

Monthly Current Affairs August 2020



Dear readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a **complete docket** of important news and events that occurred in a month of **August 2020**. This file is important for, **UPPSC, BPSC, MPPCS, RAS and various state exams**.

Monthly Current Affairs: August 2020

Important News: India

- ✓ Recently, the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has launched an incubator capabilities enhancement program 'AIM-iCREST' in collaboration with **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation**.
- ✓ 6th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting was held under the presidency of **Russia**.
Note: Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) participated in the meeting. The BRICS nations called the initiative to improve the environment and promote the circular economy in national plans for economic recovery after COVID-19
- ✓ Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs, Nitin Gadkari upstream carriageway of Mahatma Gandhi bridge in **Bihar**.
Note: Over 5.5 km, this four lane bridge at NH-19 between Patna and Hajipur is being renovated to replace its existing concrete superstructure by new steel deck superstructure, consisting of about 6600 metric steel.
- ✓ **Narendra Singh Tomar** released a booklet on 'Best Practices in Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)'.
Note: The booklet is prepared by Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development. It is based on the presentations made by states during regional and national workshops since inception of the programme.
- ✓ **CREDAI Awaas App** has been launched by Housing minister Hardeep Puri to market residential properties.
- ✓ As per the recommendation by the Parliamentary Committee on Labour, the minimum eligibility period for gratuity payable to an employee on termination of his employment-- **One year**.
- ✓ **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** has launched "**Vidyarthi Vigyan Manthan 2020-21**", a national level programme for popularizing science among school students of class sixth to Eleventh.
Note: It is India's largest Science talent search examination for New India using Digital Devices.
- ✓ Union Minister of Education **Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** has laid the foundation stone of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Sirmour at Dhaula Kuan in **Himachal Pradesh**.
- ✓ A New initiative by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) the Sahakar Cooptube NCDC Channel has been launched by **Narendra Singh Tomar**.
Note: The channel is a new initiative by National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC). During the launch event, the minister also rolled out guidance

videos made by NCDC on 'Formation and Registration of A Cooperative' for 18-different states in Hindi and regional languages.

- ✓ **Pradip Shah** is the head of the 7-member committee formed by International Financial Services Centre Authority for developing plans on international retail business.
- ✓ **DD Assam** has been launched by Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar recently.
- ✓ India's first Kisan Special Parcel Train or Kisan Rail was from flagged off between two stations **Devlali to Danapur**.
- ✓ The Government of India has extended Line of Credit of worth 18 million USD to **Maldives** to expand fishing facilities.
- ✓ The Ministry of Education organized the "Conclave on Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy (NEP)" in association with **University Grants Commission (UGC)**.
- ✓ National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) joined hands with Global digital skills training provider to support the continuity of digital skilling of the Indian workforce – **Simplilearn**.
- ✓ A new Platform, "Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste" to support the global reduction of food loss and waste has been launched by **FAO**.
Note: The official launch of the platform will be on the first International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFLW) which will be observed on 29th September 2020.
- ✓ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has signed an agreement with **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** for collaborative research and information dissemination in the area of food and nutrition.
Note: The collaboration between these two premier institutions of India will contribute in fulfilling the vision of New Food System 2050.
- ✓ The global conference on "Reimagining and Transforming the University: Confluence of Ideas during and Beyond the COVID-19 Disruption" was hosted by Indian university **O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU)**.
Note: The conference provided a platform to discuss to reimagine and transform the idea of university that will impact the lives of the students, academics and nations all across the globe.
- ✓ The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) will open the Silk Training cum Production Center in **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- ✓ Website portal **My Handloom** has been launched by the Union Minister of Textiles and Women & Child Development, Smt Smriti Zubin Irani, for the individual weavers and organization.

Note: The Union Minister of Textiles and Women & Child Development, Smt Smriti Zubin Irani launched a website portal, 'My Handloom' for the individual weavers and organization on the occasion of the 6th National Handloom Day on 7th August, 2020, virtually.

- ✓ **Delhi International Airport Limited** has developed AIR SUVIDHA, a first-of-its-kind portal allowing international arriving passengers to fill a mandatory self-declaration form and eligible passengers to apply for exemption from compulsory institutional quarantine for coronavirus.

Note: It will make passengers' journey more convenient and comfortable in a contactless way as they won't have to fill the physical copies of the forms on arrival. The online forms have been developed in collaboration with various state governments, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

- ✓ In a push for 'Make-in-India', **Rajnath Singh** has launched 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat Saptah' to focus more on the vision of the government to shift to local manufacturing.

Note: The main idea behind this is to emphasize the importance of domestic defence production in the country. The ministry is pushing for domestic manufacturing of defence items very aggressively.

- ✓ National portal **SURAKHSYA** is being launched by the Ministry of Environment and Forest on Human-Elephant conflict to collect real-time information and will also manage conflicts on a real-time basis.

Note: He will also launch portal on Human Elephant Conflict on the eve of World Elephant Day, 2020. The World Elephant Day is observed every year on 12th August to spread awareness about the animal.

- ✓ **Mumbai** become the first city in India to have women symbols on traffic signals and signage.

- ✓ **121** Police personnel have been awarded the "Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation" for the year 2020.

- ✓ **Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)** has organized the "India@75 Summit – Mission 2022".

Note: The summit was focused on 'reinventing technology in India'. The MSME Ministry and Industries should be made import substitutes, cost-effective, pollution-free and indigenous.

- ✓ Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has rolled out second edition of Student Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP 2.0) in collaboration with **Dell Technologies**.

- ✓ Festive sweet dish 'Khaje', spicy Harnal Chilli and Myndoli Banana (Moiri Banana) of **Goa** has obtained Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indications Registry.

Note: The Bicholim based All-Goa Khaje Producers Association (AGKPA) applied for the GI tag of Khaje through the department of science and technology in 2019. Myndoli Banana Growers Association, Ibrampur, Pernem applied for the GI tag of Moiri bananas.

- ✓ Krishi Megh is the data recovery centre of **ICAR** organization.

Note: Krishi Megh is the data recovery centre of ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research). The data recovery centre has been set up at National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM), Hyderabad.

- ✓ Tribal freedom fighter museums are under development by ministry of tribal affairs -- **9.**

Note: The nine museums are being developed in Gujarat(Rajpipla), Jharkhand(Ranchi), Andhra Pradesh(Lambasingi), Chhattisgarh(Raipur), Kerala (Kozhikode), Madhya Pradesh (Chhindwara), Telangana (Hyderabad), Manipur (Senapati) and Mizoram (Kelsi).

- ✓ **Swacch Bharat Mission Academy** is an IVR based mobile online learning course launched by Union Jal Shakti Ministry.
- ✓ Indian Railways is constructing the world's tallest pier bridge across river Lajai in **Manipur.**
- ✓ **NASSCOM** Association with organization 'Atal Innovation Mission' has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) based Step-up module for school students.
- ✓ As per the draft plan prepared by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), the "One Sun, One World, One Grid" (OSOWOG) initiative will **140 countries** through a common grid that will be used to transfer solar power.
Note: "The vision behind the OSOWOG mantra is "the Sun never sets" and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.
- ✓ **IIT Bombay** has secured top position in the 'Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements,' (ARIIA) 2020 for being the best centrally funded institution in India.
Note: The top five centrally funded institutions in the list are 1. IIT Madras; 2. IIT Bombay; 3. IIT Delhi; 4. IISc Bengaluru; 5. IIT Kharagpur. The ARIIA ranking was launched in 2019 by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education. The objective of ARIIA is to rank higher education institutions and universities in India as per Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Startup, and Development amongst faculty and students.
- ✓ Quality Control Lab has been set up by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) in **Porbandar, Gujarat.**
- ✓ The Central Water Commission (CWC) of India has launched the flood forecasting initiatives across India in association with tech giant **Google.**
- ✓ With the vision of going one step further towards self-reliance or "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has launched 'Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge'.
- ✓ **Delhi Police** has signed an MoU with All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) for extending ayurvedic mode of preventive and promotive health services in the residential colonies of the force.
- ✓ The Speaker of Lok Sabha, Om Birla attended the virtual mode of Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP) organized jointly by International Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of **Austria.**
- ✓ Central government departments has launched its new official logo displaying three goals of the department, Accuracy, Validity, and Reliability-- **Labour Bureau.**

