UAE:

It is an acronym of the United Arab Emirates. UAE is sometimes simply called the Emirates. It is a Sovereign State in Western Asia at the northeast end of the Arabian Peninsula on the Persian Gulf, bordering Oman to the east and Saudi Arabia to the south and west, as well as sharing maritime borders with Qatar to the west and Iran to the north. Its Capital is Abu Dhabi. In December 1971, the UAE became a federation of six emirates - Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, and Fujairah, while the seventh emirate, Ras Al Khaimah, joined the federation in 1972. The currency used here is United Arab Emirates dirham. The current President is Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Recently, United Arab Emirates (UAE) said that it is keen to have an Open sky agreement with India. Open skies between India and UAE will allow unlimited number of flights to the selected cities of each other’s countries.

There are about 1,068 flights a week between India and the UAE operated by the airlines of the two countries under the bilateral Air Service Agreement.

In India, the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016, allows the government to enter into an ‘open sky’ air services agreement on a reciprocal basis with SAARC nations as well as countries beyond a 5,000-kilometre radius from New Delhi. It implies that nations within this distance need to enter into a bilateral agreement and mutually determine the number of flights that their airlines can operate between the two countries.

India has Air Service Agreements (ASA) with 109 countries including UAE. But, India does not allow unlimited number of flights between two countries.

It is this policy that the UAE Ambassador wants India to revisit.

Open Sky Agreement: Open Sky Agreements are bilateral agreements that the two countries negotiate to provide rights for airlines to offer international passenger and cargo services. It expands international passenger and cargo flights.
CSL:

It refers to the Cochin Shipyard Limited. CSL is the largest shipbuilding and maintenance facility in India. It is part of a line of maritime-related facilities in the port-city of Kochi, in the state of Kerala, India. Cochin Shipyard was incorporated in the year 1972 as a fully owned Govt of India company, with the first phase of facilities coming online in 1982. The company has Miniratna status. The first ship to roll out of the Cochin Shipyard was the MV Rani Padmini in 1981.

Recently, Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) signed contracts for construction of two autonomous electric ferries for Norway-based ASKO Maritime, with an option to build two more identical vessels.

This Autonomous Electrical vessel project is partially funded by the Norwegian Government. It is aimed at emission-free transport of goods across the Oslo fjord. The 67 meter-long vessels will initially be delivered as a full-electric transport ferry, powered by 1,846 kWh capacity battery.

ASKO Maritime AS, the subsidiary group of NorgesGruppen ASA, is one of the largest players in the Norwegian retail segment.

CSL is already constructing 23 hybrid electric boats for Kochi Water Metro. It won this export order after detailed evaluation of various global shipyards and based on its value proposition to the customer.

India-Iran:

The MEA has recently confirmed that India is no longer involved in the Farzad-B gas field project where ONGC had originally signed an agreement for exploration in 2002, investing approximately $100 million thus far. The ONGC’s foreign arm OVL is also out of the Farzad-B gas field exploration project.

The reason cited for dropping India from the projects are policy changes by the Iranian government, Iran’s precarious finances, and the U.S. sanctions situation.

It was opened in 2008 and India had been negotiating the rights to oil and gas from the field till the US sanctions on Iran jeopardised India’s plans.
Farzad B Gas Field: Farzad B Gas Field is an offshore natural gas field located in Persian Gulf under the control of Iranian sovereignty.

Maldives:

The Maldives, officially the Republic of Maldives, is a small island nation in South Asia. It is situated in the Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean. It lies southwest of Sri Lanka and India. The Capital of Maldives is Male. The Currency of the Maldives is Maldivian Rufiyaa. The current President of the Maldives is Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

Recently, India and Maldives signed an MVR 8 Million agreement for establishment of ‘Emergency Medical Services’ Centre in Dharavandhoo, an island located north of the country’s capital, Male. The Emergency Medical Service is financed by India under grant assistance of 20 million USD for neighboring countries.

This agreement will help to increase the collaboration between the countries, especially in the areas of health care facilities, disaster responses during critical times, etc. Maldives is the only country other than Bhutan to have been given this facility.

India, earlier, in April 2020, extended 150 million USD to the Maldives under foreign currency swap support. India also launched Operation Samudra Setu to evacuate Indian citizens stranded in the Maldives.

India launched Operation SAGAR to provide medical supplies, food items, Ayurvedic medicines to the countries Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, Comoros.

Turkmenistan:

Turkmenistan also known as Turkmenia, is a sovereign country in Central Asia. It is bordered by the Caspian Sea and largely covered by the Karakum Desert. Its Capital is Ashgabat and its official language is Turkmen. The currency used here is Turkmenistan manat. The current President of Turkmenistan is Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow.
Recently, the central Asian country Turkmenistan has been granted the “Observer” status by World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council. With this, Turkmenistan has become the 25th observer of the organization and also has become the last former Soviet republic to establish formal ties with the trade body. Now, Turkmenistan will be able to reap the benefits of acquisition of the status as it would help the country to develop its economy, promote multilateral cooperation, attract foreign investment and develop international trade relations.

WTO: It is an acronym of World Trade Organization. WTO is largest international economic organization that is concerned with the regulation of international trade between nations. It is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. It was founded 1 January 1995 under the Marrakesh Agreement, signed by 123 nations on 15 April 1994, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which commenced in 1948. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WTO has over 160 members representing 98 per cent of world trade. Over 20 countries are seeking to join the WTO.

RAK OPD:

It refers to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur OPD. It is a new OPD which is named after Smt. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, renowned freedom fighter and the first Health Minister of Independent India.
This newly constructed RAK OPD building which is at the premises of AIIMS, New Delhi was recently inaugurated by the Union Health Minister. Built on an area of approximately 6,300 sqm, RAK OPD is the largest known OPD in India.

The new OPD building has 18 departments out of which 16 are clinical and 2 diagnostic departments. It has 270 counseling rooms as well as 50 treatment and procedure rooms and 13 minor operation theatres.

OPD: It refers to the Outpatient Department. An OPD or outpatient clinic is the part of a hospital designed for the treatment of outpatients, people with health problems who visit the hospital for diagnosis or treatment, but do not at this time require a bed or to be admitted for overnight care.

**Form 26AS:**

It is a new form that has been rolled out by the Income Tax Department to assist Tax payers in filing quick and correct ITR. Form 26AS will help the taxpayers recall all their major financial transactions so that they have a ready reckoner to enable them while filing the ITR. This will facilitate voluntary compliance, tax accountability and ease of e-filing of returns.

Form 26AS, which is the previous form used to give information regarding tax deducted at source and tax collected at source relating to a PAN, besides certain additional information including details of other taxes paid, refunds and TDS defaults. But now, Form 26AS has been upgraded to an 'Annual Information Statement' which will carry additional details on taxpayers financial transactions as specified in the Statement of Financial Transactions (SFTs) in various categories.

**Ministry of Personnel & Public Grievances:**

The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is a ministry of the Government of India (GoI) in personnel matters specially issues concerning recruitment, training, career development, staff welfare as well as the post-retirement dispensation. The Ministry is also concerned with the process of responsive people-oriented modern administration. Allocation of Business Rules defines the work allotted for the Ministry. It was formed on 1 August 1970. The Ministry comprises of the following three Departments.
1. Department of Personnel and Training

2. Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare

3. Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances

Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India is the current Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Deputy Minister responsible is Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.

Recently, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launched the restructured PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration and the web portal www.pmawards.gov.in through video conference, which for the very first time seeks to recognize the efforts of District level officials in the Namami Gange Programme.

The purpose of restructuring the scheme is to recognize the performance of the District Collectors towards outcome indicators, economic development, peoples’ participation and redressal of public grievances. In total 15 awards will be given under the scheme in 2020.

Nominations have been called in four major categories. They are:-

1. District Performance Indicators Programme,

2. Innovation General Category,

3. Aspirational Districts Program and

4. Namami Gange Program.

The award will be conferred by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Rashtriya Ekta Diwas which falls on 31 October 2020 at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat.

