



**G.K snippets...**

1. **Magnus Carlsen** is the current World Chess champion.
2. Former Prime Minister of Pakistan **Benazir Bhutto** was called the '**daughter of the east**'.

**Law, Policy and Governance**



[Daily snippets](#)

**1. [Rajasthan govt. Launches maternity benefit scheme for second child](#)**

- **Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot** launched a maternity benefit scheme for four districts under which mothers will get **Rs 6,000 for the second child**. These districts were selected because nutrition indicators among children and anaemia levels among mothers are worse than the average for the State. The Rajasthan government scheme is called **Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana**
- The objective is to compensate mothers for the **loss of wages during pregnancy** and after childbirth and to **curb wasting and stunting among children** as well as anaemia among mothers. They will not have to submit an Aadhaar card for the State scheme and the money will be transferred directly to their bank accounts.

**2. [Curbing on-air bigotry](#)**

- The Supreme Court's posers to the Union government on the measures it can and is willing to take against communally slanted television coverage should not end in undesirable consequences. The questions appear to be an attempt to elicit a commitment to a course of action that will **curb inflammatory journalism on broadcast media**.
- The Court is hearing petitions against the communal colour given by some channels. Curiously, the Centre seems reluctant to intervene, while the Court seems to be batting for greater media regulation. The Court appears unconvinced that the present mechanism of self regulation, **the National Broadcasting Standards Authority**, is effective.
- The government is, in any case, empowered under the Act to prohibit transmission of programmes that violate the programme or advertising codes (Section 19) and even an entire channel, in public interest (Section 20). The

case of Sudarshan News, which began a series that propagated hate against Muslims, is a flagrant example. The government has merely administered a 'caution' to the channel and asked it to moderate the content of future episodes and avoid breaching the Programme Code. In September, while ordering the suspension of further episodes, the Court **distinguished between free speech and 'hate speech'**.

### 3. [HC notice to Centre on same sex marriage plea](#)

- The Delhi High Court (HC) issued notice to the Union government on a petition seeking a direction to recognise same sex unions under **the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA)** and the **Special Marriage Act (SMA)**. The court asked the Centre to submit its response within four weeks.
- The plea said that in 2018, the **Supreme Court decriminalised consensual homo-sexual sex**. It said there was nothing in the HMA that mandated that marriage should take place only between a Hindu man and a Hindu woman.

### 4. [Can MPs teach at universities](#)

- The Joint Parliamentary Committee on **Office of Profit** headed by BJP MP Satya Pal Singh deliberated on whether an MP can continue to teach at a university and if this draws the provisions of "Office of Profit" rules.
- Under **Article 102 (1) and Article 191 (1) of the Constitution**, an MP or an MLA (or an MLC) is barred from holding any office of profit under the Central or State government.

### 5. [U.P. govt. denies confining Kerala journalist illegally](#)

- The Uttar Pradesh government denied illegally confining Malayalam journalist **Siddique Kappan** and did not object to a lawyer meeting him in jail, but accused him of using the garb of journalism to **create a "caste divide" in Hathras**.
- Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, **Solicitor General Tushar Mehta** submitted that Mr. Kappan was arrested and remanded by a competent court.
- **What is a Solicitor General?** The **Solicitor General of India** is subordinate to the Attorney General for India. He/She is the second law officer of the country, assists the Attorney General, and is himself/herself assisted by Additional Solicitors General for India. Currently, the Solicitor General of India is Tushar Mehta.

### 6. [Nod for fresh contempt action against Kunal Kamra](#)

- **Attorney General K.K. Venugopal** gave consent to initiate fresh contempt action against stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra for his **"grossly vulgar and obnoxious"** tweet with a photograph of two fingers meant to "deliberately insult" the Chief Justice of India. Mr. Venugopal said the tweet, posted on November 18, tended to lower the authority of the Supreme Court and undermined public confidence in it. This is the second consent given by Mr. Venugopal for contempt action against Mr. Kamra in November.

### 7. [In a first, the government. approves study on 'status of radicalisation'](#)

- The Union Home Ministry has, for the first time, approved a research study on **"Status of radicalisation in India"**.
- The study will attempt to **legally define "radicalisation"** and suggest amendments to the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**. It will be religiously neutral and will go by facts and reported cases. G.S. Bajpai, Director of the Centre for Criminology and Victimology, National Law University (NLU), Delhi, will conduct the research on radicalisation.
- Radicalisation is yet to be defined legally, this leads to misuse by the police. It should be defined and necessary amendments made to the UAPA.

## 8. [Akbar, Ramani nudged about possibility of out of court settlement](#)

- A Delhi Court asked former **Union Minister M.J. Akbar** and journalist **Priya Ramani**, whether there was a chance of settlement between them in a criminal defamation complaint filed by him against her.
- Mr. Akbar had filed the complaint against Ms. Ramani for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago when he was a journalist. Ms. Ramani had said the allegations against Mr. Akbar, made in the wake of #MeToo movement in 2018, were her truth and were made in public good.
- The court asked both the parties to respond on the point of settlement and get back on November 24.

## 9. [Optimizing resource utilization for the defense forces](#)

- The contracting fiscal envelope makes it more imperative to create **dual use infrastructure** through civil-military fusion, **Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat** said, calling for **integrating civil and military ecosystems** to optimise resource utilisation. He stated that the segregated **nature of defence and commercial industry ecosystems** restricts India's capabilities and capacities in making defence equipment. Integrating civil and military technology efforts is the way forward towards self-reliance. He mentioned that **Civil-military integration in infrastructure development** holds the key to the whole nation's approach towards national security.
- Cooperation between government and commercial facilities in research and development, manufacturing, maintenance operations, production of similar components and subcomponents on same production lines will optimise commercial and defence industrial base, maximize resource utilisation and reduce manufacturing and life cycle costs for defence equipment.
- On **tri service integration**, Gen. Rawat said the joint study groups on integrated air defence command, integrated theatre commands and maritime theatre command have brought out their papers which are being further refined so that firm steps can be taken to **operationalise them in the next 2-3 years**. He added that the next two years would lead to stabilisation of integrated structures and processes.

## 10. ['False allegation of impotency during divorce amounts to cruelty'](#)

- The Delhi High Court has ruled that false allegation of impotency against the husband made before the court during divorce proceedings amounts to **cruelty by the wife** under **the Hindu Marriage Act**.

## 11. [Kerala puts new libel law on hold](#)

- The Kerala government decided not to put into immediate effect an ordinance that sought to empower the police to **prosecute persons disseminating defamatory content**. The government would seek a consensus by placing the amendment for debate in the Assembly

## 12. [Supreme Court dismisses Delhi govt. plea against bail to riots accused](#)

- The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal filed by the Delhi government against a High Court decision to grant bail to a SIM card salesman who was arrested under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)** in connection with the north-east Delhi riots. Dismissing the appeal, the Bench said the remarks made by the High Court would not prejudice the trial.

## 13. [Plea for paid leave during menstruation](#)

- The Delhi High Court told the Union and Delhi governments to take a decision on a petition seeking **grant of paid leave to women employees** during menstruation by treating it as a representation.

- A Bench of **Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan** said the issues raised in the petition by the **Delhi Labour Union** should be decided as per law applicable to such matters as soon as possible and practicable. The union sought grant of paid leave for **four days a month** to all classes of women employees.

#### 14. Odisha Bill to penalise people for 'illegal' strike

- The Odisha government proposed to **impose penalty on individuals** who would spend money in **furtherance or in support of 'illegal' strike** and make such offences punishable with imprisonment.
- A Bill titled **'The Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Amendment Bill, 2020'** which sought amendment to Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Act, 1988 was passed by the State Assembly.

#### 15. Kerala to withdraw controversial amendment

- A special meeting of the Kerala Cabinet decided to request Governor Arif Muhammad Khan to promulgate a "withdrawal" ordinance to revoke the controversial executive order that sought to empower the police to prosecute persons disseminating defamatory content. The Kerala CM told that the government would place any future revision to the law, if at all, in the Assembly to evolve a political consensus before enactment.

#### 16. Jail term, fine for 'unlawful' religious conversions in U.P.

- The Uttar Pradesh government gave its nod to an ordinance that **makes religious conversion a non bailable offence** inviting penalties up to 10 years in prison if found to be effected for marriage or through fraudulent means.
- Violation of the provisions of the law would invite : A jail term of not less than one year extendable to five years with a fine of ₹15,000., However, if a minor woman or a woman from the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes communities was converted through the said unlawful means, the jail term would be a minimum of three years and could be extended to 10 years with a fine of ₹25,000.
- The ordinance also lays down strict action, including cancellation of registration of social organizations conducting mass conversions. The ordinance further said that the **burden to prove that a conversion was not done through misrepresentation** would be on the person converting or those who facilitated it. A person seeking to convert to another religion for marriage would have to inform the district magistrate **two months prior to it through a prescribed form.**

#### 17. Won't interfere in personal relations, says Allahabad HC

- **The Allahabad High Court** has said that the Interference in a personal relationship would constitute a serious encroachment into **the right to freedom of choice of two individuals**. The court made the observations while quashing an FIR against a Muslim man and his family from Kushinagar district by the father of his Hindu wife.
- "We fail to understand that if the law permits two persons even of the same sex to live together peacefully, then neither any individual nor even State can have objection to relationship of two major individuals who out of their own free will are living together."

