

Eazyprep

**MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
COMPILATION**

MAY 2020

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1st May

1. National Affairs

GRID 2020 report: Over 5 million displaced in India last year

This has been the highest internal displacement in the world last year

Around 2.6 million people in India were displaced due to south west monsoon

19,000 were displaced due to conflicts in West Bengal and Tripura.

Quick Fact: The Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2020) is released by Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

2. Geography

IMD releases list of 169 new names for Tropical Cyclones in IOR

The names were contributed by 13 countries of Indian Ocean Region (IOR)

As per guidelines, the names should be neutral and not hurt the sentiments of any group

The names are also required to be less than 8 characters in length and easy to pronounce

Quick Fact: Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) in New Delhi is responsible for naming cyclones in Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea

3. Environment

Water quality of Ganga river improves during lockdown

The water quality has improved due to industries closing down, as well as minimum human activities in the river

Dissolved oxygen has increased to 6.8 mg/litre as compared to 3.8 mg/litre before lockdown.

27 out of 36 monitoring points are now clean and fit for wildlife and fisheries propagation.

Quick Fact: The pollution level of a river is measured based on Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)

4. Economy

Economic Decline of 2.7% expected in APEC region

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region will face the economic decline due to COVID-19

APEC group consists of countries bordering Asia-Pacific region.

Its members include Vietnam, US, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Russia, Philippines, Peru, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Mexico, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, Chile, Canada, Brunei and Australia.

Quick Fact: Although India is not a member of APEC, it had observer status in 2011.

5. Person in News

Veteran Actor Rishi Kapoor Passes Away

Rishi Kapoor received the National Film Award for Best Child Artist for his debut role in Mera Naam Joker.

He was the winner of four Filmfare awards and had been honoured by Russian government for his contribution to cinema.

6. Miscellaneous

SC refuses to stay Delhi's Central Vista development project

Supreme Court has refused to stay the Central Vista development/redevelopment project, estimated to cost ₹20,000 crore

The central vista comprises a new Parliament house, a new central secretariat complex for ministries, and new residences for the prime minister and the vice president.

Quick Fact: The Central Vista was designed by architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker.

2nd May

1. Person in News

TS Tirumurti Appointed India's Permanent Representative To United Nations

TS Tirumurti is a 1985-batch Indian Foreign Service officer

At present, he is holding the key position of Secretary, Economic Relations, at the MEA headquarters.

He has succeeded the previous Permanent Representative, Syed Akbaruddin.

Quick Fact: Out of the world's 195 countries, 193 are member countries in the United Nations. The remaining two countries of the world are observer states.

2. India and the World

India placed on the US Priority Watch List

US has placed 10 countries including India and China in its list.

This has been done due to its concern that the countries have shown lack of measurable improvements in intellectual property framework.

According to the US, poor IP law enforcement in India makes it difficult for the US companies to receive, maintain and enforce patents in the country.

Quick Facts: Intellectual property rights include patents, geographic indications, trademarks, copyrights, etc.

3. Science and technology

Year of Awareness on Science and Health launched by DST

Year of Awareness on Science and Health (YASH) has been launched by Department of Science and Technology.

This aims to minimise COVID-19 spread by engaging citizens and increase their awareness about the disease.

To do this, the programme will provide health, science and risk communication software, audio-visual, folk performances, digital platforms, etc.

Quick Fact: The programme will be implemented by National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC)

4. Art and Culture

Manipur Black Rice, Gorakhpur Terracotta and Kovilpatti Kadalai Mittai get GI tags

Black rice of Manipur is also known as Chak-Hao. It has high nutritive value and is deep black in colour due to high concentration of anthocyanin.

Kadalai Mittai is a peanut candy made in southern parts of Tamil Nadu, made of peanut and jaggery. Its speciality is the unique flavour derived from water used in the recipe, which is derived only from the river Thamirabarani.

Gorakhpur terracotta artisans create both decorative as well as utilitarian forms. Its characteristic color is derived from the local soil of the region.

5. Defence and Security

2 new operational commands for ITBP at Chandigarh and Guwahati

Cabinet has approved a full cadre review for the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

Two new operational commands for ITBP will be raised

The Western command will be based at Chandigarh and Eastern command at Guwahati, Assam.

Quick Fact: ITBP guards Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

6. Defence and Security

Indian Army starts first and biggest mountain combat exercise 'Him Vijay' in Arunachal Pradesh

The exercise will build and test the mobility, coordination and communication of the Army troops in difficult terrain

The exercise aims to validate the operational concepts used for Integrated Battle Groups (IBG's).

IBGs are groups of 5-6 units both on the Western and Northern borders which have been created for quicker and formidable launch of attack on enemy.

Quick Fact: The boundary between India and China is called Line of Actual Control (LAC), of which 1288km lies between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet.

7. Miscellaneous

AYURAKSHA Programme organized by Delhi Police

In Ayuraksha programme, Delhi Police will maintain the health of the COVID-19 front line warriors including police personnel with Ayurveda.

Time tested Ayurveda immunity measures like Chyawanprash will be adopted

This is a joint venture of All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) and Delhi Police

Quick Fact:

All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) functions under the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy)

8. Science and Technology

ATULYA: Microwave sterilizer to disintegrate COVID-19 virus

Defence Institute of Advanced Technology, operating under DRDO, has developed microwave sterilizer called "ATULYA"

Objects can be kept inside the microwave to sterilize viruses on their surface.

It uses differential heating between 560 to 600 degrees Celsius to disintegrate the virus.

Quick Fact:

Differential Heating creates two different temperatures to disintegrate the virus.

4th May

1. Science and Technology

India ranks 3rd in scientific publication

As per National Science and Technology Management Information (NSTMIS), which conducted a survey on Research and Development Statistics and Indicators 2019-20, India ranked 3rd in scientific publication

The first two ranks were occupied by USA and China

The two main contributors for publication have been Department of Science and Technology and Department of Biotechnology

2. Miscellaneous

Kashmir saffron gets GI tag

Kashmir saffron is unique with longer and thicker stigmas, natural deep-red colour of stigmas, natural deep-red colour of stigmas, high aroma, bitter flavour, chemical-free processing, and high quantity of crocin (colouring strength), safranal (flavour) and picrocrocin (bitterness).

These unique characteristics may be due to the fact that it is the only saffron to be grown at a high altitude of 1600-1800m above sea level.

It is grown in the Karewa highlands of J&K

The recognition was formally published in the latest GI Journal by the GI registry.

Quick Fact: Saffron is primarily grown in Pampore and Kishtwar.

3. Sports

Sania Mirza Becomes First Indian To Get Nominated For Fed Cup Heart Award

Sania Mirza became the first Indian to be nominated for the Fed Cup Heart Award from the Asia/Oceania zone.

She has been nominated from the zone along with Indonesia's Priska Medelyn Nugrorho.

The winners of the Heart Awards will be determined by online voting by fans.

4. Government Schemes

Chhattisgarh gives maximum jobs under MGNREGA amid lockdown

Chhattisgarh has topped the list of states in terms of jobs under MGNREGA due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly 24% of the labourers employed under MGNREGA across the country are from Chhattisgarh.

Second in this list is Rajasthan with 14% of the total number of labourers employed, and third is Uttar Pradesh with 12%

Quick Facts: MGNREGA, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work' which was passed in September 2005.

5. Person in News

Shikha Sharma appointed as advisor of Google Pay India

Shikha Sharma has been named advisor to Google Pay India.

She is the former CEO of Axis Bank.

Google Pay is one of the leading apps on Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

Quick Facts: Alphabet Inc. is the parent company of Google

6. Person in News

IIT Madras Professor T Pradeep selected for Nikkei Asia Prize 2020

Professor Thalappil Pradeep will be awarded the Nikkei Asia Prize 2020 in the category of 'Science and Technology'.

The award is for his pioneering work in nanotechnology-based water purification.

Quick Fact: The Nikkei Asia Prize recognizes the achievements of people and organizations that have improved the lives of people throughout Asia.

7. Person in News

Thangjam Dhabali Singh conferred 'Order of Rising Sun' by Japanese Government

Thangjam Dhabali Singh is a Manipuri doctor.

He has been awarded for promoting a better understanding of Japan in India and deepening ties between the two countries.

The honour is conferred on individuals with achievements in international relations, promotion of Japanese culture, environmental preservation, welfare or achievements in their fields.

