

# TARGET PT 2020 in IGG DAYS

CONCEPT | CURRENT AFFAIR | TEST | SNIPPETS

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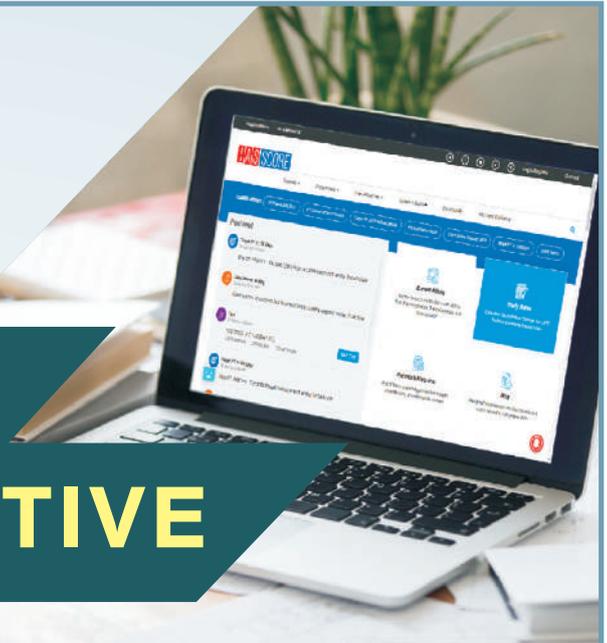


## SNIPPETS



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JUNE

**PUB. ADMN.  
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**HISTORY  
FOUNDATION**

By: **Piyush Kumar**

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JUNE

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# CONTENTS

---

## ■ Day 61: Economy .....01-05

---

- 44<sup>th</sup> Civil Accounts Day ..... 01
- Market Intelligence and Early ..... 02  
Warning System (MIEWS) Portal
- Swap Ratio ..... 03
- UKIERI-UGC Higher Education ..... 04  
Leadership Development  
Programme
- US-India Tax Forum..... 05

---

## ■ Day 62: Science & Tech .....06-10

---

- Akademik Lomonosov ..... 06
- Artificial Intelligence in ..... 07  
Agriculture
- Crypto currencies to be banned... 08
- Cyber security - Agent Smith..... 09
- Hyperloop..... 10

---

## ■ Day 63: Ecology & .....11-15 Geography

---

- American Pocket Shark ..... 11
- Chrysomallon Squamiferum ..... 12
- Dracaena Cambodiana ..... 13
- KandangiSaree of TamilNadu ..... 14  
got GI Tag
- Proahaetulla Antiqua ..... 15

---

## ■ Day 64: Economy.....16-20

---

- EASE 3.0..... 16
- Counter Cyclical Fiscal Policy..... 17
- Market Study on E-commerce ..... 18  
in India
- SPICe+ web form ..... 19
- The Mineral Laws (Amendment).. 20  
Ordinance 2020

---

## ■ Day 65: Ecology &.....22-26 Geography

---

- Asiatic Golden Cat ..... 22
- Decline in population of Hangul .. 23
- New Species of Wasp ..... 24
- Paddy Frog ..... 25
- Purple Frog: To be designated ..... 26  
as Kerala's state amphibian

---

## ■ Day 66: Science & Tech .....27-31

---

- Fedor ..... 27
- Pyrofuse ..... 28
- Sisir Kumar Mitra ..... 29
- Water on Exoplanet ..... 30
- Xenotransplantation ..... 31

---

## ■ Day 67: . Science & Tech .....32-36

---

- COVID-19 declared pandemic ..... 32  
by WHO
- India's First Global Hyperloop ..... 33  
Pod Competition
- ISRO's Assistance in finding Rich . 34  
Fishing Areas
- Low Cost Corona Testing Kit ..... 35
- The World's First Aerogels ..... 36  
made from Scrap Rubber Tyres

---

## ■ Day 68: Polity.....37-41

---

- Eklavya Model Residential ..... 37  
Schools
- Govt. invoke Epidemic Diseases .. 38  
Act, 1897
- Innovate for Accessible India ..... 39  
campaign
- Swachh Bharat Mission Phase II.. 40
- Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana ..... 41