#### 18. Adult woman can reside wherever and with whosoever she wishes: HC

- The **Delhi High Court** has remarked that a woman, who had eloped with a man, is "free to reside wherever she wishes and with whoever she wishes, she being a major".
- The woman told the Bench she went with the man of her own free will and she has married him. The Bench directed that the woman can reside with the man.

#### 19. SC reserves order on in-service quota

- The Supreme Court reserved its order on the interim question whether **Tamil Nadu and Kerala should provide 50% in-service reservation for admissions to super specialty medical courses** in government colleges for the current academic year.
- Bench led by **Justice L. Nageswara Rao** was hearing a batch of pleas filed by doctors, challenging reservation of seats for in-service candidates in super specialty courses. The Tamil Nadu government argued that there was an acute need for super specialty qualified doctors
- *“State has the legislative competence and authority to provide for a separate source of entry for in-service candidates seeking admission to post-graduate degree/diploma courses in exercise of powers under Entry 25, List III,”* the apex court had concluded in the August 31 verdict.

## 20. No precipitate step on women officers: SC

- The Supreme Court urged the Centre **not to take any “precipitate” action against women officers found ineligible for permanent commission**. A Bench led by **Justice D.Y. Chandrachud** asked the Centre to file details and reasons for not finding some of the 615 women Army officers fit for permanent commission (PC).

## 21. Government allots 2000 crores for infra funding

- The Cabinet on Wednesday approved the infusion of ₹6,000 crore as equity into a new debt platform to raise up to ₹1.1 lakh crore for **financing infrastructure projects by 2025**. Of the ₹6,000 crore equity to be injected by 2021-22, the Cabinet has approved ₹2,000 crore for disbursement this year subject to the funds being required.
- The Cabinet had asked the NIIF (National Investment and Infrastructure Fund) to take all necessary steps to use equity investments from **domestic and global pension funds** and **sovereign wealth funds** expeditiously.

## 22. Cabinet okays merger of LVB with DBS Bank India

- The Cabinet on Wednesday gave the green light to the merger of troubled Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) with DBS Bank India Ltd. (DBIL), paving the way for **lifting of restrictions placed on withdrawals from the bank**. Separately, the RBI on Wednesday notified that **LVB’s branches would operate as DBS Bank India branches** with effect from November 27.

## All India Time Survey

### 1. About the TUS

- It has been published recently by the **National Statistical Office** and covered the entire country for the first time. The “Time Use Survey, or TUS, provides a framework for measuring time dispositions by the population on different activities. Its **primary objective is to measure participation of men and women in paid and unpaid activities**.
- TUS is an important source of information on the time spent in unpaid caregiving activities, volunteer work, unpaid domestic service producing activities of the household members. It also provides information on time spent on learning, socializing, leisure activities, selfcare activities, etc., by the household members.

### 2. The data collection

- The data collection was done for one day - normal or other day in a 24 hour time diary, beginning at 4 a.m. and till 4 a.m. the next day. In India, where literacy is low, the time diary was filled in by interviewers in 30 minute time slots through face-to-face interviews. The **International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics of the United Nations Statistics Division**, was used for classification of activities.

- Two recent developments which have pushed up the demand for TUS globally are the commitment to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030**, and the **pathbreaking Resolution of the 19th International Conference on Labour Statistics**, on “Statistics of Work, Employment and Labour Underutilization - International Labour Organization 2013”.

### 3. Major findings of the report

- The 2,140-page report provides data on the participation rate of Indians in different activities in a day and the average time they spend in those activities. However, it does not provide the reasons for why people participate in certain activities, and why they spend as much time as they do in conducting that activity.
- The data, points to the fact that while a **large chunk of paid work is done by men**, unpaid work is largely done by women. The participation rate of men in paid employment — which includes jobs, farming, fishing, mining amongst other economic activities — is high at 57.3 per cent, compared to women whose participation rate is only 18.4 per cent. Indian men also spend more time at paid work, spending on average 7 hours 39 minutes compared to the 5 hours 33 minutes spent by women.
- 81.2 per cent women participate in **unpaid domestic services** spending an average 4 hours 59 minutes each day. The participation rate of men in domestic services is low at 26.1 per cent, and the amount of time they spend conducting this service is far lesser than women, who spend around 1 hour 37 minutes while conducting this activity.

### 4. How do Indians socialise and entertain themselves

- A very high percentage of Indians **socialise and spend their time in leisure** each day. Contrary to popular perception, men tend to participate more in socialising and communication, community participation, and religious practice than women. The report says that 91.4 percent of men participated in social activities, spending two hours and 27 minutes each day. The participation rate for women is just a little less at 91.3 per cent, and they also spend less time compared to men, at two hours and 19 minutes.
- Indians do not like to participate in **unpaid volunteer work**. The report shows that only 2.7 per cent of Indian men participate as unpaid volunteers or trainees, or participate in other unpaid work. The participation of women in volunteer work is lesser at 2 per cent, spending 1 hour 39 minutes.

## Explainer : Why did India stay out of the RCEP deal?

### 1. Background :

- On November 15, the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** was signed by **15 countries** led by China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the 10-country ASEAN group. It is billed as one of the **world’s largest Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.

### 2. Are FTAs bad for India?

- *“If you look at India’s experience with the already signed free trade agreements with the ASEAN group, South Korea and Japan, you will see that India’s trade deficit with these countries or groups rose very sharply during this period,”* says R. Ramakumar, NABARD Chair Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, who backs India’s decision to quit RCEP. The trade deficit with China has burgeoned from about \$4 billion in 2005-06 to nearly \$50 billion today, even without a trade agreement.

### 3. Why are trade deficits growing?

- FTAs are not the only reason imports from RCEP countries, especially China, are rising. The growing trade deficits comes from the **downturn in India's GDP since 2016**, and the decline in manufacturing.

#### 4. [How has COVID-19 pandemic changed the debate?](#)

- For the first time in 60 years, nearly **every country in the RCEP grouping is facing a recession**. The fears over individual losses, combined with the trend worldwide against globalisation, are driving countries to formulate smaller trading coalitions outside of the World Trade Organization.

#### 5. [Who wants India in?](#)

- Several RCEP countries still hope India will reconsider its decision of staying out. For Japan and Australia, the large size of the Indian economy and its negotiating heft would pose a valuable counterpoint to China within the grouping. For ASEAN countries that led the RCEP negotiations, India's presence would provide weight to the centrality of the ASEAN grouping in the region.
- For China, too, having India within the RCEP tent would not just open up India's market access for Beijing, but would also provide one more forum on which to cooperate that does not include the United States (U.S.), its biggest rival.

#### 6. [Did RCEP address India's concerns?](#)

- India's concerns over **Chinese goods flooding the Indian market through other markets** under the RCEP, without clear **guidelines on rules of origin**, find clear mention and an entire chapter devoted to it in the final RCEP text of 20 chapters, despite the fact that India is no longer in the grouping. The Indian government says there is no rethinking the decision to stay out of the RCEP. India has skipped every meeting of the grouping in the past year.

### [Laws to counter bio-terrorism](#)

1. Formulating effective laws to **counter bioterrorism** is one of the important lessons to be learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, a **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health** has said in a report, ***"The Outbreak of Pandemic COVID-19 And its Management."*** The report said low testing and shoddy contact tracing were responsible for the spike in cases.
2. The report highlights the **importance of controlling biological agents** and the need for **strategic partnerships among different nations**. The department of Health and Family welfare submitted a **seven point action plan** that is needed to ensure security against biological weapons. These include *"strengthening disease surveillance, including at animal human interface, training and capacity building for management of public health emergencies arising from use of bioweapons and strengthening research and surveillance activities related to development of diagnostics, vaccines and drugs"*.
3. The committee strongly recommended the Ministry to conduct more research and work towards **training and capacity building for management of public health emergencies** arising from the use of bio weapons. The report, however, did not explicitly state that the COVID-19 virus was a bio weapon.
4. The **plethora of COVID-19 guidelines** issued by the Health Ministry caused confusion and chaos, the report noted. The committee has also pulled up the Union Health Ministry for **"grossly inadequate"** number of hospital beds in government hospitals.

## [Analysis : Poshan Abhiyaan](#)

Image source : The Hindu

### Lack of nutrition

According to NFHS-4 (2015-16), 38.4% of children under five years were stunted (low height-for-age) and 21% of them were wasted (low weight-for-height) in India

ALL FIGURES IN %

Indicator	NFHS-4 (2015-16)	NFHS-3 (2005-06)
Children under 5 years who are stunted (height-for-age)	38.4	48
Children under 5 years who are wasted (weight-for-height)	21	19.8
Children under 5 years who are severely wasted	7.5	6.4
Children under 5 years who are underweight (weight-for-age)	35.8	42.5

1. **The National Nutrition Mission** or the Poshan Abhiyaan, the **world's largest nutrition programme** for children and mothers, **must be stepped up** to meet the targets set by the Centre to **reduce stunting, wasting and anaemia** by 2022, says a report by NITI Aayog.

2. The review report drafted in March does not factor worsening poverty and hunger levels over the past seven months due to COVID-19, which is **expected to dent strides made since 2018** to achieve nutritional targets. More than a third of the children under five face stunting and wasting and 40% aged between one and four are anaemic. Over 50% of pregnant and other women were found to be anaemic, said the **National Family Health Survey 4** released in 2016.

