

J U L Y 2 0 2 0

**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WILEY

National

- ⊙ The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the **National Education Policy 2020**. It will replace the thirty-four years old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986.



Union Ministers for Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Prakash Javadekar and Human Resource Development (HRD) and Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, made this announcement. Earlier on May 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reviewed it, for which draft was prepared by a panel of experts led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K Kasturirangan. In a significant shift from the 1986 policy, which pushed for a 10+2 structure of school education, the new NEP pitches for a (5+3+3+4) design corresponding to the age groups 3-8 years (foundational stage), 8-11 (preparatory), 11-14 (middle) and 14-18 (secondary). This brings early childhood education (also known as pre-school education for children of ages 3 to 5) under the ambit of formal schooling. Also, students until Class 5 should be taught in their mother tongue or regional language. The policy also proposes phasing out of all institutions offering single streams and that all universities and colleges must aim to become multidisciplinary by 2040.

- ⊙ A fleet of five **French-manufactured Rafale** multi-role combat jets arrived at the Ambala Air Force base after covering a distance of 7,000 km from the Merignac airbase in French port city of Bordeaux.



The fleet comprises 3 single seater and 2 twin seater aircrafts. It would be inducted into the IAF as part of its Ambala-based No 17 Squadron, also known as the 'Golden Arrows'. Government of India signed a ₹ 59,000 crore deal with French aerospace major Dassault Aviation on September 23, 2016 to procure 36 Rafale jets. The delivery of all 36 aircraft will be completed on schedule by the end of 2021.

- ⊙ Government of India along with the Government of Tamil Nadu and the World Bank has signed an agreement for two projects of worth \$250 million. These projects would be executed to help low-income groups in the state of Tamil Nadu get access to affordable housing.
- ⊙ India and Bangladesh has signed an agreement for the formation of a **50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC)**. This company has been formed for LPG business in Bangladesh.



The agreement was signed between the RR Holdings Ltd., Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, the holding company of Beximco LPG of Bangladesh, and IOC Middle East FZE, Dubai, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). It will help in reducing the import cost of LPG and provide it to the people of Bangladesh at an affordable price.

- ⊙ According to a recent United Nations University (UNU) report, **global e-waste** will increase by 38% in the decade between 2020 and 2030. The report provides a national and regional analysis on e-waste quantities and legislative instruments, and makes predictions until 2030. The Global e-waste Monitor 2020 is a collaborative product of the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership (GESP), formed by the United Nations University (UNU).
- ⊙ World Bank has signed a loan agreement of \$400 million with Government of India to enhance support for the **Namami Gange** programme. The loan amount of \$400 million comprises a loan of \$381 million and a proposed Guarantee of up to \$19 million. It will aim to stem the pollution levels in the iconic river and work towards strengthening the management of the river basin which is home to more than 500 million people.

- ③ Maharashtra government has launched the **Maha Jobs Portal** to offer employment opportunities to local residents. Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation will run the Maha job portal.



This portal will help in recruitment of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled employees by bridging the gap between employers and local workers.

- ③ The annual Global **Manufacturing Risk Index (MRI)** report was released by the US-based property consultant Cushman & Wakefield, to rank the most suitable locations for global manufacturing among 48 countries in Europe, Americas, and the Asia-Pacific. Each of the countries has been assessed in four key areas: Bounce-backability, Conditions, Costs and Risks. China and the United States retain the top two positions respectively in MRI 2020.
- ③ India has successfully conducted flight tests of its indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile **Dhruvastra** which is an anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) and has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).



It is a helicopter version of **Nag Helina**. These tests were conducted from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, Odisha.

- ③ The new act has been introduced to offer protection to buyers from traditional sellers as well as from the new e-commerce retailers/platforms. It will protect the consumer rights through its various notified rules and provisions and will empower consumers and hence help them in protecting their rights.

- ③ World Bank has approved a \$750 million MSME Emergency Response program for MSMEs in India to support increased flow of finance in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

- ③ The **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** has been implemented in India from July 20, 2020 and replaced Consumer Protection Act, 1986.



- ③ Union Minister of Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched a mobile application that will provide city-wise weather forecasts and warnings. The application has been named **Mausam**. The application was designed and developed by International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).
- ③ The Cotton Corporation of India is holding surplus stocks of cotton and is trying to boost the export by the next harvest season.



To export the current stocks, India will sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bangladesh to export 1.5 to 2 million bales of cotton. One bale is 170 kilo grams. Also, the CCI will set up its own warehouse in Vietnam to boost cotton exports.



