



**CURRENT AFFAIRS
FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL 2020**

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IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme
02 FEB	World Wetland Day	Wetlands and Biodiversity
04 FEB	World Cancer Day	I am and I will
10 FEB	National Deworming Day	-
13 FEB	National Women's Day of India	-
19 FEB	Soil Health Card Day	-
21 FEB	International Mother Language Day	Languages without borders
28 FEB	National Science Day	Women in Science
01 March	Zero Discrimination Day (SDG5: Gender Equality)	Theme: Zero Discrimination Against Women and Girls
01 March	World Civil Defence Day	Theme: Civil Defence and a first aider in every home
03 March	World Wildlife Day	Theme: "Sustaining all life on earth"
03 March	World Hearing Day	Theme: –Hearing for life. Don't let hearing loss limit you.
04 March	National Safety Day	To raise awareness about the safety measures to prevent mishaps and accidents due to lack of awareness.
07 March	Jan Aushadhi Diwas	To create awareness and providing a thrust to the use of generic medicines.
08 March	International Women's Day	Theme: 'An equal world is an enabled world'.
12 March	World Kidney Day	Theme: –Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere–from Prevention to Detection and Equitable Access to Care.
13 March	World Sleep Day	Theme: Better Sleep, Better Life, Better Planet.

14 March	World Pi day	Pi is a symbol used in mathematics to represent a constant. It is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter which is approx. 3.14.
15 March	World Consumer Day	To raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs.
16 March	National Vaccination Day	Theme: Vaccines Work for All
18 March	Ordnance Factories Day	The day is celebrated by displaying the rifles, guns, artillery, ammunition, etc in exhibitions all over India.
18 March	Global Recycling Day	Theme: —Recycling Heroes
20 March	World Sparrow Day	Theme: —I Love Sparrow
20 March	International Day of Happiness	Theme: ‘Happiness For All, Together’
20 March	French Language Day	To promote equal use of all six official working languages throughout the organization.
21 March	International Day of Forests	Theme: Forests and Biodiversity
21 March	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	For the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2020 is focused on the midterm review of the International Decade for People of African Descent.
21 March	World Down Syndrome Day	Theme: —We Decide
21 March	World Poetry Day	To encourage a return to the oral tradition of poetry recitals, to encourage the teaching of poetry as well as to restore a dialogue between poetry and the other arts such as theatre, dance, music, and painting.

22 March	World Water Day	Theme: —Water and Climate Change
23 March	World Meteorological Day	Theme: —Water and Climate Change
23 March	Martyrs Day	March 23 is observed as Martyrs Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas as a tribute to martyrs Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.
24 March	World Tuberculosis Day	Theme: ‘It’s Time’
24 March	International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims	Theme: —Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero
25 March	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	Theme: —Confronting Slavery’s Legacy of Racism Together
25 March	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members	To mobilize action, demand justice and strengthen our resolve to protect UN staff and peacekeepers, as well as our colleagues in the non-governmental community and the press.
27 March	World Theatre Day	It is celebrated annually on the 27th March by ITI Centres and the international theatre community.
Last Saturday of March (March 28)	Earth Hour	The Earth hour 2020 took place on 28 March at 8:30pm in India.
02 April	World Autism Awareness Day	Theme: “The Transition to Adulthood”.
02 April	International Children’s Book Day	Theme: Hunger for Words.
04 April	International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action	Theme: “Advancing Protection, Peace and Development.”
05 April	National Maritime Day	

05 April	United Nations International Day of Conscience	Theme: Change the World with Conscience
06 April	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace	
07 April	World Health Day	Theme: World Health Day is Support Nurses and Midwives.
07 April	International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Rwanda Genocide	-
09 April	CRPF Valour Day	-
10 April	World Homeopathy Day	Theme: "Enhancing the scope of Homoeopathy in Public Health".
11 April	National Safe Motherhood Day	-
12 April	International Day of Human Space Flight	-
14 April	Ambedkar Jayanti	Ambedkar Jayanti (also known as Bhim Jayanti) is an annual festival observed on 14 April to commemorate the birth anniversary of Babasaheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar who was born on 14 April 1891.
14 April	First Edition of World Chagas Disease Day	The aim of the day is to raise the visibility and public awareness of people with Chagas Disease (also called American trypanosomiasis)
13 April	36 th Siachen Day	On 13 April 1984, the Indian Army launched 'Operation MEGHDOOT' to secure Bilafond La and other passes on the Saltoro Ridgeline, from Pakistani aggression.
15 April	World Art Day	-
16 April	World Voice Day	Theme: FOCUS ON YOUR VOICE.
17 April	World Hemophilia Day	Theme: "Get+involved".
18 April	International Day For Monuments and Sites	Theme: Shared Cultures, Shared Heritage, Shared

		Responsibility
19 April	World Liver Day	-
20 April	UN Chinese Language Day	-
21 April	Civil Services Day	-
21 April	World Creativity and Innovation Day	-
22 April	International Mother Earth Day	Theme: Climate Action.
23 April	World Book Day	Theme: World Book Day is SHARE A STORY. The day is also known as World Book and Copyright Day or International Day of the Book.
23 April	UN English Language Day & UN Spanish Language Day	-
23 April	International Girls in ICT Day 2020	Theme: 'Inspiring the Next Generation'.
24 April	National Panchayati Raj Day	-
24 April	World Day for Laboratory Animals	-
24 April	International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace	-
25 April	World Malaria Day	Theme: Zero Malaria Starts with Me
25 April	World Veterinary Day 2020	The theme of World Veterinary Day 2020 is Environment Protection for Improving Animal and Human Health.
25 April	International Delegate's Day	
26 April	World Intellectual Property Day	The theme for World Intellectual Property Day 2020 is 'Innovate for a Green Future.'
26 April	International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day	-
28 April	World Day For Safety And Health At Work	The theme for 2020 is Stop the pandemic: Safety and health at work can save lives.

28 April	Workers' Memorial Day	Theme 2020: 'Stop the Pandemic in the Workplace.'
29 April	International Dance Day	-
30 April	International Jazz Day	
Last week of April	World Immunization Week	'Vaccines Work for all'



TAMILNADU

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - has launched the Union governments „one nation, one ration card “scheme in Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts of the State on February 1 as a pilot project.**
- ◆ **Adichanallur in Tuticorin district - is among the five archaeological sites that would be developed with on-site museums, as announced by the Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech**
 - Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Shivsagar (Assam) and Dholavira (Gujarat) are the other shortlisted archaeological sites.
 - Adichanallur, a remote village, is home to a three-tier cemetery spread over more than 200 acres
 - It is one of the largest and oldest early Iron Age cemeteries ever located in South Asia
 - Arikamedu in Puducherry, one of the earliest Roman sites in the Tamilakam, lost its significance after being excavated in 1945-50 due to the lack of an on-site museum.
- ◆ **Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU) - will be finalizing a pact with Tamil Nadu Department of Archaeology and Harvard University to carry out genomic research on fossils recovered from sites like Keezhadi.**
- ◆ **The State school education department - has allotted Rs 38 crore for constituting “Eco and Youth clubs” in 37,000 government schools, including 327 schools in Chennai.**
- ◆ **The 15th Finance Commission has allocated 4.189% of the Centre’s tax revenue for Tamil Nadu for the next 6 years, up by 0.166% (4.023% allocated in 14th Finance Commission)**
 - However, this figure is still less than what the State got from the 13th Finance Commission - 4.969%
 - Overall, the commission has recommended post-devolution revenue deficit grants amounting to ₹74,340 crore for 14 states.
 - Out of the total sanctioned amount, ₹37,917 crore has been assigned to 5 states namely, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal

- Tamil Nadu has been recommended a post-devolution revenue deficit grant of ₹4,025 crore, even though the State's estimate was around Rs 20,000 crore for the year
 - This is the first time that the State will be receiving such a grant from the Centre
- ◆ **The 15th Finance Commission - allocates Rs 556 crore for tackling air pollution and handling solid waste management in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Trichy (under the category of cities with more than one million population each) for the next Financial Year.**
- The Commission had allocated Rs 5,344 crore to local bodies in the state for 2020-21.
 - Of the total allocation, Rs 1,737 crore is set aside for urban local bodies.
 - Chennai will be receiving a maximum assistance of Rs 362 crore.
 - It will also receive another Rs 100 crore separately to prevent flooding in the city
 - A targeted allocation of Rs 500 crore has been made in 2020-21 from the National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) to enable cities with a population of more than 5 million to prepare integrated solutions for flood management during monsoon period.
 - The commission has also decided to propose grants to all three tiers of panchayats in rural local bodies and also to cantonment boards in urban local bodies.
 - For the first time, the finance commission has categorised cities into million-plus cities and cities with less than one million population
 - Further, the commission has recommended that states make allotment of grants on the basis of population to the cantonment boards within their territories.
 - It has identified two cantonment boards in Tamil Nadu – St Thomas Mount in Chennai and Wellington in The Nilgiris district which have a total population of 63,257 people.
- ◆ **K. Thiagarajan, population expert and founder of the United Writers' Association, has been selected for the Global Award of Accomplishment alongwith a medal**
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government - is planning to invite global bids for a consultant to do a detailed master plan for a second airport site - likely to be Parandur near Sunguvarchatram**

- Currently, the state has international airports at Chennai, Coimbatore, Trichy and Madurai and domestic airports at Tuticorin and Salem.
 - Chennai remains one of the four busiest airports in the entire country, with 20.36 million passengers recorded in 2017-18.
- ◆ **The grand consecration of the 1000-year old Sri Brahadeeswarar Temple (Big Temple) in Thanjavur - was conducted after a gap of 23 years**
- The ceremony was performed in both Tamil and Sanskrit, as per the directions of the Court.
 - The event was witnessed by Maratha royal family members led by Prince Babaji Rajah Bhonsle Chatrapati
 - Thirugnanasambandhar's Thirumurai was recited by the Odhuvars
- ◆ **L&T-MBDA Missile Systems (LTMMSL) - has established a missile integration facility in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu**
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government - has increased the size of the homes to qualify for the "affordable housing" scheme from 40 square metres to 60sqm within the limits of Greater Chennai Corporation**
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government's recently constituted State Shelter Fund - becomes operational in the State**
- The fund will be used to rehabilitate the urban poor in the State
 - All new construction of commercial, residential, industrial and institutional buildings across the State, whose floor space index (FSI) area exceeds 3,000 sq. m, will have to pay 'shelter charges' between 1% and 3%, based on their guideline value per sq. m.
 - Also, the fund will be used in affordable housing projects for the economically weaker sections, through the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board and the Tamil Nadu Housing Board.
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - has received ₹2,459 crore from the Union government's PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.**
- The major beneficiaries were from the districts of Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai and Salem districts
 - PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi is a scheme offering ₹6,000 a year to all landholding farmers' families

- It was launched by the PM Narendra Modi from Gorakhpur on February 24, 2019
 - It is a Central Sector scheme with 100% funding from the Centre
 - The purpose of the Scheme was to provide financial support to the small and marginal farmers
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced on January 9 that the entire Cauvery delta region would be declared a protected agriculture zone.**
- The protected agriculture zone announcement would include the districts of Thanjavur, Trichy, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Ariyalur, Cuddalore and Karur
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated a new cricket stadium in Kariveppilapatti near Thalaivasal on February 9 in the presence of former Indian national cricket team captain, Rahul Dravid**
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - laid the foundation stone for the Advanced Institute for Integrated Research on Livestock and Animal Sciences on February 9.**
- The Institute will come up at Thalaivasal in Salem at a cost of ₹1,024 crore
 - Once operational, the institute would be the biggest in south Asia, which would be set up in an area of 1,100 acre
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government's overseas manpower corporation (OMC) - has signed a pact with the India trade and exhibition centre (ITEC), Sharjah, for creation of a placement cell to find jobs for the state's youth in UAE.**
- ◆ **Tangedco - has incurred the highest loss among all state- owned discoms across the country in 2018-19.**
- As per the data released by the Union power ministry, Tangedco had suffered loss to the tune of ₹9,257 crore, about 20% more than the loss figures it recorded last year (₹7,761 crore)
 - The main reasons for the increasing losses of Tangedco is attributed to the implementation of the pay commission recommendations and damage caused to infrastructure due to cyclones
- ◆ **Puducherry - became the first Union territory to pass a resolution, on February 12, urging the Centre to repeal the controversial Citizenship**

Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and National Population Register (NPR).

- ◆ **State Deputy Chief Minister and Finance minister, Thiru O Panneerselvam - presented his 10th budget for the State with focus on several sectors including education, agriculture, rural development and infrastructure.**
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) - has dipped to 57 per one lakh live births in 2019, according to the State Health Management Information System (HMIS) data.**
- ◆ **Gujarat-based Torrent Gas - has got the Supreme Court's nod to create a gas distribution network in Chennai and Tiruvallur.**
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government - has decided to observe February 24, the birth anniversary of former chief minister J Jayalalithaa, as the State "Women and Children Safety Day".**
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced three welfare schemes for Muslims on February 19.**
 - The Government has raised the ulemas' (Muslims scholars) monthly pension to ₹3,000 from ₹1,500.
 - Poor 'pesh imams', 'mothinars', Arabic teachers and 'mujawars' who retired from service of Tamil Nadu Waqf Board institutions are paid a pension under the scheme.
 - Those who attained 60 years of age and completed 20 years of service are eligible to receive pension.
 - The scheme was implemented in the state in 1981.
 - There are 2,814 institutions registered with the state Waqf Board.
 - The CM also announced that ulemas of these institutions would either get a cash support of ₹25,000 to purchase a two-wheeler or 50% of the vehicle cost, whichever is less, as subsidy.
 - Every year, around 4,000 people go for the annual Haj pilgrimage via Chennai airport.
 - Last year, 4,300 pilgrims performed the pilgrimage.
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated the sixth phase of excavation at Keeladi through videoconferencing from Chennai on February 19, following which work at the site began**
 - The excavations at Keeladi have revealed the presence of an ancient civilisation that flourished on the banks of the Vaigai river.

