

G.K snippets...



1. **Captain Amarinder Singh** is the Chief Minister of Punjab.
2. **Krishnamurthy Subramaniam** is the Chief Economic Advisor of India.
3. **Strokes of Genius** is a documentary on the rivalry between Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.
- 4.

Law, Policy and Governance



[Daily snippets](#)

1. [SC says will study ordinance to check stubble burning](#)

- Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde said the apex court will study the new ordinance promulgated by the government to check stubble burning by farmers and will pass orders if necessary.
- The ordinance is meant to both prevent and monitor stubble burning by farmers of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The air pollution caused by the indiscriminate burning of the fields is choking Delhi.

2. [We would not like media to cross its boundaries: HC](#)

- Referring to the reportage by the media in the case of death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, the Bombay High Court said, "We would not like the media to cross its boundaries and we would also like to be within our boundaries."
- A Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a bunch of public interest litigations seeking a direction from the court to issue guidelines to be followed by all media houses to refrain from publishing and curtailing any comments which may jeopardise the reputation of the police or hinder the case.
- The court asked the Central government to state by November 6 if such reportage adversely affected the probe and subsequent trial, and if the court should issue guidelines on media reporting.

3. [Supreme Court seeks early hearing on Varavara Rao's plea](#)

- The Supreme Court requested the Chief Justice of the Bombay HC to list the case for hearing at the earliest. Mr. Rao, 79, was arrested in August 2018 in the [Elgar Parishad case](#).

4. [Ladakh's demand for a status in the sixth schedule of the Indian Constitution](#)

- Leaders of the newly formed Union Territory - Ladakh have been demanding its inclusion into the sixth schedule.
- The Sixth Schedule protects tribal populations and provides autonomy to the communities through the creation of autonomous development councils that can frame laws on land, public health, agriculture etc. As of now, 10 autonomous councils exist in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- Two months ago, People's Movement, a group comprising all political parties and the influential Buddhist association, was formed in Ladakh to strongly demand the inclusion in the Sixth Schedule and seek protection from outsiders.

5. [New wage code bars bonus for those facing sex abuse charges](#)

- **The Code on Wages** lays down norms for annual bonus dues that accrue to employees, replacing the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.
- The new Code is expected to become operational once the government notifies the rules and includes **'conviction for sexual harassment' as a ground for denying bonus payouts to employees.**
- As per the extant law, bonus dues are barred only in case of employees dismissed for fraud, violent conduct and theft or sabotage.

6. [SC issues 'mirror order' in child custody case](#)

- The Supreme Court has applied the principle of "mirror order" in a child custody case where one of the estranged parents is living abroad, in Kenya.
 - A mirror order is passed to ensure that the courts of the country where the child is being shifted are aware of the arrangements which were made in the country where he had ordinarily been residing.
 - Such an order would also safeguard the interest of the parent who is losing custody, so that the rights of visitation and temporary custody are not impaired.
- The judgment was based on a petition regarding the custody of a child whose father is based in Kenya and the mother is in India.

7. [Govt. seeks comments on draft IR Code rules](#)

- The Union Labour and Employment Ministry published the draft rules framed under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, that would require firms with 300 or more workers to seek government approval for layoffs 15 days prior to the intended action.
- For retrenchment and closure, the establishments would have to apply for permission 60 days and 90 days ahead of the actions respectively.

8. [File FIRs for cybercrime, States told](#)

- The Union Home Ministry has written to all States to examine and register FIRs based on the complaints received on the **National Cybercrime Reporting Portal**.
- As per data available with the Ministry, only 2.5% of total complaints registered on the portal are converted into First Information Reports. Through the portal, the Ministry aims to raise a group of "cybercrime volunteers" to flag "unlawful content" on the Internet.
- 2 lakh complaints received on national portal, but only 5,000 cases registered
- The portal was launched on August 30, 2019 to help people report all kinds of cybercrimes on a centralised platform.

- According to data compiled by the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, the number of registered cyber crimes increased by 63.5% in the year 2019 compared with the previous year's.
- The portal has started a helpline only for victims of financial cyber fraud in Delhi who can dial the number 155260 or report the incident on www.cybercrime.gov.in.
- On receiving the complaint, the designated police officer after verifying the matter will report to the bank and financial intermediary or payment wallet for blocking the money involved in the cyber fraud.
- "Use of this facility will help a victim of financial cyber fraud in retrieving the money and help the police in identifying the cybercriminal(s) and take legal action as per law,"

9. HC panel questions setting up of special courts to try MPs

- A three judge committee of the Madras High Court has questioned the constitutional validity of setting up **special courts to exclusively try MPs and MLAs** for various crimes. It said the special courts should be "offence centric" and not "offender centric."
- "An MP/MLA, who commits an offence under the POCSO Act [or other Special Acts that can only be tried by a Special Court created under the POCSO Act and there cannot be another Special Court exclusively for trial of an MP/MLA, who commits POCSO offence," the Madras High Court Committee report reasoned.
- The HC committee report, dated October 13, comes in the face of a 2017 Supreme Court order authorising the Centre to set up **12 special courts to exclusively try criminal politicians across the country**.
- It also comes at a time when a three judge Bench of the apex court led by Justice N.V. Ramana is looking at ways to expedite these trials pending for years, in some cases, for decades.

10. AG declines consent for contempt case against Jagan

- **Attorney General K.K. Venugopal** declined consent to initiate contempt proceedings against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister **Jagan Mohan Reddy** and his Principal Adviser Ajeya Kallam. Mr. Venugopal, however, said the timing of A.P. CM's letter to CJI could be suspect.
- The Attorney General was responding to a petition filed by Supreme Court advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay for his prior consent under the **Contempt of Court Act** to initiate proceedings against Mr. Reddy and Mr. Kallam. Mr. Reddy had 31 criminal cases against him.

11. 'Governor can rule on Rajiv convicts' plea'

- The Supreme Court said the MultiDisciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) investigation into the "larger conspiracy" behind Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991 need not deter the Tamil Nadu Governor from deciding the plea for pardon of convicts like A.G. Perarivalan
- Justice L. Nageswara Rao, leading a three-judge Bench, observed that "Larger conspiracy probe is only to prove if any other people are involved. It is not for the already convicted
- In January last, the court said the body was yet to conclude its investigation on the origin and make of the bomb that killed the former Prime Minister.
- The court made it clear during the hearing that it was reluctant to exercise its jurisdiction when the Governor was already seized of Perarivalan's plea for pardon under [Article 161 of the Constitution](#)

12. No posters outside homes of patients

- The Delhi city government informed the Delhi High Court that it has instructed officials not to paste posters outside homes of COVID19 patients.

- A Bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonium Prasad following the government's submission, disposed of a petition, seeking framing of guidelines to do away with pasting posters outside homes of COVID19 patients.
- Reasons:
 - It was leading to stigmatisation and drawing of unnecessary attention
 - Positive patients were made the centre of public attention.
 - This has resulted in persons "shying away and deliberately choosing not to test themselves" to shield themselves from the "public embarrassment and stigmatisation".

