

AUGUST 2020

**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WILEY

National

- ① National Agricultural Research & Education System – Cloud Infrastructure and Services **Krishi Megh** has been launched by the Government of India. It will help in meeting the services and infrastructure requirements of Digital Agriculture of National Agricultural Research and Education System (NARES).
- ① The **Swachh Bharat Mission Academy** has been launched by the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.



It is a crucial part of the phase 2 of Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen). This phone-based academy and offers a 60-minutes module, which is an IVR based training course. It covers a wide range of topics under Open Defecation Free sustainability (ODF-S) as well as Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).

- ① **Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO)** has been launched by the Union Minister Rajnath Singh. It is a 3-tier organisation which will enable its end users to interact with academia as well as industry for the promotion of innovation and indigenisation for self-reliance in defence, with the help of its dedicated structures.
- ① The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of **National Recruitment Agency (NRA)**. The government has sanctioned a sum of ₹ 1517.57 crore for it.



It will be responsible for transformational reform in the recruitment process for central government jobs

which will include Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance/Department of Financial Services, (also, SSC and Banking). It would be a multi-agency body which be responsible to conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET). The CET will be conducted to shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non-technical) posts. The scores received by the candidate in CET shall be valid for a period of 3-years from the date of declaration of the result. There shall be no restriction on the number of attempts to be taken by a candidate to appear in the Common Eligibility Test subject to the upper age limit.

- ① Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to offer jobs on the basis newly approved CET. The state will be offering jobs based on the marks secured by candidates in the common eligibility test (CET) by National Recruitment Agency (NRA).
- ① The ASEAN-India Economic Ministers Consultations was held virtually. The meeting was attended by the commerce ministers of the 10 ASEAN countries. This included Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Myanmar, Cambodia and Philippines. India was represented by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal.
- ① The Union Cabinet approved redevelopment of three airports in Jaipur, Thiruvananthapuram and Guwahati and approved to provide ₹ 1,070 crores to handle the redevelopment projects. The projects are to be developed by Adani Enterprises Limited. The three airports being developed are to be leased for operation, management and development in public-private partnership.
- ① The 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting was held under the presidency of Russia. The Environment Ministers of the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa participated in the meeting. The meeting was preceded by the BRICS Working Group meeting. India will host the next meeting in 2021.
- ① Russia chaired the 4th Meeting of the BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group. The session was held over video conference and featured the participation of delegates from Brazil, Russia, China, South Africa and India. Rakesh Asthana, Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau led the Indian delegation that participated in the meeting.
- ① Union Minister Piyush Goyal has inaugurated the National Digital Conference on **Easing Doing Business for Atmanirbhar Bharat**. This conference is organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with the Department for Promotion of Investment and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to improve the business environment of India.



- ⊙ The 13th Session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation was held to review the continuing growth of broad based cooperation between the two countries. The session was co-chaired by Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs of India and Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates.

Economy

- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India held the second **Monetary Policy Committee** of 2020-21. During this meet, the committee analysed the current & evolving macroeconomic and financial conditions and aimed to keep the inflation within the target and hence to preserve financial stability.

It concluded that for the year 2020-21, as a whole, real GDP growth is expected to be negative.

The committee decided:

- The Repo Rate under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) has been kept unchanged at 4.00%.
- The Reverse Repo Rate under the LAF has been kept unchanged at 3.35%.
- The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate have been kept unchanged at 4.25%.

- ⊙ The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chaired the 41st **GST Council meet**. The council discussed states' compensation and revenue losses.

In the fiscal year 2020-21, the GST shortfall is ₹ 2.35 lakh crores. There is shortfall in compensation cess and no increases were made to the taxes. The shortfall due to implementation of GST is ₹ 97,000. The Central Government now suggests that this will be provided to the states in consultation with the RBI. The money shall be repaid after five years from cess collection.

The Central Government is to give more relaxation of 0.5% to states borrowing under FRBM act.

- ⊙ The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that the businesses with annual turnover of up to ₹ 40 lakhs are exempted from GST. Earlier, the limit was ₹ 20 lakhs.

The announcement was made over the tweeter on the first death anniversary of former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. She also added that people with turnover up to ₹ 1.5 crores shall opt for Composition Scheme and shall pay 1% tax. Earlier, the limit was ₹ 75 lakhs. This composition scheme has been extended to services as well. Also, special lower rates have been prescribed for restaurants, construction, etc.

- ⊙ According to the NSO officials, in spite of agricultural production going up in the country, the GDP is contracting. First time India is witnessing fall in GDP in spite of agricultural production going up since 1996-97.

- ⊙ **Kona Kona Umeed**, a two-month long campaign has been announced by Kotak Mahindra Bank for huge offers and discounts to lift up hope and optimism among its customers in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic.



Science and Technology

- ⊙ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that the second lunar mission of India Chandrayaan-2 has completed one year around the Moon in the lunar orbit and all the instruments of Chandrayaan-2 are performing well at present.