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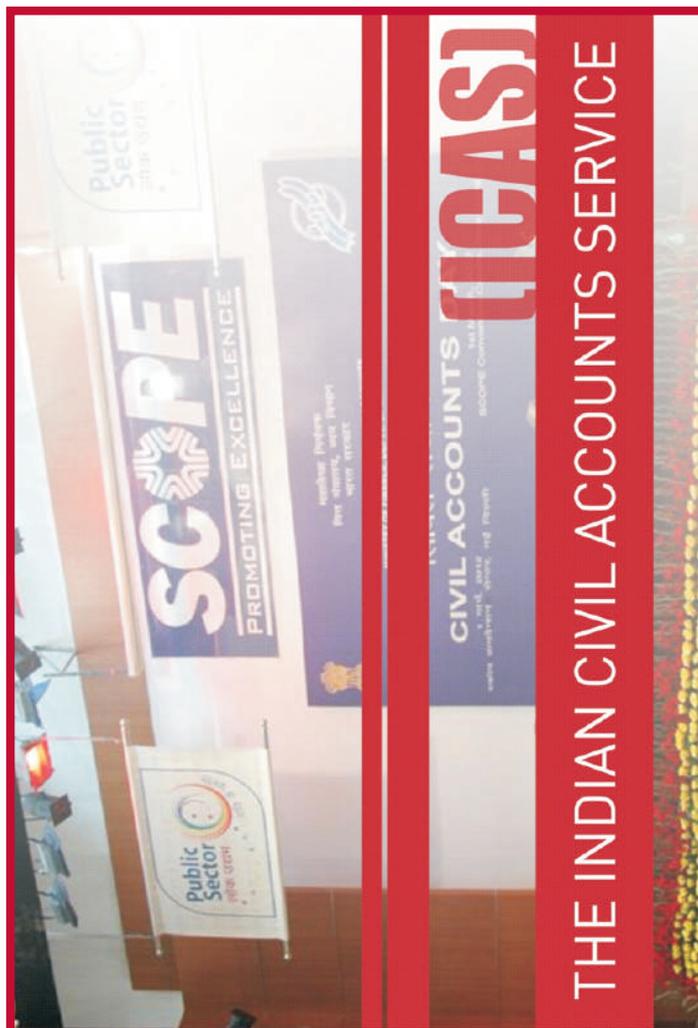
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**ECONOMY**

# 44<sup>th</sup> Civil Accounts Day

The 44th Civil Accounts Day (CAD-2020) was celebrated by Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) on March 1 in New Delhi to mark the 44th anniversary of the beginning of the ICAS on this day in 1976.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

- 1 The Union Government initiated a major reform in Public Financial Management in 1976.
- 2 The Audit and Accounts functions were separated by relieving the Comptroller and Auditor General of his responsibility of preparation of Union Government accounts.
- 3 The accounting function was brought directly under the control of the Executive. Consequently, the Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) was established.
- 4 The ICAS was carved out from the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA & AS), initially through the promulgation of an Ordinance amending the C & AG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Amendment Act, 1976.
- 5 Later on, the Departmentalization of Union Accounts (Transfer of Personnel) Act, 1976 was enacted by Parliament and assented to by Hon'ble President of India on 8th April, 1976.
- 6 The Act was deemed to have come into force with effect from 1st March, 1976. Accordingly, the ICAS is celebrating March 1 every year as the "Civil Accounts Day".

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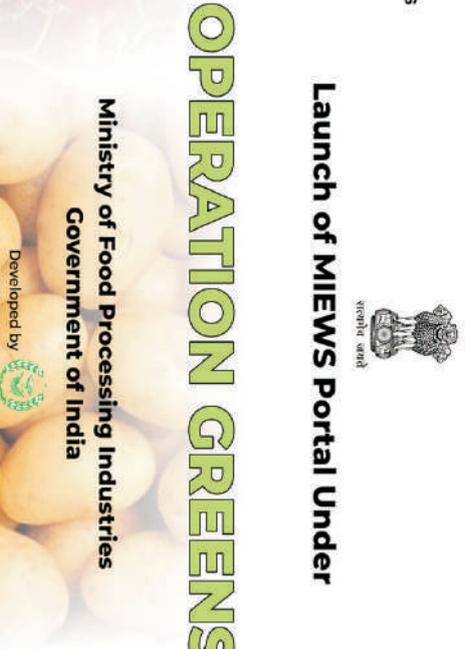
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**ECONOMY**

# Market Intelligence and Early Warning System (MIEWS) Portal



Hon'ble Union Minister for Food Processing Industries



Ministry of Food Processing Industries  
Government of India



Hon'ble Minister of State for Food Processing Industries

**OPERATION GREENS**

Developed by 

Launch of MIEWS Portal Under

**01**

The Government launched the Market Intelligence and Early Warning System (MIEWS) Web Portal.

**02**

The MIEWS Dashboard and Portal is a 'first-of-its-kind' platform for 'real time monitoring' of prices of tomato, onion and potato (TOP) and for simultaneously generating alerts for intervention under the terms of the Operation Greens (OG) scheme.

**03**

The portal would disseminate all relevant information related to TOP crops such as Prices and Arrivals, Area, Yield and Production, Imports and Exports, Crop Calendars, Crop Agronomy, etc in an easy to use visual format.

