

SPORTS UPDATE

NATIONAL NEWS



PEOPLE IN NEWS

MARCH 2020 SET-2

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National News

1. India condemns terror attack in Kabul

India has strongly condemned the terror attack at an event in Afghanistan capital Kabul that killed at least 32 people and injured dozens. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the international community must unite in the fight against terrorism and hold the perpetrators and sponsors of terrorism to account. The terror attack came days after the Taliban and the US inked a landmark peace deal, which provides for withdrawal of American forces from Afghanistan. The Islamic State terror group has claimed responsibility for the attack

2. GoI decides to have at least one PMBJP Kendra in every block

Union Government is planning to have at least one Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya JanAushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) Kendra in each block of India. The above plans are to be executed successfully by the end of year 2020. The above announcement was made by Union Minister of State in the Prime minister's Office Dr. Jitendra Singh at 'Jan Aushadhi Diwas' celebrations held in Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir.

Janaushadhi Kendras is the world's biggest retail pharma chain having around 6,200 outlets in 700 districts of the country. It also provides a good source of self-employment with sustainable and regular earnings. The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya JanAushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) Kendra were launched by the Indian Government to promote affordable and quality generic medicines among the people.

3. 'NIGHA' app launched to curb poll irregularities in Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the NIGHA App through which citizens can lodge complaints against leaders who are resorting to Model Code of Conduct violations. Jagan, who earlier warned that candidates found distributing cash or liquor to influence voters will not be spared, launched the NIGHA App at his camp office aimed at curbing the use of money and alcohol in the upcoming local body elections.

The app was developed by the Panchayat Raj department, in a bid to crackdown on electoral malpractices. Through the app, common citizens can lodge complaints on poll malpractices from any part of the State. Officials said any citizen can download the NIGHA App in their smart phones. he photos and videos of distribution of money and alcohol and any other activity that violates Model Code of Conduct can be uploaded through this app. The complaints registered through this app will be routed automatically to the Central Control Room and the information will be shared with the officials concerned, who will take stringent action against the persons responsible for the violations. The app was launched in addition to the measures taken up by State Election Commission and police department to curb malpractices in the local body elections.

4. Centre forms committee for implementation of Kisan Rail scheme

The Union Government has formed a committee for the implementation of Kisan Rail. The committee comprising representatives from the Railway and Agriculture Ministries will work out the modalities of the scheme. The

committee will also look into the creation of a cold supply chain for the perishable goods by initiating express and freight trains with refrigerated coaches.

The Kisan Rail scheme was proposed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her presentation of the Union Budget 2020-21. Under the scheme, the centre envisages setting up of a national cold supply chain to transport highly perishable goods including milk, fish and meat. The scheme has been proposed to be set up through a public-private-partnership (PPP) arrangement. The Kisan Rail will include refrigerated coaches in Express and Freight trains.

Currently, nine refrigerated vans with a carrying capacity of 17 tonnes each are already in operation. The vans are used for the transportation of highly-perishable goods. They were procured through the Rail Coach Factory at Kapurthala. Besides this, temperature-controlled perishable cargo centres have been set up in different cities including Ghazipur Ghat in Uttar Pradesh, New Azadpur, in Adarsh Nagar, Delhi and Raja ka Talab in Uttar Pradesh as a pilot project under Container Corporation of India's Kisan Vision Project. Another is under construction at Lasalgaon in Nasik, Maharashtra.

5. Maharashtra govt approves implementation of "happy hour" for autorickshaws

Maharashtra government has approved the implementation of "happy hour" for autorickshaws as recommended by Khatua panel. Under this, the fares will be slashed by 15 percent between 12 noon and 4 pm. The decision will however not be applicable to local taxis and app based taxis. The panel had said that the new concept will turn lean hours to happy hours, especially for housewives and senior citizens who normally don't have a fixed schedule for their outings. While citizens are pleased with the move, autorickshaw unions have indicated that they will oppose the move.

6. LPG scheme PM Ujjwala Yojana closed; only 3 States & 5 UTs become kerosene-free

In accordance with the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Petroleum headed by Ramesh Bidhuri, only three States and five Union Territories have become kerosene-free even though in September 2019 the government has met the target of 8 crore LPG (Liquefied petroleum gas) connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). The kerosene-free states are Haryana, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh and Union Territories (UTs) are Delhi, Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Andaman & Nicobar Island and Puducherry. The report points the gap between the continuing use of kerosene and the claim of 97% LPG coverage nationwide.

