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**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WILEY

National

- ⊙ Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi addressed his countrymen regarding the fight against the **COVID-19** pandemic and appealed all Indians to stay indoors as much as possible to stop the outspread of **COVID-19** in India. This is called as '**Social Distancing**' which can play a critical role at the time of the global corona pandemic. He stated the mantra '**Hum Swasth, toh Jag Swasth**' that is the world will be healthy, if we stay healthy.
- ⊙ In his address to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the lockdown of the whole nation for 21 days with effect from March 25, 2020. The decision of lock down has been taken by the Government of India as a preventive measure for the containment of **COVID-19** pandemic in the country.

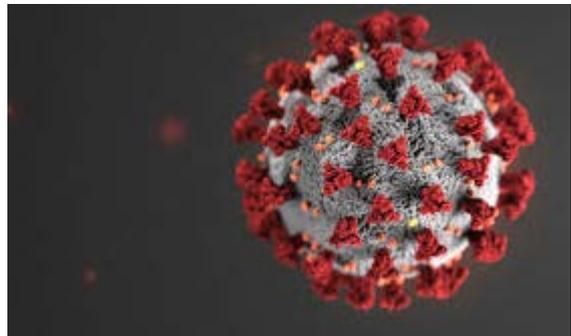


During this lockdown period, population of the country will need some essential commodities as well services to live stable life.

- ⊙ Finance minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** has announced a **mega relief package** of ₹ 1.7 lakh crore for the migrant workers and poor people affected by the lockdown amid **COVID-19** outbreak. The scheme has been named **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Scheme**. This food security scheme will assist the economically weaker sections to bridge over the added challenge of lockdown and job loss during the worldwide outbreak of coronavirus.
 - Some highlights are as follows: **PM Gareeb Kalyan Scheme** will entail ₹ 1.7 lakh crore. It will include both cash transfer and food security and target 80 crore people.
 - The government will provide insurance cover worth ₹ 50 lakh for sanitation workers, ASHA workers, doctors, nurses, paramedics just in case they have it as they're on the frontlines of the corona battle.
 - Over and above 5 kg of rice/wheat that's already given, another 5 kg per person are going to be given liberally to around 80 crore people through PDS. Besides, one kg of preferred and region-specific choice of the pulse will also be given.

- Government of India will pay the EPF contribution both of the employer and the employee put together 24% for the next three months. This is for those establishments with up to 100 employees, 90% of them earning less than ₹ 15,000.
- For the organised sector, EPFO regulation will be amended so that workers can draw up to 75% for their contingency expenditure non-refundable advance or three months of wages in advance whichever is less. This will benefit 4.8 crore workers.

- ⊙ **WhatsApp** in partnership with the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** and **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, launched '**WhatsApp Coronavirus Information Hub**' globally. It aims to provide simple, actionable guidance for health workers, educators, community leaders, nonprofits, local governments and local businesses that depends on WhatsApp for communication and will also work in the direction to reduce the spread of rumors and connect with accurate health information.
- ⊙ The top tech giants of the world jointly came forward to fight against the fake news and misinformation related to **COVID-19** on their platforms. These giants include Facebook, Google, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Reddit, Twitter and YouTube.



These companies are working closely to have a check on the fake news and misinformation related to **COVID-19**.

- ⊙ **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL)** has set up India's first **COVID-19** dedicated hospital in Mumbai in the collaboration with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC, Mumbai).



This hospital is funded by Reliance Foundation and has the facility that includes a negative pressure room which will help in preventing cross-contamination and helps control infection.

- © The **International Olympic Committee** and **Tokyo Olympic** organizers agreed to postpone **Tokyo Olympic 2020** amid the coronavirus pandemic. The new confirmed date is July 23, 2021.



It will mark the *first* time in history that the start of an Olympics will be delayed to another year. The Opening Ceremony will not be held on July 24 as scheduled, but on an undetermined 2021 date, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

- © India has been ranked 12th in the world as per study titled '**Women on Board 2020**'. The list was topped by Norway with 40.72% women on board.



The study was based on the presence of women in companies' board globally.

Economy

- © The Reserve Bank of India's **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decided to advance the Bi-monthly Monetary Policy meet which was scheduled to be held on 31st March 2020 and the announcement was meant to be made on 3rd April amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meeting it was decided to take an accommodative stance and hence reduced the policy repo rate to revive growth as well as to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. With this decision, MPC aims to keep inflation within the target and hence to preserve financial stability.