**04**

As per the terms of the OG Scheme, during a glut situation, evacuation of surplus production from producing areas to consumption centres will be undertaken as determined by the following:

- When the prices fall below preceding 3 years' average market price at the time of harvest;
- When the prices fall more than 50% compared to last year's market price at the time of harvest;
- When the prices fall less than the benchmark, if any, fixed by the State / Central Government for a specified period.

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# Swap Ratio

With the March-end deadline for the biggest-ever amalgamation scheme is approaching, eight state-owned banks announced swap ratios for the proposed mergers.



## What is Swap Ratio?

- Swap ratio is an exchange ratio used in case of mergers and acquisitions.
- It is the ratio in which the acquiring company offers its shares in exchange for the target company's shares.

## Merger of Banks

- According to the mega consolidation plan, OBC and UBI will merge into PNB; Syndicate Bank into Canara Bank; Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank into Union Bank of India; and Allahabad Bank into Indian Bank.
- After the mergers, there will be seven large public sector banks (PSBs) and five smaller ones.

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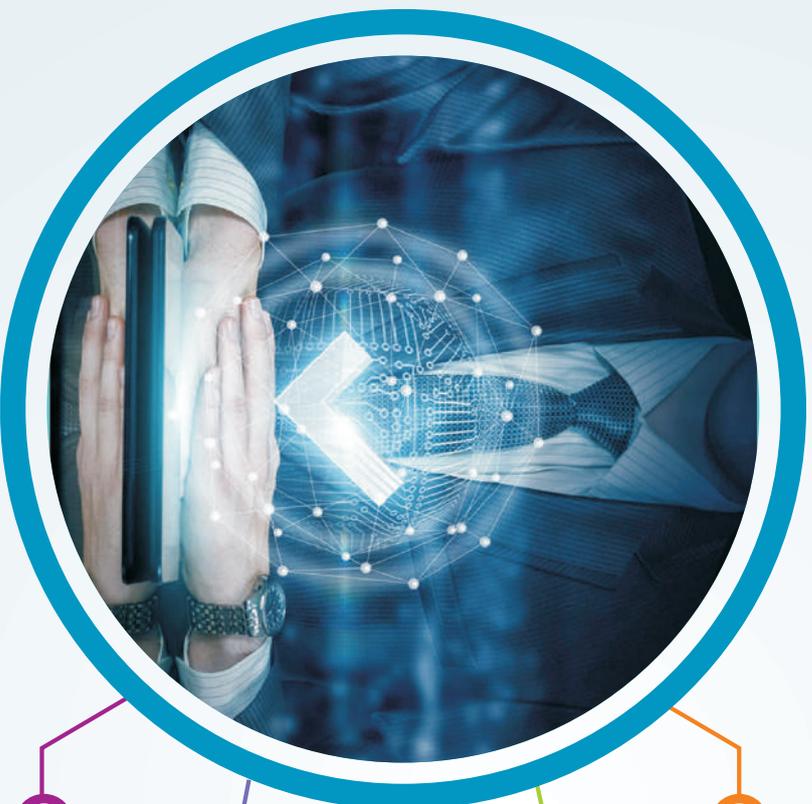
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ECONOMY

# UKIERI-UGC Higher Education Leadership Development Programme

**01**

The Union Ministry for Human Resource Development launched the 'Higher Education Leadership Development Programme for Administrators'.

**02**

It is a joint initiative of UGC and British Council under the auspices of UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI), which aims to deliver a leadership development programme for middle and senior level administrative functionaries in Indian Universities.

**03**

The training for 300 participants is aimed at capacity building for senior leaders, mid-senior level functionaries and academic faculty across Indian higher education institutes (HEIs).

**04**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) will conduct this programme in collaboration with Advance HE as the training partner with globally recognized institutional expertise and leadership excellence from the UK, which is being enabled by the British Council in India.

**05**

Since 2006, UKIERI has been driving internationalisation in higher education sectors of India and the UK by focusing on three key aspects: institutional partnerships (for research and academics), student mobility, and leadership development (for academic leaders).

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**ECONOMY**

# US-India Tax Forum

**1**

During President Trump's maiden India visit, the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) will launch the US-India Tax Forum, an initiative designed for industry and government to engage on global and local tax policy issues.

**2**

The USISPF Tax Forum will bring over 50 tax experts from Fortune 500 companies together with senior officials from Ministry of Finance, Central Board Direct Tax (CBDT), GST Council and Customs Board Indirect Tax & Customs (CBIC).

**3**

The Forum will meet on a regular basis with the government to share feedback on transparency and efficiency in tax policy.

**4**

It will also work with the government to ensure tax policy harmonization between multilateral and unilateral tax treaties.