7. Odisha Govt Creates 'Mission Shakti' Dept For Women Development

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced the creation of a 'Mission Shakti' department, exclusively for the development of the women. Odisha will be the first state to have an exclusive department for the self-help groups. This will be called the Department of Mission Shakti and will be dedicated to all the women of Odisha. The state government has introduced an independent Nutrition Budget whose focus will be on mother-child nutrition.

8. 'COVA Punjab' mobile app launched by Punjab Govt

Chief Secretary of Punjab, Karan Avtar Singh has launched a mobile application, COVA Punjab. COVA stands for Corona Virus Alert. This app has been developed by the Department of Government Reforms and Public

Grievances in consultation with the Health and Family Welfare Department to spread awareness by sharing various travel and preventive care advisories.

The app would inform people to check out for symptoms as provided by the government from time to time and follow the advisory given thereafter. The app also suggests the nearest hospital and nodal officer of the district where the patient can reach in case he/she is symptomatic. The app was available at Android Playstore and iOS app store with name COVA Punjab.

9. Coronavirus: Govt makes sanitizers, masks essential commodities to ensure supplies

Hand sanitizers and masks will be treated as essential commodities till 30 June. The Centre's move is part of its efforts to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus that has so far claimed more than 5,000 lives the world over including one in India. More than 80 are affected in the country.

The move comes as panic buying by people resulted in stocks of masks and sanitizers disappearing from the markets. They are being sold at exorbitant prices in areas where the supplies exist.

Under the Essential Commodities Act, states can ask manufacturers to enhance their production capacity of these items, to make the supply chain smooth, while under the Legal Metrology Act, which is also in force, the states can ensure sale of both at maximum retail price (MRP).

An offender under the EC Act may be punished with imprisonment of up to seven years or fine, or both, and under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, he can be detained for up to six months.

The government said the decision would empower the Centre and states/union territories to regulate production, quality, distribution, etc., of masks and hand sanitizers and smoothen the sale and availability of these items. It will also enable authorities to carry out operations against speculators. The government also invoked the Disaster Management Act to ensure price regulation and availability of surgical and protective mask, hand sanitizer and gloves.

10. India delivers 600 tonnes of rice to flood-hit Madagascar

Ambassador Abhay Kumar handed over 600 tonnes of rice on behalf of India to Madagascar Foreign Minister Tehindrazanarivelo Djacoba Liva to deliver quick relief to the flood victims of the island country.

INS Shardul brought the relief material and arrived at Port Antsiranana in Madagascar. This is the second delivery of relief materials for Madagascar flood victims and the largest humanitarian aid so far from India to Madagascar. This is also the biggest relief load ever carried by any Indian warship, loaded, transported and unloaded in record time, for quick relief assistance. On arrival at the port, the Commanding Officer of the ship along with Indian Embassy officials called on the Mayor of Antsiranana and Military and Navy authorities. Earlier, on January 30, INS Airavat brought immediate relief material. India was the first country to respond during devastation caused by Cyclone Diane in January this year.

International News

1. US House passes \$8.3 bn emergency funding bill to combat coronavirus

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed a \$8.3 billion emergency funding bill to help contain and treat the novel coronavirus outbreak in the United States.

The measure will head to the Senate for an expected swift vote. Eleven people have died from the novel coronavirus in the United States and more than 100 people have been confirmed infected. More than 90,000 people have been infected with the virus worldwide and more than 3,100 have died from complications associated with the infection.

The bill includes \$3 billion to develop vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics for coronavirus; \$2.2 billion for public health response efforts; \$1 billion for medical supplies and other health care preparedness efforts.

In addition, the bill includes low-interest loans to help small businesses survive the economic damages brought on by the crisis. It also includes \$1.25 billion to help in overseas efforts to contain the outbreak.