Quick Fact: 'Order of Rising Sun' was formed under the Japanese Emperor Meiji in 1875

8. Defence and Security

US Navy to host world's largest maritime exercises in Hawaii

The Navy has held the Rim of the Pacific exercises in Hawaii every two years since the early 1970s

The drills will only be held at sea because of the Corona virus.

The 2018 RIMPAC exercise involved 25 nations including Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

5th May

1. Science and Technology

Russia to launch first satellite to monitor Arctic climate

Russia will launch its first Arktika-M satellite for monitoring Arctic climate this year

The remote sensing satellite will monitor the meteorological conditions in the polar region.

The satellite will be launched by Soyuz -2,1b carrier rocket.

2. Person in News

Judicial Member, Lokpal of India, Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi passes away due to COVID-19

He was sworn in as the Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court in 2018.

In 2019, Justice Tripathi took oath as a Judicial Member of Lokpal of India.

He played an important role in setting up the Institution of Lokpal of India.

3. India and the World

Virtual NAM summit held on 4th May

The aim of the meeting is to enhance coordination of the member states in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

This was Prime Minister Modi's first NAM summit

The theme of NAM summit 2020 is “We are together against COVID-19”.

Quick fact: NAM represents the biggest grouping of countries outside the United Nations, comprising 120 developing countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America

4. Economy

IEA releases Global Energy Review 2020 report

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released its Global Energy Review 2020 report.

The report has projected the steepest decline in 70 years of 6% in global energy demand in 2020.

This is the first time ever that India will see a decline in energy demand.

Quick Facts: IEA's headquarters are located in Paris, France.

5. Science and Technology

COVID Toe

COVID toe is one of the 5 clinical patterns of the COVID-19 cases identified by UK dermatologists.

The symptom has been observed in 19% of COVID-19 patients

COVID Toe is a kind of rash that develops around the patient's fingers and toes.

6. Science and Technology

African Swine Flu in Assam

Its causative agent is a double-stranded DNA virus called the African Swine Flu virus.

It infects pigs, warthogs and its natural hosts.

To prevent spread of the disease, culling of pigs has been allowed in the state until measures to save the animals are developed.

7. National Affairs

Arogya Setu Mitr launched

Arogya Setu Mitr feature has been launched under private public partnership

It has been launched in partnership with Tech Mahindra, Tata Group and Swasth

It will offer free online consultation to COVID-19 with the data provided by the three private sector firms and government entities.

Quick Facts: The Aarogya Setu app was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

6th May

1. Economy

National e-commerce marketplace 'bharatmarket' to be launched by CAIT

The marketplace will integrate 95% of retail traders onboard the national platform

It will provide end-to-end services in the logistics as well as supply chains from manufacturers to end consumers.

CAIT expects an enrollment of one crore retailers on the national platform in 2020, making it the world's largest and most-unique e-marketplace ever

Quick Fact: CAIT (Confederation of All India Traders) is the leading advocate for small traders and businesses in India.

2. Science and Technology

Israel isolates key antibody of COVID-19

Israel Institute of Biological Research has isolated the key monoclonal neutralizing COVID-19 antibody

Monoclonal antibodies have greater potent values in treating the disease

This is the first monoclonal antibody to have been isolated

Quick Fact: Monoclonal antibodies are antibodies that are made from a unique parent cell and often bind to the same epitope in the antigen.

3. Sports

Commonwealth Youth Games postponed to 2023

The 17th Commonwealth youth games were to be held from 1st August 2021 in Tobago and Trinidad.

However, they have been cancelled to avoid a clash with Tokyo Olympics

Commonwealth Youth Games is an international sport event organized by the Commonwealth Games Federation

Quick Fact: The first commonwealth games were held in Edinburgh, Scotland.

4. International Affairs

Global Report on Food Crisis 2020 released

The report was released by the Global Network against Food Crisis

As per the report, around 135 million people are living under food crisis

Yemen has the highest number of such people, with around 53% of the population under food stress

Quick Fact: The Global Network against Food Crisis was launched by European Union, World Food Programme, and Food and Agriculture Organization.

5. Person in News

Ashok Michael Pinto appointed as US representative to IBRD

Ashok Michael Pinto is an Indian American who was serving as Counselor to Under Secretary for International Affairs.

The Five major member institutions that make up the World Bank include International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

Quick Fact: IBRD was established in 1944 and is headquartered in Washington DC.

6. National Affairs

Smart City Programme: Control rooms for Lock Down 3.0

Control rooms, designed by the private firm Honeywell, have been set up in Smart Cities

The rooms have sophisticated monitoring systems which use artificial intelligence and camera feeds to monitor the city.

This data helps policymakers make informed decisions and check programme efficacy.

Quick Fact: India's first smart city was in Gujarat

7th May

1. Person in News

Pulitzer Prize for Indian Journalists

Three Indian journalists have won Pulitzer Prize 2020 in feature photography.

All three of them, Dar Yasin, Mukhtar Khan and Channi Anand, are associated with Associated Press.

They have been awarded for coverage of life under lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir.

2. Economy

Unemployment rate in India climbs to 27.1%: CMIE

The Centre for Monitoring of Indian Economy released unemployment data according to which 121.5 million Indians are without work.

The rural unemployment has increased from 20.88% to 26.16%

To counter rural unemployment, GoI has boosted MGNREGA efforts.

3. Government Schemes

COVID Katha multimedia guide launched by DST

The multimedia guide has been launched by Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.

It was launched on the occasion of the 50th DST (Department of Science and Technology) Foundation Day.

The guide provides authentic consolidated information on the ongoing pandemic

Quick Fact: DST was founded in May 1971

4. Person in News

Max Bupa appoints Krishnan Ramachandran as MD, CEO

Ramachandran has over 23 years of experience in health sector

He last served as the CEO of Apollo Munich Health Insurance

He will be succeeding Ashish Mehrotra

5. Person in News

IIT Bombay Professor Saurabh Lodha receives Young Career Award in Nano Science & Technology

The award has been instituted by the Department of Science and Technology (DST)

This award recognises his pioneering contributions in the development of logic transistor technologies based on two-dimensional Van der Waals materials.

Quick Fact: Two-dimensional (2D) materials are crystalline materials consisting of a single layer of atoms.

6. Defence and Security

Indian Navy launches Operation “Samudra Setu”

“Samudra Setu” means Sea Bridge

It is part of a national effort to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas

Phase I will include evacuation from Maldives via Indian Naval Ships Jalashwa and Magar

Quick Fact: The port city of Male is the capital of Maldives

7. Environment

Marcus Wallenberg Prize 2020 announced

This year's prize has been awarded to Joseph J Landsberg, Richard H Waring and Nicholas C Coops.

They have won the prize for their model to predict forest growth in a changing climate

The award was presented by King Carl Gustaf XVI of Sweden

Quick Fact: Marcus Wallenberg Prize recognizes and encourages scientific achievements that broaden the knowledge of forestry and forest industries.

8. Miscellaneous

Facebook and Bollywood partner for I for India concert

Facebook has launched a home-to-home fundraiser concert called 'I For India'.

For this concert, it has collaborated with big Indian stars like A R Rahman, Aamir Khan, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Akshay Kumar, Alia Bhatt, Javed Akhtar, etc.

Quick Fact: The co-founder of Facebook is Mark Zuckerberg

8th May

1. Science and Technology

Long March 5B- China's new Rocket

China had launched a new rocket and a deep-space spacecraft called Long March 5B

The rocket will help China in:

- a) sending astronauts to space
- b) operating a permanent space station called Tiangong

The rocket was launched from Wenchang launch site of Hainan island

Quick Fact: Deep space refers to distant regions of outer space. However, no limits have been defined for the same.

2. International Affairs

Mustafa Al Kadhimi chosen as new Iraq Prime Minister

Mustafa Al Kadhimi has been chosen as the new Iraq Prime Minister

His predecessor Adel Abdul Mahdi had to resign due to massive anti-government protests

Al Kadhimi is a former intelligence chief, columnist and editor.

Quick Fact: Iraq president: Barham Salih, Capital: Baghdad, Currency: Dinar

3. International Affairs

Iran's new currency, Toman, to tackle Inflation

Iran has changed its currency from Rial to Toman.

1 Toman = 100 Gheran = 10000 Rial, thus, Toman removes four zeros from older currency notes.

This move has been made to curb inflation, which has been increasing due to:

- a) Islamic Revolution 1979
- b) End of Iran-Iraq war in 1989: Value of Rial decreased by 100%
- c) International sanctions during President Ahmadinejad's reign: Value of Rial decreased by 400%
- d) US pulling out of Nuclear Deal: Value of Rial decreased by 600%

Quick Fact: Iran Capital: Tehran, President: Ali Khamenei

4. National Affairs

Vande Bharat Mission: The Biggest Evacuation Exercise

Vandhe Bharat Mission aims at bringing back around 15000 stranded Indians from all over the world

It will also operate non-scheduled commercial flights which will carry people to London, Singapore and some places in USA.

