

G.K snippets...



1. **Padmaja Chunduru** is the MD & CEO of **Indian Bank**.
2. **General Manoj Naravane** is the current chief of the Indian Army.
3. **K Sivan** is the chairperson of ISRO.



Policy and Governance

India's journey in the United Nations

1. **Phase 1 :**

- Until the end of the Cold War in 1989, India was involved in exploring and enhancing its diplomatic influence as a moderating force in easing armed conflicts in Asia and Africa by disentangling them from the superpower rivalry between USA and USSR. Also, we learnt the hard way that the UN could not be relied upon to impartially resolve vital security disputes such as Jammu and Kashmir. India, thus, utilised the UN **only to focus on common causes** such as anticolonialism, anti racism, nuclear disarmament, environment conservation and equitable economic development.
- Humbling of India in the 1962 border war against China meant a definitive redesign of the country's diplomatic style to privilege bilateral contacts over the third party role by the UN.

2. **Phase 2 : The 90s decade**

- Sudden end of the Cold War, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990 and the resultant emergence of the United States as the unrivaled power in world politics changed global dynamics.
- Uncertain political climate caused by unstable coalition governments along with the balance of payments crisis constrained India's capability to be active in various bodies, especially in the Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly.
- India showed pragmatism in enabling the toughest terms on Iraq even after eviction from occupied Kuwait, or in reversing the hitherto stated position on Zionism as racism.
- Growing militancy in Kashmir in the early 1990s emboldened Pakistan to internationalise the dispute with accusations about gross human rights violations by India. India had to work hard to seek favours from Iran and China in the Human Rights Commission to checkmate Pakistan.
- NATO's intervention against Yugoslavia in 1999 without the authorisation of the UNSC deeply disturbed India, but its efforts registered their protest in partnership with Russia and China.

- India resolutely stood against indefinite extension of the [Non-proliferation Treaty](#) in 1995, and rejected the backdoor introduction for adoption of the [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty](#) in 1996. India cited national security requirements for the Pokran (Rajasthan) nuclear weapon tests in 1998 not adhering to the Comprehensive test ban treaty.
3. **Phase 3 :**
- The 21st century opened new avenues for India to shine at the UN. The impressive economic performance in the first decade, thanks to economic liberalization and globalisation policies, helped a great deal in strengthening its profile.
 - India has emerged as a responsible stakeholder in non-traditional security issue areas such as the spread of small and light weapons, terrorists weapons of mass destruction, and the impact of climate change.
 - India's share to the UN assessed budget has registered a hike from 0.34% to 0.83%.
 - India has repeatedly campaigned for the equitable expansion of the UNSC to enable India to attain permanent membership along with other claimants from Asia, Africa and Latin America.
 - India will soon begin its two-year term as a non-permanent UNSC member (January 1, 2021). The main priority will be upholding of Charter principles, mounting effective punitive measures against those who support, finance and sponsor terrorists.
 - In a world which has started to echo non-globalised sentiments with multilateral institutions like UNSC, WTO, WHO etc. losing some of their political capital, India can play a major part in restoring the rules of the game.

GST and political negotiations

1. The GST replaced numerous central and State taxes with a one **single destination based tax**. The Constitutional Amendment overhauled Centre-State relations, with States giving up almost all their powers to tax. In exchange for this bargain, the Centre assured them full compensation, for five years, for all losses arising due to the transition to the GST.
2. A **GST Council**, made up of the Central and State Finance Ministers, was established and empowered to make recommendations about various issues related to the GST.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic induced disruption. Tax collections plummeted which in turn have led to a massive revenue shortfall. In turn, this has also reduced the available resources in the compensation fund. The crisis and the unequal relationship created an incentive for the Centre to blur the lines and thus, at this moment the centre-state fiscal relationship is at a low.
4. Central government's disinclination to use the Council and working outside the Council, the Centre was able to exploit asymmetries and divisions between States.
5. The reasons why states decided in favour of compromising with their fiscal autonomy and subsuming their taxes into a single tax were - efficiency, equity, stabilisation, economic growth, and balanced development.
6. The dynamics of centre-state relations started changing with the gradual shift in power, with the emergence of regional parties in states and their divergence from the ideology of the National party at the centre. In sharp contrast to the one party dominant phase, the coalition era inaugurated a seemingly more cordial period of Centre State relations based on a recognition of mutual interests.
7. Former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha in his memoirs underlines how the Centre chose to remain out of the limelight, and an empowered group of State Finance Ministers helped bring about VAT, the precursor to GST. The GST reforms also followed the same pattern. This decision making process gave States both the confidence and ownership of reforms and the new institutions being put in place. However, with the coming back of one-party rule at the centre the situation is changing rapidly. The greater the degree of party centralisation, the higher the possibility of federal centralisation.

8. Earlier the Congress ruled States did not make a noise during the one-party dominant phase, and the Bharatiya Janata Party ruled States do not do so today.
9. While the States are negotiating within the agreed framework, the Centre's actions undermine the federal architecture. If this happens consistently over time, there is nothing to stop the States also from doing so.

