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**MONTHLY UPDATES ON  
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**WILEY**

## National

- Prime Minister of India **Narendra Modi** addressed his countrymen and announced the extension of lockdown until 3rd of May 2020 in order to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in the nation.



The lockdown was initially implemented in India from 25th March 2020 and was scheduled to end on 14th April 2020.

- According to CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board), the Lock Down which imposed in the country on March 22, 2020 has improved air quality and water quality.



On a regular basis, 40 million litres of waste water enters water bodies. The major reasons for the improvement in the water quality are bathing, tourism, fairs nearby the *ghats* and major industrial activities were stopped. Though sewage persists to enter the river, now the situation is different. This is because when sewage effluents get mixed with the industrial effluents, it is highly difficult for the river to assimilate itself.

- Odisha Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik** has requested the Centre not to start train and air services till April 30 and the state has become the first to extend the 21-day lockdown till April 30 which was about to end on April 14. The state has also announced that all educational institutions in the state will remain closed till June 17.

- The **Operation Sanjeevani** has launched by the Indian Air Force (IAF) to air-lift 6.2 tonnes of essential medical supplies to the Maldives via transport aircraft C-130J as assistance in the fight against the COVID 19.



India has supplied 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines to the Maldives. The neighbour country is mostly dependent on imports from India for such supplies.

- The Government of India has announced to allocate Rs. 15000 crores for **India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package**. The amount of Rs. 7774 crores will be utilized for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response and rest for medium-term support (1–4 years) to be provided under mission mode approach.
- The **Operation Shield** has been launched by the Delhi Government to curb the spread of COVID-19.



It will be implemented in 21 containment zones as a necessary action to protect the people of Delhi from COVID-19.

In the Operation SHIELD:

- S** stands for: Sealing of area;
- H** stands for: Home quarantine;
- I** stands for: Isolation of infected patients;
- E** stands for: Essential services ensured;
- L** stands for: Local sanitisation;
- D** stands for: Door to door survey.

The Delhi government has made it mandatory for the people of Delhi to wear masks while stepping out of their houses.



- ⊙ The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the initiative called **Lifeline UDAN** to help India fight against COVID-19. Under this, 132 cargo flights have been operated so far across the country to transport medical cargo including to remote and hilly areas.
- ⊙ The appointment of new Chief Justices for the Bombay, Orissa and Meghalaya High Courts (HC) has been approved by the Chief Justice of India, **Sharad Arvind Bobde**.



- ⊙ **Bombay High Court:** Dipankar Datta, presently a judge at the Calcutta High Court
- ⊙ **Orissa High Court:** Mohammad Rafiq, presently a Judge at the Meghalaya High Court
- ⊙ **Meghalaya High Court:** Biswanath Somadder, presently a judge at the Allahabad High Court
- ⊙ **National Panchayati Raj Day** has been celebrated on April 24. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj organizes the National Panchayati Raj day or the National Local Self Government Day. The first National Panchayati Raj Day or the National Local Government Day was celebrated on April 2010.
- ⊙ The Global Report on **Internal Displacement, GRID 2020** released by Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, IDMC said that over 5 million people have displaced in India in 2019. According to the report, this is the highest in the world.
- ⊙ The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation has stated that the APEC region is to face an economic decline of 2.7% in 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. Also, the region is to face near growth rate. This will be the highest decline for the region since the 2008 financial crisis.
- ⊙ An ordinance amending the salary, allowances and pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954, to reduce the allowances and pension by 30% starting April 1, 2020, for a year has been approved by the Union Cabinet. All Members of Parliament, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Council of Ministers, will take 30 per cent salary cut due to the impact of the novel coronavirus. The President, Vice President and all state governors have voluntarily decided to take a 30 per cent salary cut for a year in view of the coronavirus outbreak and the expected downturn in the economy.

- ⊙ **Jack Dorsey**, the CEO of Twitter, has **pledged to donate \$1 billion** to charities working towards combatting the global COVID-19 pandemic.



It seems to be the largest donation pledged by a private individual in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

- ⊙ Civil services officers' associations have formed an initiative called **Caruna** to support and supplement the government's efforts in fighting coronavirus.



**CARUNA**

CIVIL SERVICES ASSOCIATIONS REACH TO SUPPORT IN NATURAL DISASTERS

The acronym **Caruna** stands for Civil Services Associations Reach to Support in Natural Disasters.

- ⊙ IIT-Roorkee has developed a low-cost portable ventilator called **Prana-Vayu** in association with AIIMS-Rishikesh, which can be manufactured for just Rs. 25,000. This closed-loop ventilator equipped with state-of-the-art facilities & can prove useful in ensuring the safety of coronavirus (COVID-19) patients.
- ⊙ The innovation cell of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has launched a mega ONLINE challenge called **SAMADHAN** to fight against COVID-19.
- ⊙ Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has collaborated with UNICEF for developing a digital communication strategy for promoting a digital campaign for Self Help Groups (SHGs) aims to highlight the **importance of Social Distancing**.
- ⊙ The United States has announced **\$2.9 million aid for India** through the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The funds announced are going to help India in its fight against COVID-19 and to also provide care for those who are affected and help the local communities with the tools to stop the pandemic spreading in the country.

