

Weekly Current Affairs

13 April- 19 April, 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. Ahmedabad railway station becomes first station of Indian Railways to install sanitizing tunnel

- The Ahmedabad railway station at Kalupur, Gujarat of Western Railway became the first station of Indian Railways (IR) to install a Walk Through Mass Sanitizing Tunnel to ensure the safety of staff and passengers in the view of the COVID-19. The tunnel was inaugurated by Ahmedabad DRM (Divisional Railway Manager) Deepak Jha.
- The tunnel uses WHO (World Health Organization) approved sanitizer and fitted with a sensor, so that when a passenger approaches the tunnel entrance it starts fogging automatically.
- The distance of the tunnel is 20 feet long which can be covered within 10 seconds. The tunnel has a capacity of sanitizing 25 to 30 people per minute & consumes approximately 20 ml sanitizer per person.
- The sanitization system runs on the principle of Vaporization process which converts the sanitizer mixture into vapour which forms a uniform layer over the surface & dries up quickly.

2. UNIDO signs MoU with Consumer Unity Trust Society to counter the economic impact of COVID-19

- On April 10, 2020, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), has inked an memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS), a non-profit organisation based in Jaipur, Rajasthan, to promote consumers to contribute to the global development agenda as well as support their respective governments in times of global crisis like coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- The MoU, valid for 5 years, aims to create joint technical co-operation initiatives to support ongoing activities in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).
- As per the MoU, CUTS will support e-commerce as a platform to accelerate Member States' transition to the digital economy and adapt to the 4th Industrial Revolution.
- Both the agencies also decided to implement a BRICS e-commerce project that will build upon the success of UNIDO's pilot e-commerce project implemented in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries from 2016 to 2018.

3. Vice President greets the nation on the occasion of Vaisakhi, Vishu, Puthandu, Masadi, Vaishkhadi and Bhoga Bihu

- The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has wished the people on the occasion of Vaisakhi, Vishu, Puthandu, Masadi, Vaishkhadi and Bhoga Bihu which are being celebrated in different parts of the country on 13th and 14th April, 2020.
- Vaisakhi, also known as Baisakhi is a historical and religious festival in Sikhism and Hinduism. It is usually celebrated on 13 or 14 April every year, which commemorates the formation of Khalsa panth of warriors under Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.
- Vishu is a Hindu festival celebrated in the South Indian state of Kerala, Tulu Nadu region in Karnataka, bordering areas of Tamil Nadu and their diaspora communities.
- Puthandu, also known as Puthuvarusham or Tamil New Year, is the first day of year on the Tamil calendar and traditionally celebrated as a festival. Rongali or Bhoga Bihu is an important Assamese festival celebrating spring festival

4. Nation remembers Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar on his 129th birth anniversary

- Nation remembers Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar on his 129th birth anniversary. Dr. Ambedkar is known as the Chief architect of the Indian Constitution and has been bestowed with the country's highest civilian honor, Bharat Ratna in 1990 posthumously.
- Baba sahib Bhim Rao Ambedkar was born on 14th April 1891 at Mhow, now known as Dr. Ambedkar Nagar in Madhya Pradesh.
- Dr. Ambedkar was a known jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who worked hard throughout his life to end social discrimination against weaker sections of the society.
- He became the first Law and Justice Minister after independence and played an important role in drafting the Indian Constitution and made provisions for abolition of all forms of discrimination.

5. Lockdown in the country is to be extended till 3rd May

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation and announced that after considering all aspects the lockdown in the country is to be extended till 3rd May.
- The Prime Minister lauds the patience and discipline observed by citizens in making lockdown successful. The Prime Minister said that tight Vigil has to be kept on all hotspots and containment zones.
- Every district will be analyzed over the number of hotspots till 20th April. From 20th April, the restricted relaxations in few districts will be allowed.

6. Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog & National Informatics Centre (NIC) jointly launches CollabCAD in ATL schools

- Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and National Informatics Centre (NIC) jointly launched a collaborative network, CollabCAD. These computer-enabled software systems provide a total engineering solution from 2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design.
- The aim of this initiative is to provide a great platform to students of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) across the country to create and modify 3D designs with free flow of creativity and imagination.
- This software would also enable students to create data across the network and concurrently access the same design data for storage and visualization.
- CollabCAD is a great platform for students to utilize indigenous, state-of-the-art made-in-India software for 3D modeling/slicing to use 3D Printing

7. UP to become first state to start pool testing of COVID-19 samples

- As the number of Covid-19 positive patients in Uttar Pradesh increased, the state government decided to start pool testing of the coronavirus samples.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) gave permission for pool testing to the state in order to help maximise the testing of samples on a daily basis. During pool testing, if 10 samples are mixed and tested for Covid-19 and if they test negative, then it will be an indicator that all samples are negative.
- But if the test is not negative, then individual testing will be done. This will increase the testing capacity as well as accelerate the process. The health department at the moment is testing around 2000 samples per day in the state.