The Prime Minister’s Awards for Excellence in Public Administration” was instituted by The Government of India (GoI) in the year 2006 to recognize the extraordinary work done by Districts/ Organizations of the Central and State Governments. The Scheme was restructured in 2014 for recognizing the performance of District Collectors in Priority Programs, Innovations and Aspirational Districts.
In the meeting of the National Ganga Council held in December, 2019 at Kanpur under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, it was decided to create a “Good Performance for Ganga Rejuvenation” award for the Ganga districts under the Prime Minister’s Awards for Excellence for Public Administration Scheme.

**National Broadcasting Day:**

National Broadcasting day was observed every year on 23 July in India. The day is celebrated to commemorate the first ever radio broadcast aired in India.

On this day in 1927, the first ever radio broadcast in the country went on the air from the Bombay Station under a private company, the Indian Broadcasting Company. The Government took over the broadcasting on 1 April 1930 on an experimental basis and renamed it as Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS). However, in 1932 it permanently came under government control.

On 8th of June, 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Service became All India Radio (AIR). The motto of AIR is “Bahujan Hitaya Bahujan Sukhaya”. AIR broadcasts 414 stations in 23 different languages. Currently, AIR is one of the largest public broadcasting organisations in the world.

Since its inception in 1927, radio has been an important part in people's life in India.

**CCI:**

It refers to the Competition Commission of India. CCI is a statutory body of the Government of India (GoI) responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an appreciable adverse effect on competition in India. It was founded on 14 October 2003. It is headquartered in New Delhi, India. The current First executive of CCI is Dhanendra Kumar.

Recently, the CCI approved the acquisition of Krishnapatnam Port Company Limited (KPCL) by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (SEZL).

Krishnapatnam Port located in the Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh is a privately built and owned all weather, deep water port on the east coast of India.
Adani Ports is a customer-facing integrated port infrastructure services provider currently present across ten domestic ports in six maritime states of Gujarat, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. The Acquirer manages the logistics chain which includes vessel management to anchorage, pilotage, tug pulling, berthing, goods handling, internal transport, storage and handling, processing and final evacuation by road or rail.

KPCL is engaged as a developer and operator of the deep water port at Krishnapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

**Indian policy News**

**HRD Ministry:** It refers to the Ministry of Human Resources and Development. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was formerly known as the Ministry of Education. It was founded on 26 September 1985. It is headquartered in New Delhi, India. It is responsible for the development of human resources in India. The current Minister of MHRD is Ramesh Pokhriyal.

Recently, the Union Minister for HRD Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched an initiative called ‘Manodarpan’. This initiative was launched virtually under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan as a part of strengthening human capital and increasing productivity.

Manodarpan platform will not only provide psycho-social support to students but also to teachers and parents. This initiative will address their issues related to mental health and emotional well being.

A helpline number 8448440632 has been launched to provide the consultation which can be accessed from morning 8 AM to 8 PM and the website for the initiative is [http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in/](http://manodarpan.mhrd.gov.in/).
MNRE:

It is an acronym for the Ministry of Power & Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. MNRE is the nodal Ministry of the Government of India in New Delhi, for all matters relating to new and renewable energy. The ministry was established as the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources in 1992. It started functioning independently with effect from 2nd July, 1992. Earlier it was known as the Ministry of Energy sources. The current Minister of MNRE R. K. Singh, a Minister of State (Independent Charge).

Recently, Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh inaugurated India’s first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza. The EV charging plaza was inaugurated at Chelmsford Club in New Delhi in order to make e-mobility hassle free and convenient for the consumers.

The Plaza was launched by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). It will host 5 Electric Vehicle Chargers of different specifications.

ASPIRE:

It is an e-Portal named “Automobile Solutions Portal for Industry, Research & Education. ASPIRE was recently launched by the International Centre of Automotive Technology (ICAT). Along with this, ICAT has declared that the Department of Heavy Industry (DHT) which is the body under Government of India (GOI) has released the e-platforms to promote innovation, R&D and product development in various sectors of India.

The main aim of this portal is to build a strong and self-reliant automotive industry in line with the vision of Make in India and Atma-Nirbhar vision of Government of India. Its main objective is to make Indian Automotive Industry self-reliant by assisting in innovation and adoption of global technological advancements by bringing together the stakeholders from various associated avenues.

This technology platform will enable the OEMs, Tier 1 Tier 2 & Tier 3 companies, R&D institutions and academia (colleges & universities) to come
together for R&D, technology development on issues involving technology advancements. The e-portal will act as one stop solution.

The portal can be accessed through https://aspire.icat.in.

ICAT: It is an acronym for International Centre of Automotive Technology. ICAT is a leading world class automotive testing, certification and R&D service provider under the aegis of NATRiP (National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project), Government of India. It was founded in 2006. It is headquarteried in Manesar in Gurugram district of Haryana state of India.

RAISE:

It refers to the Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency. RAISE national programme is a joint initiative of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and USAID. This initiative was recently launched by the Union Minister for Power, New & Renewable Energy, Shri R.K Singh.

Maintaining good indoor air quality is essential for occupant and people who return to their offices and public spaces, comfort, well-being, productivity and the overall public health. So, in that context, the EESL has undertaken a retrofit of its office air-conditioning and ventilation system, in partnership with US Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE programme.

The corporate office of EESL in Scope Complex has been taken up as a pilot for this initiative. It focuses on improving indoor air quality (IAQ), thermal comfort, and energy efficiency (EE) in its office's air conditioning system.

Science and Technology

ChAdOx1 nCoV-19:

It is the name given to a COVID-19 vaccine jointly developed by British-Swedish Company AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford. The early-stage human trial data of a COVID-19 vaccine has shown positive results. It is safe and induces immune response, with mild side effects in some participants.
ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 is made from a genetically engineered virus that causes the common cold in chimpanzees. The recent study showed that 90% of involved people developed neutralising antibodies and T-cells that can fight coronavirus after one dose. The vaccine developed by Oxford and AstraZeneca belongs to a category called non-replicating viral vector vaccines.

When someone is infected with the Covid-19 virus, it spreads in the body easily because of the spikes on its surface, known as the ‘spike protein’, which allow the virus to penetrate cells and, thereafter, multiply. The vaccine tries to build the body’s immunity against this spike protein. The idea is to create antibodies to fight this spiked surface so that the virus does not even have the chance to penetrate the cells.

Globally, Oxford and AstraZeneca have already begun phase III trials in Brazil, targeting 5,000 volunteers. A similar trial in South Africa is also expected to be underway.

**HOPE MISSION:**

It is the first-ever interplanetary Hope Probe mission to Mars from Japan's Tanegashima Space Centre launched by United Arab Emirates (UAE). With the help of mission, UAE aims to provide a complete picture of the Martian atmosphere for the first time, studying daily and seasonal changes.

The Hope probe will be the first to study the Martian climate throughout daily and seasonal cycles. It will not only study daily and seasonal weather cycles, weather events in the lower atmosphere such as dust storms, and how the weather varies in different regions of Mars but will also attempt to answer the scientific questions of why Martian atmosphere is losing hydrogen and oxygen into space and the reason behind drastic climate changes of Mars. UAE, with this launch, is targeting to build a human settlement on Mars within the next 100 years.

If successful, it would become the first mission to Mars by any West Asian, Arab or Muslim majority country.

The “Hope” mission to “Mars”, also called Emirates Mars Mission is a space exploration mission to Mars, which launched the Hope orbiter (Al Amal in
Arabic). H2A, the rocket carrying the Hope Probe to space, was launched on 19 July 2020 and it is expected to reach the Mars by February 2021, to coincide with 50th anniversary of the unification of the UAE, an alliance of seven emirates. Rest of the journey of “Hope” would be tracked by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai. It was built by the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre, an United Arab Emirates Space Agency, as well as the University of Colorado Boulder, Arizona State University, and the University of California, Berkeley. The UAE launch marks the first of three missions being planned to Mars in the end of July.