Annual State of Education Report (ASER) Survey

1. **ASER is a nationwide survey** of rural education and learning outcomes in terms of reading and arithmetic skills that has been conducted by the NGO Pratham for the last 15 years. This year, the survey was conducted via phone calls, reaching 52,227 rural households with school age children in 30 States and Union Territories.
2. **Snippets:**
 - About 20% of rural children have no textbooks at home, In Andhra Pradesh, less than 35% of children had textbooks, and only 60% had textbooks in Rajasthan. More than 98% had textbooks in West Bengal, Nagaland and Assam.
 - The ASER survey provides a glimpse into the levels of learning loss that students in rural India are suffering, with varying levels of access to technology, school and family resources, resulting in a digital divide in education.
 - School Enrolment patterns show a slight shift toward government schools, with private schools seeing a drop in enrolment in all age groups.
 - In 2018, ASER surveyors found that about 36% of rural households with school going children had smartphones. By 2020, that figure had spiked to 62%. About 11% of families bought a new phone after the lockdown, of which 80% were smart phones.
 - WhatsApp was by far the most popular mode of transmitting learning materials to students, with 75% of students who got some input receiving it via the app. About a quarter of those who got input had personal contact with a teacher.

Countering deep fakes : Challenges from AI

[View video](#)

1. Access to commodity cloud computing, algorithms, and abundant data has created a perfect storm to democratise media creation and manipulation. . Deepfakes are the digital media (video, audio, and images) manipulated using Artificial Intelligence. This synthetic media content is referred to as deepfakes.
2. Synthetic media can create possibilities and opportunities for all people, regardless of who they are, where they are, and how they listen, speak, or communicate. It can give people a voice, purpose, and ability to make an impact at scale and with speed. But as with any new innovative technology, it can be weaponized to inflict harm.
3. Deepfakes, hyper realistic digital falsification, can inflict damage to individuals, institutions, businesses and democracy. They make it possible to fabricate media — swap faces, lip-syncing, and puppeteers — mostly without consent and bring threat to psychology, security, political stability, and business disruption.
4. Nation-state actors with geopolitical aspirations, ideological believers, violent extremists, and economically motivated enterprises can manipulate media narratives using deepfakes, with easy and unprecedented reach and scale.
5. Deepfakes can depict a person indulging in antisocial behaviours and saying vile things. These can have severe implications on their reputation, sabotaging their professional and personal life.
6. Deepfakes can be deployed to extract money, confidential information, or exact favours from individuals.
7. A deepfake can also aid in altering the democratic discourse and undermine trust in institutions and impair diplomacy. False information about institutions, public policy, and politicians powered by a deepfake can be exploited to spin the story and manipulate belief. A high-quality deepfake can inject compelling false information that can cast a shadow of illegitimacy over the voting process and election results.

8. For authoritarian regimes, it is a tool that can be used to justify oppression and disenfranchised citizens. Leaders can also use them to increase populism and consolidate power.
9. Another concern is a **liar's dividend**; an undesirable truth is dismissed as deepfake or fake news. Leaders may weaponize deepfakes and use fake news and an alternative facts narrative to replace an actual piece of media and truth.

10. Major solutions

- Collaborative actions and collective techniques across legislative regulations, platform policies, technology intervention, and media literacy can provide effective and ethical countermeasures to mitigate the threat of malicious deepfakes.
 - Media literacy for consumers and journalists is the most effective tool to combat disinformation and deep fakes. Improving media literacy is a precursor to addressing the challenges presented by deepfakes.
 - We also need easy-to-use and accessible technology solutions to detect deepfakes, authenticate media, and amplify authoritative sources. We should thus become critical consumers of media on the Internet.
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National News/ Interventions



Daily snippets

1. [Dr. Reddy's data centres compromised](#)

- India's leading pharmaceutical company Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said it has isolated all data centre services and temporarily shut some production facilities to take preventive action in the wake of a cyberattack
- The cyber attack comes days after the pharma giant received the Drugs Controller General of India's approval to conduct Phase 2/3 human clinical trial for **Sputnik V vaccine**, developed by Russia. As per the plan, Russia's sovereign wealth fund RDIF, which is piloting the COVID-19 vaccine candidate, intends to supply 100 million doses of the vaccine to Dr.Reddy's.
- Subject to completion of successful trials and registration of the vaccine by regulatory authorities in India, deliveries could potentially begin in late 2020, the RDIF had said in September.

2. [India warns twitter over map misrepresentation](#)

- India has warned Twitter over its location setting that showed Leh in China, saying any disrespect of the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

3. [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\) flags unsafe disposal of carcasses](#)

- The draft guidelines require carcasses of livestock to be disposed of in incinerators and municipal authorities must ensure that such facilities are set up and made available.
- Carcasses, especially those that result from the animal slaughter, are an 'environmental hazard' and are partly to blame for 'bird hit' hazards at airports.
- There were nearly 25 million head of cattle including buffalo that died of natural causes, however there wasn't any organised system of disposal and it had become a major environmental hazard.
- While the hide was mostly removed for leather, the carcasses were frequently left to "putrefy in the open" and attracted "vultures and dogs polluting the environment and creating environmental hazards. This open dumping attracted birds which can cause air accidents.
- Setting up more 'carcass utilisation plants can be a solution, where the parts of the animal could be used to make tallow, nutritional supplements and fertilizer. The other methods of disposal are incineration and 'deep burial'.

4. [Testimony of sexual assault victim enough for conviction](#)

- The Supreme Court has held that The sole and trustworthy evidence of a woman, who is a victim of a sexual offence, is enough to find her assailant guilty
- The court was confirming the punishment awarded to a man found guilty under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act of sexually assaulting a 13 year old child in Tamil Nadu.
- Justice M.R. Shah drew attention to the long train of judicial precedents from the apex court which have all held that "evidence of the victim of sexual assault is enough for conviction" in a sexual offence case unless there are serious contradictions.