13. Kerala withdraws general consent to CBI

- A meeting of the Cabinet decided to withdraw the general consent accorded to the Central Bureau of Investigation
- The Kerala government has invoked the provisions of the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act**, which governs the CBI, to bridle the agency's operational independence in the State.
- The government said the law clearly states that law and order and crime investigation are State subjects.
- The CBI could probe local cases or charge sheet suspects only with the **permission of the State administration**.
- The government had already thrown down the gauntlet to the Centre by legally challenging the decision of the CBI to investigate LIFE Mission officials on the charge of violating the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

14. It is in public interest to set up courts to try lawmakers'

- **Justice N.V. Ramana**, leading a three judge Bench of the Supreme Court, said the court has only public interest and faith in judiciary in mind while pushing for the setting up of special courts to expeditiously try sitting and former MPs and MLAs accused of various crimes.
- The Bench was considering a report filed by a committee of the Madras High Court that raised reservations over the setting up of special courts to exclusively try legislators for various offences.
- The committee said that special courts cannot be "offender centric".

15. Arnab Goswami case

- Republic TV editor Arnab Goswami was on Wednesday arrested by the Local Crime Branch (LCB) of the Raigad police in a case of abetment to suicide. Interior designer Anvay Naik, who was found dead on the first floor of his farm house at Kavir Village in Alibaug in June 2018, is said to have left a suicide note accusing Mr. Goswami, Mr. Feroz Shaikh of icastX/Skimedia and Mr. Nitesh Sarda of Smart works of not paying dues amounting to ₹5.4 crore for his interior design work, due to which his firm, Concorde Designs Private Ltd., suffered severe losses.
- According to the note, Mr. Goswami owed the interior designer ₹83 lakh, while Mr. Shaikh owed him ₹4 crore, and Mr. Sarda ₹55 lakh.
- The LCB in a statement has said it followed the protocol for the arrest and gave a letter to Mr. Goswami's wife informing her of the arrest, which she had to sign. She instead tore it. Advocate Gaurav Parkar, for Mr. Goswami, alleged that the journalist was assaulted at the time of his arrest. Mr. Parkar alleged that Mr. Goswami's wife was never informed about the arrest.
- Police assault claims were rejected by the court. The court said that the abrasion found on his body was due to force used to arrest him while he resisted. The court also said that there is nothing to be recovered from him and hence police custody is not needed.

[NITI Aayog on Import barriers](#)

More incentives

Excerpts from NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar's address to the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry:

- Incentives for manufacturing investments to be extended to nine to ten sectors from four at present
- Protection from imports won't be perpetual
- India not turning into a protectionist or closed economy
- Incentives will operate within the multilateral trading rules framework

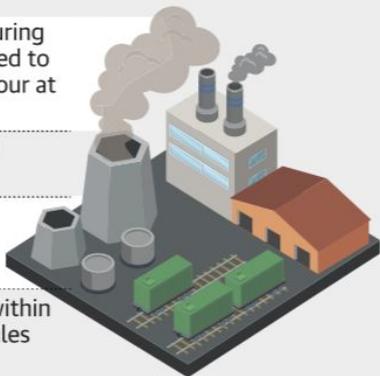


Image Source : The Hindu

1. The NITI Aayog's **Vice-Chairperson Rajiv Kumar** has said that any tariff protection to **promote local manufacturing in India** will come with an in built sunset clause. India's self-reliance mission must not be equated to it becoming a 'protectionist' and closed economy.

2. The government is set to extend the **production linked incentive (PLI)** scheme for manufacturing pharmaceuticals, medical devices and electronics announced under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat package to six more sectors. The PLI is meant to incentivise investors already in the country to put up globally comparable capacities in scale and competitiveness.

3. **India's efforts towards self reliance** were not dissimilar to what other nations are doing to insulate themselves from global supply chain shocks and revive the economy. However, it will be done with India remaining open and trying to regain its share in global and regional production chains, it will be done with respect to rule bound multilateral trading orders. It will not imply in any sense any form of isolation, closed economy or protectionism. India is fully committed to a global economy with open orders.
4. Rajiv Kumar called for a more empathetic and humane approach to assess economic growth beyond GDP numbers and flagged concerns about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of technologies like robotics, machine learning and artificial intelligence on job creation.

[The coming together of the Quad in the seas](#)

1. [History of Malabar exercises:](#)

- **Malabar** began as a simple **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** in 1992 between the **Navies of India and the U.S.** and hit a pause in 1998 after **India's nuclear tests in Pokhran**, to resume again in 2002. Since then, it has become an annual feature.
- India-US sides fielded submarines for the first time in 2003 and aircraft carriers in 2005 — **USS Nimitz and INS Viraat**. Over the years, the exercise grew in scope and complexity. It got converted into a trilateral exercise with **Japan's inclusion in 2015**.

2. [Quad 2020 \(India, US, Japan and Australia\)](#)

- This year's naval exercise is being held in two phases with **Phase -I** from November 3 to 6 at Vishakhapatnam (**Bay of Bengal**) and **Phase II** from November 17 to 20 in the **Arabian Sea**.
- **Phase-1** of Malabar 2020 will see participation of **U.S** guided missile destroyer USS John S McCain, **Australian** long range frigate HMAS Ballarat with integral MH 60 helicopter and **Japanese** destroyer JS Onami with integral SH 60 helicopter.
- **Indian Navy** is fielding destroyer INS Ranvijay, stealth frigate INS Shivalik, offshore patrol vessel INS Sukanya, fleet support ship INS Shakti and submarine INS Sindhuraj, a Sindhughosh class Russian Kilo class diesel electric submarine. Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer, P 8I long range maritime patrol aircraft, Dornier maritime patrol aircraft, and helicopters will also be participating in the exercise. Officials were quiet about the flotilla for Phase II.

3. [Check on Chinese Naval Expansion ?](#)

- Since 2008, China has maintained a regular presence in the Indian Ocean Region in the name of anti-piracy patrols and even deployed submarines for the purpose. In 2017, China formally opened its **first overseas base in Djibouti**, in the [Horn of Africa](#).

4. [Enhanced Communication:](#)

- This is the first Malabar exercise since India signed mutual logistics pacts with all three countries. For instance, during the past Malabar exercises, to enable encrypted communication, the U.S. would install its encrypted communication kits, **CENTRIXS (Combined Enterprise Regional Information Exchange System)**, onboard Indian ships. India got access to these systems after it signed the **Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)** in 2018.
- In March 2019, Indian Navy and the U.S. Navy signed a loan agreement and installed two Pacific fleet provided CENTRIXS kits at the Indian Navy headquarters. More systems have been added in a variety of places and platforms. This will enable seamless communication with all participants of Malabar.

[The amended land laws for Jammu & Kashmir](#)

1. On October 26, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) announced several amendments to land laws for the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir (J&K), including the Jammu and Kashmir Development Act of 1970
2. The MHA has amended sections of the J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996 and the J&K Development Act of 1970.
3. [According to the amendment to the Land Revenue Act,](#)
 - Anyone from any part of the country can now buy land in J&K, including agricultural land.
 - Though the amendments prohibit sale, transfer, mortgage and conversion of agricultural land to a non-agriculturist in the UT, it can still be allowed, **“provided that the Government or an officer authorized by it in this behalf may grant permission to an agriculturist to alienate the land to a non agriculturist by way of sale, gift, exchange or mortgage”**.
 - The government can allow the transfer of agricultural land to a public trust
 - A Board of Revenue headed by a Financial Commissioner has been constituted and a fresh clause defining “agricultural land” has been inserted.
4. [According to amendment in the 1970 Act](#)
 - The amendment deletes the “permanent resident” provision that provided housing sites within the range of 2530 square metres to permanent residents belonging to “economically weaker section” and “low income groups”.
 - Now, economically deprived people from all parts of the country will be eligible for such housing sites.
 - A fresh provision has been added, by which the government, on the written request of an Army officer not below the rank of a Corps Commander, may declare an area as a “strategic area”
 - It also creates the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Development Corporation
5. With regard to the **Jammu and Kashmir Land Grants Act, 1960**, which regulates grant of government land on lease will now be extended to the entire UT. The amendment omits the permanent resident clause to get government land on lease for “residential purposes”.
6. **The J&K Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976**, which provided for transfer of land from big landowners to tillers, has been amended.