2. Saudi Arabia reopens Mecca's Grand Mosque but bars people from touching the cuboid Kaaba shrine

Saudi Arabia reopened the area around the sacred Kaaba in Mecca's Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest site, reversing one of a series of measures introduced to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

Saudi authorities this week suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage, during which worshippers circle the Kaaba seven times, and also announced the temporary closure of the area around the cube structure. But King Salman has 'allowed for the opening of the Mataf (where people circle the Kaaba) for non-umrah performers'. Hundreds of Muslims were seen rotating around the Kaaba, but the area between two hills that pilgrims must go between seven times to complete umrah remained closed.

3. High court of Bangladesh declares 'Joy Bangla' as national slogan

The High Court of Bangladesh has ordered that 'Joy Bangla' will be the national slogan of Bangladesh. The court also directed the authorities to ensure that teachers and students use the slogan after assembly. The two-judge bench of High Court asked the authorities to take necessary steps so that all the people holding constitutional posts and state officials use 'Joy Bangla' after their speeches on national days and other appropriate occasions.

'Joy Bangla' was the main slogan during the liberation war of Bangladesh fought against Pakistan in 1971. The first President of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also used 'Joy Bangla' in his speeches and especially during his historic 7th March speech in 1971 declaring the goal of independence for Bangladesh.

4. United Nations adopts political declaration on women's rights

In a Political Declaration adopted today by Member States commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, leaders pledged to ramp up efforts to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, still considered the most visionary blueprint on women's rights.

The Political Declaration is the main outcome of the 64th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the largest annual gathering on gender equality and the empowerment of women at the UN. This year the Commission decided to scale back the session to a one-day procedural meeting with delegations and civil society representatives based in New York, in light of the COVID-19 situation. This year's session focused entirely on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The review took stock of the status of women, including in-depth assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

5. Europe is now the 'epicenter' of the coronavirus pandemic, WHO says

Europe has become the new epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic as cases in China slow and the deadly coronavirus runs through Italy and nearby countries.

WHO officials declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the virus spreads rapidly across the world from Asia to Europe, the Middle East and now parts of the United States.

Emerging from Wuhan, China, less than three months ago, the virus has spread to more than 132,000 people across 123 countries and territories with 5,000 people dead. Italy currently has the most cases outside of China with at least 15,113 infections, followed by Spain at 4,334, Germany at 3,156 and France at 2,882, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Other countries in Europe are seeing cases soar. Switzerland currently has 1,125 cases, followed by Sweden at 809, the Netherlands at 804 and Denmark at 788.

6. Trump Signs Bill to Help Telecoms Replace Huawei Equipment

President Donald Trump signed into law a bill that provides \$1 billion to help small telecom providers replace equipment made by China's Huawei and ZTE.

The U.S. government considers the Chinese companies a security risk and has pushed its allies not to use Huawei equipment in next-generation cellular networks, known as 5G. Both companies have denied that China uses their products for spying.

The Federal Communications Commission has already voted to bar U.S. phone companies from using government subsidies for equipment from the two Chinese companies. This bill affects mostly small, rural companies, because the major U.S. network providers don't use the Chinese equipment.

The White House said that using untrustworthy vendors to build communications infrastructure threatens national security by exposing networks to actors who are potentially influenced by foreign entities.

The legislation creates a reimbursement program that small telecom providers can use when removing and replacing equipment manufactured by entities deemed to pose unacceptable national security risks. The bill is aimed at telecom providers with fewer than 2 million customers.

People in News

1. **Sophie Gregoire Trudeau, wife of Canada PM Justin Trudeau, tests positive for coronavirus**

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's wife, Sophie Gregoire, has tested positive for COVID-19. Health professionals are set to reach out to people who have been in close contact with Gregoire Trudeau. As a precautionary measure and following the advice of doctors, he will be in isolation for a planned period of 14 days.

2. **Indian Mountaineer Scales Australia's Highest Mountain Peak**

Indian mountaineer Bhawna Dehariya has successfully scaled Mount Kosciuszko, the highest mountain peak in Australia.

Ms Dehariya, who last year scaled Mount Everest, successfully summit the 2,228-metres Mount Kosciuszko. Bhawna Dehariya had scaled Mount Kilimanjaro on the occasion of Diwali on November 27th, last year.

3. **Nupur Kulshrestha becomes Indian Coast Guard's first woman DIG**

Nupur Kulshrestha becomes the first woman to be promoted as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Indian Coast Guard. She joined Indian Coast Guard in 1999. The Indian Coast Guard is a multi-mission organization, conducting round-the-year real-life operations at sea.