After returning to India, evacuees are to be kept under quarantine for 14 days.

Quick Fact: The operation will be planned by Home Ministry and led by Air India

5. Environment

Impact of Energy Efficiency Measures 2018-19 report released by MNRE

As per the report:

- a) India has reduced its energy intensity by 20% as compared to 2005. As per its CoP21 pledge, India has to reduce its energy intensity to 30-35% by 2030.

- b) Its key energy efficiency programmes are UJALA Programme, Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme, Municipal Demand Side Management Programme and Standards and Labelling Programme.

6. Miscellaneous

More rural internet users than urban for the first time in India

As per a report released by Internet and Mobile Association of India:

- a) Rural India has 10 % more active users than urban India, with 227 million in rural and 205 million in urban India.
- b) India has become the second largest internet user after China.
- c) India is third in terms of internet penetration, with a rate of 40%. China is at 61%, and USA at 88%
- d) Increase in female internet users is higher than increase in male internet users.
- e) Delhi tops in internet penetration followed by Kerala.

Quick Fact: Internet penetration is % of total population of a country that uses internet

9th May

1. Miscellaneous

NITI Aayog launches 'Surakshit Dada-Dadi & Nana-Nani Abhiyan'

The campaign has been launched virtually in association with Piramal Foundation

It aims to ensure the well-being of senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic through behavioral change, access to service and early detection and tracking

The campaign will reach over 2.9 million senior citizens in 25 Aspirational Districts across Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh(MP), Maharashtra, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh(UP)

Quick Fact: India had identified 117 districts in 2002 called Aspirational Districts, which were affected by poor socio-economic indicators

2. Economy

Cooperative banks providing banking services now 'banking companies' as per SARFAESI Act

Supreme Court has ruled that the cooperative banks involved in activities related to banking are covered within the meaning of 'banking company'

Parliament now has legislative competence to provide for procedure for recovery of loan under the SARFAESI Act.

The SARFAESI Act allows banks and financial institutions to auction properties (residential and commercial) when borrowers fail to repay their loans.

Quick Fact: SARFAESI Act stands for Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

3. National Affairs

Styrene gas leaked from LG Polymers Plant in Vishakhapatnam

A gas leak of Styrene gas has affected around 5000 residents in 5 villages in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Styrene is a flammable liquid that is used in the manufacturing of polystyrene plastics, berglass, rubber, and latex.

It can affect the respiratory system, central nervous system along with other diseases.

The Styrene plant is owned by South Korean electronics giant LG and is located at RRV Puram near Gopalapatnam.

4. Defence and Security

Border Link Road to Kailash Mansarovar inaugurated

The link road connects Dharchula to Lipulekh (China Border) at 17060 feet height.

It is also known as Kailash Mansarovar Yatra Route.

The road has been constructed by Border Roads Organization (BRO).

The road will provide connectivity to border villages and security forces

Quick Fact: The headquarters of BRO, founded in 1960, is located in New Delhi.

5. Science and Technology

NSAFE: First antimicrobial and washable Face Mask

NSAFE has been developed by an IIT Delhi Startup

It is the first fabric-based face mask that is antimicrobial and can be washed 50 times

NSAFE face mask provides 99.2% of bacterial filtration via mechanical filtration, repulsion of aerosol droplets and antimicrobial decontamination.

It complies with ASTM standards.

Quick Fact: ASTM or American Society for Testing and Materials is an international standards organization that develops and publishes technical standards for materials, services and products.

6. Environment

Royal Bengal Tigers in Sundarbans leaps to 96

Number of Royal Bengal Tigers in the Sundarbans has increased to 96 according to the census conducted for the year 2019-20

The mangrove forest has 3,700 square kilometres of 'tiger territory'.

Tiger Territory is where individual tigers live, hunt, congregate and establish territory.

Royal Bengal Tigers are listed as Endangered Species under IUCN.

Quick Fact: Sundarbans, formed on the delta of Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers, are a World Heritage Site

7. Person in News

Tarun Bajaj becomes new director on RBI Central Board

Economic Affairs Secretary, Tarun Bajaj has been appointed as new director of Central Board of RBI.

He is a 1988 batch IAS officer.

He will be replacing Atanu Chakraborty, who was the previous director.

Quick Fact: Shaktikanta Das is the governor of RBI

8. Miscellaneous

Vijyant at Kargil: The Life of a Kargil War Hero: Book on Capt. Vijyant Thapar released

This book is a biography of posthumous Vir Chakra awardee Captain Vijyant Thapar

It is authored by Capt. Vijyant's father Colonel VN Thapar and writer Neha Dwivedi.

11th May

1. Government Schemes

MP: First state to provide Mid-Day Meal ration

In Madhya Pradesh, mid day meal rations will be sent to students at their home.

This is being done to ensure that children obtain optimum nutrition which they were missing out due to schools being closed in the lockdown

The distribution will be done with the help of Anganwadi workers, Panchayat representatives and local teachers.

Quick Fact: The Mid Day Meal scheme was launched in 1995.

2. Person in News

Dia Mirza to be UNEP's goodwill ambassador till 2022

United Nations Environment Programme has extended the term of actress and environmentalist Dia Mirza as the Goodwill Ambassador of India till 2022

As part of this role, she will continue spreading information about key environmental concerns

She is also United Nation's Sustainability Development Goal Advocate

Quick Fact: Headquarters of UNEP is located in Nairobi, Kenya.

3. Science and Technology

CSIR's NMITLI Programme conducts 'hmAbs' trial to neutralize COVID-19

NMITLI will develop and clone human monoclonal antibodies (hmAbs) which will neutralise COVID-19 virus in patients.

The antibodies will be generated from patients that are in convalescent phase (who are recovering)

NMITLI is the largest PPP model of Research and Development programme in India

Quick Fact: The coronavirus monoclonal neutralizing antibodies were first developed by Israel

4. Economy

Global Energy Review 2020 released by International Energy Agency

The report highlights the global energy demand and carbon dioxide emissions in 2020.

This is based on data from 30 countries

According to the report, 15% of the daily electricity demand has been reduced due to lockdown.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions have also declined by 8% as compared to 2019 levels.

5. India and the World

AIIB approves 500 million USD for India

The funds are meant to:

- a) scale up the containment efforts and strengthen the health system.
- b) support research that is being conducted in collaboration with ICMR.
- c) focus on community engagement and risk communication strategies.

Quick Fact: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is headquartered in Beijing, China.

6. Economy

INR-USD Futures and Options Contracts launched by Finance Minister

Finance minister launched the INR-USD Futures and Options contracts in the BSE and NSE platforms.

They were launched at the GIFT International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) in Gandhinagar

This move allows the RBI to reduce foreign influence on the Indian currency and stabilise it.

Reduced volatility in the Indian rupee will reduce the risk of inflation in India.

Quick Fact: Future and Options are financial products that allow investors to buy or sell shares.

12th May

1. Miscellaneous

Jharkhand govt bans Pan Masala for 1 year on health concerns

The state government has banned 11 premium brands of pan masala

This has been done on the suspicion that they contain magnesium carbonate which can cause acute hyper magnesemia and cardiac arrest

The move would also contain spread of COVID-19

2. Defence and Security

Defence Ministry signs pact with Tata Power to modernise 37 Airfields

The Rs. 1200 crore deal aims to modernise 37 airfields for the Indian Air Force, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard.

The project is a turnkey project that includes installation and commissioning of modern airfield equipment.

This up-gradation would enhance the operational capability by facilitating air operations even in poor visibility and adverse weather conditions while enhancing aerospace safety.

3. India and the World

India launches Mission Sagar

'Mission Sagar' is in line with India's role as the first responder in the East Indian Ocean region

As part of it, Indian Naval Ship Kesari has departed for Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros, to provide food items and COVID related medicines.

This step is for Prime Minister's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region, i.e. 'SAGAR'.

4. National Affairs

Department of Consumer Affairs launches Suraksha Store Initiative

The Department of Consumer Affairs has partnered with a StartUps Safejob and Seekify for this initiative.

The initiative aims to educate owners of Kirana stores about COVID-19, related protocols and safety guidelines.

The protocols and safety guidelines have been developed by FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India).

Arogya Setu app would be used to find a store that is operated under the initiative.