US is the only country that has sent previous missions to Mars, plans its Perseverance mission on July 30. China plans its first Mars probe, Tianwen-1 (formerly Huoxing 1), in the coming few days.

**ANASIS-II:**

It is South Korea’s first military satellite “ANASIS-II” launched successfully by SpaceX. It was launched from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in the US of Florida. The satellite was deployed into a geostationary transfer orbit (GTO) by a Falcon 9 rocket.

With this successful launch, South Korea has become the 10th country to own a military-only communications satellite. It is now able to secure its first military-only communication satellite, which will replace the ANASIS-I satellite used for both civilian and military purposes. The satellite is expected to reach its orbit of 36,000 kilometres in 2 weeks. South Korea’s military will take over the system in October after testing.

According to NASASpaceFlight, ANASIS-II was previously named as KMitSatCom-1. It replaces the Koreasat-5/ANASIS-I satellite, a combined civilian and military communications satellite launched in 2006. As part of a package for Lockheed Martin’s F-35A combat aircraft, South Korea’s Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) contracted with Lockheed Martin for the satellite. The spacecraft of the satellite is based on Airbus’s Eurostar E3000 satellite bus.

SpaceX: Space Exploration Technologies Corp., trading as SpaceX, is an American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company. It
was founded on 6 May 2002 by Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs to enable the colonization of Mars. This privately held company is headquartered in Hawthorne, California, United States. The current SpaceX president & COO is Gwynne Shotwell.

**Bubonic plague:**

Bubonic plague also known as the Black Death in the Middle Ages, killed tens of millions of people around the world in three major pandemics, with about a third of Europe’s population wiped out in the 1300s. According to WHO, there were 3,248 cases worldwide, leading to 584 deaths—a fatality rate of 18%—between 2010 and 2015.

There are two main forms of plague infection; depending on the route of infection is Bubonic plague and Pneumonic plague or lung-based plague.

1. Bubonic plague is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria Yersinia pestis, a zoonotic bacteria, usually found in small mammals and their flea. Plague bacillus, Y. pestis, enters at the bite and travels to the nearest lymph node where it replicates itself. The lymph node then becomes inflamed, tense and painful, and is called a ‘bubo’. Human to human transmission of bubonic plague is rare.

2. Pneumonic plague, or lung-based plague, is the most virulent form of plague. Any person with pneumonic plague may transmit the disease via droplets to other humans.

It is transmitted between animals through fleas. Humans can be infected through the bite of infected vector fleas, unprotected contact with infectious bodily fluids or contaminated materials and the inhalation of respiratory droplets/small particles from a patient with pneumonic plague.

As an animal disease, plague is found in all continents, except Oceania. Since the 1990s, most human cases have occurred in Africa. The three most endemic countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo and Peru and Madagascar.

At present, plague is easily treated with antibiotics and the use of standard precautions to prevent acquiring infection.
Recently, a hospital in China’s Inner Mongolia reported a case of suspected bubonic plague. This case is being carefully monitored by World Health Organization (WHO).

**Digantara:**

It is India’s first air and space Surveillance Company. It was started by Anirudh Sharma and Rahul Rawat in 2018 from their dormitory at their university. The startup has received a grant of Rs 25 lakhs which will be used to develop space debris monitoring systems and the company's expansion.

The startup has developed India’s first In-orbit Space Debris Monitoring and tracking system, which is based on LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology, which will provide global real-time earth coverage by deploying a constellation of cost-efficient nanosatellites in LEO (Low Earth Orbit) and a space-based air surveillance payload for accurate tracking of both aircraft and space objects.

Recently, the Government of India (GoI) allowed private firms, startups to utilize facilities of ISRO to build satellites and rockets. The startup is planning to establish a small satellite assembly line and production unit to develop small satellites. This is being done to build a satellite constellation which in turn will help India achieve indigenous space surveillance system. Such measures will help India become self-reliant (Atma Nirbhar Bharat).

**Sports News**

**Hungarian Grand Prix:**

The Hungarian Grand Prix is a motor race held annually in Mogyoród, Hungary. Since 1986, the race has been a round of the FIA Formula One World Championship. The first Hungarian Grand Prix was held on 21 June 1936 over a 5-kilometre (3.1-mile) track laid out in Népliget, a park in Budapest.

Recently, Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton won the Hungarian Grand Prix for the eighth time to equal Michael Schumacher’s single-venue record and take the championship lead on recently at Hungaroring, Mogyoród, Hungary.
Max Verstappen (Dutch-Red Bull) was second, followed by Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes- Finland) at the third spot. Hungarian Grand Prix 2020 was the third race of the 2020 Formula One World Championship.

First International Chess Day:

The first International Chess Day is being celebrated on 20 July 2020. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), on 12 July 2019, proclaimed 20 July as World Chess Day to mark the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.

Under initiative of FIDE, July 20 has been observed as International Chess Day by chess players around the world since 1966.

Chess: Chess is a board game for two players. It is played in a square board, made of 64 smaller squares, with eight squares on each side. Each player starts with sixteen pieces: eight pawns, two knights, two bishops, two rooks, one queen and one king. The player with white pieces always makes the first move.

Origin: The origin of chess goes back almost 1500 years. An early game similar to chess called Chaturanga originated in Northern Indian Subcontinent during the Gupta period (~ 319 – 543 CE) in the 6th century AD and spread to Persia. Chaturanga, and later Shatranj, was the name given to the game when it arrived in Sassanid Persia around 600 CE. When the Arabs conquered Persia, chess was taken up by the Muslim world and subsequently, through the Moorish conquest of Spain, spread to Southern Europe.

IPL:

It refers to the Indian Premier League. The IPL is a professional Twenty20 cricket league in India contested during March or April and May of every year by eight teams representing eight different cities in India. The league was founded by the Board of Control for Cricket in India in 2008. The founder was Lalit Modi. The current reigning champions are Mumbai Indians.

Recently, IPL chairman Brijesh Patel confirmed that IPL 2020 is going to be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It will be held from September 19 to November 8, and it will be a full 51-day tournament. IPL 2020 will be hosted
by Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. However, the Indian board is still awaiting a green signal from the government for taking IPL out of India.

The decision to host the IPL in the UAE was considered due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases in India.

Economic News

FMCBG:

It refers to the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors. The 3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting was recently held under the Saudi Arabian Presidency through Video Conferencing. India was represented by Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman in the meeting.

During the meet, the participants deliberated on the global economic outlook amid evolving COVID-19 pandemic crisis along with other G20 Finance Track priorities for the year 2020. Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the measures taken by India to fight the COVID-19 pandemic such as direct benefit transfers, special support to agriculture and MSME sectors, rural employment guarantee measures etc.

G20: The G20 means the Group of Twenty. It is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union (EU). The membership of the G20 consists of 19 individual countries plus the European Union. The members of the G20 group are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (EU). The EU is represented by the European Commission and by the European Central Bank. It was established on 26 September 1999 with an aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability. The objective of G20 is to unite world leaders around shared economic, political and health challenges. The current Chairman of G20 is King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (2020)
CBDT: It is an acronym of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. CBDT is a statutory authority functioning under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963. The officials of the Board in their ex-officio capacity also function as a Division of the Ministry dealing with matters relating to levy and collection of direct taxes. It functions as a division of the Ministry of Finance under the Department of Revenue. Its functions include formulation of policies, dealing with matters relating to levy and collection of direct taxes, and supervision of the functioning of the entire Income Tax Department. The current Chairperson of CBDT is Pramod Chandra Mody.

Recently, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India (MoMSME).

As per MoU, certain Income-tax Return (ITR) related information will be shared with MoMSME by CBDT. The exchanged data will enable MoMSME to keep a check as well as to classify enterprises in Micro, Small and Medium categories as per the criteria.

