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**MONTHLY UPDATES ON  
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**WILEY**

## NATIONAL

- © The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the agreement signed between Government of India and the Government of UK based on Customs Cooperation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs matters. This Agreement will provide a legal framework to share intelligence and information between the customs department of the two countries. It will help to ensure if Customs laws are abided and to prevent and investigate custom offences. Also, the agreement will help in exchange of information about origin of goods traded between the countries, customs value, tariff classification, etc.
- © The Union Cabinet recently approved the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Director General of Trade Remedies of India and Trade and Tariff Commission of Bangladesh. The agreement was signed on March, 2021 to increase the cooperation in the area of trade remedies. This agreement aims to promote exchange of information, trade remedies and other activities in accordance with the provisions of World Trade Organisation. It will mainly target on countervailing, anti-dumping and safeguard measures in bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh.
- © In the **Global Gap Report 2021** of World Economic Forum, India has slipped 28 places to rank 140 among 156 countries. In 2020, India ranked 112th among 153 countries. Iceland has topped the index as the most gender-equal country in the world for the 12th time followed by Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Rwanda. Afghanistan is the worst-performing country. India emerged as the third-worst performing country while Bangladesh is the best performer in South Asia. Among India's neighbours, Bangladesh ranked 65, Nepal 106, Pakistan 153, Afghanistan 156, Bhutan 130 and Sri Lanka 116.
- © The **Jallianwala Bagh massacre**, also known as the Amritsar massacre, took place on April 13, 1919. After the incident, the Jallianwala Bagh garden has been converted into a memorial.



This year was the 102nd anniversary of the terror that shook the entire country to a standstill. Thousands of people on this day come to pay their respects to the martyred men, women, who were killed on this fateful day for the nation.

- © Nation celebrates **National Panchayati Raj Day** (National Local Self Government Day) on April 24 every year organized by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. The first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated on April 2010. April 24, 1993 marks a defining moment in the history of decentralization of power to the grassroots, with the institutionalization of Panchayati Raj, through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 which came into force with effect from that day. Ministry of Panchayati Raj commemorates the 24th April of every year as the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD), as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment came into force on this date. Rajasthan was the first state that carried the Panchayati Raj System in 1959 during the times of late Prime Minister Jawarharlal Nehru.
- © Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has launched the **Tribal TB Initiative** in pursuit of TB Mukt Bharat. The government accords top priority to ensuring Universal Access to free treatment and care for TB across the country. A Guidance Note on Joint Action Plan for Tuberculosis (TB) Elimination, a Special Edition of Tribal Ministry's Publication 'ALEKH' on TB, and a document on Tribal Tuberculosis (TB) Initiative was also released at the event.



- ⊙ The central government has declared April 14 as the public holiday in the remembrance of Dr. BR Ambedkar's (his birth date).



He was the sculptor of the Indian Constitution and the country already celebrates his birthday as Ambedkar Jayanti every year. The government announced that from this year 14th April will be declared as a public holiday. April 14, 2021 was his 130th birth anniversary.

## ECONOMY

- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India recently joined the Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS). The main objective of the system is to increase and accelerate green finance. By joining the system, RBI is to learn from and contribute to the Global Climate risk management in the financial sector. Ultimately, the apex bank will work with its global partners to support the transition towards a sustainable economy. There are 83 central banks associated with the system, out of these 75 are members and 13 are observers.
- ⊙ The **Bitcoin** currency tumbled more than 4% after the Central Bank of Turkey banned the use of Crypto currencies and crypto assets for purchases. The bank cited possible irreparable damages and transaction risks as the reason for the ban. The ban followed actions of Morocco in banning the currency and is expected to be implemented in India as well. The other smaller coins such as XRP, Ethereum that tend to move in tandem with bitcoin fell between 6% and 12%.
- ⊙ **Flipkart**, an E-Commerce company, recently announced that it will be acquiring **Cleartrip**

which is a leading online travel and technology company. Cleartrip was founded in 2006. The company books train and flight tickets, hotel reservations and other activities in India and in middle east countries. The company has offices in Saudi Arabia, UAE, India and Egypt. Flipkart is the major competitor of Amazon's Indian subsidiary and Snapdeal. Till 2017, Flipkart held 39.5% of market share of E-Commerce industry of India. After acquiring Myntra it gained a dominant position in apparel segment. Today it is described as being neck and neck with Amazon. Flipkart also owns Phonepe. In 2018, Walmart acquired 77% of controlling stake in Flipkart.