5. Science and Technology

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

The National Institute of Virology and ICMR have developed an antibody detection kit for COVID-19.

COVID Kavach will test the presence of IGg antibodies in blood samples.

Compared to other kits, COVID Kavach is sensitive, cost-effective, rapid and requires minimum biosafety and biosecurity requirements.

Gujarat based Zydus Cadila will be producing the kits on a large scale.

Quick Fact: ELISA is Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay and is considered the gold standard test for HIV.

6. National Affairs

Birth rate, death rate and IMR data for 2018 released by Registrar General of India

As per the data, in India:

- a) birth rate is 20 (Highest in Bihar, Lowest in Andaman and Nicobar)
- b) death rate is 6.2 (Highest in Chhattisgarh, Lowest in Delhi)
- c) infant mortality rate is 32 (Highest in Madhya Pradesh, lowest in Nagaland)

Data for these annual estimates is collected via Sample Registration System (SRS)

Quick Fact: SRS is a mix of field investigation and demographic survey where continuous enumeration of deaths and births takes place, alongside 6-monthly surveys conducted by Anaganwadi workers.

7. Science and Technology

DHRUVs: UV based Sanitizer developed by DRDO to sanitize phones

Research Centre Imarat (RCI) of DRDO has developed Defence Research Ultraviolet Sanitizer (DHRUVS).

DHRUV is a contactless ultraviolet sanitization cabinet that sanitizes electronic gadgets through 360 degrees UV ray exposure.

Short wavelength (200-300nm) UV rays are generally germicidal and inhibit DNA/RNA replication by reacting with its nucleic acid.

Quick Fact: UltraViolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) is the technology where UV rays are used as disinfectant.

13th May

1. Miscellaneous

WHO & UNPA release postage stamp on 40th anniversary of smallpox eradication

World Health Organisation and United Nations Postal Administration are commemorating 40 years of smallpox eradication

The stamp serves to honour world leaders, international organizations, rural doctors and community doctors, who worked together to eradicate smallpox.

Quick Fact: Tedros Adhanom is the director-general of WHO.

2. Miscellaneous

Stringency Index created by Oxford University to study lockdown measures

The Stringency Index has found that India had one of the strongest lockdown measures in the world

For developing this, a team of 100 Oxford community members have continuously updated a database of 17 indicators of government response.

The Stringency Index is a number from 0 to 100 that reflects these indicators. A higher index score indicates a higher level of stringency.

Quick Fact: India's lockdown 1.0 scored 100 in the index.

3. Miscellaneous

United Nations marks 2020 as the Year of Nurse and Midwife

To mark this year, World Health Organization, Nursing Now Campaign and the International Council of Nurses has released the State of World's Nursing report.

As per the report:

- a) there are an average of 36.9 nurses per 10,000 people in the world
- b) the largest shortage of nurses is to occur in the South East Asian regions
- c) India has 1.56 million nurses who comprise of 47% of medical staff

4. Environment

Ash Barges: Ecological threat for Sundarbans

Fly ash filled barges, carrying fly ash from Indian thermal plants to Bangladesh for cement production, are sinking and capsizing in the Hooghly river.

Their capsizing causes heavy metals to mix with the river water and harm the local fish population and ecosystem

Fly Ash is a by-product of coal combustion and is used to create roads, bricks, cement, etc.

Quick Fact: River Ganga splits into Hooghly and River Padma at Murshidabad.

5. Miscellaneous

Madhya Pradesh becomes the first state to launch innovative Scheme "FIR Aapke Dwar Yojana"

In this scheme, citizens would be able to file FIRs at home through home visits of head constables.

The scheme will also enable on spot FIR registrations.

Alongside, the government has also launched "Dial 112" helpline which will provide instant ambulance, fire fighting and police services.

Quick Fact: Police is a state subject under the Constitution of India.

6. National Affairs

ICMR, NCDC to initiate a population-based Sero-survey in selected districts

A Sero Survey is testing of blood serum of individuals for antibodies against infectious antigens like COVID-19 virus.

The objective of this survey is to monitor the trend in prevalence of COVID-19 infection at district level.

In the beginning, 200 samples per district per week and 800 samples per district per month shall be taken.

7. Miscellaneous

Startup India - Animal Husbandry Startup Grand Challenge results announced

The awards are an initiative of Ministry for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and StartUp India.

Awards were given to 12 startups for finding innovative solutions to address problems faced by the animal husbandry and dairy sector.

Quick Fact: Giriraj Singh is the Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

8. Persons in News

Mr. Indu Shekhar Chaturvedi assumes charge as Secretary, MNRE

He is a 1987 Batch IAS officer and belongs to Jharkhand cadre.

Before this, he was serving as Additional Chief Secretary of Climate Change Department, Government of Jharkhand.

14th May

1. Government Schemes

Ministry of MSME launches CHAMPIONS Portal

CHAMPION stands for Creation and Harmonious Application of Modern Processes for Increasing the Output and National Strength.

It has been envisioned as a one-stop-shop solution of the MSME Ministry which will utilise modern ICT tools to assist Indian MSMEs into becoming National and Global CHAMPIONS.

It is a technology driven Control Room-Cum-Management Information System.

Quick Fact: Nitin Jairam Gadkari is the Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

2. Economy

Rs 20 Lakh crore Economic Package declared for Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

15 different measures have been declared under this campaign:

- a) **For MSMEs:** Collateral free loans, relief to stressed MSMEs, change in definition of MSME, disallowing global tenders, strengthening of e-market linkages, etc.
- b) **For EPF:** Liquidity relief and decrease in statutory PF contribution to increase take-home salary
- c) **For NBFCs:** Injecting liquidity and Partial Guarantee Scheme 2.0
- d) **For Discoms:** Rs. 90000 crore injected
- e) **For contractors:** Contracts under Transport, Railway sectors, etc to be extended by 6 months.
- f) **For Real Estate (RERA Projects):** Projection completion and registration dates to be extended
- g) **For Taxation:** Decreased TCS and TDS rates, Extension of income tax returns date, immediate pending refunds to certain entities, Vivad Se Vishwas Scheme deadline postponed

3. Economy

Definition of MSMEs changed

MSME definitions have been changed in order to stimulate their growth and support them in availing benefits. Following are the revised limits which will define enterprise categories:

- 1) Micro Enterprises:
For Manufacturing and Service: < Rs. 1 crore investment and < Rs. 5 crore turnover
- 2) Small Enterprises:
For Manufacturing and Service: < Rs. 10 crore investment and < Rs. 50 crore turnover
- 3) Medium Enterprises:
For Manufacturing and Service: < Rs. 20 crore investment and < Rs. 100 crore turnover

4. Miscellaneous

Bengaluru Airport voted as best regional airport in India & Central Asia

The Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru has won SKYTRAX Award 2020 for Best Regional Airport in India and Central Asia.

This is the third consecutive win for the airport at the World Airport Awards

Quick Fact: World Airport Awards from Skytrax are coveted quality accolades for the airport industry, and a global benchmark of airport excellence

5. Miscellaneous

Israel names street after Rabindranath Tagore on his 159th anniversary

Israel has named a street in Tel Aviv 'Tagore Street' after Rabindranath Tagore.

The naming is a tribute to the poet on his 159th birth anniversary.

Rabindranath Tagore was the first Indian to receive a Nobel Prize.

Quick Fact: Rabindranath Tagore won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his collection Gitanjali

6. Sports

Para-athlete Deepa Malik announces retirement

Para-athlete Deepa Malik has announced her retirement from Paralympics games in order to fulfil eligibility to serve in the Paralympic Committee of India.

She is the first Indian woman to earn a medal at the Paralympic Games.

She has also won Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award for Para-Athletics, Padma Shri and Arjuna Award for Athletics.

7. Defence and Security

Shekatkar Committee: 9,304 posts in Military Engineering Service abolished

This step has been taken to make MES a more effective organisation with a leaner workforce.

It is in line with the Shekatkar Committee recommendations, which had recommended measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the Armed Forces.

15th May

1. History, Art and Culture

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

Sohrai Khovar painting:

It is a traditional and ritualistic mural art practised by local tribal women in Hazaribagh

It is made during local harvest and marriage seasons using local, naturally available soils of different colours in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.

Telia Rumal cloth:

This is intricate handmade work made on a cotton loom.

The rumal displays a variety of designs and motifs in red, black and white colors

Quick Fact: The GI registry headquarters are located in Chennai

2. Person in News

Manoj Ahuja appointed new chairman of CBSE

Manoj Ahuja is an IAS officer from Odisha cadre

He is currently the Special Director, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration.