- ✓ To improve the production and productivity of raw Jute in the country Jute Corporation of India (JCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **National Seeds Corporation (NSC)**.
- ✓ The Bureau of India Standards (BIS) signed with an MoU with **IIT Roorkee** for collaboration in areas of Standardization and Conformity Assessment based on equality and reciprocity.
- ✓ India's rank in the 2nd edition of global research "Digital Quality of Life (DQL) Index 2020" released by online privacy solutions provider SurfShark-- **57th**.
- ✓ **TL Alamelu** will head the ten-member committee set up by IRDAI to recommend setting up loss prevention entities for non-life insurers.
- ✓ **Tata Steel** has launched the FerroHaat App, a first-of-its-kind mobile application (App) in the world to source steel scrap from the traders.
- ✓ **Nitin Gadkari** has launched the mobile app named 'Harit Path' to monitor plantation along national highways.
The minister launched 'Harit Path', a mobile app to monitor the plantations through geo-tagging and web-based GIS-enabled monitoring tools.
- ✓ **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** has constituted the National Council for Transgender Persons, a requirement under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- ✓ The Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, Arjun Munda has e-inaugurated "Tribes India Showroom" in **Mumbai**.
- ✓ Ministry of Tourism has signed an MoU with **Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)** and FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) with primary objective of women empowerment.
- ✓ APEDA functions under **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** has signed two MoUs with AFC India Limited and National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) for working together in the interest of agriculture and allied sectors.
- ✓ **Ramesh Chand** will head the task force constituted by the NITI Aayog that recommended linking of Sugarcane prices to sugar rate.
- ✓ IT majors **Tech Mahindra** joined hands with NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) to support Indian women entrepreneurs.
- ✓ ReNew Power signed a partnership agreement with **UNEP** to promote increased access to renewable energy and improved energy efficiency.
- ✓ **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has developed the '**Vendor Performance Evaluation System**' to establish a transparent and comprehensive performance rating system for its consultants, contractors and concessionaires.
- ✓ **Rajnath Singh** has launched the Directorate General National Cadet Corps (DGNCC) Mobile Training App.

Note: The Mobile Training App will support in conducting countrywide online training of NCC cadets as it has been affected adversely due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. The DGNCC Mobile Training App seeks to offer entire training material to the NCC cadets on one platform.

- ✓ National e-Governance Division (NeGD) is working under **MeitY** that signed an MoU with Common Service Center e-Governance Services India Limited to facilitate delivery of UMANG app services to citizens.
- ✓ **Piyush Goyal** has launched the National GIS (Geographic Information System)-enabled Land Bank system.
- ✓ **Mahindra & Mahindra** has partnered with Israel's REE Automotive to develop commercial EVs.
- ✓ **Valiye Ramagopal Rao** will chair the 5-member committee constituted by DRDO to review charter of duties of 57 DRDO labs on the basis of current and futuristic defence and battlefield needs.
- ✓ Three-member committee headed by **DB Shekatkar** has been to review the effective utilisation of the Armed Forces Headquarters Civil Services (AFHQ CS) cadre.
- ✓ In partnership with **UNDP**, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) has launched the Sustainable Finance Collaborative (SFC) to Promote Sustainable Finance in India.
- ✓ Next-generation startup Challenge contest has been launched by the Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Ravi Shankar Prasad--**Chunauti**.
- ✓ **Piyush Goyal** represented India in the virtual 8th East Asia Summit Economic Ministers' Meeting (EAS-EMM) chaired by Vietnam.
- ✓ The Union Government is planning to come up with Mega Bamboo Industrial Park in **Ghati**.

Important News: States

August 2020

- **Madhya Pradesh** state government has launched a public awareness campaign “**Ek Mask-Anek Zindagi**” from August 1-15.
- **Maharashtra** government approved **MagNet project** worth Around Rs 1,000 crore to Help Farmers.
Note: This will boost the fruit and vegetable production and will improve processing and minimise the losses in the sector of perishables.
- **Andhra Pradesh** state government has signed an MoU with Hindustan Unilever Ltd, P&G and ITC to Support Economic Empowerment of Women.
- Union territories **Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu** has launched **E-Gyan Mitra** mobile application for online education.
Note: Through the app, the students from primary till the higher secondary can take online classes along with attempting. The app will have lectures and quizzes posted by teachers along with a system of monitoring in which teachers can monitor students' progress
- ‘**Thenzawl Golf Resort**’ project has been inaugurated in **Mizoram**.
Note: The project will develop Golf Tourism attracting both national and international tourist in the country. It will have an international standard of 18 holes

Golf Course with a total cost of Rs 92.25 crore. Designed by: Canadian based Golf Course Architect Firm Graham Cooke & Associates and 30 Eco Log Huts.

- **‘E-Raksha Bandhan’** awareness programme launched by Andhra Pradesh is related to **Cybercrime**.

Note: It is a month-long online campaign that will create awareness on Cyber crimes across the State with slogan ‘Let us make August a month of e-freedom and e-safety.

- **Haryana** state government has launched **“Parivar Pehchan Patra”** to enable the citizens to get the benefits of various central and state government schemes.

Note: PPP each family will be considered as a single unit and will be allotted a 8 digit unique identification number. The 8-digit number will enable seamless delivery of state government services.

- **Uttarakhand** state is set develop **India’s first Snow Leopard Conservation centre**.

Note: The main aim of the centre is to conserve and restore Himalayan ecosystems. It also aims to conserve elusive snow leopards and other endangered Himalayan species. A number of snow leopards has been spotted in the districts of Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi.

- **Haryana** state government has launched **“Mahila Evam Kishori Samman Yojana”** to provide free sanitary napkins to girls and women of below poverty line (BPL) families.

- **Haryana** state government has launched **“Mukhya Mantri Doodh Uphar Yojana”** to provide fortified flavoured skimmed milk powder to women and children.

- **Chhattisgarh** government has launched **“Shaheed Mahendra Karma Tendupatta Sangraha Samajik Suraksha Yojana”** for tendu leaves collectors.

Note: Used for making bidis (leaf-wrapped cigarettes), these are collected by forest dwellers and from them it is purchased by the state government. Mahendra Karma was popularly known as Bastar tiger for his tough stand against Naxals. He was among 29 people, including senior Congress leaders, who were killed in a Naxal attack in Jhiram valley of Bastar district on May 25, 2013.

- **Maharashtra** became the first state in India to collaborate with Google India for state-wide distribution of G suite for Education and Google Classroom.

- India’s homegrown e-commerce marketplace, Flipkart has signed an MoU with **One District, One Product (ODOP)** scheme of **Uttar Pradesh** government.

Note: The MoU will bring the artisans, weavers and craftsmen under the ODOP scheme into the scope of the “Flipkart Samarth” initiative. This will provide artisans, weavers and craftsmen under the ODOP scheme a momentum to expand their business online as they face social and economic challenges.

- The Ministry of Railways has inaugurated a dedicated museum for railways in **Hubballi, Karnataka**.

Note: This is the first of its kind museum in Northern Karnataka and second in South Western Railways after the historic railway museum at Mysore, Karnataka. The main objective of the museum is to preserve and portray the glorious heritage of various

branches of Railways and displays the gradual evolution of advanced systems in all spheres of Railway.