7. The laws for Ladakh have not yet been notified as local leaders have demanded inclusion in the Sixth Schedule (tribal) of the Constitution to protect their land from “outsiders”.

The Shifting trajectory of India's Foreign policy

1. India-US

- India had signed the **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)**, in 2016, and the **Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)**, in 2018. By appending its signature to BECA, India is in a position to specifically receive sensitive geospatial intelligence.
- It is a point worth considering whether by signing on to (**Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement**) **BECA** at this juncture, India has effectively jettisoned its previous policy of neutrality, and of maintaining its equidistance from power blocs (Non-Alignment). It may be argued that the new policy is essentially a pragmatic one, in keeping with the current state of global disorder.

2. India-China

- Since 1988, India has pursued, despite occasional problems, a policy which put a premium on an avoidance of conflicts with China. Even after Doklam in 2017, India saw virtue in the Wuhan and Mamallapuram discourses, to maintain better relations. This will now become increasingly problematic as India gravitates towards the U.S. sphere of influence amidst growing tensions with China at LAC. **The Quad** has become more anti-China in its orientation. The invitation to Australia to participate in the **Malabar Naval Exercises** this year, to which the other two Quad members (US, Japan) had already been invited, further confirms this impression.

3. India's regional ties

- Several of India's neighbours (**Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh**), normally perceived to be within India's sphere of influence, currently seem to be out of step with India's approach on many issues. At the same time, both China and the U.S. separately, seem to be making inroads and enlarging their influence here.
- The **Maldives**, for instance, has chosen to enter into a military pact with the U.S. to counter Chinese expansionism in the Indian Ocean region. Again, while India has been complacent about improved relations with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, it needs to ensure, through deft diplomatic handling, that the latest UAE-Israel linkage does not adversely impact India's interests in the region.
- India must also not rest content with the kind of relations it has with **Israel**, as Tel Aviv has its own distinct agenda in West Asia.
- Furthermore, India needs to devote greater attention to try and restore India-Iran ties which have definitely frayed in recent years.

4. India- Afghanistan

- India had subscribed to an anti-Taliban policy and was supportive of the Northern Alliance (prior to 2001). The new policy that dictates India's imperatives today, finds India not unwilling to meet the Taliban more than half way — partly, no doubt, since even countries such as the U.S. are not unwilling to enter into negotiations with it.

5. India- NAM

- Even though India currently has a detached outlook, vis-à-vis the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)**, and has increasingly distanced itself from the **African and Latin American** group in terms of policy prescriptions, matters could get aggravated, following India's new alliance patterns. It would be a rude awakening for India, if it is seen as no longer a stellar member of NAM.

6. India-Russia

- The impact of India signing on to U.S. related foundational military agreements, cannot but impact India–Russia relations, which has been a staple of India’s foreign policy for more than half a century.

A secure future for platform workers

1. The Code on Social Security Bill, 2020, for the first time in Indian law, attempted to define ‘platform work’ outside of the traditional employment category.
2. The Code has drawn criticism from platform workers’ associations for failing to delineate it from gig work and unorganised work.
3. A categorical clarification could ensure that social security measures are provided to workers without compromising the touted qualities of platform work: flexibility and a sense of ownership.
4. While platform work promises workers flexibility and ownership over delivery of work, they are still largely dictated by mechanisms of control wired by the algorithm. This affects pricing per unit of work, allocation of work, and hours.
5. Entry into on demand platform work like ride sharing and food delivery are dependent on existing access to vehicular assets. The average Indian worker on a ridesharing platform has limited access to such capital.
 - Thus, to enter the platform economy, workers rely on intensive loan schemes, often facilitated by platform aggregator companies. This results in dependence on platform companies, driven by financial obligations, thus rendering flexibility and ownership moot in the short to mid term investment cycle.
6. The flexibility of the platform is a significant attraction. Smallholder agrarian labour migrants with access to vehicular assets and capital hailing from peri urban areas rely on the low barrier of entry and flexibility of platform work to accumulate wealth that they invest back into farm work.
7. Platform workers were responsible for delivery of essential services during the pandemic at great personal risk to themselves.
8. They have also been responsible for keeping platform companies afloat despite the pandemic induced financial crisis.
9. A way forward for platform workers is through a sociolegal acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of work in the gig economy, and the ascription of joint accountability to the State and platform companies for the delivery of social services.

SC lays down guidelines for matrimonial cases

1. The Supreme Court held that deserted wives and children are entitled to alimony/maintenance from their husbands from the date they apply for it in a court of law.
 2. The 67 page judgement was pronounced by a Bench of **Justices Indu Malhotra and R. Subhash Reddy**
 - It laid down uniform and comprehensive guidelines for family courts, magistrates and lower courts to follow while hearing applications filed by women seeking maintenance from their estranged husbands.
 - “The plea of the husband that he does not possess any source of income **ipso facto does not absolve him of his moral duty** to maintain his wife, if he is able bodied and has educational qualifications,”
 - Both the applicant wife and the respondent husband have to disclose their assets and liabilities in a maintenance case.
 - The judgment was based on a matrimonial plea from Maharashtra on the question of payment of maintenance by a man to his wife and son under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.
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National News/ Interventions



Daily snippets

1. NHRC seeks report on rehabilitation

- The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has asked the Odisha government to submit a report on non-receipt of compensation by people who were displaced by the **Hirakud Dam project** — one of the oldest unresolved problems of displacement in the country.
- 26,561 families were displaced for construction of the Hirakud Dam project. The land for the mega project was acquired during 1952–53.

2. India upset by Kashmir depiction on Saudi note

- India on Thursday described the map of Kashmir in a new currency note of Saudi Arabia as a “gross misrepresentation” of sovereign territory.
- The map shows **Kashmir** as a separate entity between India and Pakistan. The map also appears to depict **Gilgit Baltistan** and the **Azad Kashmir** areas out of Pakistani control.

3. Centre sets up commission to tackle NCR pollution

- Dissolving the 22-year old Environmental Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority that has so far addressed air pollution in Delhi, the Centre has constituted a “permanent” body — Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas.
- Encompassing Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the all powerful body assumes several powers to coordinate action among States, levy fines — ranging up to ₹1 crore or five years in prison — to address air pollution.
- The panel will have at least six permanent members and will be headed by a former or incumbent Secretary to the Central government, or a Chief Secretary to a State government.
- In case of overlap in jurisdiction with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and its state branches, the commission's writ will prevail specific to matters concerning air pollution.
- A major weakness in controlling the menace of pollution has been the inability of agencies such as the CPCB to consistently enforce rules on the ground.
- Critics state that the EPCA had almost similar powers but failed miserably in cleaning the air even after being in force for more than 20 years. Also, red flags have been raised against the way the whole exercise of creating the commission has taken place without proper consultation from stakeholders.

4. Boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram

- The boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram has flared up again over the issue of alleged refusal of Mizoram Police personnel to withdraw from Assam’s territory.
- Officials in Assam said people of Mizoram, allegedly backed by local authorities and NGOs, have encroached upon large swathes of area in Cachar and Karimganj districts. The two States share a 164.6 km border.
- The indefinite economic blockade from Thursday, called by traders, transporters and local NGOs in Assam against Meghalaya, has been called off subject to proper adherence of COVID-19 protocols at the Assam-Meghalaya border.

5. [India to import onions to tame prices](#)

- The central cooperative, NAFED, will soon begin importing onions in a bid to tame soaring prices, Food and Consumer Affairs Minister **Piyush Goyal** said.
- The government is facilitating import of onions by private traders, with 7,000 tonnes of the bulb already having arrived in the country, and another 25,000 tonnes expected to arrive before Deepavali. Onions are being bought from Egypt, Afghanistan and Turkey by private traders at market rates with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade facilitating import by waiving quarantine and fumigation requirements.

6. [J&K government voids Roshni Act](#)

- The J&K government has decided to declare all the actions taken under the Jammu and Kashmir State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001, also known as the **Roshni Act**, under which 20 lakh kanals of land was to be transferred to existing occupants, as “null and void”, and has decided to retrieve the land within six months.
- An earlier High Court order had declared the Jammu and Kashmir State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001 as amended from time to time as unconstitutional, contrary to law and unsustainable. The Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, has been asked to pass an order declaring all actions taken under the Act as void *ab in- itio* (from the beginning).
- The Roshni Act, enacted during Farooq Abdullah’s regime, aimed at earning ₹25,000 crore by transfer ring 20 lakh kanals of State land to existing occupants against payment at market rates.

7. [Stubble burning area has decreased in Punjab](#)

- Punjab Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan on Saturday said the State has so far reported stubble burning over 7.49 lakh hectares, about 5% lower than what it had witnessed in corresponding period last year, with the effective management of crop residue and concerted efforts to sensitise farmers.
- She said about 137 lakh metric tonnes of paddy has so far arrived in the mandis, which is 33% higher than the previous year. She also asked the respective district administrations to enforce the instructions strictly to ensure zero stubble burning in coming days.

8. [India's first seaplane Service](#)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the country’s first seaplane service between the **Statue of Unity near Kevadiya** in Narmada district of Gujarat and the **Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad**.
- The 19-seater seaplane will be used for flights between the two points as part of the regional connectivity scheme.

9. [Work From Home spurring Rural Buoyancy](#)

- The pandemic triggered work-from-home (WFH) model has been flattening the socio-economic curve through wealth distribution and job creation in small towns and villages. This has contributed significantly to the growth of the rural economy as a lot of well-paid professionals moved to their hometowns as part of the new work regime, and thus, collectively creating some kind of economic buoyancy across rural India.
- On the longevity of WFH model, a study stated that, almost 75% of Indian CFOs are actually on record, saying that they’re going to look at WFH as a way to depress their operating costs.

10. [Rajasthan Bills to counter farm laws](#)

- The Rajasthan government introduced three Bills in the Assembly to stop the applicability of the three new agriculture sector laws enacted by the Centre recently.

- This was done along with another Bill seeking to amend the Civil Procedure Code for protecting the agriculturists' land measuring up to 5 acres against attachment and sale in execution of a decree issued by the court in the cases of monetary award.
- The three Bills pertaining to the State amendments to the Central statutes are the
 - **Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2020,**
 - **The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2020**
 - **Essential Commodities (Special Provisions and Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020.**
- According to the statement of objects and reasons for the Bills,
 - Parliament had introduced a mechanism which was “vulnerable to encroachment and manipulation” by vested corporate interests, leaving the farmers open to the vagaries of market forces.
 - There was no guarantee for Minimum Support Price and
 - no check against exploitation of farmers

11. Three new Rafale jets to fly non-stop from France to India

- The first batch of five Rafale jets were formally inducted into the **No.17 ‘Golden Arrows’ squadron** of the IAF on September 10 at the **Ambala Air Force station**. The second squadron would be based at **Hasimara in West Bengal**.
- IAF would get three or four Rafales every two or three months till all **36 jets** were delivered and that the first squadron would be fully ready by 2021–end and the second by 2023.

12. Satellites to detect drug cultivation in Odisha

- With illicit cannabis cultivation continuing to flourish in remote areas of the State, the Odisha Space Application Centre (OSAC) has proposed to help law enforcement agencies detect the activity using remote sensing and artificial intelligence technologies.
- High resolution satellite imagery can be used for detecting cultivation of hemp, a variety of cannabis. OSAC has also proposed to create a mechanism for citizen reporting by which people can take images and video of any illegal hemp cultivation and report through application. Odisha is one of the leading cannabis producing States in India.
- Considering the increasing availability of both spatial and temporal resolution satellite images and advanced algorithms for image processing and spatial modelling, the system will be able to produce reliable geographic information for law enforcement agencies
- Officially more than 4 crore hemp plants, whose market value is estimated at approximately ₹4,000 crore, have been destroyed in the past five years.

13. Govt. gets 6 weeks to file status report on Mallya’s extradition

- The Supreme Court refused a plea made by the lawyer of fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya to discharge him from the case and gave the Union government six weeks to file a status report on the progress made in extraditing him from the United Kingdom.
- On October 5, the court asked Mr. Mallya’s side to come clean about the nature of a “confidential” proceedings going on after the rejection of his appeal against extradition in the U.K. Supreme Court.
- The government had informed them that the extradition case in the U.K. was over but some “secret” proceedings were on.

14. States’ suggestions sought to amend IPC

- Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy said that the States had been asked for their suggestions to amend the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- He said the government had amended criminal laws from time to time and enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, to prescribe more stringent penal provisions for convicts.
- He further added, the Ministry was supporting the States and Union Territories in setting up and strengthening woman help desks in police stations and strengthening antihuman trafficking units in all districts.

15. States cannot make isolated plans for vaccine distribution

- The Health Ministry has advised State governments to refrain from making isolated plans for vaccine distribution.
- The Central government has set up an expert committee on vaccine administration, and asked states to adhere to the directions from the Centre. States have been advised to create a database according to the blueprint used by the Central government and also take stock of the storage and transport facility for the distribution.
- The expert committee is also looking at the infrastructure of the immunisation program and manpower support that the private players can offer.
- On the advisory front the committee reiterated the test-track-trace-and-treat-strategy.

16. Odisha bans crackers for Diwali

- The Odisha government has imposed a ban on the sale and bursting of fire crackers during Deepavali from November 10 to 30 in order to prevent the resurgence of COVID-19 infections.

17. More Children to get fortified rice

- Children in anganwadis and government schools will soon be eating rice infused with iron, folic acid and vitamin B12. In a bid to combat chronic anaemia and undernutrition, the government is planning to distribute fortified rice through the Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-day Meal schemes across the country from next year.
- The Food Corporation of India has now been asked to come up with a comprehensive plan to scale up the annual supply of fortified rice. Discussions on the supply chain and logistical implications were held with NITI Aayog, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), and NGO stakeholders including the Tata Trust and World Food Programme.
- Only five States — Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh — have started distribution of fortified rice in their identified pilot districts.
- What is fortifying? Fortifying rice involves grinding broken rice into powder, mixing it with nutrients, and then shaping it into rice like kernels using an extrusion process. These fortified kernels are then mixed with normal rice in a 1:100 ratio, and distributed for consumption.