The Indian Coast Guard was formally established on 18 August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 of the Parliament of India as an independent Armed force of India. It operates under the Ministry of Defence. The Coast Guard works in close cooperation with the Indian Navy, the Department of Fisheries, the Department of Revenue (Customs) and the Central and State police forces.

Economy, Business and Defence News

1. **Rajnath Singh receives Rs 100 cr cheque as interim dividend from Defence PSU**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh received a cheque of 100 crore rupees as the interim dividend from Defence Public Sector Undertaking, Bharat Dynamics Limited, BDL in New Delhi. The Hyderabad-based Defence Public Sector Undertaking has declared an interim dividend of six rupees 25 paise per share of 10 rupees each for the financial year 2019-20. It pertains to the Government holding in the undertaking.

2. **SBI evaluating draft scheme of reconstruction for Yes Bank: Rajnish Kumar**

SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar spoke on the latest developments regarding the Yes Bank crisis on. The chairman said that the draft scheme of reconstruction has been received by SBI and their legal team is working on the plan. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a draft rescue plan for Yes Bank, saying State Bank of India (SBI) has expressed its willingness to invest in the troubled lender.

The draft 'reconstruction scheme' said Yes Bank's authorized capital will increase to ₹5,000 crore (from ₹600 crore currently) and the paid-up capital will be enhanced to ₹4,800 crore, comprising 24 billion shares of ₹2 face value. This will be effective from the day the government notifies the scheme in the Official Gazette. Currently, there are 2.55 billion fully paid-up shares issued, totalling ₹510 crore. The draft released by RBI stated that the investor bank will have to pick up 49 per cent stake and it cannot reduce holding to below 26 per cent before three years from the date of capital infusion. The draft was released a day after the RBI imposed a moratorium on Yes Bank, restricting withdrawals to ₹50,000 per depositor till April 3. During the moratorium period, Yes Bank will not be able to grant or renew any loan or advance, make any investment, incur any liability, or agree to disburse any payment. The RBI also superseded the board of the private sector lender, which is now being headed by former deputy managing director and CFO of SBI Prashant Kumar.

3. **MCA launches LLP Settlement Scheme, 2020; Shall allow a One-Time Condonation of Delay in Filing Statutorily Required Documents with Registrar**

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has launched the Limited Liability Partnership LLP Settlement Scheme, 2020. It has been observed that due to applicability of additional fee on late filing, which in case of inordinate delay could actually become a financial burden, a large number of Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) have remained non-compliant, mainly on account of their inability to pay late fees for the cumulative period of delay. As part of Government's constant efforts to promote ease of doing business, it has been decided to give a One-time relaxation in an additional fee to the defaulting LLPs to make good their default by filing pending documents and to serve as a compliant LLP in future. Accordingly, the Central Government has decided to introduce a scheme namely "LLP Settlement Scheme, 2020", by allowing a One-time condonation of delay in filing statutorily required documents with the Registrar. LLPs, that wish to avail themselves of the scheme, may file the pending documents/Forms and make good the defaults, to gain immunity from prosecutions for such defaults. The Scheme shall come into force on the 16th March, 2020 and shall remain in force up to 13th June, 2020. It would be applicable to a "defaulting LLP" for filing overdue documents, which were due for filing till

31st October, 2019 on a payment of a nominal additional fee of Rs 10/- per day for the period of delay, in addition to any fee as is payable for filing of such document or return, subject to a maximum amount of Rs. 5,000/- as the additional fee per document.

4. Concerns abound over Lord Jagannath's ₹545 crore stuck in Yes Bank

Devotees of Lord Jagannath and priests at the centuries-old temple in Puri are worried following RBI restrictions on Yes Bank where ₹545 crore is deposited in the deity's name.

The RBI has capped withdrawals from Yes Bank at ₹50,000 for the next one month and imposed strict limits on operations after the cash-starved lender faced "regular outflow of liquidity" following an effort to raise new capital failed.

5. Govt Says Rs 5,275cr Remains Unspent Under MPLAD Scheme

A cumulative amount of Rs 5,275.24 crore remained unspent under Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme. The government released Rs 53,704.75 crore under MPLAD scheme out of which Rs 51,267.75 crore was spent. As per the data given by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Rs 5,275.24 was the "unspent fund".