3. The programme aims to **reduce stunting and wasting by 2% a year** (total 6% until 2022) among children and **anaemia by 3% a year** (total 9%) among children, adolescent girls and pregnant women and lactating mothers.
  4. The report calls for a need to lay as much **emphasis on complementary feeding as it does on breastfeeding**, which it points out can help avert 60% of the total stunting cases in India. **On stunting**, the review says that India's targets are conservative as compared to the global target defined by **the World Health Assembly (WHA)**, which is a prevalence rate of 5% of stunting as opposed to India's goal of **reducing stunting levels to 13.3% by 2022**.
  5. The target of **reducing prevalence levels of anaemia** among pregnant women from 50.3% in 2016 to 34.4% in 2022 and among adolescent girls from 52.9% in 2016 to 39.66%, is also considered conservative.
  6. Experts warn that deepening poverty and hunger may delay achieving the goals defined under the Nutrition Mission.
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## National News/ Interventions



### Daily snippets

#### 1. Digital India is now a way of life, says PM

- **Digital India mission**, launched five years ago, is not being seen as any regular government initiative and has now become a way of life, especially for the poor and marginalized and those in the government, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** said on Thursday.
- Addressing the summit, **Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison** said India and Australia had unlimited possibilities of working together in space research, critical minerals, 5G, Artificial Intelligence, quantum computing and much more

#### 2. Government sought FB data of 57,294 users

- Facebook **received 35,560 requests from the Government of India** for user data during the first half ( January -June) of 2020, according to the latest **Transparency Report** published by the firm. Of the 35,360 requests for 57,294 users or accounts, Facebook said some data was produced in 50% of the cases while complying with **internationally recognised standards** on human rights, including due process, privacy, free expression and the rule of law.
- **In the first six months of 2020**, government requests for user data globally increased 23% from **1,40,875 to 1,73,592**. Of the total volume, the U.S. continued to submit the largest number of requests (61,528), followed by India, Germany (11,211) and France (11,086).
- As per the data shared by Facebook, in the first half of 2020, it witnessed about 53 instances of Internet disruptions affecting its services in 10 countries. India continued to top the list, accounting for 79% or 42 disruptions.

#### 3. Exercise Malabar comes to an end

- The 24th edition of **Exercise Malabar**, which concluded on Friday, was reflective of the “commitment of the participating countries to support a free, open, inclusive Indo-Pacific as well as a rules-based international order,” the Navy said in a statement.
- Simultaneously, it also carried out **Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) with Thailand** in the Andaman Sea and **delivered food aid to South Sudan** in western Indian Ocean under **Mission Sagar-II**. The 30th edition of India-Thailand **Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)** concluded in the Andaman Sea close to the strategic Strait of Malacca. It saw the participation of indigenously-built missile corvette INS Karmuk and Thailand Frigate HTMS Kraburi, along with Dornier maritime patrol aircraft.
- The naval exercise, consisting of **India, Australia, Japan and the U.S.**, was held in two phases this time. Australia joined the war games for the first time since 2007. In the backdrop of COVID-19, it was conducted in a ‘noncontact at sea only’ format.
- For **Phase-II**, Indian and the U.S. deployed aircraft carrier groups **INS Vikramaditya** and **USS Nimitz** respectively and **P-8 long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft** for Anti-Submarine Warfare drills. The two aircraft carriers, along with other ships, submarine and aircraft of the participating navies, engaged in high intensity naval operations, including cross deck flying operations and advanced air defence exercises by **MiG-29K fighters of INS Vikramaditya and F/A-18 fighters and E2C Hawkeye aircraft from USS Nimitz**, the Navy said.

#### 4. [India to double oil refining capacity in five years, says PM](#)

- India plans to almost **double its oil refining capacity** in the next five years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said. The Prime Minister said India was also aiming to **raise the share of natural gas in its energy consumption mix** by up to four times. The cleaner burning fuel currently accounts for about 6% of the energy consumed in the country.
- India would achieve its target of increasing **renewable energy capacity to 175 gigawatts by 2022, and 450 gigawatts by 2030**, ahead of schedule, Mr. Modi added. The country had **renewable energy capacity of about 75 gigawatts at the end of 2018**.

#### 5. [Odisha tribe sees rise in migration](#)

- Bondas, a **particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG)**, known for their secluded lives away from the mainstream, in the hilly **Malkangiri district of Odisha**
- **What are PVTG?** 75 tribal groups have been categorized by the **Ministry of Home Affairs** as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). **PVTGs reside in 18 States and UT of A&N Islands**. The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** implements the Scheme of **“Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)”** exclusively for them. Under the scheme, Conservation-cum-Development (CCD)/Annual Plans are to be prepared by each State/UT for their PVTGs based on their need assessment, which are then appraised and approved by the Project Appraisal Committee of the Ministry. Activities for development of PVTGs are undertaken in Sectors of Education, Health, Livelihood and Skill Development, Agricultural Development, Housing & Habitat, Conservation of Culture etc.
- The trend of **distress migration** in lieu of the pandemic has seen the young population of the tribe migrate to neighbouring states. The **unequal effect of technological backwardness** resulting in inaccessibility of education services has also led several students to drop out and go in search of livelihoods. If migration is taken as the single largest indicator to assess the livelihood status of a community, it is seen that the incidence of migration has increased over the years amongst the Bonda households.

#### 6. [Arunachal Pradesh CM pushes for Highway along Tibet border](#)

- Arunachal Pradesh CM **Pema Khandu** has been pushing for the **ambitious Frontier Highway project** along the **“India Tibet border”** for facilitating faster **movement of troops if a war like situation arises**.
- He added that the project has gained momentum after all armed forces, Border Roads Organisation and other stakeholder agencies were brought on the same page for a coordinated approach to build the **highway at Himalayan heights along the 1,100 km Line of Actual Control**.

#### 7. [Delhi records coldest November night in 17 years](#)

- It was the coldest November night in 17 years as the minimum temperature in the Capital dropped to 6.9 degrees Celsius. The Capital recorded a minimum of 7.5 degrees Celsius on Friday, which was the lowest in the month in 14 years, the Met said.
- November has consistently seen temperatures below average due to the absence of cloud cover. Also, over the past few days, icy cold winds from the Himalayas have been blowing towards the city. However, under the **influence of a Western Disturbance**, the minimum is not likely to go down further and will rise to settle around 10 degrees Celsius, the Met said.
- October this year was the coldest in 58 years. The air quality in the Capital remained in the “poor category” with an AQI of 274.
- **About AQI ?** An AQI between **zero and 50** is considered “good”, **51 and 100** “satisfactory”, **101 and 200** “moderate”, **201 and 300** “poor”, **301 and 400** “very poor”, and **401 and 500** “severe”.

#### 8. [Digital concert series supports folk artists during pandemic](#)

- A digital COVID-19 relief concert series, titled “**Padharo Mhare Des**”, has been launched in Rajasthan to support folk artistes, deprived of regular livelihood for several months, in the **remote areas of Rajasthan**. The fundraising series will present some renowned performers and promote virtual tourism during the pandemic.
- The series has been planned and organised by Jaipur based **Arpan Foundation**. The series will feature about 70 folk artistes from the interiors of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Barmer districts in western Rajasthan, highlighting the rich heritage of traditional music and dance forms of the Thar desert.

### 9. [Assam ex-CM Tarun Gogoi dies](#)

- Three time **former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi** passed away due to multiple organ failure at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Guwahati, the Congress veteran was suffering from post COVID complications.
- In his political career spanning more than 50 years, he represented the Congress as an **MP from Assam six times** and led the party to a **record three straight electoral victories**. He was **Chief Minister from 2001 to 2016** and is credited with having tamed insurgency that ravaged the state. He changed the narrative that development in Assam, whose per capita income post 1947 was higher than the national average, would be elusive unless the extremists were tamed.

### 10. [Ramping up Anganwadi services](#)

- The government must make efforts to ramp up services offered at anganwadis to make up for lost time, say experts after the Centre announced its decision to reopen anganwadis across the country after a gap of seven months. On November 11, the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** issued an order allowing the States to reopen anganwadis outside containment zones with immediate effect.
- Anganwadis were the focal point where **many essential services are imparted**, such as Growth Monitoring Referral, and supplementary nutrition, etc. to ensure the health and well being of the pregnant ladies, lactating mothers and children below five years. Health Ministry data showed that these services were severely hampered during the lockdown. There is thus a need to speed up service delivery.
- **What are Anganwadis?** Anganwadi is a type of rural child care centre in India. They were started by the **Indian government in 1975** as part of the **Integrated Child Development Services program** to combat child hunger and malnutrition. *Anganwadi* means "courtyard shelter" in Hindi. These centres provide supplementary nutrition, non-formal pre-school education, nutrition, and health education, immunization, health check-up and referral services of which the last three are provided in convergence with public health systems.

### 11. [Cyclone Nivar in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry](#)

- **Cyclone Nivar** over the southwest Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a **very severe cyclonic storm** in the next 18 hours and cross the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts between Karaikal and Mamallapuram around Puducherry late on Wednesday evening. With extremely heavy rainfall and gusty winds expected, **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami** declared a public holiday in the State on Wednesday.
- It is very likely to intensify further **into a severe cyclonic storm** during next 12 hours and into a **very severe cyclonic storm** during subsequent 12 hours. NDRF and State Disaster Response Force teams were rushed to the coastal areas.

