

M A Y 2 0 2 1

**MONTHLY UPDATES ON
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WILEY

NATIONAL

- ⊙ **World No Tobacco Day** is being observed on May 31 under the theme **Commit to Quit**. It is observed since 1987 after member states of World Health Organisation created 'World No Tobacco Day' to bring global attention towards tobacco epidemic and associated preventable death.
- ⊙ Pramod Sawant, the Chief Minister of Goa launched **solar-based electrification programme** for rural households of state, on the occasion of Goa Statehood Day (May 30). It was launched with focus on delivering clean, reliable and affordable energy to all and it will bring electricity by using renewable energy to rural areas in Goa where grid connectivity is not feasible. Solar PV-based home lighting systems was inaugurated two days after agreement was signed between Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL) and Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA).
- ⊙ Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has launched four new helpline numbers to help people amid the second wave of Covid-19. To promote these numbers advisory was issued to private television channels to government in spreading awareness regarding Covid-19 pandemic.

 - **1075**: National Helpline number of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and is now open for rural India to book vaccination slots.
 - **1098**: Child Helpline number of Ministry of Women & Child Development.
 - **14566**: Senior Citizens Helpline of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. It will work in states like, Karnataka, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
 - **08046110007**: Helpline number of National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) that will provide psychological support.
- ⊙ The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has constituted a group of ministers (GoM) in order to decide on the rates of COVID-19 relief material. Currently, 5% GST is levied on domestically manufactured vaccines, while it is 12% for COVID drugs and oxygen concentrators. Alcohol-
- based sanitisers, hand wash, disinfectants and thermometers attract 18% GST.
- ⊙ An eight-member ministerial panel under the Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma to consider Goods and Services Tax (GST) exemptions on a range of Covid-19 essentials such as vaccines, drugs, testing kits and ventilators. The other members of the group of ministers (GoM) are Gujarat deputy chief minister Nitinbhai Patel, Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, Goa transport minister Mauvin Godinho, Kerala finance minister KN Balagopal, Odisha finance minister Niranjan Pujari, Telangana finance minister T Harish Rao and UP finance minister Suresh Kumar Khanna.
- ⊙ According to **Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI)**, in 70 years China had made a significant transition from 'where survival of women & children was priority' to 'where children & adolescents now have similar health profiles to young Australians'. China has progressed by rapid socioeconomic development and reducing poverty. Its capacity for top-down leadership including reorganisation of social health insurance and systematic public health planning has also contributed.
- ⊙ The Union Culture Minister **Prahlad Singh Patel** recently announced that around six cultural heritage sites have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites. With this, the total number of sites in the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Tentative list has increased to 48.

The following six places have successfully entered the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

 - Ganga Ghats, Varanasi
 - Temples of Kancheepuram, Tamil Nadu
 - Satpura Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh
 - Maharashtra Military Architecture
 - Hire Benkal Megalithic Site
 - Bhedaghat Lametaghat of Narmada Valley, Madhya Pradesh

ECONOMY

- ⊙ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an advisory group to assist the second **Regulatory Review Authority (RRA 2.0)**, which was set by the central bank on May 01, 2021 to streamline

regulations and reduce the compliance burden of regulated entities. The Advisory Group will be headed by SBI Managing Director S Janakiraman.

Other members of the 6-member advisory group are

- T T Srinivasaraghavan (Former Managing Director and Non-Executive Director, Sundaram Finance),
 - Gautam Thakur (Chairman, Saraswat Co-operative Bank)
 - Subir Saha (Group Chief Compliance Officer, ICICI Bank)
 - Ravi Duvvuru (President and CCO, Jana Small Finance Bank)
 - Abadaan Viccaji (Chief Compliance Officer, HSBC India)
- ⊙ Government has increased the scope of **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** for three more months overlooking the disruptions caused by second wave of COVID 19 pandemic. Extension will help businesses across several sectors of economy.
- ⊙ Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have announced support measures and launch of new loan products to mitigate economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic. PSBs would provide unsecured loans of up to ₹ 5 lakhs to individuals. Loan can be utilized to meet their and family members' treatment cost. Indian Banks Association and State Bank of India announced three new loan products in Mumbai. Loans in Mumbai were announced by the basis of measures taken by RBI and Government of India.
- ⊙ Indian Navy has installed a medical ICU (MICU) on Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Mk-III at INS Hansa. It will help in boosting its capacity to evacuate critical patients even in unfavourable weather conditions.