The unspent amount under the scheme was Rs 4,103.97 crore on March 31, 2019; Rs 4,877.71 crore on March 31, 2018 and Rs 5,029.31 crore on March 31, 2017.

Under MPLAD scheme, each Member of Parliament has the choice to suggest to the District Collector for development works to the tune of Rs 5 crore per annum to be taken up in his/her constituency.

Rajya Sabha MPs can recommend works in one or more districts in the State from where he/she has been elected. The nominated members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha may select any one or more districts from any one State for implementation of their choice of work under the scheme.

6. Union Cabinet clears draft resolution scheme for YES Bank revival

The Union Cabinet cleared a draft resolution scheme for cash-starved YES Bank. Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced a draft scheme of reconstruction for the lender, according to which the strategic investor in the bank would pick up 49 per cent stake and not reduce holding to under 26 per cent before three years from the date of capital infusion.

The scheme was announced a day after the RBI imposed a month-long moratorium on the bank, restricting withdrawals to Rs 50,000 per depositor till April 3.

State Bank of India (SBI) would infuse Rs 7,250 crore into ailing YES Bank and pick 7,250 million shares at Rs 10 each, and its shareholding would remain within 49 per cent of the paid-up capital of the private sector lender

7. DST, Intel, SINE-IIT Bombay launch 3rd edition of 'Plugin'

The Department of Science & Technology (DST) - Government of India, Intel India, and Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurship (SINE)-IIT Bombay have announced the third edition of Plugin, a one-year collaborative accelerator program for hardware and systems software startups. Eleven startups have been selected from over 200 entries from across the country in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), security and platform to receive mentoring and coaching, access to labs for tools and platforms, technical and financial support, local and international ecosystem connect and visibility. A total of 20 startups were shortlisted from over 200 entries from across India for an initial four-day bootcamp. These focused on innovative applications of emerging technologies such as AI, ML, Internet of Things (IoT), edge computing, among others, in the healthcare, manufacturing, industrial, retail, automotive and banking domains. The final 11 startups were chosen post the initial bootcamp and due diligence, of which eight have customer validated products in the market.

8. Air India announces temporary suspension of its flight services to Rome, Milan & Seoul

National carrier Air India has announced temporary suspension of its flight services to Rome, Milan and Seoul. While services to Rome in Italy are being discontinued from March 15 to March 25, flight operations to Milan in Italy and Seoul in South Korea will remain suspended between March 14 and March 28. The decision came following the government suspending all visas, except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, till April 15 to prevent the spread of coronavirus yesterday. Passengers of an Air India flight from Milan to New Delhi, which landed at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport yesterday, were screened as part of the ongoing preventive measure. The operating crew of the flight has self-quarantined for 14 days.

9. DA (dearness allowance) of government employees hiked by 4%

Union minister Prakash Javadekar said that the government has hiked DA by 4%, which means the dearness allowance has been increased from 17% of basic pay/pension to 21% of basic pay/pension for central government employees and pensioners. The move will benefit at least 50 lakh government employees and 65 lakh pensioners. The hike would be effective from January 1. The cost to the exchequer will be ₹14,500 crore.

10. Deadline for bids to buy 100% stake in Air India extended till April 30

Union Government today extended the deadline for submitting bids for buying 100 per cent stake in Air India till 30th of April. The deadline was originally set at 17th of March.

The government had allowed access to the virtual data room of Air India to interested bidders late in February and allowed them further time till March 6th to pose queries. Home Minister Amit Shah-led Ministerial Panel on Air India decided on extending the deadline for submission of Expression of Interest (EoI) by interested bidders till 30th of April.

11. Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates exits company's board of directors

Microsoft announced that co-founder Bill Gates has left its board of directors to devote more time to philanthropy.

The 64-year-old stopped being involved in day-to-day operations at the firm more than a decade ago, turning his attention to the foundation he launched with his wife, Melinda. Gates served as chairman of Microsoft's board of directors until early in 2014 and has now stepped away entirely. Gates left his CEO position in 2000, handing the company reins to Steve Ballmer to devote more time to his charitable foundation. He gave up the role of chairman at the same time Nadella became Microsoft's third CEO in 2014.