### 12. [Govt. bans 43 more apps citing threat to security](#)

- The government blocked **43 more mobile apps**, including major Chinese ones such as AliSuppliers, **AliExpress**, Alipay Cashier, CamCard and DingTalk, citing threat to national security, integrity and sovereignty. “**The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** issued an order under **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act** blocking access to 43 mobile apps,” an official statement said.
- In June, the government had blocked access to 59 apps ranging from e-commerce to gaming, social media, browsers, instant messaging and file sharing. In September, another 118 apps were banned. These included

popular gaming apps **PUBG, TikTok**, UC Browser, Baidu, WeChat Work and Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade. The ban came in the backdrop of the **tensions along the border with China** in Ladakh.

### **13. PM tells States to prepare for vaccine distribution**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** asked the State governments to **set up steering committees** and **block-wise task forces** to prepare for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as and when they are available for disbursement, but spent much of his meeting with Chief Ministers emphasizing that the focus should still be on containing the spread of the virus.

### **14. President to inaugurate Speakers' conference**

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** will inaugurate the **80th All India Presiding Officers' conference** at the **Statue of Unity** at Kevadia in Gujarat on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi would address the concluding session of the conference on Thursday, which is the Constitution Day during which all delegates would recite the Preamble.

### **15. Ahmed Patel, veteran congress strategist, no more**

- Rajya Sabha MP and senior Congress leader **Ahmed Patel**, 71, died on Wednesday after a prolonged battle with complications arising out of COVID-19. He was the quintessential backroom strategist during the 10-year rule of the Congress-led UPA.
- Patel had played a key role in the formation of the **Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)** government by ensuring that the Congress joined hands with the Shiv Sena to keep the Bharatiya Janata Party out of power.

### **16. Jallikattu is India's entry for Oscar awards**

- Malayalam film **Jallikattu**, directed by **Lijo Jose Pellissery**, has been selected as India's official entry for the **Best International Feature Film** category for the **93rd Academy Awards**. Jallikattu is the third Malayalam film after **Guru (1997)** and **Adaminte Makan Abu (2011)** to be chosen as the country's official entry for the Oscars. Based on writer S. Hareesh's acclaimed story Maoist, the film explores the human psyche following a buffalo that escapes the butcher's hold when he is about to slaughter it.

### **17. MHA issues fresh COVID guidelines**

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** on Wednesday issued fresh guidelines for **"surveillance, containment and caution"** in view of the surge in COVID-19 cases due to the festival season and onset of winter. The MHA has stressed that States should ensure 80% contacts of all persons found COVID-19 positive should be traced in 72 hours and their **"tracking, identification, quarantine and follow up"** for the next 14 days should be done strictly.
- The order issued on Wednesday is called **'Guidelines for surveillance, containment and caution'**, which will be effective from **December 1 to 31**. The MHA said that States and Union Territories, based on their assessment of the situation, **may "impose local restrictions" such as "night curfew"**. "However, State/UT Governments shall not impose any local lockdown (State/ District/ sub-division/City level), outside the containment zones, without prior consultation with the Central Government," MHA order said. International air travel of passengers continues to remain barred except as permitted by MHA.

### **18. Indian Navy inducts 2 drones on lease from the US**

- The Indian Navy has inducted two **MQ-9B Sea Guardian** unarmed drones procured from the U.S. on lease, two defense sources said on Wednesday. "The drones are on lease for one year. All planning, execution and operations will be with the Indian Navy.
- The Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) will play a support role for maintenance as laid down in the agreement," one defence source said. The drones arrived in India in mid-November. The recently released **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020** has introduced an option for leasing military platforms.

### 19. Farmer protests enter the capital

- Hundreds of farmers led by **Bharatiya Kisan Union (Charuni)** leaders set out for Delhi from Ambala in response to a call for “Dilli Chalo” from several farmers’ groups for November 26 and 27 in protest against the three controversial farm laws.
- The farmers’ response from Uttar Pradesh remained lukewarm with the Bharatiya Kisan Union, leading the protests in west U.P., distancing itself from the march.

### 20. Portal launched for ID cards for transpersons

- The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry on Wednesday launched a national portal for transgender persons to apply for certificates and identity cards. The portal had been developed within two months of the Ministry notifying the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020**, on September 29.

### 21. Prefix calls from landline to mobile with 0 soon

- Starting January 15, all consumers trying to dial a mobile number using landline phones will need to prefix the mobile number with the numeral 0, the Department of Telecom said. Approximately 2539 million numbering series is expected to be generated due to the process, **freeing up sufficient numbering resources for future use**. The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** had made the recommendation.

### 22. Prime Minister Modi to lay foundation for new Parliament building

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to lay the foundation stone for a new Parliament building in the first half of December. The new building will be constructed close to the existing one under the **Central Vista redevelopment project** and it is expected to be completed in 21 months from the start of construction work.
  - According to the plan, the new Parliament building, which will have separate offices for all MPs, will be equipped with the latest digital interfaces as a step towards creating “paperless offices“. The new building will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India’s democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.
  - In September, **Tata Projects Limited** had won the bid to construct a new parliament building at a cost of ₹861.90 crore. The existing building is a **British era building, designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker** who were responsible for planning and construction of New Delhi.
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## International NEWS/Events/ Personalities

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### Daily snippets

#### 1. Terror funding : Saeed gets 10 years in jail

- Mumbai terror attack mastermind and **Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed** was on Thursday sentenced to 10 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan in two more terror financing cases.
- **Hafiz Saeed**, a UN-designated terrorist on whom the U.S. has placed a \$10 million bounty, was arrested on July 17 last. He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two other terror financing cases. The 70 year-old JuD chief is presently lodged at Lahore's high security Kot Lakhpat jail.
- Thursday's sentencing comes weeks after the **Paris-based global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog - the Financial Action Task Force** - retained Pakistan on its **grey list** till February 2021 as Islamabad failed to fulfil the agency's six key obligations, including failure to act against two of India's most wanted terrorists- **Hafiz Saeed and Maulana Masood Azhar**.

#### 2. Oxford vaccine triggers robust immunity in elderly

- The **SARS-CoV-2** vaccine developed by teams at the **University of Oxford** has been shown to trigger a robust immune response in healthy adults aged 56 to 69 and those over 70. The findings published in the medical journal Lancet on Thursday, based on 560 healthy adult volunteers, shows that the **ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine** is **safe and well tolerated with a lower reactogenicity profile in older adults** than in younger adults, meaning the older age groups could build immunity to the disease. The Oxford group has a tie-up with the Pune-based **Serum Institute of India**.

#### 3. Riyadh to invest \$20 billion in AI in 2030

- **Saudi Arabia** announced it will invest \$20 billion in **artificial intelligence projects** by 2030, as the oil rich country seeks to diversify its economy amid slumping crude prices. The kingdom launched an artificial intelligence strategy last month as part of **Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's** ambitious "**Vision 2030**" plan to wean the kingdom off oil. "Saudi Arabia will invest \$20 billion from now until 2030," said Abdullah al-Ghamdi, head of the Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority.

#### 4. China cautions 'Five eyes' to face Honk Kong's reality

- China rejected the latest attack on its Hong Kong policy by the U.S. and several of its allies, saying they "**should face up to the reality**" that the former British colony has been returned to China.
- **The Five Eyes** is an intelligence alliance comprising **Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States**. These countries are parties to the multilateral UKUSA Agreement, a treaty for joint cooperation in **signals intelligence**.

#### 5. Pakistan's Prime Minister vows to stem bloodshed in recent Afghanistan visit

- **Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan** visited war-torn neighbor **Afghanistan**, where he vowed to help reduce spiraling violence and push for a ceasefire between the **Taliban** and Afghan forces. Mr. Khan's maiden visit to Kabul comes amid **surging violence across Afghanistan** that has worsened despite Afghan government negotiators and the Taliban launching peace talks in the Qatari capital Doha in September.
- Diplomatic **ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan** have long been strained. Many Afghans are furious with their eastern neighbour, which they accuse of **meddling in domestic affairs**, aiding the Taliban and deliberately **destabilising Afghanistan**.

#### 6. **Xi pitches for Chinese economy as a base for free trade**

- President Xi Jinping hailed China as the pivot point for global free trade, vowing to keep its "supersized" economy open for business and **warning against protectionism** as the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic.
- He vowed "**openness**" to trade and rejected any possibility of the "decoupling" of China's economy, in his only nod to the hostile trade policy of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, which has battered China with tariffs and tech restrictions.
- **What is Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation?** It is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. APEC's **21 members** aim to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

#### 7. **Bhutan says no to Chinese village on its territory**

- The statement from Ambassador Vetsop Namgyel came a day after sections of the Indian media reported the presence of a Chinese built village approximately 2 km inside the Bhutanese border. The confrontation, which was triggered by the detection of Chinese construction near the **India-Bhutan-China trijunction (Doklam)**, lasted for approximately 70 days but the details of the ultimate withdrawal of the Chinese troops and heavy machinery remained sketchy.
- In recent months, India has maintained close coordination with Bhutan and has included the Himalayan country in plans for containment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bhutan was the second country to accept the **RuPay card** after Singapore. It is understood that during the second phase, Bhutanese banks will be able to issue RuPay cards for Bhutanese citizens.

#### 8. **Almost a million inoculated in China**

- Nearly a million people have taken an experimental coronavirus vaccine developed by **Chinese company Sinopharm**, the firm said, although it has not yet provided any clear clinical evidence of efficacy. China has been giving experimental COVID-19 vaccines to people including state employees, international students and essential workers heading abroad since July.
- China has been bullish about the development of its vaccine for the new virus - which first emerged in the centre of the country late last year - with four vaccines now in late-stage testing. Many of the trials are taking place overseas, as China has largely brought the virus under control within its borders. Sinopharm is testing two vaccines in late-stage trials in countries, including the UAE, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Peru and Argentina.