18. Indian Navy matches skills with three foreign fleets off Vizag

- Phase I of the **Malabar 2020 naval exercise** by India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. began off the coast of Visakhapatnam in the Bay of Bengal.
- This is the 24th edition of the exercise that began in 1992 and this time, it is being held in two phases, in the Bay of Bengal and from November 17 to 20 in the Arabian Sea.
- The four Navies would conduct a range of high-end training, including air defence and anti submarine exercises, aviation, communications and at sea replenishment between ships.

- The Indian Navy also began **Mission Sagar II**, under which **INS Airavat** entered the Sudan port carrying 100 tonnes of food. Under the mission, India provides assistance to friendly countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mission Sagar II is a follow up of **Mission Sagar** undertaken in May-June 2020, during which India delivered food and medicines to the Maldives, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros. As part of Mission Sagar II, Indian Naval Ship *Airavat* will deliver food aid to Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea. (Locate these countries on the map)

19. **Thulasendrapuram prays for Kamala's victory**

- The nondescript village of **Thulasendrapuram** in Tiruvarur district of Tamil Nadu came alive on Tuesday when a section of residents fervently prayed for the emphatic victory of **Kamala Harris, the U.S. Democratic Vice Presidential candidate**, on the day one of the most contested elections in recent times were held in America.

20. **GDP will be higher than forecast this year : Finance Ministry**

- **What is GDP?** Gross Domestic Product is the total monetary or market value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific time period. As a broad measure of overall domestic production, it functions as a comprehensive scorecard of a given country's economic health. The calculation of a country's GDP encompasses all private and public consumption, government outlays, investments, additions to private inventories, paid-in construction costs, and the foreign balance of trade.
- The economy is poised to recover fast and reach pre COVID-19 levels by the end of the year, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has estimated that India's GDP will contract by 9.5% this year, while the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have forecasted a contraction of 10.3% and 9.6%, respectively.
- The Finance Ministry added that the rise in Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections to more than ₹1 lakh crore in October for the first time since February is evidence that the fiscal space would improve. The Fiscal space has been constricted on account of the additional spending the government undertook to alleviate the impact of the pandemic on the vulnerable sections of society as well as its measures to boost consumption spending.

21. **What is anti-Semitism?**

- **Background** : Suspension of **Jeremy Corbyn**, the popular British Labour Party leader on charges of anti-Semitism.
 - **Antisemitism** is hostility to, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews. A person who holds such positions is called an **anti-Semite**. Antisemitism is generally considered to be a form of racism
 - Antisemitism may be manifested in many ways, ranging from expressions of hatred of or discrimination against individual Jews to organized pogroms by mobs or police forces, or even military attacks on entire Jewish communities. Although the term did not come into common usage until the 19th century, it is also applied to previous and later anti-Jewish incidents. Notable instances of persecution include the Rhineland massacres preceding the First Crusade in 1096, the Edict of Expulsion from England in 1290, the 1348–1351 persecution of Jews during the Black Death, the massacres of Spanish Jews in 1391, the persecutions of the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the Cossack massacres in Ukraine from 1648 to 1657, various anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire between 1821 and 1906, the 1894–1906 Dreyfus affair in France, the Holocaust in German-occupied Europe during World War II, Soviet anti-Jewish policies, and Arab and Muslim involvement in the Jewish exodus from Arab and Muslim countries.
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International NEWS/Events/ Personalities

Daily snippets

1. [30 years since the eviction of Muslims by LTTE : Sri Lanka](#)

- Thirty years may have passed since the LTTE evicted northern Muslims overnight, but the ordeals of the community, most of whom moved to Puttalam district in the North-Western Province, have not ceased, according to Juwairiya Mohideen.
- For two weeks beginning mid-October in 1990, the LTTE undertook a mass expulsion of resident Muslims in the north, at gunpoint, amid growing hostilities between the two Tamil-speaking minority communities in the north and east. Some 70,000 people had no choice but to build their lives from scratch in Puttalam or elsewhere.
- What is LTTE? The **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam** (LTTE) was a Tamil militant organisation that was based in northeastern Sri Lanka. Its aim was to secure an independent state of Tamil Eelam in the north and east in response to the state policies of successive Sri Lankan governments. Founded in May 1976 by **Velupillai Prabhakaran**, the LTTE was involved in armed clashes against the Sri Lankan government and armed forces.

2. [U.K's Labour Party suspends Corbyn after scathing anti-Semitism report](#)

- Britain's main opposition Labour Party on Thursday suspended its former leader **Jeremy Corbyn**, after a government watchdog found his office broke equality law through its "inexcusable" handling of **anti-Semitism complaints**.
- The EHRC found damning instances where Mr. Corbyn's leadership team underplayed, belittled or ignored complaints by Jewish members, and sometimes actively interfered to support favoured allies, after a deluge of antisemitic abuse online and in party meetings.

3. [Malabar Naval exercise to start from next week](#)

- Australia is all set to join the navies of India, U.S., Japan in the Bay of Bengal for the Malabar exercises.
- This is the first time Australia will be joining the exercise after 2007 and it will bring all four countries of the Quadrilateral grouping together for military games.
- **Phase 1** of the Exercise Malabar 2020 involving participation by Indian Navy, United States Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force, and Royal Australian Navy is set to commence off Vishakhapatnam in **Bay of Bengal** from November 3 to 6.
- **Phase 2** is scheduled to be held from November 17 to 20 in the **Arabian Sea**.
- Malabar began as a bilateral exercise between India and the U.S. in 1992 and became trilateral in 2015 with the addition of Japan.

4. [China gears up for 'Strategic Period'](#)

- A lengthy communique issued in Beijing followed the four-day plenum of the Communist Party of China's (CPC) Central Committee, which ended on Thursday, announced three goals to be achieved by 2025, 2027 and 2035 :
 - a 14th five-year plan (2021–2025) that emphasises boosting domestic consumption and innovation
 - a national security and defence modernisation plan ahead of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) centennial in 2027

- a ‘Vision 2035’ longer-term economic blueprint that calls for “big leaps” in economic strength and technological prowess.
- The communique said China’s GDP would cross **100 trillion yuan (around \$15 trillion)** this year, and the new economic blueprint, which did not announce a specific GDP target, would broadly push for China to double its GDP and **current per capita GDP of \$10,000** by 2035.

5. [Earthquake strikes Turkey, Greece Islands](#)

- Fourteen people were killed in Turkey and Greece after a strong earthquake **struck the Aegean Sea** on Friday, bringing buildings crashing down and setting off tidal waves which slammed into coastal areas and islands.

6. [Anti-France protests in Muslim countries](#)

- Demonstrations in **Pakistan’s** capital Islamabad turned violent as some 2,000 people who tried to march toward the French Embassy were pushed back by police firing tear gas and beating protesters with batons.
- A few hundred demonstrators in **Lebanon’s** capital Beirut flocked toward the Palais des Pins, the official residence of the French Ambassador to Lebanon. The sight of anti-France protests in Lebanon is an embarrassment for **Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri**, who is trying to form a new government that would implement a French plan for reform.
- In **Jerusalem**, hundreds of **Palestinians** protested against Macron outside the **Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam**.
- Cries of “Death to France” rang out in **Afghanistan’s** capital of Kabul and several other provinces as thousands filled the streets.
- In **Bangladesh’s** capital Dhaka, tens of thousands marched through streets, chanting “boycott French products” and carrying banners calling Mr. Macron “the world’s biggest terrorist”.

