



Weekly Current Affairs

20-26 July 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. AIIMS Delhi starts registration for human clinical trial of “Covaxin” coronavirus vaccine

- AIIMS Delhi has begun the registration process for conducting human trials of the indigenously developed coronavirus vaccine- COVAXIN
- Dr. Sanjay Rai, the Principal Investigator for conducting these trials at AIIMS Delhi said that the response for registration has been overwhelming. Rai stated that the first dose of the vaccine is likely to be administered to the volunteers on July 23rd.
- AIIMS-Delhi is one of the 12 institutes chosen by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) to conduct phase I and phase II human trials of COVAXIN. The phase I human trials is likely to involve around 375 volunteers, among whom about 100 would be from AIIMs.

2. Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath launches employment scheme for Scheduled Castes

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday launched ‘Navin Rojgar Chhatri Yojana’ for an all round development of the Scheduled Castes.
- He transferred a financial assistance of 17.42 crore online to 3,484 people under the ‘Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Swarojgar Yojana’ and interacted with some beneficiaries from Rae Bareli, Gorakhpur, Basti, Meerut, Azamgarh and Moradabad districts through video conferencing.
- The state government is extending financial help to make people self-dependent.

3. India ranked among 10 worst countries for working people: ITUC

- On July 20, 2020, the International Trade Union Confederation released its ranking of 144 countries on degree of respect for workers’ rights
- Unfortunately, India was among the least performing 10 countries in the list. The other least performing countries include Brazil, Bangladesh, Columbia, Kazakhstan, Honduras, Philippines, Egypt, Zimbabwe and Turkey.
- The middle east region has been named the worst region in the world for working people. This is mainly due to the ongoing insecurity and conflicts in Syria, Palestine, Syria, Libya, Yemen coupled with most regressive region of worker representation and union rights.
- The ranking of the countries has been made based on the value of Global Rights Index. The index is prepared based on 97 metrics. This includes workers’ rights, right to strike, freedom from violent conditions.

4. Private Trains To Begin Plying By March 2023: Railways Ministry

- The Railway Ministry has said that the private trains are slated to run from March 2023.
- The Ministry has issued the clarification regarding timeline of introduction of private trains, as some section of the media had mentioned that the private trains project will start in March 2024.
- The Railways said the tenders will be finalised by March 2021 and trains will operate from March 2023.

5. Maharashtra becomes the first state to use drones to inspect power lines

- Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Limited(MSETCL) has started to use drones for aerial surveillance and inspection of extra high voltage(EHV) power transmission lines and towers. Maharashtra becomes the 1st state to do so. The Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Director General of Civil Aviation(DGCA) gave approval for this purpose.
- MSETCL becomes the 1st power utility to get approval from DGCA for powerline inspections with drones in the country
- MSETCL will use 16 drones that will fly at a maximum height of 50 metre. These drones will reduce the risk posed to its staff, as the workers earlier must use ladders and chairs to inspect transformers.

6. Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal approves 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana' for doorstep delivery of ration

- On July 21, 2020, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched “Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana”. The scheme is to help the eligible beneficiaries get ration delivered at home. The scheme is to run for 6-7 months. Under the scheme, the Delhi government will deliver wheat, rice, flour and sugar in hygienically packed bags. The packets are to be delivered at door step of the people.
- The Delhi Government is to start One Nation One Ration Card scheme and Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Yojana on the same day.
- The scheme will benefit lakhs of people in the capital. Currently, subsidized ration is being provided under National Security act, 2013. The new scheme will add benefit to the act.

7. Mega food park launched in Mizoram to create 5,000 jobs, benefit 25,000 farmers

- The Union Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated a mega food park in Mizoram on July 21, 2020 that will benefit around 25,000 farmers and generate around 5,000 job opportunities.

- The Minister virtually inaugurated the park in the presence of Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Rameswar Tel and DoNER Minister Jitendra Singh and other senior Ministers of Mizoram.
- Speaking during the inauguration, Badal emphasised that the food processing sector has the potential to generate huge job opportunities for the youth and boost farmers' income and reduce food wastage in the country.