- **Gujarat** state government has launched **Mukhya Mantri Kisan Sahay Yojana**.
Note: The yojana has been announced for the current Kharif season and all farmers of the state will be covered under this scheme. Farmers would not have to pay any premium or registration process for the scheme.
- **Assam** state government has started “**Orunodoi Scheme**” for women’s empowerment.
Note: Under the “Orunodoi” scheme, Rs 830 per month aid would mean an additional annual income of Rs 10,000 to the poor households to meet their medical, nutritional, and academic needs besides to meet the additional spending during various festivals.”.
- The Madhya Pradesh state government has announced to name **Gwalior-Chambal Expressway** after **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
Note: The Gwalior Chambal Expressway is a 6 lane expressway connecting Madhya Pradesh with Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, through the ravines of Chambal region. The expressway will go parallel to the Chambal River via Shivpuri, Bhind, Morena to Kota (Rajasthan).
- **Nagaland** state government has launched “**YellowChain**” centralized e-commerce platform.
Note: Yellow Chain will act as an integrated platform for the people of the state, where any Seller/Service Provider/Individual/Group can register themselves and upload their products, trades, skills, services etc. to enable the citizens/buyers to have access to their Service or Product.
- **Chhattisgarh** state government has launched a student centric scheme named as “**Padhai Tuhar Para**”.
Note: The scheme will enable the school students to study with the help of community in their localities and villages, in view of the suspension of classes due to coronavirus outbreak.
- **Madhya Pradesh** state top in implementing **PM SVANidhi Scheme**.
Note: Madhya Pradesh is the leading state in implementing the Pradhan Mantri Street Vendors Atma-Nirbhar Scheme (PM SVANidhi). The state has sanctioned interest free loans of Rs 10000 to more than 58000 street vendors, so far. Identity cards are distributed to the registered vendors.
- **Madhya Pradesh** has launched the ‘**Ek Sankalp – Bujurgo ke naam**’ campaign for the elderly people living alone in homes during the global pandemic COVID-19.
Note: This unique campaign is proving to be a boon for the **Elderly People** living alone in homes during the global pandemic COVID-19.
- **Madhya Pradesh** has launched the ‘**Ek Sankalp – Bujurgo ke naam**’ campaign for the elderly people living alone in homes during the global pandemic COVID-19.
Note: In this campaign, the police are taking care of the elderly people from the food to their health. Renowned social activist Anna Hazare has also praised this initiative of Chhatarpur Police.

- **Delhi** state government has launched the **Niraman Mazdoor Registration Abhiyan** for construction workers from August 24 to September 11.
Note: Special camps would be set up for construction workers to register themselves and take advantage of nearly 18 different assistance schemes. Delhi government will set up camps at 70 schools—one each in all the 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi—to help workers who are not tech-savvy.
- **Uttar Pradesh** government has signed a ‘**plan of cooperation**’ with **Israel** to resolve water crisis in Bundelkhand region.
Note: The partnership between the two governments seeks to address water crisis in drought hit regions of Bundelkhand. It will support regional farmers with latest farming technologies such as drip irrigation, meant for water deficient regions like Bundelkhand
- **Odisha** government is working on a mobile-based application to enable farmers to upload picture of grievances such as water availability in canals and their redressal in a fixed timeframe.
- **Kerala** is to host the first-ever State **Dragonfly Festival 2020**.
Note: The festival has been christened as Thumbimahotsavam 2020. ‘Pantalu’ is the official mascot of the festival.
- The longest river ropeway of India has been inaugurated in **Assam**.
Note: The ropeway will be operated from Kachari Ghat in Guwahati to Dol Govinda temple in North Guwahati. The new ropeway service empowered with state-of-the-art technology will decrease the travel time between Guwahati and North Guwahati.
- **Odisha** has launched a new scheme for promoting intensive aquaculture through **Biofloc technology in fisheries**.
- **Kerala** state will establish the **first international women’s trade centre (IWTC)** of India.
Note: The IWTC seeks to accelerate the women entrepreneurship and secure gender parity. It will also offer a safe place away from home to women to start new businesses, set up or expand, and get their products marketed globally.
- **Uttar Pradesh** government has launched ‘**Major Dhyam Chand Vijaypath Yojana**’ scheme under which 19 International Players will get road connectivity to their homes.
Note: The initial list includes 19 International Players from the state, and later on more players are expected to be added to the list. The list includes Indian Cricketers Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Praveen Kumar, Piyush Chawla and Mohammad Kaif.

Important News-World

August 2020

- **Great Britain** is considering minting a coin to remember Mahatma Gandhi.
- Former king of **Spain** Juan Carlos decided to leave his country to protect the monarchy after a barrage of corruption allegations surfaced against him.

- Barakah Nuclear Plant of **UAE** has achieved first criticality and successfully started up is located in which country.

- **Russia** becomes the first country to officially register a coronavirus vaccine and declare it ready for use.

Note: The Russian vaccine will be called "**Sputnik V**" in homage to the world's first satellite launched by the Soviet Union. The vaccine developed by the Gamaleya Institute in Moscow uses a different virus -- adenovirus -- that's been modified to carry genes for the "spike" protein that coats the coronavirus, as a way to prime the body to recognise when a real COVID-19 infection comes along.

- Indian origin senator **Kamala Harris** named as US Vice Presidential candidate for Democratic party.

Note: In the United States, Democratic **Presidential nominee Joe Biden** has named Indian-origin senator Kamala Harris as his Vice-Presidential running mate. Joe Biden made history by selecting the first black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket. Kamala Harris is currently the US Senator from California. Former US President Barack Obama has often described her as a trailblazer.

- **Reliance Foundation** has launched the "W-GDP Women Connect Challenge" across India in association with US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Note: The "W-GDP Women Connect Challenge" has been launched to bridge the gender divide as well as the digital divide in India. The Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) challenge supports private sector-led approaches that close the gender digital divide, expand business opportunities and empower women.

- India announced a \$500 million package to fund a project in **Maldives**.

Note: An **air connectivity "bubble"** for travel, a direct ferry service, a submarine cable for telecom connectivity; and assistance for the Greater Male Connectivity project (GMCP) to connect Male to three neighboring islands. India has sought to regain diplomatic influence in the islands after a new administration led by President Ibrahim Solih took power following the defeat of the pro-China strongman Abdulla Yameen in elections in 2018.

- The **Dragon Endeavour** is the spacecraft of space company **SpaceX**.

Note: NASA astronauts Robert Behnken and Douglas Hurley are aboard the SpaceX Crew Dragon Endeavour spacecraft as it is lifted onto the SpaceX GO Navigator recovery ship shortly after landing in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Pensacola, Florida, Sunday, Aug. 2, 2020.

- **Israel** has successfully tested its advanced missile defence system, "**Arrow-2**" ballistic missile interceptor.

Note: The Missile test was conducted in the test site in Central Israel over the Mediterranean Sea. The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) of the United States of America along with Israeli Air Force and Israel Aerospace Industries conducted the testing.

- Intergovernmental organization **European Union** has launched project '**Nirmanshree**' for enhancing the women skill towards housing construction sector.
Note: This is the first-of-its-kind sustainable housing on a large scale in India with 1-million-euro. The project will be implemented in Beed and Osmanabad districts of Maharashtra and the Dhenkanal and Jajpur districts of Odisha.
- **United Kingdom** has launched £3 million "**Innovation Challenge Fund**" in India to support scientists in academic arena and industry to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.
Note: The fund invites tech innovators with connections to the AI-Data cluster in Karnataka and the future mobility cluster in Maharashtra to submit research and development proposals for tackling COVID-19 or which promote a greener planet.
- Recently, India has signed a cultural agreement with **Israel** that outlines a three-year programme of cooperation to further strengthen their strategic bilateral relations.
Note: India and Israel signed a cultural agreement that outlines a three-year programme of cooperation to further strengthen their strategic bilateral relations today. It aims to promote greater people-to-people exchanges.
- **UAE** became the first Gulf Arab country to have active **diplomatic ties to Israel**.
Note: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates, have agreed for the Israel–United Arab Emirates peace agreement, or the Abraham Accord to establish full diplomatic ties. It is expected that the peace accord will be signed in the White House, US in early September, 2020.
- The first meeting of the National Coordination Committees for monitoring implementation of mutually agreed projects between India and **Uzbekistan**.
Note: Both nations reexamined the activities of bilateral economic and trade cooperation which are in operation or planned for the future. The Committee was set up under the supervision of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev.
- Tech giant **Google** has launched '**The Anywhere School**' initiative in more than 250 countries around the world.
Note: Under the initiative, Google will roll out over 50 new features across products like Google Meet, Classroom, G Suite and other products. Google will launch custom and blurred backgrounds in Google Meet to provide 'extra privacy' to the users.
- **China** has launched its New Optical Remote-Sensing Satellite "Gaofen-9 05" along with 2 Smaller Payloads.
Note: The satellite, Gaofen-9 05, was sent into orbit by a Long March-2D carrier rocket. A multifunctional test satellite and another satellite named Tiantuo-5 was also launched via the rocket.
- Indian Institute of Technology's (IIT) Alumni Council has signed an agreement with **Russia** to build the world's largest and fastest hybrid quantum computer in India.