7. [Ensuring the accessibility of the COVID vaccine](#)

- India is among the 92 countries that are eligible to access COVID-19 vaccines through **GAVI’s COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC)**, a donor supported mechanism that will help cover part of the cost of vaccines to ensure that all countries not just wealthy countries can access them.
- COVAX is an initiative led by GAVI, the vaccine alliance, WHO and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) is committed towards equitable distribution of COVID vaccine.

8. [Amidst India’s protests, US amends transcripts](#)

- Days after a protest by the Indian government, the U.S. State Department agreed to amend its version of **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh’s** comments at the “2+2” India U.S. meeting on October 27.
- According to the original U.S. version, released by both the State Department and the U.S. Department of Defense, *Mr. Singh was quoted as saying that India was challenged by “reckless aggression on our northern borders”*, in what appeared to be the first reference by an Indian official, in talks with another country, to what the government has so far maintained was a “bilateral issue” with China at the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)**.
- A similar controversy was seen in May this year, when **U.S. President Donald Trump** claimed that he had spoken to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** about the stand-off between the People’s Liberation Army and the Indian Army at the LAC, and that Mr. Modi was not “in a good mood” about it. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had denied any such conversation.

9. [Legendary 007 Sean Connery takes last blow](#)

- **Sean Connery**, the charismatic Scottish actor who rose to international superstardom as the suave and fearless secret agent **James Bond** and then abandoned the role to carve out an Oscar winning career in other rugged roles, has died. He was 90.

- In his early 30s, he starred in the first Bond thriller, 1962's *Dr. No*, based on the Ian Fleming novel. Connery continued as Bond in *From Russia With Love*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball*, *You Only Live Twice* and *Diamonds Are Forever*.

10. [Armenia asks Russia for help amidst Karabakh fighting](#)

- Armenia's leader urged Russia on Saturday to consider providing security assistance to end more than a month of fighting over **Nagorno-Karabakh**.
- **Russia**, which has a military base in **Armenia** and has signed a pact obliging it to protect its ally in case of foreign aggression, faces a delicate balancing act, of trying to also maintain good ties with **Azerbaijan** and avoid a showdown with **Turkey**.

11. [Tanzania's opposition allege fraud in polls, calls for protests](#)

- Tanzania's Opposition on Saturday called on supporters to take to the streets to protest **President John Magufuli's** landslide election victory, which it says was fraudulent, demanding a fresh vote.
- Mr. Magufuli was declared the winner on Friday with a crushing 84% of votes, while his **Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)** ruling party took 97% of the 264 elected Parliament seats.
- Democracy was introduced in 1994 and **Tanzania** has been seen as a haven of stability in a volatile neighbourhood but critics have raised alarm over a slide into autocracy under Mr. Magufuli. The 61-year-old, nicknamed "*The Bulldozer*", was in his first term accused of flouting due process and brooking no criticism.

12. [Ezhuthachan Puraskaram for writer Paul Zacharia](#)

- Writer **Paul Zacharia** has been selected for the 28th **Ezhuthachan Puraskaram**, the highest literary honour of the Kerala government. Mr. Zacharia was chosen for his contributions to Malayalam literature and thought for the past 50 years.

13. [Gilgit- Baltistan to be a full province : Pak Prime Minister](#)

- **Prime Minister Imran Khan** has angered India after declaring that part of the contested Kashmir region will provisionally become a full province of Pakistan. The move comes after New Delhi last year revoked the special status of Kashmir, upending a decades long status quo and drawing strong condemnation from Islamabad.
- Pakistan has administered the area now known as **Gilgit-Baltistan** since shortly after the country's birth in 1947, but New Delhi asserts the mountainous territory bordering **China** and Afghanistan is an integral part of Kashmir.
- China has spent years building infrastructure projects in Gilgit-Baltistan, home to an estimated 1.3 million people, including a long stretch of the Karakoram Highway, a key component to the [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor \(CPEC\)](#).

14. [ISIS attack on Kabul](#)

- **Islamic State** militants in **Afghanistan** stormed the **Kabul University** on Monday as it hosted a book fair attended by the **Iranian Ambassador**, sparking an hours long gun battle and leaving at least 25 dead and 22 wounded at the war-torn country's largest school.

15. [Snowden aims to become dual US-Russian citizen](#)

- Fugitive U.S. whistle-blower **Edward Snowden** said on Monday he had applied for Russian citizenship but would keep his U.S. nationality. The former American intelligence contractor, who revealed in 2013 that the U.S. government was spying on its citizens, has been living in exile in Russia since the revelations.

16. [Priyanca appointed as a Minister in Arden's cabinet](#)

- **Priyanca Radhakrishnan** on Monday became New Zealand's first ever Indian-origin Minister after **Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern** inducted five new Ministers into her executive.

- She was elected first as a Member of Parliament belonging to the Labour Party in September 2017. In 2019, she was appointed the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister for Ethnic Communities. Her work in that area helped her build the base for her new role of Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities.
- In addition to this, she has become the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector and Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment.

17. [Six locations in central Vienna attacked](#)

- Witnesses said crowds were fired on in bars in Vienna on Monday night as people enjoyed a last evening out before the start of a coronavirus curfew. Six locations in central Vienna were attacked, starting outside the main synagogue, which was closed. Islamic State claimed responsibility on Tuesday for the attack.

18. [Qatar Emir sets first national elections for next October](#)

- **Qatar's** ruler said on Tuesday that a long delayed vote for the country's policy reviewing chamber will be held in October 2021, marking the Gulf emirate's first national election.
- The currently unelected Shura Council advises the absolute ruler, **Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani**, on draft laws but does not create its own legislation and can be overruled by a simple decree.
- Qataris have previously been able to cast ballots on constitutional reforms and in elections to a nationwide municipal council.
- Qatar has undergone cautious reform on issues including democracy, worker rights and representation of women since Sheikh Tamim came to power in 2013.

19. [Ethiopia sends Army into troubled region](#)

- **Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed** said the army has succeeded in containing a rebel attack in the northern **Tigray** region after it was deployed to quell an uprising by the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** that sparked fears of a civil war.
- The government also placed the Tigray region, which borders **Eritrea**, under a six-month state of emergency following what it said was an attack by the region's governing party, the TPLF, on an army base.
- The TPLF attack poses the latest challenge to Abiy from the party which held local elections in defiance of the federal government in September.
- Abiy was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2019** for resolving a border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea.

20. [US formally exits Paris pact on curbing climate change](#)

- The United States on Wednesday formally left the **Paris Agreement**, a global pact forged five years ago to avert the threat of catastrophic climate change. Some 189 countries remain committed to the **2015 Paris accord**, which aims to keep the increase in average temperatures worldwide "well below" 2 degrees Celsius, ideally no more than 1.5C, compared to preindustrial levels.
- The U.S. is the world's second biggest emitter after China of heat trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and its contribution to cutting emissions is seen as important. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has said he favours signing the U.S. back up to the Paris accord.

21. [Indian-American Democrats re-elected](#)

- All the four Indian-American Democratic lawmakers — Ami Bera, Pramila Jayapal, Ro Khanna and Raja Krishnamoorthi — have been re-elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. The Indian American community with 1.8 million members has emerged as a force to reckon with for the first time in the history of the U.S. presidential election.

- The so-called **Samosa caucus** (a term coined by Mr. Krishnamoorthi for informal grouping of Indian American lawmakers) comprises five lawmakers — four Representatives and Sen. Kamala Harris.

