

M A Y 2 0 2 0

**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WILEY

National

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** announced an Economic Package of ₹ 20 lakh crore, focusing on land, labour, liquidity and law.



He stressed on the local products and urged all countrymen to be '**Vocal About Local**'.

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Scheme for Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises and it was announced recently by the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as a 3rd tranche of Economic Relief Package, **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**. This scheme will focus on the unorganized sector on all India basis with an outlay of ₹ 10000 crore, and this expenditure will be borne by the Government of India and the respective states in the ratio of 60 : 40.
- The Maharashtra government has announced the inclusion of state's whole population under the **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana**.



As per this announcement, state will provide free health treatment to cent per cent population of the state. With this inclusion, Maharashtra has become India's first state to provide free and cashless

insurance premium to the people of the state. Currently, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana is covering 85% of the state's population. With the latest announcement, the benefits of the scheme have been extended towards the remaining 15% people of state. The latest announcement enables the state government, semi-government employees as well as the white ration card holders to apply for this scheme.

- The central government has launched a scheme for complete solarisation of Konark Sun Temple and Town in Odisha. Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency would be responsible for the implementation of this project. To execute it, the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy will provide full Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of approx. ₹ 25 crores.
- The **Saras Collection** has been launched by the Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj and Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar on the e-Marketplace portal of the Government.



It has been launched with an objective to provide Self Help Groups in rural areas with market access to Central as well as State Government buyers.

- Union Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri has announced the results of the **Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities 2019–2020**. According to this result, 6 cities were rated 5 star, 65 cities rated 3 star and 70 cities rated 1 star out of 141 cities. He also launched the revised protocol for the Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities.
- The first instance of **African Swine Fever** was reported in Assam. This outbreak amid the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed more than 2900 domestic pigs across 306 villages of the state. It is being noted that the swine fever was started in April 2019 at a village in Xizang province of China which is sharing its border with Arunachal Pradesh. Earlier in April, there were reported deaths of pigs dying from the classical swine fever (CSF).
- Nirmala Sitharaman**, the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs has formally launched the facility for instant allotment of **Permanent Account Number (PAN)**. This facility has been rolled out on near to real time basis. To avail this facility, the applicant should have a valid Aadhaar number and have a mobile

number registered with Aadhaar. Also, the allotment process is paperless and an electronic PAN (e-PAN) will be issued to the applicants free of cost.

- ⊙ **Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme** has been launched by the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This program envisages to engage 20 students with postgraduate degrees for a duration of one year via an open, transparent, online competitive process. These students will learn about natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. Hence they will be supporting the projects of NBA in various State and Union Territories. They would also be responsible to technically help the State Biodiversity Boards/UTs Biodiversity Council in discharge of their mandates.

Economy

- ⊙ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to advance the Bi-monthly Monetary Policy meet on May 20 to 22, 2020, which was scheduled to be held on June 3, 2020.

The key decisions taken in this were

- The repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) has been reduced by 40 basis points from 4.40% to 4.00%.
 - The reverse repo rate under the LAF has been reduced by 40 basis points from 3.75% to 3.35%.
 - The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate have been reduced from 4.65% to 4.25%.
- ⊙ A scheme **Vikas Abhaya** has been launched by the Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank.



This scheme will focus on providing some relief to MSME borrowers whose business activities are disrupted on account of the COVID-19 pandemic in Dharwad, Karnataka.

- ⊙ A song **#HumHaarNahiMaanenge** has been released by HDFC Bank to keep hopes up amidst the ongoing national lockdown and Covid-19 pandemic.



The lyricist of the song is **Prasoon Joshi** and music has been composed by **AR Rahman**.

- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the license of the **CKP Co-operative Bank Ltd.**, Mumbai to carry on banking business with effect from the close of business on April 30, 2020.



- ⊙ Moody's cuts down India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to zero for the current fiscal 2020–21. Its previous estimate was 2.6%. Also, it estimated that in 2021–22 India's GDP growth rate will bounce back to 6.6%.
- ⊙ As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 4.2% in 2019–20.



National Statistical Office
Papua New Guinea

- ③ **iTurmeric FinCloud**, a cloud-ready, API-first, micro services based platform has been launched by the Intellect Design Arena Ltd. This platform has launched through IBM public cloud and will enable the new digital banks' systems to be tested and run in isolation or in parallel with core legacy systems.
- ③ **PAi**, an Artificial Intelligence based chatbot, has been launched by the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) to create awareness around NPCI's products such as FASTag, RuPay, UPI, AePS on a real time basis. It has been developed by startup CoRover Private Limited.
- ③ Life Insurance Corporation of India has announced the launch of the modified **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana**, a social security scheme for senior citizens.



LIC is solely authorised to work this scheme, which works as a Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Pension Scheme subsidised by the Centre.