ALH Mk-III is an all-weather aircraft which will help Indian Navy to undertake medical evacuation of critical patients by air even during unfavourable weather conditions. Equipment can be installed in two-three hours to convert aircraft into an air ambulance.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- ⊙ **Curiosity Rover** (developed by NASA) has captured images of shining clouds on Mars.



This will help the scientists to know more about MARS. Researchers are now studying clouds which arrived earlier and formed higher than expected.

- ⊙ According to space official of China, a three-man crew of astronauts will be sent for three-month mission on new space station of China in June 2021. Plans for station's first crew were confirmed to state after an automated spacecraft was launched with fuel and supplies for Tianhe station which is third and largest space station launched by China. Core module of the station was launched on April 29, 2021 into the orbit highlighting increasingly ambitious space program of China.
- ⊙ Google Cloud and SpaceX signed a deal for providing internet service through **Starlink satellite**. Google will provide the Cloud infrastructure for this connectivity Project, while Space X will install ground terminals in Google's cloud data centres for connecting Starlink satellites. It will help in providing fast internet service to the rural areas. This service will be available to customers before the end of 2021.

SPORTS

- ⊙ India is all set to host **2022 FIFA under-17 Women's World Cup** from October 11 to 30, 2022. It will be the second FIFA tournament to be hosted by India.



Earlier, India had to organise 2021 Under-17 Women's World Cup but it was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic. India had also hosted FIFA under-17 World Cup in 2017 which has set a record for being most attended youth World Cup in the history.

- ⊙ Pakistani skipper **Babar Azam** has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for April 2021 for his consistent and stellar performances across all formats in the recently concluded series against South Africa.



The ICC Player of the Month Awards recognise and celebrate the best performances from both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.

- ⊙ The **Italian Open 2021** (originally called the Italian International Championship) was held on May 16, 2021 which is won by **Rafael Nadal**.



It is a clay tennis tournament. There are four different types of tennis court surfaces. They are clay courts, carpet courts, hard courts and grass courts. This is Rafael's tenth title of the Rome Masters. The Finals was held between Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. Rafael Nadal is a Spanish tennis player. He is ranked third in the world by the Association of Tennis Professionals. He has won twenty Grand Slams, thirteen French Open titles so far. His record of winning has been maximum in clay courts.

- ⊙ The Board of Control of Cricket (BCCI) has suspended the **Indian Premiere League (IPL)** indefinitely due to COVID-19. The decision came in after Balaji tested positive for COVID-19. Balaji is the bowling coach of CSK. So far twenty-nine games has been conducted. Also, the T20 World Cup is to be moved from India to UAE. This is mainly because if held in India none of the participants will be comfortable to come to India due to the third wave in the country.
- ⊙ The English professional snooker player **Mark Selby** has won the **World Championship** for the fourth time by defeating **Shaun Murphy**.



The World Snooker Championship is being held since 1927 annually. It is played at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, England. The World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association organises the championship.



PERSONS IN NEWS

- The Government of India recently appointed **T Rabi Shankar** as the fourth **Deputy Governor** by succeeding **B P Kanungo**.



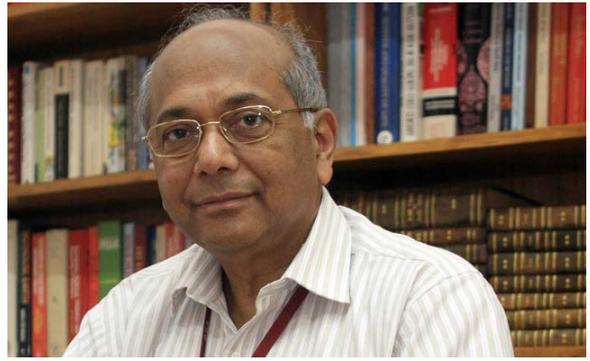
T Rabi Shankar is in charge of fintech, payment system, risk management and information technology at the Apex Bank. He worked with the Ministry of Finance between 2008 and 2014 and was also appointed as the Chairman of RBI subsidiary Indian Financial Technology and Allied Services (IFTAS).

- Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company Limited (KLI) announced it has appointed **Mahesh Balasubramanian** as managing director of the company.



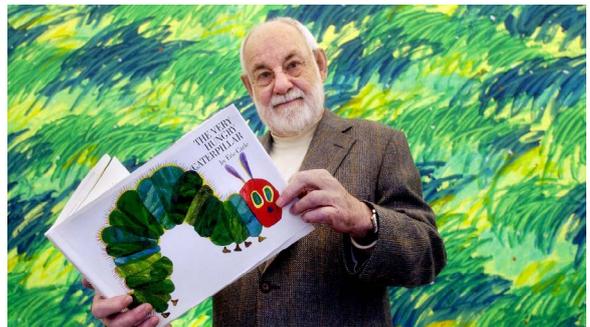
He has been appointed following the retirement of G Murlidhar.