**5**

On Feb 25th, USISPF together with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF) will also convene the U.S.-India Forum



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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# Akademik Lomonosov

- 1** Akademik Lomonosov is a Russian powership to be operated as the world's first floating nuclear power station.
- 2** It will be deployed at Pevek, in the Chukotka region in Russia's Far East and is planned to come online in end of 2019 as the nearby Bilibino Nuclear Power Plant is shut.
- 3** It intends mainly to serve the region's oil platforms as Russia is expanding the exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Arctic.
- 4** Nuclear agency Rosatom says the reactor is a simpler alternative to building a conventional plant and it intends to sell such reactors abroad.
- 5** Rosatom plans to store spent fuel onboard of ship and thus any accident involving this fuel might have a serious impact on the fragile environment of the Arctic.
- 6** Environmental groups have long warned of the dangers of the project, dubbing it a potential "Chernobyl on ice" and a "nuclear Titanic" as it is additionally vulnerable to storms.

### Russia's sea-based nuclear power plant

Russia's first floating nuclear power plant, the Akademik Lomonosov, is preparing to embark on its maiden mission in the Arctic far east

**Pevek, Chukotka district:** Floating plant due to be connected to power grid in 2019, supplying electricity to over 50,000 people

**AKADEMIK LOMONOSOV**  
Nuclear floating power unit (FPU) – named after Russian scientist *Mikhail Lomonosov*

**ALASKA (U.S.)**  
2,000km  
1,250 miles

**Planned route of Akademik Lomonosov**

**Murmansk:** Base for nuclear fuel loading

**Retrefuelling room**

**Storage of spent fuel and radioactive waste**

**Nuclear power:** Two KLT-40S reactor units can generate up to 70MW of electric energy

**FPU SPECIFICATIONS**

Length	144 metres	Helicopter deck
Width	30 metres	<b>Propulsion:</b> Power plant has no engines of its own and needs to be towed by tugs
Displacement	21,500 tonnes	
Crew	69	
Average towing speed	4 knots	

Sources: IAEA, Reuters, Rosatom

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN AGRICULTURE



Soil temperature  
50°



**1**  
Government inked pact with IBM India for undertaking a pilot study to utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) and weather technology solutions in agriculture.

**2**  
The pilot study will be conducted for the Kharif crop season 2019 in three districts - Bhopal, Rajkot and Nanded - in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra, respectively.

**3**  
It will provide weather forecast and soil moisture information on pro bono basis to help farmers for taking decisions regarding water and crop management for better production and productivity.

**4**  
It is estimated that AI and connected farm services can impact 70million Indian farmers by 2020, thereby adding US\$ 9 billion to farmer incomes

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# Crypto Currencies to be banned

**1**

Subhash Chandra Gang Committee was constituted on November 2, 2017 to look into the legality of crypto-currencies and block-chain.

**2**

The report says crypto-currencies do not have any intrinsic value of their own and lack any of the attributes of a currency.

**3**

They neither act as a store of value nor are they a medium of exchange in themselves.

**4**

The committee thus recommended that private crypto-currencies be banned in India.

**5**

It has, however, said the government should keep an open mind on the potential issuance of crypto-currencies by the Reserve Bank of India.



# Cyber Security - Agent Smith


**1**

Agent Smith is the latest malware to creep into android phones.

**2**

This malware can replace apps on android phones with malicious versions without the users' knowledge.

**3**

As of now Agent Smith is only infiltrating mobile phones with the intention of throwing up advertisements (sudden rise) for other apps.

**4**

However, once the malware has control over a cell phone, it can do anything, including stealing banking details or other sensitive data, liable to its misuse.

**5**

It is estimated to have already impacted 25 million devices, Indian constituting nearly 60% of them.

**6**

Users are thus advised against downloading third party apps and keep their operating system updated.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# HYPERLOOP



1

The Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop project received a push with the Maharashtra Cabinet approving to appoint a consortium of DP World and Hyperloop Technologies as its Original Project PropONENT (OPP).

2

With Hyperloop travel the 150-km journey between Mumbai and Pune will be cut down to just 23 minutes, turning the region into one megacity.

3

Project is given a 'public infrastructure' status, which will enable it an easier access to funds and concessions.

4

The project will improve connectivity for the 2.6 crore residents of both cities, and expect 15 crore people to use the service annually.

5

India could be the first country in the world to officially commission a hyperloop.

6

The project is being carried out by the Pune Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (PMRDA) and is said to have a total investment of Rs 70,000 crore.