ISRO also highlighted that the fuel on-board is adequate to keep Chandrayaan-2 operational for seven more years. The orbiter completed more than 4,400 orbits around the Moon. Although, the soft-landing attempt was not successful previous year but the orbiter was placed successfully in the lunar orbit.

- ⊙ A catastrophic blast occurred recently at the Lebanon capital, Beirut which was driven by tonnes of Ammonium Nitrate that killed more than 135 people and injured more than 1000s.

Basically, Ammonium Nitrate is a white, crystalline chemical that is soluble in water and mainly used to manufacture commercial explosives.





In India, the use of Ammonium Nitrate is defined by the Ammonium Nitrate Rules, 2012 under the Explosives Act, 1884. Under the UN classification of dangerous goods, ammonium nitrate is classified as an oxidiser. However, it can be used as an explosive when mixed with other contaminants.

- ⊙ The NASA researchers have discovered that Ceres (one of among 5 dwarf planets which includes, Pluto, Eris, Haumea, Makemake and Ceres) has an ocean world. Ceres is found between Mars and Jupiter. Also, Ceres has a brine reservoir that is located 40 km deep and is 100s of miles wide. This makes the dwarf planet water rich. There are other moons and dwarf planets in the solar system where oceans exist. This includes moons of Jupiter and Saturn.
- ⊙ The Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad launched the **Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge**. The challenge is being launched to achieve self-reliance or **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.



The challenge aims to design microprocessors that has the ability to address global challenges. These challenges mainly include technological glitches and security. The prize money of the challenge is ₹ 4.3 crores. Students and start-up companies can participate in the challenge.

Sports

- ⊙ Former Indian Captain and the World Cup winner, **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** has announced his retirement from the International Cricket.



He represented India in 350 ODI's, 98 T20 Internationals (T20Is) and 90 test matches.

- ⊙ Indian batsman **Suresh Raina** has announced his retirement from the International Cricket.



He made his international debut against Sri Lanka in 2005 and represented India in 226 ODIs, 78 T20Is and 18 Tests in his cricketing career that spanned over 13 years.

- ⊙ Indian table tennis player, **Poulomi Ghatak** announced the retirement and joined her husband **Soumyadip Roy** to coach younger players.



She represented India at the Commonwealth Games in 2006 and Commonwealth championships between 2000 and 2008. She entered Olympics at Sydney for the first time when she was 16.

- ⊙ On the occasion of the **National Sports Day 2020**, the Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has announced an enhancement in the prize money in four of the seven categories of the National Sports and Adventure Awards. The prize money for the Sports Awards was last reviewed in 2008.
 - The prize money for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award has been increased to ₹ 25 lakhs from the previous amount of ₹ 7.5 lakhs.
 - Prize of the Arjuna Award has been enhanced to ₹ 15 lakhs from ₹ 5 lakhs.
 - Prize of the Dhronacharya (Lifetime) Award has been enhanced to ₹ 15 lakhs from ₹ 5 lakhs, while Dhronacharya (Regular) award has been enhanced to ₹ 10 lakhs instead of ₹ 5 lakhs.
 - Dhyanchand Awardees will be given ₹ 10 lakhs instead of ₹ 5 lakhs.
- ⊙ India has withdrawn from the women's world team Squash championship scheduled in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 15 to 20, due to lack of preparation, time and match-readiness of its players.
- ⊙ The Indian Government has provisionally granted permission for the 13th edition of **Indian Premier League's (IPL's) 2020** to be rescheduled in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 19 to November 10, 2020, due to COVID-19 outbreak. BCCI has also decided to host a Women's T20 Challenge to be held from November 1 to 10, 2020 in UAE.
- ⊙ World Cup winner German footballer, **Benedikt Howedes** and former Real Madrid and Spain goalkeeper, **Iker Casillas** have retired from football.
- ⊙ Indian Umpire, **KN Ananthapadmanabhan** has been included in ICC's international panel of umpires.
- ⊙ **Lewis Hamilton** (Mercedes-Great Britain) has won the Formula One Spanish Grand Prix 2020 held at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Spain.



Max Verstappen (Red Bull–Netherlands) came second followed by **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes–Finland) at third.

- ⊙ The International Cricket Council has confirmed that the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2020** that was postponed due to Covid-19 will be held in Australia in 2022. India will host the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 as planned. ICC has also decided to postpone the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2021 in New Zealand till February–March 2022 because of the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on cricket globally.

Persons in News

- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India has approved the appointment of **Sashidhar Jagdishan** as the next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of HDFC Bank. He will replace **Aditya Puri**.
- ⊙ The Lieutenant-Governor of Jammu Kashmir, **Girish Chandra Murmu** has resigned from his post. Murmu's resignation on the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 which gave special status to the erstwhile state.
- ⊙ President **Ram Nath Kovind** has appointed former Union minister **Manoj Sinha** as the next Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ⊙ **Pradeep Kumar Joshi**, Educationist Professor, has been appointed as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- ⊙ **P S Ranipse**, Odisha cadre IPS officer, has been appointed as Inspector General (IG), in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- ⊙ **Hardayal Prasad**, the former SBI Card head, has been appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of PNB Housing Finance.
- ⊙ **Harsh Kumar Bhanwala** has been appointed as Executive Chairman of the Capital India Finance Limited.
- ⊙ **Pramod Bhasin** has been appointed as a new Chairman of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).
- ⊙ **Soma Mondal** has been selected by the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) as the next chairman of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).
- ⊙ **Subhash Sheoratan**, former RBI deputy governor, has been appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of Indiabulls Housing Finance (IBH).