Economy

- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India launched **Innovation Hub** for ideation and incubation of new capabilities that can be leveraged to deepen financial inclusion. The hub is being launched to promote the start-ups in the country. It will help in ideation and incubation of new capabilities. The hub is being launched to promote the start-ups in the country. It will help in ideation and incubation of new capabilities.
- ⊙ General and Health Insurance companies has received approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to launch short-term **Corona Kavach** health insurance policies. This health insurance policy will cover medical expenses occurred due to coronavirus disease.
- ⊙ YES Bank has launched a digital solution, **Loan in Seconds** for instant disbursement of retail loans.
- ⊙ Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) has entered into a partnership with Star Health and Allied Insurance Co. to provide a wide range of health insurance options to its customers.
- ⊙ Bank of Baroda has launched **Insta Click Savings Account**, a 100% paperless digital self-assisted online savings account.
- ⊙ Reserve Bank of India has signed an agreement for extending a \$400-million currency swap facility to Sri Lanka in order to boost the foreign reserves and ensure the financial stability of the country, which is badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ⊙ Government of India has approved the Special liquidity scheme of ₹ 30,000 crore for Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFCs)/Housing Finance Companies (HFCs). This scheme aims to improve the liquidity position of NBFCs/HFCs via a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

Science and Technology

- ⊙ China launched its first successful Mars probe from the Wenchang spacecraft launch site on July 23, 2020. The Mars probe has been named **Tianwen 1**. So far, US, Russia, India and European Union have successfully sent missions to mars. India was the first Asian country to send Mars orbiter and the mission was called **Mission Mangalyaan**.
- ⊙ The United Arab Emirates launched the first ever mission to the red planet, Mars on July 19, 2020. The spacecraft will arrive Mars in February 2021. The satellite **Hope** is to be placed in orbit between 20,000 and 43,000 kilometres above the surface of mars. The satellite will complete its orbit once in 55 hours inclined at an angle of 25 degrees.

- ⊙ NASA announced to launch **ASTHROS** Mission from Antarctica in December 2023. The mission is going to spend three weeks observing air currents above the continent.



This mission will send a football stadium sized balloons into the stratosphere which will observe wavelengths of invisible light from the earth. The balloon has a telescope, sub systems, science instruments, electronic systems and cooling system. ASTHROS is Astrophysics Stratospheric Telescope for High Spectral Resolution Observation as Sub millimetre wavelengths.

- ⊙ IIT-Madras supported start-up Modulus Housing which has developed **portable hospital unit**.



The unit can be dragged anywhere and can be installed within 2 hours.

- ⊙ Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishnak, the Union Minister of Human Resource and Development launched world's most affordable **COVID-19 kit** which was developed by IIT Delhi.



The test called **COROSURE** and came forward as the world's most affordable RT-PCR based COVID-19 diagnostic kit with the base price of ₹ 399. Around 10 companies have been given licenses to manufacture the kit. The technology of preparing the kit is to be transferred to the companies by IIT Delhi.

Sports

- © The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju announced that Haryana will host the fourth edition of **Khelo India Youth Games**. The Games has scheduled to be conducted after Tokyo Olympics. Star Sports has been signed in as the official broadcast of Khelo India Youth Games. The government has been taking immense measures to keep the sports activities alive even during COVID-19 times. The Sports Authority of India transferred ₹ 30,000 to the accounts of Khelo India athletes to help them during COVID-19 crisis. To achieve this, a fund of ₹ 8.25 crores was allocated.
- © The Federation Internationale de Football Association announced that the **2022 World Cup** is to be held in Qatar which will be the first world cup to be held in Arab World and also the first in a muslim-majority country.



FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar 2022

The World Cup would be the last to involve 32 teams as the teams are to be increased to 48 in 2026 tournament.

- © Indian all-rounder **Ravindra Jadeja** has been named as India's most valuable Test player in the 21st century by the Wisden magazine.



He was also rated as the second-most valuable Test player worldwide behind Sri Lanka legend Muttiah Muralitharan.

- © **Lin Dan**, the former world number one badminton player and the two-times Olympic badminton champion from China, has announced his retirement from the sport.
- © At the Cricket South Africa annual awards 2020, **Quinton de Kock** was named as the men's cricketer of the year, while **Laura Wolvaardt** was named as the women's cricketer of the year.



- © Mercedes's, **Valtteri Bottas (Finland)** has won the **Austrian Grand Prix 2020** at Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, Austria.



This was the first race of 2020 Formula One season.

- © International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that the **T20 Men's World Cup**, scheduled to be played in Australia in October-November 2020, has been formally postponed to 2022 due to COVID-19.
- © **G Akash** has become India's 66th Chess Grandmaster. The second council meet of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) for the year 2020 confirmed Akash's GM title. Along with him, **Ameya Audi** of Goa has earned International Master title.