8. Sikkim to impose week-long lockdown from July 21 amid rising COVID-19 cases

- The Sikkim government ordered a statewide lockdown from 6 am tomorrow to 6 am on 27th July in view of the recent surge in COVID19 cases.
- All government offices, shops, commercial establishments, markets and factories will remain closed except those granted exemptions.
- All activities, congregations and movement of people and goods and passenger vehicles have been prohibited barring some exceptions.

9. CBDT and MoMSME Signs Formal MoU for Sharing of Data

- On 20th July 2020, the Central Board of Direct Taxes(CBDT) and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises(MoMSME) signed the formal memorandum of understanding(MoU) for sharing of data related to income tax returns by the CBDT to the Ministry of MSME.
- Anu J Singh, the principal director General of Income tax (systems) and Devendra Kumar Singh, Additional Secretary and Development Commissioner of MSME Ministry signed the MoU.
- The MoU came into force on 20th July 2020, marking the era of cooperation and synergy between CBDT and MoMSME.

10. Union HRD Minister launches “Manodarpan” initiative for students

- Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal launched ‘Manodarpan’, an initiative under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- It provides psychosocial support to students for their mental health and well-being.
- It will cover a wide range of activities to offer Psychosocial Support to students for their Mental Health & Well-being amid the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond.
- The ‘Manodarpan’ initiative is a part of the ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN launched by the Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in May 2020.

11. Karnataka Deputy CM, inaugurates first plasma bank under Mission COPE

- Karnataka Deputy CM C.N. Ashwathnarayan inaugurated state's maiden plasma bank at HCG Hospital, Bengaluru as a part of Mission COPE (Covid Plasma Endeavour).
- The state government in association with HCG Hospital and COVID India Campaign has launched Mission COPE to control the spread of COVID-19 and to promote plasma donation among the recovered patients.
- Currently, there are only 4 to 5 plasma banks in India and the first was launched in New Delhi in early July 2020. The latest state to launch the plasma bank was Odisha.

12. Consumer Protection Act, 2019 comes into force; Replaces Consumer Protection Act 1986

- The Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 2019, which has replaced old Consumer Protection Act 1986 has come into force aiming to enforce and protect the rights of consumers, and provide an effective mechanism to address consumer grievances. The act was briefed by Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan through video conference with media.
- Notably, the rules for prevention of unfair trade practice by e-commerce platforms will also be covered under this Act. The rules for this new act will be finalized after the meeting of former Secretaries of the Consumer Affairs Department and Members of Parliament which will be held this month.

13. Rajya Sabha Secretariat Launches “Arun Jaitley Financial Assistance for Group C Employees” Scheme for Employees Welfare

- The Rajya Sabha Secretariat launched “Arun Jaitley Financial Assistance for Group C Employees”, an Employees Welfare Scheme in the name of former Union Minister of Finance, Arun Jaitley. The Scheme will be funded by the pension his family receives as he has been a member of the upper house. The scheme was formulated and approved based on the decision of Sangeeta Jaitley, wife of Arun Jaitley.
- After the demise of Former Finance minister Arun Jaitley on 24th August 2019, Sangeeta Jaitley, submitted a request to the Chairman of Rajyasabha, M Venkaiah Naidu, to utilise the family pension (Rs 3 lakhs at present) entitled to her for the benefit of Group C employees of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat with low salaries.
- The wards of the Group C employees will be awarded 3 scholarships for higher technical or professional education in engineering, medicine and MCA/MBA/LLB. Financial support in case of death and medical emergencies will be provided to the Group C employees.

14. Govt extends work from home for IT, BPO companies till Dec 31 due to COVID-19

- Government has extended connectivity norms for work from home for IT and BPO companies till December 31 this year due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- It has further extended the relaxations in the terms and conditions for other service providers up to 31st December 2020 to facilitate work from home in view of the ongoing concern due to COVID-19.
- The time period for work from home was expiring on July 31.