Plans and Policies

- Reliance Power and Japanese energy major JERA have signed an agreement with a group of banks for their new gas-fired thermal power generation project in Bangladesh. This agreement is for a new 745 MW natural gas combined-cycle power project in Meghnaghat, Bangladesh.
- The Department of Defence (DoD) has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K).

Awards and Honours

- The Government of India has announced the list of winners of the **National Sports Awards 2020**, as per the recommendation of the Selection Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) **Mukundakam Sharma** (former Judge of Supreme Court of India).



Honourable President of India conferred the awards to the awardees at a specially organized function through virtual mode from Rashtrapati Bhawan on 29th August, 2020.

Winners of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award

Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Rohit Sharma	Cricket
Mariyappan T.	Para Athletics
Manika Batra	Table Tennis
Vinesh	Wrestling
Rani	Hockey

Winners of Arjun Award

Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Atanu Das	Archery
Dutee Chand	Athletics
Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy	Badminton
Chirag Chandrasekhar Shetty	Badminton

Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Vishesh Bhriguvanshi	Basketball
Subedar Manish Kaushik	Boxing
Lovlina Borgohain	Boxing
Ishant Sharma	Cricket
Deepti Sharma	Cricket
Sawant Ajay Anant	Equestrian
Sandesh Jhingan	Football
Aditi Ashok	Golf
Akashdeep Singh	Hockey
Deepika	Hockey
Deepak	Kabaddi
Kale Sarika Sudhakar	Kho
Dattu Baban Bhokanal	Rowing
Manu Bhaker	Shooting
Saurabh Chaudhary	Shooting
Madhurika Suhas Patkar	Table Tennis
Divij Sharan	Tennis
Shiva Keshavan	Winter Sports
Divya Kakran	Wrestling
Rahul Aware	Wrestling
Suyash Narayan Jadhav	Para Swimming
Sandeep	Para Athletics
Manish Narwal	Para Shooting

Winners of Dronacharya Award: Life-Time Category

Name of the Coach	Discipline
Dharmendra Tiwary	Archery
Purushotham Rai	Athletics
Shiv Singh	Boxing
Romesh Pathania	Hockey
Krishan Kumar Hooda	Kabaddi
Vijay Bhalchandra Munishwar	Para Powerlifting
Naresh Kumar	Tennis
Om Parkash Dahiya	Wrestling

Winners of Dronacharya Award: Regular Category

Name of the Coach	Discipline
Jude Felix Sebastian	Hockey
Yogesh Malviya	Mallakhamb
Jaspal Rana	Shooting
Kuldeep Kumar Handoo	Wushu
Gaurav Khanna	Para Badminton

Winners of Dhyan Chand Award

Name of the Sports person	Discipline
Kuldip Singh Bhullar	Athletics
Jincy Philips	Athletics
Pradeep Shrikrishna Gandhe	Badminton
Trupti Murgunde	Badminton
N. Usha	Boxing
Lakha Singh	Boxing
Sukhvinder Singh Sandhu	Football
Ajit Singh	Hockey
Manpreet Singh	Kabaddi
J. Ranjith Kumar	Para Athletics
Satyaprakash Tiwari	Para Badminton
Manjeet Singh	Rowing
Late Sachin Nag	Swimming
Nandan P Bal	Tennis
Netarpal Hooda	Wrestling

Winners of Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar

Category	Entity Recommended for Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, 2020
Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent	1. Lakshya Institute 2. Army Sports Institute
Encouragement to sports through Corporate Social Responsibility	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Ltd.
Employment of sports persons and sports welfare measures	Air Force Sports Control Board
Sports for Development	International Institute of Sports Management (IISM)

Winner of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy

- Panjab University, Chandigarh

Winners of Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award

Name of the Sports person	Category
Anita Devi	Land Adventure
Col. Sarfraz Singh	Land Adventure
Taka Tamut	Land Adventure
Narender Singh	Land Adventure
Keval Hiren Kakka	Land Adventure
Satendra Singh	Water Adventure
Gajanand Yadava	Air Adventure
Late Magan Bissa	Life Time Achievement

Winners of the Gramodaya Bandhu Mitra Puraskaras

- Chairperson of Infosys Foundation, Sudha Murty
- Group Head of Agri and IT Businesses of ITC Ltd, Sivakumar Surampudi
- Padma Bhushan Vijay Bhatkar
- Padmasri SP Verma
- Vilas Shinde (Director, Sahyadri Farms)
- Koosam Rajamouli, Former Sarpanch of Gangadevipalli in Telangana
- Brig Pogula Ganesham, Founder of Palle Srujana
- Govinda Rajulu Chintala, Chairman of the NABARD