Both the CBDT & MoMSME , for the successful process of data exchange, will appoint Nodal Officer and Alternate Nodal Officers. The MoU between the both the organizaions marks the beginning of a new era of cooperation and synergy between them.

MoMSME: It is an acronym for Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. MoMSME a branch of the Government of India (GoI) is the apex executive body for the formulation and administration of rules, regulations and laws relating to micro, small and medium enterprises in India. It was founded in 2007. The current Ministers in charge of MoMSME are Giriraj Singh (MOS independent charge) and Nitin Gadkari (Union Minister).
CBIC:

It is an acronym for the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs. CBIC is the nodal national agency responsible for administering Customs, GST, Central Excise, Service Tax and Narcotics in India. It comes under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance. It was founded on 1 January 1964. The current CBIC is M. Ajit Kumar.

Recently, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) to facilitate smoother bilateral exchange of data. The MoU was signed by Shri Pramod Chandra Mody, the Chairman of the CBDT, and Shri M. Ajit Kumar, the Chairman of the CBIC on the 21st of July 2020.

This MoU supersedes the MoU signed between CBDT and the erstwhile Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) in the year 2015.

As, significant developments have taken place since the signing of earlier MoU in 2015 including introduction of GST, incorporation of GSTN and change in the nomenclature of Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) to Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). So, changed circumstances, including advancements in technology, are duly incorporated in the current MoU.

AS per the MoU, both the CBTD and CBIC will share data and information with each other on an automatic and regular basis. They will also share any information available in their respective databases which may be useful for the other organisation.

The signing of the new MoU marks the beginning of a new era of cooperation and synergy between the CBDT and CBIC.

OLA:

The full form of OLA is An operational level agreement. Ola is an India-based mobility platform offering services that include peer-to-peer ridesharing, ride service hailing, taxi and food delivery. Ola was launched in December 2010 as Ola Cabs by Bhavish Aggarwal and Ankit Bhati. The company is based in Bangalore, Karnataka,
India. It was developed by ANI Technologies Pvt. Ltd. It was founded on 3 December 2010. The current CEO of Ola is Bhavish Aggarwal.

Ola is rolling out its enterprise mobility solution ‘Ola Corporate’ across global markets. It will be rolling out the enterprise offering to customers across Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.

With the introduction of the service in international markets, Ola is widening the scale of its global offerings to provide business travelers with a cost-effective, flexible and easy-to-use solution for all their mobility needs.

The solution had first been introduced in the Indian market and had garnered 10,000 corporate users in the country. Ola Corporate will also offer a range of safety features under its Ride Safe initiative and will follow in class hygiene and sanitization protocols for safer mobility amid the pandemic.

**NCPI:**

It refers to the National Payments Corporation of India. NPCI is an umbrella organization for all retail payments in India. It was founded in 2008. It has been incorporated as a Not for Profit Company under the provisions of Section 25 of Companies Act 1956 (now Section 8 of Companies Act 2013). It is an initiative of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks Association (IBA) under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 for creating a robust Payment & Settlement Infrastructure in India. It is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The current MD & CEO is Dilip Asbe.

Recently, NCPI launched its one-stop fintech payment solution Unified Payments Interface (UPI) AutoPay. It was launched in a virtual event of Global Fintech Fest.

This new UPI AutoPay feature in India aims to ease recurring online payments. It can be used for multiple financial purposes such as utility payments, train tickets, booking bus pass, paying DTH subscriptions, mobile bills, mutual funds and loan payments, transit or metro fares, EMI payments, insurance, electricity bills, and others.
Customers can create e-mandate through their UPI ID or QR Scan for transactions up to Rs.2000. For transactions above Rs.2000, the UPI PIN will be needed to authenticate the payment.

NPCI has introduced the facility to Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, HDFC Bank, HSBC Bank, ICICI Bank, IDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Paytm Payments Bank, AutoPe-Delhi Metro, AutoPe-Dish TV, CAMS Pay, Furlenco, Growfitter, Policy Bazaar are some of the financial institutions.

Mizoram:

Mizoram is a mountainous region in northeastern India. It became the 23rd state of the Indian Union in February 1987. It was previously part of Assam until 1972, when it was carved out as a Union Territory. It became the 23rd state of India on 20 February 1987, with the Fifty-Third Amendment of the Indian Constitution, 1986. It is the southernmost landlocked state. It shares its borders with three of the Seven Sister States, namely Assam, Tripura and Manipur. The capital of Mizoram is Aizwal and the current Chief Minister and Governor of Mizoram are Pu Zoramthanga and P.S. Sreedharan Pillai respectively.

Recently, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal virtually inaugurated the “Zoram Mega Food Park” in Mizoram. This is the first Mega Food Park (MFP) operationalized in the State of Mizoram. It is located near National Highway 54.

This Mega Food Park aims to be a big boost to the growth of the food processing sector in the North East Region. It will provide direct and indirect employment to 5,000 persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers in the CPC (Core Processing Centre) and PPC (primary processing Centre) catchment areas.

Under the Mega Food Park Scheme, Government of India (GoI) provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50 Crore per Mega Food Park project. It is equipped with a dry warehouse of 3000 metric tonnes capacity and cold storage of 1000 metric tonnes.
At present, 18 Mega Food Park Projects are under implementation in various states and 19 Mega Food Parks have already become functional in the States. Six of them are in the North eastern region. 2 MFPs at Assam and Mizoram in North eastern Region are operational.

**New Delhi:**

![New Delhi Image]

It is an urban district located in the city of Delhi. New Delhi officially the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT), is a city and a union territory of India. It serves as the capital of India is the seat of the State Government of Delhi and the Government of India, as well as the city or local governments as per the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act. Union Territories are governed by the Union Government. The current Chief Minister and Governor of Delhi are Arvind Kejriwal and Anil Baijal respectively.

Recently, Delhi Cabinet approved of the ‘Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana’. The scheme will be launched in 6 to 7 months. It will be linked to Centre’s ‘one nation, one ration card’ scheme. The scheme aims to help the beneficiaries get ration delivered at home. They will not have to come to the ration shops.

It is expected to benefit lakhs of people in the national capital through 2016 PDS shops. At present subsidized ration is provided under the National Security, 2013 Act and this new programme would add to the benefits of the Act.

Under the scheme, people will no longer have to visit the ration shop. The ration will be transported to people’s homes with due respect. Packing of rice and sugar will also be done and delivered at the doorstep. The flour will be crushed and wheat will be from the FCI warehouse. People can pick their preference of either going to a shop or buying ration or delivery of ration at their doorstep.

**Uttar Pradesh:**

![Uttar Pradesh Image]

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is a state in northern India. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950. Its Capital city is Lucknow. The Chief Minister and the...
Governor of Uttar Pradesh are Yogi Adityanath and Anandiben Patel respectively.

Recently, UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched ”Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana” for all-round development of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and to provide financial assistant to support people to become self-dependent. The scheme targets to benefit around 7.5 lakh families in 2020-2021.

A financial assistance of 17.42 crore online was transferred to 3,484 people under the ‘Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Swarojgar Yojana’ by the UP CM. He also interacted with some beneficiaries from Rae Bareli, Gorakhpur, Basti, Meerut, Azamgarh and Moradabad districts through video conferencing. The state government is extending financial help to make people self-dependent.

Karnataka:

It is a state in the south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. It is bordered by the Arabian Sea to the west, Goa to the northwest, Maharashtra to the north, Telangana to the northeast, Andhra Pradesh to the east, Tamil Nadu to the southeast, and Kerala to the south. Its capital city is Bangalore. The current Chief Minister and Governor of Karnataka are B. S. Yediyurappa and Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala respectively.

Recently, Karnataka State Government approved the formation of the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission. The Mission is being launched under the provision of Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. The Mission was aimed to promote over 7,000 start-ups, e-commerce, and other gig economy companies in the State. Under the mission, the Karnataka Government will hold 49% of shares of the companies and the rest 51% by the industries and other stakeholders.