Note: The most promising areas for Indo-Russian joint projects are Information and Communications Technology, space exploration, climate change, quantum technology and data security.

- Global telecom company **Ericsson** has partnered with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to help map school internet connectivity in 35 countries by the end of 2023.

Note: This joint initiative is a part of the Giga initiative launched by UNICEF and International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in September 2019 to provide internet connection to every school and their surrounding communities.

- **Singapore** will offer free coronavirus tests to community groups such as taxi drivers, food delivery workers and hawkers as part of efforts to expand the COVID-19 testing regime.

Note: Singapore will offer free coronavirus tests to community groups such as taxi drivers, food delivery workers and hawkers as part of efforts to expand the COVID-19 testing regime.

Important News: Economy

August 2020

- ✓ **SIDBI** in association with **TransUnion CIBIL Limited** launched a comprehensive financial education and one-stop knowledge platform for micro, small and medium enterprises "**MSMESaksham**" for MSMEs.

Note: The portal is focused on two key pillars of financial knowledge and access to credit. The portal will have a consolidated list of all the schemes launched by the Centre and state governments for MSMEs. It will be a knowledge hub with informative articles, business insights to help entrepreneurs and business owners start or grow businesses.

- ✓ The National Digital Conference on "**Easing Doing Business for Atmanirbhar Bharat**" organised by **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**.

- ✓ Payment system **MobiKwik** has launched **mpay.me**, a UPI payment link service that allows users to send and receive money from any UPI payment app.

Note: Through mpay.me, users and merchants can set up a personalized link using their mobile number. The link can be created through the MobiKwik app or the MobiKwik website and can be shared anywhere with anyone over chat, SMS, email etc.

- ✓ Indian Power Company **Reliance Power** and Japanese energy major **JERA** have inked a pact with a group of banks for financing their new gas-fired thermal power generation project in Bangladesh.

Note: Both partners will develop a new 745 MW natural gas combined-cycle power project in Meghnaghat in Bangladesh. In September, 2019 Reliance Power inducted JERA as a partner for the 750 mw-gas based combined cycle power project in Bangladesh as a part of its understanding with the country in 2015 to set up a total of 3,000 mw.

- ✓ As per the revised Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, list entities will get **3 years** to meet criteria of minimum public shareholding of 25 per cent.
Note: listed entities get one more year to comply with the rules of MPS, benefitting more than three dozen PSUs (public sector undertakings) who have been unable to meet this requirement amid COVID-19.
- ✓ Country's national bank **Bahrain, National Bank of Bahrain (NBB)** has decided to adopt the Finacle Cash Management Suite of Infosys Finacle to digitally transform its transaction banking business.
- ✓ AI-powered multilingual voice bot **AXAA** has been launched by Axis Bank to resolve customer queries.
Note: The BOT has been launched in collaboration with Bengaluru startup Vernacular.ai, an AI-based SaaS voice automation platform. AXAA will optimise voice AI solutions and help automate customer interactions through intelligent human-like dialogue.
- ✓ **Mozambique**, Export-Import (EXIM) Bank has to improve the power supply quality of the country.
- ✓ **International Financial Corporation (IFC)** entities committed to invest Rs 75 crore in Endiya Partners Fund II.
Note: In addition to this, IFC has also committed an additional USD 10 million for direct co-investments. The partnership will provide financial and strategic support to Endiya portfolio companies, resulting in increased access to growth opportunities and sustainable scalability.
- ✓ **National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI)** has launched '**nth Rewards**', a business intelligence and analytics enabled omni-channel multi-branded loyalty platform.
Note: This platform enables users to earn 'nth' (denoting infinite possibilities) points through various bank transactions and redeem them instantly on various products, such as e-vouchers, donations, hotel and flight bookings. The platform aims to become a one stop shop for the bank which will enable them to retain and grow their customer base.
- ✓ **Paytm** has launched **India's 1st Pocket Android POS** (Point of Sale) Device for contactless ordering and payments in India.
Note: It is an effort to digitise and empower a large number of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The company aims to issue over 2 lakh devices within the next few months which will generate over 20 million transactions per month.
- ✓ Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has launched the platform "**Honoring the Honest**" for **Transparent Taxation**.
Note: In a major reform the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has carried out several major tax reforms in direct taxes in recent years. Last year, the Corporate Tax rates were reduced from 30 per cent to 22 per cent and for new manufacturing units, the rates were reduced to 15 per cent. Dividend distribution tax was also abolished.
- ✓ The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced to introduce a mechanism of '**Positive Pay**' feature for all cheques of value of **Rs 50,000 and above**.

Note: This feature helps to avert cheque frauds. The limit of Rs 50,000 will cover approximately 20 per cent of transactions by volume and 80 per cent by value. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced to introduce a mechanism of 'Positive Pay' feature for all cheques of value Rs 50,000 and above.

- ✓ The National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) was funded by Government of India and **World Bank (WB)**.

Note: The Government of India-World Bank-funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project is designed for strengthening the national agricultural education system in the country. The overall objective to provide more relevant and high-quality education to the agricultural university students that are in tune with the New Education Policy – 2020.

- ✓ **Punjab National Bank** has launched '**DIGITAL APNAYEN**' campaign to encourage customers to use digital banking channels.

Note: The campaign launched by the bank's Managing Director S S Mallikarjuna Rao on the occasion of Independence Day is till March 31, 2021. PNB encourage customers to use digital channels and participate in the noble cause of donating to the PM CARES Fund for COVID-19.

- ✓ Reserve Bank of India has decided to transfer as dividend **Rs 57,128 crore.** to the central government accounting year 2019-20.

Note: It has decided to maintain a contingency risk buffer of 5.5 percent at the minimum threshold recommended by the Jalan committee to review RBI's capital framework. The central board approved the dividend at its 584th meeting through video conferencing to discuss the financial operations and the balance sheet for the financial year 2019-20.

- ✓ **Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX)** exchanges is going to launch India's first bullion index named "**Bulldex**".

Note: Bullions, viz. gold and silver are already being traded as individual commodities on the country's premier commodity exchange. With gold and silver as underlying, Bulldex will have a market lot size of 50 and be cash-settled futures contract. MCX had tested bullion index futures trade in mock trading exercises in July.

- ✓ Indian company **Biological E** announced the acquisition of Akorn India, a subsidiary of U.S. firm Akorn Inc.

Note: The acquisition, for an undisclosed sum, comes days after BE entered into an agreement with Johnson & Johnson firm Janssen Pharmaceutica, whose COVID-19 vaccine candidate (Ad26.COV2.S) is undergoing clinical trials.

- ✓ **Fino Payments Bank** has launched an Aadhaar Authentication based digital savings account Jan BachatKhata (JBK).

Note: Under the JBK, customers can transact at a Fino branch or merchant point with fingerprint and OTP combination, while at non-Fino points they need Aadhaar authentication. Earlier, Fino Payments Bank had introduced Shubh and Bhavishya, subscription-based savings accounts targeted at specific customer segments.