8. Robots to serve food, medicine to COVID-19 patients in Jharkhand

- 'COBOT-Robotics' Robots are serving food and medicine to COVID-19 patients in two hospitals in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district.
- It is a step to protect doctors and health workers from getting infected with coronavirus.
- Developed by District Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) Aditya Ranjan, the remote-controlled COBOT-Robotics will provide food and medicine to patients without human intervention.

9. Fit India, CBSE organises 1st-ever live fitness sessions for School students

- Fit India and CBSE will organise first-ever live fitness sessions for school students in the second phase of lockdown.
- Live sessions will commence from 9:30 in morning and students can get access to these live sessions on Facebook and Instagram handles of Fit India Movement and CBSE.
- During the programme guidelines of the Ministry of AYUSH to stay healthy will be shared with students.
- The live sessions will cover all aspects of children's fitness from daily workouts to yoga, nutrition to emotional well-being

10. Jim Corbett National Park of Uttarakhand becomes India's 1st quarantine centre for animals

- Jim Corbett National Park, the India's oldest forested wildlife sanctuary located in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand, has become the India's 1st quarantine centre for animals with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- At least 10 quarantine centers are being set up within the complex to handle the coronavirus prey animals & Cameras will be installed in the park to monitor the cold and cough symptoms of animals.
- After humans, the threat of COVID-19 is now hovering over wildlife. The NTCA (National Tiger

Conservation Authority) has alerted the officials of country's sanctuaries, forests, and zoos after the Coronavirus infection was detected in the Malayan tiger 'Nadia' in the Bronx zoo of US (United States).

11. Spitting in public now an offence under Disaster Management Act

- Union Home Ministry has made spitting in public without caring as a punishable offence under the strict Disaster Management Act in its revised guidelines for lockdown.
- The guidelines issued by the ministry also make wearing of face masks in public places mandatory. The Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation has imposed a fine of Rs 1,000 if anyone is caught spitting in public.
- Similar measures are also in place in municipal corporations of Delhi, and several other states.

12. India's Aarogya Setu becomes world's fastest app to reach 50 million downloads in 13 days

- The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Amitabh Kant stated that Centre's mobile app, AarogyaSetu, which is developed for tracking COVID-19 patients, has become the world's fastest app to reach 50 million (5 crore) downloads in just 13 days.
- The app is developed by the National Informatics Center (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in just 4 days, it supports 11 languages. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is working on testing and some of the other aspects, whereas Tech Mahindra and the Mahindra group is working with the committee on the next version of this application and developing next-generation technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), machine learning, and data science.
- Tech Mahindra is also working on expanding the reach of Aarogya Setu on all types of phones, where the current version of the app is only suitable for use on smartphones

13. Indian Tricolour projected onto Switzerland's Matterhorn mountain to send a message of hope

- The Indian flag has been projected onto the Matterhorn mountain in the Swiss Alps as part of a breathtaking light illumination series as part of an effort to spread hope amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- Renowned Swiss light artist Gerry Hofstetter has been lighting up the 14,690 feet mountain with spectacular displays of country flags and messages of hope to inspire solidarity as people face up to the alarming spread of the deadly pandemic.
- The Matterhorn is a mountain of the Alps, straddling the main watershed and border between Switzerland and Italy.

14. Rate of doubling of COVID-19 cases improves to 6.2 days from three days due to Lockdown

- India has been doing better than many other countries on outcome ratio- the ratio of number of COVID-19 recoveries Vs number of deaths.
- India's doubling rate was about 3 days, before the lockdown. For the past 7 days, the doubling rate is 6.2 Days.
- 19 states have shown a higher doubling rate better than the national average.
- Indian government has set up 1,919 dedicated COVID Hospitals and COVID Health Centres have been set up in the country, with capacity of 1.73 lakh isolation beds and 21,800 ICU beds.