Previously, e-commerce, startups and other gig economic companies operating under “Technology Mission” were governed by three to four government agencies. Now, with the cabinet approval, the companies will come under one roof.

Invest Karnataka: It is a company formed by the Karnataka Government in 2016 to promote the State as an ideal investment destination. The company, so far,
has been active in promoting the State globally and is efficiently run jointly by the industry as private partners and the government. The Chairman of Invest Karnataka is the Industries Minister. This was the first such mission launched in India by the State Government of Karnataka. It is the first state to form a company under Section 8 which is led by industrialists. Of the nine directors of the company, six are from the industry. The chief executive officer (CEO) will be a professional from the industry.

**Person in News**

**Sahil Seth:** He is a 2011 Indian Revenue Services (IRS) officer, currently posted as Deputy Commissioner of Mumbai Customs. He has recently been appointed as the honorary adviser of steering committee for BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI). He has been appointed for the period 2020-2023.

The role of an honorary advisor is on a voluntary basis and there are no financials involved. There is no remuneration involved for the post.

**BRICS CCI:**

The BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a parent organization that promotes commerce and industry in BRICS. It was founded in 2012 with the efforts of the eminent entrepreneurs and professionals. It is a non-profit and non-governmental organization.

The goal of BRICS CCI is to create an enabling help system particularly for the MSME phase of companies and younger entrepreneurs from throughout all geographies.

The primary objective of the honorary advisers committee is to organize themselves in BRICS countries chapters for a period of three years with a chair leading the committee.

**BRICS:** It is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies which are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC", before the induction of South Africa in 2010. The BRICS members are known for their significant influence

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on regional affairs. All are also the members of G20. Since 2009, the BRICS nations have met annually at formal summits. BRICS headquarter is situated at Shanghai, China. BRICS members are known for their influence in regional affairs.

**Nelson Mandela Prize:**

The Nelson Mandela Prize is awarded every five years. The Mandela Prize was established by a UN General Assembly resolution in June 2014. It recognizes those who dedicate their lives to the service of humanity, by promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations, while honoring Nelson Mandela’s life, and legacy of reconciliation, political transition, and social transformation.

Recently, Guinean doctor Morissana Kouyate and Marianna Vardinoyannis of Greece were announced the winners of the 2020 Nelson Mandela Prize for their dedication towards the service of humanity. The announcement was made by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.

Morissana Kouyate: Morissana Kouyate is a leading figure in efforts to end violence against women in Africa, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). He has received several international humanitarian awards for his work.

Marianna Vardinoyannis: Marianna Vardinoyannis has been involved in the fight against childhood cancer for some 30 years and, thanks to her work, thousands of children have been cured.

The United Nations observes 18 July every year as Nelson Mandela International Day.

**Arnab Chaudhuri:**

Arnab Chaudhuri, who passed away on December 25, 2019, was one of the pioneers of the Indian Animation industry, and his animation movie ‘Arjun: The Warrior Prince’ is the only animation from India to date to be longlisted for Oscar awards.

He will posthumously be conferred the ‘Legend of Animation’ award instituted by the Toonz Media Group (TMG) as part of the Animation Masters Summit
(AMS) 2020. The award is being presented for his invaluable contribution to the animation and entertainment industry of India.

**Arvind Krishna:**

He is an Indian-American business executive. He has recently been congratulated via video conferance by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for becoming the global head of IBM. He became the chief executive officer (CEO) of IBM in early 2020.

With this he has joined Satya Nadella (Microsoft), Sundar Pichai (Google) and Shantanu Narayen (Adobe) as an Indian CEO of a major United States technology company.

**Roshni Nadar-Malhotra:**

She is the daughter of Shiv Nadar who is the founder of $9.9-billion HCL company. She recently replaced her Father as the Chairman of HCL Technologies.

With this, she has become the first woman chairperson of a listed Indian IT services company. Shiv Nadar, however, would continue to be the Managing Director of the company with designation as Chief Strategy Officer.

She worked with Sky News UK and CNN America as a news producer before joining HCL Corp in 2009, and within a year was made executive director and then CEO at the age of 27.

**HCL Technologies:** HCL Technologies was founded by Shiv Nadar in 1976. It is today the third largest in the IT industry, after TCS and Infosys. The company was founded by him 44 years ago to make calculators and microprocessors.

**Ramesh Boddu:**

He has recently been appointed as a Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of the bank by the Board of Directors of the Karur Vysya Bank. He has also been co-opted as an Additional Director.

He has been appointed for a period of three years from the date of taking charge. He will succeed PR Seshadri who resigned on 31st March 2020. He has
earlier served as Deputy Managing Director in State Bank of India and retired in April 2020.

KVB: It refers to The Karur Vysya Bank Limited. KVB is a Scheduled Commercial Bank in India. It has completed 100 years of operation and is one of the leading banks in India. It is headquartered in Karur in Tamil Nadu. It was set up in 1916 by M. A. Venkatarama Chettiar and Athi Krishna Chettiar.

Ashwini Kumar Tewari:

He has recently been appointed as the new Managing Director and chief executive officer by SBI Cards and Payment Services. He has been appointed for a period of two years. His appointment will come into effect from August 1, 2020. He was nominated by parent State Bank of India for the position.

He was appointment after the resignation of present MD & CEO, Hardayal Prasad who decided to quit from the directorship of the company owing to his voluntary retirement from the State Bank of India.

SBI: It refers to the State Bank Of India. SBI is an Indian multinational, public sector banking and financial services statutory body. It is a government corporation statutory body headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It was founded on 1 July 1955. SBI is ranked as 236th in the Fortune Global 500 list of the world's biggest corporations of 2019. The current Chairman of SBI is Rajnish Kumar.

Arun Kumar:

He is the Director General of Railway Protection Force (RPF). International Union of Railways, UIC, Paris, has recently nominated him as Vice-Chairman of its security platform.

Mr Kumar will serve as VC of the UIC Security platform from July 2020 to July 2022. Thereafter he will then take over as Chairman of the Security Platform from July 2022 to July 2024. The decision to nominate Arun Kumar was taken during the 96th UIC General Assembly.
UIC: It refers to the International Union of Railways. The International Union of Railways (UIC), is the worldwide professional association representing the railway sector and promoting rail transport. It was founded on 17 October 1922. It is headquartered in Paris, France. The current Chairman of UIC is Gianluigi Vittorio Castelli.

The UIC Security Platform is empowered to develop and formulate analysis and policy positions on behalf of the rail sector in matters relating to security of persons, property and installations. It also promotes the exchange of information and experience among the Union members and proposes common interest projects in rails.

Art and Culture

Mont Blanc mountain range:

It is the second-highest mountain in Europe after Mount Elbrus and highest mountain in the Alps and Western Europe. "Roof of Europe" is the epithet of the mountain and it is also known as White Mountain in French. The mountain stands in a range called the Graian Alps, between the regions of Aosta Valley, Italy, and Savoie and Haute-Savoie, France. The border between Italy and France passes through the summit of Mont Blanc, making it both French and Italian.

Recently, a melting French glacier of Bossons on the Mont Blanc mountain range in Western Europe disentombed Indian newspapers buried there for 54 years. The newspapers are among the remains of Air India Flight 101, named ‘Kanchenjunga’, a Boeing 707 plane that on January 24, 1966, crashed mysteriously into Mont Blanc ending the lives of all 177 passengers and crew. Among the 177 dead was Homi Bhabha, the founding leader of India's nuclear programme.