He will be replacing Anita Karwal as the chairman of the CBSE.

Quick Fact: CBSE, or Central Board of Secondary Education, was founded in 1962 and is headquartered in Delhi.

3. Environment

Global Forest Resources Assessment, 2020 released by FAO

As per the report,

- 178 million hectares of forests have been lost in the last 30 years
- Rate of deforestation has reduced in 2015-2020, as compared to previous five years
- Africa, followed by South America, has the largest decline of forest of all the continents
- Brazil, USA, Canada, China and Russia contribute the most forest resources globally

Quick Fact: Currently, the largest proportion of the forest on the earth are tropical forests (45%), followed by boreal forest, temperate forests and subtropical forests.

4. National Affairs

WHO releases Global Nutrition Report, 2020

As per the report:

- Around 9% of under-5 children in India are stunted and 20.8% are wasted.
- At least 21.6% of Indian women and 17.8% of Indian men are anaemic
- India is one of 88 countries which will miss Global Nutrition Targets set for the year 2025
- 4 nutritional indicators for the targets are anemia among women in reproductive age, stunting among children under-5, exclusive breast feeding and childhood overweight

Quick Fact: Stunting, in child development, can be understood as low height for age, and wasting as low weight for height

5. Economy

Second Tranche of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan announced

The second tranche will focus on migrant workers, small traders, street vendors, self-employed through 9 steps.

For Migrant Workers: Free food grain supply, One Nation One Ration Card scheme and affordable rents for living

For Small Traders and MSME Owners: Subvention of 2% for MUDRA Shishu loans for 12 months

For Street Vendors: Special credit facility

For Informal Sector workers: Rs 70,000 crore is to be infused into the housing sector

For Workers in Rural and Semi-rural areas: Infuse Rs 6,000 crores of CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority) funds. Emergency funds allocated to NABARD

For Farmers, Animal Husbandry workers and Fishermen: KISAN Credit Cards to be allotted

6. Sports

Sania Mirza becomes first Indian to win Fed Cup Heart Award

Tennis player Sania Mirza became the first Indian ever to win a Fed Cup Heart Award for Asia/Oceania zone

Indonesia's 16-year-old Priska Madelyn Nugroho was also nominated for this category

The Fed Cup Awards aim to recognise players who have represented their country with distinction, showed exceptional courage on court and demonstrated outstanding commitment to their teams

Quick Fact: Sania Mirza has won six grand slam titles, Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in her career till now

7. Person in News

Indian journalist Siddharth Varadarajan gets DW Freedom of Speech Award 2020

Deutsche Welle presents Freedom of Speech Award annually to people or initiatives that have shown outstanding commitment to human rights and freedom of expression in the media.

17 journalists from 14 countries have been named for the award.

Founder of The Wire, Siddharth Varadarajan, is among the recipients this year.

8. Science and Technology

CFTRI develops immunity-boosting Spirulina groundnut Chikki

Mysuru-based Central Food Technological Research Institute, CFTRI has developed Spirulina groundnut Chikki

The chikki can serve as an easy source of micro-nutrients and immunity for people during the ongoing pandemic

The chikki contains micro-nutrients such as Vitamin A, Beta Carotene and easily digestible algal proteins.

Quick Fact: Spirulina is a biomass of cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, and is considered a superfood

16th May

1. Economy

NDB approves USD 1 billion Emergency Assistance Program Loan to India

The loan aims to support GoI to curb the spread of COVID-19, and overcome social, human and economic losses

This is NDB's second emergency assistance program in order to help its member countries to fight COVID-19.

Quick Fact: KV Kamath is the President of New Development Bank

2. Miscellaneous

CAPF canteens to sell only indigenous products from 1st June

This initiative is aligned with the national campaign of Aatmanirbhar Bharat

As a result of this, about 10 lakh CAPF personnel and their families, will be using indigenous products

This decision was taken by Union Home Ministry

Quick Fact: Amit Shah is the Union Home Minister

3. Person in News

V. Vidyavathi becomes new DG of Archaeological Survey of India

V. Vidyavathi has been appointed as the new Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

She is a 1991 batch Karnataka cadre officer.

Quick Fact: ASI was founded by Alexander Cunningham in 1861

4. Miscellaneous

India ranks 74th on WEF Global Energy Transition Index

The index is published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

India has shown improvements on all key parameters of economic growth, energy security and environmental sustainability.

Sweden, Switzerland and Finland have the top three ranks, respectively.

Quick Fact: Klaus Schwab is the chairman of WEF

5. Economy

UN releases World Economic Situation and Prospects Report 2020

According to the report,

- the world economy is to shrink by 3.2% in 2020
- growth rate of India will reduce to 1.2% in 2020, and rise to 5.5% in 2021
- international tourism sector needs to be focussed upon to prevent job loss of millions

6. Science and Technology

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

COBAS 6800 is a completely automated high end RT-PCR testing machine.

It can detect pathogens like COVID, hepatitis HIV viruses.

The machine will provide high volume tests and increase testing capacity of India

Quick Fact: COBAS 6800 has been developed by Roche Diagnostics

7. Science and Technology

CERT-In issues warning against a new malware called "EventBolt"

The malware is a trojan which steals personal financial information from Android phone users.

It targets money-transfer services and financial applications.

It has infected HSBC, PayPal, Coinbase, etc. till now.

Quick Fact: CERT-In, or Computer Emergency Response of Team (CERT) of India is the nodal agency in India that deals with hacking, cyber security threats, phishing, etc.

18th May

1. International Affairs

Slovenia becomes first coronavirus-free country in Europe

Slovenia has become the first officially declared coronavirus-free country in Europe. It had reported 1,464 cases of COVID-19 resulting in 103 deaths. It is located in Central Europe and shares borders with Italy, Austria, Hungary, and Croatia.

Quick Fact: Capital: Ljubljana, Currency: Euro

2. International Affairs

WTO chief Roberto Azevedo resigns

He is said to have resigned after intense pressure from US President Donald Trump who has accused WTO of anti-US bias among other allegations. The Brazilian diplomat's second four-year term would have normally ended in September 2021. He has been the World Trade Organisation's chief since 2013.

Quick Fact: The normal term duration of the WTO chief is four years long.

3. India and the world

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Foreign Ministers meet on COVID-19

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation. Foreign ministers of member countries met virtually to discuss cooperation to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. India was represented by the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Quick Fact: SCO comprises of 8 members: India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

4. Defence and Security

Army proposes 3-year stint for civilians

Army plans to take civilians on a three-year “Tour of Duty” (ToD) or short service” on a trial basis to serve as officers and in other ranks for a limited number of vacancies

This aims to reduce the expenditure on pay and pensions and free up funds for the Army’s modernisation.

In return, recruits would be taken up as interns with a tax-free salary and be favoured for corporate and public sector jobs post their temporary experience.

5. Government Schemes

“Goal Programme” launched for Tribal Youth

The Ministry for Tribal Affairs has launched the “GOAL Programme” in partnership with Facebook.

GOAL Programme, Going Online As Leaders, is being launched to provide mentorship to the tribal youth in digital mode.

The programme will focus on three areas: Life skills, Digital literacy and Leadership and entrepreneurship in sectors like agriculture, handicrafts, etc.

Quick Fact: Arjun Munda is the Union Minister for Tribal Affairs

6. Science and Technology

Light Weight Carbon Foam Batteries developed by CSIR

CSIR has developed light carbon foam material.

This material can be replaced in lead batteries as it is non-toxic, affordable and easy to make.

Carbon foams are porous and form a new type of electrolyte structure which can increase power, energy and life cycle of their batteries.

Quick Fact: The world’s first carbon foam manufacturing unit was set up in Gujarat in 2011.

7. Science and Technology

Injectable Silk-Fibroin based Hydrogel developed for diabetics

JNCASR (Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research) has developed the hydrogel.

The hydrogel will ease insulin delivery in diabetic patients.

Subcutaneous injections of insulin with fibroid based hydrogel form active depots under the skin which release insulin slowly in patients.

Quick Fact: A hydrogel is a network of polymer chains which is highly absorbent

8. India and the world

India attends 32nd Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan participated in the meeting
Member countries' COVID-19 related health and allied economic measures were discussed

The theme of the meeting was: Delivering a coordinated Commonwealth COVID-19 response.