15. Rajasthan claims to be first State in country to carry out Rapid Testing for COVID-19

- In Rajasthan, Health minister Raghu Sharma claimed that it became the first state in the country to carry out Rapid Testing for COVID-19.
- In Beginning, 52 persons were tested and all the 52 persons tested negative.
- Health minister Raghu Sharma told that this test will be done at a large scale to assess the prevalence of COVID-19 in hotspots - both in the containment and the buffer zones around the clusters.
- In addition to rapid testing, PCR based testing will continue to be done in an aggressive manner in the containment zones all over Rajasthan.

16. Shri Santosh Gangwar requested UT's/States to designate Nodal Officers for resolving Grievances of Workers

- Union Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment Shri Santosh Gangwar requested various State/UT Governments to designate a nodal officer from Labour Department.

- The main aim is to coordinate with Control Rooms set up by the Union Government for addressing issues of the labour/workers in the country.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment recently set up 20 Control Rooms under the Chief Labour Commissioner on pan India basis due to issues of workers arising in the backdrop of COVID-19.

17. Postal employees to get Rs 10 lakh compensation in case they succumb to COVID-19

- Department of Posts planned to extend the payment of compensation of 10 lakh rupees to all postal employees including Gramin Dak Sevaks employees to the corona disease. Department of Posts comes under essential services and the employees are performing various routine duties along with delivering COVID-19 test kits, food packets, rations, and essential medicines across the country.
- The Department of Posts has decided to extend the payment of compensation of 10 lakh rupees to all postal employees, including Gramin Dak Sevaks succumbing to the corona disease. The guidelines will come into effect with immediate effect and continue for the period until the crises of COVID-19 is over.
- Postal employees perform various duties such as providing mail delivery to customers, Post Office Saving Bank, Postal Life Insurance, the ease of money withdrawal at his/her doorstep from any bank and any branch under the AePS facility.



International News & Foreign Affairs

1. IMF to consider \$1.4 bn loan to Pakistan after Imran Khan seeks help to tackle COVID-19 economic fallout

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has called its executive board meeting on April 16 to consider disbursement of an extra loan worth \$1.4 billion to Pakistan after Prime Minister Imran Khan's request.
- Khan said that in developing countries, apart from containing the virus and dealing with the economic crisis, the biggest worry is people dying of hunger as a result of the lockdown.
- The Pakistan government had also requested the IMF last month for a low-cost, fast-disbursing loan under the fund's Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI) to deal with the adverse economic impact of COVID-19. The RFI is used to provide financial assistance to IMF member countries facing an urgent balance of payments need.
- The \$1.4 billion loan to Pakistan is additional to the country's \$6 billion bailout package that it signed with the IMF in July last year to stave off a balance of payments crisis.
- The government is also planning to seek more support from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank in the future to save its economy from the dire economic fallout.

2. India sends 5,022 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan

- India has shipped the first consignment of 5,022 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan to ensure food security during difficult times of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Indian Embassy in Afghanistan has announced that 251 containers carrying the first consignment of 5,022 metric tonnes of wheat out of the total gift of 75,000 metric tonnes from India to Afghanistan set sail from Kandla port to Chabahar port.
- Last year, India Ambassador to Afghanistan Vinay Kumar had said that India would give 75,000 metric

tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan.

- Indian embassy in Afghanistan has also announced that New Delhi will send 5 lakh hydroxychloroquine tablets soon.

3. UN releases \$ 2.5 million to help cyclone-ravaged Vanuatu

- The United Nations (UN) humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock announced and released 2.5 million dollar from its emergency humanitarian fund to help thousands of people in the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu affected by Cyclone Harold and offered support to other hard-hit countries.
- The cyclone made landfall on the largest island in Vanuatu, Espiritu Santo, on April 6, 2020, before hitting the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga, which left more than two dozen people dead, destroyed homes, buildings and crops in four countries. Initial assessments suggest as much as 90 percent of the population in Sanma, the most affected province.
- Vanuatu, with roughly 80 islands stretching about 1,300 kilometers and a population near 3,00,000 was jointly controlled by the United Kingdom (UK) and France as the New Hebrides before it gained independence in 1980.

4. World's most famous cycling race Tour de France postponed due to Coronavirus pandemic

- The world's most famous cycling race Tour de France has been postponed in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- The French newspapers reported that the three-week race that was set to start on 27th of June in the Riviera city of Nice has been set for August.
- This year's event has 21 stages, with the longest of them stretching 218 kilometres (135 miles).
- The last time the Tour was not held was in 1946, with the nation still emerging from World War-II. It was also stopped during World War-I.