Copies of the "National Herald" and "Economic Times" are among a dozen newspapers discovered. Indian newspaper copies with headlines such as "India's First Woman Prime Minister", referring to Indira Gandhi’s election win in 1966 is also among the recovered newspaper. The newspapers were discovered by Timothee Mottin, who runs the cafe-restaurant La Cabane du Cerro at an altitude of 1,350 metres above the French resort of Chamonix.
Homi Bhabha: Homi Jehangir Bhabha was an Indian nuclear physicist, founding director, and professor of physics at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. Colloquially known as "father of the Indian nuclear programme", Bhabha was also the founding director of the Atomic Energy Establishment, Trombay. TIFR and AEET were the cornerstone of Indian development of nuclear weapons which Bhabha also supervised as director. After the death of Bhabha in an air crash on Mont Blanc in 1966, the institute was renamed the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in his memory.


**Suraj Kade Marda Nahi:**

It is the name of the book authored by Sahitya Akademi Award winner, Baldev Singh Sadaknama. Suraj Kade Marda Nahi means the sun never dies. The book is published by Unistarbooks. The book has been released and will be formally launched on July 31, 2020 on Udham Singh 80th death anniversary.

Many aspects of freedom fighter Udham Singh is portrayed in his book. The book not only portrays some facts pertaining to Colonel Reginal Dyer, also known as the butcher of Jallianwala bagh but also covers how Udham Singh killed Michael O’ Dwyer, former lieutenant governor of Punjab on 13 March 1940, at Caxton Hall, London for which he was hanged on July 31, 1940.

Baldev Singh Sadaknama: He is an Indian novelist and story writer in Punjabi - language. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award 2011 for his novel Dhaahwan Dilli De Kingre. His novel ‘Suraj Di Aakh’, which was about the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh won Dhahan Prize. He is also known for his novels Sadaknaama and Laal Batti.
The Endgame:

It is the name of the book authored by crime writer Hussain Zaidi. His new novel talks of politics, betrayal, and unimaginable terror. The book has been published by HarperCollins India. “The Endgame” gives the readers a close-up of complex political machinery at work, including state security, defence services, and intelligence agencies like – all building up to an explosive climax. The book explores the challenges that the security of a country faces from within and without at the same time.

S. Hussain Zaidi: He is an Indian author and former investigative journalist. His works include Dongri to Dubai: Six Decades of the Mumbai Mafia, Mafia Queens of Mumbai, Black Friday, My Name is Abu Salem and Mumbai Avengers. He was the associate producer of an HBO documentary, “Terror in Mumbai”, based on the 26/11 terror attacks.

TIFF:

It refers to the Toronto International Film Festival. The TIFF is one of the largest publicly attended film festivals in the world, attracting over 480,000 people annually. Founded in 1976, TIFF is now one of the largest and most prestigious events of its kind in the world. This film festival is held each September in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. TIFF’s mission is "to transform the way people see the world through film"

Recently, bollywood actor, Priyanka Chopra Jonas has been chosen as the ambassador of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) 2020. She has joined the list of 50 celebrated filmmakers and actors who are invited as the ambassadors of the TIFF. Bollywood filmmaker Anurag Kashyap has also been chosen for TIFF 2020.

TIFF 2020 will be opting for digital screenings and virtual red carpets in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The festival is scheduled to start from September 10 to September 19, 2020.
Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

Consumer Protection Act, 2019 is an Act of the Parliament of India. It repeals and replaces the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 8 July 2019 by the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan and was passed by Lok Sabha on 30 July 2019. It was passed in Rajya Sabha on 6 August 2019. The bill received assent from President Ram Nath Kovind on 9 August, and was notified in The Gazette of India on the same date.

Recently, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 came into force on 20th July 2020. The new law was briefed to the media by Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan through a video conference.

The new act has been introduced to empower consumers and help them in protecting their rights through its various notified Rules and provisions. This Act aims to be swift and less time consuming compared to the older Consumer Protection Act, 1986 in which single-point access to justice was given making it a time-consuming exercise.

Under this Act, a Central Consumer Protection Authority, (CCPA), as an advisory board, will be established. CCPA will promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers. It will be headed by the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution with the Minister of State as Vice Chairperson and 34 other members from different fields. The Council will have three-year tenure. It will have Minister-in-charge of consumer affairs from two States from each region- North, South, East, West, and NER.

Some of the other features of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 include Consumer Protection Councils, Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions, Product Liability, punishment for manufacture or sale of products containing adulterant and spurious goods and Mediation. The rules for prevention of unfair trade practice by e-commerce platforms will also be covered under this Act.

The CCPA will be empowered to conduct investigations into violations of consumer rights and institute complaints or prosecution. It will not only order recall of unsafe goods and services but also order discontinuance of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements etc.
This new Act introduces the concept of product liability and brings within its scope, the product manufacturer, product service provider and product seller, for any claim for compensation.

**Plea Bargaining:**

Plea bargaining refers to a person charged with a criminal offence negotiating with the prosecution for a lesser punishment than what is provided in law by pleading guilty to a less serious offence. It primarily involves pre-trial negotiations between the accused and the prosecutor. It may involve bargaining on the charge or in the quantum of sentence.

There are three types of Plea Bargaining. They are:-

1. **Charge Bargaining:** This is used when a defendant pleads guilty to a less serious crime than the one originally imposed.

2. **Count Bargaining:** This is used when the defendant pleads guilty to a fewer number of the charges.

3. **Sentence Bargaining:** This is used when the defendant pleads guilty knowing what sentence will be given.

Recently, many members of the Tablighi Jamaat belonging to different countries have obtained release from court cases in India by means of plea bargaining. These foreign nationals, accused of violating visa conditions by attending a religious congregation, have walked free after pleading guilty to minor offences and paying the fines imposed by the court.

Plea Bargaining in India: The concept of Plea Bargaining, in India, was not part of law until 2006. It was introduced in 2006 as part of a set of amendments to the CrPC as Chapter XXI-A, containing Sections 265A to 265L. The process of plea bargaining in India can be initiated only by the accused; further, the accused will have to apply to the court for invoking the benefit of bargaining.

Only someone who has been charge sheeted for an offence that does not attract the death sentence, life sentence or a prison term above seven years can make use of the scheme. It is also applicable to private complaints of which a criminal court has taken cognisance.
The Justice Malimath Committee endorsed the concept of plea bargaining owing to its benefits i.e., it seeks to ensure speedy trial, end uncertainty over the outcome of criminal cases, save litigation costs and relieve the parties of anxiety. It could also increase the conviction rates as seen in the United States where the practice is common. It may even help offenders make a fresh start in life.

**ECI:**

It refers to the Election Commission of India. The ECI is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. It was formed on 25 January 1950. Its headquartered in New Delhi. It functions under the jurisdiction of Government of India.

Recently, the ECI decided against extending postal ballots to them in the upcoming Bihar Assembly election and other byelections in the near future. This decision was taken keeping in view that more than 70 lakh electors above 65 years of age and also due to the logistical challenges posed.

Voters above 80 years of age along with physically disadvantaged voters and those who have either tested positive for the novel coronavirus or are in quarantine will be allowed to vote through postal ballots. Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) for Defense Personnel to cast their vote as service voters will be provided by the ECI.

Earlier, ECI had proposed optional postal ballot facilities for voters above 65 years of age and those infected with Covid-19 in order to minimize exposure at polling stations. The Ministry of Law and Justice, based on ECI's recommendations had notified the amended rules on 19 June 2020. The Ministry of Law and Justice, based on ECI's recommendations had notified the amended rules on June 19 of this year. Postal ballots had been extended to Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and electors over 80 years in November last year, ahead of the Jharkhand and Delhi elections.

However, now ECI announced that it would not be extending the facility to electors of age 65 and above due to logistical, staff and safety protocol-related constraints.
Postal voting: It is a type of voting where a voter can cast his/her vote remotely by recording his/her preference on the ballot paper and sending it back to the election officer before counting. Section 60 in The Representation of the People Act, 1951 provides for any person to be given the postal facility by the ECI in consultation with the government.

There are a restricted set of voters who can exercise postal voting. They are:-

1. Members of the armed forces like the Army, Navy and Air Force, members of the armed police force of a state (serving outside the state).