Quick Fact: The Commonwealth of Nations is a political association of 54 member states, mostly all former territories of the British Empire

19th May

1) Geography

Cyclone Amphan intensifies into super cyclone

Cyclone Amphan is a category 4 or 5 storm as per Saffir-Simpson scale of storm intensity

The cyclone is expected to hit coastal Odisha and parts of West Bengal

Cyclones are classified based on wind speeds as:

Depression: 31-50 km/hr

Deep Depression: 51-62 km/hr

Cyclonic Storm: 63-88 km/hr

Severe Cyclonic Storm: 89-117 km/hr

Very Severe Cyclonic Storm: 118-165 km/hr

Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm: 166-220 km/hr

Super cyclonic Storm > greater than 220 km/hr

Quick Fact: Monitoring and classification of cyclones in India is done by Indian Meteorological Department

2) India and the world

India-World Bank Social Protection Response Programme

World Bank has given 1 billion USD assistance to accelerate India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Programme.

The Social Protection Response Programme is to be implemented by the Ministry of Finance.

It will first be implemented through Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, and then at a local level by state governments to support vulnerable households.

3) Environment

A new Fungus species "Troglomyces twitteri" discovered

A Denmark biologist discovered a new parasitic fungus called "Troglomyces twitteri"

The fungus has been named after Twitter as it was discovered on Twitter

The fungi belongs to the order Laboulbeniales which attacks millipedes and insects

Quick Fact: Scientists who specialize in the study of fungi are called mycologists

4) International Affairs

Baltic countries open borders to one another creating "Baltic travel bubble"

The term Travel Bubble was coined in April 2020.

As part of travel bubble strategy, the governments open the travel within safe travel zones.

Travel bubble was initiated by Australia and New Zealand.

Quick Fact: Baltic states include Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

5) Sports

Bundesliga of Germany to be world's first post COVID-19 lockdown sports competition

The games were held with no audience and a lot of COVID-19 preventive measures

The Bundesliga means football league and is the primary football league in Germany

It has the highest stadium attendance globally

6) Science and Technology

Super Earth discovered

The Super Earth has been discovered by scientists from New Zealand

It has the same size and orbiting distance as that of our planet

The Super Earth might be in the “Goldilocks Zone” in the future

Quick Fact: Goldilocks Zone is the space around a star where temperature is suitable enough for water to exist in a liquid state.

7) Defence and Security

Changes to 61st Cavalry, world’s only horse serving cavalry

61st Cavalry is largely a ceremonial unit from Jaipur.

It will be converted into a combat force and with independent squadrons of tanks.

The 61st cavalry was raised in 1953.

20th May

1) “National Migrant Information System” dashboard developed by NDMA

National Disaster Management Authority has built this online dashboard to secure information regarding the movement of migrants

With the help of this dashboard:

- a) interstate movement of stranded persons can be facilitated
- b) speedy inter-state communication/coordination can be executed

- c) numerical data of the movement can be maintained

Quick Fact: NDMA is an apex body of the GoI with a mandate to lay down policies for disaster management.

2) International Affairs

Benjamin Netanyahu to start 5th term as Israeli Prime Minister

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will start his 5th term after winning the Israeli national election

This win is after a controversial power-sharing deal with former political rival Benny Gantz

As per the deal, Netanyahu will be PM for 18 months, while Gantz will be Defence Minister. They will then switch roles after 18 months.

Quick Fact: Israel Capital: Jerusalem, Currency: Israeli shekel

3) Geography

Rapid intensification leads to Amphan becoming a super cyclone

Rapid intensification of tropical cyclones is defined as an increase in the maximum sustained winds of at least 30 knots (35 mph; 55 km/h) in a 24-hour period.

The main reasons for rapid intensification of Amphan are:

- a) High sea surface temperature of Bay of Bengal
- b) Optimum moisture level of the middle layers
- c) Low vertical shear winds

While this phenomenon is not as common in cyclones as in hurricanes, scientists feel this may change in the future.

Quick Fact: Two super cyclones to have hit India earlier are Cyclone Gonu in 2007 and Cyclone Kyarr in 2019.

4) Miscellaneous

'Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam' song sung by 211 Indian singers

211 singers have composed a song titled 'Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam - Vasudev Kutumbakkam'

The song aims to increase the nation's will power and evoke the spirit of self-reliance

The song has been composed by Shankar Mahadevan and written by Prasoon Joshi.

It features famous singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhonsle, Sonu Nigam, Shankar Mahadevan, Shaan and Usha Uthup.

5) Science and Technology

COVID-19 Vaccine by US company Moderna becomes the first to show positive results

The mRNA-1273 vaccine injects encapsulated messenger RNA to generate immunity against the virus.

People who were given the vaccine dose produced antibodies against COVID-19 and stopped the reproduction of the virus.

It is the first vaccine which has generated antibodies against the virus in test subjects.

6) Environment

Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities released by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Ambikapur, Surat, Rajkot, Mysuru, Indore and Navi Mumbai has received 5 star rating

65 cities received 3 star rating and 70 received 1 star rating.

The rating mainly focuses on solid waste management.

Quick Fact: The rating system was launched in 2018.

7) Science and Technology

ARCI scientists develop next-generation biodegradable metal implants

New generation Iron-Manganese based alloys for biodegradable metal implants in humans have been developed.

Biodegradable materials made of Fe, Mg, Zn, and polymers are preferred alternatives as they assist healing process and degrade without toxic residues

These have been jointly developed by ARCI and Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences, Thiruvananthapuram

21st May

1) Economy

Kotak Mahindra Bank: First Indian bank to allow video KYC

The bank will allow video Know Your Customer facility for opening savings accounts on its digital banking platform Kotak 811.

Verification of documents and signatures will be done on a video call with a bank representative

This will minimise physical interface and quicken the KYC process

Quick Fact: Kotak Mahindra Bank's tagline is "Let's make money simple"

2) Sports

ICC cricket committee to ban the use of saliva to shine ball

The Cricket Committee has recommended banning use of saliva to shine the ball.

This practice is primarily used in swing bowling.

The recommendation is in line with COVID-19 prevention measures..

Quick Fact: ICC headquarters are located in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

3. Miscellaneous

India Post exhibits Special Postal Cover dedicated to Migrant Workers

India Post has released a Special Postal Cover dedicated to the migrant workers to pay tribute to them.

This release is an attempt by India Post to keep the struggles and contributions of migrant workers recorded in the history of India.

Quick Fact: Arundhaty Ghosh is the DG of India Post

4. Defence and Security

Gol implements Shekatkar Committee border infrastructure recommendations

Gol has accepted and implemented three important recommendations of the committee.

These are related to speeding up road construction for socio-economic development in the border areas.

Recommendations include:

- a) outsourcing road construction work beyond optimal capacity of Border Roads Organisation (BRO)
- b) introduction of modern construction plants, equipment and machinery
- c) use of new technology like blasting technology for precision blasting, Geo-Textiles for soil stabilisation, cementitious base for pavements, plastic coated aggregates for surfacing

5. Miscellaneous

MHRD launches National Test Abhyas

Ministry Human Resources Development has launched a mobile application called National Test Abhyas

The app has been developed by the National Testing Agency which conducts competitive exams in India

The application will help the candidates take mock tests for exams such as JEE, and use Artificial Intelligence to give them instant results.

6. Geography

Sun enters deepest period of Sunshine Recession

The sun has gone into a state called the 'solar minimum' and is about to enter the deepest period of 'sunshine recession'.

This stage is the peak of the regular 11 year long sun cycle.

During this time, the sun's magnetic field weakens, decreasing solar activity like sunspots, coronal mass ejections and solar flare.

This only has an effect at the Earth's stratosphere and levels above. But astronauts in space may face less shielding from cosmic rays.

7. International Affairs

WHO initiates independent inquiry about COVID-19 handling

The review aims to address the international blame game regarding the origin of COVID-19

The resolution for the same was taken at the 73rd World Health Assembly

116 countries, including India, have backed the resolution

Quick Fact: The resolution was initiated by Australia and drafted by European Union.

22nd May

1. Person in News

Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar wins Alexander Dalrymple Award 2019

Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar is the National Hydrographer to the government of India

He has been honoured with the 2019 Alexander Dalrymple Award for his outstanding contribution to Indian hydrography and the broader Indian Ocean region.

The award recipients are selected by the chief Committee of the UK Hydrographic Office

2. Miscellaneous

Ruskin Bond's new book released in an online format

The new book is called Hop On: My Adventures on Boats, Trains and Planes

It has a number of the author's hilarious journeys and travel adventures.