- Nuclear Scientist and former chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, **SriKumar Banerjee** passed away at 75 due to heart attack after he recovered from COVID-19.



He was a veteran nuclear scientist who led nuclear establishment when India and USA signed their nuclear deal and legislated Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Bill.

- Beloved Children's author and illustrator, **Eric Carle**, died at age 91. He was an American designer, illustrator, and children's author.



He wrote a famous picture book 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' that has been translated into about 66 languages of which about 50 million copies have been sold. His career as an illustrator and children's author gained pace when he collaborated on 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?'. He had illustrated more than 70 books.

- Northern Railway has ordered suspension of wrestler **Sushil Kumar** after he was arrested by Delhi Police in a murder case.



Winner of Olympic medal, Sushil Kumar, was arrested on May 23 for his involvement in death of a 23 years old wrestler, Sagar Dhankhar, at Chhatrasal Stadium in Delhi. Apart from him, his associate and co-accused Ajay was also arrested.

- ⊙ A former minister and an old-time communist leader **K R Gouri Amma** passed away in Thiruvananthapuram. She was born on July 14, 1919 in Alappuzha district. She played a leading role in fighting for the rights of unprivileged sections and labourers. She fought against the Travancore Divan Ramaswamy Aiyar in Punnara Vayalar struggle. In 1957, when the first election to Kerala Assembly was conducted, Gouri Amma successfully contested and became the first revenue minister of the state. She played a major role in several reformative legislations passed. It includes the Lands reforms act. The act was enacted against the expulsion of landless from government land.

- ⊙ **Himanta Biswa Sarma** is to be sworn in as the **Chief Minister of Assam** on May 10, 2021.



The Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor since the last CM Sarbananda resigned as the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister are appointed by the Governor and President, respectively.

- ⊙ Hong Kong mountaineer, **Tsang Yin-hung**, recorded **World's fastest ascent of Everest by a woman** in just 25 hours and 50 minutes in her third attempt.



Earlier in 2017, Tsang became first Hong Kong woman to climb the top. She broke the earlier record of Nepali women Phunjo Jhangmu Lama completed the climb in 39 hours 6 minutes.

- ⊙ **Guillermo Lasso** assumed **presidency of Ecuador** and has become first right-wing leader in 14 years in Ecuador (a country in north-western South America).



Rejuvenation of an economy that has contracted by 7.8 percent in 2020 and the overall debt stands at 63 percent of GDP is the major challenge before the new President. Apart from that, Ecuador is battling economic and health crises as covid-19 has infected about 420,000 people and killed more than 20,000.

- ⊙ Billionaire **Gautam Adani** has edged past Chinese tycoon Zhong Shanshan to become the **second-richest Asian**, according to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index. China's Zhong was the richest Asian till February when he lost the crown to Mukesh Ambani, India's richest person and chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd. However, while Ambani lost \$175.5 million this year, Adani's wealth surged by \$32.7 billion to touch \$66.5 billion, against Zhong's \$63.6 billion. Ambani's total wealth now stands at \$76.5 billion, making him the 13th richest in the world, followed by Adani at 14th.

Rank	Name	Net Worth	Country
1.	Jeff Bezos	\$189 Billions	US
2.	Elon Musk	\$163 Billions	US
3.	Bernard Arnault	\$162 Billions	France
4.	Bill Gates	\$142 Billions	US
5.	Mark Zuckerberg	\$119 Billions	US
6.	Warren Buffet	\$108 Billions	US



Rank	Name	Net Worth	Country
7.	Larry Page	\$106 Billions	US
8.	Sergey Brin	\$102 Billions	US
9.	Larry Ellison	\$91.2 Billions	US
10.	Steve Ballmer	\$89.2 Billions	US
11.	Francoise Bettercourt Meyers	\$87.2 Billions	France
12.	Amancio Ortega	\$82.4 Billions	Spain
13.	Mukesh Ambani	\$76.3 Billions	India
14.	Gautam Adani	\$67.6 Billions	India
15.	Zhong Shanshan	\$65.6 Billions	China

PLANS AND POLICIES

- © Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **PM-CARES for Children scheme** for children orphaned due to COVID-19. As per data, about 577 children have lost their parents till date. Under this scheme, measures include free education, creation of ₹ 10 lakh corpus for each child- to be given to them at the age of 23.
- © The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government of India has announced two major measures for those families who have lost the earning member due to Covid, to mitigate financial difficulties that may be faced by them. Firstly, the government have decided to provide family pension to such families and secondly, provide them with enhanced & liberalised insurance compensation as mentioned below.