- ✓ **Asian Development Bank** has approved a total of 1 billion USD loan to provide assistance for the construction of modern, high-speed Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System.
Note: ADB'S finance will include the construction of railway tracks, station buildings, maintenance facilities, and traction, and power supply. The project aims at smoothening regional connectivity by establishing transit options across the densely populated sectors of the National Capital Region connecting Delhi to Meerut in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ **Lakshmi Vilas Bank** has launched '**DigiGo**', a digital initiative to enable the opening of savings account instantly.
Note: LVB's new initiative will help people to avail the most required banking services instantly through the website. As a Lakshmi DigiGo customer, one can visit the nearest LVB Branch and convert his/her "Lakshmi DigiGo", account to a fully-featured regular account of choice and avail cheque book, debit card and a host of other facilities.
- ✓ The Asian Development Bank has approved **USD 1 billion** package to support the construction of the modern, high-speed Delhi-Meerut regional rapid transit system, a first of its kind in India.
Note: The transit system project aims to help decongest the city and improve regional connectivity by establishing transit options through densely populated sections of the NCR connecting Delhi to Meerut in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✓ **Axis Bank** has launched a new initiative named '**Gig-a-Opportunities**' to attract skilled talent that can work with the bank remotely.
Note: The initiative aims to attract skilled talent that can work with the bank remotely, from anywhere in the country. This hiring model comprises two working patterns.
- ✓ **Tata Group** has launched "**super app**", an e commerce app with an aim to take on Amazon and Reliance Industries in the country's booming e commerce sector.
Note: The app will offer food and grocery ordering, fashion and lifestyle, consumer electronics and consumer durables, insurance and financial services, education, healthcare and bill payments. The app will put the conglomerate in competition with giants of the region like Reliance Industries and global titans like Amazon.
- ✓ **ICICI Bank** becomes the first bank in India to use satellite data to assess the creditworthiness of farmers.
Note: The satellite data with demographic and financial details provides strong information on the land asset of the farmers. Usage of this technology will help farmers with existing credit to expand their eligibility and help new-to-credit farmers to get better access to formal credit.
- ✓ **NABARD** has introduced, '**Structured Finance and Partial Guarantee Program for Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFC)-Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)**'.
Note: It is a dedicated debt and credit guarantee product to ensure uninterrupted flow of credit to the last mile in rural areas hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ✓ **Axis Bank** has '**Liberty Savings Account**' for the Indian Youth, to address the ever-changing lifestyle needs of young and digitally interested Indians.
Note: It offers a complimentary hospital cash insurance cover of up to Rs 20,000 per year, which covers hospital expenses incurred under COVID -19, which makes this a 1st of its kind savings account to cover the pandemic.
- ✓ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its Annual Report for 2019-20 projected India's growth at what percent for 2020-21-- **minus 4.5%**.
Note: It is the Report of the Central Board of Directors on the working of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the year ended June 30, 2020 submitted to the Central Government in terms of Section 53(2) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. In the report, RBI projected that India's growth at minus 4.5% for 2020-21.
- ✓ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its Annual Report for 2019-20 has decided to dissolve **Banking Codes and Standards Board of India (BCSBI)**.
Note: It was set up in February 2006 as an independent and autonomous body for formulating codes of conduct to be adopted by banks voluntarily for ensuring fair treatment of customers. BCSBI, in collaboration with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), has evolved two codes – Code of Bank's Commitment to Customers and the Code of Bank's Commitment to Micro and Small Enterprises.
- ✓ The Innoviti Payment Solutions Pvt. Ltd. has partnered with **Visa** to develop an instalment platform, which will enable the issuers to extend credit to their cardholders at face-to-face Point of Sale (PoS) in India.
Note: The installments platform with the suite of platform capabilities leveraging **Innoviti's uniPAYNEXT** platform and Visa's APIs, provides shoppers the ability to choose how they pay during the purchase.
- ✓ **Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company Limited** has launched '**Smart Assist**', a 1st of its kind technology service in the insurance industry.
Note: It helps the customers to know about product details while enjoying virtual assistance and maintaining social distance protocol. It is the latest in the series of initiatives by Bajaj Allianz Life to enhance the customer experience by digitizing its operations, making them easy-to-use and completely secure

Awards and Honours

August 2020

- ✓ **Sunil Ydv SS** has been conferred with the Karmaveer Chakra Award instituted by the United Nations and International Confederation of NGO (iCONGO).
Note: He received the award for his relentless contribution to society through his Telegram channel "SS Motivation." He addresses social issues and motivates people every day through his channel. The awards he won last year include Rastra Prerna, Iconic Personality of India, Incredible Indian Icon and Humanitarian Excellence.

- ✓ **Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT)** has won the first prize in the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2020, a national-level digital product building competition.
Note: It was jointly organized by MHRD and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) at Noida Institute of Engineering & Technology (NIET), Uttar Pradesh. The team of DIAT named as 'Age of Ultron' had six members under Dr. Sunita Dhavale . Prize Money: Rs 1 Lakh
- ✓ **Moothon** film has won the Best Film Award in the 20th edition of New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) of Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC).
Note: It was conducted as a virtual event with the celebrities of the film industries and award winners participating from all across India and the United States. Nivin Pauly starring film Moothon was directed by Geetu Mohandas. The movies portray the story of a 14-year-old who travel in search of Moothon (elder brother) Akbar who left Lakshadweep for Mumbai".
- ✓ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) recognized Venkataipur and Noliassahi, villages of **Odisha** as 'Tsunami Ready' for their overall preparedness to face the tsunami.
Note: With this recognition, Odisha became the first state in the India and India became the 1st Country in the Indian Ocean region to achieve the honour from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO.
- ✓ The researchers from **IIT Kharagpur** institutions has won the Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (GYTI) Awards 2020 for developing a mechanism for generating electricity from wet clothes left under sunlight to dry.
Note: The work has been published in Nano Letters, a high-impact journal in the field, and the innovation has been patented by them. The same award was presented separately to another team of the IIT Kharagpur for addressing the problem of energy conservation and thermal management in wearable and flexible electronic devices.
- ✓ **Nitin Sethi** has won the Asian College of Journalism's award 2019 for investigative journalism.
Note:The awards ceremony was conducted online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Sethi won in the investigative journalism category for his six-part series titled "Paisa Politics" published by The Huffington Post India.
- ✓ **Shiv Sahay Singh** has won the Asian College of Journalism's award 2019 the K P Narayana Kumar Memorial Award for social impact journalism.
Note: He won the inaugural social impact journalism award for his story titled "Death by digital exclusion: On faculty public distribution system in Jharkhand" published in The Hindu.
- ✓ **Akshay Kumar** is the only Indian actor to be listed among the top 10 world's highest-paid actors of 2020.
Note: Akshay is placed at sixth place in the list. Most of his income came from product endorsements. The list takes into account the earnings between June 1, 2019, and June 1, 2020. The list has been topped by Wrestler-turned-movie star Dwayne

Johnson, for a second straight year, with the total earning of \$87.5 million. Johnson is also known by his ring name The Rock.

- ✓ Indian origin physician **Ravi Solanki** is among 19 winners of the UK's Royal Academy of Engineering President's Special Awards for Pandemic Service.

Note: Ravi Solanki, a physician working on neurodegenerative diseases, along with Raymond Siems, an engineer working in machine learning, were awarded for their volunteer work to help build a secure and fully functioning website for a new National Health Service (NHS) charity HEROES.

- ✓ Rohit Sharma, Vinesh Phogat, Manika Batra and M Thangavelu were recommended for **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award 2020** award by the National Sports Awards selection committee.

Note: Rohit Sharma will be the fourth cricketer after legendary Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli to be conferred the award. Tendulkar was awarded the Khel Ratna in 1998, Dhoni got it in 2007 and Kohli received in 2018. In a first, this year's National Sports Awards ceremony is likely to be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- ✓ St Christopher School of **Nagaland** has won the Gold Award along with cash prize of Rs.1 Lakh from the first ever Pallikkutam National Award for Innovation in Education instituted by Rajagiri Media.

Note: The St Christopher School won the award for ensuring a seamless class for the students with the limited infrastructure and resources in the rural area. The Prize money for Gold Award is Rs.1,00,000. The rural school provided a balanced online and offline activities for the students over the whatsapp. The award was sponsored under the CSR initiative of the Federal Bank Ltd.