- ⊙ The **Asian Development Bank** recently released its Asian Development Outlook, 2021. According to this report, India is to grow at 11%. ADB has provided a financial support of 1.5 billion USD to India to fight against COVID-19. According to ADB, the South Asia is expected to rebound at 9.5% in 2021. The South Asian region had contracted by 6% in 2020. The growth of the region will moderate to 6.6% in 2022.
- ⊙ The Central Government has announced to infuse ₹ 14,500 crores in four state-owned lenders namely Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of India and UCO Bank in 2020-21, by issuing non-interest bearing bonds to these banks. This infusion will complete the government's total capital infusion of ₹ 20,000 crores in public sector banks for the current financial year 2020-21.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- ⊙ The biggest floating **solar power plant** of India is set up at the Ramagundam Thermal Power Plant reservoir in Telangana. The capacity of the solar power plant is 100 MW. The solar power plant is to be set up in 450 acres of the reservoir.



The project is commissioned by NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation). NTPC aims to reduce its carbon footprints and increase its green energy production to 30% of its capacity through this solar power plant. The cost of the project has been estimated as ₹ 423 crores. The power plant will have 4.5 lakh photovoltaic panels.

- © The Central Institute of Brackish Aquaculture located in Chennai has developed an indigenous vaccine for Viral Nervous Necrosis. The name of the vaccine is **Nodavac-R**. The disease is caused by the **Betanodavirus**. It mostly affects teleost fish. More than forty species are affected by this virus and most of them are marine species. This virus transmits through passive diffusion and contact. The disease mostly occurs in juveniles or larvae. However, it also affects the adults.

## SPORTS

- © Indian Women have created history at the AIBA 2021 Youth World Boxing Championship. A total of eight Indians entered the finals, out of which seven were women. All the women finalists finished on top. All the women finalists registered victories and finished top.



The names are as follows:

Name	Category
Gitika	48 kg
Naorem Babyrojisana Chanu	51 kg
Poonam	57 kg
Vinka	60 kg
Arundhati Choudhary	69 kg
T Sanamacha Chanu	75 kg
Alfiya Pathan	81 kg

In Men's section, Ankit Narwal won bronze in 64 kg. Similarly, Bishwamitra Chongthom and Vishal Gupta won bronze medal in 49 kg and 91 kg, respectively.

- © **Hubert Hurkacz** of Poland has won the Miami Open title. He won the title playing against Jannik Sinner.



He has also become the Poland's first Masters 1000 Champion. In 2018, he qualified for the Next Gen ATP Finals held in Milan. In 2019, he won his first ATP title in Winston-Salem.

- © The Indian Wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** has won her maiden Gold at the Asian Wrestling Championship. She won the medal beating Taipei's **Meng Hsuan Hsieh**.



Vinesh had earlier won four bronze and three silver medals. This is her third gold medal, but first at the Asian Wrestling Championship. She won Arjuna Award in 2016, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award in 2020. Also, she was a Padma Shri nominee in 2018 by the Sports Authority of India.

## PERSONS IN NEWS

- ◎ The Expenditure Secretary **T V Somanathan** was recently designated as the Finance Secretary by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.



Currently, he is the senior most officer among all the secretaries in the Ministry of Finance. He is a 1987 batch Indian Administrative Service Officer of Tamil Nadu cadre.

- ◎ Election Commissioner **Sushil Chandra** recently took over as the new Chief Election Commissioner of India and appointed by the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind. He was appointed as the Election Commissioner along with Ashok Lavasa and Arora in 2019.



He will oversee the completion of the ongoing assembly elections. His term will end in 2022. Before that assembly elections will be held in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur, and Uttarakhand. Earlier, he had served as the Chairperson of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. In 2017, he launched 'Operation Clean Money' to curb illegal wealth and black money in the country.

- ◎ **Noura al-Matroushi** has been selected as the first female astronaut of UAE from four thousand other applicants. She is to be trained with NASA for future space exploration missions.



Noura is to be accompanied by Mohammed al-Mulla. Both astronauts are to be trained with Johnson Space Centre of NASA located in Houston, Texas. She is currently working as an engineer at the National Petroleum Construction Company. She acted as the Vice President of the Youth Council of the company and is also a member of American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

- ◎ Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently released the Hindi translation of **Odisha Itihaas**. The book is available in Odia and English so far. It was translated to Hindi by Shankarlal Purohit. The book was written by Utkal Keshari Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab and was translated to Hindi by Shankarlal Purohit. Harekrushna Mahatab was the first Chief Minister of Odisha, served 1946 and 1950 and again between 1956 and 1961. He was popularly known as Utkal Keshari.
- ◎ The Government of India recently appointed **S Ramann** as the Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries and Development Bank of India. The appointment is for a period of three years.