5. [INS Kavaratti commissioned at Visakhapatnam](#)

- **INS Kavaratti**, the last of the four indigenously built AntiSubmarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes built under Project 28 (Kamorta class), by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, was formally inducted into the Navy at the Naval Dockyard in Eastern Naval Command.
- It was commissioned by **General Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of the Army Staff**, in the presence of Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Commanding In-Chief, Eastern Naval Command (ENC). The ship, named after the capital of the Lakshadweep group of islands, has been constructed using high grade DMR 249A steel produced in India. The ship spans 109 metres in length, 14 metres in breadth with a displacement of 3,300 tonnes and is regarded as one of the most potent Anti-Submarine Warships to have been constructed in India.
- Experts say the induction of the ASW corvettes will be a game changer in the eastern seaboard, especially with the Chinese submarines trying to make sorties in the Indian Ocean

6. [Nag anti-tank missile completes final user trail](#)

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Thursday carried out the final user trial of the third-generation **anti tank guided missile (ATGM), Nag**, at the Pokhran firing range.
- Nag had been developed to engage highly fortified enemy tanks in day and night conditions. The missile has “fire and forget” and “top attack” capabilities with passive homing guidance to defeat all Main Battle Tanks (MBT) equipped with composite and reactive armour.

7. [Centre slaps stock limits as onion prices shoot up](#)

- Wholesale traders will not be allowed to store more than 25 tonnes of onions, while retailers will be limited to two tonnes only from October 23 till December 31.
- The Centre has already slapped an export ban on the staple vegetable, taken steps for imports, and released more than 40,000 tonnes from its buffer stock to cool down the prices.
- *Prices are always high at this time of year as stocks from the last rabi crop dwindle before the fresh kharif crop begins to arrive.*
- This is the first-time stock limits have been imposed on any commodity after **the Essential Commodities Act** was amended last month to reduce such interventions.

8. [Reliance - Future Group Deal: Amazon gets relief as Singapore Emergency Arbitrator stalls the sale of Future Group](#)

- Amazon has won a favourable ruling before the Emergency Arbitrator at Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) in its fight over Kishore Biyani controlled Future Group and Future Coupons that owns Big Bazaar and other retail outlets.
- The Respondents are enjoined from taking steps to complete the transaction with entities which are part of the Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani Group.

9. [Mysuru Dasara](#)

- The **10 day Mysuru Dasara festivities** concluded on Monday under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the world famous **Jamboo Savari finale** being the shortest and the quickest.
- In a normal year, the Savari is a big spectacle with multiple cultural events taking over three hours to complete.
- **Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa** flagged the Savari, showering flowers on the Chamundeshwari idol in the 750 kg golden howdah on elephant Abhimanyu.

10. [India's disaster preparedness against tsunami](#)

- India is much safer against the threat of tsunamis than it was in 2004, thanks to the state-of-the-art tsunami early warning system established in **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)**.
- We have reached a stage where we can detect large undersea earthquakes in real-time and provide a tsunami warning in 10-20 minutes after the earthquake occurs.
- The focus in recent times has been on enhancing community awareness and response through several capacity building activities, biennial Indian Ocean wide tsunami drills and piloting of the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Ready initiative to provide a structured framework to build and measure capacities of coastal communities to respond effectively to tsunamis.

11. [First seaplane service set to be launched soon](#)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate the country's first seaplane service in Gujarat, between **Sabarmati Riverfront** in Ahmedabad and the **Statue of Unity near the Narmada Dam** in Kevadia, on October 31. The 19-seater seaplane will fly four times a day. The fare is ₹4,800 per passenger.

12. [India to sign geo-spatial cooperation deal with U.S](#)

- India and the U.S. will sign the last foundational agreement, **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial cooperation (BECA)** during the 2+2 ministerial dialogue on Tuesday.
- India has posted a liaison officer at the U.S. Navy Central Command in Bahrain recently and is also considering a U.S. request for posting liaison officers at the **U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)** and the **U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)**
- **'2+2' Dialogue** is a format of dialogue where the defence and foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country. 2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries.
- *Defence Minister Rajnath Singh: U.S. Secretary of Defence Mark Esper.
U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.*

13. [Efforts to block child pornography](#)

- Search engine major Google has informed the Delhi High Court that there is ongoing effort to develop more effective automated tools to prevent hosting of child pornographic content on its platforms. "However, it is difficult to prevent uploading of the same prior to the content being reported,"
- Google was responding to the High Court's query on removing "offending images" of children and preventing them from resurfacing.
- The senior advocate explained that even a minor change in the properties of the image would enable it to evade discovery or action through the automated processes.

14. [Court live-streaming could be abused : Chief Justice of India](#)

- **Attorney General of India K.K. Venugopal** pushed for live streaming court proceedings to make hearings accessible to all. But Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, heading a three judge Bench of the Supreme Court, sounded a cautionary note, saying it was susceptible to "abuses."
- The issue of live streaming came up as a Special Bench led by the CJI was taking stock of the virtual court system initiated after the lockdown.

15. [Single male parent can take child care leaves](#)

- Male government employees who are single parents will now be entitled to child care leave, said the Union Minister **Jitendra Singh**. He also added that The leave could be granted at 100% of leave salary for the first 365 days and 80% of leave salary for the next 365 days

16. S.C keeps Lokur committee's appointment in abeyance

- The Supreme Court has decided to "keep in abeyance" its preDasara order appointing former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur to a one-man committee to monitor/ prevent stubble burning in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.
- The decision to put on hold came soon after Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta informed a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde that the Centre had "proposed a legislation to tackle the problem" which occurs annually and chokes the capital.

17. Meghalaya staring at economic blockade

- After Nagaland and Mizoram, Meghalaya is staring at an economic blockade from organisations in Assam.
- The latest cause of friction is Meghalaya's alleged obsession with COVID19 restrictions that have denied entry to traders from Assam. At least 40 organisations, including the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) have threatened to block all points of entry to western Meghalaya's Garo Hills from October 29 if the Meghalaya government "does not get over its pandemic obsession"
- Truckers in Assam have stopped plying to Mizoram following an interstate boundary dispute that led to violence. Parts of Nagaland had suffered a temporary blockade over the protest of the killing of an Assam based trucker in Nagaland's Dimapur.