The key decisions of the meeting are:

- The repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) has been reduced by 75 basis points from 5.15% to 4.40%.
- The reverse repo rate under the LAF has been reduced by 90 basis points from 4.90% to 4.00%.
- The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate have been reduced from 5.40% to 4.65%.
- Reduction in the Cash Reserve Ratio of all banks by 100 basis points from 4% to 3% of Net Demand and Time Liabilities. This would be effective from 28th March 2020 for a period of one year. Also, all lending institutions have been allowed a moratorium period of 3 months for all term loans outstanding as on March 1, 2020.
- © A temporary prohibition has been imposed by the Government of India on the **Yes Bank** and capped withdrawals at ₹ 50,000 per account after considering an application made by the Reserve Bank of India. Above decision has been taken as Yes Bank has been grappling with mounting bad loans.



Former SBI CFO Prashant Kumar has been appointed as administrator of Yes Bank.

- © RBI has lowered the single borrower exposure limit for urban cooperative banks (UCBs) to 15% of tier I capital. This limit was earlier 15% of tier I and tier II capital. Also, it has lowered the group of borrower's exposure limit for urban cooperative banks (UCBs) to 25% of tier I capital. This limit was earlier 40% of tier I and tier II capital.
- © A liquidity of ₹ 30,000 crore has been infused by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to maintain financial stability in the Indian economy. This decision has been taken to boost liquidity in order to ensure that all markets segments function normally with adequate liquidity and turnover, as certain financial market segments are facing stress due to COVID-19 outbreak.
- © The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has agreed to buy shares worth ₹ 7250 crore of the cash-strapped Yes Bank. The purchase of the shares will be in accordance with the draft reconstruction scheme put forward by the Reserve Bank of India. SBI will purchase the 725 crore shares of Yes Bank at a price of ₹ 10 per share. After the purchase, the shareholding of the State Bank of India (SBI) in Yes Bank will remain under 49% of the paid-up capital.

- ⊙ The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has waived off the minimum balance charges on all savings bank accounts. SBI has waived charges for non-maintenance of Average Monthly Balance (AMB) for all 44.51 crore savings bank accounts.
- ⊙ **Paytm Payments Bank Ltd** has partnered with Visa to issue Visa debit cards.
- ⊙ The facility '**Covid-19 Emergency Credit Line (CECL)**' has been launched by the State Bank of India (SBI) to meet any liquidity mismatch for its borrowers in order to tide over the current crisis situation.
- ⊙ **Flipkart** has tied up with **Aegon Life Insurance** to sell comprehensive insurance solutions for customers who are seeking instant digital policies with a sum assured of up to ₹ 10 lakh.

Science and Technology

- ⊙ According to the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, **Jitendra Singh**, a possible schedule for the launch of **Chandrayaan-3** is planned to be implemented in the first half of 2021.



The preparation of Chandrayaan-3 has been done by taking lessons from the previously launched Chandrayaan-2, a Moon mission which was launched in 2019, in which the Indian Space and Research Organisation (ISRO)'s **Vikram Lander** lost contact following a hard landing on the Moon's surface.

- ⊙ **Google Cloud** announced its plans to open a **Delhi Cloud Region** which will be the company's second cloud region in India as compared to the one in Mumbai.
- ⊙ The **Technology Innovation Hub (TIH)** will be established in the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi under the **National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)** with the help of Rs 7.25 crore sanctioned by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to IIT Mandi.

- ⊙ **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** announced the name of the 5th Mars (red planet) rover as **Perseverance**.



Previously, the rover was known by its codename as **Mars 2020**.

Sports

- ⊙ The first edition of the **Khelo India Women's Hockey League Under-21** has been announced by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in association with Hockey India.



- ⊙ The **Badminton Asia Championships** will be held in the **Manila** (which is the capital of Philippines) due to the Coronavirus outbreak in China.
- ⊙ **Tasnim Mir** and **Mansi Singh** of India have won the **bronze medal** each in the girls' singles Badminton event at the Yonex Dutch Junior International 2020 held in Haarlem, Netherlands.



- ⊙ Skipper **Kieron Pollard** (of West Indies) has become the *first* player in the history of T20 (Twenty20) cricket to feature in **500 matches** during the field against Sri Lanka for the first T20I in Pallekele, Sri Lanka.



- ⊙ Former Indian opener **Wasim Jaffer** has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.



- ⊙ He made his Test and ODI debut for India against South Africa in 2006.
- ⊙ American golfer **Tiger Woods** will be elected in the **World Golf Hall of Fame** as part of the class of 2021.



- ⊙ **Saurashtra** won their maiden **Ranji Trophy** title after earning a 44-run lead in the first innings against Bengal which eventually ended in a draw in the final in Rajkot, Gujarat.