- The Government has allocated ₹40 lakh for the first phase of this excavation and additional amount would be released as per the requirement later
 - The excavation is expected to go on simultaneously in all four villages - Keeladi, Konthagai, Manalur, and Agaram - which has been approved by the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA).
 - The excavation in the last five phases has revealed more than 15,500 artefacts from the Keeladi site.
 - The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) conducted the first three phases from 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, while the next two were done by the state archaeology department.
 - Though five excavations have been completed only the report of the fourth phase has been published in detail so far, which revealed that Keeladi dated back 2,600 years ago.
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu and Australia - to come together for the restoration of Humayun mahal in Chennai**
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu assembly - passed the Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development Bill, 2020 on February 20**
- The bill proposes the ban of eight categories of hazardous industries in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam districts and in five blocks each of Cuddalore and Pudukottai districts.
 - The draft bill was approved by the State Governor Banwarilal Purohit, after the approval of state Cabinet on February 19.
 - It proposes to punish violators with imprisonment for a period ranging from six months to five years, apart from levying a fine ranging between Rs 10 lakh to Rs 50 lakh.
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government - signed memorandums of understanding with Japan-based Mitsuba Sical, South Korea- based Hanon Automotive Systems and US-based Jogo Health at the two-day "Diplomatic Outreach".**
- ◆ **In a first of its kind, students from University of Madras Department of ancient history and archaeology - have excavated a Neolithic ash-mound during field training at Sendoor Malai near Gudiyatham.**
- This is the first time a neolithic ash-mound has been excavated in TN

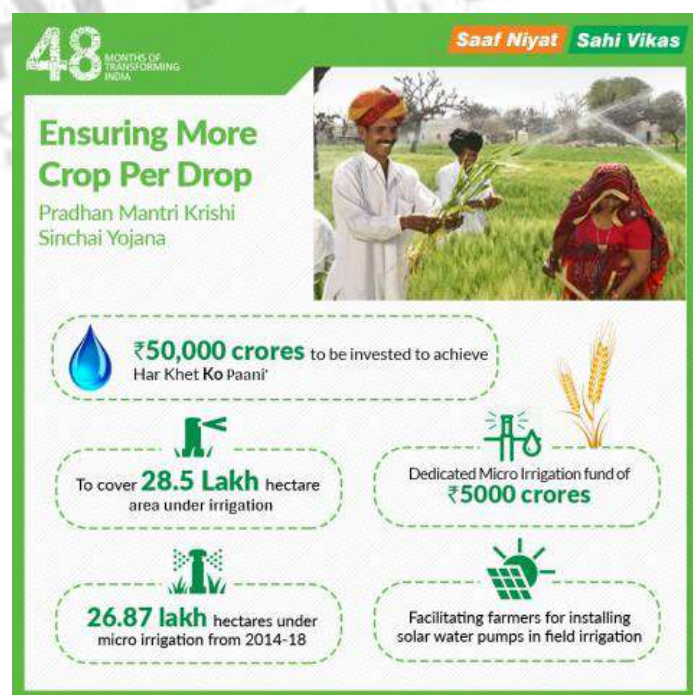
- However, such neolithic ash-mounds have earlier been discovered in other parts of south India, including Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh
 - The students also unearthed potsherds and stone tools dating to the neolithic, iron age and early historic periods.
 - The excavation is being carried out at Valasai village, about 12km from Gudiyatham town in Vellore district, since February 3
 - Earlier in 2012, an Archaeological Survey of India team visited the site to understand the cultural sequences and importance, which confirmed the site belongs to the neolithic period
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated a ₹1.34 crore mani mandapam for late media baron, B Sivanthi Aditanar in Tiruchendur in Tuticorin district.**
- During the occasion, the CM announced that the fourth phase of the Tamirabarani, Karumeniyar and Nambiyar linking project would be completed by the end of this year.
- ◆ **Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - has announced financial assistance of ₹2 lakh to V. Abhinaya, a student who has been selected to visit the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the U.S.**
- V. Abhinaya was a Class IX student from Nallipalayam village in Namakkal district
- ◆ **The Tamil Nadu government - issued an order prohibiting new industrial activities under eight categories in the region under the Environment Act on February 24.**
- The order has also been published in an extraordinary gazette.
 - The state had recently enacted a law to declare the Cauvery delta districts and blocks of the delta a protected agricultural zone
 - The ban order was issued in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the notification issued by the Union ministry of environment and forests in February 1988
 - The state government cited Article 48-A of the Constitution that mandated the state to protect the environment
 - The areas comprise Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam, and Kattumannarkoil, Melbhuvanagiri, Keerapalayam, Parangipettai and Kumaratchi blocks of Cuddalore district, and Aranthangi,

Avudaiyarkoil, Manamelkudi, Tiruvarangulam and Karambakudi blocks of Pudukottai.

- The banned industries include, zinc, copper and aluminium smelter, iron ore process plant, integrated steel plant and sponge iron plant, bone meal, processing of animal horn, hoofs and other body parts, tannery, exploration, drilling and extraction of oil and natural gas and ship breaking industry.
- ◆ **KV Jeyasri - has won the Sahitya Akademi Prize 2019 for her Tamil translation work “Nilam Poothu Malartha Naal”, a novel based on the Sangam era.**
- The original novel was written in Malayalam by Manoj Kuroor with the title Nilam Poothu Malarnna Naal’.
- ◆ **The Union ministry for renewable power (MNRE) - has announced the cancellation of the proposal for a new solar park at Kadaladi in Ramanathapuram district**
- ◆ **Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - will lay foundation stone for ₹565 crore diversion of flood surplus from Mettur to the dry tanks in Sarabanga basin in his native, Edappadi panchayat union, on March 4**
- The Chief Minister is expected to launch the project in Mettupatti Tank in Iruppali village.
 - A detailed project has been prepared to divert the Cauvery river flood surplus to 100 tanks and ponds in four taluks of Omalur, Mettur, Edappadi, Sankari in Salem district.
 - It also covers drought prone blocks like Nangavalli, Mecheri, Tharamangalam, Omalur, Konganapuram, Edappadi and Sankari
 - The Chief Minister will lay foundation stone for the construction of new medical college in Virudhunagar and Ramanthapuram on March 1.
 - The state government allotted Rs 1,200 crore against its share in the construction of 11 colleges sanctioned by the Centre.
- ◆ **Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - launched the Tamil Nadu Health System Reform Programme in Chennai on March 4, 2020.**
- ◆ **QS World University Rankings.**

- Anna University - was ranked at 373rd, up by 24 places, in Engineering and technology category in the QS World University Rankings.
 - IIT Madras moved seven places to 88th rank in the same category
 - It is the fourth best institute in engineering and technology category, followed by IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IIT-Kharagpur, which have bagged the top three ranks at country level.
- ◆ The Union environment ministry - has notified a buffer zone of 9.068sqkm around the boundary of Ousteri lake bird sanctuary in Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu as an “**ecosensitive**” zone
 - ◆ Former AIADMK minister C Ponnaiyan - was appointed vice-chairman of the State Planning Commission (SPC)
 - ◆ **Chennai** - becomes the first city in Tamil Nadu to get an **Art District**.
 - The Chennai Corporation inaugurated the Kannagi Nagar Art District, showcasing work of renowned artists from various countries.
 - The Kannagi Nagar Art District is the fifth project in the country.
 - ◆ The State government - has declared COVID-19 a notified disease under the Tamil Nadu Public Health Act, 1939.
 - ◆ The Centre - has notified constitution of a regional bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) in Chennai
 - ◆ The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister - announced the creation of a new district of Mayiladuthurai on March 24
 - Nagapattinam will be divided into two and Mayiladuthurai will be created as the 38th district of TN
 - ◆ Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - announced the creation of an Information Centre Park on March 24
 - The park will be spread over 150 acres across Nemili and Mannur villages in Sriperumbudur taluk and will be developed at a cost of ₹500 crore

- ◆ The Tiruvallur Police – have launched an app called „CoBuddy“ to provide a platform between people on home quarantine for Covid-19 and the state government.
- ◆ Kovilpatti ‘kadalai mittai’ (chikki or a jaggery with peanuts) - has been granted the prestigious ‘Geographical Indication (GI) tag’ by the GI Registry
- ◆ Mayiladuthurai becomes Tamil Nadu's 38th district after bifurcation of Nagapattinam;
 - The Edappadi K Palaniswami government in Tamil Nadu on 7th April, 2020 through an official order announced the formation of a new district with Mayiladuthurai as its headquarters.
- ◆ Tamil Nadu - has finished as the Topmost state at the all-India level for micro-irrigation coverage, in the just-concluded financial year 2019-20.
 - This has been achieved as part of implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) across the state.
 - The PMKSY is a central government scheme that is aimed at promoting the “more crop per drop” concept by focusing on water-saving technologies.



- During the inaugural year of the programme (2015-16), Tamil Nadu had just about 32,290 hectares under micro-irrigation, well behind several high performing states such as Telangana (39,864 ha),

Rajasthan (56,345 ha), Karnataka (64,220 ha), Andhra Pradesh (94,104 ha) and Gujarat (about 1.43 lakh ha).

- The implementation of the scheme – from registration of beneficiaries to the final round of release of funds – has been made fully ‘online’, thereby simplifying the procedure and speeding up the approval process.
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - has received just ₹312.64 crore as ‘Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package’ under National Rural Health Mission, a centrally-sponsored scheme.**
 - The Centre allocated ₹510 crore a week ago to the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).
- ◆ **On April 16, Tamil Nadu Government - announced the formation of an expert committee to decide on the guidelines for a phased exit from the Covid-19 lockdown imposed under the Disaster Management Act.**
 - The 18-member committee will be headed by senior IAS Officer and finance secretary S Krishnan
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - is all set to commence work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) on April 16.**
 - The overall figure of active workers in the State is around 84 lakh
 - The State government has fixed the wage for the current year, which began on April 1, at Rs. 256 per day, a hike of Rs. 27 from the previous year.
 - The central government had allocated Rs 60,000 crore for MGNREGA for the financial year 2020-21.
 - MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) is the biggest source of employment generation in the country.
 - It provides work to more than 50 to 60 million households annually.
- ◆ **The Puducherry government - has rolled out a new mobile application platform to help trace, track and contain the spread of COVID-19.**
 - The platform ‘NAADI’ was developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Ministry of Electronics and IT.
 - It consists of two mobile apps – 112++ India for citizens and nCoV Satark for health agencies.

STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - to set up centres for women under the Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme in 14 more districts soon.**
 - These centres will serve as one-stop support point to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health, and nutrition.
 - They will come up in Salem, Chennai, Cuddalore, Virudhunagar, Perambalur, Villupuram, Namakkal, Tiruvannamalai, Trichy, Thiruvallur, Ariyalur, Thanjavur, Theni and Vellore.

- ◆ **Bihar - became the first state with an NDA government announcing not to implement the National Register of Citizens**

- ◆ The new Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)** - will be the only place in the country to undergo a „delimitation exercise“ based on the population figures recorded in the 2011 census.

- ◆ In a „historic and landmark“ decision, Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat - announced in the state assembly that his government will make „Gairsain“ the summer capital of **Uttarakhand**

- ◆ The state of **Andhra Pradesh** - has been ranked first for the overall implementation of Poshan Abhiyan, as per a recent report by NITI Aayog
 - The Union Government has launched Poshan Abhiyan, which was earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, across the nation on December 18, 2017 to address the problem of malnutrition.

- ◆ The **Maharashtra** government - has approved the implementation of the "happy hour" concept for the autorickshaws in the state.

- ◆ Retired Madras High Court judge V Kanagaraj appointed new State Election Commissioner of **Andhra Pradesh**

- ◆ On April 16, the **Uttar Pradesh** government – announced that it had started the ‘pool testing’ of COVID-19 samples in the State.
 - The state has become the first in the country that will attempt this method.
 - The pool testing of sample collections is done using a single RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction).

◆ **Rajasthan** - became the first State to carry out 'rapid testing' for COVID-19.

◆ In a first, Varanasi region - has sent a consignment of four tonnes of green vegetables, including green chilli, cucumber and gourd, for Delhi to be exported to the UK

- Earlier, vegetable consignments were sent only to the Gulf countries from Varansi region.

◆ **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy - launched 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' scheme at Tedepalli in Guntur District of the state

- It is a fee reimbursement scheme that is expected to benefit 14 lakh college students in the State.

◆ **Karnataka** tops in total installed renewable capacity: CRISIL Research report.

- On April 28, 2020, According to a CRISIL Research report, Karnataka retained its 1st position in terms of total installed renewable capacity in FY20 followed by Tamil Nadu(2nd) & Gujarat(3rd). The top 3 states in overall solar energy capacity addition are Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka & in wind energy- Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

Position List

Position Secured	State	Total installed renewable capacity in Mega Watt (MW)
1	Karnataka	15,232
2	Tamil Nadu	14,347
3	Gujarat	10,586

NATIONAL

- ◆ **NITI Aayog - announced that it will launch National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) in 2021**
- ◆ **Union Minister Piyush Goyal - announced that Indian Railways will run 100% on electricity by 2024, becoming the first ever Railways in the world to run so**
- ◆ **The Bengaluru-based company, Quess - has the largest strength of employees and associates – 3.85 lakh – in the private sector in India.**
- ◆ **The Prime Minister Narendra Modi - announced Rs 1500 crore package for Bodo areas of the state**
- ◆ **The Union Cabinet - has approved the introduction of the Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020.**
 - The bill proposes to declare five IIITs at Bhopal, Surat, Bhagalpur, Raichur and Agartala in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode as Institutions of National importance.
 - With this, the total number of IIITs that have been declared as institutions of national importance increases to 25.
- ◆ **The Union Cabinet - gave in-principle approval for the establishment of a new major port on the 'Landlord Model' at Vadhavan, Maharashtra.**
- ◆ **Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay - presented the 'World Heritage City' certificate to the Pink City – Jaipur on February 05, 2020.**
- ◆ **The Union Government - has launched 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign to promote cultural unity among various states of the country.**
 - The campaign aims to promote the spirit of national integration through various cultural activities.
 - The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been paired with Tamil Nadu, Punjab with Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand with Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh with Kerala, Delhi with Sikkim and Rajasthan has been paired with Assam.
 - The basic objective of this initiative is to promote the coordination between the people of different states by bridging the cultural differences.