- © **Asian Development Bank** assured of **\$2.2 billion support package to India** to fight against COVID-19 pandemic. India's needs, including emergency assistance, policy-based loans and budget support to facilitate swift disbursement of ADB funds.
- © **Dunzo** (an online delivery platform) has partnered with packaged foods company **Britannia Industries** to deliver range of products to its consumers.



Britannia Industries has launched a Britannia Essentials store that will be available to **Dunzo** app users.

- © **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** signed an agreement with the **Indian Army** for setting up an advanced **IT-enabled system** to operate the Armed Forces network under the Network of Spectrum (NFS).

## Economy

- © **Paytm Payments Bank Limited** joined partnership with **MasterCard** to issue virtual and physical debit cards which will enable the customers to perform secure online transactions and make payment in stores as well as withdraw cash from ATMs.
- © The **Airtel Payments Bank** partnered with **Bharati AXA General Insurance** to launch a COVID-19 insurance policy which can be purchased directly from the Airtel Thanks App or from active banking point-of-sales (POS). The price of policy will be Rs. 499 for fixed sum insured of Rs. 25,000.
- © The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has reduced India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate from 5.8% to 1.9% for the fiscal year 2020–21 in the World Economic Outlook.



It stated that India's GDP will show recovery in the next financial year with the growth rate of 7.4%.

- © A campaign **#HDFCBankSafetyGrid** has been started by the HDFC Bank to encourage social distancing in Public places.



This campaign will help people waiting in the queue at a shop or an establishment.

- © ICICI bank starts a new feature of **voice banking services** which will be available on Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant for their customers.



The service will enable customers to **#BankWithTheirVoice** and get answers to banking queries, check account balance and transactions, credit card due date and more.

- ⊙ **Punjab National Bank Housing Finance** has partnered with **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** to raise \$75 million. The Citibank will also co-finance \$25 million to finance the mortgage loans in the affordable housing segment. This partnership also states first debt funding by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the housing finance sector in India.
- ⊙ The **Reserve Bank of India** launched a **twitter campaign** urging bank customers to adopt digital modes of payment that are convenient and safe. RBI emphasised on transacting digitally as it gives the convenience of making payments anytime and anywhere.
- ⊙ **DigiGen**, a digital banking platform has been launched by the **Jana Small Finance Bank** where customers can digitally open a savings account and fixed deposit instantly, anytime, anywhere.
- ⊙ **YES Bank** has announced the extension of its strategic bancassurance relationship with the **Max Life Insurance** for 5-years in order to reaffirm their commitment to invest in building a digitally-enabled ecosystem.
- ⊙ The **Reserve Bank of India** has cancelled the licence of **Mapusa Urban Co-operative Bank** of Goa Ltd. with an order of barring the bank to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on April 16, 2020.
- ⊙ **State Bank of India** has announced to waive service charges for all ATM transactions made on SBI ATMs and on the other bank ATMs on account of exceeding the free number of transactions up to June 30, 2020.
- ⊙ **People's Bank of China (PBOC)** has raised its stake in HDFC Bank from 0.8% to 1.01%.



The stakes comprise of 17.49 million shares of the country's largest mortgage lender HDFC.

- ⊙ **Tata AIA Life Insurance** has become first life Insurance Company in India to announce additional benefits related to COVID-19 for Policyholders and Agents at no additional cost.

## Sports

- ⊙ **National Sports Federation of India (NSFI)** has announced that India will host the **Asian Boxing Championships** for men and women in Nov-Dec, 2020.



- ⊙ Late **Kobe Bryant** has been selected as a member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.



He has been selected as the member of the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility.



- ⊙ The **Independent Member Federation Sanctions Panel (IMFSP)** of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) has banned the Malaysia & Thailand weightlifters from competing in Tokyo Olympics 2020 by imposing the disciplinary sanctions on both the countries from participating in weightlifting events at the Tokyo Olympics for doping violations.
- ⊙ **FIFA**, the world's governing body for football announced that it took the decision to postpone the **FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup** tournament due to the coronavirus pandemic. The FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup, which was scheduled to be played in India between November 2 to 21.
- ⊙ England's all-rounder **Ben Stokes** has been named as the leading cricketer in the world 2020 by Wisden.