5. Emirates claims to be first airline to conduct on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for passengers

- The Emirates Airline claimed to have become the first airline to conduct on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for its passengers. Emirates in coordination with Dubai Health Authority (DHA) will be introducing additional precautions.
- The quick blood test, according to the statement, was conducted by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) and results were available "within 10 minutes". This test was conveniently done at the Group Check-in area of Dubai International Airport Terminal 3.
- The airline said its check-in and boarding formalities have also been adapted with social distancing in mind.

6. China dispatched a total of 650,000 kits to India

- A consignment of 550,000 antibody testing kits and 100,000 RNA extraction kits was dispatched by Chinese firms to India. They will be used in the country's efforts to prevent and control the spread of Covid-19.
- The consignment includes part of the large orders placed by India for medical supplies and equipment with Chinese firms.
- Chinese companies have been contracted for nearly 15 million personal protective equipment (PPE) kits comprising gowns, gloves, masks and goggles, and 1.5 million rapid testing kits for Covid-19 by the Indian government and private companies.

7. S Korea governing party sees big gains in the parliamentary election

- Parliamentary elections in South Korea have resulted in a big win for the governing Democratic Party. Moon's Democratic party and its allies took 180 seats in the 300-member National Assembly, while the opposition United Future Party (UFP) won 103.
- South Korea was among the first countries to hold a national election during the pandemic. The citizens are still being asked to maintain social distancing, wear protective masks, clean their hands with sanitiser and don plastic gloves.
- At each of the 14,000 polling stations, voters had their temperature checked before they were allowed to enter. Those found to have fevers cast their ballots in separate booths that were disinfected after each user.

8. Asia expected to witness zero % growth in 2020: IMF

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that Asia is expected to witness zero % growth in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It will be its worst growth performance in almost 60 years
- The IMF in a blog titled 'COVID-19 Pandemic and the Asia-Pacific Region: Lowest Growth Since the 1960s' further said the impact of the coronavirus on the region will be "severe and unprecedented".
- This is the worst growth performance in almost 60 years, including during the Global Financial Crisis, when the growth stood at 4.7 %; and the Asian Financial Crisis when it stood at 1.3 %."It further noted that "Asia still looks to fare better than other regions in terms of activity".

9. China releases 4th Asian Para Games 2022 mascot as 'FeiFei' bird

- The organizing committee of Hangzhou Asian Games, has released 'FeiFei' the bird as an official mascot for 4th Asian Para Games 2022, which is scheduled to be held in Hangzhou, China from 9 – 15 October 2022.
- The design inspiration of "Feifei" comes from the motif of the 'Divine Bird' in the Liangzhu Culture and represent both Hangzhou city's heritage and its innovation in technology.
- The first fei' of the mascot represents the birds flying, implying inclusiveness, respect, and fraternity of human society, whereas the 2nd fei' represents the mental tenacity of the athletes with disabilities pursuing dreams and reaching beyond themselves.
- The bird's body features "i" (intelligence) on its crown, which is a symbol of intelligence and wisdom, and it also shows the characteristics of Hangzhou's Internet city. It also has 45 dots circle on its chest which represents the joyful gathering of Asian Paralympic Committee's (APC) members, while the Games logo is in the centre.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Birupaksha Mishra took charge as the Executive Director of Union Bank of India

- Birupaksha Mishra has taken over the charge as the executive director of Union Bank of India.
- Prior to this, Mishra was executive director at erstwhile Corporation Bank, which along with Andhra Bank got amalgamated with Union Bank from April 1.
- Mishra has more than 35 years of experience in various administrative and functional capacities at branches, regional offices and also at the corporate office of Corporation Bank.

2. MS Dhoni appointed as the brand ambassador of PokerStars India

- PokerStars India has appointed former Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its new brand ambassador. Prior to MS Dhoni's appointment, popular Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui was the brand ambassador of the company.
- Muskan Sethi and Sharad Rao are the other brand ambassadors of PokerStars India, while Aditya Agarwal quit the brand in December 2019.
- PokerStars India's motive to bring MS Dhoni on board is aimed at increasing its market share in the industry as the cricketer has a fan following among millions of Indians.
- Currently, the brand is at rank four for player traffic among poker sites.