- ◆ **The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs - has decided to pair the 20 best performing smart cities as 'sister cities' with the least performing 20 smart cities**
 - According to the ministry's internal rankings, 20 best performing cities are - Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Ranchi, Udaipur, Nagpur, Bhopal, Surat, Kanpur, Visakhapatnam, Vellore, Tiruppur, Vadodara, Nashik, Agra, Dehradun, Davanagere, Kota, Pune, Indore, and Amravati.

- ◆ **The Lok Sabha - passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill by voice vote on February 11**
 - The new bill seeks to include the Parivara and Talawara communities in the ST category.
 - The Siddi tribes of Belagavi and Dharwad in Karnataka would also be included in the category, apart from those living in Uttar Kannada.

- ◆ **In a first such instance, an Indian infrastructure major 'GMR Airports'- to build and operate an airport in Europe.**

- ◆ **The Union Government - has decided to rename the National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM), Faridabad as Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM)**

- ◆ **A Home Ministry appointed committee - has proposed the year _1951' as the cut-off year for determining indigenous people of Assam**

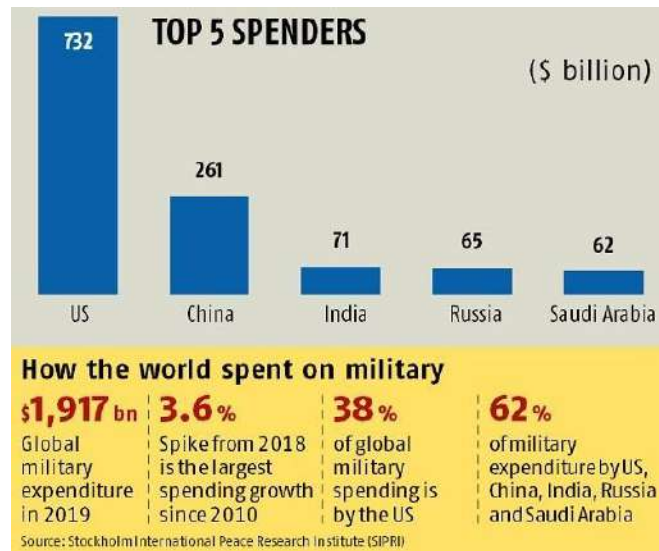
- ◆ **The government - has unveiled a new initiative, SUTRA PIC, to research on 'indigenous 'cows.**

- ◆ **Hindi - is the third most spoken language in the world with 615 million speakers, according to the 22nd edition of the world language database Ethnologue**
 - English has the most number of speakers (1132 million) followed by Chinese Mandarin, which secured second place with 1117 million speakers.
 - Bangla is the seventh most spoken language of the world as it has 228 million speakers in the world.
 - Ethnologue provides an annual database of living languages of the world. It covers 7111 living languages across the globe

- ◆ **The country's first intercity electric bus service between Mumbai and Pune - was started on February 14, 2020.**
- ◆ **India - has become the first country in the world that provides 100 percent digital Haj-2020 process.**
- ◆ **The World Bank and Government of India - signed a \$450 million loan agreement to improve groundwater requirements of the country.**
- ◆ **Researchers at the Atomic Energy Commission of India - have discovered 14,100 tonnes of lithium reserves in Mandya near Bangalore.**
 - Lithium is a rare metal, which is mainly used for the manufacture of electric vehicle batteries.
 - Chile, being the highest producer, produces 8.6 million tons of Lithium
- ◆ **The Union government - has decided to rename the 'Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses' (IDSA) as the 'Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses'**
- ◆ **The Delhi International Airport - has become the first single-use plastic-free airport in India.**
- ◆ **The Geological Survey of India (GSI) - confirmed the presence of two big block of gold reserves of approximately 3,000 tonnes, worth more than ₹12 lakh crore in Sonbhadra, east UP's mineral-rich district**
- ◆ **India's largest known burial site (necropolis) in UP's Sanauli – where 126 burials have been discovered until now – is estimated to be 3,800 years old, according to the results of carbon dating tests**
- ◆ **India and the United States finalised defence deals worth \$3 billion on February 25, 2020**
 - The two key defence deals signed between India and US include -
 - Procurement of 24 MH-60 Romeo helicopters by India for \$2.6 billion.
 - Procurement of six AH-64E Apache helicopters at a cost of \$800 million
- ◆ **The Union government - approved setting up of a 'National Technical Textiles Mission' on February 26 with a total outlay of Rs 1,480 crore**

- ◆ **The Centre - launched a new app, 'Aarogya Setu' on April 2, to track Covid-19 infection across the country more accurately and effectively.**
 - The app is available in 11 languages.
- ◆ **Aarogya Setu App, the centre's COVID-10 tracing app - has become the world's fastest app to reach 50 million users.**
 - The app became the world's highest downloaded in just 13 days.
- ◆ **For the first time in the history of Indian judiciary, a J&K high court judge, Justice Rajnesh Oswal - took oath under the Constitution of India and not under the J&K Constitution on April 2.**
- ◆ **The Government - has announced that all COVID-19 hospitalisation expenses will be covered under Arogya Sanjeevani insurance policy.**
 - It was introduced on April 1, 2020.
 - The insurance policy will offer health expenses between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 5 lakh.
- ◆ **The government - launched one of the largest ever cash transfer schemes on April 3**
 - The government pay outs include the deposit of over ₹30,000 crore into the account of woman Jan Dhan account holders and ₹5,000 crore into the linked accounts of eight crore poor households with LPG connections provided under 'Ujjwala' scheme.
 - The incentive was announced earlier by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as part of the 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package'
 - The package was meant to support the poor and vulnerable who are facing hardships during the lockdown.
 - On the first day of PM Jan Dhan transfer scheme, ₹500 was deposited into the accounts of four crore women
- ◆ **The Centre - has decided to provide free testing and treatment of COVID-19 under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.**
- ◆ **The National Highway Authority of India - recently completed the construction of 3,979 km of national highways under its flagship scheme, Bharatmala Pariyojana, in the financial year 2019-20.**

- The Bharatmala Pariyojana scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Road and Transport and Highways.
 - It was launched in 2015
 - The scheme has set a target of completing 65,000 km of NH.
 - Under Phase-I of the project, the scheme has plans to complete 27,500 km of NH construction.
 - The phase I was supposed to be completed in 5 years of the project launch
- ◆ **Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal - launched a new e-portal 'YUKTI'**
- YUKTI is the abbreviation for 'Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation'
 - It will also monitor and help the HRD Ministry to effectively plan its activities in the upcoming six months.
- ◆ **The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh - has set up India's first remote health monitoring system, in association with BHEL (Bharat Heavy Electronics Limited)**
- ◆ **The Union Agriculture Ministry - has launched a 'Kisan Rath' mobile application**
- The app will connect farmers and traders to a network of more than 5 lakh trucks and 20,000 tractors.
- ◆ **The Union Government - has reconstituted the National Shipping Board (NSB), which will now be headed by former Director General of Shipping, Malini Shankar**
- ◆ **For the first time, India - has emerged among the top three countries in the world in terms of military expenditure**
- However, it has to be noted that the US spends more than 10 times and China almost four times than the defence budget of India.



- ◆ **King George Medical University, Lucknow - has become the first government hospital in India to launch Plasma Therapy for the treatment of COVID-19 patients, following the approval of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).**
- ◆ **On April 28, the government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) - signed a \$1.5 billion loan that will support the Centre's response to the Covid-19 pandemic**
- ◆ **The Government of India - has established 'International Financial Services Centre Authority'.**
 - The headquarters of the new authority will be established in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
 - The authority will regulate financial markets in the International Financial Service Centres in India.
- ◆ **Mahim dargah of Shah Makhdoom Fakhir Ali Mahimi - was probably the first place of worship in India to install the Preamble of the Constitution on its premises on February 1.**
- ◆ **The year 2020 - marks the centenary of India's first demonetisation of paper currency**
 - It was in 1920 that the Nizam government in Hyderabad had withdrawn ₹1 paper currency from circulation.
 - The Nizam had introduced ₹10 and ₹100 paper currency in 1918 and ₹1 in 1919 as there was severe shortage of metal, particularly silver, in view of World War I
 - Moreover, the ₹1 note was printed in black.

- People saw the colour as inauspicious and thus refused to accept it.
 - This forced the Nizam to withdraw the note within one year of its introduction, launching India's first demonetisation.
 - The withdrawn currency was kept in the royal treasury and
- ◆ The Union Government - has approved 32 projects across 17 states in the food processing sector under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY).
 - ◆ Four of the culprits in the **Nirbhaya case** - were hanged by the neck to death on March 20.
 - Pawan Jallad is the executioner who has performed the hanging
 - ◆ The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) - has announced the launch of "**Swavalamban Express**" on June 05, 2020, to promote aspiring and budding business entrepreneurs.

BUDGET

- ◆ **Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - presented the Union Budget 2020 in the Lok Sabha on February 1**
 - At 2 hours and 40 minutes or a total of 160 minutes, this is the longest ever budget speech made by a Finance Minister
 - The budget was based on three broad themes - aspirational India (a better life for all), economic development for all (yielding more space for the private sector) and creating a caring society

Highlights of the Budget 2020

- ◆ **Income Tax**
 - The tax structure has been revised with the introduction of four tax slabs between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 15 lakh with the rate applicable to each of them getting reduced
 - Rs 5 lakh - Rs 7.5 lakh – reduced from 20% to 10%
 - Rs 7.5 lakh - Rs 10 lakh - reduced from 20% to 15%
 - Rs 10 lakh - Rs 12.5 lakh - reduced from 30% to 20%
 - Rs 12.5 lakh - Rs 15 lakh - reduced from 30% to 25%.

◆ **New definition of 'NRI'**

- The Government has modified the definition of 'NRI' from the point of view of residing in the country to arrest the non-payment of tax by exploiting the non-resident status of NRIs
- Earlier it was possible to be classified as non-resident by staying out of the country for 183 days or about 6 months in a year
- This has now been, in effect, enhanced to 245 days.

◆ **Allocation in Central Missions/schemes**

- The Centre will encourage states and local authorities to ensure that every household in million-plus cities gets piped water supply by March 2021 under Jal Jeevan Mission.
- The government has allocated ₹11,500 crore during the next financial year for implementation of the scheme, which aims to provide safe drinking water to all households across the country by 2024.
- The FM also announced that ₹12,300 crore has been allocated for Swachh Bharat Mission, which will now focus on ODF plus in order to sustain the open defecation free (ODF) status that both rural and urban areas have achieved
- The Smart City Mission was launched in 2015 and 100 cities have been selected so far, with an aim to make them citizen-friendly and sustainable
- Finance Minister also announced that 100 more airports will be developed by 2025 to support the UDAN scheme, aimed at better regional connectivity.

◆ **Proposed Taxpayer's charter**

- The government has announced its decision to introduce a taxpayer's charter as a part of the statute through the Budget
- A charter defines the rights of a taxpayer and the obligations of the tax department
- As many as 40 countries (of the 42 surveyed) had such a charter in place, but only in 33% of these was it legally effective.
- Countries like Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Italy, Kenya and Mexico have the charter as a part of their statute

◆ **New scheme – Kisan Rail and Kisan Udan**

- To boost transport of farm produce and incomes, the Budget proposes Kisan Rail and Kisan Udan services for seamless connectivity between farms, markets and consumers

◆ **KCC Scheme updation**

- The FM announced that beneficiaries of PM-Kisan (income support scheme) would be covered under Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme—a move which will help over 14 crore farmers get easy access to credit on low interest.
- KCC scheme, launched in 1998, has so far covered nearly 7 crore land holders.
- The cards help farmers avail short-term loans from banks for purchase of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other production needs.

◆ **MSME Sector**

- In a major relief to small retailers, traders and shopkeepers forming the Medium, Small and Micro Enterprise (MSME) sector, the Budget has proposed to raise by five times the turnover threshold for audit from the existing ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore.

◆ **Education**

- The Government had announced that the select higher educational institutions among the 'Top 100' will offer degree-level online education programmes for underprivileged students
- To start with, around 150 higher educational institutions will start apprenticeship embedded degree/diploma courses by March 2021 to boost job opportunities for general stream students
- The UGC, as a pilot, has already approved 7 institutions – IGNOU, Amity, JSS Academy, Manipal Academy, Bharatiya Vidyapeeth, Shanmugha Academy, Dr DY Patil Vidyapeeth—to offer online programmes.
- Government has also opened up higher education to foreign direct investment (FDI) and external financial borrowings
- In other proposals, a National Police University and a National Forensic Science University for forensic science, cyber-forensics, and

a programme in urban local bodies to provide internships to fresh engineers for up to one year were announced.

- The Budget proposes to provide Rs 99,300 crore for education in 2020- 21, up from Rs 94,853.64 crore in 2019-20, while Rs 3,000 crore will be for skill development.

