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**MONTHLY UPDATES ON  
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**WILEY**

## National

- Country's first seaplane service between the Statue of Unity near Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



This 19-seater seaplane will be managed by private airline SpiceJet. The service will cover the distance of 200 km between Sabarmati and Kevadia, in just 45 minutes by flight, which usually takes 4 hours.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Arogya Van** in the Narmada district of Gujarat and accompanied by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and Governor Acharya Devvrat.



Arogya Kutir, Ekta Mall, and Children Nutrition Park were also inaugurated by him.

- The 40th Meeting of the SAARCFINANCE Governors' Group was held virtually, under the Chairmanship of Governor of RBI, Shaktikanta Das and was attended by the Governors from SAARC central banks. SAARCFINANCE is a network of central bank governors and finance secretaries of the SAARC region. The Governors reaffirmed their commitment to continued co-operation and sharing of central bank experiences.
- The Panna Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh) has been included in the **World Network of Biosphere Reserves** list of the UNESCO. This is the 12th biosphere reserve from India to be included in the list, and third from Madhya Pradesh, after Pachmarhi and Amarkantak.

The UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) covers internationally designated protected areas that demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature.

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is to set up a committee to review the existing guidelines of Television Rating Agencies. The committee has been formed with four members under the chairmanship of CEO of Prasar Bharti Sashi Shekar Vempati. The other three members of the committee are, Rajkumar Upadhyaya, Dr. Shalabh and, Professor Pulak Ghosh.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi co-chaired India-ASEAN summit along with the Vietnamese Prime Minister Ngyuyen Xuan Phuc. The summit reviewed the status of India-ASEAN strategic partnership. It focused on key areas such as maritime cooperation, connectivity, trade and commerce, capacity building and education. During the summit, PM announced that India is to contribute 1 million USD to COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved ₹ 1810 crore investment proposal of 210 MW of Luhri Stage I Hydro Power Project. The hydro power project is to be constructed on River Sutlej and will generate 758.2 million units of electricity annually. In order to implement the project, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Government of Himachal Pradesh and Sutlej Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited during the event 'Rising Himachal'.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has made FASTags mandatory for all four-wheelers from January 1, 2021. As per the notification, it is a major step towards online payment at toll centres.



FASTags are the prepaid tags for automatic toll collection and work on Radio Frequency Identification technology. It will reduce the time of toll collection and will also ensure correct toll collection. These are usually pasted on the windscreen of the vehicles and rechargeable. The amount of toll is automatically deducted once these vehicles pass through the toll centre areas.

- ③ The Mumbai based research non-profit India Migration Now has recently released **Interstate Migrant Policy Index (IMPEX)** to measure integration of interstate migrants. The average IMPEX score of India is 37 out of 100. As per the index, the states of Kerala, Goa, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have been most successful in integrating migrant workers. On the other hand, Delhi has the least Interstate Migrant Policy Index.
- ③ The State Government of Tamil Nadu recently notified that it would grant 100% motor vehicle tax exemption for Electric Vehicles. Earlier, the State Government had issued orders for 50% concessional rate to EV taxes. The State Government has exempted taxes to both transport and non-transport vehicles. The State Government is already providing incentives to attract investments. The Tamil Nadu Government provides 100% GST reimbursement and 50% capital subsidy to the EV manufacturing units.
- ③ The IISc and the Indian Oil Corporation Research and Development Centre signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop biomass gasification-based Hydrogen Generation Technology to produce Fuel Cell Grade Hydrogen at an affordable price. This technology is to be demonstrated at the Indian Oil Research and Development Centre at Faridabad and will provide clean energy option to address the challenge of biomass waste. The hydrogen generated from this demonstration plant is to be used to power fuel cell buses of bigger projects of Indian Oil.
- ③ The Union Education Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated 46 online AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy Faculty Development Programmes (FDP). It was launched to train the teachers in higher education institutions association with AICTE (All India Council of Technical Education).
- ③ Mastercard and United States Agency for International Development launched 'Project Kirana'. The programme will enable women entrepreneurs to grow, launch and thrive. Under Project Kirana, a two-year programme is to be rolled out in selected cities such as Kanpur, Lucknow and Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh. The project will work to increase revenue, digital payments and expand financial inclusion.
- ③ The Union Cabinet approved ₹ 6,000 crores of capital infusion into the National Infrastructure Investment Fund under the **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**. The move will leverage to create financial pipeline of ₹ 1 lakh crore. NIIF was set up by Government of India in February 2015. The main objective of creating the fund was to increase the investment in Greenfield and brownfield projects. It manages three funds namely master fund, strategic fund, fund of funds.
- ③ The National Payment Corporation of India approved the Facebook owned messaging Application, WhatsApp to 'Go Live' on UPI. This is to be achieved through new feature of WhatsApp called 'WhatsApp Pay'. In order to achieve this, WhatsApp has partnered with five banks and one payment bank namely ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India and, Jio Payment Bank. Under the partnership, the money will be held in the bank account. The messaging app is just a platform that will help transfer the money to other people.
- ③ The Reserve Bank of India recently imposed a moratorium on Lakshmi Vilas Bank of India for a period of thirty days. The RBI has put a cap of ₹ 25,000 on withdrawals from the bank and has also drafted a scheme for the merger of the bank. Under the scheme, the Lakshmi Vilas Bank is to be amalgamated with the DBS Bank of Singapore. The bank had undergone a steady decline in the last three years. It has been experiencing continuous withdrawal of deposits and very low levels of liquidity. The bank failed to raise adequate capital to address its issues. Around one-fourth of the bank advances have turned into bad assets. Also, the non-performing assets of the bank were at 25.4% of its advances in the September quarter.