7

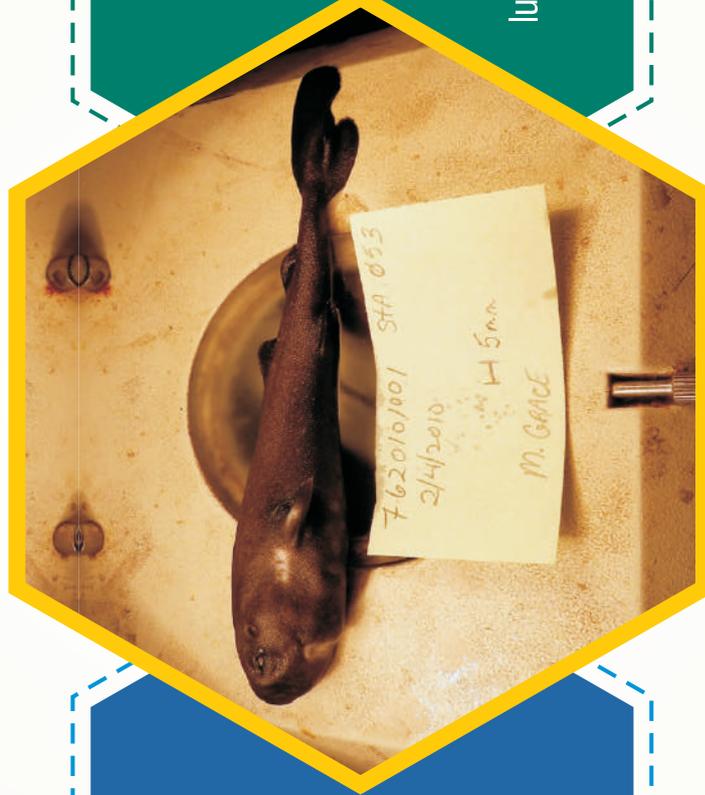
Hyperloop is a high-speed mode of transportation, where a pod-like vehicle travels through a sealed tube at near the speed of an airline.

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# AMERICAN POCKET SHARK

1

It is a new species of pocket-sized pocket shark found recently in the Gulf of Mexico.



2

It is only the third out of more than 500 known shark species which squirts luminous liquid.

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GEOGRAPHY + ENVIRONMENT



# CHRYSOMALLON SQUAMIFERUM

**1** It is a scaly-foot snail which is found at only three spots in the Indian Ocean which has become the first species to be officially declared threatened due to deep-sea mining.

**2** *Chrysomallon squamiferum* is found at three hydrothermal vents in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar.

**3** It was added by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to its updated Red List of Endangered Species.

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# DRACAENA CAMBODIANA



# 1

Dracaena cambodiana is a dragon tree species which has been discovered in Dongka Sarpo area of West Karbi Anglong district of Assam by a group of researchers.

# 2

This is for the first time that a dragon tree species has been reported from India.

# 3

1. Dracaena cambodiana is an important medicinal plant as well as an ornamental tree. It is a major source of dragon's blood which is used traditionally as medicine in China.

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GEOGRAPHY + ENVIRONMENT

# KANDANGISAREE OF TAMILNADU GOT GI TAG

**1**  
The Kandangisaree, manufactured in Karaikuditaluk in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu.



**2**  
The original Kandangisaree is manually made using a winding machine, loom, shuttle and bobbins. It is a team effort of the town of Karaikudi and it forms part of their livelihood.

**3**  
These sarees are characterised by the lagrige contrast borders, and some of them are known to have borders covering as much as two-thirds of the saree.

# PROAHAETULLA ANTIQUA

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GEOGRAPHY + ENVIRONMENT

1 It is a new species of vine snake which has been discovered recently by researchers from the Western Ghats that dates back 26 million years.

2 The species is endemic to southern Western Ghats and is thought to have evolved during the mid-Oligocene epoch.

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**ECONOMY**

# Counter Cyclical Fiscal Policy


**1**

The Government of India has adopted "Counter Cyclical Fiscal Policy" in order to decrease the Economic Slow Down in the country.

**2**

It is the strategy adopted to counter recession or boom through fiscal measures.

**3**

During recession, the Counter cyclical fiscal policy aims at reducing taxes and increasing expenditure.

**4**

It aims to create demand in the country to bring an upswing in the country.

**5**

The counter-cyclical fiscal policy aims at increasing taxes and reducing public expenditure.

**6**

Allowing amplification of boom can be disastrous because, it may increase inflation and debt crisis.

**7**

Wealth Creation is the only way to achieve the target. Alongside Wealth Creation, the Govt has planned to adopt more counter-cyclical Fiscal measures to arrest the economic slowdown


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# EASE 3.0

- 1**

The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE 3.0)
- 2**

It was launched along with the annual report of EASE 2.0 at a function organized by Indian Banks' Association.
- 3**

The main aim of EASE 3.0 is to make public sector banking technology enabled and smart.
- 4**

EASE is set of technology-based banking reforms. It aims at improvising banking sector with technology. It ensures wider financial inclusion, better banking experience and easier credit distribution.
- 5**

The initiative will enhance paperless, digital banking. It will also support other Gov initiatives such as Ujyami Mitra, credit take-off, Dial-a-loan and credit at a click. EASE will increase the reach all these initiatives and improve the standards of banking sector.