18. Allahabad HC to monitor CBI's Hathras probe

- The Supreme Court left it to the Allahabad High Court to monitor the CBI investigation into the gang rape and murder of a 19 yearold Dalit woman by allegedly four upper caste persons in Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh.
- The court said the High Court had taken suo motu cognisance of the case and passed a detailed order on October 1.
- The court, moreover, said since the incident occurred within the jurisdiction of the High Court, it would be "**appropriate for the High Court to monitor the probe**" "in the manner in which it would desire".

19. Now, outsiders can buy land in J&K

- The Centre has notified new land laws for the region, **ending the exclusive rights enjoyed by the local population** over land under the now diluted **Article 370**
- Some of the **features of the new Jammu & Kashmir land laws** are :
 - The Centre has omitted the term "**permanent resident of the State**" thereby ending the exclusive rights of permanent residents over the land
 - People, including investors, outside Jammu and Kashmir can now purchase land in the Union Territory.
 - There will be a bar though on agricultural land to be used for non-agricultural purposes.
 - Land can be transferred in favour of a person or an institution for the purpose of promotion of healthcare or senior secondary or higher or specialised education.
 - An army officer not below the rank of Corps Commander can declare an area as a "Strategic Area" for operational and training requirements of the armed forces.
- The introduction of the UT of J&K Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020, by the Ministry of Home Affairs has resulted in the repeal of at least 11 land laws in vogue in J&K earlier, including the J&K Big Landed Estates Abolition Act that had resulted in the famous 'land to tiller' rights.

20. [SC asks government to bring home Indians in Kuwait](#)

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday urged the government to “find some solution” to bring home Indians, mostly blue-collar workers from Tamil Nadu, stranded in Kuwait during the pandemic. Out of 1.33 lakh Indians registered with the embassy for travel to India from Kuwait, the repatriation of 87,022 had been facilitated. Foreign airlines have also been pitching in with flights to India. The Vande Bharat Mission was on its seventh phase of operations in October.
- **Vande Bharat Mission** is the biggest evacuation exercise to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the coronavirus-induced travel restrictions. It is also considered as the largest exercise to bring back Indian citizens since the evacuation of 177,000 from the Gulf region in the early 1990s at the start of hostilities between Iraq and Kuwait during the first Gulf War.

21. [Prime Minister lauds beneficiaries of scheme for street vendors](#)

- The scheme, **PM Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)** which provides vendors collateral-free working capital loans of ₹10,000, was announced on June 1 as a part of the government’s Atma Nirbhar Bharat package in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis.
- So far, 24.76 lakh applications have been received, of which 12.37 lakh have been sanctioned and over 5 lakh loans have been disbursed, according to the PM SVANidhi portal.

22. [Green-crackers only in Delhi](#)

- Only ‘green’ firecrackers can be manufactured, sold and used in the national capital with the Delhi government scheduled to launch an anti firecracker campaign on November 3, which will continue even after Deepavali. This decision is as per the Supreme Court order of October 23, 2018,
- Environment Minister Gopal Rai appealed to Delhiites to start a ‘no cracker’ campaign, considering the seriousness of the situation due to COVID19 pandemic and said that the two main reasons behind the spike in pollution are Deepavali and *parali* (stubble burning).
- In the manufacturing of green crackers, pyrotechnics are used due to which the emission of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide does not occur. This is why using green crackers can control or curb the spike in pollution level.
- The jurisdictions are also under the Environment Protection Act and the Air Act
- Steps taken by the Delhi government to tackle air pollution in winters : The government is sprinkling bio decomposer to stop stubble burning in the national capital and has also launched the ‘Red Light On, Gaadi Off’ campaign, anti dust pollution campaign and has come up with the Electric Vehicle policy.
- As per CPCB's (Central **P**ollution Control Board) **air quality** standards, **AQI** is categorized into six parts. **AQI** between 0-50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor', and between 401-500 'severe'.
- What are ‘Green Crackers’ : **'Green' crackers** have a small shell size compared to traditional crackers. They are produced using less harmful raw materials and have additives which reduce emissions by suppressing dust. Green crackers don't contain banned chemicals such as lithium, arsenic, barium and lead. They are called Safe Water Releaser (SWAS), Safe Thermite Cracker (STAR) and Safe Minimal Aluminium (SAFAL) crackers.

23. [Victim’s account may be more conclusive than medical finding](#)

- The general **medico-legal status** and the various Supreme Court judgements in relation to the recent alleged gang-rape in Hathras which is still under investigation.
- The medical officer should only state whether there is evidence of recent sexual activity and injuries in and around the private parts of the victim or bite marks noticed in any part of the body instead of using the word ‘rape’ in their conclusions.
- In **Tuka Ram v. State of Maharashtra (1978)**, the accused policemen were acquitted as the victim bore no traces of violence. But in later cases, absence of live or dead spermatozoa during vaginal examination was held to be

irrelevant by the Supreme Court. It is established now that **injury is not a sine qua non for deciding whether rape has been committed.**

- In **State of Punjab v. Gurmit Singh (1996)**, the court laid down that the **victim's ipse dixit** is sufficient to record a conviction and no corroboration is necessary.
- There was **no change in the rape law from 1860 to 1983.**
- The first major change came about after the 'Mathura case' and the burden of proof was shifted to the accused.
- Next, The Criminal Procedure Code was amended
- The definition of rape was enlarged after the 'Nirbhaya' case in 2012.
- It is well settled that the testimony of a victim in sexual assault cases is vital and unless there are compelling reasons which necessitate corroboration, the courts should find no difficulty to convict the accused solely on the testimony of the victim.
- The forensic evidence is at the most corroborative evidence; not conclusive. Moreover, the forensic details need not be disclosed to the public when the matter is still under investigation.