3. Ajay Mahajan appointed as MD & CEO of CARE Ratings

- CARE Ratings has appointed Ajay Mahajan as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer for a period of 5 years commencing from 15 April 2020 up to 14 April 2025.
- Mahajan started his career with Bank of America in 1990 and went on to become the MD and Country Head of Global Markets Group. CARE Ratings Limited is a credit rating agency.
- The Company is engaged in providing financial services other than securities dealing activities.

4. Vineet Arora appointed as MD, CEO of Paytm General Insurance

- Digital payments major Paytm has named Vineet Arora as the managing director and chief executive officer of Paytm General Insurance Ltd.

- The appointment, which is subject to regulatory approvals, is a step for Paytm to further its journey into the insurance sector with an immediate focus on General Insurance.
- Arora will lead the efforts to provide industry-leading solutions in the general insurance space, where Paytm continues to explore options to enter the sector.
- Previously, Arora served as the managing director and chief executive officer of Aegon Life Insurance Company and was part of the India Leadership team.

5. IWF President Tamas Ajan resigns

- International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) President Tamas Ajan, 81 years old, resigned in the wake of allegations of corruption and doping violations. The IWF Executive Board accepted the resignation of the IWF president. Ursula Papandrea will be the acting president of IWF.
- He is from Hungary, had been at the IWF since 1976, serving 24 years as general secretary and 20 years as president.
- The IWF thanks Tamas Ajan for more than 4 decades of service to weightlifting and most notably for his work in recent years to ensure an anti-doping programme which meets the standards of the IOC (International Olympic Committee) and WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency).
- Papandrea, a former International lifter for the United States (US), is the first woman to lead IWF, which has existed under different names since 1920 and has only 2 presidents since 1972- Ajan and the Austrian Gottfried School.

6. Viswanathan Anand joins WWF India as an ambassador for environment education

- Five-time world chess champion Viswanathan Anand has joined WWF (World Wide Fund) India as its ambassador for the environmental education programme. WWF India is celebrating its 50 years of conservation in India.
- In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, governments, development organisations, corporates and individuals around the world are doing their bit to prevent the spread of the disease.
- The environmental education programme currently reaches out to over 5,00,000 children across 2000 schools in the country.

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Previously, Arora served as the managing director and chief executive officer of Aegon Life Insurance Company and was part of the India Leadership team.

BANKING

1. Jana Small Finance Bank launches DigiGen, a digital banking platform

- Jana Small Finance Bank, a scheduled commercial bank, has launched DigiGen, a digital banking platform which enables the customers to open digitally a savings account & fixed deposit instantly anytime & anywhere.
- It is a 3 step process to open an account, where the customers are eligible for 4.5% interest rates on savings accounts with no minimum balance and up to 7.5% interest on fixed deposits.
- The new digital solution offers many features including online bill payment, instant cash transfer and airport lounge access on a debit card.

2. People's Bank of China now owns 1.01% stake in HDFC

- The People's Bank of China (PBoC) has bought 1.01 percent stake in the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC).
- PBoC held 1.75 crore shares of HDFC during the quarter that ended in March.

- HDFC Vice Chairman and CEO Keki Mistry said the PBOC has been an existing shareholder and had owned 0.8 percent in the company as of March 2019.
- Due to the coronavirus crisis, HDFC shares fell nearly 39.87 percent this year from a high of Rs 2,493 to a low of Rs 1,499 last week.

3. Retail inflation eases to 5.91 percent in March

- Retail inflation slowed to 5.91 percent in March over the previous month, mainly due to easing food prices as per the government data released.
- The retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 6.58 percent in February 2020 and 2.86 percent in March 2019.
- The inflation in the food basket was 8.76 percent in March 2020, lower from 10.81 percent in the previous month, as per the CPI data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- The Reserve Bank of India mainly factors in retail inflation while deciding its bi-monthly monetary policy. The government has mandated the central bank to keep inflation at around 4 percent.

4. Max Life Insurance, YES Bank extended bancassurance tie-up for 5 years; Dedicated FY21 as “Year of the Customer”

- Max Life Insurance and YES Bank have extended their 15 years strategic bancassurance partnership for five more years. In this regard, both companies dedicated the current financial year i.e. FY 2020-21 as the “Year of the Customer”.
- As a part of the partnership, the products of the life insurer sold through the branches of Yes Bank. Customers are offered with a broad range of need-based products and services.
- It should be noted that the companies began their partnership in February 2005, and has about 280,000 policies. It has settled death claims of more than Rs 70 crore and offered protection worth Rs 34,500 crore to policyholders and their families.