#### 9. **Debutant Douglas Stuart wins 2020 Booker Prize**

- **Scottish author Douglas Stuart** was awarded the **2020 Booker Prize** for his acclaimed debut novel **Shuggie Bain**, set in his home city of Glasgow. Mr. Stuart's book reflects his own experiences growing up with a mother who was an alcoholic and died from her addiction. He was one of four debut novelists among the six finalists.

#### 10. [Australia to temporarily host ISRO satellite tracking facilities](#)

- As part of steps to deepen cooperation in civil space activities, the space agencies of India and Australia were working together to temporarily position Indian tracking facilities in Australia, **Australian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology Karen Andrews** said on Friday. This would support India's planned human space flight programme.
- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has embarked on an ambitious plan to put an Indian in space by 2022 under **Gaganyaan** mission. India, Australia space cooperation is underpinned by a formal Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two countries in 2012. Both nations have been collaborating since 1987 to "support data calibration and laser ranging for Indian satellites, launching Australian satellites, and conducting joint research".

#### 11. [At UNSC, India calls for immediate Afghan ceasefire](#)

- India has told the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** that it calls for an "immediate comprehensive ceasefire" in Afghanistan, while welcoming all opportunities to bring peace to the country.
- In a UNSC meeting on Friday, convened under the **Arria Formula** (informally convened at the request of a UNSC member), current and incoming members of the UNSC spoke on how the Council could support the Afghan peace process.
- India has been concerned that the Afghan peace process and premature withdrawal of NATO/ U.S. coalition forces could leave opportunities for terrorist networks that could target both Afghanistan and India.

#### 12. [COVID-19 is world's biggest challenge : PM](#)

- The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge the world is facing since the Second World War and is a turning point in the history of humanity, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** said at the **G20 Summit** on Saturday, as he offered India's IT prowess for efficient functioning of the grouping. Mr. Modi also said that "**Work from Anywhere**" is a new normal in the post-COVID-19 world and suggested creation of a **virtual G20 secretariat**.
- The Prime Minister also suggested developing a new global index for the post-corona world that comprised four key elements - *creation of a vast talent pool, ensuring that technology reached all segments of society, transparency in systems of governance and dealing with Mother Earth with a spirit of trusteeship*.
- Addressing the G20 Summit, **President Xi Jinping** said **China** was ready to **pursue peaceful coexistence** with all countries on the basis of **mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit**. India is scheduled to host the G20 Summit in 2022.
- **What is G20?** The G20 is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union. The members of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

#### 13. [On inauguration day, Twitter to give Biden control of @POTUS](#)

- Twitter will hand control of the presidential **@POTUS** account to **Joe Biden** when he is sworn in on inauguration day, even if President Donald Trump has not conceded his election loss, U.S. media reported on Friday.
- The handover will see all existing tweets on **@POTUS, as well as @FLOTUS, @VP** and other official accounts, archived.

#### 14. [In Pakistan, people mourn radical cleric's death](#)

- Massive crowds of mask-less mourners gathered in Lahore for the funeral of **hardliner Pakistani cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi**, who for years terrorized the country's religious minorities, incited riots and advocated the destruction of European nations in the name of fighting blasphemy. Rizvi's party, **Tehreek-e-Labiak**, holds only two seats in Parliament, but his movement has repeatedly pressed its cause by staging large-scale demonstrations.
- In 2018, the TLP brought the country to a standstill with riots following **the acquittal of Christian woman Asia Bibi**, who had been falsely accused of **disrespecting the Prophet Mohammed**. The party has also called for the assassination of Supreme Court judges, pleaded for a mutiny in the armed forces and vowed to wipe out European nations such as France and the Netherlands.

#### 15. **US, Taiwan step up economic partnership**

- The U.S. and Taiwan are stepping up co-operation in a newly created economic dialogue, in another move from the outgoing Trump administration to increase official exchanges with the self-ruled island. The two sides signed a five-year agreement establishing the **U.S.-Taiwan Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue**, which is meant to be held annually. China, which views Taiwan as its own territory to be reunited by force if necessary, has criticized such steps as provocation.

#### 16. **Honour for Bhutan's queen mother**

- In a first for the Himalayan Kingdom, and a rare honour in the subcontinent, **Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck** has been awarded the United Nations Population Award in the individual category for 2020 for her **work on sexual health and ending gender violence**. In the **organisation category** the awardee is **HelpAge India**.
- Only two Indians have been awarded in the past four decades since the **award was established in 1981** : former **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983** and industrialist philanthropist **J.R.D.Tata in 1992**.
- Gyalyum Sangay Choden, **popularly called "AshiSan gay" (Princess Sangay)** has been recognised for creating "an enabling environment to openly discuss sexual reproductive health in the [Bhutanese] kingdom" and for founding a volunteer organisation called '**Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women' (RENEW)**. India has supported RENEW through the Embassy in Thimphu, and helped construct the RENEW crisis centre as well as Bhutan's first shelter for victims of gender based violence.
- Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck, 57, is the youngest of four sisters, all married to Bhutan's former monarch, the **Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck**, who abdicated in favour of his son **Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in 2006**. While Bhutanese women enjoy a status, a place in the workforce and property rights that are considered more equitable than much of the SAARC region, there are growing concerns about violence. A **2017 study by Bhutan's National Commission for Women and Children** found that 14% of women surveyed had suffered physical violence that year, 4.5% suffered sexual violence and more than 72% had never sought help for it.

#### 17. **PM Modi calls for integrated fight against climate change**

- Climate change must be fought not in silos but in an **integrated, comprehensive and holistic way**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at a **G20 event**. Addressing a G20 summit side event — **Safeguarding the Planet: The Circular Carbon Economy Approach** — Mr. Modi said India is not only meeting its Paris Agreement targets, but also exceeding them.
- He highlighted that "*Inspired by our traditional ethos of living in harmony with the environment, and the commitment of my government, India has adopted low carbon and climate resilient development practices*". He

further added that for humanity to prosper, every single individual must prosper. Rather than seeing labour as a factor of production alone, the focus must be on the human dignity of every worker.

- India is a signatory to the **2015 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC). India has set a target of generating **175 gigawatt of renewable energy by 2022** going forward expanding it to **450 gigawatt by 2030**.

#### **18. Global meet on criminal finances**

- Over 2,000 representatives from 132 countries attended the virtual **4th Global Conference on Criminal Finances and Cryptocurrencies** organized by the Interpol, Europol and the Basel Institute on Governance.
- The conference is an initiative of the Working Group on **Cryptocurrencies and Money Laundering** established in 2016 by the three organisations, launched with an objective of strengthening knowledge, expertise and best practices for investigations into financial crimes and intelligence on virtual assets and cryptocurrencies.
- The conference underlined the need to expand capabilities on ways to probe virtual assets and regulate virtual asset service providers to prevent money laundering.

#### **19. Manufacture and distribution of the COVID vaccine**

- According to certain estimates, the world **requires 16 billion doses of vaccine** with each of the 7.2 billion people on the planet requiring two doses each, besides the **1.5 to 2 billion** that were likely to go waste. Most of the developed world has booked more than double the quantity they require from western manufacturers. About **3.4 billion doses had already been booked by the developed world** by giving the manufacturers an advance amount, this puts a question mark on the equitable distribution of vaccines.
- There's also a problem with **suggesting an expiry date for the vaccine**, unless there is **good stability data for a long period of time for the product**, manufacturers cannot determine to what extent the product will remain stable. Availability of stability data was one of the major reasons for vaccines to take a long time for development.
- In India, **PMO constituted Vaccine Task Force (VTF)** will lay down the principles for emergency use authorisation, while the **National Expert Group On Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC)** should take the lead in setting the principles for advance market commitment, including vaccine pricing.

#### **20. India, Thailand, Singapore naval exercise concludes**

- The **second edition** of the India, Thailand and Singapore **trilateral naval exercise, SITMEX20**, concluded in the Andaman Sea on Sunday. The 27th edition of **India Singapore bilateral maritime exercise, SIMBEX20**, is scheduled to be held in the same area from November 23 to 25.
- It highlights growing synergy, coordination and cooperation in the maritime domain between the three friendly navies and maritime neighbours. The Indian Navy deployed **indigenous Anti Submarine Warfare corvette INS Kamorta** and **missile corvette INS Karmuk** for the exercise. Singapore deployed a 'Formidable' Class frigate *Intrepid* and 'Endurance' Class Landing Ship Tank *Endeavour* and the Royal Thai Navy deployed a 'Chao Phraya' Class frigate *Kraburi* for the exercise.

#### **21. Japanese grant to strengthen Maldives Coast Guard**

- The **Maldives and Japan** signed an agreement for a **Japanese grant of \$7.6 million** to be extended to the **Maldives Coast Guard** and the **Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre**. This is the Maldives's second major pact with a member of the '**Quad**', an **informal strategic grouping of the U.S., Japan, Australia and India**. It

earlier entered an agreement with the US. The Indian Ocean archipelago Maldives, is home to nearly 4 lakh people, assumes **geopolitical significance**, owing to its strategic location.