◆ **New agency for Government jobs**

- The Government proposes a National Recruitment Agency (NRA) to conduct a computer-based common eligibility test (CET) for recruitment to non-gazetted posts with the test scores remaining valid for three years for recruitment
- A test centre would be set up in every district, particularly in 'aspirational districts'.
- Separate CETs shall be conducted for graduate, Class XII pass and matriculate-level candidates for non-technical posts
- The recruitment for these posts is currently done through Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS).
- The Budget estimates that more than 2.62 lakh jobs are likely to be created between March 2019 and March 2021 in various government organizations

◆ **Healthcare Sector**

- The FM announced an outlay of Rs 69,233 crore for the healthcare sector (including health research and AYUSH), slightly increased by 4.2% from Rs 66,416 crore provided in the 2019-20 revised estimate.
- The total outlay includes Rs 6,400 crore for Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, hailed as the world's largest state run health insurance scheme.
- The government has allocated Rs 4,400 crore to help states draw up schemes to improve air in cities that have a population of one million and more

◆ **Women and children**

- Categorising women and children under the larger budgetary theme of —Caring India, the Finance minister allocated Rs 35,600 crore to nutrition- related programmes under various ministries.
- The Budget also set aside Rs 30,007 crore for the women and child development (WCD) ministry — an increase of more than Rs 3,822 crore over the current year.

Department allocations

◆ Space

- Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has proposed a marginal increase of ₹340 crore in the fund allocation for the department of space (DoS) for 2020-21 over the previous fiscal.
- DoS has got a total allocation of ₹13,479 crore for 2020-21 as against the revised estimates of ₹13,139 crore for 2019-20.

◆ Sports

- The government allocated ₹2826.92 crore to the sports budget for the next financial year, which is an increase of a mere 50 crore from the revised estimates of 2019-20.
- The government gave a substantial hike of ₹312.42 crore to its flagship Khelo India programme by allocating ₹890.42 crore as compared to the 2019-20 revised amount of ₹578 crore

◆ MGNREGA

- The budgetary allocation for rural development ministry's flagship MGNREGA has been reduced by around 13% over the expenditure incurred in 2019-20
- While the job guarantee scheme was allocated ₹60,000 crore in 2019, it ended up spending ₹71,000 crore.
- However, the new budget has allocated only ₹61,500 crore for the coming new financial year.

◆ Home Ministry

- A total sum of ₹1,67,250 crore has been allocated to the home ministry in Union Budget 2020-21, of which nearly 63% will go to police organisations and schemes aimed at enhancing police resources.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- ◆ **India and Maldives - signed 5 memorandum of understanding (MoUs) on February 02**
 - The objective of this MoU is to establish the Addu tourism zone on the 5 islands of Addu Atoll in the Maldives at a budget of twenty-four million ninety thousand dollars.
 - Apart from this, sixth MoU was signed to establish a water bottling plant in Hoarafushi.

- ◆ **The double taxation avoidance agreement between India and Sri Lanka - was amended on February 12**
 - The DTAA was signed on January 22, 2013 and became effective on October 22, 2013.

- ◆ **The first high-speed patrol boat being built for Vietnam under the \$100-million Line of Credit (LoC) - will be delivered by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) in September**

- ◆ **India and Portugal - signed 7 agreements recently to boost cooperation in different fields between both the countries**
 - Both the sides signed agreements after the conclusion of talks between PM Narendra Modi and Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa.
 - This is his first visit to India.

- ◆ **India and Myanmar - exchanged 10 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) in various fields on February 26, 2020**
 - India is Myanmar's fifth-largest trading partner

- ◆ **India - is planning to launch an 'Information Exchange Platform' (IEP), to facilitate real-time exchanges among health professionals of SAARC countries.**

INTERNATIONAL

- ◆ **World Health Organisation (WHO) - declares that the coronavirus epidemic, that has killed 213 people as on date, as a global emergency.**
- ◆ **Britain - will officially depart from the European Union 11 pm local time on January 31 (4.30am IST-February 1)**
 - Thus, it becomes the first country to leave the 28-member bloc and will go it alone for the first time since 1973, marking the beginning of an uncertain future
- ◆ **Maldives - was officially readmitted to the Commonwealth on February 1, more than three years after the Indian Ocean archipelago nation quit the organization**
 - The rejoining takes the count of the bloc's membership countries back to 54.
- ◆ **Hong Kong - reported its first coronavirus death on February 4, the second outside mainland China**
- ◆ **Donald Trump is the third US President to face the impeachment trial in the history of US Politics.**
 - Apart from Trump, two other US Presidents were impeached by the US House of Representatives - Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998
 - However, all the three Presidents were acquitted by the Senate and thus not removed from the office.
- ◆ **The UAE - has issued an operating licence for the Arab world's first nuclear power plant, Barakah nuclear power plant in Abu Dhabi**
- ◆ **China - has assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council for March 2020**
- ◆ **Luxembourg in Europe - has become the first country to make all forms of public transport 'free'**
 - Estonia's capital, Tallinn and the French city of Dunkirk are the only two cities that have made buses free and accessible to all passengers. However, this scheme was not implemented across the entire country.

- In October 2019, the State Government of Delhi announced similar scheme, making the public transport free for women
- ◆ **Lebanon** - has become the first Arab nation to legalise the cultivation of Marijuana
- ◆ **China** - has named its first Mars exploration mission as 'Tianwen-1', which is expected to be launched later this year
- ◆ **Iran** - recently launched its first military satellite 'Noor', which is placed at an orbit of 425 km from Earth



APPOINTMENTS

NAME	DESIGNATION
G Narayanan	Chairman of New Space India Ltd (NSIL)
Rajiv Bansal	CMD of Air India
Suresh Patel	Vigilance Commissioner
Amita Pandove	Information Commissioner
Sanjay Kothari	Chief Vigilance Commissioner
Bimal Julka	Chief Information Commissioner
Ajay Bhushan P Pandey	Finance Secretary
Ranjan Gogoi	Nominated as a member of Rajya Sabha
Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Fourth term as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh
Sanjay Kothari	Secretary to the President of India
Dr Sudarsanam Babu	Member of the National Science Board, United States of America
T S Tirumurti	Ambassador to the United Nations

◆ **Indian-American Sri Srinivasan - took over as chief judge of the influential 'Appeals court' in Washington DC**

- With the appointment, he becomes the first person of Indian origin to lead a federal court that is just one step below to the US Supreme Court.

SCHEMES

- ◆ The Karnataka government - announced the launch of a new doorstep delivery scheme '**Janasevaka scheme**'

- ◆ The Agricultural Minister Narendra Singh Tomar - announced that Government of India is to launch –**TILHAN MISSION** to boost the oil seeds production

COMMITTEES

- ◆ **Amithav Roy committee - Prison Reforms**

- ◆ **The Government - has constituted a 'Science and Technology Empowered Committee' for coronavirus response in the country**
 - It will be chaired by Prof. **Vinod Paul**, member, NITI Aayog and Prof. **K. Vijay Raghavan**, Principal Scientific Adviser to the government.

PERSONALITIES

- ◆ IIT-Kanpur alumnus Arvind Krishna - was named as the new CEO of the 108-year-old American company, International Business Machines (IBM)
- ◆ India's Gita Sabharwal - has been appointed by the United Nations as its Resident Coordinator in Thailand.
- ◆ SS Vasan, a doctor of Indian origin - was named as the head of the team of researchers to develop a vaccine to fight the Coronavirus.
- ◆ Kanya Karthikeyan (12-year-old) from Mumbai - has become the youngest girl to climb Mount Aconcagua, the highest peak in South America.
- ◆ A Japanese man - has become the world's oldest male at 112 years and 344 days, according to Guinness Book of World Records.
- ◆ Rishi Sunak, son-in-law of Infosys founder N R Narayana Murthy - is promoted as Chancellor of the exchequer (finance minister) by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, after post-Brexit cabinet re-shuffle
 - Another Indian, Priti Patel is already holding the post of Home Secretary in another Britain's great office of state
- ◆ 93-year-old, C I Sivasubramanian- becomes the oldest student to obtain Master's degree at the IGNOU convocation
- ◆ Vallabhbhai Vasrambhai Marvaniya - has developed a 'Madhuban gajar', which is a biofortified carrot variety with high contents of Beta-Carotene & iron.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

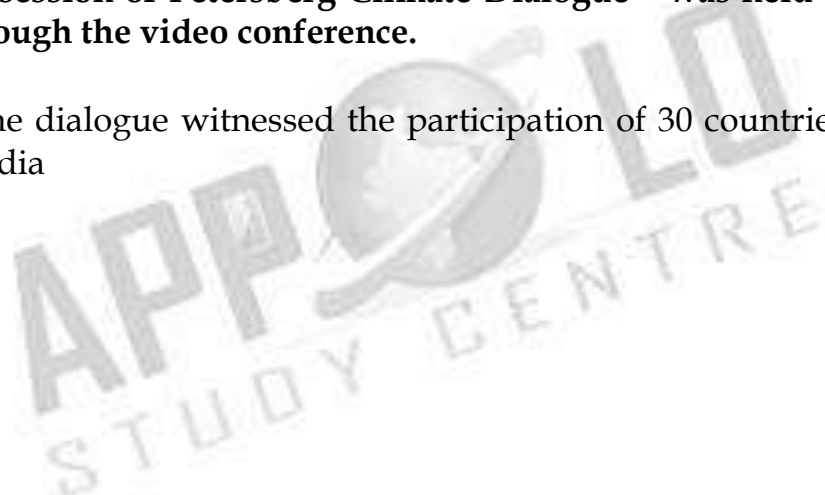
- ◆ **ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization) - launched Bhuvan Panchayat version 3.0.**
 - Under the project, the ISRO will collaborate with Gram panchayat members to understand their data requirements.
- ◆ **Christina Koch, who returned to Earth on February 6 - completed the longest stay by a female astronaut in space, 328 days.**
- ◆ **Takshashila Institution, a think tank and public policy school - drafted a new Space Policy 2020 for the Government**
- ◆ **Pangolin, the most trafficked mammal of Asia - was identified as the carrier of the coronavirus by the researchers of China**
- ◆ **Scientists - have recently discovered a new species of snail and named it after the environmental activist Greta Thunberg as 'Craspedotropis gretathunbergae'**
- ◆ **The world's first mission to a Martian moon, Phobos - will be launched by Japan in 2024**
 - The mission is expected to be a stepping stone for a possible human mission to the Red Planet, Mars.
- ◆ **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - announced a new mission, 'SunRISE' on March 30, 2020 to study the creation and release of giant solar particle storms by the Sun.**
 - The Sun Radio Interferometer Space Experiment (SunRISE) mission aims to help scientists understand the workings of the Solar System.
 - The mission is expected to be launched on July 1, 2023
 - Purpose of SunRISE : It aims to help protect astronauts going to the Moon and Mars in the future from the solar storms.
- ◆ **Scientists - have recorded the first-ever heat wave event in Antarctica over the 2019-20 summer period**
- ◆ **The students and scientists of IISc, Bengaluru - have developed indigenous ventilators under "Project Prana".**

- ◆ **Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala - has designed the prototype of a low-cost energy efficient ventilator named as 'JEEVAN'**
- ◆ **The Indian Council of Medical Research - has recently approved a new home testing COVID-19 kit, that was designed by a startup called 'Bione'**
- ◆ **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - announced the plans for its 'Artemis Program', which aims at landing humans on the moon by 2024.**
 - It will host four astronauts at the moon's South Pole for a week's expedition.
- ◆ **A Super Pink Moon, the biggest supermoon of the year 2020 - was visible in the skies on April 7, 2020.**
- ◆ **On April 7, 2020, the Ministry of Human Resource Development launched a new initiative of "Samadhan", a challenge to check the spread of COVID-19 in the country.**
- ◆ **Indian Scientists - have found that two bat species – Pteropus (Indian flying fox) and Rousettus (old world fruit bats) – found in four states of the country were carrying coronavirus**
 - This was the first Indian study to examine bat samples for coronavirus
 - One of the species, Pteropus, has earlier been linked to the nipah virus in India.
 - Bat samples that tested positive for coronavirus were found in Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.
- ◆ **NASA - announced that it will launch its flight of astronauts on a new mission titled 'Demo-2' on May 27, 2020.**
 - The mission will launch astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley to the International Space Station (ISS)
 - The mission is to be launched by SpaceX using its Falcon-9 rocket
 - It is the first crewed launch of the Elon Musk space company.
- ◆ **A South Korean company, SD Biosensor - has set up an Indian subsidiary, thereby becoming the first foreign company to produce rapid antibody test kits in India.**

CONFERENCE & SUMMITS

- ◆ **The Ministry of External Affairs - to organize East Asian Summit (EAS) to discuss maritime security cooperation as part of its 'Indo-Pacific' policy in Chennai**
 - India's Indo-Pacific policy has 7 pillars -
 - maritime domain awareness
 - marine environment
 - humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR)
 - sustainable use of maritime resources
 - science and technology
 - capacity building
 - maritime transportation and
 - trade
 - The conference is being jointly organised by India, Australia and Indonesia
 - This is the fifth maritime security conference
- ◆ **The 11th edition of DefExpo (Defence Exhibition) - was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**
- ◆ **India and African nations - adopted the 'Lucknow Declaration' during the first India-Africa Defence Minister's Conclave on February 6, 2020.**
 - The conclave was held on the sidelines of the 11th edition of the biennial defence exhibition, DEFEXPO India 2020.
 - The first-ever field training exercise 'AFINDEX' between both the sides was held earlier in March 2019.
- ◆ **The African Union Summit 2020 - was held in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa.**
 - Theme of African Union Summit 2020 - 'Silencing the Guns'.
- ◆ **The 23rd National Conference on E-Governance - was held in Mumbai recently, to transform governance activities using digital technologies**
 - Delhi, Chandigarh and Daman and Diu were ranked at the Top 3 spots in delivering e-governance services among Union Territories.
 - Among the states, Haryana and Rajasthan emerged as leaders