12. YES Bank crisis: RBI's Moratorium on lender to be lifted on March 18

The moratorium on Yes Bank will be lifted by March 18 and the new board led by CEO and MD Prashant Kumar will be put in place by the end of this month, . The government notified the Yes Bank Reconstruction Scheme 2020. Under the plan, SBI cannot reduce its stake in the bank to below 26 per cent for a period of three years, while other investors and existing shareholders will have a lock-in period of three years for 75 per cent of their investment in Yes Bank. However, the lock-in period will not apply to shareholders with less than 100 shares. Apart from Kumar, the reconstructed board of Yes Bank will have Sunil Mehta (former PNB non-executive chairman) as non-executive chairman, and Mahesh Krishnamurthy and Atul Bheda as non-executive directors.

The Yes Bank Reconstruction Scheme 2020 shall come into force on March 13, 2020. The RBI had on March 5 put a moratorium on Yes Bank, restricting withdrawals to Rs 50,000 per depositor till April 3. It superseded the board of the troubled private sector lender and appointed Prashant Kumar as administrator. State Bank of India (SBI), which will hold up to 49 per cent stake in Yes Bank, will nominate two directors on the newly-constituted board and RBI can appoint one or more additional directors.

Any investor, other than SBI, with voting right of 15 per cent in the private lender can nominate one director on Yes Bank's board.

ICICI Bank, Housing Development Finance Corp Ltd, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Bandhan Bank will also join the SBI-led consortium and invest in Yes Bank.

HDFC will invest Rs 1,000 crore in Yes Bank through the purchase of 100 crore shares, Axis Bank will invest Rs 600 crore by buying 60 crore shares, Kotak Mahindra Bank Rs 500 crore through 50 crore shares and Bandhan Bank another Rs 300 crore through the purchase of 30 crore shares.

The authorised capital of the reconstructed lender has been fixed at Rs 6,200 crore. All employees of the bank will continue with the same remuneration and service conditions. However, services of 'key managerial personnel' may be discontinued at any time by the new board, the notification said.

13. Facebook launches 'Pragati' to boost women entrepreneurship in India

Facebook India called for applications for its CSR initiative, Facebook Pragati, powered by N/Core (The/Nudge Centre for Social Innovation). The initiative will incubate and accelerate early-stage women-led non-profits that are working to drive women entrepreneurship and to spread awareness and adoption of technology among women in India. Facebook Pragati will award four grants of up to ₹50 lakh for each non-profit to scale their work.

Non-profits that are less than three years old and have at least one woman founder can apply. They should be able to demonstrate a viable business plan.

Besides a grant of up to ₹50 lakh, each of the non-profits selected for Facebook Pragati initiative will mentored by an N/Core Partner — which include Kamakshi Rao (Partner, Ankur Capital); KR Lakshminaraya (Chief Endowment Officer of Azim Premji Foundation) and SK Jain (Co-founder, WestBridge Capital), among others. The start-ups will also receive hands-on support in areas like technology, marketing and human resources from renowned experts and industry leaders, including Facebook's leadership team and employee volunteers. Along with improving the fundraising strategy of the non-profits through techniques including targeting and storytelling, the programme will also ensure face to face meetings with funders to enable the non-profits to utilise and internalise the learnings, leading to greater sustainability.

The programme will work on building second-tier capacity within the non-profits, with a series of functional mentors across marketing, HR and technology. Apart from creating sustainability, this will also allow founders to spend time on strategic growth, resulting in scaling up faster.

14. Union Cabinet approves construction of 780 km Green National Highway Corridor

The Union Cabinet has approved construction of 780 km Green National Highway Corridor project with an investment of Rs 7660 crore in partnership with the World Bank.

The highway will connect Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Besides up-gradation and redevelopment, environment-friendly and sustainable steps will be taken to build the highway.

15. Discovery of bi-luminescent security ink to curb fake printing of currency notes and passports

The Indian scientists have developed a special safety ink that can help in counterfeiting documents such as passports, packing fake medicines and counterfeiting currency notes. This ink shows two colours when exposed to the light of a certain frequency.

It has been developed by scientists from the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research, Ghaziabad. The study has been published in the Journal of Materials Chemistry-C.