2. Government employees posted outside India and their spouses are entitled to vote only by post.

3. Voters under preventive detention can also vote only by post.

4. Special voters such as the President of India, Vice President, Governors, Union Cabinet ministers, Speaker of the House and government officers on poll duty have the option to vote by post. But they have to apply through a prescribed form to avail this facility.

5. A new category of ‘absentee voters’ who can now also opt for postal voting, was recently, introduced by the Law Ministry. These are voters employed in essential services and unable to cast their vote due to their service conditions. Currently, officials of the DMRC, Northern Railway Services and media persons are notified as absentee voters.

**Rajya Sabha:**

The Rajya Sabha or Council of States is the upper house of the bicameral Parliament of India. It is a permanent body and is not subject to dissolution. At present the Rajya Sabha has a maximum membership of 245, of which 233 are elected by the legislatures of the states and union territories using single transferable votes through Open Ballot while the President has the power to appoint 12 members for their contributions to art, literature, science, and social services. The Upper House was founded on 3 April 1952 by the Constituent Assembly of India. It is headquartered in New Delhi. Its Chairperson is Venkaiah Naidu.
Recently, Chairman Venkaiah Naidu nominated the new Rajya Sabha members to different Parliamentary Standing Committees. They were nominated a day after administering the oath of office to the newly-elected Rajya Sabha members in Parliament. A total of 45 of the 61 new members were administered oath. The remaining 16 new members would participate only after subscribing to oath/affirmation.

Jyotiraditya Scindia and former Lok Sabha deputy speaker Thambi Durai were included in Human Resource Development (HRD) committee. Congress leader Digvijaya Singh was nominated to Urban Development and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar to Defence. Former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has been nominated to the Committee on External Affairs and former Rajya Sabha deputy speaker Harivansh to the panel on Agriculture.

Those MPs who are yet to take oath have also been included in a number of committees. They include former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda in Railways, Tiruchi Siva in Transport, and Tourism, while Trivedi was nominated to the committee related to Home Affairs.

Vinay P Sahasrabuddhe has been appointed as the Chairman of the Committee on HRD further to the expiry of the membership of Satyanarayan Jatiya.

**Environment**

**Balasore:**

Balasore also known as Baleswar District or Baleshwar District, is an administrative district of Odisha state in eastern India. It is one of the coastal Districts of Odisha. It lies on the northernmost part of the state. It was a part of the ancient Kalinga which later became a territory of Toshal or Utkal.

Recently, a rare yellow turtle was spotted in Balasore by a farmer Basudev Mahapatra. According to the experts, it is the product of albinism. The turtle is known as the “Indian flap shell turtle”. It is commonly found in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar. It is omnivorous and its diet consists of frogs, snails and even some aquatic vegetation.
Albinism: Albinism refers to a range of disorders that result from a reduction or absence of the pigment melatonin. These vary in severity and often causing white skin, light hair, and vision problems. The condition can affect anyone or in other species in the fur, feathers, or scales etc., but its prevalence varies by region.

**Dehing Patkai:**

It is a 112 km² Wildlife Sanctuary located within the larger Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve. It spreads across the coal- and oil-rich districts of Upper Assam (Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar). It is the place with the highest concentration of the rare endangered White Winged Wood Duck can be found. It is also believed to be the last remaining contiguous patch of lowland rainforest area in Assam.

Recently, the decision to upgrade Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park has been taken by the Assam Government. Dehing Patkai was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 2004.

Post upgradation, Dehing Patkai will be the sixth national park in Assam. the other five are Kaziranga, Orang, Nameri, Manas and Dibru-Saikhowa.

Wildlife Sanctuaries: Wildlife sanctuaries are protected areas which permit some activities such as grazing, national parks call for a complete protection status under The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Some human activities can be allowed inside a wildlife sanctuary.

National Parks: A national park is a park in use for conservation purposes, created and protected by national governments. It is an area set aside by a national government for the preservation of the natural environment. It may be set aside for purposes of public recreation and enjoyment or because of its historical or scientific interest. Often it is a reserve of natural, semi-natural, or developed land that a sovereign state declares or owns. No human activity is allowed in a national park.
Bathynomus Raksasa:

Bathynomus raksasa is a giant isopod in the genus Bathynomus. The giant isopods are distantly related to crabs, lobsters, and shrimps (which belong to the order of decapods). These are found in the cold depths of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans.

Recently, scientists have discovered a new species in the eastern Indian Ocean (near Indonesia) called ‘Bathynomus raksasa’, a ‘supergiant’ Bathynomus. It has since been described as the “cockroach of the sea”. It is the first 'supergiant' isopod species to be discovered in the eastern Indian Ocean. The discovery takes the number of known giant isopods to 20.

This gaint isopod has 14 legs and it measures around fifty centimetres (1.6 feet) in length. It is big for isopods, as isopods normally do not grow beyond 33 cm (just over a foot). Isopods that reach 50 cm are referred to as supergiant’s. The only member of the isopod species that exceeds the raksasa in size is the Bathynomus giganteus, which is commonly found in the deep waters of the western Atlantic Ocean.

ITCAN:

It refers to the Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network. The ITCAN was formed to launch citizen-science initiative to platform to exchange vital information on turtles, provides assistance to enforcement agencies, forest departments, etc. It will also help in observing 2020 as the YEAR OF THE TURTLE. The World Turtle Day is marked by the Turtle Survival Alliance as well.

Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) was formed in 2001 in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature for sustainable management of tortoises and turtles. The alliance arose in response to the Asian Turtle Crisis which is the unsustainable harvest of turtles to supply to Chinese markets.

Recently, a mobile-based application called KURMA was launched for turtle conservation, which has been hailed by the Government. The app was launched in May 2020 on World Turtle Day. The application has been developed by ITCAN in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India.
This special turtle-tracking app serves as a digital database, with a built-in digital field guide covering 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises of India, and information on turtle identification, distribution, vernacular names, and threats.

If anyone reports a turtle from any part of the country using KURMA, it will help in accurately identifying species and help in reporting turtle sightings, apart from enlisting the help of experts and local help centres.

As per the report released in 2019 by TRAFFIC, which is an international wildlife trade monitoring organisation, showed that at least 11,000 tortoises and freshwater turtles fall prey to illicit poaching and smuggling every year, adding up to over 1,11,130 turtles poached or smuggled between September 2009 and September 2019.

The most smuggled species are Indian Star Tortoise Geochelone elegans, Indian Softshell Turtle Nilssonia gangetica, Indian Flapshell Turtle Lissemys punctata and Black spotted or Spotted Pond Turtle Geoclemys hamiltonii.

World Turtle Day: World Turtle Day was founded by the American Tortoise Rescue (ATR), a non-profit organization committed to the protection of all turtles and tortoise alike. In 2002, the rescue announced World Turtle Day to fall on May 23rd annually.

**Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone:**

The zone is located in the upper Himalayas. It is an interdependent fragile Ganga-Himalayan basin. The area falls under the Higher Himalayas and Garhwal lesser Himalayas.

Recently, the Union Environment Minister Prakash Javedkar informed that the Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) of Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone has been approved by the government. The announcement was made by the minister during a review meeting of “Chaardham Road Project” in the state of Uttarakhand.

The approval of ZMP will not only give a boost to conservation and ecology of the area but also to undertake developmental activities as permitted under ZMP. This will also pave way for faster execution of the Chaardham Road Project in Uttarakhand.
Earlier, in 2012, the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification from Gaumukh to Uttarakashi covering an area of 4179 sq. kilometre was issued by the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The notification was then amended in 2018. The notification mandated the State Government of Uttarakhand to prepare ZMP to be implemented under the supervision of the Monitoring Committee.

ZMP: It means Zonal Master Plan. The ZMP is based on watershed approach and includes governance in the area of forest and wildlife, watershed management, energy, tourism, road infrastructure, etc.