- National Health Authority and Ayushman Bharat received gold awards under the category of government process re-engineering for Digital Transformation.
- ◆ **The first-ever 'Jerusalem-Mumbai Festival' held in Mumbai**
- ◆ **The 13th United Nations Migratory Bird Species Conservation Conference - commenced in India.**
- ◆ **The International Judicial Conference - was held in New Delhi between February 21-23**
 - The Conference was addressed by PM Modi.
 - Theme - Gender Just World
- ◆ **The 11th session of Petersberg Climate Dialogue - was held on April 28, 2020, through the video conference.**
 - The dialogue witnessed the participation of 30 countries, including India



DEFENCE

- ◆ **“SAMPRITI” a Joint Military Exercise between India and Bangladesh - is scheduled to be held at Umroi, Meghalaya between 3rd February, 2020 and 16th February, 2020**
- ◆ **The Indian Coast Guard - commissioned a 'C-448' high-speed boat in Mangaluru, Karnataka**
- ◆ **The third Scorpene submarine, Karanj - will be delivered to the Indian Navy by December 2020**
 - The first Scorpene, Kulvari, was commissioned in 2018.
 - The second Scorpene, Khanderi was inducted in September 2019.
- ◆ **India-UK - to hold a joint exercise called ‘Ajeya Warrior’ on February 13, 2020**
- ◆ **The Centre’s National Disaster Response Force - is scheduled to host the second BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise - 2020 (BIMSTEC DMEx-2020) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha**
- ◆ **Defence PSU, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) - to supply 83 Tejas jets to IAF, in one of the biggest deal in the indigenous military aviation sector**
- ◆ **Indian and Russian companies - have signed 14 MoUs for setting up various joint ventures covering a range of equipment from modern T-90 tanks to legacy Pechora air defence systems.**
- ◆ **President Ram Nath Kovind - presented President’s Colour to Indian Navy’s INS Shivaji in Lonavala, Maharashtra.**
- ◆ **The foundation stone for the new Army headquarters or the –Thal Sena Bhawan (TSB) - was laid by Defence minister Rajnath Singh at Delhi Cantonment.**
- ◆ **The Indian Air Force - has been adjudged the best marching contingent among the tri services**
 - The Central Industrial Security Force was ranked as the best among the Central Armed Police Forces and other auxiliary forces category in this year’s Republic Day parade.

- ◆ **The Joint military exercise between India & United Kingdom, Ajeya Warrior 2020 - concluded successfully on February 25, 2020.**
 - This was the 5th edition of the exercise that aims to promote defence cooperation between the armies of India and the UK.

- ◆ **The 5th edition of the Exercise Indra Dhanush - commenced on 24th February, 2020 at the Air Force Station Hindan, India.**
 - It is a joint air force exercise between the Indian Air Force and the Royal Air Force of the United Kingdom
 - The Exercise focuses on the theme of “Base Defence and Force Protection”.

- ◆ **The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) - has launched three ocean-based advanced warning systems-**
 - Swell Surge Forecast System (SSFS),
 - Algal Bloom Information Service (ABIS) and the Small Vessel Advisory and Forecast Services System (SVAS)

- ◆ **The sixth coast guard Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV-6), VAJRA - was launched in Chennai at Kattupalli on February 27, 2020.**

- ◆ **Union Minister of State for Shipping (Independent) Mansukh L. Mandaviya - commissioned a new offshore patrol vessel ‘ICGS Varad’ for the Indian Coast Guard in Chennai on February 28.**
 - ICGS Varad was designed and built by Larsen & Toubro at Kattupalli near Chennai
 - The ICGS Varad will be deployed at Paradip in Odisha, under the operational control of the North-Eastern Region’s Coast Guard.

- ◆ **Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh - inaugurated the production facility of Light Combat Helicopter at the HAL campus in Bengaluru.**
- ◆ **In a major success, India - has bagged a deal worth \$40 million to supply four indigenously-built “Swati” weapon locating radars to Armenia by outscoring Russian and Polish firms.**

- ◆ **India - is ranked as the world’s second-largest arms importer, just behind Saudi Arabia**

- The country is ranked at the 23rd position among the top 25 weapon exporters, with Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius being its biggest clients

◆ **Tejas**, the made in India Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) - completed its maiden test on March 17, 2020 after Final Operational Clearance (FOC)

- This first flight of LCA Tejas was held in Bangalore

◆ **Operation Namaste**

- The Indian Army has launched its anti-COVID-19 campaign code-named as “Operation Namaste” in order to help the government in its fight against the pandemic.

◆ **The US - has approved the sale of next lot of Harpoon Block-II missiles and MK-54 lightweight torpedoes worth \$155 million to India**

- These weapons will be fitted in about a dozen Poseidon-8I long-range maritime patrol aircrafts’ acquired by India



- The Harpoon is an anti-ship missile used to attack an enemy boat or ship.
- The torpedoes is an underwater missile that can be launched below or above the water

◆ **Australia - has informed India that its premier multilateral air combat training exercise – Pitch Black 2020 – has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation**

ECONOMY

◆ **The Economic Survey for 2019-20 - was tabled on January 31 by the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian in the Parliament**

- As per the tradition, on the next day, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be presenting the Budget 2020 on February 1, 2020
- The Economic Survey talks about the overall economic progress made in the previous fiscal year and the challenges faced to achieve the targetted GDP Growth
- It continues the 28-year old tradition of pushing for more pro-market reforms, based on the country's experience so far
- The theme for the Economic Survey 2020 - 'Wealth Creation, Promotion of pro-business policies, strengthening of trust in the economy'

Highlights of the Economic Survey 2019-20

- The Economic Survey for 2019-20 is optimistic about improved growth in 2020-21 with GDP growth forecast to grow by 6% to 6.5%.
- The Current Fiscal Growth is 5%
- The industrial growth for the Fiscal Year 2020 (2019-20) has been 2.5%
- The Forex Reserves of the Fiscal Year 2019 (2018-19) was 461.2 billion USD
- The GST collection for the FY20 has grown by 4.1%
- The Inflation declined from 3.2% in April 2019 to 2.6% in December 2019
- According to the survey, Livestock has become a major secondary source of income for rural families, which has grown by 7.9% in the last 5 years
- For instance, in 2018, Isro launched 7 satellites, while Russia, US and China dominated the sector with 20, 31, and 39 satellites, respectively.
- Tamil Nadu is one among the top three States in attracting domestic and foreign tourists, according to the Economic Survey 2019-20.
- The Survey, quoting the 2018 figures, mentioned Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra as the other two which were in the top league.

- In September 2014, the country introduced e-tourist visa for visitors from 46 countries, the arrangement of which was available for only 12 countries.
 - The scheme is now available for 169 countries with valid entry through 28 designated airports and five designated seaports.
- ◆ **The Government - revised the GDP growth estimates for 2018-19 and 2017-18 in line with the revision policy of the National Statistical Office (NSO).**
- According to the revised estimates, GDP growth for 2018-19 has been reduced to 6.1% from 6.8%, while the data for 2017-18 was brought down to 7% from 7.2%.
- ◆ **The 15th Finance Commission's interim report for 2020-21 - was tabled in Parliament on February 1**
- It had left the share of states in central taxes virtually unchanged for the next financial year, but has revamped the formula on how the proceeds are allocated between states
 - As per the new formula, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Arunachal Pradesh and Bihar are the biggest gainers.
 - The southern states of Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are the biggest losers.
 - As per the 15th Finance Commission, states be given 41% of the Centre's net tax receipts during the next financial year, as against 42% for 2015-16 to 2019-20
 - The 1 percentage point change was on account of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh being converted into union territories.
 - The 14th Finance Commission had increased the share of states from 32% to 42%.
- ◆ **The Direct Tax Vivad Se Vishwas Bill, 2020 - was tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman**
- The scheme offers a complete waiver on interest and penalty to the taxpayers who pay their pending taxes by March 31, 2020
 - This scheme is similar to the 'Indirect Tax, Sabka Vishwas' scheme, which was introduced by the Finance Minister during her maiden budget presentation in July 2019.
- ◆ **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) - has announced the elevation of five officials to the post of Executive directors.**

- The elevated officials are Indrani Banerjee, Regional Director, Nagpur, Saurav Sinha, chief general manager-in-charge, Vivek Deep, CGM in-charge, J.K. Dash, CGM in-charge, and P. Vijayakumar, the senior most RBI ombudsman.
 - At present, RBI has 12 executive directors, and 5 of them are due to retire in 2020
- ◆ **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman - launched Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE 3.0)**
- EASE is set of technology-based banking reforms which aim at improvising banking sector with technology.
- ◆ **India** - has overtaken France and the UK to become the **world's fifth-largest economy**, as per IMF's October World Economic Outlook, which ranked the countries based on nominal GDP.
- On the other hand, India's real GDP is predicted to witness slow growth in the year ahead due to credit weakness.
- ◆ The government - announced the collection of ₹1.05 lakh crore as Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in February 2020, an increase of 8% over the same month last year.
- ◆ According to the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**, Chinese billionaire Jack Ma, founder of e-commerce major Alibaba Group - has replaced Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) as the richest man in Asia.
- Ambani's current net worth stands at \$41.8 billion, while that of Jack Ma is \$44.5 billion
 - Globally, Ambani is the 19th richest man just behind Jack Ma
- ◆ **Iran Seeks IMF Loan**
- Iran has sought financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help it combat the novel coronavirus. This is the first time the nation has sought money from the IMF since 1962.
- ◆ **World Bank's \$1 Billion Emergency Fund for India**

- WB has sanctioned \$1 billion to roll out a COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems.
- Preparedness Project in India.

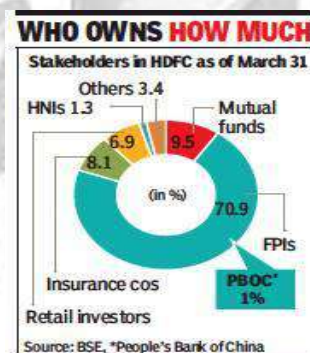
◆ Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Finance Minister announced a relief package under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana for the poor. An amount of Rs 1.7 lakh crore has been allocated for the same.

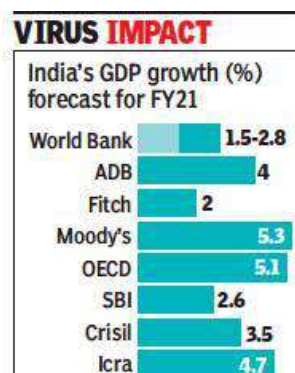
◆ Asian Development Bank (ADB) - announced that it was planning to provide a \$2.2 billion immediate assistance for the upgradation of health sector in India.

◆ China's central bank - has acquired a 1% stake in the country's largest mortgage company, HDFC.

- ✓ As per HDFC, People's Bank of China (PBoC) has bought nearly 1.75 crore shares in HDFC, currently worth nearly ₹3,000 crore.



◆ The World Bank - estimates India's GDP growth to drop to 1.5-2.8% in 2020-21 due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic in its recently released 'South Asia Economic Focus' report



- ◆ **India's economy - is forecast to grow by 1.9% in 2020-21, as per the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) '2020 World Economic Outlook', released on April 14**
- ◆ **Social media giant, Facebook - has agreed to invest \$5.7 billion or ₹43,574 crore for a 9.99% stake in Mumbai-based Jio Platforms, a unit of Reliance Industries (RIL).**



SPORTS

- ◆ **The Haryana Government - announced to offer Rs. 6 crore prize money to players winning gold medals at the Olympic Games**
 - It has also announced to offer Rs. 3 crore to those winning Gold Medal at Asian Games.
 - Moreover, the state government has also proposed to give Rs 1.5 crore to those winning Gold Medal at Commonwealth Games.
 - It had also decided to give Rs. 15 lakh to each player participating in the Olympic Games

- ◆ **Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova - announced her retirement at the age of 32.**

- ◆ **Barcelona striker Lionel Messi - has become the first player to record 500 wins in the history of Spanish football.**

- ◆ **21-year-old Sofia Kenin - defeated former World No. 1 Garbine Muguruza to win the Australian Open Women's singles title on February 1 in Melbourne**

- ◆ **Serbia's Novak Djokovic - claimed his 17th Major crown in the Australian Open**

- ◆ **Harmeet Desai - clinched his maiden national men's singles table tennis title in the UTT 81st National Table Tennis Championship at the Saroornagar Indoor Stadium**

- ◆ **G Sathiyan - became the first Indian table tennis player to sign up for Japan's top-tier T-League for the 2020-2021 season.**

- ◆ **Dronacharya awardee Pullela Gopichand - was named by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) among the recipients of the International Olympic Committee's 2019 Coaches Lifetime Achievement Award in the male category.**
 - Gopichand is the first Indian coach to be bestowed with this honour.