- The agreements include the provision of communications equipment, professional search and rescue dive equipment and highlighted the need for coordinated action in **combating piracy, countering violent extremism and narco trafficking**, and "to ensure a **free and open Indian Ocean** that would bring about peace and prosperity to the region". The agreement falls under the Economic and Social Development Programme of the Government of Japan.
- India views the development as a positive one, as it did when Washington and Male earlier signed the defence pact that focuses on maintaining peace and security in the Indian Ocean, besides **promoting a rules based order that promotes stability and prosperity** in the Indo Pacific region.

## 22. [Ethiopia gives Tigray 72 hours to surrender](#)

- **Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed** gave Tigrayan regional forces 72 hours to surrender before the military begins an offensive on the regional capital of Mekelle. **The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)**, which is refusing to surrender its rule of the northern region, said its forces were digging trenches and standing firm.

## 23. [Pak. schools shut as virus surges back](#)

- A little over two months after students across Pakistan returned to classes, the authorities on Monday decided to close all educational institutions again from November 26 to January 10 to contain the COVID-19 pandemic that has claimed nearly 7,700 lives and infected over 3.7 lakh people in the country.

## 24. [Taliban rigging drones to drop bombs](#)

- **The Taliban** have deployed small drones to drop bombs on government forces in some recent attacks, **Afghanistan's** spy chief said, illustrating a new fighting method used by the insurgents. **Ahmad Zia Shiraj**, who heads the **National Directorate of Security (NDS)**, said Taliban fighters were using hobby drones and rigging them with explosives.
- While the technique is new to the Taliban, **Islamic State (IS)** jihadists operating in Iraq and Syria started **using toy planes and hobby drones** in 2016 to carry explosives. The Taliban and Washington are holding negotiations in **Doha**.

## 25. [China prepares probe to bring back lunar rocks](#)

- China is preparing to launch an unmanned spacecraft to **bring back lunar rocks**, the first attempt by any nation to retrieve samples from the moon in four decades. Beijing is pouring billions into its military run space programme, with hopes of having a **crewed space station by 2022** and of eventually sending humans to the moon.
- The **Chang'e-5 probe**, named after the **mythical Chinese moon goddess**, aims to shovel up lunar rocks and soil to help scientists **learn about the moon's origins**, formation and volcanic activity on its surface.
- If successful, China will be only the third country to have retrieved samples from the moon, following the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s. The Chinese probe will collect 2 kg of surface material from a previously unexplored area known as **Oceanus Procellarum** - or "**Ocean of Storms**" - which consist of a vast lava plain, according to the science journal Nature.

## 26. [Bhutan border village on disputed land](#)

- Chinese media claimed that a new border village built by China near Bhutan was on Chinese territory, but released images of the village show its location on territory disputed by the two countries. **The Global Times** confirmed that the village of **Pangda** had been newly built and residents moved there in September.
- The area is east of the **India-Bhutan-China trijunction on the Doklam plateau**, which was the site of a 72-day stand-off in 2017 triggered by China's roadbuilding. Last week, however, Bhutan's officials denied the village was on their territory. China has in the past sought to bolster its territorial claims in disputed areas by building civilian settlements there, as on disputed **South China Sea islands**.

### 27. [Ready to die to defend rights, says Tigray leader](#)

- The leader of Ethiopia's dissident Tigray region has said that his people are "ready to die" defending their homeland, rejecting **Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's** ultimatum that they surrender within 72 hours.
- Mr. Abiy launched a military campaign against the **Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)** on November 4, accusing it of **attacking two federal military camps** in the northern region, as well as defying and seeking to **destabilize his government**. The federal Army says its forces are within 60 km of **Mekele, the Tigrayan capital** and seat of the TPLF.

### 28. [What's next for Afghanistan?](#)

- With the U.S. prepared to reduce its troop presence in Afghanistan to about 2,500 by January 20 - the inauguration day for the new President - Afghanistan is bracing for an uncertain future. **The Taliban, who were ousted from power in 2001** after the U.S. invasion and have since been fighting both foreign troops and the Afghan government in Kabul, now **control more than half of the country** and contest the whole of it.
- In February this year, the U.S. reached an agreement with the Taliban after prolonged **negotiations in Doha, Qatar's capital**, where the insurgents have a political office. According to the agreement, the U.S. would withdraw all of its troops from Afghanistan in 14 months in return for assurances from the Taliban that they would not allow Afghan soil to be used by transnational jihadist organisations such as **al-Qaida and the Islamic State**.
- According to a **UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)** report in October, nearly 6,000 Afghan civilians were killed in the first nine months of the year - 45% of the deaths were at the hands of the Taliban. The UNAMA said violence refused to die down even after talks began in Doha. At present, the U.S. and coalition troops are not directly involved in frontline combat. They **provide training to Afghan troops**, and American air power is a **critical ally of Afghan forces** that resist Taliban's repeated attempts to take over big population centres.
- But all is not lost for the Afghan government, which has hundreds of thousands of soldiers fighting for it and has backing in urban centres. Much would depend on the policy **Joe Biden, the President-Elect of the U.S.**, would take towards Afghanistan and the outcome of the peace talks. Mr. Biden has said his administration would **withdraw all American troops from Afghanistan** in his first term, which ends in early 2025. NATO has also committed to funding Afghan troops for four more years.

### 29. [Sri Lanka, China to focus on 'poverty alleviation'](#)

- **Sri Lanka and China** will expedite ongoing development cooperation projects, and increase trade and investment, with **"a special focus" on poverty alleviation and livelihoods generation**, Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry said.
- Amid a persistent second wave of COVID-19, Sri Lanka faces a major economic crunch, as the country's export and tourism sectors have been badly hit. Colombo has sought a **\$700 million loan from Beijing** - in addition to

the \$500 million obtained in March - and is also negotiating a **\$1.5-billion currency swap facility** with the People's Bank of China.

- Colombo has witnessed heightened engagement from Beijing, New Delhi and Washington over the past few months. In September, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** held a virtual bilateral summit with **Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa**, months after the **RBI sanctioned currency swap facility of \$400 million**.

### **30. ISI chief-led panel to oversee 2 dozen spy agencies in Pakistan**

- **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan** has approved the setting up of the **National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC)**, a mechanism to coordinate over two dozen intelligence organizations in the country, to be headed by the ISI chief.
- The new body would be led by the director general of the **Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)**, who would function as its chairman. A leaked version of the **Abbottabad Commission's report** had revealed that the commission, while noting the absence of **civil military intelligence coordination mechanism**, too had proposed establishment of an agency on the lines of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to synergise the working of main spy agencies in the country.

### **31. More trilateral naval exercises on the cards**

- In continuation of the trend of growing trilateral and multilateral exercises, two new trilateral naval exercises are in the works: one **among India, Australia and Indonesia**, and in the other, France is keen on joining the **India-Australia bilateral naval exercise AUSINDEX**, according to two official sources.
- In the last few years, India has significantly expanded its **military to military engagement** with both Australia and France on bilateral level. Last year, India, Thailand and Singapore began an annual exercise, which completed the second edition last week. The 24th edition of the **Malabar naval exercise** among India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. just concluded, with Canberra joining the exercise for the first time since 2017.

### **32. China slams India's ban on apps**

- China on Wednesday said it "firmly opposes" India's "use of national security as an excuse" after New Delhi's Tuesday decision to ban 43 Chinese apps, which followed similar measures announced in June and September that barred 177 mostly Chinese apps amid continuing tensions along the border.
- With Tuesday's ban, more than 200 Chinese apps, many owned by some of China's biggest Internet firms, including **Alibaba, Tencent, Baidu, Sina and Bytedance**, which once saw **India as their biggest potential overseas market**, are now no longer accessible in India.

### **33. Hong Kong leader vows to restore political order**

- Hong Kong's leader vowed on Wednesday to restore order to the city's legislature and save its political system from "chaos", in a key policy speech at a muted gathering of almost exclusively proBeijing lawmakers.
- **Chief Executive Carrie Lam's** annual policy address to the Legislative Council - postponed for more than a month after she was ordered to travel to mainland China for meetings with central government officials - outlines the administration's plans for the city.
- Hong Kong is ruled under a **'One Country, Two Systems'** model that allows it to retain a degree of autonomy and some freedoms that are denied to citizens on the authoritarian mainland. But while last year saw months of sometimes violent pro-democracy protests, a strict new **national security law** imposed by Beijing in June - as well as anti-pandemic measures limiting public gatherings - have meant Hong Kong's streets have remained largely free from unrest.

#### 34. [Bhutan establishes formal ties with Germany](#)

- Bhutan announced on Wednesday that it had established diplomatic relations with Germany, increasing the restricted number of capitals that Thimphu has formal ties with to 53 states and the EU. The move, which was announced at an “Exchange of Verbal Notes ceremony” in Delhi by **Bhutan’s Ambassador to India Major General Vetsop Namgyel** and **Germany’s Ambassador Walter Lindner**, was described by the German Foreign Office as a “special day” and a “rare” event.
- Until 2007, when Bhutan conducted its first election, it had formal relations with just 22 countries, mostly donor countries such as Japan, Australia and several Nordic countries. It also made a firm decision not to open ties with any of the permanent five members of the UN Security Council.
- After the election of Prime Minister Jigme Thinley in 2008, however, the Bhutanese government rapidly increased its diplomatic forays, signing agreements with 31 countries in five years, possibly with a view to winning the election for a non-permanent seat election at the UNSC in 2013–14, which it eventually lost.
- The ties with Germany mark the **first new diplomatic agreement made by Bhutan since March 2013**, when it had established ties with Oman.