**Defence**

**MoD:**

It refers to the Ministry of Defence. It was created in 1776 which is 244 years ago as Military Department by the British East India Company at Kolkata but in 15 August 1947, the Department of Defence became the Ministry of Defence under a cabinet minister. It is headquartered in New Delhi, India. It is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. The function of MoD is to provide policy framework and resources to the armed forces to discharge their responsibility in the context of the defence of the country. The Indian Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Ministry of Defences are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation. The current Defence Minister is Rajnath Singh.

Recently, the Acquisition Wing of Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a contract with Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) for procurement of Mine Plough (MP) for Tank T-90 S/SK with the approval of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh. The contract was signed at an approximate cost of Rs.557 crore. The move comes as a major boost to the Make in India initiative of the Government of India.
Under this contract, these mine ploughs will be fitted on T-90 Tanks which will provide individual mobility to Tanks while negotiating mine field.

The contract has Buy and Make (Indian) categorization with a minimum of 50% indigenous content in making a portion of the contract. The induction of 1,512 mine ploughs will be completed by 2027.

With this, the combat capability of the Army will be further strengthened as the enhanced Mobility of the Tank Fleet will extend the reach of Armoured Formation deep into enemy territory without becoming mine causality.

**AFCC:**

It refers to the Indian Air Force Commanders’ Conference. Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh recently inaugurated the AFCC at Air Headquarters (Vayu Bhawan) New Delhi. The conference will be held with the theme “IAF in the Next Decade”.

AFCC is a three days conference which will be chaired by the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria. During the conference, commanders will take stock of the current operational scenario and deployments before deliberating on building the IAF capabilities in the next decade to tackle all emerging threats.

IAF: it is an acronym for the Indian Air Force of India. IAF is the air arm of the Indian Armed Forces. It was officially established on 8 October 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire which honoured India's aviation service during World War II with the prefix Royal. With the government's transition to a Republic in 1950, the prefix Royal was removed. The present Commander-in-Chief of IAF is Ram Nath Kovind. The Chief of Air Staff, an air chief marshal, is a four-star officer and is responsible for the bulk of operational command of the Air Force. The present Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) is Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria, PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC and the Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) is Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora, AVSM, ADC.
**DRDO:**

It is an acronym for the Defence Research and Development Organisation. DRDO is India's largest research organisation. It was founded in 1958. It is headquartered in New Delhi, India. It is an agency under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.

It is charged with the military's research and development. It has a network of laboratories engaged in developing defence technologies covering various fields, like aeronautics, armaments, electronics, land combat engineering, life sciences, materials, missiles, and naval systems. The Minister currently responsible for DRDO is Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence. The present Chairman of DRDO is Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy.

Recently, DRDO has developed P7 Heavy Drop System which is capable of para dropping military stores up to 7-ton weight class from IL-76 aircraft. This system is fully indigenous and being manufactured by L&T who makes the platform system, parachutes manufactured by Ordnance Factory. This system has been made under the Make in India programme. P-7 HDS has been inducted in the Army.

P-7 Heavy Drop System: It is used for Para drop of military stores (vehicle/ammunition/equipment) of 7 Ton weight class. Heavy Drop System (P-7 HDS) for IL-76 Aircraft consists of a multi-stage parachute system (comprising of 5 Main canopies, 5 Brake chutes, 2 Auxiliary chutes, 1 Extractor parachute) and platform (a metallic structure made up of Aluminium/steel alloys).

**PASSEX:**

Indian Naval ships recently conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the U.S. Navy. This high-end joint naval exercise with the U.S. Navy’s USS Nimitz carrier strike group was conducted near the Andaman and Nicobar islands as it is transiting the Indian Ocean.

The maritime drill, PASSEX, has been designed to maximize training and interoperability, including air defense. It aims at further enhancing interoperability between Navies of both the countries. The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group is on its way to be deployed in the Gulf region from the South China Sea.
PASSEX featured the participation of four Indian naval ships, including a stealth corvette which teamed up with USS Nimitz along with Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59) and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS Sterett (DDG 104) and USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114) in the Eastern Indian Ocean.

The exercise comes amid a high alert by the Navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) due to the stand-off with China along the border in Ladakh.

With regular large-scale exercises deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Indian Navy had conducted similar PASSEXs with Japanese and French Navy in the recent past.

Indian Navy: The Indian Navy is the naval branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Chief of Naval Staff, a four-star admiral, commands the navy. It was founded in 5 September 1612. The current Chief of Navy Staff (CNS) is Karambir singh. Indian Navy day is celebrated on the 4th of December every year. The main objective of the Indian Navy is to protect the country’s maritime borders and help in the expansion of its forces. There are 3 commands under the Navy which are:

1. The Western Naval Command (Headquarters at Mumbai).
2. The Eastern Naval Command (Headquarters at Visakhapatnam)
3. The Southern Naval Command (Headquarters at Kochi)

Indian Army:

The Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. It was founded on 1 April 1895. It is headquartered in New Delhi, India. It is the world's second-largest military force. It has the world's largest volunteer army. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, and its professional head is the Chief of Army Staff, who is a four-star general. The current Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army is President Ram Nath Kovind and the 28th Chief of Army Staff is General Manoj Mukund Naravane. The motto of Indian Army is “Service Before Self”.

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Recently, the Chandigarh-based laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has provided drones named ‘Bharat’ to the Indian Army. The indigenously developed drones are sent in order to provide accurate surveillance along the Line of Actual Control in high altitude and mountainous terrains of Eastern Ladakh.

Bharat Drone: The drone christened 'Bharat' has been indigenously developed by DRDO's Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), Chandigarh. The Bharat series of the drones can be listed among “World’s most agile and lightest Surveillance drone.

The drones are equipped with artificial intelligence which helps the drone to detect friends from foes and helps take any action accordingly. The capability of the drone to survive in the extreme weather and temperature is high. It has been made in such a way that ensures its survival in extreme cold weather temperatures. In addition, the drones can also provide a real-time video transmission during the missions and have advanced night vision capabilities. It is equipped with artificial intelligence to identify the friends and foes and perform actions accordingly and it is built in a way that the detection of the drone using radar is impossible.

**Dhruvastra:**

It is an anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) which has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Dhruvastra was developed under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) of DRDO. It is a 3rd generation ‘fire and forget’ class ATGM system mounted on the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH). It is a helicopter version of ‘Nag Helina’.

Recently, India successfully conducted flight tests of its indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile ‘Dhruvastra’. The flight tests were conducted from the Integrated Test Range at (ITR) in Balasore, Odisha. The trials were conducted without a helicopter in direct and top attack mode. The trials can also be seen in the light of ongoing disengagement between India and China in Eastern Ladakh.

‘Dhruvastra’, the helicopter-launched anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) is one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world as it is meant to be fired
from air to destroy enemy bunkers, armored vehicles and main battle tanks. It can be fired in two modes namely Direct and Top attack.

**WAC:**

It refers to the Indian Air Force’s Western Air Command. WAC is the regional command of Indian Air Force headquartered in New Delhi. WAC was raised in 1947 as the No. 1 Operational Group which controlled all the flying units of Indian Air Force, including the flying training units. On July 22, 1949, the No. 1 Operational Group was re-designated as the Operational Command. In 1958, the rank of the Commanding Officer of Operational Command was upgraded from Air Commodore to Air Vice Marshal and later, to the rank of Air Marshal.

It is the largest and most important Air Command of the IAF, comprising sixteen Air Force Bases (AFBs), and is responsible for aerial defence of North India. WAC's Area of Responsibility extends from Jammu and Kashmir to Rajasthan, also covering the states of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, New Delhi and Western Uttar Pradesh.

Recently, Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari has been appointed as the new commander-in-chief of the Indian Air Force's Western Air Command (WAC). He will replace Air Marshal B Suresh who will retire on July 31.

Chaudhari is currently serving as the Senior Air Staff Officer at the Shillong-based Eastern Air Command. He was closely associated with the Rafale programme in a previous role. He was the head of the bilateral high-level group monitoring the progress of the fighter jet project.