22. China remains quiet on Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan move

- In contrast to the strong reaction to India's Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation move last year, China on Wednesday refrained from voicing its opposition on Pakistan's announced move to accord "**provisional provincial status**" to **Gilgit-Baltistan** in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- Gilgit-Baltistan, a disputed region where China is also carrying out projects under its **China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** plan. China had also opposed the decision to convert Ladakh into a Union Territory.

23. India enjoys bipartisan support, says Shringla

- India's ties with the U.S. is based on bipartisan support and the two countries have forged a relationship that has withstood the test of time, **Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla** has said, as he exuded confidence that the outcome of the U.S. presidential elections will not affect the bilateral ties.
- Mr. Shringla, who is on a seven-day trip to Europe to review bilateral ties and discuss matters of mutual interest with European nations, also said that India-US relationship is "very comprehensive and multifaceted."

China and the US elections : Is it a lose-lose situation

1. A recent article in the **Global Times**, the main **mouthpiece of the Communist Party of China**, reflected the ambivalence, "...if Biden wins, the U.S. will remain tough on China", but "tactically, the U.S. approach would be more predictable, and Biden is much smoother to deal with than Trump."
2. In the previous election between candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, Beijing was openly batting for a Republican win. Hillary Clinton was widely disliked in China, and the fear was she would be vocal on issues such as human rights. Mr. Trump, on the other hand, was seen as a businessman and "dealmaker" who Beijing's Mandarins, in hindsight, completely underestimated.
3. Donald Trump has shattered the myth that economic interdependence between the world's two biggest economies would be both an inevitability and a guarantor of stability. The prospect of outright confrontation is being debated openly on both sides.
4. Experts in China feel that Trump may continue on his path of confrontation and hostility against China. If elected to a second term, Trump would continue to push for economic decoupling from China and has promised to 'end U.S. reliance on China'.
5. The results of the policies followed by President Trump has not yielded anything significant, the objective of reversing a U.S. decline in manufacturing" through his trade and tariff war has not translated into anything significant, on the other hand trade deficit with China has risen this year and is now back to where it was when he took office. He has, however, pushed Beijing to make concessions on trade that it had never done before.
6. Donald Trump has clipped the wings of China's soaring tech giants, some of which are now floundering without access to critical U.S. technology. On the positive side, Donald Trump's unsteady rule, and particularly the administration's handling of COVID-19, has not only given China a huge propaganda win at home — and for the Communist Party helped rewrite the narrative following its own botched response to the outbreak at Wuhan. His constant anti-China rhetoric has helped CPC mobilise people and double down on policies that sparked the great divergence in the first place
7. No one in China expects Biden to reverse any of these trends. Experts in China believe that the Democrats have accepted the fundamental stance of great power competition laid by the Republicans" and can "only make tactical level adjustments". They believe that he will likely lead an administration quite similar to what Beijing was familiar with during the Obama years. Some experts believe that he will possibly form an international

united front against China working more closely, for instance, with Europe, instead of acting alone or deserting U.S. leadership.

8. Thus, the consensus in Beijing very much seems to be this is an election that promises no good outcome.



Science & Technology and Environment

Daily snippets

1. Olive Ridley turtles

- The **coast of Odisha in India is the largest mass nesting site for the Olive-ridley**, followed by the coasts of Mexico and Costa Rica. The Olive ridley turtles are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles** found in the world. These turtles are **carnivores** and get their name from their olive coloured carapace.
- They are found in **warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans**. They migrate thousands of kilometres between feeding and mating grounds in the course of a year. They are best **known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- **Gahirmatha Beach** is a beach in the Indian state of Odisha. The beach separates the Bhitarkanika Mangroves from the Bay of Bengal and is the world's most important nesting beach for olive ridley sea turtles. The beach is part of Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary, which also includes the adjacent portion of the Bay of Bengal.
- The Odisha government has requested the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to conduct a fresh study for identifying the movement of endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles, which would help the State renew its conservation efforts along its coast.

2. Science of monsoons

- The Southwest monsoon 2020 has officially drawn to an end with the Indian Meteorological Department declaring a withdrawal of the associated winds and rainfall pattern from India. The over 8% surplus this year has surpassed the IMD's estimates. For the first time since 2010, India got more than 100% of its long period average (LPA) of 88 cm in consecutive years.
- Last year the country saw record rainfall of 110% of the LPA, the highest in a quarter century. India has never got over 105% of the LPA in consecutive years in at least 30 years, according to records available since 1988 on the IMD website.
- Since 2000, India was in a low patch with several drought years and had barely a handful of above normal or excess rainfall. In that light, the two years of a munificent monsoon could signal a possible return to a rainy epoch. While it could mean more rain, it also implies floods, overflowing dams, landslides and loss of lives. Moreover, surplus rains are not evenly distributed in time and space.
- This year the IMD undertook a long due revision of the onset and withdrawal dates of the monsoon in India. Historically October 15th has always been a statistical average and the actual withdrawal is usually within a few days of this. However, this year the withdrawal has been extremely delayed. Factoring in these changes must become a key part of a State and city's disaster management preparedness.

- The southwest monsoon's withdrawal also heralds the advent of north-easterly winds that bring in the northeast monsoon to parts of peninsular Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- While significant to the agriculture there, the northeast monsoon contributes 10%-12% of India's annual rainfall, against the southwest monsoon's 75%-80%. Thus, its limited geographic spread has meant that the northeast monsoon is not showered with as much research attention.
- There have been significant investments in super computing infrastructure to simulate weather as well as to tune forecasts to go beyond just giving rainfall estimates and factor in the potential damage of floods and cyclones.
- All about the India Monsoon - [Explainer video](#)

D614G mutation in the COVID-19 virus

1. One particular mutation called **D614G**, according to a study, has become the dominant variant in the global COVID-19 pandemic.
2. When the virus enters an individual's body, it aims at creating copies of itself. When it makes an error in this copying process, we get a mutation. In this case, the virus replaced the aspartic acid (D) in the 614th position of the amino acid with glycine (G). Hence the mutation is called the D614G.
3. This mutated form of the virus was first identified in China and then in Europe. Later it spread to other countries like the U.S. and Canada and was eventually reported in India.
4. **Prevalence of this mutation**
 - The mutation was found in 10% of 997 global genome sequences before March 1, 67% of sequences between March 1 and March 31 and 78% of the sequences between April 1 and May 18.
5. **Possible effects of the mutation:**
 - A preprint posted in *medRxiv*, which has not undergone peer review, explains, D614G show increased infectivity but it also displayed greater ability at attaching itself to the cell walls inside an individual's nose and throat, increasing the viral load. (a non-peer reviewed paper)
 - No clear correlation could be established between this particular genetic change in the virus and an increase in the severity of COVID-19 or its impact on a patient's mortality.
6. **Prevalence in India**
 - D614G was one of the most prevalent spike mutations even during the initial phase of the pandemic. Since then, D614G mutation's 'relative abundance' has increased over time to 70% and above, in most States except Delhi
7. **Impact of this mutation on vaccine development**
 - A paper in the journal, *Nature*, after conducting experiments on hamsters, concluded that this particular mutation may not reduce the ability of vaccines in clinical trials to protect against COVID-19 and that the therapeutic antibodies should be tested against the circulating variant of the virus before clinical development.