- ✓ **Indore** city became India's cleanest city for the fourth year in a row in the Swachh Survekshan 2020 awards.

Note: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri announced the Swachh Survekshan 2020 result at the Award Ceremony 'Swachh Mahotsav' in the national capital being organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoUHA). This is the fifth edition of the annual cleanliness survey of the country. A total of 129 awards will be handed out to the top-performing cities and states.

- ✓ Water technology company **VA Tech Wabag Ltd.** has won the prestigious Global Water Award for its 45 million liters a day Tertiary Treatment Reverse Osmosis Plant.

Note: The plant has won the distinction award under the category of 'wastewater project of the year'. The plant is one of the largest and technologically advanced water treatment plants in India.

- ✓ **NLCI** has bagged the "Swachhta Hi Seva award" for transforming Neyveli Township into a plastic-free, green campus.

Note: The award was conferred to three units of the PSU - Township administration office (First rank), Thermal Power Station -I (second rank) and Mines Sub-stores (third rank). NLCIL implemented the Swachhta Hi Seva programme in two phases -- the first phase from September 11 to November 2, 2019 and the second phase from October 3 to 27, 2019.

- ✓ **Neelakantha Bhanu Prakash** has won the first ever Gold Medal for India in Mental Calculations World Cup (MCWC).
Note: Bhanu Prakash had secured the gold medal with a score of 167, Lebanese contender Mohammed El Mir secured the Silver Medal with a score 102 and Asmita Pal from the UAE bagged the Bronze medal with a score of 100 points.
- ✓ **Tenzin Priyadarshi and Zara Houshmand** has authored the book titled 'Running toward Mystery: The Adventure of an Unconventional Life'.
Note: The book provides an account of how the Dalai Lama traced his Spiritual Teacher Khunu Lama in India. Tenzin Priyadarshi is the President and CEO of The Dalai Lama Center for Ethics and Transformative Values at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Zara Houshmand is an Iranian American author and literary translator.
- ✓ **Marieke Lucas Rijneveld** has been adjudged as the winner of the International Booker Prize 2020.
Note: The book was first published in Dutch in 2018 and eventually translated into English by Michele Hutchison. The £50,000 prize (\$66,000) will be split equally between the author and translator to give equal recognition to both.
- ✓ "Nayi Disha" is the HR initiative of **SBI** bank has been awarded with **Brandon Human Capital Management** (HCM) Excellence Award 2020.
Note: The award is also known as the Academy Awards of Learning & Development 2020. The SBI has been awarded with the global recognition for its HR initiative, "Nayi Disha". The award winners will be honored at Brandon Hall Group's annual HCM Excellence Conference, January 26-28, 2021 at the Hilton West Palm Beach, Florida.

Important Days

August 2020

- ✓ **World Lung Cancer Day** is being observed on **1st August** to raise awareness about the causes and treatment of lung cancer.
Note: August 1 to raise awareness about the causes and treatment of lung cancer. The campaign was first organized in 2012 by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies
- ✓ The theme of the World Breastfeeding Week celebrated annually in the first week of August from 1st to 7th of August-- "**Support Breast feeding for a healthier planet**".
Note: The day is celebrated to encourage breastfeeding and improve the babies' health around the world. The day was commenced after signing the Innocenti Declaration in August 1990.
- ✓ The World Sanskrit Day was observed annually on **Shravan Purnima (3rd August 2020)**.
Note: On the occasion Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked everyone involved in promoting, teaching and using Sanskrit language. Sanskrit is a beautiful language which has made India a repository of knowledge for many years.

- ✓ Annually World Heroshima Day is observed every year on **6th August**.
Note: Annually 6th of August marks the anniversary of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima during World War II. The horrific incident took place on August 6, 1945, when the United States dropped an atomic bomb named “Little Boy”, on the town of Hiroshima in Japan.
- ✓ **National Handloom Day** is being celebrated every year on 7th August.
Note: 7th August was chosen as the National Handloom Day to commemorate the Swadeshi Movement which was launched on the same date in the year 1905. The objective is to generate awareness about the Handloom Industry among the public and its contribution to socio-economic development.
- ✓ United Nations observes the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples every year on **09th August**.
Note: The day is being observed to raise awareness of the needs of indigenous peoples. The **theme** of International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples 2020 is “**COVID-19 and indigenous peoples’ resilience**”.
- ✓ The World Biofuel Day is observed globally every year on **10th August**.
Note: The World Biofuel Day is observed every year to aware about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels. The day also highlights the various actions taken by the Government in the Biofuel sector.
- ✓ **International Youth Day** is being celebrated very year on 12th August.
Note: This day is celebrated to recognize the efforts put in by the youth for the betterment of society. The Day aims to promote the ways to engage the youth and make them more actively involved in their communities through positive contributions.
- ✓ The theme of the International Youth Day (IYD) 2020 --**Youth Engagement for Global Action**.
Note: This day is celebrated to recognize the efforts put in by the youth for the betterment of society. The Day aims to promote the ways to engage the youth and make them more actively involved in their communities through positive contributions.
- ✓ The ‘World Elephant Day’ is observed every year across the world on **12th August**.
Note: The day focuses on bringing the world together to help elephants and also inform people and organisations about the threat that an elephant faces. On 12 August, 2012, the first international Elephant Day was celebrated. Since then, it is observed annually and this day is dedicated to the huge animal protection and preservation.
- ✓ The World Organ Donation Day is observed globally every year on **13th August**.
Note: This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation and motivate people to donate organs after death.
- ✓ The World Lizard Day is observed every year on **14th August**.
Note: Most celebrations of this holiday occur at the local level, through events organized by schools, natural history or science museums, zoos, national parks, conservation NGOs etc. World Lizard Day has not yet been taken up for serious

conservation work by international agencies or organizations like the IUCN or WWF, and is focused on creating awareness of the reptiles, apparently mostly as pets.

- ✓ The World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is observed globally every year on **19th August**.

Note: This day is celebrated to pay tribute to humanitarian personnel and those workers who lost or risked their lives while doing humanitarian service. This year is the 11th edition of World Humanitarian Day.

- ✓ The World Photography Day also known as World Photo Day is observed annually on **19th August**.

Note: The Day is celebrated to inspire photographers across the globe to share a single photo with a purpose of sharing their world to the world. The day celebrates the arts, crafts, science and history of Photography.

- ✓ Indian Akshay Urja Day or Renewable Energy Day is observed on every year on **20th August**.

Note: It is significant to promote awareness about renewable resources among people who are ignorant about the subject. Indian Akshay Urja Day was established in 2004 to support renewable energy development programs and promote its use instead of traditional sources of energy. The very first event relating to Akshay Urja Diwas was organized in New Delhi.

- ✓ **Rajiv Gandhi** birth anniversary is celebrated as Sadbhavana Diwas or Harmony Day on 20th August every year.

Note: This year on 20th August 2020, we are going to celebrate the 76th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Indian National Congress instituted Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award in 1992, a year after his death. Every year this day is celebrated in the memory of the late Rajiv Gandhi who was the youngest Prime Minister of India at the age of 40 years.

- ✓ World Mosquito Day is observed annually on **20th August**.

Note: The Day is celebrated to raise awareness about the Causes and Prevention of Malaria and to commemorate the discovery made by British Doctor Sir Ronald Ross in 1897 that female Anopheles mosquitoes transmit Malaria between humans.

- ✓ The World Senior Citizen Day is observed globally every year on **21st August**.

Note: This day is celebrated to raise awareness about issues affecting older people, such as deterioration with age and the abuse of the elderly and support, honour and show appreciation to seniors and to recognize their achievements. The World Senior Citizen's Day also recognises and acknowledges the contributions of older people to society.

- ✓ International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism observed globally every year on **21st August**.

Note: The day is observed to pay tribute to the individuals across the globe who have been attacked, injured, traumatized or lost their lives because of terrorist attacks. This year, the 3rd commemoration of the day will focus on the response to the pandemic and cancellation of many memorials and commemorations, it is critical to take the time to remember and honour the victims of terrorism.