5. HDFC Chairman pushes for restructuring of NPA norms

- HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh pushed for a one-time restructuring of stressed real estate accounts and relaxation in classification of NPA norms to 180 days from 90 days to help the sector.
- Unless the stressed accounts are restructured, financial institutions will find it difficult to provide additional liquidity to the sector.
- Most of the developers are in a stressful situation and many of them are NPAs or will become NPAs.
- Recommendation has already been made to the RBI for the restructuring following which real estate developers can be given additional money.
- Under the RBI norms, an account is classified as a NPA if it is not serviced for 90 days.

6. RBI slashes reverse repo rate by 25 bps to 3.75 per cent to inject liquidity

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a reduction in reverse repo rate by 25 basis points from 4 % to 3.75 %.
- This announcement has been made to facilitate bank credit flows amid the coronavirus crisis and subsequent countrywide lockdown which has brought economic activity to a virtual halt.
- However, it kept the repo rate unchanged.
- Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank lends money to commercial banks, and reverse repo rate is the rate at which it borrows from them.

Awards and Books

1. Four Indian-Americans awarded Guggenheim fellowships 2020

- Indian-Americans have been awarded with Guggenheim fellowships 2020 for their already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts.
- The 4 Indian- Americans are: Pradeep Sharma- mechanical engineer at the University of Houston; Kavita Ramanan- professor of Applied Mathematics at Brown University; Dilip Da Cunha- architect, planner and teacher at Harvard University and Columbia University; Mukul Sharma- professor of Earth Sciences

at Dartmouth College.

- About 175 such fellowships are awarded each year among 3000 applicants, the size of grant varies and is adjusted to the needs of fellows, by considering their other resources and the purpose and scope of their plans & the average grant in the 2008 Canada and United States competition was approximately USD 43,200.

2. Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu authored by V. Krishnaswamy

- A book titled “Shuttling to the Top: The Story of P V Sindhu” authored by Krishnaswamy V was published by HarperCollins in Amazon digital platform along with other two books, amid the lockdown due to Coronavirus.
- “The Story of P V Sindhu”, conveys the story of one of the finest badminton players in the world. The biography tells her life from the time when, while living in the colony of Secunderabad, she travelled over 40 km every day by train to get to P Gopichand’s academy and train.
- P V Sindhu has achieved so much, including four World Championship medals besides those at Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.
- The third book is “The Big Questions of Life” authored by Om Swami which marks the way to enlightenment through mindful thinking.

Science Tech & Defence

1. Apple books coronavirus domain name after Google collaboration

- Apple has booked a domain name called AppleCoronavirus.com, after the iPhonemaker and Google last week announced a joint effort to enable the use of Bluetooth technology to help governments and health agencies reduce the spread of the new coronavirus.
- Apple and Google are launching a comprehensive solution that includes application programming interfaces (APIs) and operating system-level technology to assist in enabling contact tracing.

2. COVID-19: IIT-Bombay researchers develop ‘digital stethoscope’ which can hear a heartbeat from a distance

- A team from Biomedical Engineering & Technology incubation Centre (BETiC) at the Indian Institute of Technology of Bombay (IIT-B) has developed a “digital stethoscope” that can listen to hear beats from a distance and record them. Thus the smart stethoscope minimises the risk to doctors and health care professionals who are handling COVID- 19 (Coronavirus) patients.
- The IIT-B team has received a patent for the device that records the auscultated sound from lungs & store it as a part of a patient’s health record and the data can be shared with other doctors for analysis.
- The data or the auscultated sound from a patient’s chest is wirelessly sent to the doctor using Bluetooth.
- The team in collaboration with “AyuDevice”, a startup company in IIT-B campus, has sent 1,000 digital stethoscopes to different hospitals and healthcare centers across the country. The product has been developed with clinical inputs from doctors at Reliance Hospital and PD Hinduja Hospital.

3. Google Pay launches 'Nearby Spot' to help users find local stores selling essentials

- Google has launched 'Nearby Spot' under Google Pay using which users in Bengaluru can see local stores selling essentials like groceries that are open, amid the lockdown.

- The Nearby Spot will be launched in Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune, and Delhi soon. The company has also launched the COVID-19 Spot on Google Pay that aggregates all pertinent information on the topic, sourced directly from the Health Ministry.
- This Spot also helps users donate to the PM-CARES Fund or to NGOs such as SEEDS, Give India, United Way and Charities Aid Foundation that are working towards the procurement of protective equipment for medical workers and relief for lockdown-impacted daily wagers.