- ◆ **Australia - was presented the ICC Women's Championship trophy on February 8**

- ◆ **Bangladesh boys - created history by winning their country's first global cricket title, ICC U-19 World Cup**
- ◆ **Teenage Pakistani pacer Naseem Shah - became the youngest player to record a Test hat-trick**
 - He achieved the feat in the first test against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi on February 9
- ◆ **The Indian men's Hockey team midfielder, Vivek Sagar Prasad - was named as the 2019 Rising Star of the year by the International Hockey Federation (FIH)**
- ◆ **Aditya Mehta (Mumbai, Maharashtra) - defeated multiple World champion, Pankaj Advani to win the National snooker championship at Pune**
- ◆ **India forward Lalremsiami - has been named as the 2019 FIH Women's Rising Star of the Year, as announced by the International Hockey Federation (FIH)**
- ◆ **Hosts, Nepal and USA - registered the record for playing the shortest ever ODI in the history of cricket on February 12**
- ◆ **Nitin Menon - is the lone Indian in the ICC's list of umpires for the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup in Australia**
 - Apart from him, India's G.S. Lakshmi will become the first woman match referee at a global ICC event.
- ◆ **Manpreet Singh, the Indian skipper and one of the top midfielders in international hockey - was named the FIH Player of the Year (2019)**
- ◆ **Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh - won his maiden open tournament at the Hillerod 110th Anniversary Open event which concluded in Denmark**
- ◆ **Joshana Chinappa - claimed her 18th national squash title at the Indian Squash Academy at Chennai**
- ◆ **Indian GM Koneru Humpy - emerged the winner of Cairns Cup at St Louis, US on February 16, claiming her second title in the last two months**
- ◆ **India - will host the 2021 Junior Men's Hockey World Cup**

- ◆ **The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), in a historic decision - banned national javelin thrower Amit Dahiya for four years.**
- ◆ **Divya Kakran (68kg), Sarita Mor (59kg) and Pinki (55kg) - won their first-ever gold each in the women's freestyle at the Asian Wrestling championships in New Delhi's Indira Gandhi indoor stadium on February 20.**
- ◆ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - launched the first Khelo India University Games through a video conference facility in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.**
 - This is the first edition of the Khelo India University Games
 - Khelo India School games were launched in 2018 and have been conducted annually in the month of January-February since then.
 - Khelo India is a National Programme for Development of Sports at the grass root level
- ◆ **India's 13-year-old Grandmaster D. Gukesh - emerged champion in the 34th Cannes Open chess.**
- ◆ **Saurashtra - claimed their maiden Ranji trophy title**
- ◆ **Teenage Indian batting sensation, Shafali Verma - becomes the World No. 1 female player in the ICC women's T20 rankings, following her brilliant knocks at the Women's World Cup in Sydney, Australia.**
- ◆ **Australia - defeated India to win an unprecedented fifth T20 World Cup**
 - For India, the game is their maiden entry into the summit clash
- ◆ **Legendary M C Mary Kom (51kg) and World No.1 Amit Panghal (52kg) - bagged bronze medals at the Asian Olympic Qualifiers at Amman, Jordan**
- ◆ **China, the erstwhile epicenter of COVID-19 pandemic - will host the third edition of Asian Youth Games in November, 2021**
 - The third Asian Youth Games will be held from November 20-28, 2021 in Shantou, a city on the eastern coast of Guangdong, China.
- ◆ **Ben Stokes - has ended Virat Kohli's three-year reign as Wisden's leading cricketer in the world for the year 2019**
- ◆ **Former Karnataka captain and coach, J. Arunkumar - has been appointed the head coach of the United States of America Men's Cricket team**

AWARDS

- ◆ Veteran documentary film-maker S. Krishnaswamy - was recently awarded the Dr. V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award for his invaluable contribution to non-fiction filmmaking.
- ◆ Ministry of Women and Child Development, Smriti Irani - awarded Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandhana Yojana (PMMVY) awards to various states and Union Territories and Districts on February 3
 - ◆ Category - Best performance since inception (States/UTs of more than 1 crore population)
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - Andhra Pradesh
 - Haryana
 - ◆ Category - Best performance since inception (States/UTs of less than 1 crore population)
 - Dadra and Nagar Haveli
 - Himachal Pradesh
 - Chandigarh
 - ◆ Category - Best performance in Matru Vandana Saptah (States/UTs of more than 1 crore population)
 - Andhra Pradesh
 - Maharashtra
 - Madhya Pradesh
 - ◆ Category - Best performance in Matru Vandana Saptah (States/UTs of less than 1 crore population)
 - Dadra and Nagar Haveli
 - Sikkim
 - Manipur
 - The PMMVY is a maternity benefit programme launched in 2017.
 - Under the programme, a cash benefit of Rs 5000 is provided to pregnant women and lactating mothers.
 - The PMMVY has so far benefitted 1.28 crore beneficiaries.

- ◆ **International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy**
 - The awards were presented to Dr NS Dharmashaktu in the individual category and the under the institutional category.

- ◆ **Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton and footballer Lionel Messi - were declared joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award at a glittering ceremony in Berlin**
 - The Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000-2020) public fan vote was won by Sachin Tendulkar.

- ◆ **Kiran Mazumdar Shaw - EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2019**

- ◆ **Professional model, Adline Castelino - was crowned LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020**
 - She will represent India at Miss Universe this year.

- ◆ **Dr. Niti Kumar, Senior Scientist of Molecular Parasitology and Immunology Division, CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow - to be conferred the SERB Women's Excellence Award-2020.**
 - She will be awarded by the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind during the National Science Day celebration at Vigyan Bhawan on February 28, 2020.
 - The award is given to women scientists under the age of 40, who have received awards and accolades from various national academies

- ◆ **RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das - has been chosen as the Central Banker of the Year 2020 for the Asia Pacific Region**

- ◆ **President Ram Nath Kovind - presented Nari Shakti Puraskar for 2019 to 15 women at Rashtrapati Bhavan on March 8**
 - The awards are conferred to illustrious women in recognition of their efforts in rendering distinguished service towards emancipation of women, especially vulnerable and marginalised women

Nari Shakti Puraskar 2019: Winners List

S. No	Name	Category	State
1	Padala Bhudevi	Individual	Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh
2	Bina Devi	Individual	Munger , Bihar
3	Arifa Jan	Individual	Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir
4	Chami Murmu	Individual	Rajnagar, Saraikela Kharsawan, Jharkhand
5	Nilza Wangmo	Individual	Leh ,Ladakh
6	Rashmi Urdhwareshe	Individual	Pune, Maharashtra
7	Sardarni Mann Kaur	Individual	Patiala, Punjab
8	Kalavati Devi	Individual	Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh
9	Tashi and Nungshi Malik	Individual	Dehradun, Uttarakhand
10	Kaushiki Chakroborty	Individual	Kolkata, West Bengal
11	Bhageerathi Amma Karthyayini Amma	Individual	Kollam, Alappuzha, Kerala
12	Avani Chaturvedi Bhawna Kanth Mohana Singh	Individual	Rewa, Madhya Pradesh Darbhanga, Bihar Agra, Uttar Pradesh Indian Air Force

◆ The Abel Prize 2020


- **Hillel Furstenberg**, 84, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and **Gregory Margulis**, 74, of Yale University. Both are retired professors, shared this year's Abel Prize, the mathematics equivalent of a Nobel.

OBITUARY

◆ **Rajinder K. Pachauri (79 years), former Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – passed away on February 13.**

- Dr. Pachauri was the founder and chief executive of The Energy Resources Institute (TERI).
- In 2002, he was elected Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which was established by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme.
- He received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the IPCC, with former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, in 2007

'Perasiriyar' K Anbazhagan, veteran politician (97 years)



A LIFE OF PRINCIPLES

DEC 19, 1922
Born Ramaiah to M Kalyanasundaram and Swamambal at Kattur near Tiruvannur. His father was a Congressman and follower of Periyar

1942 Introduced to values of Periyar at home, begins following Maraimalai Adigal's Thani Tamil Iyakkam and changes his name to Anbazhagan

1942 While pursuing his post-graduation at Annamalai University, invites C N Annadurai to address students. Connects with M Karunanidhi

1944 Joins Pachaiyappa's College as Tamil lecturer

1948 Becomes editor of Puthuvazhu magazine


1949 Comes out of Dravidar Kazhagam and becomes part of the launch of the DMK

1957 Gives up his job at the college to turn full-time politician; his academic background earns him the sobriquet Perasiriyar

➤ Elected for the first time to assembly from Egmore constituency

1962 Loses assembly polls, but is elected to legislative council

1964 Participates in anti-Hindi agitation and is imprisoned for six months



FROM THE ALBUM: Seen with E V R Periyar, C N Annadurai and M G Ramachandran

1967 Elected to Lok Sabha from Tiruchengode

1971 Elected MLA from Purasaivalkam, joins Karunanidhi's cabinet as health minister

1977 Becomes DMK general secretary, holds post till death

1983 Resigns as MLA along with Karunanidhi protesting against the Sri Lanka war

1986 Disqualified from assembly for burning a copy of the 17th Schedule of the Constitution as part of anti-Hindi agitation

1989 Wins from Anna Nagar constituency and becomes education minister in the DMK government; retains portfolio after winning 1996 election

2006 Gets elected from Harbour and goes to the assembly for the ninth time. Becomes finance minister

2017 Pushes M K Stalin to be DMK working president

2018 Proposes Stalin as DMK president after the demise of M Karunanidhi

MAR 7, 2020 Passes away at the age of 97 after being ill for a few months

INDEX, RANKING & REPORT

- ◆ **India - was ranked at 40th position out of the 53 economies, as per the International IP (Intellectual Property) Index released recently**
 - The Index has been released by the Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) of the US Chamber of Commerce
 - This year, India scored 16.22 in Intellectual Property Index.
 - India's score has shown improvement by 7% as compared to the previous year
 - In 2019, India was at 36th rank, improving from 44th position in 2018.
 - It was the highest gain for any country in 2019.
 - With a score of 42.66, US is ranked first followed by UK, Sweden, France, Germany and Ireland to complete the Top 5.

- ◆ **India - has been ranked at 17th in the list of countries which are having 'more' risk of importing coronavirus**
 - The top 10 countries and regions at risk of importing coronavirus are - Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, USA, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Cambodia.

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana - are named as the Top 3 states with highest incidence of depressive disorders in 2017, according to a new study published in The Lancet Public Health journal after analysing cases over 27 years.**
 - Each of the three states also reported over 3,760 people with depressive disorders per 10,000 population.

- ◆ **Switzerland - no longer retains the top position in the newly released financial secrecy index (FSI-2020) – a slot occupied by it since 2011.**
 - Cayman Islands is ranked first, moving up two slots from the 2018 ranking.
 - The US continued to retain its second position.

- ◆ **Global software major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) - has bagged a spot as one of Fortune's Best Big Companies to Work For in 2020**
 - TCS is the only Indian company to be in the top 20 Great Places to Work in US alongside US mega-companies.

- The list was made by Great Place to Work, the global authority on workplace culture.
 - Since 2014, TCS has been among the top two US job creators in the IT services and consulting sector, hiring more than 20,000 new employees
- ◆ **The Economic Intelligence Unit - recently published the ‘Worldwide Education for the Future’ Index for the year 2019.**
- India has been ranked at 35th place with an overall score of 53.
 - In 2018, India ranked at 40th position with an overall score of 41.2.
- ◆ **The CSIR of Delhi - topped the National Ranking Index 2020, which ranks the scientific research institutes in the country.**
- CSIR was followed by IISc Bangalore in the second place.
 - The third rank was won by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)
- ◆ **New Delhi - topped the list of most polluted capital cities in the world in 2019, according to World Air Quality Report 2019, compiled by IQAir AirVisual**
- As per the report, 21 of the world’s 30 most polluted cities were located in India.
 - Ghaziabad had the dubious distinction of being the most polluted city in the world
 - According to the report, Ghaziabad was followed by Hotan in China, and then Gujranwala and Faisalabad in Pakistan.
 - Delhi took the fifth place.
 - The 21 Indian cities named in the list in the order of their ranking were Ghaziabad, Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, Greater Noida, Bandhwari, Lucknow, Bulandshahr, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Jind, Faridabad, Coraut, Bhiwadi, Patna, Palwal, Muzaffarpur, Hisar, Kutail, Jodhpur and Moradabad
- ◆ **The state of Madhya Pradesh - topped the list of the first ever ‘Index on land records’**
- The index was compiled by a top economic think- tank, National Council of Applied Economic Research
 - Odisha took the second spot and Maharashtra was ranked third in the 2019-20 rankings.

- Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were the other states in the top 10 list.
- The Union territory of Ladakh was at the bottom of the table.

◆ **Jeff Bezos - is the richest man in the world with a net worth of \$140 billion, as per the ninth edition of 'Hurun Global Rich List 2020'**

TOP 10 RICHEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD			
RANK	NAME	WEALTH(US\$bn)	COMPANY
1	JEFF BEZOS	140	AMAZON
2	BERNARD ARNAULT	107	LVMH
3	BILL GATES	106	MICROSOFT
4	WARREN BUFFETT	102	BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
5	MARK ZUCKERBERG	84	FACEBOOK
6	ARMANCIO ORTEGA	81	ZARA
7	CARLOS SLIM HELU AND FAMILY	72	AMERICA MOVIL
8	SERGEY BRIN	68	GOOGLE
9	LARRY PAGE	67	GOOGLE
10	MUKESH AMBANI	67	RELIANCE

- In India, the highest numbers of 50 billionaires are located in Mumbai, 30 billionaires in Delhi, 17 billionaires in Bengaluru and 12 billionaires are living in Ahmedabad
- Among the Indian billionaires, SP Hinduja family with a net worth of \$27 billion is in second place while Gautam Adani with a net worth of \$17 billion is in third place.

◆ **The Arvind Kejriwal - led Aam Aadmi Party - secured a landmark victory on February 11 to sweep the Delhi polls, winning 62 seats in the 70 member house.**

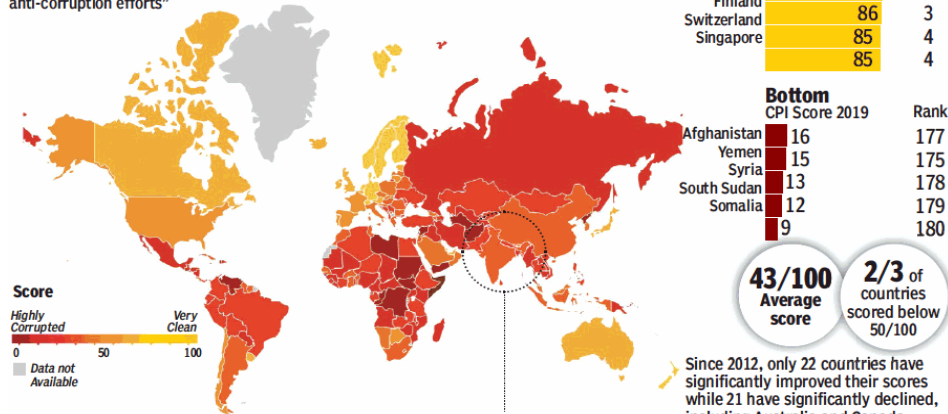
- AAP Chief Arvind Kejriwal will take oath as the Chief Minister of Delhi from the Ramlila Maidan on February 16, 2020.
- This would be his third consecutive term as the Chief Minister.