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ECONOMY

# Market Study on E-commerce in India



<b>1</b>	The Competition Commission of India (CCI) released a Report titled 'Market Study on E-commerce in India.'
<b>2</b>	Fastest growing market in the world: Revenue from the India's e-commerce sector is expected to increase from USD 39 billion in 2017 to USD 120 billion in 2020, growing at an annual rate of 51 percent, the highest in the world.
<b>3</b>	Funding: Since 2009, the e-commerce sector has received around USD 13,338 million in investments from across the world.
<b>4</b>	MSME Participation: As per a Working Paper of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), nearly half of the manufacturing output in India comes from the Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and 43% of the MSMEs participate in online sales in India.
<b>5</b>	Dynamic pricing: Online trade has led to increased price transparency and the consequent ease of price comparison for the customers. It also enables sellers to monitor competitors' prices and use the same as an input in setting their own prices.
<b>6</b>	Strategic response to e-commerce: Some smaller retailers are primarily using third party marketplace platforms to access the online consumers. Some have launched their own websites to complement the physical sales. Also, there are sellers who sell exclusively online, with no brick and mortar presence.
<b>7</b>	Role of online marketplace platforms: The study reveals that third-party online marketplaces play a central role in e-commerce in India. An estimated 64% of digital retail trade in India is through online platforms.
<b>8</b>	Growth enablers: Besides the growth in smart phone penetration and access to internet, the growth of e-commerce has been enabled through introduction of cash on delivery, discounts and deals offered by the marketplaces, faster deliveries including one-day delivery and access to a large product range, especially, in tier II and tier III cities where choices were limited.

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ECONOMY

# SPICE+ Web Form

1

As part of the Government of India's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) initiatives, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has notified a new web form christened Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically Plus (SPICE+) replacing the existing SPICE form.

2

SPICE+ will offer 10 services by 3 Central Govt Ministries & Departments (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Labour, and Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance) and one State Government (Maharashtra).

3

Registration for EPFO and ESIC shall be mandatory for all new companies to be incorporated through SPICE+ and no EPFO & ESIC registration nos. shall be separately issued by the respective agencies.

4

Registration for Profession Tax shall also be mandatory for all new companies to be incorporated in the State of Maharashtra through SPICE+.

5

This will save procedure, time, and cost for starting a business in India and will be applicable for all new company incorporations.

6

India had improved its ranking to the 63rd spot on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) survey, out of 190 countries.

7

The reserve unique name (RUN) web service will now only be applicable for a change of name with SPICE+ coming in.

8

In the 2019 EODB rankings, the World Bank had placed India at the 136th spot for ease of starting business. The country was ranked 154th and 115th for paying taxes and enforcing contracts in the survey.

# The Mineral Laws (Amendment)

## Ordinance 2020

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ECONOMY

### Key Amendments

- It amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) and the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 (CMSP Act).
- In 2014, Supreme Court cancelled the allocation of the coal mines following the CAG report on Coal seam.
- The CMSP Act in 2015 provides for the auction and allocation of mines whose allocation was cancelled by the Supreme Court.
- Schedule I of the Act provides a list of all such mines;
- Schedule II and III are sub-classes of the mines listed in the Schedule I.
- Schedule II mines are those where production had already started then, and
- Schedule III mines are ones that had been earmarked for a specified end-use.
- However, out of 204 coal blocks, only 29 of these blocks could be auctioned as some of these mines had end-use restrictions.