4. C-DOT and Telecom Service Providers develop COVID Quarantine Alert System

- The Department of Telecommunication and C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics) in coordination with Telecom Service Providers have developed and tested COVID Quarantine Alert System application which automatically triggers an email (Electronic Mail) or SMS (Short Message Service) if any identified corona positive person moves away from their quarantine location.
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has encouraged state government agencies to use the COVID Quarantine Alert system.
- A Standard Operating Procedure for location based monitoring of potential cases from the telecom network data has been established and a large number of requests from state agencies are coming in from Andhra Pradesh (AP), Telangana, Haryana and Bihar.
- The system would send triggers to the identified monitoring agencies for any potential violations from the quarantined locations subject to network availability and triangulation limitations.

5. BSNL in partnership with SBI launches Bharat InstaPay a UPI-based payment platform

- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in partnership with the State Bank of India (SBI) has launched a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) based payment platform, Bharat InstaPay to enable all types of channel partners of BSNL to digitize their payment transactions on a round the clock basis/ real-time basis.
- In particular it will help the prepaid sellers to buy the services immediately for sale. It will improve BSNL's credibility towards partners, & will help in the growth of partners' business at a faster pace.
- 1-time online verification process is introduced, which is to be done by the partners themselves by visiting the portal.

6. Tata AIA becomes the first Life Insurance company to announce Additional Benefits Related to COVID-19

- Tata AIA Life Insurance announced additional benefits for its Policyholders and Agents. As part of Tata AIA Life's initiative, its individual policyholders will get COVID-19 related additional benefits up to Rs 500,000 at no additional cost.
- Further, to extend the Circle of Protection to its own Agents, all 'active' Agents of Tata AIA Life Insurance along with their spouse and children will be reimbursed up to Rs 25,000 in case of hospitalisation due to COVID-19. This is a first of its kind initiative in India.
- All policyholders of Tata AIA will get an additional benefit equal to the base sum assured or Rs 500,000 whichever is lower for valid death claims due to COVID-19.
- This benefit is applicable for all valid death claims with a date of death on or before June 30 2020.

7. DRDO innovates automatic sanitiser and ultraviolet devices to fight coronavirus

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation introduced two new technologies that are aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus.
- These two are Automatic Mist Based Sanitiser Dispensing Unit and UV Sanitisation Box and Hand-held UV device.
- Ultraviolet device, which is hand held, can disinfect office and house objects like chairs, files and food packets.
- It also comes as a box, which has been designed to disinfect personal belongings such as mobile phones, files and wallet.
- Automatic mist based sanitiser dispensing unit is a contactless sanitiser dispenser, which sprays alcohol based hand sanitiser, for use at the entry of buildings and office complexes.

8. Delhi government launched 'Assess Koro Na' app for door-to-door survey in containment zones

- The Delhi government has asked officials to use the new 'Assess Koro Na' app for door-to-door survey in COVID-19 containment zones. Officials say the delay in collecting and analysing the data of a person in a physical form is a major challenge.
- With this app, the data collected can be uploaded on the servers in real-time and immediately analyse.
- This will help the control centres in making a quick decision on the requirement of ambulances and other medical equipment and personnel in the area.
- During the process, surveyors ask questions like travel history, contact history, flu-like symptoms and shortness of breath.

Sports

1. India's Limited-overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma becomes brand ambassador for "CricKingdom"

- Limited-overs Vice-captain of Indian cricket team Rohit Sharma was named brand ambassador of "CricKingdom" a Dubai-based cricket coaching academy which provides a platform for online coaching after the global COVID-19 pandemic subsides.
- Provides support on booking of coaches, ground/nets with the management of academies. They are trying to merge the modern scientific training methods with the time-tested theories of the legends in the game.

Obituaries

1. Sir Stirling Moss, F1 and motor racing legend, dies at the age of 90 after long illness

- Stirling Moss, the British racer widely regarded as the greatest Formula One driver ever to win the world championship, has died at the age of 90.
- He made 67 starts in the F1 World Championship, winning 16 races and claiming 16 pole positions and 24 podium positions.
- He retired from top-level competition after a crash in 1962 but continued in historic racing and was highly active within motor racing for the rest of his life. In 1961 he was named the BBC's sports personality of the year.