The name of the new Chairman and Managing Director was recommended by Banks Board Bureau. S Ramann is currently the CEO of National E-Governance Services Limited. The National E-Governance is the first Information Utility of India. He is a 1991 batch Indian Audit and Accounts Service Officer.

- © **Justice N V Ramana**, who was recently appointed as the Chief Justice of India is to assume charge on April 24, 2021. He is to take charge a day after the retirement of CJI Sharad Arvind Bobde.



Justice Ramana is to take over as the 48th Chief Justice of India. He became the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court in 2013. In 2014, he was appointed as the judge of the Supreme Court. Justice Ramana was a part of a five-judge constitution bench that declined to refer to a

seven bench, a batch of pleas that challenged the constitutional validity of Gol decision to abrogate Article 370.

- © The Chinese born film maker **Chloe Zhao** has become the first Asian woman to win the Best director at the Academy Awards. She won the award for her film Nomadland.



Her debut film was Songs My Brothers Taught me. It was premiered at Sundance Film Festival. Her second film was The Rider. It received nominations at the Independent Spirit Award for the Best Film and Best Director.

## PLANS AND POLICIES

- © The Government of India recently suspended the **Char Dham Yatra** due to surge in COVID-19. Only the priests are to be allowed to conduct the daily worship and rituals. The **Kedarnath** is to be reopened on May 17, **Gangotri and Yamunotri** on May 14 and **Badrinath** on May 18.
- © The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare recently announced that around 14,491 hectares of land in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been certified as organic. This is the first large contiguous territory to be certified under government scheme. The organic certification was provided under the Large Area Certification Scheme of the Participatory Guarantee System certification programme. Under the scheme, each village is considered as one cluster or group. The farmers have to adhere to the standard requirements without the need to undergo a conversion period to get certified. This was launched under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana.



- ⊙ The Government of India recently announced that it will provide **five kilo grams of free food grains** under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana till June 2021. The free food grains are being provided to those covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013. This is to continue till June 2021. Around eighty crore beneficiaries are being provided with free food grains (rice or wheat) at a scale of 5 kg per person per month. This is over and above the monthly entitlements under the National Food Security Act. These are the beneficiaries that are covered under both Antyodaya Anna Yojana and Priority Householders.
- ⊙ The Government of India is to extend the insurance scheme for health workers under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana for another one year. The current COVID Warrior Insurance Scheme that was launched by Government of India in 2020 was to end by March 24, 2021. Thus, the Gol is extending the scheme. The Gol had provided one month window to invite final claims under the scheme till April 24, 2021.
- ⊙ The Union Minister for Commerce and Industry recently launched the **Start Up India Seed Fund** scheme. The scheme aims to provide financial support to the startups for their prototype development, proof of concept, product trials, market entry. This scheme will provide ₹ 945 crores in the next four years to the startups. It is expected to support more than 3,600 startups through three hundred incubators. The scheme will create robust startup ecosystem in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. The startups in these cities are often deprived of funding. The fund will support transformative ideas and kindle startup revolution.
- ⊙ The Ministry of Finance recently expanded the scope of **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme** to ₹ 3 lakh crores. It aims to provide relief to stressed companies in the country. This mainly includes business enterprises in tourism, hospitality, travel and sporting sector. The National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company is the guarantee provider of the ECLGS Scheme. The scheme has been expanded to health care and other stressed sector companies that have loan dues up to sixty days (SMA-1 accounts). The validity of all the three ECLGS, that is, ECLGS 1.0, ECLGS 2.0 and ECLGS 3.0 have been extended till June 2021.
- ⊙ The Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers recently approved sixteen applicants under Production Linked Incentive scheme. The approvals will promote domestic manufacturing of drug intermediates and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients in the country. The approved applicants will set up pharmaceutical manufacturing plants in the country. They will invest around ₹ 348 crores in establishing these units. These plants are expected to create employment for more than 3,042 people. The operation of these plants is expected to commence from April 2023.
- ⊙ The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan recently launched **Mission Aahaar Kranti**. The mission aims to spread the message of the importance of nutritionally balanced diet. It will also promote the importance of accessibility to local fruits and vegetables. This Mission is designed to address the major problem faced by India and the world, which is, 'Hunger and Diseases in Abundance'.
- ⊙ The Ministry of Food Processing Industries, earlier launched an all India Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) Scheme. The scheme is to be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25. It is to be implemented at an outlay of ₹ 10,000 crores. Recently, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) agreed to work with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) to implement the PM FME scheme. The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) operating under MoRD is to work with the MoFPI to implement the scheme.