15. Punjab govt. signs MoUs with IIT Ropar for skill development

- Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Tuesday paved the way for closer cooperation between government and IIT Ropar and IIM Amritsar, particularly in the area of skill development. The Punjab government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar, in the area of skill development.
- The MoU provides for the IIT's technical education department to become an academic mentor for the state's engineering colleges at Gurdaspur and Ferozepur, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Skill Institute at Chamkaur Sahib, five government polytechnics and 10 government ITIs.
- The institute will also help the state in developing a model ITI and a model polytechnic. Others would be modelled on similar lines subsequently.
- Punjab Government helps to resolve the IIT's land acquisition-related issues, while urging the institute to develop its campus as a green campus, with extensive landscaping and afforestation.

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16. India's GDP To Shrink By 6% This Year: DBS Report

- Singaporean brokerage firm DBS Bank Ltd has estimated that the Indian economy will contract by 6 percent in FY21 (2020-21).
- In its previous forecast,, DBS had estimated – 4.8 percent growth for FY21.

- The reason for this downward revision is the prolonged sub-normal reopening as the country is yet to stabilize the infection curve and the pandemic is going to take a deeper economic bite.

17. Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan tests positive for COVID-19

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has tested positive for COVID-19. The Chief Minister announced the same through a tweet on July 25, 2020.
- In a series of tweets, the MP Chief Minister revealed that he had developed symptoms of COVID-19 and underwent a COVID test, the report of which came positive. He has now appealed to all his colleagues who came in contact with him recently to get their COVID test done. The close contacts of the Chief Minister have been suggested to move to quarantine.
- The Chief Minister further informed that he has quarantined himself as per the advice of the doctors and is following all COVID-19 guidelines. He will be participating in the daily coronavirus review meeting through video conferencing.

18. Indonesian Defence Minister General Prabowo Subianto to pay three-day India visit

- Indonesian Defence Minister General Prabowo Subianto will pay a three-day visit to India.
- During the visit he will hold talks with the leadership to strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.
- General Prabowo will be visiting India from July 26 to 28 and will lay a wreath at the National War Memorial. He will be also presented with a Guard of Honour at South Block Lawns.

19. PM Modi to inaugurate three new high throughput labs of ICMR

- PM Narendra Modi will inaugurate three new high-throughput labs of the Indian Council of Medical Research at 4.30 pm on July 27, 2020. The Prime Minister will be inaugurating the labs through video conferencing.
- The three new high-throughput ICMR labs have been constructed in Mumbai, Noida and Kolkata. The labs will majorly boost the nation's COVID-19 testing capacities.
- The Union Government has adopted the test-track-treat strategy for early detection and containment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this, the ICMR has ramped up its testing capabilities to effectively deal with Coronavirus crisis.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. UAE launches its first space mission “Hope” to Mars from Japan

- UAE’s historic journey to Mars has been successfully started from the Tanegashima Space Center in Japan. The spacecraft Hope Probe took off in an early morning launch.
- H2A, the rocket carrying the Hope Probe to space, was launched from the Tanegashima Space Centre in Japan.
- It is the Arab world’s first interplanetary landmark mission, putting UAE firmly ahead of all the countries in the Middle East in the area of space and technology.
- Hope Probe Spacecraft is expected to reach the Red Planet by February 2021, to coincide with UAE’s 50th anniversary of its formation.
- The orbiter Hope is expected to take images and send back data of the distant Red Planet.

2. South Korea's first-ever military satellite "ANASIS-II" launched

- South Korea launched its first-ever military communications satellite on July 20, 2020. The satellite was launched by private operator SpaceX.
- The military satellite, ANASIS-II is aimed at enhancing the nation’s ability to defend itself against nuclear-armed North Korea. The South Korean military satellite blasted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida aboard a Falcon 9 rocket.
- The ANASIS-II satellite was successfully deployed about 32 minutes after the lift-off, confirmed SpaceX. It is expected to reach its pre-planned orbit of 36,000 kilometres in about two weeks.