Persons in News

- © **Karnam Sekar**, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Indian Overseas Bank, has retired on 30th June 2020.
- © **Sukhbir Singh Sandhu's** tenure as the chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has been extended for a period of six months.

- © **Micheal Martin** has been elected as new Prime Minister of Ireland.



His election Saturday by the 160-member parliament, with 93 votes in favor to 63 against, caps a remarkable comeback for the 59-year-old Martin.

- © **Gudni Th. Johannesson** has been re-elected as the President of Iceland. He has won his second four-year term as the president of Iceland in the presidential elections held recently. He won the presidential elections with 92% of the popular vote which the second-largest win in Icelandic presidential elections.
- © Pakistan Army has appointed **Major General Nigar Johar** as first female lieutenant general.



She has been appointed as first female Surgeon General of Pak Army.

- © French Prime Minister **Edouard Philippe** has resigned from his post ahead of a government reshuffle. President of Russia, Vladimir Putin has recorded a victory in the recently held Presidential polls and he is set to stay in power until 2036.
- © IAS **Vini Mahajan** has become the first woman chief secretary of Punjab replacing Karan Avtar Singh of the 1984 batch who was due to retire in August this year.



Mahajan is set to remain in the post until her retirement in October 2024.

- © Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the reappointment of Solicitor General **Tushar Mehta** for a period of 3 years. It has also appointed **Chetan Sharma** as the Additional Solicitor General (ASG) for Delhi High Court.
- © The term of **KK Venugopal** has been approved to extend as the Attorney General of India by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet for a period of one year.
- © The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Professor **Sanjay Dwivedi** as the Director General of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication.
- © **Injeti Srinivas** has been appointed as first chairman of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) for a period of three years.
- © **Jean Castex** has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of France. He has replaced the former french Prime Minister Edouard Philippe who resigned from the post ahead of a government reshuffle.

Plans and Policies

- © Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a working group to study and make recommendations on formation of an **Indian Pandemic Risk Pool**. The panel has been tasked to examine the possibility of addressing the different risks which have raised out of a COVID-19 pandemic with the help of a 'Pandemic Risk Pool'.
- © Delhi Cabinet has approved **Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana**. It will be linked to Centre's 'one nation, one ration card' scheme. The scheme will help the beneficiaries get ration delivered at home. They will not have to come to the ration shops.

- © Odisha government has launched **Balaram Yojana** to provide crop loans to landless farmers.

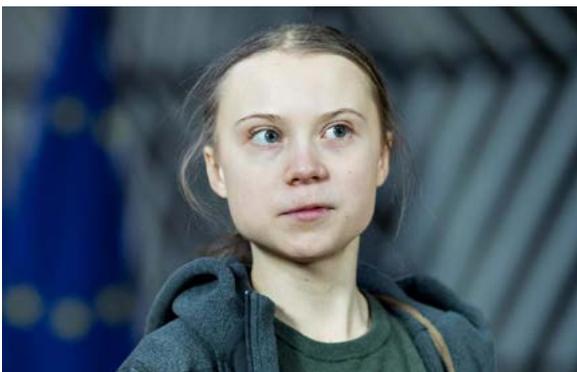


Under this, the landless cultivators will get loans through joint liability groups (JLGs).

- © Karnataka government has launched a relief scheme **Nekara Samman Yojana** for the Silk, cotton, wool and other handloom weavers. State government has allocated a sum of ₹ 10.96 crore under the programme.
- © Uttar Pradesh government has launched **Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana** for all-round development of the Scheduled Castes. He also transferred financial assistance of ₹ 17.42 crore online to 3,484 people under the **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Swarojgar Yojana**.

Awards and Honours

- © The Climate Activist **Greta Thunberg** was awarded the **Gulbenkian Prize** for Humanity with prize money of 1 million Euros.



She is the first person to receive the prize and was selected among 136 nominees from 43 countries.

- © Technical partner of MyGov Corona Helpdesk – **Jio Haptik Technologies Limited** was awarded two awards for their AI (Artificial Intelligence) enabled technology solution at the virtual Global Leadership Summit and Festival of AI & Emerging Technology.



The awards won are under the categories of Best Innovation for COVID-19-Society and People's Choice Covid-19 Overall Winner.

- © The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has announced the list of winners of **MoES National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science**.

Award	Winner
Life Time Excellence Award	Professor Ashok Sahni
National Award for Atmospheric Science & technology	Dr. S. Suresh Babu
National award for Geoscience & technology	N. V. Chalapathi Rao
National Award for Ocean Technology	Dr. M. A. Atmanand
Anna Mani award for woman scientist	Dr. Lidita D. S. Khandeparker
Young Researcher Awards	Dr. Indra Sekhar Sen
National Award for Ocean Science & technology	Dr. V. V. S. S. Sarma