Science and Technology

- ③ **Atulya**, a microwave steriliser, has been developed by the Defence Institute of Advanced Technology, Pune. It will disintegrate the COVID-19 virus with the help of differential heating.



- ③ Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR's Scientific Instruments Organisation, Chandigarh has developed an **Electrostatic Disinfection Machine** which is effective in the disinfection and sanitization and has been developed to fight with COVID-19 pandemic.
- ③ 17-year-old, Indian-origin girl, **Vaneza Rupani** has been honoured of naming the NASA's 1st Mars helicopter 'Ingenuity'.



She submitted her essay into NASA's **Name the Rover** contest.

- ③ An Ultra Violet (UV) **Disinfection Tower** has been developed by the Laser Science & Technology Centre (LASTEC), a premier laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation. It has been developed to achieve rapid and chemical free disinfection of high infection prone areas.
- ③ Bharat Dynamics Ltd. (BDL) has signed a pact with IIT Kanpur to make large-scale **ventilators** developed by NOCCA Robotics (incubated start-up of IIT Kanpur).
- ③ Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has tied-up with Bharat Biotech to develop indigenous **COVID-19 vaccine**.
- ③ DRDO's Research Centre Imarat lab, Hyderabad has developed an automated contactless UVC sanitisation cabinet named **Defence Research Ultraviolet Sanitiser (DRUVS)** to sanitise mobile phones, iPods, laptops, currency notes, cheque leafs etc.
- ③ **Covid Kavach Elisa**, India's first indigenous antibody testing kit, has been developed by the National Institute of Virology, Pune. It consists of a blood test which detects antibodies in the blood to find out if an individual was infected with COVID-19 infection or not.
- ③ **SwasthVayu**, a non-invasive BiPAP ventilator, has been developed by CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories based on Bangalore to treat COVID-19 patients.





- © **Sundaram Ventago**, a low-cost automated respiratory assist device, has been developed jointly by the TVS group, Sundaram Medical Foundation and IIT-Madras.



- © MIR AHD Covid-19 Dashboard has been developed by the researchers at IIT Gandhinagar. It will help to provide key information to stakeholders and the public in order to make research-backed decisions during the time of crisis.
- © A new generation Iron-Manganese based alloys (for biodegradable metal implants) to use in humans, has been developed by International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) and Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram.
- © Two mobile indoor Disinfection Sprayer units namely Pneumatically Operated Mobile Indoor Disinfection (POMID), and Battery Powered Disinfectant Sprayer (BPDS) have been developed by the scientists at CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI), Durgapur.

Sports

- © International Cricket Council's (ICC) Cricket Committee headed by former India leg-spinner Anil Kumble, has recommended a **ban on the use of saliva** to shine the ball.



International Cricket Council

Apart from this, the committee also recommended increasing the use of **DRS review** per innings from two to three.

- © A campaign **#WeWillWin** has been launched by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) to pay tribute to health workers and other professionals who ensure the society continues to function among COVID-19 pandemic.



David Beckham, Harry Kane and Diego Maradona have teamed up for this video with FIFA. It released on the governing bodies' social media, a list of 50 star-studded names are shown applauding the efforts of those on the front-line.

- © Indian discus thrower **Sandeep Kumari** has been banned by World Anti-Doping Agency for four years. This ban has lifted when she failed a drug test. In that test, National Dope Test Laboratory (NDTL) had failed to detect the banned substance **steroid** which was present in her blood sample.
- © Swimming world governing body, Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) rescheduled the **2021 Fukuoka Aquatics World Championships** to May 2022 to avoid a clash with the postponed Tokyo Olympics.

- ⊙ Egypt's tennis player **Youssef Hossam** has been banned by the Tennis Integrity Unit from professional tennis for life.



He has been banned from the game following his conviction on multiple match fixing and associated corruption charges.

- ⊙ The **Badminton World Championships 2020** has been postponed to November 2021. It will be held at the Carolina Marin Stadium in Huelva, Spain.
- ⊙ French cyclist **Remy Di Gregorio** has been banned for 4 years by the International Cycling Union for using a form of banned blood-boosting hormone EPO (Erythropoietin).



- ⊙ China has won the first edition of **FIDE Chess.com Online Nations Cup** beating USA in the finals.
- ⊙ **FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020** has been postponed to 2021 due to coronavirus pandemic.
- ⊙ Para-athlete **Deepa Malik** has announced her retirement from Paralympics games in order to serve as the office-bearer in the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI).
- ⊙ International Hockey Federation (FIH) has extended the term of **Narinder Batra** as President of FIH until May 2021.

Persons in News

- ⊙ United States President, **Donald Trump** has nominated Indian-American lawyer **Ashok Michael Pinto** as US representative to World Bank's lending arm International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.



- ⊙ Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet has appointed **Govinda Rajulu Chintala** as the Chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.
- ⊙ World Bank Group has appointed **Carmen Reinhart** as its new Vice President and Chief Economist.