24. Jammu and Kashmir new land laws

- New land laws were notified by the Centre in Jammu and Kashmir to allow the purchase of land by those who are not permanent residents.
- One of the arguments against the now nullified special status of J&K was that the restrictions on land transfers hampered investments.
- The argument that these changes would help the people of the region might have been stronger if these were done in consultation with them.
- The irony is that in all three regions —Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh — there is strong opposition to opening the land market to non-residents. Political parties in J&K too have opposed the changes.
- The Centre's approach towards J&K has been marked by a lack of trust, which has accentuated the alienation of large sections of the population.
- Fears of deliberate demographic engineering have dominated politics in the Valley for long. There is no point forcing a particular path of development upon people.
- There is no wisdom in pushing through measures aimed to promote investment when the end result is political volatility.
- Therefore, to conclude, the Centre's policy towards J&K must be buttressed by a robust political process that enables people's participation and ensures stability with growth and development.

25. Parliamentary panel asks Twitter for affidavit on geotagging glitch

- The Joint Committee of Parliament on the Data Protection Bill sought an affidavit from **Twitter Inc.**, the U.S.-based parent company of the social media platform, asking them to explain why it had shown Ladakh as a part of China, a panel member said on Wednesday.
- Appearing before the panel headed by **Bharatiya Janata Party MP Meenakshi Lekhi**, representatives of Twitter India "apologised" and claimed it to be a "mistake" as the app's geotagging had suffered a technical glitch.
- Twitter faced a backlash from social media users after its geo-tagging feature recently displayed "Jammu & Kashmir, the People's Republic of China" in a live broadcast from a war memorial in Leh, Ladakh

India's outreach to Myanmar

1. Ties between New Delhi and Naypyidaw before general elections in Myanmar is on the incline. For India, her Myanmar policy is reflective of engagement with key political actors and balancing neighbours. For Myanmar, it is India's support for its efforts in strengthening democratisation amidst criticisms by rights groups over the credibility of its upcoming election

2. The Indian delegation visiting Myanmar is scheduled to meet State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and Myanmar's military Commander-in-chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.
 3. The political logic that has shaped India's Myanmar policy since the 1990s has been to support democratisation driven from within the country. This has allowed Delhi to engage with the military, which has played a major role in Shaping Myanmar's socio-economic-political transition.
 4. This has also enabled Delhi to work with the party in power, whether the military backed Union Solidarity and Development Party that won the 2010 polls or the prodemocracy National League for Democracy, which is in power now.
 5. Myanmar's political transition created challenges for Naypyidaw and limited its ties with the West. India and a few Asian countries have engaged Myanmar keeping in mind the need to reintegrate it with the region and world. By engaging Myanmar, Delhi provides alternative options to Naypyidaw and helps reduce its dependence on China.
 6. As part of expanding diplomacy initiatives, India is establishing a liaison office in Naypyidaw, very few countries have a permanent office in the country's capital.
 7. India has also proposed to build a petroleum refinery in Myanmar that would involve an investment of \$6 billion. This is another indication of Myanmar's growing significance in India's strategic calculus, particularly in energy security.
 8. Another area of cooperation that has expanded involves the border areas. The joint visit reiterated the "mutual commitment not to allow respective territories to be used for activities inimical to each other." Also, for Delhi, the balancing act between Bangladesh and Myanmar remains one of the keys to its overall approach to the Rohingya issue. India has reiterated its support for "ensuring safe, sustainable and speedy return of displaced persons" to Myanmar.
 9. For India, Myanmar is key in linking South Asia to Southeast Asia and the eastern periphery becomes the focal point for New Delhi's regional outreach.
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International NEWS/Events/ Personalities

Daily snippets

1. Unrest in Pakistan

- Eleven Opposition parties, which have now formed the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), have held two mammoth rallies, part of a plan for nationwide agitations, calling for the resignation of Imran Khan's PTI government over law and order, food shortages, inflation and gas cuts.
- Former Pakistan PM and Pakistan Muslim League (N) chief Nawaz Sharif, named Pakistan Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa and ISI chief Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed for “rigging elections”, restrictions on the media, harassment of journalists, putting pressure on the judiciary and subverting other democratic institutions.
- In the Sindh province, there was a tense situation between the police and the army over the treatment meted out to the Sindh inspector General by the Pakistan army over the arrest of Captain Safdar.

2. Saad Hariri renamed Lebanon PM

- Three-time **Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri** was renamed to the post on Thursday to create a cabinet that can lift the country out of its worst economic crisis in decades.
- Mr. Hariri, 50, made his comeback almost a year after stepping down under pressure from a protest movement demanding an overhaul of Lebanon's political system. The country is under international pressure to form a crisis cabinet to address a plummeting economy made worse by COVID-19 and *the blast at the Beirut port on August 4*.

3. Pakistan to stay on FATF list till 2021

- Pakistan has now almost four months to comply with the recommendations as its performance will now be put to scrutiny in the next plenary in February 2021.
- The points on which Pakistan failed to deliver included inaction against charitable organisations or non-profit organisations linked to terror groups banned by the UNSC.
- Pakistan was found noncompliant in cracking down on terror financing through narcotics and smuggling of mining products including precious stones.