**1** Composite license for prospecting and mining

**2** Removal of restriction on end-use of coal

**3** Eligibility for auction of coal and lignite blocks

**4** Prior approval from the central government

**5** Non-exclusive reconnaissance permit (NERP) holders may apply for licence.

**6** Advance action for auction

**7** Transfer of statutory clearances to new bidders

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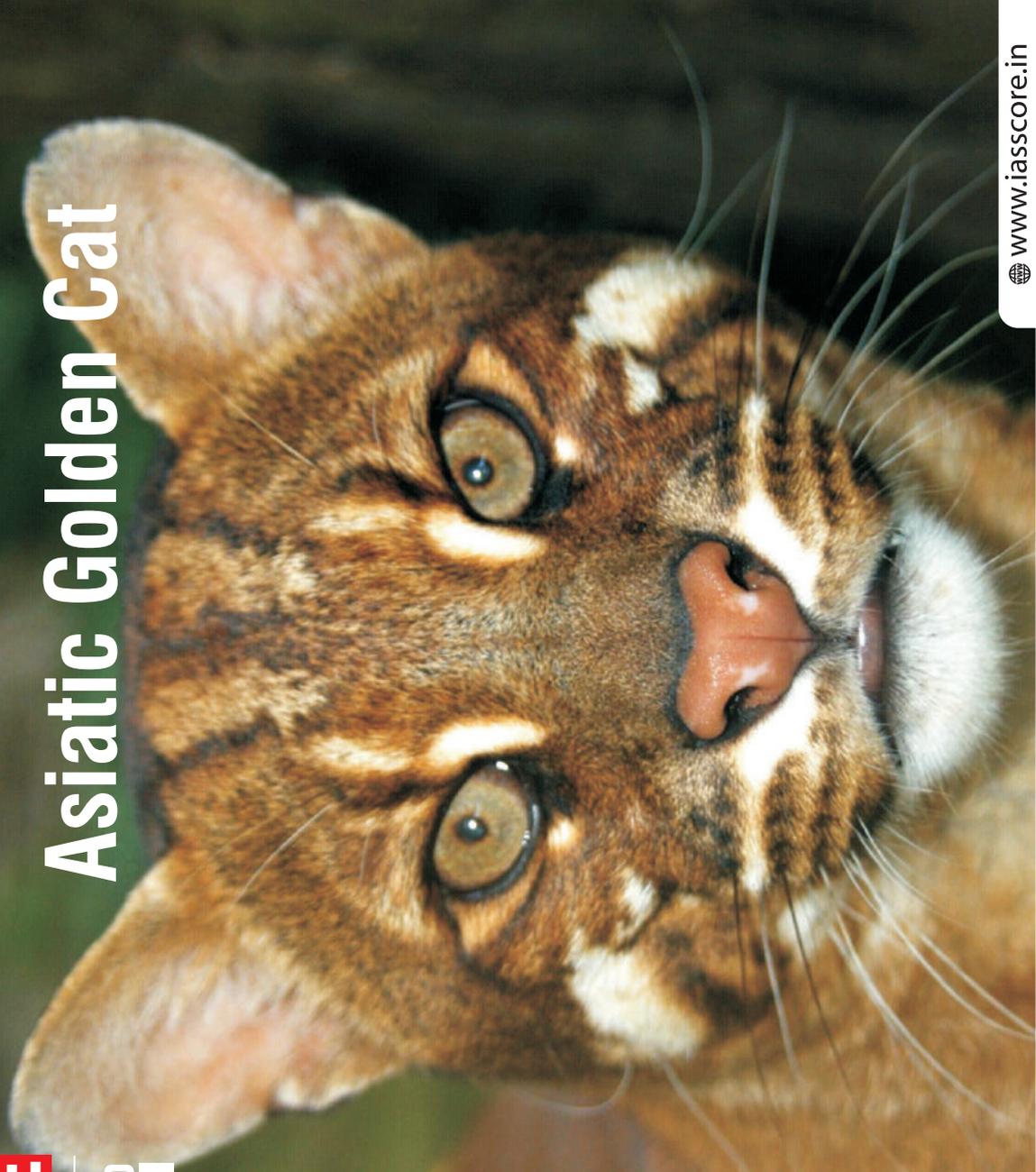
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ECOLOGY & GEOGRAPHY

# Asiatic Golden Cat



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**01**

Scientists have discovered the Asiatic golden cat in Arunachal Pradesh.

**02**

The Asiatic golden cat (*Catopumtemminckii*) is listed as near threatened on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of threatened species.

**03**

It is found across eastern Nepal through northeastern India to Indonesia.

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ECOLOGY &amp; GEOGRAPHY

# Decline in population of Hangul

- 1 A massive decline in the population of the Hangul (Cervushangluhanglu), also known as the 'Kashmir stag' has been observed.
- 2 It is the state animal of Jammu & Kashmir and is restricted to the Dachigam National Park which is 15 km north-west of Jammu & Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar.
- 3 It is placed under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the J&K Wildlife Protection Act, 1978.
- 4 The Hangul was once widely distributed in the mountains of Kashmir and parts of Chamba district in neighbouring Himachal Pradesh.
- 5 The IUCN's Red List has classified it as (Critically Endangered and is similarly listed under the Species Recovery Programme of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Environmental Information System (ENVIS) of the MoEF&C.

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ECOLOGY &amp; GEOGRAPHY

# New Species of Wasp

**1**

A new species of wasp has been identified from the genus Kudakrumia in Goa. It was found in the Western Ghats forests from Cotigao Wildlife sanctuary.

**2**

The wasp has been named as Kudakrumiarangnekari, after ParagRangnekar, a Goa-based researcher.

**3**

It belongs to genus Kudakrumia which is a genus of primitive wasps that was previously known only from Sri Lanka.

**4**

It is any insect of order Hymenoptera and suborder Apocrita which means neither a bee nor an ant.