3. China launched "Tianwen-1" ambitious Mars rover mission

- China launched its first ambitious Mars Rover Mission- ‘Tianwen-1’ on July 23, 2020 aboard Long March 5 rocket from Hainan Island's Wenchang Satellite Launch Center.
- As per China’s space agency, the rocket carried the Mars probe for 36 minutes before successfully placing it on the looping path, which will take it beyond Earth's orbit and eventually into Mars’ more distant orbit around the sun.
- Tianwen-1 includes a Mars orbiter, a lander and a rover. The mission, if successful, will mark a huge first in human history, as it includes a Mars orbiter, lander and rover all in one go.
- Tianwen-1 is China’s first fully homegrown Mars mission. The name of the Mars probe has been taken from a poem by Qu Yuan, who lived from the 4th -3rd B.C. and it means “Questions to Heaven.”

4. Turkmenistan gets observer status in World Trade Organization

- Turkmenistan has been granted Observer status by the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council. Turkmenistan has become the last former Soviet republic to establish formal ties with the trade body, a WTO Spokesperson said yesterday.
- The Central Asian country filed a request for Observer status in May and expressed willingness to trigger the talks on accession to the WTO within five years.
- Neighbouring Central Asian countries -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan have acceded to the WTO, while Uzbekistan has been in on-and-off negotiations on WTO accession since 1994.

5. India and Israel join hands to develop rapid testing for COVID-19 in under 30 seconds

- Israel and India will work together to develop a new generation set of Covid-19 tests that aim to bring the entire testing process down to a few seconds.
- Using artificial intelligence and machine learning, these breakthrough technologies will be tested in India. If it is successful, it will be manufactured in India, and marketed jointly by Israel and India to the world.
- To achieve this, Israel is to send a high level research delegation to India. The team will conduct a series of final stages of testing and this is a part of the cooperation.

6. Nicaragua becomes the 87th Country to sign the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement

- The Republic of Nicaragua became the 87th country to sign the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement, an initiative to promote sustainable energy, led by India.
- E. Jaime Hermida Castillo, Permanent Representative to the UN of the Republic of Nicaragua, signed the Agreement at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York.
- On 30th November 2015 the initiative was jointly launched by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India and Francois Hollande, former French President at the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference held in Paris.

7. India-UK affirm shared commitment towards Free Trade Agreement

- India and the United Kingdom affirmed their shared commitment towards a Free Trade Agreement during the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting on July 24, 2020.
- The virtual meeting was co-chaired by Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for International Trade

Elizabeth Truss. The Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Hardeep Singh Puri and UK's Minister of State for International Trade Ranil Jayawardena had also attended the meeting.

- At the conclusion of the meeting, it was decided that a deliberation led by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and UK Trade Minister Elizabeth Truss will be held in August in New Delhi to carry forward the dialogue.

8. French refinery leaks toxic chemical into marine life area

- On July 25, 2020, an orange brown chemical spread over 6 hectares of nationally recognised marine life area in the French Mediterranean Sea. The chemical spread was mainly due to the leak at a petrochemical plant in the southern France. The leak at the American-owned chemical company Kem-One spilled 200 gallons of iron chloride into the sea.
- The Sea is connected to Atlantic Ocean and is completely enclosed by land. The countries with coastlines of Mediterranean Sea are Albania, Bosnia, Algeria, Croatia, Herzegovnia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Montenegro, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey.

9. Bangladesh bans free internet for social media to stop 'unhealthy' competition

- The Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has directed the telecom companies to stop free internet services to its subscribers for accessing social media.
- The regulatory authority asked the telecom service providers to stop the free-internet service because it gives rise to unhealthy competition between the companies.
- The authority also stated that the facility was being used by some people for carrying out criminal activities on social media.

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New Appointments and Person in News

1. Ashwini Kumar Tewari appointed as MD & CEO of SBI Cards

- SBI Cards and Payment Services has appointed Ashwini Kumar Tewari as Managing Director & CEO, as a nominee of State Bank of India (SBI). Hardayal Prasad, the current Managing Director & CEO will cease to be at helm from July 31 after opting for voluntary retirement from SBI.
- The NBFC said Tewari would take over from August 1 for a term of two years. Associated with SBI since 1991, Ashwini Kumar Tewari since April 2017 was the country head of SBI's American operations, prior to which he was also the Regional Head of the East Asia region for two years.