#### 35. [Civil rights pioneer Bruce Boynton dies at 83](#)

- **Bruce Carver Boynton**, a civil rights pioneer **from Alabama** who inspired the landmark ‘**Freedom Rides**’ of 1961, died on Monday. He was 83.
- Mr. Boynton was arrested 60 years ago for entering the white part of a racially segregated bus station in **Virginia** and launching a chain reaction that ultimately helped to bring about the abolition of **Jim Crow laws** in the South. Mr. Boynton contested his conviction, and his appeal resulted in a U.S. Supreme Court decision that prohibited bus station segregation and helped inspire the “**Freedom Rides**”.

#### 36. [Pakistan Cabinet for strict punishment to rapists](#)

- To combat rising cases of sexual attacks on women and children in Pakistan, the federal Cabinet has approved in principle two antirape ordinances aimed at handing out exemplary punishment, including chemical castration and hanging, to rapists, according to a media report.
- The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance, 2020, and the Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, would be finalised in a week to be promulgated, Information Minister Shibli Faraz said. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, the definition of rape has been changed by **incorporating “transgender” and “gangrape” in it**, the report said.
- The proposed laws also prohibit the controversial **two-finger test** performed on rape survivors. **The World Health Organization** has already declared the test as **unscientific, medically unnecessary and unreliable**.

#### 37. [Thai protesters call on king to give up fortune](#)

- Thousands of Thai democracy activists rallied in Bangkok on Wednesday to demand the king give up control of his multibillion dollar fortune, turning their protest movement directly on the once-untouchable monarchy’s vast wealth.
  - Thailand has for months been rocked by youth led protests demanding a new constitution, reform of the untouchable monarchy, and for **Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha** to resign.
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## Science & Technology and Environment

### Daily snippets

#### 1. Willow warbler spotted for the first time

- The willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), one of the longest migrating small birds that breeds throughout northern and temperate Europe and the Palearctic, has been sighted for the first time in India in **Thiruvananthapuram**. The bird weighs around 10 g and it has long wing feathers that help it fly long distances. Usually seen in **European and the Palearctic regions**, the birds migrate to sub-Saharan Africa during early winter.

#### 2. Children account for one in 9 cases

- Children and adolescents account for **one in nine reported COVID-19 infections** across **87 countries**, according to an analysis by UNICEF, which highlights the trifecta of threats due to COVID-19 facing children, including the disruption of essential services and rise in poverty and inequality.
- The analysis seeks to reject the myth that children are not affected by the infection and estimates that children and adolescents account for 11 per cent of the 25.7 million infections reported across 87 countries until November 3.
- Children face a **trifecta of threats**: direct consequences of the disease itself, interruption in essential services and increasing poverty and inequality. Much worse is the impact of disruption of **critical services that support and safeguard children** such as **vaccination and maternal and new-born care**, which could aggravate mortality and morbidity.
- UNICEF calls upon governments to implement a six-point plan which includes bridging the digital divide to ensure all children are able to access school learning and guaranteed nutrition and health services.

#### 3. Doctors on Remdesivir

- Many doctors who have been treating COVID-19 patients in India say that **remdesivir** is no magic bullet but it may still have its uses. The World Health Organisation has recently been advising against the use of remdesivir, which is listed as **experimental therapy for COVID - 19** by the Health Ministry. Meanwhile, the Health Ministry on Saturday said that India has conducted 10,66,022 COVID-19 tests in the last 24 hours, which has increased India's total cumulative tests to 13,06,57,808.

#### 4. India set to launch deep sea mission

- India will soon launch an ambitious '**Deep Ocean Mission**' that envisages exploration of **minerals, energy and marine diversity of the underwater** world, a vast part of which still remains unexplored. The mission, which is expected to cost over ₹4,000 crore, will give a boost to efforts to explore **India's vast Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf**. The mission will also involve developing technologies for different deep ocean initiatives.
- The mission will involve **multi-disciplinary work** with active involvement by different stakeholders like DRDO, Department of Biotechnology, ISRO, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

## 5. [Air pollution linked to health scares for children, says study](#)

- Spike in air pollution levels corresponded to an increase in visits by children to **hospital emergency rooms (ER)** for treatment of acute respiratory infections, finds a two year long study in Delhi. Though the impact of pollution on health is known, there is a paucity of studies that link specific pollutants, for example, sulphur dioxide or nitrous oxide, with adverse health outcomes.
- Previous studies have found that children are more susceptible to **adverse health effects of air pollution** than adults due to immature growth of lungs, making them vulnerable to inflammatory and oxidative damage. **Nitrous oxide and sulphur dioxide emissions** are associated with vehicular and industrial pollution and previous studies have noted an increase in hospital visits when these levels spike, the authors note. The study analysed hospital visits of 19,120 children over two years, **from June 2017 to February 2019**. Roughly, a 21%-28% increase in visits by children manifesting symptoms of **acute respiratory disease** during days of 'high' and 'moderate' level pollution, compared to days of 'low pollution' was observed.
- The researchers compared levels of PM10 and PM 2.5, SO2 (sulphur dioxide), CO (carbon monoxide), NO2 (nitrous oxide) and O3 (ozone) with day wise data on ER admissions of children. The **age of the children studied ranged from 5 months to 13 years**. The pollutants most strongly linked with more ER respiratory visits were sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. The relative increase in visits was also observed when days preceding pollution spikes were considered, further highlighting the role that pollution plays in **exacerbating respiratory illnesses**.

## 6. [Oxford vaccine is 70% effective](#)

- Pharma major **AstraZeneca** said its COVID-19 vaccine could be as much as 90% effective, giving the world's fight against the global pandemic a new weapon, cheaper to make, easier to distribute and faster to scale up than rivals. The British drug maker said it will have as many as 200 million doses by the end of 2020, around four times as many as U.S. competitor Pfizer. However, AstraZeneca's shares fell 4%, on track for their worst daily performance in six months, as investors perceived the efficacy data as disappointing compared with rivals.
- **Pfizer and Moderna**, which reported that their vaccines **prevented around 95% of cases**, had set the bar for success sky-high. The AstraZeneca shot does, however, have some advantages over offerings from U.S. rivals. The **drug's cost to governments works out at just a few dollars a shot**, a fraction of the price of shots from Pfizer and Moderna, which use a more unconventional technology.
- The AstraZeneca vaccine uses a modified version of a **chimpanzee cold virus** to deliver instructions to cells to fight the target virus, a different approach from Pfizer and Moderna, which rely on new technology known as **messenger RNA (mRNA)**.

## 7. [Sputnik V shows interim efficacy of 91%, says RDIF](#)

- The **Russian COVID-19 vaccine** candidate **Sputnik V** has shown an interim **efficacy of 91%** based on analysing results from nearly 18,000 volunteers, some of whom got the actual vaccine and others a placebo, **the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) said**.
  - While the **interim vaccine efficacy numbers** are in same range as trial data reported by biotechnology and pharma companies such as PfizerBioNTech (95%), Moderna (94.5%) and Oxford AstraZeneca (with an efficacy of 70%), Sputnik V appears, so far, to have **relatively lower protectivity**.
  - The latest results, which are yet to be announced in a medical journal, were gleaned from ongoing double blind, randomised, **placebo controlled Phase III clinical trials** in Russia involving 40,000 volunteers.
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## Economics and Finance

### Daily snippets

#### 1. Oxford Economics cuts India's 2020-2025 growth average at 4.5%

- **Global forecasting firm Oxford Economics** revised downwards its **India growth forecast over the medium term to an average 4.5%** over 2020-25, from its pre pandemic projection of 6.5%. In a research note, it said India's post COVID-19 scars could be among the worst in the world.
- It said an adequate and well-designed fiscal stimulus would halve this impact by limiting deterioration in pre COVID-19 headwinds. The report added that, It's likely that headwinds already hampering growth prior to 2020 - such as stressed corporate balance sheets, elevated non performing assets of banks, the fallout in nonbank financial companies (NBFCs), and labour market weakness - will worsen.

#### 2. Centre keen to grow India as a large data economy : Ravishankar Prasad

- The government plans to cultivate India as a **large data economy** and as a precursor, the country will soon have its Data Protection Law in place, said **Union IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad**.
- He further said data would drive the digital economy and international commerce, and that it offered 'a great opportunity for India to emerge as a data economy'. India produces a 'humongous' amount of data in its digital ecosystem, be it mobile phones, Aadhaar database, ecommerce transactions, or e-payments.

#### 3. Modi moots for closer ties with Luxembourg

- Asserting that there was a huge potential to further ramp up economic engagement between India and Luxembourg, the third largest source of **Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPI)**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for strengthening ties in areas such as financial and digital technologies.
- Luxembourg is one of the most important financial centres globally. Several Indian companies have raised capital by issuing Global Depository Receipts at the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. Luxembourg based investment funds hold substantial banking and asset management market share in portfolio investments in India.

#### 4. Investment in data centres grow to \$396 million

- Data centres in India are emerging as an alternative real estate asset and have attracted investments of \$396 million from January to September 2020. The report - ***Navigating the India Data Centre Lifecycle - Trends & Perspectives*** - noted that data centres are now the **hottest alternative real estate asset**.
- At least 28 large hyper scale data centres are expected in India over the next 3 years, the report said. Mumbai has remained the most popular location for data centres **given the undersea cable landings**.