- ✓ The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition observed globally every year on **23 August**.
Note: The Day is observed to inscribe the tragedy of the slave trade in the memory of all peoples. The day was designated by UNESCO to memorialize the transatlantic slave trade.
- ✓ The World Water Week 2020 is observed as the World Water Week at Home (WWWeek at Home) from **24th to 28th August 2020**.
Note: The theme for World Water Week 2020 at Home is ‘**Water and Climate change: Accelerating Action**’.
- ✓ The Women’s Equality Day is being observed in the United States on **26th August**.
Note: This was 100th anniversary of the Women’s Equality Day. The day is celebrated to commemorate American women getting the constitutional right to vote.
- ✓ The National Sports Day is observed every year on **29th August**.
Note: The first National Sports Day was celebrated on 29th August 2012, on the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand who was the star of hockey team of India.
- ✓ The International Day against Nuclear Tests is observed globally on **29th August**.
Note: The day aims to increase awareness about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.
- ✓ The International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances observed every year on **29th August**.
Note: The day is being observed to express deep concern about the rise in **enforced or involuntary disappearances** in different regions of the world including the incidents of arrest, detention and abduction.

New Appointments

August 2020

- ✓ **Hamed Bakayoko** has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Ivory Coast.
- ✓ Indian economist **Urjit Patel** has been appointed as the additional and independent director of Great Eastern Shipping Company Ltd.
- ✓ **Perseverance** launched by NASA to seek signs of ancient life and collect first Martian rock.
- ✓ Mohamed Irfaan Ali became the President of **Guyana**.
- ✓ Mark Anthony Phillips has been sworn in as the Prime Minister of **Guyana**.
- ✓ **Manoj Sinha** has been appointed as the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Jammu and Kashmir.
Note: He will succeed Girish Chandra Murmu, who resigned recently. Manoj Sinha has represented the parliamentary constituency of Ghazipur in eastern Uttar Pradesh thrice in the Lok Sabha. He also served as Communication Minister as well as Minister of state for Railways.

- ✓ **Girish Chandra Murmu** has been appointed as the new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India.
- ✓ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), Government of India (GoI), has approved another extension of Ajay Tyagi's term as Chairman of **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**.
- ✓ Indian cricketers **Suresh Raina & Harmanpreet Kaur** were appointed as Global brand ambassadors of Win Trade Fantasy (WTF) Sports.
- ✓ **Pradeep Kumar Joshi** has been appointed as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
Note: His tenure as the chairman of the UPSC will be till April 4, 2022. He succeeds Arvind Saxena who retires as the UPSC chairman on 6th August 2020.
- ✓ **Mahinda Rajapaksa** took oath as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.
Note: The 74-year-old Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) leader has been appointed as the PM of Sri Lanka. Prior to this, Mahinda Rajapaksa was first elected prime minister in 2004 and again appointed for brief periods in 2018 and 2019.
- ✓ Alexander Lukashenko has won the presidential election in **Belarus**.
- ✓ Walter Roger Martos Ruiz becomes new Prime Minister of **Peru**.
- ✓ **Mohamed Ould Bilal** has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Mauritania.
- ✓ **Pramod Bhasin** has been appointed as the new Chairman of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).
- ✓ **Rakesh Asthana** has been appointed as the Director General of the Border Security Force (BSF).
- ✓ Goa Governor Satya Pal Malik has been appointed as the new Governor of **Meghalaya**.
- ✓ Recently, Ashok Lavasa has stepped down from constitutional post of **Election Commissioner of India**.
Note: Lavasa is set to join the Philippines-based Asian Development Bank as the vice-president from September 2020. He will succeed the incumbent vice-president Diwakar Gupta, who is in charge of private sector operations, and public-private partnerships.
- ✓ **Rohit Sharma** has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Sports eyewear "Oakley".
- ✓ Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona has been sworn in as the 54th President of **Dominican Republic**.
- ✓ **Keith Rowley** has been appointed as the **Prime Minister** of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for a 2nd consecutive 5-year term.
- ✓ **Ritesh Shukla** has been appointed as the **Chief Executive Officer** (CEO) of the newly launched NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of NPCI.
- ✓ **Luis Rodolfo Abinader** has been sworn in as the President of Dominican Republic.
- ✓ **Rajiv Kumar** has been appointed as the **Election Commissioner of India**.
- ✓ **Akinwumi Adesina** has been re-elected as the **President of African Development Bank**.

Obituaries

August 2020

- Renowned personality Sonam Tshering Lepcha passed away recently, he was a veteran **Folk Musician**.
Note: He played a major role in reviving and promoting the Lepcha Culture which is one of the indigenous culture of Sikkim.
- Lee Teng-hui dubbed as “Mr. Democracy” passed away recently. He was former president of **Taiwan**.
Note: He was popularly known as “Mr. Democracy” for eradicating the dictatorial rule in favour of unbiased pluralism in Taiwan.
- Famous personality Anil Murali passed away recently. He was a veteran **Malayalam Actor**.
- Former **Uttar Pradesh** education minister of Kamal Rani Varun passed away due to coronavirus. She served as Minister of Technical Education, is the first minister in Uttar Pradesh to die after contracting coronavirus.
- **Writer and Singer** Vangapandu Prasada Rao passed away recently.
- Nobel Peace Prize winner, John Hume passed away.
Note: He was a founding member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in 1970 and led the party from 1979 until 2001.
- **Politician** Ram Pradhan passed away recently.
Note: He served as the governor of Arunachal Pradesh during Rajiv Gandhi government. He was an IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre.
- Renowned politician Shyamal Chakraborty passed away due to COVID-19 infection, he was a former governor of **West Bengal**.
- Renowned personality Shirley Ann Grau passed away recently, she was a veteran **Environmentalist**.
- Renowned personality Sadia Dehlvi passed away recently, she was a veteran **Writer and Activist**.
- Renowned personality Mukund Lath passed away recently, he was a veteran **Culture Historian**.
- Renowned personality Nandi Yellaiah passed away recently, he was a veteran **Politician**.
- Famous personality Manikombu Karunanidhi passed away, he was a veteran **Sportsman**.
- Renowned personality PK Muthusamy passed away recently, he was a veteran **Songwriter**.
- Noted personality Rahat Indori passed away recently, he was a veteran **Urdu Poet**.
- Renowned personality GK Menon passed away, recently he was a veteran **Journalist**.
- Chunnakara Ramankutty passed away recently he was a famous poet and film and drama lyricist of **Malayalam** language.

- Famous sportsperson Chetan Chauhan passed away recently, he was associated with **Cricket**.
- Noted Carnatic musician Dr B Siva Kumar passed away recently, he was proficient in **Veenam** musical instrument.
- Renowned personality Nishikant Kamat passed away, he was a veteran **Film Director**.
Note: Nishikant had directed some popular Bollywood movies like Force, Drishyam and Madaari.
- Renowned personality Pandit Jasraj passed away recently, he was a veteran **Vocalist**.
Note: Pandit Jasraj was a recipient of India's fourth-highest civilian award, Padma Shri in 1975; Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1987 and Padma Bhushan in 1999. In the year 2000, the government of India conferred him with Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian honour in the country.
- Legendary sportsperson Angela Buxton passed away recently; she was associated with **Tennis** sports.
- Renowned personality Russell A. Kirsch passed away recently, he was a veteran **computer scientist**.