## AWARDS AND HONOURS

- ⊙ The film **Nomadland** won four prizes at the BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) awards. The Nomadland won the best picture, best director, best actress and best cinematography. The film maker **Chloe Zhao** became the first woman of colour and the second woman to win BAFTA for best director. **Frances McDormand** won the best actress. It is an American drama. The film had also won People's Choice Award, Golden Globe Awards.

- © The Japanese Government recently awarded the **Order of Rising Sun** to a Bengaluru based Japanese teacher, **Shyamala Ganesh**. Shyamala is a Japanese teacher at the Septuagenarian Institution and also at the Ohara School of Ikebana in RT Nagar, Bengaluru.



She has tutored more than hundreds of students since its inception 38 years ago. Shyamala along with her husband Ganesh started a Japanese language school in 1983 in Bengaluru. This award is presented by the Emperor of Japan and was created in 1875. IT is presented to those who have made distinguished achievements in promotion of Japanese culture, achievements in international relations, advancements in their field and conservation of environment.

- © The British Academy Film Awards (BAFTAs) for the year 2021, has been announced by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. BAFTA 2021 was the 74th edition of the annual award to honour the best national and foreign films of 2020 and early 2021. The film **Nomadland** won four prizes under the best picture, best director, best actress and best cinematography. The list of all winners is as follows.

Category	Winner
Best Film	Nomadland
Best Director	Chloe Zhao (Nomadland)
Best Actor in a Leading Role	Anthony Hopkins (The Father as Anthony)
Best Actress in a Leading Role	Frances McDormand (Nomadland as Fern)

Category	Winner
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Daniel Kaluuya (Judas and the Black Messiah as Fred Hampton)
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Youn Yuh-Jung (Minari as Soon-JA)
Best Original Screenplay	Promising Young Woman (Emerald Fennell)
Best Adapted Screenplay	The Father (Christopher Hampton and Florian Zeller)
Best Short Animation	The Owl and the Pussycat (Mole Hill and Laura Duncalf)
Best Short Film	The Present (Farah Nabulsi)
Best Animated Film	Soul (Pete Docter and Dana Murray)
Best Documentary	My Octopus Teacher (Pippa Ehrlich, James Reed and Craig Foster)
Best Film Not in the English Language	Another Round
Best Casting	Rocks (Lucy Pardee)
Best Cinematography	Nomadland (Joshua James Richards)
Best Costume Design	Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (Ann Roth)
Best Editing	Sound of Metal (Mikkel E.G. Nielsen)
Best Makeup and Hair	Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (Matiki Anoff, Larry M. Cherry, Sergio Lopez-Rivera and Mia Neal)
Best Original Music	Soul (Jon Batiste, Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross)
Best Production Design	Mank (Donald Graham Burt and Jan Pascale)
Best Sound	Sound of Metal (Jaime Baksht, Nicolas Becker, Phillip Bladh, Carlos Cortés and Michelle Couttolenc)
Best Special Visual Effects	Tenet (Scott R. Fisher, Andrew Jackson and Andrew Lockley)
Outstanding British Film	Promising Young Woman (Emerald Fennell, Ben Browning, Ashley Fox and Josey McNamara)
Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer	His House (Remi Weekes (Writer/Director)
Rising Star Award	Bukky Bakray

- © The Union Education Minister, **Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** recently presented the **AICTE Lilavati Awards, 2020** in New Delhi. The awards were presented based on the theme **Women Empowerment**. The winners were selected by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) in six sub-themes. The list of winners is as follows.

Sub-theme	Winner
Women Entrepreneurship	SWEAT (Sona Women Entrepreneurship and Training) from Sona College of Technology, Tamil Nadu
Self Defense	Paritrana from St. Joseph's College of Engineering, Tamil Nadu
Literacy	Bharatiya Vidyapeeth of the Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune
Women's Health	WIT Women Health Coalition from Walchand Institute of Technology, Maharashtra
Legal Awareness	Radiant Seetha from Thiagarajar Polytechnic College
Sanitation & Hygiene	Smt. Kishoritai Bhojar College of Pharmacy, Nagpur