CPI Index - A REPORT

India stands about halfway in a ranking of 180 countries for perceived corruption in 2019. But while its score was just two points below the average score for the year and remained unchanged over 2018, the country did slide two places in the latest edition of the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by advocacy group Transparency International, which noted that as a trend, globally, corruption is “more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals”

Most countries struggling to root out corruption

India's score suggests the country did not make much of an improvement in combating corruption last year. But the report notes that more than two-thirds of countries – including some advanced economies – are “stagnating or... backsliding in their anti-corruption efforts”



India, China have the same score, rank

India			China			Sri Lanka			Nepal			Pakistan			Bangladesh		
Year	Rank	Score	Year	Rank	Score	Year	Rank	Score	Year	Rank	Score	Year	Rank	Score	Year	Rank	Score
2019	80	41	2019	80	41	2019	93	38	2019	113	34	2019	120	32	2019	146	26
2018	78	41	2018	87	39	2018	89	38	2018	124	31	2018	117	33	2018	149	26
2017	81	40	2017	77	41	2017	91	38	2017	122	31	2017	117	32	2017	143	28

It all boils down to money in politics

70 Average index score of countries that have proper policies and implementation of finance regulations for political parties

Mid 30s Average score of countries where party finance rules either don't exist or are poorly enforced

The Index ranked 180 countries for their perceived levels of public sector corruption through expert assessments and surveys of business executives

India's struggled to clean up party funding

Party financing has remained a controversial matter in Indian politics. An attempt to increase transparency was made by the NDA government in 2017 with the electoral bond scheme. But it has faced severe criticism from opposition parties and some experts

QS World University Ranking

- ◆ For the first time, Indian technical institutions - have found place among the Top 50 in **QS World University Ranking** by subject
 - IIT-Bombay and IIT-Delhi were occupying the 44th and 47th rank respectively, this year in engineering & technology.
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh** - topped the list with 22,655 fatalities (15% of all road deaths) in **road accidents** last year
 - Tamil Nadu had reported 17,218 fatalities in 2015, which came down to 10,525 last year.
 - The total number of accidents in Tamil Nadu in 2019 is 57,228
- ◆ On March 20, 2020, United Nations - released the 8th edition of **World Happiness Report** on the International Day of Happiness, 2020



- **Finland** was ranked first in the report and **India** was ranked 144 among 156 ranked countries

◆ Freedom in the World 2020 Report

- The Freedom in the World 2020 report has ranked **India** at the 83rd position along with Timor-Leste and Senegal.
- While, Finland topped the list as the free democratic country.

◆ **India** - has scored 'C' ranking in the **Animal Protection Index 2020**, released by World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity.

- The index ranks countries from A (being the highest score) to G (being the weakest score) according to their policy and legislation.
- India has attained a C ranking in the index.
- India was ranked along with Spain, Mexico, France and New Zealand.
- Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Austria are rated with the highest scores.
- The countries that performed weakly included Iran, Morocco, Algeria and Belarus.

- ◆ India - has been ranked at 142 out of 180 countries in the Global press **freedom index**, released in the annual 'Reporters without borders' report on April 21.
 - Norway has been ranked first in the list for the fourth successive year
 - 'Reporters without borders' is a non-profit organization established in 1985
 - The aim of the organisation is to promote independent and free journalism as well as to defend media workers.
- ◆ **Global Press Index - Norway 1, India 142**

India's Birds 2020 Report

- ◆ **The State of India's Birds 2020 Report - was recently released at the 13th COP Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Gandhinagar, Gujarat on February 17, 2020**
 - The report has been prepared with the help of a massive database of more than 10 million observations uploaded by 15,000 birdwatchers on the 'e-bird' platform.
 - The project was started in May 2018 as a means to collect the actual data of birds in India.
 - As part of the project, about 867 birds were assessed and it was concluded that almost all the species are declining
 - Birds were divided into different categories - 101 birds as a high concern, 319 birds as moderate concern and 442 birds as low concern species.
 - Out of 101 species categorized as of High Conservation Concern, 59 were based on their range size and abundance trends, and an additional 42 were based on their IUCN Red List status.
 - As per the report, good growth has been observed in Indian Peacock's population.
 - Indian Peacock has also mentioned as the species of 'least concern' on the IUCN list.
 - The number of India's domestic or house sparrow has decreased in large cities but almost stable overall

Tamil Nadu Government Achievements in Three Years of Office - A Report

On the occasion of completing three years in office, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - released various publications of the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) in Chennai Secretariat on February 17

Tamil Nadu ranks first in the good governance index	Hon'ble Chief Minister's foreign visit has attracted investments worth Rs.8,835 crore	Cauvery Delta Region declared as protected Special Agriculture Zone	New Government Medical Colleges in 11 Districts	5 New districts created for administrative convenience	Rs.1,000 with Pongal gift hamper to 2.05 crore families
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<p>PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nadanthai Yazhi Kaveri Scheme to restore the pristine glory of Cauvery river and its tributaries at an estimate of Rs.11,250 crore Athikadavu Avinasi Scheme for Irrigation, Ground Water Recharge and Drinking Water Supply Scheme at a cost of Rs.1,652 crore Tamil Nadu Water Resource Conservation and augmentation mission as people's movement 4,865 Kudimaramathu works at a cost of Rs.930.25 crore Construction of barrage across Kollidam river in Adhanur-Kumaramangalam at a cost of Rs.494.60 crore Dams renovation and improvement project at a cost of Rs.803.49 crore Groyne and Rubble Mound Sea Wall (RMS) at a cost of Rs.168.57 crore Mettur Dam - Sarabanga Lift Irrigation scheme at a cost of Rs.565 crore Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation Project at a cost of Rs.2,962 crore 	<p>AWARDS AND RECOGNITION RECEIVED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India Today Magazine adjudged Tamil Nadu as the overall best performing State for the second time Tamil Nadu bagged the Prestigious Krishi Karman award for 5 times Best State Award for organ transplantation consecutively for the 5th year 12 National Awards for e-Governance, capacity building, child care, grama sabha, etc "Public Affairs Centre", Bengaluru has ranked Tamil Nadu second in good governance Frost & Sullivan adjudged Tamil Nadu in second position for the overall best performing State for the second consecutive time Central Government's Award for reducing the death ratio of lactating mothers Central Government's Award for the best performance in "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" Scheme Best State Award for Clean India Scheme Award for End to End computerization of Public Distribution System Nine National Awards for exemplary work of Rural Development Department Four National Awards for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme National Award to Tamil Nadu State Apex Co-operative Bank for providing loans to a large number of differently abled persons National Award for forerunner state in online learning National Award for best service to senior citizens Food Safety and Standards Authority of India Award Award to Chennai Government General Hospital for organ donation Award to renewable energy department Central Government's Award for road safety Nine National Awards for best performance of Transport Corporations Tamil Nadu State forerunner in enrolment in higher education National Kamadhenu Award to Bargur Cattle Research Station Post graduate Award to Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University Tamil Nadu Fisheries University accredited with First Rank among the fisheries universities in India Central Government's Award for Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve Central Government's National Water Resource Award for the year 2018 Central Government's Clean City Swatch Sarvakasan Award for the year 2018 Clean Holy Place Award for Arulmigu Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, Madurai UNESCO Award to Srirangam Arulmigu Aranganatha Swamy Temple for restoration work without altering architecture 	<p>HOME, PROHIBITION AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28,312 Uniformed service personnel appointed "Kavalan" App for the protection of women 3,28,688 CCTV cameras installed across the State for monitoring New Court buildings and quarters for Judges at a cost of Rs.838 crore The Fire and Rescue Services Department regularized 68,710 calls relating to fire accidents and rescued 213 lives and saved properties worth Rs.916.69 crore. This Department received 73,414 calls relating to various rescue services and rescued 12,502 lives
<p>HIGHWAYS AND MINOR PORTS DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of 21,109 k.m. length of highways at a cost of Rs.22,096 crore. 8,524 k.m. length of roads renewed. Works of 447 small bridges, 247 bridges completed Administrative sanction given for road works between Ennore Port and Mamallapuram Pooncheri Junction at a cost of Rs.12,301 crore Chennai - Kanyakumari industrial corridor project at a cost of Rs.6,448 crore 	<p>FINANCE DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Health Insurance Scheme for pensioners at a cost of Rs.331.36 crore. 94,981 persons have benefitted. This scheme extended for another four years 	<p>HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4,44,203 tenements / houses at a cost of Rs.22,367 crore under Housing for All Schemes 1,25,390 tenements / houses to the urban slum families 9,535 tenements / houses in 33 schemes at a cost of Rs.2,117.55 crore 22,669 layouts and 17,00,906 plots regularized under regularization of unapproved layouts / plots scheme Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) Act and its Rules 2019 notified
<p>SPECIAL PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From 2018-19 onwards, laptops provided to students in 11th standard itself 17.72 lakh cost free laptops to students at a cost of Rs.2,183.55 crore 	<p>LAW DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Government Law Colleges in Villupuram, Dharmapuri, Ramanathapuram, Salem, Namakkal and Theni Districts New buildings and infrastructure facilities for Law Colleges at a cost of Rs.458.67 crore 	<p>INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An investment of Rs.3,00,501 crore has been attracted creating job opportunities for 10.5 lakh persons through Global Investors Meet Through Hon'ble Chief Minister's foreign visits a total of 41 MoUs were signed for an investment of Rs.8,835 crore which will create job opportunities for 35,520 Total of 22 MoUs were signed for an investment of Rs.10,301 crore which will create job opportunities for 48,317 persons after Global Investors Meet 2019 Tamil Nadu Aerospace and Defence Industrial Policy 2019 released Rs.5,324.50 crore financial incentives to 25 large industries Tamil Nadu E-Vehicle Policy 2019 released
	<p>CO-OPERATION AND FOOD DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crop loans to 34,07,954 farmers at a cost of Rs.22,031.69 crore Interest incentive of Rs.303.71 crore for repayment of crop loans within due date 	<p>COMMERCIAL TAXES AND REGISTRATION DEPARTMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAR 2.0 project launched for ensuring Simplified and Transparent Administration of Registration 65,02,906 documents registered during the past three years

'Who' Declares 'Covid 19' As a Public Health Emergency - A Report

- ◆ **The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared the coronavirus outbreak in China's Wuhan, a 'global health emergency' recently.**
 - Covid 19, as the coronavirus is designated, has become the sixth global health emergency reported in the last 10 years
 - Globally, more than 20,000 cases of the disease have been confirmed in little more than a month, after the first case was confirmed on December 31 last year.

- ◆ **Is this the first time a coronavirus has been designated a global public health emergency? What was the case with Nipah in Kerala?**
 - Three major coronavirus cases – SARS in 2003, MERS in 2011, nCoV 2019 – have all been traced to bats but are understood to have jumped to humans from an intermediary animal, civet cats and camels, for SARS and MERS, respectively.
 - Nipah virus, which struck Kerala in 2018, too, arose from bats, but is not a coronavirus infection even though respiratory trouble is one of the symptoms.
 - In fact, several viruses carried by bats can cause disease in humans and the coronavirus is just one of them.
 - The Kerala Nipah outbreak killed 17 of the total 19 people, causing a fatality rate of 89%.

- ◆ **What is the economic impact of a disease outbreak?**
 - According to a 2017 paper published by US National Library of Medicine, the expected losses from pandemic risk stood at about \$500 billion per year, taking into account both lost income and the health impact.
 - The total global economic cost of the 2003 SARS outbreak was estimated at \$40 billion.
 - It is well-established that disease outbreaks have a slowing-down effect on the economy.
 - Travel and trade restrictions in the wake of the outbreak have already caused big losses to businesses

- ◆ Why a slowing China is worse for the global economy today than when the SARS outbreak, which too took a substantial economic toll, is because China now accounts for about a third of global growth, a larger share than the US, Europe and Japan combined.

H1N1 influenza	2009
Polio	2014
Ebola	2014 & 2019
Zika virus	2016
Novel coronavirus	2020



Facts on Covid - 19

- ◆ On February 26, for the first time since the COVID-19 outbreak began in China on December 8, the number of novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) cases reported in a single day was more outside mainland China than within the country.
- ◆ Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, including some that cause the common cold to some that cause major diseases such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).
- ◆ The coronavirus outbreak came to light when on December 31, 2019, China informed the World Health Organisation of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of an unknown cause in Wuhan City in Hubei province.
- ◆ The novel coronavirus has acquired the ability to spread among humans, with cases of human-to-human transmissions being reported first in Vietnam and Germany.
- ◆ Coronavirus symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- ◆ The illness also causes lung lesions and pneumonia.
- ◆ Milder cases may resemble the flu or a bad cold, making detection difficult.

Declaration of pandemic: WHO

- ◆ A pandemic is defined as the worldwide spread of a new disease
- ◆ The last pandemic reported was the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic, which killed hundreds of thousands globally
- ◆ Unless it is influenza, WHO generally avoids declaring diseases as pandemics.
- ◆ This change came about after the lessons learned from the 2009 H1N1 experience.
- ◆ According to 2017 pandemic influenza risk management guidelines, the WHO uses pandemic influenza phases – interpandemic, alert, pandemic and transition– to –reflect its risk assessment of the global situation

regarding each influenza virus with pandemic potential infecting humans’.

WHO declared the COVID-19 as Pandemic on March 11, 2020.

ARS-CoV-2? Covid-19?