2. Sumit Deb succeeds N Bajendra Kumar as CMD of National Mineral Development Corporation

- Sumit Deb has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC), iron ore mining major of the country.
- Deb, at present Director (Personnel) in the NMDC, will have tenure till February 28, 2023, i.e. the date of his superannuation.
- He succeeds N Bajendra Kumar who superannuates this month-end.
- NMDC Limited, previously known as National Mineral Development Corporation, is an Indian state-controlled mineral producer.
- It is 72.43% owned by the Government of India, under the administrative control of the Ministry of Steel.

3. Sahil Seth appointed as honorary adviser for BRICS CCI

- Sahil Seth has been appointed an honorary adviser to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce (CCI) young leaders for the period of 2020-2023. He is a deputy Commissioner of Mumbai Customs.
- Mr. Seth who is a 2011 batch Indian Revenue Service Officer, expressed his pleasure on being appointed as an honorary adviser which gives him a chance to represent his country. He added that BRICS CCI young leaders is a step in motivating the youth of India. The role of an honorary adviser is on a voluntary basis and there are no financials involved which makes it a no/remuneration appointment.
- BRICS CCI aims at creating an enabling support system especially for the MSME segment and young entrepreneurs from all over the world.

4. Sonu Sood launches 'Pravasi Rojgar' app to help migrants find job opportunities

- Actor Sonu Sood has launched a free online platform called 'Pravasi Rojgar' to help migrants find job opportunities in various sectors across the country.
- Mr Sood catapulted to the national spotlight for his work in helping migrants reach their homes amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The app will provide all the necessary information and right linkages to find jobs.
- The online platform has over 500 reputed companies related to construction, apparel, health care, engineering, BPOs, security, automobile, e-commerce and logistics sectors, offering job opportunities.
- The platform will also be offering specific job training programmes like spoken English.

5. Riva Ganguly Das appointed Secretary (East) in External Affairs Ministry

- India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Riva Ganguly Das is appointed by the Government as the Secretary East, in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Das is an Indian Foreign Service officer of 1986 batch.
- He will succeed Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh after her retirement on 30th September this year.

6. SBI General Insurance appoints P.C. Kandpal as MD, CEO

- Prakash Chandra Kandpal has been appointed as the managing director and chief executive officer of the Non-life insurer SBI General Insurance.
- He has been serving as the deputy CEO of SBI General Insurance since June 2019.
- He will replace Pushan Mahapatra who has been appointed as director (strategic investments & digital initiatives).
- Prakash Chandra Kandpal has more than 33 years of banking experience with State Bank of India (SBI) in various aspects such as retail and international banking, human resource, technology, and learning and development.
- He has also served as the chief operating officer of the SBI Mutual Fund.

7. Dr Alok Misra appointed as CEO & Director of MFIN

- Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN), the self-regulatory organization (SRO) for the microfinance industry, announced that Alok Misra will be taking over as its chief executive officer and director from August 1, 2020.
- Misra is currently professor and chairperson of public policy and governance at MDI Gurgaon.
- He will take over from the present CEO, Harsh Shrivastava, who has decided to move on after over two years at MFIN.

- Dr. Alok Misra has 28 years of professional experience in international development, rural finance, microfinance, inclusive finance and research at both policy and implementation level. Dr Misra has worked globally across 22 countries and with premier institutions like NABARD, NCDEX and MDI.

8. Mr.Partha Pratim Sengupta appointed as MD and CEO of IOB

- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has appointed Mr.Partha Pratim Sengupta as its new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and his tenure ends by December 31, 2022 or until further orders. Mr.Partha Pratim Sengupta succeeds Shri. Karnam Sekar who was retired on June 30, 2020.
- Sengupta, 57, prior to his elevation of deputy managing director of SBI, was the Chief General Manager at the country's largest lender's Kolkata circle..
- He has more than three decades of experience in the Banking sector, in various domains.