- ⊙ **Thangjam Dhabali Singh**, a Manipuri doctor has been conferred with the Order of Rising Sun by Japan government. She received this status for promoting a better understanding of Japan in India and deepening ties between the two countries.
- ⊙ **Shobhana Narasimhan** has been elected as an International Honorary Member to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences for her distinguished work in the field of sciences.
- ⊙ **Shikha Sharma**, the ex-CEO of Axis Bank has been appointed as an advisor to Google Pay India.
- ⊙ **Giridhar Aramane** has taken over the charge as Secretary to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.



- ⊙ **Arvind Kumar Sharma** has taken over the charge as Secretary to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.
- ⊙ **Krishnan Ramachandran** has been appointed as the MD and CEO of Max Bupa Health Insurance. He will succeed Ashish Mehrotra.
- ⊙ **Tarun Bajaj**, Economic Affairs Secretary has become new director on Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India.



He will succeed Atanu Chakraborty.

- ⊙ **Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury** has been reappointed as chairperson of the Parliament's public accounts committee (PAC). He was reappointed the chairman of the committee by Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla**.
- ⊙ **Zubair Iqbal** has been appointed as new managing director of Jammu and Kashmir Bank by Jammu and Kashmir Government.
- ⊙ **Dilip Oommen** has been appointed as the president of Indian Steel Association. He is presently the CEO of Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India.

Plans and Policies

- ⊙ A report, **Lost at Home** is published by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). It is mentioned in this report that almost 33 million new displacements were recorded in 2019 in which around 25 million were due to natural disasters and 8.5 million as a consequence of conflict and violence. According to this report, natural disasters resulted in more new displacements than conflict and violence.
- ⊙ International Energy Agency (IEA) has released its report with the title **Global Energy Review 2020**. This report comprises of estimates for how energy consumption and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions trends are expected to develop over the rest of 2020.

- ⊙ **Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF)** has been set up by the Government of India to provide stimulus to the rice exports. It is set under the aegis of the Agricultural and Processed Foods Export Promotion Development Authority.
- ⊙ To reform the Drug Regulatory System, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) has constituted a committee and is headed by **Rajesh Bhushan**, Officer on Special Duty to the Union health minister. This committee has been tasked with examining the current drug regulatory system and to give recommendations for reforms in order to bring the system more efficient and to streamline it with global standards.

Awards and Honours

- ⊙ **Thalappil Pradeep**, an IIT Madras Professor, has been selected for the **Nikkei Asia Prize 2020** in the category of **Science and Technology** for his pioneering work in nanotechnology-based water purification.



The Nikkei Asia Prize is an award which recognizes the achievements of people and organizations that have improved the lives of people throughout Asia. The awards were created and presented by Nikkei Inc, one of the largest media corporations in Japan. The prize is conferred annually in the three areas that is, Economic and Business Innovation, Science and Technology, and Culture and Community.

List of winners of the prize is as follows:

- **Science and Technology:** Professor Thalappil Pradeep (India)
- **Culture and Community:** Ram Prasad Kadel (Nepal)
- **Economic and Business Innovation:** Anthony Tan (Malaysia) & Tan Hooi Ling (Malaysia)

- ◎ **Pulitzer Prize** has been announced for 2020 in the month of May and Indian journalists **Dar Yasin**, **Mukhtar Khan** and **Channi Anand** have won the award in the field of feature photography.



All the three journalists belong to Associated Press and awarded for the lockdown coverage. The Pulitzer Prize is considered as the highest honour that United States-based journalists and organisations can receive.

- ◎ 17 journalists from 14 countries have been named for **Deutsche Welle Freedom of Speech Award 2020** for showing the outstanding commitment to human rights and freedom of expression in the media. Indian journalist **Siddharth Varadarajan** has the only one who won from India.
- ◎ Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Giriraj Singh has presented the award to the winners of **Startup India-Animal Husbandry Grand Challenge**. The list of winners is as follows.

Category	Winner
Value Added Products	Krushak Mitra Agro Services Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
Eliminating Milk Adulteration	White Gold Technologies LLP, Mumbai
Product Traceability	EmerTech Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
E-commerce Solutions	MoooFarm, Gurugram, Haryana
Breed Improvement & Animal Nutrition	Adis Technologies, Belagavi, Karnataka

- ◎ **Joseph J Landsberg**, **Richard H Waring** and **Nicholas C Coops**, share the **2020 Marcus Wallenberg Prize** for forest sector' for 3-PG (Physiological Principles Predicting Growth), a model to predict forest growth in a changing climate.



The prize for the year 2020 will be presented by **King Carl Gustaf XVI** of Sweden during a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden.

- ◎ Russian President **Vladimir Putin** has awarded North Korean Leader **Kim Jong-un** a commemorative war medal marking the 75th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany.