4. What is the RCEP?

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed free trade agreement in the Asia-Pacific region between the ten-member states of ASEAN, namely Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and five of their FTA partners—Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. It is expected to be signed in November 2020.

5. India to chair key ILO forum after 35 years

- India assumed the role of chair of the International Labour Organisation's governing body from October 2020 till June 2021, the Labour Ministry said on Friday. It is taking up the role after a gap of 35 years. Labour Secretary Apurva Chandra will preside over its meeting in November.

6. [France to crackdown on social media](#)

- France said on Friday it would crack down on social media posts that put people in danger by divulging their personal details, a week after the murder of a teacher (Samuel Paty) targeted in an online campaign over Prophet Mohammed cartoons.
- French Prime Minister Jean Castex said a pending draft law defending secular values against radical Islam — known as an anti-separatism law — would now be amended to allow the prosecution of anybody who posts personal details online if this “threatens the life of another”.

7. [Italy approves partial lockdown, Spain announces national curfew](#)

- In Italy, **Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte** approved a plan to limit opening hours for bars and restaurants, and shut entertainment, gambling venues and gyms. Italians will also be urged not to travel. The measures will begin on Monday and remain in effect until Nov. 24.
- **Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's** Cabinet Sunday approved a new state of emergency that will give the central government more powers and he announced the government planned a national curfew from 11p.m. to 6 a.m.

8. [Samsung Electronics chairperson dies aged 78](#)

- The **Samsung Electronics chairman, Lee Kun-hee**, who made the South Korean company a global name, has died at the age of 78. Under Lee's leadership Samsung rose to become the world's largest producer of smartphones and memory chips, with overall turnover equivalent to a fifth of South Korea's GDP.
- Samsung is by far the biggest of the family-controlled conglomerates. Nowadays they are under scrutiny for murky political ties and stifling competition – with Lee himself twice convicted of criminal offences, in one case bribing a president.
- When Lee inherited the chairmanship of the group in 1987 – it had been founded by his father to deal in fish, fruit and noodles – Samsung was already the country's largest conglomerate, with operations ranging from consumer electronics to construction.
- **Mr Lee's son, Lee Jae-yong**, has served jail time for his role in a bribery scandal which triggered the ousting of then-President Park Geun-hye from office in 2017. Last month, prosecutors laid fresh charges against him over his role in a 2015 merger deal

9. [Indian-origin priest is Seychelles President](#)

- An Indian-origin priest from Bihar has been elected President of Seychelles which has a substantial population from the subcontinent. **Wavel Ramkalawan**, whose grandfather came from Gopalganj, Bihar, defeated incumbent Danny Faure.
- Seychelles was ruled by France-Albert René from 1977 to 2004. When he stepped down, he handed over power to Vice President James Michel, who won two presidential polls in 2006, 2011 and 2015. After defeating Ramkalawan by just 198 votes in 2015, Michel handed over power to Danny Faure a year later.
- With its strategic location, Seychelles has been a critical part of India's Indian Ocean policy. The most ambitious project that India had proposed in Seychelles was to sponsor a naval facility at **Assumption Island**.

10. [Lewis Hamilton on top of the Formula 1 world](#)

- Lewis Hamilton became Formula One's record all-time race winner on Sunday when he claimed his 92nd victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix to pass Michael Schumacher at the top of the list.

- He now has the most wins, a record 97 pole positions, a record 161 podium finishes and a record 45 consecutive points finishes.

11. [The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries \(OPEC\)](#)

- It is an intergovernmental organization of 13 nations. Founded on 14 September 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela), it has since 1965 been headquartered in Vienna, Austria, although Austria is not an OPEC member state. As of September 2018, the 13 member countries accounted for an estimated 44 percent of global oil production and 81.5 percent of the world's "proven" oil reserves.
- The current OPEC members are the following: Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Saudi Arabia (the De facto leader), the United Arab Emirates and Venezuela. Former OPEC members are Ecuador, Indonesia and Qatar.
- The stated mission of the organization is to "coordinate and unify the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure the stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers, and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry."

12. [Erdogan for boycott of goods, amid Macron row](#)

- **Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** on Monday joined calls for a boycott of French goods, ramping up a standoff between France and Muslim countries over Islam and freedom of speech.
- Mr. Erdogan has led the charge against **French President Emmanuel Macron** over his robust defence of the right to mock religion following the murder of a **French school teacher (Samuel Paty)** who had shown his class cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.
- Anti- France: French goods have already been pulled from supermarket shelves in **Qatar and Kuwait**, among other Gulf states, whereas in **Syria** people have burned pictures of Mr. Macron and French flags have been torched in the **Libyan** capital Tripoli.
- Pro- France: **German Chancellor Angela Merkel** condemned Mr. Erdogan's "defamatory" remarks about the French leader. The Prime Ministers of the **Netherlands and Greece** also expressed support for France, as did **European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen**.

13. [China to levy sanctions on U.S companies](#)

- China will impose sanctions on **Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense, Raytheon** and other U.S. companies it says are involved in Washington's arms sales to Taiwan.
- Beijing considers Taiwan a wayward province it has vowed to bring under control, by force if necessary. Relations between Beijing and Washington are already strained by disagreements over the South China Sea, Hong Kong, human rights.

14. [Chileans vote for new Constitution](#)

- Chilean voters threw out the Constitution left by the regime of **1973– 1990 dictator Augusto Pinochet** in a landmark referendum.
- Acknowledging the result, **President Sebastian Pinera** called on the nation to work together for a "new Constitution". The new Constitution would expand the role of the state in providing a welfare safety net, ensuring basic rights to health, education, water distribution and pensions.