#### 5. CCI approves Reliance-Future group deal

- The Competition Commission has approved Reliance's proposed acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing businesses of Future Group.

## 6. Raising private banks promoter cap to 26%

- **An Internal Working Group (IWG)** of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has recommended **raising the cap on promoters' stake in private sector banks to 26%** in the long run (15 years). The holding is currently mandated at 15% of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank.
- IWG, has also suggested that large corporate or industrial houses be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to **the Banking Regulation Act, 1949** (to prevent connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and nonfinancial group entities); and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates, including consolidated supervision.
- **Well-run non banking financial companies (NBFCs)**, with an asset size of ₹50,000 crore and above, including those owned by a corporate house, may be considered for conversion into banks subject to completion of 10 years of operations, meeting due diligence criteria and compliance with additional specified conditions. The IWG was constituted to review the extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for private sector banks in India.
- The panel also recommended that for Payments Banks intending to convert to a Small Finance Bank (SFB), their track record of three years should be considered sufficient. The IWG also suggested that the minimum initial capital requirement for licensing new banks be enhanced from ₹500 crore to ₹1,000 crore for universal banks, and be raised to ₹300 crore from ₹200 crore for Small Finance Banks.

## 7. Capgemini to hire rural women graduates

- French technology major Capgemini has introduced **Sakhi Drishtikon**, an initiative to **train and hire rural women graduates, post graduates or diploma holders** in technical subjects from economically weaker families and bring them into the **mainstream workforce**. Under this initiative, Capgemini would have **500 rural women from rural India** joining its workforce by December end while, during calendar 2021, the firm expected 15% of its fresh hiring to come from rural talent.

## 8. What is a moratorium

- Background : **Lakshmi Vilas Bank case**
- The RBI, the **regulatory body overseeing the country's financial system**, has the power to ask the government to have a moratorium placed on a bank's operations for a specified period of time. Under such a moratorium, depositors will **not be able to withdraw funds at will**. Usually, there is a ceiling that limits the amount of money that can be withdrawn by the bank's customers. Usually, the RBI steps in if it judges that a bank's net worth is fast eroding and it may reach a state where it may not be able to repay its depositors. When a bank's **assets (mainly the value of loans given to borrowers)** decline below the level of **liabilities (deposits)**, it is in danger of failing to meet its obligations to depositors.
- After banks were **nationalised in 1969**, the RBI sought to always intervene to **protect depositors' interests and prevent commercial banks from failing**. A moratorium primarily helps prevent what is known as a '**run**' on a **bank**, by clamping down on rapid outflow of funds by wary depositors, who seek to take their money out in fear of the bank's imminent collapse. A moratorium gives both **the regulator and the acquirer** time to first take stock of the actual financial situation at the troubled bank. It allows for a realistic estimation of assets and liabilities, and for the regulator to facilitate capital infusion, should it find that necessary.

## 9. Single window approval for FDI by March

- A new, unified single window clearance system for **foreign direct investment (FDI)** proposals would be in place by March 31 which would make approvals **transparent and expeditious**.

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman** said the government had seen fresh interest from large sovereign wealth funds looking to invest in the country and conceded the need to address many compliance issues that worry investors at large.

#### 10. [Move to allow corporates to set up banks attracts flak](#)

- The RBI working group's proposal to allow corporate houses to set up banks is a "bombshell" and at this juncture, it is more important to stick to the tried and tested limits on involvement of business houses in the banking sector, says an article written by **former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan** and **ex deputy governor Viral Acharya**.
- An **Internal Working Group (IWG) set up by the RBI**, had last week made various recommendations, including that a large corporate may be permitted to promote banks after necessary amendments to the **Banking Regulation Act**.
- **S&P Global Ratings** also expressed scepticism over allowing corporate ownership in banks given **India's weak corporate governance** amid large corporate defaults over the past few years. It added that Corporate ownership of banks raises the risk of inter-group lending, diversion of funds, and reputational exposure. Also, the risk of contagion from corporate defaults to the financial sector increases significantly,

#### 11. [Smartphone exports could cross \\$1.5 billion](#)

- India is expected to export smartphones worth **\$1.5 billion (over ₹11,113 crore)** this year to various countries, including the UAE, the U.S. and Russia, according to a report by research firm techARC.
- techARC, in its **India Mobile Phone Exports Market Scan Report**, pegged total exports of smartphones to cross \$1.5 billion by value in 2020, with smartphones accounting for over **98% of the total mobile phones exported**.

#### 12. [NSE expels Karvy from membership](#)

- The **National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has declared Karvy Stock Broking as a defaulter for **non compliance with the regulatory provisions** of the bourse. Earlier, Karvy had transferred securities of clients into its demat accounts by misusing the PoAs (power of attorney) given by its clients, in an unauthorised manner.

#### 13. [Government orders 'priority' for local tenders](#)

- The government has tightened its procurement norms to make it tougher for Ministries to pursue global tenders for **contracts worth up to ₹200 crore**. Under the **AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** announced in May, the government had barred departments from issuing global tenders for contracts worth ₹200 crore or less. This was done to help boost the prospects of domestic Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
- Ministries can no longer seek a nod for issuing a global tender unless they have first floated a domestic tender for their requirements, and tried to locate domestic producers in coordination with industry bodies.

### [Commentary on India's trade : Are Free Trade Agreements really the reason](#)

1. Between **1995 and 2018**, India's overall export growth averaged 13.4% (in dollars) annually. This is the third best performance in the world among the top 50 exporters and not far behind China's growth of just over 15%.. It is true that despite the evident success, India is not a big exporter on the global scale; its share of global manufacturing exports is only 1.7%, marginally less than Vietnam's, at 1.75%

#### 2. [Strong Rupee Approach :](#)

- **How much of the blame for India's below potential growth can be ascribed to trade agreements?** The Narendra Modi government's "strong rupee" approach is among the chief causes that have been shown to have

slowed down exports. Strong rupee means that the cost for domestic exporters will be high and thus will provide incentives for exporters of other countries to import in India. India's switch to a **"strong rupee" policy**, in line with the Prime Minister's pre 2014 election campaign, led to the surge in imports of **goods and services preferred by non rich Indians**, and a measurable **loss of competitiveness in labour intensive exports**.

- **Studies of trade agreements by NITI Aayog** show that Indian exporters suffer logistics, compliance and transaction costs twice as high in other countries. This **low ease of doing business** relative to other exporting countries has further eroded the competitiveness of Indian exports.

### 3. **On manufacturing**

- **Between 1995 and 2018**, India's manufacturing exports (in dollars) grew on average by 12.1%, **nearly twice the world average**. This was the third best performance in the world, surpassed only by China and Vietnam. Even during the years of slowing global trade post 2012, when world exports were virtually flat, India continued to gain global market share, its exports growing by about 3%.
- If India's manufacturing sector finds itself in crisis since 2012, it is in large part because of policy errors inflicted first by the Manmohan Singh led government and then the one headed by Mr. Modi.
- Between **fiscal years 2006 to 2012**, manufacturing sector GDP grew by an average of 9.5% per year. Then, over the next six years, manufacturing sector GDP growth declined to 7.4%, coinciding with the phase of corruption scandals, a severe banking crisis, demonetisation and a badly designed Goods and Services Tax (GST).

### 4. **Globalisation and openness to trade**

- Openness to trade is in fact one of the few channels available to India for **generating employment in the post COVID-19 world**, given that the financial positions of households, government and banks are too weak to support the economy.
  - **Trade openness versus import substitution** is the one policy debate where policymakers need to look no further than India's own pre 1991 experience of inferior, low-quality products on the one hand and low growth rates on the other.
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## Sports

### Daily snippets

#### 1. Football genius Diego Maradona passes away

- World footballing great **Diego Armando Maradona** died on Wednesday after suffering a heart attack at his home in Buenos Aires, those close to him confirmed. He passed away less than a month after his 60th birthday.
  - Rising to stardom from a grimy Buenos Aires slum to lead **Argentina** to World Cup victory, Maradona was a rags-to-riches story in his football-mad homeland and gained the iconic status of fellow Argentines **Che Guevara** and **Evita Peron**.
  - One of the most gifted football players in history, Maradona's pinnacle of glory came when he captained **Argentina to win the World Cup in 1986** before plunging into misery when he was dropped from the 1994 World Cup for doping.
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### Suggested Readings

1. Moral Policing of OTT platforms, [Link to article](#)
  2. Implications of India outside RCEP, [Link to article](#)
  3. Dealing with Habeas Corpus cases, [Link to article](#)
  4. GAVI - COVAX facility, [Link to article](#)
  5. Protecting the heart and soul of the Indian Constitution, [Link to article](#)
  6. Boeing's 737 MAX flight ban lifted, [Link to article](#)
  7. 118A of Kerala Police Act, [Link to article](#)
  8. Comedians, Courts and the Constitution, [Link to article](#)
  9. Allahabad High Court on conversion for marriage, [Link to article](#)
  10. White Hat Jr. defamation case, [Link to article](#)
  11. Citations of SC judgements by foreign courts, [Link to article](#)
  12. A Police Constable's Constitution, [Link to article](#)
  13. Corporates as Banks : RBI's IWG, [Link to article](#)
  14. Supreme Court and protecting people's rights, [Link to article](#)
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Sources referred to : [The Hindu](#), [The Indian Express](#), [Live Law](#), [Bar & Bench](#)

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