Important Events: Sports

August 2020

- ✓ **German** Famous footballer Benedikt Howedes retired recently.
Note: He was one of the 3 players who had played every minute for the team in the tournament. Benedikt Howedes has played 44 times for German National Team from 2011-17. In September 2007, German Football Association honored him with the Fritz Walter Medal, under-19 Gold Medal which is given to the best youth players.
- ✓ The **Indian Government** has provisionally granted permission for the 13th edition of **Indian Premier League's (IPL's) 2020** to be rescheduled in **UAE**.
Note: BCCI has also decided to host a Women's T20 Challenge to be held from November 1 to 10 in UAE. Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah will be the three venues of the tournament. No spectators to be allowed in the initial phase of the tournament
- ✓ India has withdrawn from the women's world team **Squash championship** scheduled to be held in **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**.
Note: India has withdrawn from the **women's world team Squash championship** scheduled in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 15th to 20th December, due to lack of preparation, time and match-readiness of its players. Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) has decided to withdraw from the championship.
- ✓ **Lewis Hamilton** won the **British Grand Prix (GP) 2020**.
Note: It is officially known as the Formula 1 Pirelli British Grand Prix 2020. The tournament was held at the Silverstone Circuit in Silverstone, United Kingdom (UK). This is his 7th time to win this title. He is the only racer to win most in British GP.

- ✓ **Sports Authority of India** with CISCE and CBSE, will host an online program for training of Physical Education (PE) Teachers on "Khelo India Fitness Assessment of School Going Children".
Note: The program will target 7500 participants across 2615 CISCE schools. It will assess the fitness levels of the school children and identify potential future champions. Khelo India Fitness Assessment through Khelo India Mobile App (KIMA) will be done. The session is titled 'Whole School Approach to Fitness'.
- ✓ Indian umpire **KN Ananthapadmanabhan** has been included in ICC's international panel of umpires.
Note: Ananthapadmanabhan played 105 First-Class and 54 List A games for Kerala, taking 344 and 87 wickets respectively. Ananthapadmanabhan has officiated in all major domestic events including the IPL.
- ✓ **INOX** company will be the official sponsor Indian team for the rescheduled Tokyo Olympic.
Note: The Tokyo Olympics was rescheduled to next year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be held from July 23 to August 8 in 2021. As part of the partnership the Group will also support team's promotions through its entertainment company -- INOX Leisure Limited, which owns a chain of multiplexes in the country.
- ✓ "Fit India Freedom Run" would be organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports from **15th August to 02nd October 2020**.
Note: The ministry is organising "Fit India Freedom Run" to mark the 74th Independence Day of India on August 15 to 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2. This would be the largest country-wide run, targeted to encourage fitness among the masses while following the COVID-19 protocols.
- ✓ **Max Verstappen** has won the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.
Note: His victory ended Mercedes dominant Formula 1 season. 70th Anniversary Grand Prix 2020 was the 5th race of 2020 Formula 1 season and was held at Silverstone, United Kingdom
- ✓ **India** will host the ICC Men's T20 World cup 2021.
Note: While the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2020 that was postponed due to Covid-19 will be held in Australia in 2022. Cricket's governing body 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.
- ✓ Suresh Raina announced his retirement from **Cricket** sport.
Note: 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. He scored 7,787 runs across all the formats in international cricket. He also claimed 167 catches in his international career, setting the bar high with his athleticism on field. Suresh Raina is the first Indian batsman who has scored a century in all three formats of the game.
- ✓ **Lewis Hamilton** has won the Formula One Spanish Grand Prix 2020 held at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Spain.

Note: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes-Great Britain) has won the Formula One Spanish Grand Prix 2020 held at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Spain. This was his 4th win of the season and the 88th win of his career. Max Verstappen (Red Bull-Netherlands) came second followed by Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes-Finland) at third.

- ✓ The Asian Boxing Championship has been postponed to next year owing to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the tournament was scheduled to be held in **India**.

Note: India last hosted the men's Asian meet back in 1980 in Mumbai before conducting the women's event in 2003 in Hisar. The tournament became a combined event for men and women last year. The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown sporting calendars haywire the world over with several big events, including the Olympics and the T20 World Cup of cricket, postponed.

- ✓ **Dream 11** has bagged the title sponsorship rights of Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020.

Note: Dream 11 has bagged the rights as Expression of Interest (EOI) was invited by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for IPL 2020's title sponsorship after the Chinese mobile phone brand, Vivo, pulled out of it. The title rights bagged by the fantasy gaming start-up "Dream 11" are valid till December 31, 2020.

- ✓ Famous cricketer Laura Marsh of **England** has announced her retirement from all forms of cricket.

Note: In her international career, Marsh played 9 Tests, 103 ODIs and 67 T20Is. She managed to score 1,588 runs across all formats and also registered 217 wickets. The 33-year-old announced her retirement from international cricket in December and has now decided to call time on her domestic career as well.

- ✓ **All India Football Federation (AIFF)** has signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with International Professional Scouting Organization (IPSO) to conduct online Scouting Workshops throughout India.

Note: Under the agreement, IPSO will conduct online workshops which will provide a number of courses and webinars with regards to scouting in India. The workshop will be a starting point to become a scout or an analyst and will also help anyone to understand the foundations and protocols in talent identification, scouting & analysis.

- ✓ Football team **Sevilla** has won the Europa League for a sixth time.

Note: Italy's wait for a first European trophy in a decade, and Inter's nine-year trophy drought, goes on after Lukaku could not stop Carlos's spectacular strike. It is Europe's secondary club football tournament organised by UEFA, and the 12th season since it was renamed from the UEFA Cup to the UEFA Europa League.

- ✓ **Table tennis player** Manika Batra has been selected for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award 2020.

Note: The government has announced the National Sports Awards 2020. Rohit Sharma (Cricketer), Mariyappan Thangavelu (Para-Athlete), Manika Batra (TT player), Vinesh Phogat (Wrestler) and Rani Rampal (Hockey) will receive the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award.

- ✓ Former cricketer Lisa Sthalekar has been inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame, she held from **Australia**.
Note: Former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar were inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame in a virtual ceremony along with Legendary South African all-rounder Jaques Kallis and Pakistan batting great Zaheer Abbas. Pune born Sthalekar represented Australia in eight Tests, 125 ODIs and 54 T20s. Sthalekar is the 27th from Australia and the ninth woman player in the list, which includes five from her country.
- ✓ **Sophia Popov** has won the Women's British Open 2020 title in Golf.
Note: German Golfer Sophia Popov won the Women's British Open 2020 title (rebranded as 2020 AIG Women's Open) by defeating Thailand's Jasmine Suwannapura by two strokes at Royal Troon in Scotland. Sophia has now become the first female golfer from Germany to win the LPGA Tour's major title.
- ✓ Football club **Bayern Munich** has won the UEFA Champions League 2019-20 title.
Note: Bayern Munich has become the first European Cup winners who won all their matches during the tournament. This is the sixth European Champions League title for Bayern Munich.
- ✓ Famous all-rounder Cameron White was playing for **Australia** announced his retirement from all forms of professional cricket.
Note: He represented Australia in 4 Test matches, 91 ODIs and 47 T20Is. He also led the Australian limited-overs team in 7 international games. He amassed 146 runs in tests, 2072 runs in ODIs and 984 runs in T20Is.
- ✓ **Table Tennis** player Poulomi Ghatak announced her retirement.
Note: Poulomi Ghatak belongs to the state of West Bengal. She won three junior national championships as well as seven senior national championships between 1996 and 2016.
- ✓ **James Anderson** became the first-ever fast bowler to take 600 wickets in Test Match Cricket.
Note: Overall, he is the 4th bowler to take 600 test wickets after 3 spinners Muttiah Muralitharan, Shane Warne, and Anil Kumble. Anderson, who made his Test debut in 2003 against Zimbabwe, had become the highest wicket-taker among seamers in 2018 when he dismissed Mohammed Shami against India at The Oval to go past Glenn McGrath's tally of 563 Test wickets.
- ✓ **India** will host BRICS Games 2021.
Note: This announcement came after Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju attended a meeting of Sports Ministers of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). India will get the chairmanship of the five-nation independent international group in 2021.
- ✓ Brother's pair, Mike Bryan and Bob Bryan have announced their retirement from the sport. They are associated with **Tennis** sport.
Note: They are the most successful men's doubles pair in tennis history. The brother's pair captured an Open Era record with 119 trophies in 26 seasons which comprises all four Grand Slams, all nine ATP Masters 1000s as well as the Olympic gold medal.

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