15. [Hope rise for Oxford vaccine](#)

- The COVID-19 experimental vaccine, developed by the University of Oxford, also triggers lower adverse responses among the elderly as well as young adults, British drug maker AstraZeneca Plc, which is helping manufacture the vaccine, said on Monday.
- The **Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine** is expected to be one of the first from big pharma to secure regulatory approval, along with **Pfizer** and **BioNTech's** candidate.

16. [US to support India's defence of territory](#)

- Addressing the media at the end of the third **India U.S. '2+2' dialogue** in New Delhi, Mr. Pompeo also said that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is "no friend to democracy". The observations about the threats to Indian sovereignty came as New Delhi announced the signing of the **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on geospatial cooperation (BECA)** with the U.S.
- Apart from BECA, India and the U.S. also sealed an MoU on Technical Cooperation in Earth Observations and Earth Sciences, and an agreement to extend the duration of the MoU regarding the Global Center for Nuclear Energy Partnership. The two sides also signed an agreement on electronic exchange of customs data and a letter of intent regarding cooperation in traditional Indian medicines.

17. [The Gilgit-Baltistan game plan](#)

- Reports indicate that the Pakistan government is on the verge of declaring Gilgit-Baltistan a province of Pakistan. From the beginning **Gilgit-Baltistan** was governed as a separate entity by Pakistan and not as a part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Islamabad had hesitated to declare it a province of Pakistan because of its claim that J&K is disputed territory and its future must be decided by a plebiscite among all its inhabitants.
- Pakistan's imminent move, transforming Gilgit-Baltistan's de facto status into a de jure one, is a clear riposte to the Indian decision of the revocation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the State into two Union Territories. -
- China has been encouraging Islamabad to turn Gilgit-Baltistan into a province. **The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** runs through Gilgit-Baltistan and China has invested heavily in the region

18. [France boycott call pushes Turkey 'even further' from EU](#)

- President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's support for a boycott of French goods is a further setback to Turkey's already stalled bid to join the EU.
- Turkey applied to **join the then European Economic Community in 1987** and began formal accession negotiations to the European Union in 2005, but the talks are seen as effectively frozen. Protests erupted in several mainly-Muslim countries after **President Emmanuel Macron** defended a cartoonist's right to caricature religious leaders in the wake of a French teacher's murder. Currently, Turkey is not a member of the European Union.

19. [Anti-France protests rocks Bangladesh](#)

- Around 10,000 people in Bangladesh rallied in the South Asian nation's capital on Tuesday to protest France's President Emmanuel Macron and his staunch support of secular laws that deem caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad as protected under freedom of speech.
- Muslim politicians, religious scholars and everyday people have condemned such depictions as a form of hate speech and view them as sacrilegious and insulting to Islam.

20. [US to sell defence systems worth \\$2.4 billion to Taiwan](#)

- The U.S. on Monday said it had **approved a \$2.4 billion sale of 100 Harpoon coastal defence systems** to Taiwan, defying Beijing's anger over a \$1 billion missile deal last week.

- The deal involves 100 Harpoon Coastal Defense Systems (HCDS), which includes 400 RGM-84L-4 Harpoon Block II surface launched missiles with a range of around 125 km.
- Beijing has ramped up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan since the 2016 election of **Ms. Tsai Ing wen**, who views the island as a de facto sovereign nation and not part of “one China.”

21. [US Senate votes to confirm Barrett to the Supreme Court](#)

- With just a week to go until Election Day, Senate Republicans pushed through the confirmation of President Donald Trump’s Supreme Court Nominee **Judge Amy Coney Barrett**, potentially giving the Supreme Court a 6-3 conservative majority for decades
- Ms. Barrett’s potential positions on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), immigration, abortion rights, climate change, gay rights and how she may rule on any election related case in the event that a narrow victory or loss is litigated could impact the country for decades to come.

22. [India deplores personal attack on French President](#)

- India on Wednesday came out in support of **French President Emmanuel Macron**, who has been subjected to personal attacks and harsh observations in various parts of the world after he spoke in favour of the freedom of expression against the backdrop of the beheading of a schoolteacher in Paris for showing cartoons of Prophet Muhammad to students. France has come under intense criticism in the **Arab world** and Pakistan after the development

23. [India, Central Asian republics call for destruction of terror ‘safe havens’ : India-Central Asia dialogue](#)

- Delhi announces an additional \$1 billion Line of Credit for the region. India’s efforts to modernise the infrastructure of the Chabahar port in Iran were also appreciated. The first meeting of the dialogue was held in Samarkand, the Republic of Uzbekistan in January 2019.
- **India-Central Asia Dialogue** is a ministerial-level dialogue between India and the Central Asian countries namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. All these five nations had become independent states after the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The group will enable India to expand its footprints in the resource-rich region amid an ongoing standoff with China and to fight terror effectively, including in Afghanistan.

24. [China is a predator, Pompeo tells Sri Lanka](#)

- **U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** on Wednesday slammed China for operating as a “predator” in Sri Lanka, while the U.S. came as a “friend”. He made the remark during his visit to Colombo, amid a heightening geopolitical contest playing out in the island nation. While India and China’s competing strategic interests in Sri Lanka are well known, the tension between the U.S. and China escalated around Mr. Pompeo’s visit.
- Sri Lanka, over the last decade, has borrowed heavily from bilateral partners and multilateral agencies, and is due to repay \$4.5 billion next year.

[Sri Lankan Parliament passes 20th Amendment](#)

The controversial 20th Amendment to Sri Lanka’s Constitution that envisages expansive powers and greater immunity for the Executive President was passed in Parliament with a two thirds majority, following a two-day debate.