 - a. Family Pension under Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)
 - Dependent family members of such persons will be entitled to get the benefit of a pension equivalent to 90% of the average daily wage drawn by the worker as per the existing norms.
 - This benefit will be applicable with effect from 24 March 2020 till 24 March 2022.
 - b. Employees Provident Fund Organization-Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme (EDLI)
 - The insurance benefits under the EDLI scheme have been enhanced and
- liberalized, particularly to help the families of employees who have lost their lives due to COVID.

 - The amount of maximum insurance benefit has been increased from ₹ 6 lakh to ₹ 7 lakh.
 - The provision of minimum insurance benefit has been retained at ₹ 2.5 lakh.
 - This benefit will apply retrospectively from 15 February 2020 for the next three years, that is 15 February 2022.
- © **Facebook** has partnered with the Indian government to roll out a vaccine finder tool on its mobile app in India, which will help people identify places nearby to get inoculated. The social media giant had, earlier this week, announced a USD 10 million grant for emergency response efforts for the COVID-19 situation in the country.
- © The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare has recently approved ₹ 2,250 crores for the Mission for **Integrated Development of Horticulture** for the year 2021-22.
- © The Union Cabinet recently approved the **Production Linked Incentive scheme** for Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage. Around ₹ 18,100 crores have been allocated to the scheme. This has been done as a part of National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage.
- © The **National Bamboo Mission** recently launched the **Management Information System** to strengthen the domestic Agarbatti industry.
- © The Union Government released ₹ 5,968 crores of rupees to implement the **Jal Jeevan Mission**. The funds were released to fifteen states. This is the first instalment of the four to be released in 2021-22.
- © Union Ministry of Power has announced to set up a **National Mission on use of Biomass** in coal based thermal power plants. This decision was taken to address issue of air pollution caused due to farm stubble-burning.
- © **National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS)** app and **Area officer monitoring** App was launched by Rural Development Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar on May 22, 2021. These apps are a big step towards bringing the transparency and proper monitoring of the schemes.

- Odisha government has announced **Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana** for journalists. Odisha has declared the journalists as frontline Covid warriors. It will benefit more than 6500 journalists of the state.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

- Indian economist and Nobel Laureate, **Amartya Kumar Sen**, was conferred with 'Princess of Asturias Award' in social sciences category which is Spain's top prize.



He was selected out of 41 candidates from 20 countries for his best-known work- "Poverty and Famines". This award comprises of a Joan Miro sculpture as a symbol, an insignia, a diploma, and a cash prize of 50,000 Euros. His candidature was forwarded by Director General of Casa Asia (Barcelona), Javier Parrondo.

- India Biodiversity Awards 2021** were presented on the occasion of International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22. This initiative was started jointly by ministry of environment, forest & climate change; National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2012. It recognizes and honour outstanding models from grassroot level for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biological resources and governance.

The winners are:

Winner	Category
Krishi Avam Paristhitiki Vikas Sansthan (KRPAVIS)	Sustainable Use of Biological Resources
Shaji N.M. (Tuber Man of Kerala)	Conservation of domesticated species
Khonoma Nature Conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS)	Sustainable Use of Biological Resources

- Andrea Meza** of Mexico crowned the Miss Universe, 2020 in the 69th edition of Miss Universe which was held in Florida, United States. It was cancelled for the first time in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.



Andrea Meza beat seventy-four contestants from all over the world. Julia Gama of Brazil was the runner up and Janick Maceta of Peru finished third. Miss India Adline Castelino made it to the top four.

- Whitley Awards** (also called 'Green Oscar') 2021 is won by **Nuklu Phom** of Nagaland. He is the only Indian to receive the award. Whitley Awards are presented annually by the Whitley Fund for Nature. It is presented to recognise grass root level conservation leaders.



Nuklu Phom is creating 'Biodiversity Peace Corridors'. Apart from conservation of wildlife and environmental protection he also extends his works to health, education and micro finance. Lemasachenlok Society was founded by him. It has worked towards sensitising the locals about the Amur Falcons. It has set up three reserves that helped to increase the number of roosting Falcons. Nuklu Phom is popularly known as the 'Amur Falcon Man of Nagaland'.