Persons in News

- ⊙ **Byju Classes'** founder **Byju Raveendran** and **Zomato's** co-founder **Gaurav Gupta** are among the five Indians named by the **World Economic Forum (WEF)** in its new list of 115 **Young Global Leaders**.
- ⊙ **Sunil Joshi** has appointed as the new chairman of the national selection panel by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC).
- ⊙ **Sanjay Kumar Panda** has been appointed as Indian Ambassador to Turkey.
- ⊙ **Ajay Bhushan Pandey** (former Revenue Secretary) has been appointed as the new Finance Secretary by the Government of India.
- ⊙ **N.S. Vishwanathan**, Deputy Governor of RBI has announced his *resignation* due to health problems.
- ⊙ **Sudhanshu Pandey** has assumed additional charge as Chairman and Managing Director of Metals and Minerals Trading Corporation (MMTC) Ltd.
- ⊙ **Pekka Lundmark** will succeed Rajeev Suri as the new Chief Executive Officer & President of Nokia.
- ⊙ **Dr. Vijay Laxmi Saxena** has been elected as general president of the Indian Science Congress, 2021.
- ⊙ **Bimal Julka** is appointed as the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) of India. Sudhir Bhargava was the former CIC of the country retired on January 11, 2020.
- ⊙ **Nupur Kulshrestha** becomes the first woman to be promoted as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Indian Coast Guard. She joined Indian Coast Guard in 1999.



Plans and Policies

- ① **'Poshan Abhiyan'**, the flagship programme of the Central Government is launched for improving the nutritional status of Indian citizens.



It will help children, adolescents, pregnant women, and lactating mothers by leveraging technology.

- ① **"Kisan Rail"** is planned to be set up through the public-private-partnership (PPP) mode and will facilitate a cold supply chain to transport the perishable goods. It was proposed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her budget speech of 2020-21 to set up a seamless National Cold Supply Chain for perishables like fish, milk and meat.
- ① The three schemes- **Kaushal Satrang**, **Yuva Hub** and **Apprenticeship Scheme** has launched by the Uttar Pradesh government for skill development and employment generation for youths in the state. UP government also announced to depute **"Arogya Mitras"** at all primary health centres to inform people about govt health schemes.
- ① **Amazon** has partnered with the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)** under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to facilitate e-marketing of products made by Self Help Groups across the nation in urban areas.



- ① **IIT Mandi & Enabling Women of Kamand (EWOK)** Society joint hands with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to set up 3 Farmer Producer Organization in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.

Awards and Honours

- ① The 61st annual awards of the **National Lalit Kala Akademi** has been presented by **President Ram Nath Kovind** to 15 artists at the **Rashtrapati Bhavan** in New Delhi. The awardees were honoured with a shawl, plaque and cash prize worth ₹ 1 lakh.



These awards are conferred to recognize individuals for their outstanding work in the field of art. Following is the list of winners:

Winner	State
Anoop Kumar	Thrissoor, Kerala
Manzukhi Gopi	Kolkata, West Bengal
David Malakar	Vadodara, Gujarat
Devendra Kumar Khare	Mumbai, Maharashtra
Dinesh Pandya	Kolkata, West Bengal
Faruque Ahmed Halder	Jaipur, Rajasthan
Hari Ram Kumbhawat	Jaipur, Rajasthan
Keshari Nandan Prasad	Bengaluru, Karnataka
Mohan Kumar T	Mumbai, Maharashtra
Ratan Krishna Saha	Mumbai, Maharashtra
Sagar Vasant Kamble	New Delhi
Satwinder Kaur	Ernakulam, Kerala
Sunil Thiruvayur	Solapur, Maharashtra
Tejaswi Narayan Sonawane	Delhi
Yashpal Singh	Delhi
Yashwant Singh	Delhi

- © The 4th edition of **Times of India Sports Awards (TOISA)** awards have been presented to the best Indian (sports) in 2019 in New Delhi, India.



The event was powered by **Bharat Interface for Money- Unified Payments Interface (BHIM-UPI)**.

Following is the list of winners:

Award	Winner
Sports person of the Year	P.V. Sindhu
Cricketer of the year	Rohit Sharma
Team of the year	Indian men's Hockey Team
Coach of the year	Jaspal Rana
Inspiration of the year	Rani Rampal
Mentor of the year	Pullela Gopichand
Change agent of the year	Odisha
Corporate supporter of the year	Reliance Foundation
Unbreakable Spirit of Sports	P.V. Sindu
Youth Icon of the year	Vijendra Singh
Lifetime Achievement	Bhaichung Bhutia
Icon of the year	Balbir Singh