- ◆ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has named the new coronavirus disease as Covid-19’.
- ◆ The new name is taken from the words "corona", "virus" and "disease", with 2019 representing the year when it emerged (the outbreak was reported to the WHO on 31st December, 2019).
- ◆ The WHO wanted to avoid stigmatizing a country or particular group, so it chose a name that did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or a group of people.
- ◆ Moreover, the word coronavirus refers to the group of viruses it belongs to, rather than the latest strain. The latest strain has been designated Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)’ by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.

What test is done for coronavirus?

- ◆ The first test that samples of all suspected patients are sent for is the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. If that is positive, the sample is sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune, which is the only government laboratory currently doing genome sequencing, for final confirmation. This final confirmatory test specific for the novel coronavirus was developed virtually overnight after the emergence of the disease.

Can masks contain the coronavirus infection?

- ◆ Masks are effective in containing the spread of infection

Coronavirus in India: Are hand sanitisers effective?

- ◆ They are, provided they are alcohol-based and the alcohol content is more than 60%. The US Centres for Disease Control —recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible because handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs and chemicals on hands. But if soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60%

alcohol can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Hand-washing, though, remains the first and best step, preferably with warm water.

Coronavirus outbreak: Is it safe to shake hands?

- ◆ The virus can transmit itself via hand contact, especially if the infected person has coughed or sneezed into his own hands. As the number of people exposed to the virus goes up, and given the 14-day incubation period during which a person can stay asymptomatic but spread the disease, it may be better to use a hands-off greeting, such as a namaskar.

How does the novel coronavirus spread?

The virus is transmitted through

1. Direct contact with respiratory droplets of an infected person (generated through coughing and sneezing)
2. Touching surfaces contaminated with the virus. The virus may survive on surfaces for several hours, but simple disinfectants can kill it

What is Endemic, Epidemic and Pandemic?

- ◆ Endemic: a disease that exists permanently in a particular region or population. Malaria is a constant worry in parts of Africa.
- ◆ Epidemic: An outbreak of disease that attacks many peoples at about the same time and may spread through one or several communities.
- ◆ Pandemic: When an epidemic spreads throughout the world.
- ◆ Sporadic: Refers to a disease that occurs infrequently and irregularly.

CORONAVIRUS STRAIN ISOLATED

- ◆ India is only the fifth country in the world besides – Japan, Thailand, U.S. and China – to have successfully isolated the COVID-19 virus strain, helping it take the first step towards expediting the development of drugs, vaccines and rapid diagnostic kits in the country.


About India Isolating the Coronavirus Strain

- ◆ Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said that India has managed to isolate the strain from a very small batch of positive cases which is a remarkable achievement.
- ◆ The strain that we have is 99.99% similar to the Wuhan strain.
- ◆ These steps will enable India to expedite detection of the virus and will help in effective management.



Covid-19 Tests - A Report

Here are the two ways in which it can be detected if a person is infected by the novel coronavirus




SPOTTING THE VIRUS

PCR TEST (Polymerase Chain Reaction)


also known as RT-PCR test

HOW IT IS DONE | A swab from the nose or throat of the patient is taken, stored in a viral transport medium and sent for processing

HOW IT WORKS | The virus that causes Covid-19 - SARS-COV2 - is a RiboNucleic Acid (RNA) virus and the PCR test detects its presence in the swab during the actual phase of the infection



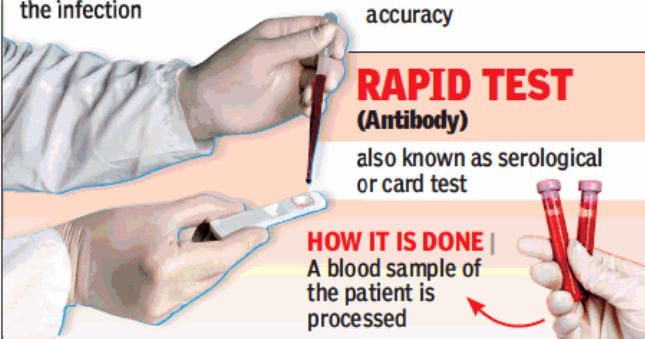
LIMITATIONS | Doctors say it is more accurate but the test takes time to yield results and is labour intensive. In Chennai, it takes up to half a day to get the result. A screening and a confirmatory test are done to enhance accuracy




RAPID TEST (Antibody)

also known as serological or card test

HOW IT IS DONE | A blood sample of the patient is processed



HOW IT WORKS | The immune system generates antibodies when a virus enters the body. The test checks for the presence of antibodies usually released - Immunoglobulin M or Immunoglobulin G - in the blood stream

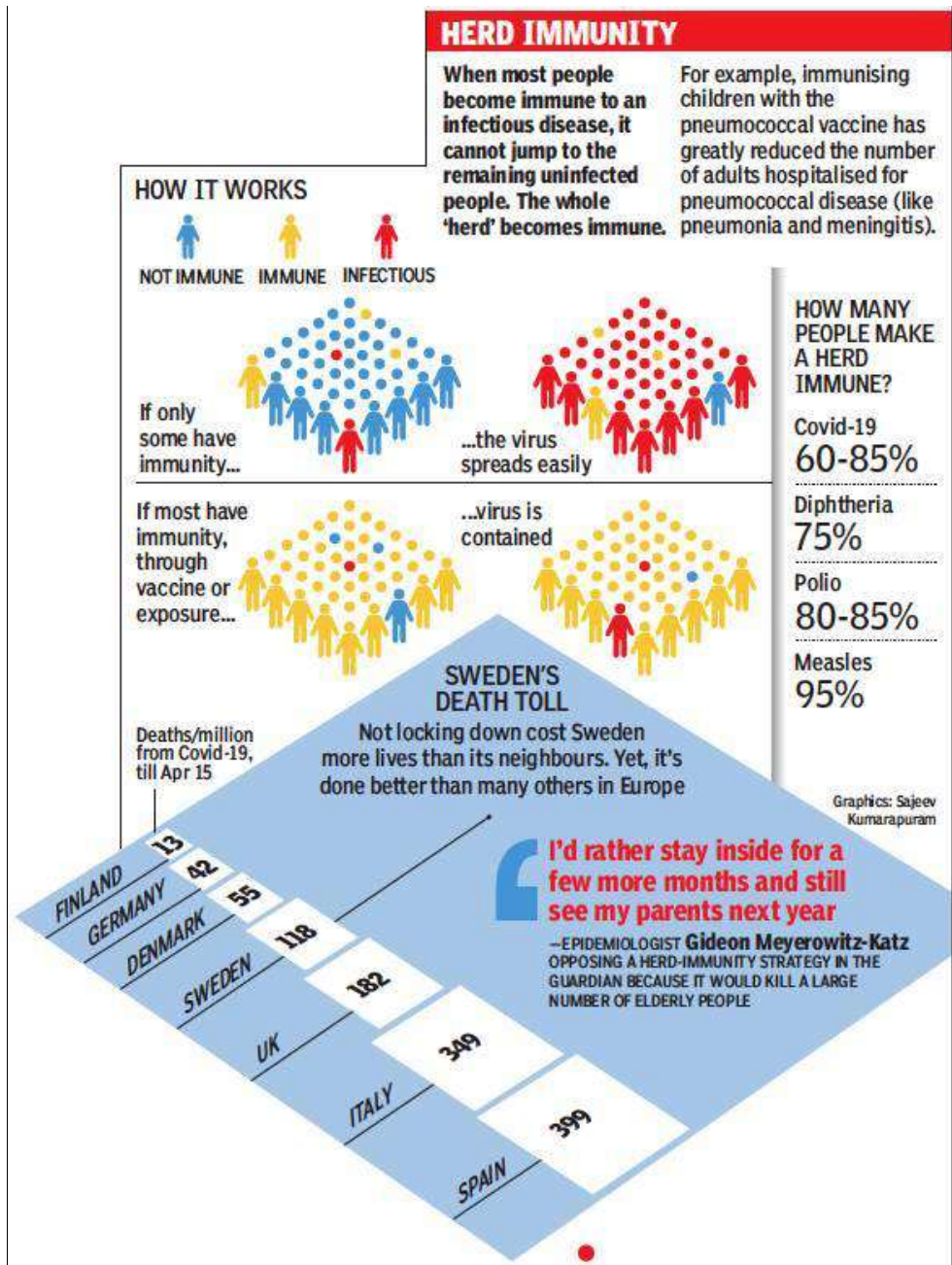


LIMITATIONS | This is a quick test, yields results within 30 minutes. Can be an indication of how many people could be affected by the virus in a particular area/ community, show herd immunity

Compiled by Siddharth Prabhakar | Graphic: Norbert Rosario

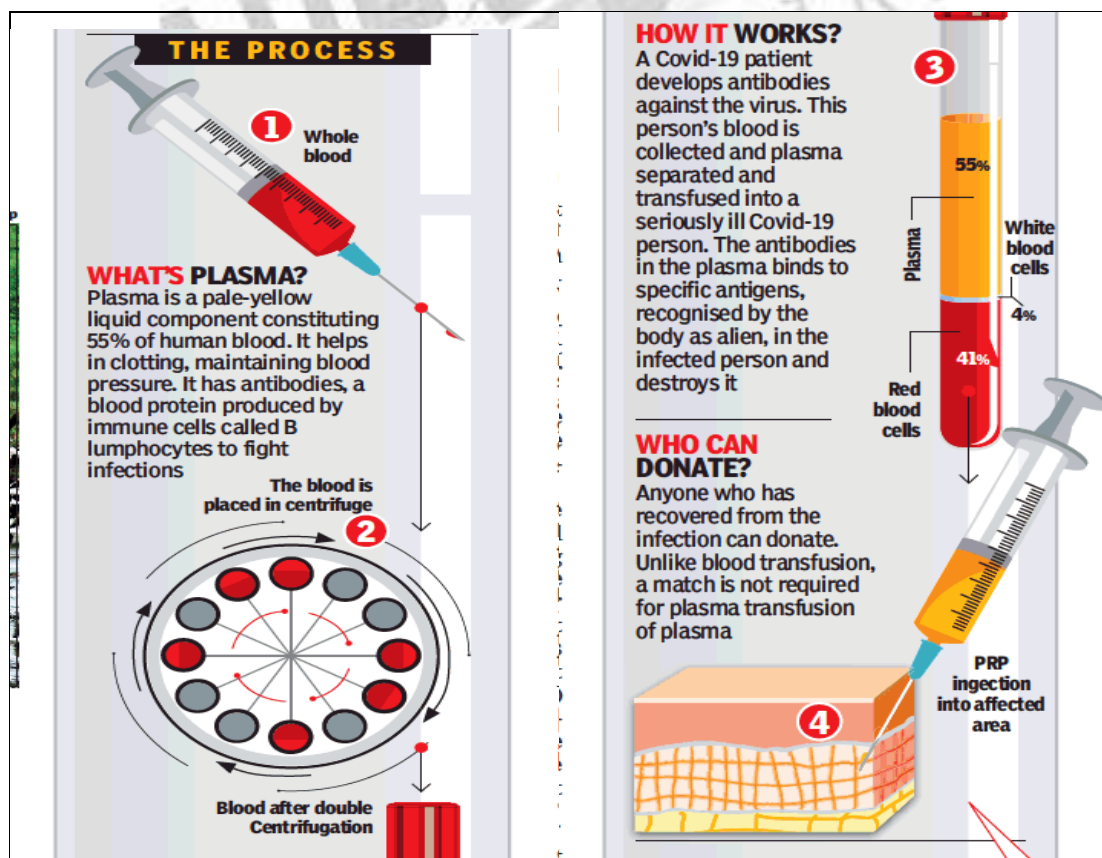
What Is Herd Immunity? – A Report

- ◆ As per the concept, the plan was to let enough people fall sick and become immune so that the virus would not be able to find new hosts.
- ◆ The term ‘herd’ refers to the entire community, thereby indicating that when the entire community gets affected, they become ‘immune’ to the disease



Plasma Therapy for Coronavirus Treatment – A Report

- ◆ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - finalized the protocol for practising convalescent plasma therapy for the treatment of critically ill COVID-19 patients on April 10, 2020.
- ◆ Kerala may become the first Indian state to start the clinical trials of the therapy among COVID-19 patients after receiving the DGCA nod.
- ◆ The therapy will only be used to treat only the critically-ill patients, who are on ventilator support.
- ◆ In the therapy, the antibodies of the person who has recovered from the virus are taken and transfused into the critically-ill person to help boost his/ her immune system.
- ◆ The plasma therapy was used earlier to treat patients during the outbreak of diseases like Ebola, SARS and MERS.



WHAT IS PLASMA THERAPY

THE THERAPY

- Entails giving patients a transfusion with plasma (or serum) from those who have developed antibodies to a virus or bacteria
- This process grants the patient some passive immunity. Convalescent blood is an option if there are no medicines or vaccines to treat an infectious disease
- The first valid trial was done in 1892 for diphtheria, using serum from animals

SIDE-EFFECTS

- No definitive studies exist showing effectiveness. In case of dengue, convalescent serum was found to make patients worse, as it led the virus to replicate
- There could be transfusion-associated reactions. Unknown pathogens could be transferred into a patient during transfusion

RISKS FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS

- Potential risks of therapy remain unknown. US FDA rules say suitable donors are those whose infection began 28 days prior
- A study from Wuhan published in March showed that 10 adults who were severely ill with Covid-19 tolerated the transfusion well and started developing antibodies that helped reduce the viral load within seven days



RBCs



Us President's Visit to India - A Pictorial Report

Modi, Trump Have Met Seven Times Before



Ahmedabad extends its welcome to US president

June 2017 | Modi travelled to Washington DC for bilateral

November 2017 | At Asean and East Asia Summit in Manila

November 2018 | On sidelines of G20 Summit in Buenos Aires

June 2019 | On sidelines of G20 summit in Osaka

August 2019 | On sidelines of G7 meet in France

Sept 2019 | In Houston and also in New York

IMPORTS RISING FASTER THAN EXPORTS

