

Current Affairs

13th June 2021



Today's Important News

GST rates on Covid items slashed;
Exemptions & GST reductions
extended till September

1. GST rates on Covid items slashed; Exemptions & GST reductions extended till September

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council Saturday cut rates on Covid-related medicines, oxygen concentrators and testing kits, but kept the rate for vaccines unchanged at 5%.
- Except for three items — electric furnaces used in crematoriums, temperature-checking instruments and ambulances — the Council, at its 44th meeting, accepted all other recommendations for tax rates at the same level as suggested by a Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted on the issue. The changes would be notified soon, officials said, and will be valid, as of now, until September 30.
- Differing views over the extent of reduction on Covid essentials resurfaced between the states and the Centre. Opposition-ruled states asked for exemption or zero rating for Covid essentials which they said was not considered by the Centre in the meeting.



2. UNCTAD appoints Costa Rica's Grynspan as 1st Women Secretary General

- The UN General Assembly approved the appointment of Rebecca Grynspan as the Secretary-General of its trade and development body, UNCTAD.



- She is the first woman and central American (Costa Rica) to head the global body that deals with trade, investment, and development issues.
- Since 2014, Ms. Grynspan has been secretary-general of the Ibero-American General Secretariat.
- From 2010 to 2014, she was the deputy administrator of the UNDP.

Foot Notes:

About UNCTAD:

Head: Acting Secretary-General

Headquarters location: Geneva, Switzerland

Founded: 30 December 1964

3.ICRA projects GDP growth of India at 8.5% in FY 2022

- The domestic credit rating agency ICRA has projected the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of India for the financial year 2021-22 to 8.5 percent year-on-year.
- ICRA is Gurgaon based credit rating agency, owned by Moody's Corporation.



4.India's first international maritime services cluster coming up at GIFT City

- India's first International Maritime Services cluster will be set up at GIFT City, India's first operational smart city and international financial services centre (IFSC).
- The GIFT City maritime cluster will be set up by the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB).
- It will be a dedicated ecosystem comprising ports, shipping, logistics services providers and government regulators, in the same geographic vicinity.
- The first-of-its-kind commercial maritime services cluster of India has been conceptualised to enhance competitiveness and self-sufficiency in the maritime sector and provide one-stop solutions.



5.HDFC Bank inks MoU with KIADB, to offer banking solutions to investors

- Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HDFC Bank to provide a wide range of financial products and services to its customers.
- As part of the MoU, HDFC Bank will provide a wide range of financial products and services to its customers through an extensive network of branches across the country.



- In addition, KIADB, in its efforts to make the land acquisition for industrial purposes more affordable and attract investments into Karnataka, has agreed to collaborate with HDFC bank so that eligible investor/customer of KIADB can avail of credit facilities from HDFC Bank as per Bank process and policies.

Foot Notes:

About HDFC:

CEO: Sashidhar Jagdishan

Headquarters: Mumbai

Founded: August 1994

6.DIC signed MoU with ICAR to provide ‘Demand Based Tele Agriculture Advisories’ to farmers

- In order to facilitate farmers by providing location specific ‘Demand Based Tele Agriculture Advisories’, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Digital India Corporation (DIC) has signed an initial pact to provide location specific farm tele-advisories.
- ”The objective of the MoU is to integrate the existing Interactive Information Dissemination System (IIDS) platform of DIC with the proposed KisanSarathi program of ICAR and its implementation through ICAR network to reach a large number of farmers across the country”.



7.India’s first CAR-T cell therapy conducted at ACTREC, in Mumbai

- On June 4, the country’s first CAR-T cell therapy was done at the Bone Marrow Transplant unit at ACTREC, Tata Memorial Centre in Mumbai.
- This trial is the joint effort of the IIT Bombay and Tata Memorial Centre.
- It was Supported by the Department of Biotechnology through the National Biopharma Mission-BIRAC.
- The central government’s National Biopharma Mission-BIRAC has approved Rs 19.15 crore to the team for conducting a first-in-human phase-1/2 clinical trial of the CAR-T cells.
- Clinical trials conducted globally have shown promising results in end-stage patients, especially in patients suffering from acute lymphocytic leukemia.
- Each patient’s CAR-T cell therapy costs Rs 3-4 crore, and currently this technology is not available in India.



Foot Notes:

About CAR-T :

The CAR-T cells were designed and manufactured at the Bioscience and Bioengineering (BSBE) department of IIT, Bombay.

This work is partly supported by the BIRAC-PACE scheme.

The clinical trials are being done by Dr Gaurav Narula, professor of paediatric oncology and health sciences.

8.Amul's Sodhi conferred with Asia Pacific Productivity Champion award

- In recognition of enhanced productivity and efficient milk supply chain, R S Sodhi, managing director, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), was conferred with the regional award as Asia Pacific Productivity Champion from Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Tokyo, Japan.
- This is the first time in the past 20 years an Indian has received the prestigious award.
- Sodhi's name was unanimously recommended for the award by the Government of India's National Productivity Council (NPC) under the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.



9.A New book titled tiananmen square the making of protest Authored by Vijay Gokhale

- A New Book titled Tiananmen square the making of protest Authored by Former Indian foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale.
- The Book is Published by HarperCollins Publishers.
- About the Book :
- The Book deals with the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in China from an Indian perspective in a persuasive and precise manner
- The Book Mainly focuses on the principal player of the time, Deng Xiaoping, the general secretary of the all-powerful Chinese Communist Party (CCP).



10.National award-winning filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta died at 77

- On June 10, 2021, Bengali filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta Passed away.He was 77.
- He was a famous poet, his published works of poetry include Suit-case, Himjog, Govir Arale, Coffin Kimba, Chhaata Kahini, Roboter Gaan, Sreshtha Kabita, and Bhomboler Ascharya Kahini O Ananya Kabita.



- Buddhadeb Dasgupta had won National Film Award for Best Feature Film five times in his career including Bagh Bahadur (1989), Charachar (1993), Lal Darja (1997), Mondo Meyer Upakhyan (2002) and Kaalpurush (2008).
- He won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Bengali for his films Dooratwa (1978) and Tahader Katha (1993).
- He was also honoured with Best Director Award for his films Uttara (2000) and Swapner Din (2005).



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