Critical Analysis of the 20th Amendment Bill

1. Fundamental shift in the nature of the Sri Lanka state that signalled the return of the country to 1978 in a bizarre form of ‘forward to the past’. The 1978 Constitution introduced the office of the Executive President in Sri Lanka, making it one of the most powerful of similar systems in the world.

2. Erodes the Power of Parliament: Parliament is disempowered against the executive by the restoration of the President's power to dissolve Parliament at will at any time after the first year of its term.
 3. Removes Checks on Executive: The checks on presidential power within the executive are abolished by the removal of the requirement of the Prime Minister's advice for the appointment and dismissal of Cabinet and other Ministers
 4. Reversing Democratic Spirit: It abolishes the binding limitations on presidential powers in relation to key appointments to independent institutions that used to happen through the deliberative process of the Constitutional Council.
 5. Leads to Politicisation of Institutions: It effectively provides sweeping powers to the President to appoint individuals to key institutions, and with it, politicising institutions that are meant to function independently of the political executive and for the benefit of citizens.
 6. Rights of Citizens Curtailed: It has also removed the opportunity for citizens to challenge the executive actions of the President through fundamental rights applications, suggesting that the President is above the law.
 7. Undermine the accountability of government: The weakening of checks and balances to the executive presidency would adversely impact the efficient, effective, and transparent use of public funds.
 8. Neglecting Minorities: The President's address was also notable for the absence of any reference to ethnic minorities.
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Science & Technology and Environment

Daily snippets

1. [ISRO to launch EOS-01](#)

- India would launch its latest **earth observation satellite EOS-01** and nine international customer spacecraft onboard its Polar rocket PSLV-C49 from the spaceport of Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. This will be the first launch of ISRO after the lockdown. The customer satellites are being launched under commercial agreement with **New Space India Limited (NSIL)**
 - EOS-01 is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.
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Economics and Finance

Daily snippets

1. [CPI-Industrial Worker base year revised to 2016](#)

- The Labour and Employment Ministry revised the base year of the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) from 2001 to 2016 to reflect the changing consumption pattern, giving more weightage to spending on health, education, recreation and other miscellaneous expenses, while reducing the weight of food and beverages. The weight to food and beverage was reduced from 46.2% to 39%, while spending on housing increased from 15.2% to 17%.
- CPI-IW is used to regulate the dearness allowance (DA) of government staff and industrial workers, as well as to revise minimum wages in scheduled employments.
- [What is the Consumer Price Index](#)? Consumer Price Index is a measure of change in retail prices of goods and services consumed by a defined population group in a given area with reference to a base year. This basket of goods and services represents the level of living or the utility derived by the consumers at given levels of their income, prices and tastes. The consumer price index number measures changes only in one of the factors; prices. This index is an important economic indicator and is widely considered as a barometer of inflation, a tool for monitoring price stability and as a deflator in national accounts.

2. [Forex reserves hit record high of \\$555.12 bn](#)

- India's total foreign exchange (Forex) reserves stand at around **\$ 555.120 Billion** on 16 October 2020, the highest ever, with the **Foreign Exchange Assets (FCA)** component at around US\$512.322 Billion, **Gold Reserves** at around US\$36.685 Billion, **SDRs (Special Drawing Rights with the IMF)** of around US\$1.480 Billion and around US\$4.634 Billion **Reserve Position in the IMF**, as per Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) weekly statistical supplement.
- The rise in total reserves was due to a sharp rise in Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA jumped by \$3.539 billion to \$512.322 billion, the data showed.
- FCAs include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non U.S. units such as the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.
- Foreign-exchange reserves act as the first line of defence for India in case of economic slowdown, but acquisition of reserves has its own costs. Foreign exchange reserves facilitate external trade and payment and promote orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India.

3. Centre borrows 6000 crores for GST compensation

- Starting the borrowing plan to meet the GST compensation shortfalls faced by States, the Centre on Friday borrowed and transferred ₹6,000 crore to 16 States as well as the Union Territories of Delhi and J&K.
- The borrowing is at an interest rate of 5.19%. It is intended to make weekly releases of ₹6,000 crore to the States. Tenor of borrowing is expected to be broadly in the range of 3 to 5 years.
- The interest on these borrowings, as well as the principal, is to be repaid from future GST cess collections.
- As of now, 21 States had selected the Centre's option to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore out of the total ₹2.35 lakh crore GST compensation shortfall estimated for 2020-21.



Sports

Daily snippets

1. Lewis Hamilton overtakes Michael Schumacher with record 92nd Formula1 win

- Six-times world champion Lewis Hamilton became the most successful Formula One driver of all time in terms of race wins on Sunday with a dominant 92nd career victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix. The Mercedes driver had equalled Ferrari great Michael Schumacher's record 91 wins at the previous race.
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Suggested Readings

1. Has India passed the COVID-19 peak , [Link to article](#)
2. Umar Khalid's arrest : Right of the accused to be informed of necessary facts, [Link to article](#)
3. Karnataka High Court recommends death penalty for gang-rape, [Link to article](#)
4. Why India should challenge the Vodafone-Idea BIT award, [Link to article](#)
5. Reliance-Amazon-Future group story, [Link to article](#)
6. Remembering K.R Narayanan, [Link to article](#)
7. Women at the heart of recovery, [Link to article](#)
8. Who created the Aarogya Setu app, [Link to article](#)
9. When does the right to default bail accrue and extinguish?, [Link to article](#)
10. General Environmental Acts, [Link to article](#)
11. Helping dyslexic children bloom, [Link to article](#)
12. Right to dignity, the institutional deficit, [Link to article](#)

Sources referred to : [The Hindu](#), [The Indian Express](#), [Live Law](#), [Bar & Bench](#)

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