## Economy

- ③ The Reserve Bank of India has constructed an Internal Working Group under PK Mohanty. The committee was set up to review ownership guidelines of Indian private sector banks. It has submitted a report about the bank licensing in India. Large industrial houses and corporates shall be allowed as promoters of banks which is possible only after making required amendments to the Banking Regulations Act, 1949. The committee has recommended a 3-year operational time for a Payment Bank to be converted into a Small Finance Bank. The current period is of 5 years.
- ③ India attended first BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meet represented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman. During the meet, the finance ministers observed that BRICS members have delivered significant initiatives in 2020 at G20 Action Plan in response to COVID-19.

- © **Kris Gopalakrishnan**, the former co-chairman and co-founder of Infosys was appointed as the first Chairperson of Reserve Bank Innovation Hub by the Reserve Bank of India.



The Reserve Bank Innovation Hub aims to promote innovation across financial sector. The hub will aim to increase the use of innovative technologies across the finance sectors and acts as a centre for incubation and ideation of new capabilities that can be leveraged to create innovative financial services and products.

- © Karnataka Bank Ltd. has launched the National Common Mobility Debit (NMC) card.



It is the first-ever contactless debit-cum-prepaid Rupay Card of the bank and is an inter-operable transport card. This debit card has been launched in-line with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' vision.

## Science and Technology

- © The Dry Swab Direct RT-PCR testing method was approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research to test the COVID-19 virus. The test was developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) by making a simple variation to the standard RT-PCR method. The method is highly inexpensive and does not require new investment of resources. It has a

quick turnaround time. Also, in this testing method the swabs collected can be transported in dry state. Therefore, handling and transportation of samples become easier and also less prone to spread of infection.

- © NASA launched the Copernicus Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich satellite to monitor oceans.



The satellite was launched in SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket and was a part of the Mission Jason Continuity of Service. The mission was launched to measure the height of the ocean which will be helpful to understand the climate change.

## Sports

- © The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced Reliance Jio as the title sponsor of the 2020 edition of the Women's T20 Challenge. The partnership will also have the support of Reliance Foundation Education and Sports for All (RF ESA).
- © **Lewis Hamilton** (Mercedes-Great Britain) has won the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix 2020 at Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari race track, Italy.
- © Australian all-rounder, **Shane Watson** has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.



The 39-year-old will hang up his boots after an illustrious career during which he won two ICC Men's Cricket World Cups and two ICC Champions Trophy titles. He played 59 Tests, 190 ODIs and 58 T20Is.

- Indian boxers Amit Panghal, Sanjeet and Ashish Kumar have won gold medals at the recently concluded Alexis Valentine International Boxing Tournament held in Nantes, France.
- West Indies batsman, **Marlon Samuels** has announced his retirement from professional cricket.



The 39-year-old had informed Cricket West Indies (CWI) about his retirement in June this year, having last played for his country in December 2018 against Bangladesh.

- Russian tennis player, **Daniil Medvedev** has won Paris Master 2020 title in tennis when he beat Alexander Zverev 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 in Paris. He became the fourth Russian to capture the Rolex Paris Masters title.

## Persons in News

- Former Chief Minister of Assam, **Tarun Gogoi** passed away due to post covid-19 complications.



He was diagnosed with COVID-19 in August 2020. He was then administered with the plasma therapy.

- Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer, **Rajiv Jalota** has been appointed as the chairman of Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT).
- AK Gupta**, the new Managing Director and CEO of ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) took charge. Before this, he was Director (Operations) of the company.
- National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) Chairman, **Dilip Rath** has been unanimously elected to the board of global dairy body International Dairy Federation (IDF).

- Manipur's **Gyanendro Ningombam** was elected unopposed as the President of Hockey India, while former President **Mohd Mushtaque Ahmad** is back in the Hockey India Executive Board after being Elected Unopposed for the Senior Vice President post.
- Indian diplomat, **Vidisha Maitra** has been elected to the UN's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).