The book was released on his 86th birthday

Quick Fact: Ruskin Bond has been awarded the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards

3. Environment

Rare Palm from Andaman replanted in Kerala to prevent extinction

The rare palm called *Pinanga andamanensis* is a critically endangered species due to natural calamities.

It is small sized and generally grows in evergreen forests.

It has been replanted in Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI), which will also conserve its germplasm.

Quick Fact: Germplasm consists of living resources like tissue and seeds that are preserved for breeding, preservation and research

4. Miscellaneous

Charan Paduka Campaign launched by Madhya Pradesh

The campaign was launched for migrant workers passing through the state.

As part of this initiative, migrant workers are being provided with shoes and slippers to reduce their pain while walking long distances to reach home.

The campaign is being operationalised by the police of the state.

5. National Affairs

National Crisis Management Committee reviews Amphan preparedness

National Crisis Management Committee oversees the command, coordination and control of disaster response.

It is responsible for coordination of the state governments' and central ministries' activities in relation to disaster preparedness.

Quick Fact: National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) is headed by the Cabinet Secretary

6. National Affairs

Indian Railways operationalizes first 12,000 HP Electric Loco

The locomotive was built by the French Alstom Company, at the Madhepura Electric Locomotive in Bihar, as part of the Make in India initiative.

The overall project is the largest FDI in the railways sector.

The locomotive can haul 6000 tonnes at a top speed of 120 km/hr.

Quick Fact: After this initiative, India has become the sixth country in the world to produce high horsepower locomotive.

23rd May

1. Person in News

Govinda Rajulu Chintala appointed as chairman of NABARD

Govinda Rajulu Chintala has been appointed the Chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

The appointment has been made by the Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet. His term will last till July 2022.

Quick Fact: NABARD is an apex development financial institution responsible for rural and agriculture related credit in India

2. Miscellaneous

India becomes the second largest manufacturer of PPE in the world

India has become the second largest producer of Personal Protective Equipment in the world after China

India is now producing 2.06 lakh PPE kits every day

PPE includes protective gears like shoe covers, gloves, eye shield, mask and gown.

Quick Fact: Ministry of Textile has launched many measures to maintain PPE quality while the data is being maintained by Ministry of Health

3. Environment

Coir Geotextiles approved for rural road construction in Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

This measure will be implemented by the National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency

The coir geotextile is made of coir and has a life of 3-5 years.

It later degenerates into humus and enriches the soil.

Quick Fact: Geotextiles are permeable textile structures made of polymeric materials and are used mainly in civil engineering applications along with soil, rock and water

4. Economy

Carmen Reinhart appointed Chief Economist of World Bank Group

Carmen Reinhart has been appointed as World Bank's new Vice President and Chief Economist

Prior to this, she was a Senior Policy Advisor and Deputy Director at the IMF

World Bank Group is the parent organization of the World Bank and includes the following institutions:

IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

IDA: International Development Association.

IFC: International Finance Corporation.

MIGA: The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

ICSID: International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes

Quick Fact: Together, World Bank and IMF are called the Bretton Woods Twins

5. India and the World

Dr. Harsh Vardhan to take charge as chairman of WHO Executive Board

Dr. Harsh Vardhan will be taking charge as the chairman of the World Health Organization 34 member Executive Board

Dr Harsh Vardhan is the Indian Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare

The Executive Board is one of the governing decision-making bodies of the WHO, the other being World Health Assembly

Quick Fact: The director-general of WHO is Tedros Adhanom

6. Environment

Gol launches scheme for 100% solarisation of Konark sun temple town

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has taken up complete solarisation of Konark sun temple and Konark town in Odisha

This is working towards the vision of developing the town as a 'Surya Nagri'

The scheme will include setting up of 10 MW grid connected solar projects and solar off-grid applications like solar trees, solar drinking water kiosks, off-grid solar power plants with battery storage etc.

Quick Fact: The Konark temple is a UNESCO World Heritage Site built with black granite during the reign of Narasimhadeva-I of Eastern Ganga Dynasty

7. Government Schemes

Cabinet approves Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana for boosting fisheries sector

The scheme aims to bring about Blue Revolution through sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector in India

The scheme will involve an investment of Rs 20,000 crore shared by the centre, states and beneficiaries.

It will be implemented for 5 years between 2020-21 to 2024-25 and create employment and fisherfolk welfare by boosting the fisheries sector.

8. Person in News

Dilip Oommen becomes new President of Indian Steel Association

Dilip Oommen is presently the CEO of Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India

He has spent in the steel industry for more than 37 years of experience and is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

Quick Fact: Indian Steel Association headquarters are located in New Delhi

25th May

1) Environment

NTPC and ONGC partners to set up JVC for Renewable Energy

NTPC Limited and ONGC will form a Joint Venture Company for renewable energy business.

This partnership will explore the setting up of offshore wind and other renewable energy projects in India as well as overseas.

It will also explore opportunities in the fields of sustainability, storage, e-mobility and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) compliant projects.

2) International Affairs

Airtel Africa and UNICEF join hands to support COVID-19 affected children and families

The initiative will:

- a) provide children with access to remote learning by zero-rating selected websites with educational content
- b) enable access to cash assistance for families through mobile cash transfers
- c) benefit children and families in 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa

Quick Fact: As per United Nations, Sub-Saharan Africa consists of all African countries that are fully or partially located south of the Sahara

3) Science and Technology

RNA extraction kit Agappe Chitra Magna launched commercially for COVID-19 detection

Agappe Chitra Magna is a magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction kit used for COVID-19 testing

The kit was developed by Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Trivandrum

The kit can make India self-reliant and more effective in COVID-19 testing

4) Environment

Gol launches 5 initiatives for biodiversity conservation

The initiatives include:

- 1) Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme: Engage students in post graduate programme to learn about biodiversity conservation and natural resource management.
- 2) UNEP campaign: Illegal trafficking of endangered species
- 3) Wildlife Crime Control Bureau campaign: Not All Animals Migrate by Choice
- 4) Webinar series on Biodiversity Conservation and Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- 5) World Wildlife Fund Model Conference of Parties

5) Miscellaneous

Manipur's Khudol declared one of Top 10 Global Initiatives to fight COVID-19

Khudol is an initiative by an NGO called Ya_All

The initiative entails ensuring food, health and hygiene of the LGBTQI+ community, people living with HIV, daily-wage earners, children and adolescents.

Ya_All has created a model of an inclusive safe space for transgender returnees.

Quick Fact: Ya_All NGO had also created India's first transgender football team

6) Environment

States urge expedited notification of Ecologically Sensitive Area for Western Ghats

The discussion is based on the recommendations of a high level working group under Dr Kasturirangan

The committee had identified geographical areas in Western Ghat states that need to be declared as Ecologically Sensitive Areas

Ecologically Sensitive Areas have restrictions on mining, thermal plants, quarrying, construction and setting up of industries.

Quick Fact: The Western Ghats cover areas in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

26th May

1) Science and Technology

WHO initiates Human Challenge Trial to develop COVID-19 vaccine

The Human Challenge Trial involved people volunteering to get tested with the vaccines under development

This trial will expedite the process of vaccine development.

Quick Fact: Tedros Adhanom is the director general of World Health Organisation

2) Environment

Emission norms of L7 category of BS VI notified

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified emission norms for L7 category for Bharat Stage VI

L7 category vehicles are those with four wheels and with a mass more than 400 kg

These norms will boost production of quadricycles in India.

This notification has completed the process of BS-VI for all category vehicles in India

Quick Fact: The emission norms are on the lines of the European Union's World Motorcycle Test Cycle (WMTC)

3) Sports

Mizoram gives Sports an industrial status

This move will attract more investment in the Sports industry.

The state is famous for its players in football, weightlifting and hockey.

A lot of players in the Indian Super League, a top football league in India, are from Mizoram.

4) International Affairs

US withdraws from Open Skies treaty

US President has announced that the United States will withdraw from Open Skies treaty

US government feels that Russia has not adhered to the treaty, making it unfair

The Open Skies Treaty permits each member to conduct short-notice, unarmed, reconnaissance flights over the others' territory to collect data on military forces and activities

Quick Fact: The Treaty on Open Skies was signed in 2002

5) Environment

Australian researchers develop 'heat resistant' corals to fight bleaching

Researchers have developed a potential agent that could help coral reefs increase their heat tolerance and prevent coral bleaching

This was done by increasing the heat tolerance of the tiny cells of algae that live inside the coral tissue.