This ink reflects two colours when exposed to the light of a certain frequency. This ink appears white in normal light. However, when ultraviolet light is applied at a frequency of 254 nanometers, it emits a red colour. Similarly, when ultraviolet light is switched off, it emits a green colour.

This newly developed ink emits red color at a frequency of 611 nanometers and green color at a frequency of 532 nanometers due to exposure to ultraviolet light. The red colour emits due to the fluorescence and the emission of green color is due to the phosphorescence effect.

Ranking and Indexes

1. Tamil Nadu tops in Poshan Abhiyan's participants list

Tamil Nadu tops the list of the states in terms of the number of participants in the programme. The Integrated Child Development Scheme has been in force for long in the southern state that has got rejuvenated with the Centre's Poshan Abhiyaan mission. The programme is revitalizing India by reaching out to the children and mothers across the nation.

The Union Government is implementing the flagship programme Poshan Abhiyan for improving the nutritional status of Indian citizens. It helps children, adolescents, pregnant women and lactating mothers by leveraging technology, a targeted approach and convergence. The importance being given to the programme is evident from the fact that as many as fourteen Central Departments and all the State Governments are being involved in the programme.

2. India ranks better in Animal Protection Index 2020, but still needs improvements

India is one of the better-performing countries in the global Animal Protection Index 2020, created by international animal welfare charity, World Animal Protection.

The Animal Protection Index (API) aims to showcase where countries are doing well, and where they fall short on animal welfare policy and legislation, so they can take steps to improve.

The index ranks countries from A (being the highest score) to G (being the weakest score) according to their policy and legislation.

India has attained a C ranking in the index, along with countries like New Zealand, Mexico, France, and Spain.

However, there is room for improvement in many domains related to animal welfare. For instance, animals used in scientific research are exempt from cruelty considerations in the Prevention of Animal Cruelty Act 1960.

Furthermore, there is a lack of regulations regarding the rearing of farm animals, notably with unregulated urban dairy systems developing quickly with very poor welfare standards.

New research reveals poor animal welfare practices, in the trade and farming of wild animals and livestock, which provides the perfect breeding ground for viruses to mutate and spread. If animal welfare laws aren't improved, we face the risk of disease outbreaks becoming more frequent. This is just one of the ways that governments are failing to protect animals and people, says the report.

World Animal Protection assessed the animal welfare policies and legislation of 50 countries and clearly identified a worrying lack of adequate animal welfare laws. It is pushing for urgent improvements.

The index will help countries to put in place good animal welfare practices such as keeping animals clean, healthy and with sufficient space to exhibit natural behaviours. Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Austria are rated with the highest scores, which is encouraging. More countries need to follow their lead and World Animal Protection is

calling on all governments to immediately improve their animal welfare standards, not only for the benefit of animals but also to reduce the risk to public health.

World Animal Protection last year launched a 60-second film to highlight the many ways that we are failing to protect animals, asking the question: does the life of an animal mean nothing at all? A question, we need to ask the governments which currently lack the most basic animal welfare policies.

Sports News

4. Women's T20 World Cup final: Australia beat India at MCG

Australia demolished India by 85 runs to win their fifth Women's T20 World Cup title in front of 86,174 at Melbourne Cricket Ground. It was a near-perfect evening for the hosts, who posted 184-4 after a brutal 75 from Alyssa Healy and opener Beth Mooney's unbeaten 78.

5. PV Sindhu named BBC Indian Sportswoman of Year

Indian badminton player PV Sindhu won the inaugural BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award following a public vote. The shortlist of five contenders also consisted of sprinter Dutee Chand, boxer Mary Kom, wrestler Vinesh Phogat and para-badminton player Manasi Joshi.

In 2019, Sindhu became the first Indian to win badminton World Championship gold in Basel, Switzerland. Sindhu has five World Championship medals and is the first Indian singles badminton player to win an Olympic silver medal.

Days and Events

1. 'Fagli' festival celebrated in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnaur

The traditional 'Fagli' festival was celebrated in Yangpa village of Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh. The festival is organised to observe the "victory of good over evil". This festival is celebrated to mark the end of winter or the beginning of spring. It is celebrated in the entire valley on the moonless night or Amavasya. Men dressed in traditional attire with masks on their faces were seen dancing in circles while hundreds of locals also gathered to watch the event.