The election was a tightly contested one but Maitra won with 126 UN members supporting her candidature for the only post for the Asia-Pacific group while 64 voted for the opposing candidate who was from Iraq.

- Indian Oil Corp (IOC) director-pipelines **Akshay Kumar Singh** will be the new managing director and chief executive of the country's biggest gas importer, Petronet LNG Ltd. He will replace Prabhat Singh who completed his 5-year term.
- The Union government has extended the tenure of Enforcement Directorate (ED) Director **Sanjay Kumar Mishra** by a year after modifying his appointment order that was issued in 2018. His tenure was to end next week as the ED director's post comes with a fixed term of two years.
- Auckland-based commercial lawyer and director of New Zealand Cricket (NZC) since 2012, **Greg Barclay** has been elected as the new chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), after the second round of voting.

## Plans and Policies

- The Union Minister of Science and Technology, Harsh Vardhan has launched the 'SERB – POWER' (Science and Engineering Research Board – Promoting Opportunities For Women in Exploratory Research) schemes which aim to encourage and support emerging as well as eminent women researchers to undertake R&D activities in frontier areas of science and engineering.

- ③ Ganga Utsav-2020 has been organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) jointly with the Ministry of Jal Shakti. The three-day-long Ganga Utsav-2020 has been organised from November 2-4, 2020, virtually amidst COVID-19 precautions.
- ③ Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Narendra Singh Tomar has virtually inaugurated the capacity building component of the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises scheme (PM-FME Scheme). This scheme has been launched with an outlay of ₹ 10,000 crore for a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25.
- ③ India's first Sandalwood Museum is being established in Aranya Bhavan in Ashokapuram, Mysuru, Karnataka. The museum is set up by the Regional Forest Department to educate farmers about the significance of cultivation of sandalwood.
- ③ The Bilateral Summit between India and Italy was held virtually on November 6, 2020. The Summit was attended by the Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Italy Prof. Giuseppe Conte. The two leaders reviewed the broad framework of the bilateral relationship and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation against common global challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ③ The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a subsidiary of NTPC Ltd., NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVVN), to promote usage of electric vehicles and set up solar power plants at the airports managed and operated by AAI.



This will also provide technical support, information on the availability of saplings, marketing facilities, pest control measures, incentives and schemes provided for sandalwood growers by the government.

- ③ ICICI Lombard in partnership with Freepaycard, an online pre-paid card trading platform, has launched Group Safeguard Insurance. This strategic partnership will make the bite-sized health insurance solutions, designed specifically for Freepaycard members, available at its multi-category partner retail outlets. Freepaycard members can add these health solutions on the go while shopping for other essential goods or services.
- ③ Tech giant IBM stated it has collaborated with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) to transform the latter's customer experience using digital tools. Around 12,400 IOCL distributors covering about 130 million consumers can now use the Indian Oil One mobile app and portal, developed by IBM Services.
- ③ The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the Research and Development Centre of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) have signed an MoU to develop and demonstrate biomass gasification-based hydrogen generation technology. This technology will be used for producing fuel cell-grade hydrogen at an affordable price.
- ③ The Booker Prize of the year 2020 was won by **Douglas Stuart** for his debut novel **Shuggie Bain**. The shortlist of Booker Prize consisted of five more titles such as **Burnt Sugar**. The **Burnt Sugar** was published in India as **Girl in White Cotton**. It also included **The New Wilderness** by Diane Cook, **The Shadow King** by Maaza Mengiste, **This Mournable Body** by Tsitsi Dangarembga, **Real Life** by Brandon Taylor and **The Shadow King** by Maaza Mengiste.
- ③ The Pilibhit Tiger Reserve and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department bagged the first international award TX2. The Pilibhit Tiger Reserve was awarded for doubling its number of tigers in four years. The target set was to double the numbers in ten years. The target was set by the partners of the award in 2010. The partners are Global Tiger Forum, United Nations Development Programme, Conservation Tiger Standards and Lion's Share. None of the other thirteen tiger range countries could success in doubling the big cat population within a span of ten years.
- ③ Malayalam writer, **Paul Zacharia** has been selected for this year's Ezhuthachan Puraskaram, the Kerala government's highest literary honour. Zacharia was chosen for his contribution to Malayalam literature during the past five decades.
- ③ Filmmaker **Hariharan** has been selected for the JC Daniel Award, the state government's highest honour for lifetime contributions to Malayalam cinema. The award carries a purse of ₹ 5 lakh, a citation, and a sculpture.
- ③ Malayalam author, **S Hareesh** has won the JCB Prize for Literature 2020 for his novel **Moustache**. It has been translated into English by Jayasree Kalathil & published by HarperCollins India.

## Awards and Honours