The microalgae was made heat resistant by isolating it and culturing using a technique called "directed evolution"

Quick Fact: Coral reefs are formed of coral polyp colonies held together by calcium carbonate

27th May

1) Person in News

Abhas Jha appointed World Bank's Practice Manager for Climate Change

Abhas Jha has been appointed as the World Bank's Practice Manager for Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management for South Asia

As part of this role, he will be leading a team of highly qualified professionals to provide the best environmental solutions for South Asian countries

Quick Fact: David Malpass is the President of World Bank

2) Sports

Indian hockey legend Balbir Singh Dosanjh passes away

Balbir Singh Dosanjh was a part of three-time Olympic gold medal-winning Indian hockey team, which won in London Olympics (1948), Helsinki Olympics (1952), and Melbourne Olympics (1956)

He was the only Indian among 16 modern Olympic history legends chosen by the International Olympic Committee.

He held an unbeaten record of scoring most goals by an individual in the Olympic men's hockey final.

Quick Fact: 1928 to 1956 is considered the golden period for the Indian Hockey team at the Olympics

3) Defence and Security

LADAKH POLICE gets formed

Police force in the Ladakh Union Territory will now be called LADAKH POLICE.

The force will have its new symbols, insignia, formation sign for a new identity

The logo will include the letters LP in symmetric design and juniper leaves covering the Ashoka and LP.

The red and blue Ladakh police flag will have 'Khidmat aur Himmat' written on it.

4) Economy

India facing its worst recession in current fiscal: CRISIL

CRISIL has predicted the economy to shrink by 5 per cent in the current fiscal because of coronavirus lockdown.

India has faced recession only three times in the last 69 years, in the years 1958, 1966 and 1980.

The primary reason for each of these three recessions has been a monsoon shock.

Quick Fact: Recession is typically recognized as two consecutive quarters of economic decline, as reflected by GDP and other monthly indicators

5) Geography

IMD issues 'red alert' for several parts of north India

Indian Meteorological Department has issued a "red" warning for Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Rajasthan as temperature rises above 45 degrees celsius.

For the plains, a heatwave means the actual maximum temperature is 45 degrees Celsius and severe heatwave when it is 47 degrees Celsius or above.

Quick Fact: IMD's colour-coded warnings regarding intensity of weather system is green, yellow, orange and red (in ascending order)

28th May

1) Economy

World Steel Report 2020 published by World Steel Association

The report studies crude steel production of 64 countries

The crude steel output in India has decreased by 65.2% in April 2020

Globally, there has been a 13.0% decrease compared to April 2019

2) Miscellaneous

J.K. Rowling announces new book: The Ickabog

British author J.K. Rowling has released the first two chapters of her new Children's book "The Ickabog"

The Ickabog is her first children's book since the Harry Potter series

The story will be published in installments on The Ickabog website for free before its official publication

3) National Affairs

Chamba Tunnel inaugurated under Chardham Pariyojana

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the Chamba Tunnel under Chardham Pariyojana

The construction was challenging due to geographical challenges, land acquisition issues and COVID lockdown restrictions

The tunnel and Char Dham highway have a big role to play from socioeconomic and religious point of view in the region.

Quick Fact: The Char Dham highway network will connect the four holy places in Uttarakhand, i.e. Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri

4) National Affairs

Supreme Court takes suo motu cognisance of migrant workers' plight

A three-judge Supreme Court bench has taken suo motu cognisance of the migrant workers issue

They have noted inadequacies and lapses in Central and State governments' support to them during lockdown

They have ordered the centre and states to immediately provide free of cost transport, food and shelter to stranded migrant workers.

Quick Fact: Suo motu cognisance means that the court has taken the matter into cognisance on its own, without anybody filing a petition

5) Environment

Critically Endangered Saharan Cheetah Seen in Algeria For The First Time in a Decade

The Saharan Cheetah was sighted in the Hoggar Mountains national park in Algeria.

The Saharan or Northwest Cheetah is a Cheetah subspecies endemic to Sahara and the Sahel regions of Africa

It is unique because of its shorter coat and nearly white colour.

Quick Fact: Algeria is the largest country of the African continent

29th May

1) Science and Technology

Facebook launches calling application “CatchUp”

Facebook has launched a separate calling application called CatchUp

The app will enable a user to indicate their availability to talk to and call others.

It will also enable users to check availability of time with a group of up to eight people

Quick Fact: Facebook headquarters is located in California, US

2) Science and Technology

NASA renames telescope after ‘Mother of Hubble’ Nancy Grace Roman

NASA has renamed its next-generation space telescope Wide-Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST) in honour of Nancy Grace Roman

Nancy Grace Roman was NASA’s first chief astronomer. She worked to ensure space telescopes focused on the broader universe.

Quick Fact: NASA headquarters are located in Washington DC, US

3) Person in News

Major Suman Gawani to be honoured with UN Military Gender Advocate Award 2019

Major Suman Gawani would be the first Indian to be awarded with this honour.

The Indian Army officer has been conferred the award for her work against sexual violence while stationed in South Sudan under the United Nations Mission

She will be awarded on May 29, the International Day of the United Nations Peacekeepers

4) Person in News

Rajiv Joshi wins NYIPLA Inventor of the year Award 2020

He has won the award for his contribution to advance the electronic industry and improving artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities.

He works currently at the IBM Thomson Watson Research Center in New York.

The award has been presented by the New York Intellectual Property Law Association (NYIPLA).

5) Science and Technology

New species of fish discovered in Tamil Nadu

The small freshwater fish has been discovered in a small waterbody in Venlankanni, Tamil Nadu

The silvered colored fish has been named Puntius sanctus. 'Sanctus' is Latin for holy.

The new fish is now deposited in Gol's museum, the Zoological Survey of India, Pune.

Quick Fact: International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature is the official authority for naming animals

6) Economy

NPCI launches an Artificial Intelligence Virtual Assistant called Pai

National Payment Corporation of India has launched a chatbot based on Artificial Intelligence, called Pai

The Chatbot aims to increase financial inclusion in India

It is a 24*7 accessible chatbot where users can ask queries about NPCI products.

The chatbot has been created by Bengaluru based startup CoRover Private Limited.

Quick Fact: NPCI services and products include FASTag, RuPay, UPI, etc.

7) Defence and Security

Russia constructs its first Stealth Bomber

Russia has constructed its first Stealth Bomber under its Perspective Aviation Complex for Long Range Aviation (PAKDA) programme

The PAKDA programme will use latest technologies to reduce the visibility and traceability of its weapons to opposite parties

The stealth bomber is the second-generation combat aircraft after Sukhoi Su-57

30th May

1) Miscellaneous

Kargil's first Solar Lift Irrigation Plant inaugurated

Kargil's first Solar Lift Irrigation Plant with five KW Solar Plants and three HP Submersible Pumps has been inaugurated at Yak Breeding Farm, Bodh Kharboo

This project will help in solving for the water shortage problem for irrigation and drinking

This plant is a step towards the vision of making Ladakh a Carbon Neutral Entity as well as developing its Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries Sector

2) Person in News

Famous Urdu writer Mujtaba Hussain passes away

Mujtaba Hussain was a famous Urdu satirist writer

He has written 'Japan Chalo Japan' and columns in Siasat

He was awarded the Padmashree in 2007

Quick Fact: Mujtaba Hussain was known as the Mark Twain of Urdu

3) Defence and Security

Indian Air Force inducts Tejas Mk-1 FOC aircraft

Tejas Mk-1 FOC has been built under indigenous fighter aircraft program

It was a part of the 'Make In India' initiative on part of the defence services

Tejas Mk-1 FOC is a single engine, light weight, highly agile, all weather multi role fighter aircraft capable of air-to-air refuelling.

4) International Affairs

US joins G7 partnership on Artificial Intelligence

G7 is an intergovernmental economic organization consisting of the world's largest economies.

These countries have set up the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence to support and guide the responsible adoption of AI

US had initially refused to be a part of the above due to fear of over-regulation hampering innovation in the field.

Quick Fact: The G7 members are: France, Canada, Italy, Germany, Japan, UK and US

5) National Affairs

UP Government launches Herbal Roads Project

The UP government will plant medicinal trees on an 800 km long stretch of roads along state and national highways

This will control infectious diseases, provide raw materials for medicines and prevent soil erosion

The medicinal trees will include Neem, Peepal, Sehjan, etc.

6) National Affairs

Karnataka becomes first state to launch State Health Register

The register will contain names of all people in the state and will support state government in health scheme implementation and fund allocation

The register will be created with 50% partnership with private hospitals

The survey for the register will be conducted through ASHA workers, educational department staffs, staffs in primary health centre and revenue officials