9. Centre appoints senior IAS officer Rajesh Bhushan as new health secretary

- Rajesh Bhushan, IAS officer of 1987 Batch, Bihar Cadre has been appointed as the new Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry.
- He was earlier holding the post of OSD in the Health Ministry and will succeed Preeti Sudan upon completion of her tenure on 31st of this month.
- Ms. Sudan was granted an extension for three months as Health Secretary in April this year.
- In another major reshuffle Ajay Tirkey has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development.
- Ram Mohan Mishra will take over as Secretary in the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

10. After demise of Lalji Tandon, President Kovind appoints Anandiben Patel as MP Governor

- President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Smt. Anandiben Patel the Governor of Madhya Pradesh.
- Presently, she is the Governor of Uttar Pradesh.
- She has been given the additional charge of the Governor of Madhya Pradesh after the demise of Lalji Tandon.

BANKING & ECONOMY

1. FamPay launches India's first numberless payments card for teenagers

- India's first Neobank for teenagers, in partnership with IDFC First Bank launched India's 1st numberless card, FamCard. FamPay with National Payments Corporation of India(NPCI) developed this card.
- This card is accepted across the RuPay payment network of merchants. It is similar to a debit card which enables teenagers to transact in a cashless manner.
- Teenagers can use the card independently without the intervention of the parents. The details of the card are saved on the FamPay app. There is no need to refer the physical card to fill in details during online transactions.

2. Bank of Baroda launches paperless 'Insta Click Savings Account'

- Bank of Baroda (BoB) has launched 'Insta Click Savings Account', a 100 per cent paperless digital self-assisted online savings account.
- India's third-largest public sector bank said the Insta Click Savings Account uses a new form of digital KYC (know-your-customer) and Aadhaar-based OTP (one-time personal identification number) authentication of the customer, which can be operated from the bank's website, through mobile phone, IPad, laptop, and PC.
- The account is activated in real-time, which means the customer can start transacting, using the Baroda M Connect Plus application with the MPIN received on the mobile number, immediately.
- The product also offers customers the option to subscribe to a wide range of digital channels like mobile banking, Internet banking, UPI (unified payments interface), and debit card.

3. RIL becomes the 1st Indian company to reach Market Cap of Rs 13 lakh crore

- As stock market data, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) becomes the 1st Indian company to reach Market Capitalisation (m-cap) of Rs 13 lakh crore. It becomes the world's 48th largest company by m-cap, ahead of Abbott Labs, Oracle, Chevron and Unilever. It also crossed the stock price of Rs 2000 for the 1st time.
- Globally, Saudi Aramco is the company with the highest market cap of \$1.7 trillion, followed by Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Alphabet.
- Reliance is the 10th highest m-cap company in Asia. China's Alibaba Group is ranked 7th globally.
- The United States listed Reliance Jio among the companies that are becoming "Clean Telcos"(who reject doing business with tools of the Chinese Communist Party's surveillance state, like Huawei).

4. Flipkart acquires Walmart India's wholesale biz to help transform kiranas

- E-commerce company Flipkart has acquired 100 percent stake in Walmart India Private Limited, which operates the Best Price cash-and-carry

business. Flipkart announced on July 23, 2020 that it has acquired parent company, Walmart Inc's Best Price wholesale cash-and-carry business in India.

- The move will allow Flipkart to launch a digital marketplace called Flipkart Wholesale next month. This will also strengthen the e-commerce firm's wholesale offerings, to compete better with Amazon.
- Walmart has been running the Best Price wholesale cash-and-carry stores in India since 2009. The American retail giant had bought a controlling stake worth USD 16 billion in Flipkart in 2018.

Books and Awards

1. A book titled “The Endgame” authored by Hussain Zaidi released

- S Hussain Zaidi, a well known crime writer has recently written a novel named “The Endgame”. It was published by the HarperCollins India. The book speaks about the politics, betrayal, and unimaginable terror.
- “Black Friday”, “Mafia Queens of Mumbai”, “Dongri to Dubai” and “Byculla to Bangkok” are other notable books written by him. He was the associate producer of “Terror in Mumbai”, a famous HBO documentary based on 26/11 terror attacks.

SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1. Various important events including Captain Sourabh Kalia Cup cancelled in Kargil due to COVID- 19

- Though Kargil, Ladakh is slowly getting back to normalcy with relaxations in the Lockdown after unlock 2.
- However many important events and programmes are being cancelled due to the threat of Spread of Covid 19.
- The pandemic has also affected the celebration of this year 21st Kargil Vijay Diwas both from the Indian Army Side as well as from the Local Level as no event has been organised.
- The most popular Captain Sourabh Kalia cricket Cup has also been postponed due to the pandemic in Kargil.

2. World's largest aircraft carrier, Indian warships conduct naval exercise (PASSEX) with US Navy

- The Indian Navy conducted Passex (passing exercises) with the United States (US) Navy's USS Nimitz, which is a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

- The Indian Navy ships Rana, Sahyadri, Shivalik and Kamorta, operated together with the USS Nimitz (CVN 68), along with the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group's Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59), Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Sterett (DDG 104) and USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114).
- The cooperative exercises took place near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and transited through the Indian Ocean region.
- The Indian Navy had recently conducted similar passing exercises with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and French Navy.

3. India's first public electric vehicle charging plaza inaugurated in New Delhi

- India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza has been inaugurated by the Minister for Power, New & Renewable Energy, R.K Singh at Chelmsford Club in New Delhi.
- The public EV Charging Plaza has been established by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) in collaboration with New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) to make e-mobility ubiquitous and convenient in India.
- India's first public EV Charging Plaza will host 5 Electric Vehicle Chargers of different specifications and hence will make EV charging hassle free and convenient for the consumers.
- During the inauguration ceremony, Union Power Minister also launched "Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency (RAISE)".
- RAISE has been developed for healthy and energy efficient buildings and will help in alleviating the issue of bad air quality in workspaces across the nation.

4. First batch of 5 Rafale fighter jets to arrive in India by July-end

- The aircraft will be inducted at Air Force Station Ambala on 29th July.
- Indian Air Force aircrew and ground crew have undergone comprehensive training on the aircraft, including its highly advanced weapons systems and are fully operational now.
- India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around Rs 58,000 crore.
- The aircraft is capable of carrying a range of potent weapons.
- Out of 36 Rafale jets, 30 will be fighter jets and six will be trainers. The trainer jets will be twin-seater and they will have almost all the features of the fighter jets.

5. Dhruvastra, India's anti-tank guided missile, test-fired successfully in Odisha

- On July 22, 2020, India successfully conducted the flight trial of Dhruvastra anti-guided missile at the Interim Test Range of Odisha.
- The trials of the helicopter launched Nag Missile (HELINA) were successful. The missile has now been renamed as “Dhruvastra”.
- Helina is a third-generation anti-tank guided missile mounted on Advanced Light Helicopter. The missile system can engage targets in direct hit mode and attack mode. Also, the system has all-weather day and night capability, defeat battle tanks with conventional armour and explosive reactive armour.

6. DRDO sets up COVID-19 testing facility at Leh

- The DRDO has established a COVID-19 testing facility at the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) in Leh.
- It has been established to augment the existing capacity for identification of coronavirus cases in the union territory of Ladakh.
- The testing facility was inaugurated by Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R. K. Mathur.
- It is capable of screening 50 samples per day.
- The DIHAR is one of the life sciences laboratories of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) working on cold arid agro-animal technologies.

7. Indian Navy’s Largest solar power plant commissioned in Kerala

- Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla commissioned the largest Solar Power Plant in the Indian Navy, with a capacity of 3 MW, at Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala.
- This is in line with the Government of India initiative of "National Solar Mission" to achieve 100 GW of solar power by 2022.
- The solar plant has an estimated life of 25 years.
- All components have been indigenously sourced, including 9180 highly efficient monocrystalline solar panels employing the latest technology.
- The solar power plant project will help Naval station in reducing the carbon footprint and is one of the many initiatives undertaken by INA towards a clean and green environment.

SPORTS

1. Germany’s forward player & World Cup winner, Andre Schurrle announced retirement

- Germany’s forward player & World Cup winner, Andre Schurrle has announced retirement from the sport.
- He helped his country to win the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

- He represented Germany in 57 matches, scoring 22 goals.
- He also played for Chelsea from 2013-15 and also won a Premier League winners medal in 2015.