2. Veteran Army officer KP Dhal Samanta dies

- Veteran Army officer Lt Gen (retd) K P Dhal Samanta, who had played a valiant role in 1971 and Kargil wars, died. A product of the first batch of Sainik School Bhubaneswar, Lt Gen Samanta had retired as Director-General of the Rashtriya Rifles, India's premier counter-insurgency force deployed in Kashmir.
- General Samanta fought in the 1971 war on the eastern front and was awarded the Poorvi Star. He was among the veterans invited regularly to Bangladesh as a mark of honor for their valiant efforts in the liberation of Bangladesh.
- Later in his career, he participated in Operation Blue Star and the larger fight against terrorism in Punjab. During the 1999 Kargil war, Samanta was instrumental in helping deploy the 155 mm Bofors guns in difficult conditions.

3. Former Attorney General of India Ashok Desai passed away

- Former Attorney General of India and senior advocate Ashok Desai passed away. A Padma Bhushan awardee, Desai held office as the Attorney General of India from July 9, 1996, to May 6, 1998.
- Earlier, he was the Solicitor General of India from 18 December 1989 to December 2, 1990.
- Desai took up several landmark cases, including decriminalization of homosexuality, Vineet Narain case relating to the investigation into allegations of corruption against high-ranking public officials in the

country, Narmada Dam case and Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) (IMDT) Act in Assam, among others.

4. Former Pakistani cricketer Zafar Sarfraz passes away

- Former Pakistani first-class cricketer Zafar Sarfraz became the first professional player in the country to die after contracting the novel coronavirus.
- Sarfraz, a middle-order batsman, played 15 first-class games in Peshawar and retired in 1994.
- Pakistan has recorded more than 5,000 coronavirus cases to date and nearly 100 deaths.
- Lack of testing and an underfunded health care sector, however, has raised fears the country is ill-equipped to handle a spike in cases.

5. Freedom fighter R V Bhuskute died after a prolonged illness

- Freedom fighter R V Bhuskute, who had participated in the Quit India Movement, died of prolonged illness in Maharashtra's Raigadh district.
- Bhuskute, who had participated in the Quit India Movement, wrote several books on land laws and worked for the release and rehabilitation of bonded labourers in tribal areas of the state.
- The Quit India Movement also known as India August Movement or Bharat Chodo Andolan was launched at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) by Mahatma Gandhi on August 8, 1942.

6. Nigeria President Buhari's chief of staff Abba Kyari dies of COVID-19

- Abba Kyari, the Chief of Staff to Nigeria's president Muhammadu Buhari, has died from Covid-19 after a nearly month-long infection.
- Kyari was in his 70s and had underlying health problems including diabetes.
- He was the top official aide to 77-year-old President Muhammadu Buhari.

Important Days

1. Pohela Boishakh 2020: Bengali New Year

- Gregorian calendar, the Bengali New Year usually falls around April 14 or April 15. This year Pohela Boishakh is celebrated on April 14.
- On this day, Bengali traders community opens new books of accounts named as 'Hal Khata'.
- But due to ongoing lockdown, New Years celebrations have been drastically curtailed this year.

2. Retail inflation eases to 5.91 percent in March

- Retail inflation slowed to 5.91 percent in March over the previous month, mainly due to easing food prices as per the government data released.
- The retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 6.58 percent in February 2020 and 2.86 percent in March 2019.
- The inflation in the food basket was 8.76 percent in March 2020, lower from 10.81 percent in the previous month, as per the CPI data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- The Reserve Bank of India mainly factors in retail inflation while deciding its bi-monthly monetary policy. The government has mandated the central bank to keep inflation at around 4 percent.

3. World Haemophilia Day is observed every year on 17 April

- The day is observed to raise awareness regarding the disease and other hereditary bleeding disorders.
- 17 April is also the birthday of Frank Schnabel, a businessman born with severe haemophilia who was the founder of the World Federation of Haemophilia (WFH).
- Haemophilia is a mostly inherited genetic disorder that impairs the body's ability to make blood clots. The Theme of the World Haemophilia Day 2020 is : 'Get + involved'

4. World Heritage Day is observed every year on April 18

- World Heritage Day is observed every year on April 18. The aim of celebrating this day is to promote cultural heritage through activities which are undertaken by the International Council on Monuments and Sites.
- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1982 announced 18th April as the World Heritage Day. It aims to conserve and enhance awareness about the importance of cultural heritage and monuments.
- The World Heritage Day Theme 2020 is 'Shared Culture, Shared Heritage and Shared Responsibility'.

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