About Serological surveys

1. The purpose of the surveys is to measure the proportion of a population already infected, as evidenced by antibody positivity. When applied on a national scale, a random sample of the entire population is tested. Then, the data are extrapolated to the whole population.
2. What does random sampling mean here? In biostatistics, it means each individual has an equal probability of getting selected. Statisticians stratify the population and select a random sample from all strata so that the prevalence figure obtained is representative of the whole population.
3. **Critical Observation : Problem with the anti-body test**

- Antibodies are the footprints of the host's response to virus infection. Their presence in the bloodserum confirms past infection. Antibody prevalence data derived from sero-surveys must be interpreted with caution and correction factors.
 - The virus carries several antigens, both on the surface and internally. The body responds to all of them.
 - Four antigens selected to detect antibodies are spike protein (S1, S2), receptor binding domain (RBD) and nucleocapsid (N). An antibody against each antigen has its own time of appearance, duration in blood and rate of decay over time.
 - Testing for virus neutralising antibodies is not an option, since handling the virus is risky for lab personnel. It is prohibited in clinical labs and restricted to selected research labs.
 - Researches show that in people with asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic infections, these antibody levels decline over time, reaching 50% of the initial levels by about 36 days and become undetectable by 60 days after proven infection. Such asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic cases constitute more than 80% of those infected with the virus.
 - The latent period between infection and the appearance of a detectable antibody is about four weeks.
4. Sero-survey results have to be cautiously interpreted to arrive at the true level of prevalence of antibodies. If taken at face value, sero-survey results grossly underestimate true prevalence, except in the very early phase of the epidemic when infected people two months earlier were very few.

Problems in the outer space : Space Debris

1. Problems like congestion, threats of collision and Space traffic management. Threat from space debris has increased over the years.
 2. Sputnik 1 was the first human made object to orbit the Earth. Its launch created new opportunities in space. However, 63 years later, it has also added 29,000 objects as debris (larger than 10 centimetres in diameter) in addition to the 2,500 plus active satellites in space. Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's first human spaceflight in 1961, numerous space missions have contributed to the build-up of debris. Most 'space junk' can reach a speed of nearly 29,000 kilometres per hour.
 3. The amount of debris in **Low Earth Orbit, LEO** and the speed at which they are moving, current and future space based services, explorations, and operations pose a safety risk to people and property in space and on Earth, according to NASA.
 4. It thus becomes important to track natural and artificial objects in the orbit around Earth and predict where the objects are going to be at any given time. Using optical sensors in satellites to monitor space objects including active and inactive satellites and debris that could pose a threat.
 5. A space based satellite system to monitor debris has certain advantages over ground based systems, including having multiple points of view for an object; not reliant on weather changes and atmospheric interferences; and the ability to make frequent revisits. Thus, when objects collide and create debris, you want to know what is happening and don't want to wait long for a new map of all this new debris. So, in space and from space, those things are more achievable.
 6. **Some facts:**
 - According to **European Space Agency**, the number of space debris objects in Earth's orbit is 6.7 lakh (larger than 1 cm) and over 17 crore (larger than 1 mm).
 - Mega constellations from companies such as SpaceX, and Amazon will add thousands of satellites in the low Earth orbit. It presents a serious challenge to operators, regulators, insurance companies, and investors.
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Economics and Finance

Daily snippets

1. 15th Finance Commission to submit its report by November 9th : N.K Singh (chairperson)

- Three years after it was constituted, the Fifteenth Finance Commission has finalised its report for fund devolution from the Centre to States for the five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- The report will be subsequently tabled by the Finance Minister in the Parliament along with an action taken report.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission was constituted on November 27, 2017, against the backdrop of the abolition of the Planning Commission and the distinction between Plan and non plan expenditure, and introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- An important provision that the commission was working on apart from its regular duties was to determine the viability of creating a separate defence and national security fund as suggested by the Centre.
- The panel is also expected to factor in unpaid GST compensation dues to States for this year, while working out States' revenue flow calculations for the years beyond 2022. States were guaranteed compensation by the Centre for revenue losses owing to the implementation of the GST for a period of five years. [Further Reading](#)

2. Banks to pay back interest on interest : RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) informed the Supreme Court that it had advised banks and financial companies to fully comply with a government scheme to pay back borrowers compound interest, or interest on interest, charged on their loans during the six-month moratorium.
- The RBI said it had "advised" commercial banks, cooperative banks, financial institutions and non banking financial companies to comply with the government's payback scheme.
- The government scheme is meant to bring "additional relief" to borrowers affected by the pandemic induced financial distress.
- The Central Government has directed that all lending institutions shall give effect to the scheme and credit the amount calculated as per the scheme into the accounts of the borrowers by November 5.

3. GST inflows cross ₹1 lakh cr. in October

- Revenues from the Goods and Services Tax surpassed ₹1.05 lakh crore in October, up 10% from a year ago, and the highest recorded since February 2020.
- Government cited it as a 'clear' sign of a recovery in the economy after its 23.9% contraction in the first quarter of this year.
- Tax experts said the expected shortfall in GST compensation for the States could be lower than the current estimate of ₹2.35 lakh crore if this revenue momentum is maintained through the rest of 2020-21.
- Some experts also pointed towards the sustainability of this trend citing the current increase because of a build-up of inventories in anticipation of a robust festive season. The uptick in October's GST inflows could be attributed to the festive demand and input tax credits as well as other reconciliations that were due for

businesses in September. Many companies raised sales invoices in September by pushing out their finished products which they had planned in March itself.

4. **Concept of disguised unemployment**

- Also known as hidden unemployment, this refers to a situation where labour that is employed in a job is not actually utilised for the production of goods and services. In other words, such employment does not contribute to the output of an economy and is thus akin to a form of unemployment. Sometimes disguised unemployment could simply be a form of underemployment wherein the skills of a labour force are not utilised to their full capacity. In many other cases, however, such unemployment could simply be due to the lack of other alternative avenues of production where the surplus labour could be employed profitably.
- Example : A whole family working on a single piece of land in which the amount of labour required is far less.



Sports

Daily snippets

1. **Player's profile**

- **Anju Bobby George** : She is India's first and only World Champion in Athletics IAAF World Athletics Final. Anju Bobby George made history when she won the bronze medal in long jump at the 2003 World Championships in Athletics. She was awarded the Arjuna Award in 2002. She had got 5th position with a personal best score of 6.83 at the 2004 Athens Olympics. She participated in long Jump and Triple Jump. Recently, she has been elected as the senior vice-president of the Athletics Federation of India.
- **SC East Bengal** : Sporting Club East Bengal is an Indian professional football club based in Kolkata, West Bengal. Founded in August 1920, the club became affiliated with the Indian Football Association (IFA) in 1922. East Bengal won their first league title in 1942 and have since gone on to win the title a record 39 times. The club was also a founding member of the National Football League in 1996 and have won the league title three times.
- **Mithali Raj (Cricketer)** : Mithali Dorai Raj is an Indian cricketer and the captain of the Indian women's national cricket team. A right-handed opening batter, she is often regarded as the greatest batswoman of all time.
- **Rutuja Bhosale**: She is an Indian tennis player. She made her debut for the India Fed Cup team in 2012. In that year, she also achieved her highest junior ranking of world No. 55. Bhosale is the former Indian number one in the WTA doubles rankings.
- **Anjum Moudgil** : She is an Indian sport shooter. She took 9th Position at the 2016 World Cup, Munich and silver medal in the World University Championship. She won gold in South Asian Games. On 1st May, 2019, Anjum claimed the world number 2 spot in women's 10m Air Rifle ISSF rankings. She was India's No. 1 in Women's 50m

3P. Anjum is one of 19 athletes picked up by the selection committee for the Arjuna Award year 2019. She is an avid abstract artist and has sold many of her artworks.

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