2. Sri Lanka's Sripali Weerakkody announces retirement from international cricket

- Sri Lankan bowling all rounder, Sripali Weerakkody has announced her retirement from International Cricket with immediate effect.
- She made her international debut in 2006 and played 89 ODIs (One Day International) and 58 T20Is (Twenty20 International) for Sri Lanka.
- Sripali Weerakkody played her last international game in 2018 and scored 722 runs and 58 wickets in ODIs, and 209 runs and 31 wickets in T20Is

OBITUARIES

1. Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon dies at the age of 85

- On July 21, 2020, Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon passed away at the age of 85. Upon the governor's death, the MP Government has announced 5-day mourning period between July 21, 2020 and July 25, 2020.
- Tandon was admitted to Madanta Hospital due to breathing problems and other health issues. He was diagnosed with chronic liver disease due to multiple ailments. After Tandon was admitted in the hospital, UP governor Aanandiben Patel took additional charge of MP in June 2020.
- Tandon had served in Uttar Pradesh Legislative council for two terms between 1978 and 1984, also between 1990 and 1996. He also served as MLA in UP Legislative Assembly for three terms between 1996 and 2009. Also, Tandon was elected as MP in the 15th Lok Sabha. He has served as governor of the states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

2. Award-winning Spanish novelist Juan Marsé dies at age 87

- Juan Marsé, the Spanish novelist, has died at age 87.
- Marsé was one of Spain's most-respected novelists over the past few decades and the winner of the 2008 Cervantes Prize, the Spanish-speaking world's top literary award.
- Marsé's most important novel was "Últimastardes on Teresa" ("Last Afternoons with Teresa") published in 1965.
- It chronicles the misadventure of a working-class adolescent who tries to win over a girl from the upscale side of Barcelona.
- Marsé, a native of the city, followed that success with several other novels that form a portrait of the social transformation of Spain during the latter part of the 20th century.

3. Legendary Jazz Singer Annie Ross passes away at age of 89

- Annie Ross, a popular jazz singer in the 1950s before crossing over into a successful film career, has died. She was 89.
- Ross rose to fame as the lead vocalist of one of jazz's most well-respected groups, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross.
- The trio became known for the 1952 hit "Twisted," a tune by saxophonist Wardell Gray and written by Ross.
- A decade later, Lambert, Hendricks and Ross went on to win a Grammy Award for the album High Flying."

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. 20 July to be observed as World Chess Day

- The International Chess Day is celebrated on July 20 every year as the founding day of the FIDE (World Chess Federation). This year will mark FIDE's 96th anniversary.
- In the fifth century, chess was invented in India. It was called "Chaturanga" at the time.
- Chess is one of the most ancient games of the period. This game was then spread to Persia.

2. Pi Approximation Day is celebrated on 22 July every year.

- The reason why this day is celebrated on 22 July is because of the value of Pi- 22/7.
- The fraction 22/7 is said to be the common approximation of Pi (π).
- Pi is the ratio of circumference of a circle divided by the distance across the circle, i.e., diameter of the circle.
- The value of Pi is 22/7 or 3.14. Pi is an irrational number,
- The first calculation of π was done by Archimedes of Syracuse (287–212 BC), one of the greatest mathematicians of the ancient world.

3. National Broadcasting Day is observed every year on 23 July

- On this day in 1927, the first ever radio broadcast in the country went on air from Bombay.
- In the last 93 years, Radio broadcast in the country has achieved several milestones.
- Since 1927, radio has been an important part in people's life in India.
- On 8th of June 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Service became All India Radio.

4. National Thermal Engineer Day observed on 24 July 2020

- National Thermal Engineer Day is celebrated on July 24 to appreciate the contribution of thermal engineers in everyday life.
- The day commemorates the importance of thermal management in the electronics industry and the engineers and companies that make it possible.
- Irrespective of the market sector without the contributions of thermal engineers, the electronics that are an integral part of today's life and the cornerstone of our nation's technological advancement would not be possible. Thermal engineering deals with the research, design, and modeling of heat transfer equipment and processes.

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