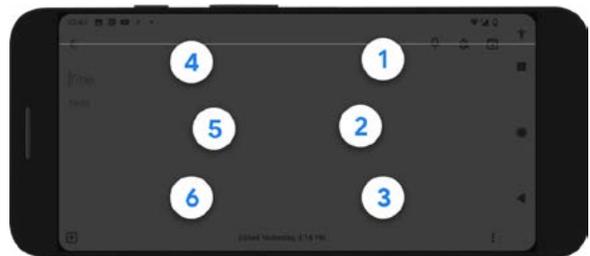
- ⊙ In Women's category, Australia's **Ellyse Perry** has been named the Wisden's Leading Female Cricketer in the World. The other Five Cricketers of the Year by Wisden's are **Jofra Archer** (England), **Pat Cummins** (Australia), **Simon Harmer** (South Africa), **Marnus Labuschagne** (Australia) and **Ellyse Perry** (Australia-female).

## Science and Technology

- ⊙ **DRDO** has rolled out two new products: **Automatic Mist Based Sanitiser Dispensing Unit** and **UV Sanitisation Box and Hand-held UV** device to enable COVID-19 disinfection process.  
The Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences has developed a compact and portable solid-state sensor to detect the heavy metal ions in water.
- ⊙ **Sahyog**, an integrated geospatial platform is launched by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India. It will help in decision making during the present COVID-19 outbreak and support with area-specific strategies in order to handle the socio-economic impact in the recovery phase.
- ⊙ **NASA** unveils plan to setup **Artemis**, the first human base camp on Moon's south pole by 2024. NASA is working on the Artemis program that aims to land humans on the moon by 2024.



- ⊙ **Google** has announced the launch of a **virtual Braille keyboard** for Android users with low vision or blindness.



This new keyboard will enable these people to type on their phones without additional hardware.

## Persons in News

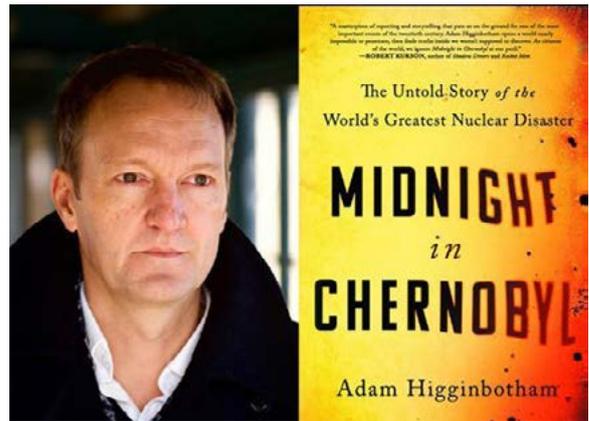
- ⊙ The Pulitzer Prize-winning American reporter for The Washington Post, **Mary Jordan** has written a book titled **The Art of Her Deal: The Untold Story of Melania Trump**. It is published by Simon & Schuster and is to be released on June 16, 2020.
- ⊙ The term of **Madhabi Puri Buch** as a Whole Time Member (WTM) at Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has been extended by 6 months.
- ⊙ Infosys' Chief Operating Officer, **UB Pravin Rao** became the new chairman of the **National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM)**, for 2020–21. He will succeed Keshav Murugesu.
- ⊙ The tenure of **Justice Shiva Kirti Singh**, as the incumbent Chairman of the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) has been extended by the Supreme Court of India.
- ⊙ Bharti AXA Life Insurance has appointed **Parag Raja** as **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer** of the company.

## Plans and Policies

- ⊙ Andhra Pradesh has started the **Jagananna Vidya Deevena** Scheme. Under this scheme, fee reimbursement will be credited directly to mothers' accounts instead of college accounts in the coming academic year 2020–21.
- ⊙ The Government of India has constituted an Empowered Group for coordinating response activities with Private Sector, NGOs and International Organisations related to COVID-19 which will be headed by the chief executive officer (CEO) of NITI Aayog **Amitabh Kant**. This group will coordinate response activities with Private Sector, NGOs and International Organisations related to COVID-19.
- ⊙ Madhya Pradesh government has launched **Jeevan Amrit Yojana** to boost the immune system of people to fight (COVID-19) disease.
- ⊙ Madhya Pradesh government has launched the **Jivan Shakti Yojana**. Under this scheme, women in urban areas can earn by making masks at home.
- ⊙ Assam government has launched a new scheme called **Dhanwantari** for home delivery of medicines.

## Award and Honours

- ⊙ **Naveen Patnaik**, the Chief Minister of Odisha has been conferred with **Hero to Animals Award** by animal rights body PETA India for allocating funds to feed community animals in Odisha during the lockdown over the novel coronavirus pandemic.
- ⊙ Adam Higginbotham's book **Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster** wins the **William E. Colby Award**.



Forbes has launched the list titled **The Richest in 2020** has been topped by the Amazon Founder and Chief Executive Officer **Jeff Bezos**.



This was 3rd time in a row that he has topped the annual world's billionaires list released by Forbes. He has topped the list with a net worth of \$113 billion. Jeff Bezos was followed by **Bill Gates** having net worth of \$98 billion while luxury goods tycoon **Bernard Arnault**, the Chairman and CEO of luxury magnate LVMH (LVMHF), stood on the 3rd position with a net worth of \$76 billion.