**5**

Wasps are proficient at controlling pest populations and thus are deployed to protect crops.



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ECOLOGY &amp; GEOGRAPHY

# Paddy Frog

**01**

A new species of Paddy Frog has been discovered from Northeast India which is endemic particularly to Assam. It has been named Aishani, after Sanskrit word named as 'aishani' or aishani meaning northeast.

**02**

The frog belongs to genus *Microhyla* which is a small genus of microhylid frogs. The microhylid genus is a group of narrow-mouthed frogs that are more commonly known as paddy frogs which are distributed in Southeast Asia (SEA).

**03**

As of now, there are only 4 recognised species in this group and newly discovered *Microhyla aishani* becomes the 5th. It is likely to be more widely distributed in Northeast India, particularly Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot region.

# PURPLE FROG

## To be designated as Kerala's State Amphibian



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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# FEDOR

Fedor short for Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research is a Russian humanoid robot which has recently reached International Space Station (ISS).

Fedor weighing 160 kg& standing 180 cm tall was sent in an unmanned Soyuz capsule from the launch pad at Russia's space facility in Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

It will copy human movements and will help with high-risk tasks at the ISS specially to work on the outside of the ISS.

2

1

3

6

5

4

The ISS programme is a joint project between five participating space agencies:

- NASA - USA
- Roscosmos - Russia
- JAXA - Japan
- ESA - Europe
- CSA - Canada

The International Space Station is habitable artificial satellite in low Earth orbit.

While Fedor is Russia's first robot in space, in 2011, NASA sent up Robonaut 2 and in 2013 Japan sent up a small robot called Kirobo into Space.

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# PYROFUSE

1  
For example, if the airbag sensor detects an impact, the tiny devices measuring not more than 10 mm by 10 mm and weighing a few grams trigger the pyrofuse.

2  
Pyrofuse are small devices that "blow out" whole sections of the cable connection to the high-voltage battery by means of miniature explosive charges, thus quickly and effectively shutting off the power circulation.

3  
Cutting off power in an accident is key in Electric Vehicles to prevent car occupants, rescuers from suffering electric shock.

4  
This sets off little explosions that drive a wedge into the high-voltage cable between the battery unit and the power electronics, disconnecting the two.

5  
By thus cutting off the flow of power, the risk of electric shock or fire is fully eliminated.



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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# SISIR KUMAR MITRA



1

Chandrayaan-2 took photos of various craters on the moon while it was flying over its north pole.

2

One of the craters it scanned over was a lunar impact crater named Mitra, after the noted Indian physicist, Sisir Kumar Mitra

3

The Working Group for Planetary System Nomenclature (WGPSN), an arm of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) had named the crater after Mitra in 1970.

4

Mitra was the first to introduce radio communication in India and was pioneer in the field of Ionospheric Science and Radio Technology.

5

The ionosphere is a region of the upper atmosphere which extends from 60 km to several thousand kilometres above the earth.

6

Ionosphere reflects short radio waves, enabling transmission to be made around the curved surface of the earth by sky waves, and its presence is vital for long-distance radio communication.

7

Other Indian scientists who have their names etched on the moon are Dr Vikram Sarabhai.

# WATER ON EXOPLANET

1

Astronomers have for the first time discovered water in the atmosphere of exoplanet - K2-18b, along with Earth-like temperatures that could support life.

2

An exoplanet or extra solar planet is a planet outside the Solar System.

3

The K2-18b planet orbits the cool dwarf star K2-18, which is about 110 light years from Earth in the Leo constellation of the Milky Way galaxy.

4

Scientists used archive data from 2016 and 2017 captured by the ESA/NASA Hubble Space Telescope and developed open-source algorithms to analyse the starlight filtered through K2-18b's atmosphere.

5

The results revealed the molecular signature of water vapour, also indicating the presence of hydrogen and helium in the planet's atmosphere.

6

Scientists concluded further studies are required to estimate cloud coverage and the percentage of atmospheric water present.

# XENOTRANSPLANTATION

Xenotransplantation is the transplanting of organs from one species to another.

1

Pioneering transplant surgeon Sir Terence English, who had performed the first heart transplant in the United Kingdom in 1979, declared that his team would transplant a pig's kidney into a human's body by end of 2019.

2

The first attempts at animal-to-human transplants were made in 1838, when the cornea of a pig was transplanted into a human.



3

Over the past century there have been unsuccessful attempts to transfer organs from pigs, goats, sheep, monkeys, chimpanzees, baboons and pigs into humans.

4

5

With a lack of human cadavers as donors, researchers are looking at animal organs as viable alternative.

6

A pig's genetic make-up and internal organs are similar to a human's. Its weight, lipids, arterial pressure, heart rate, renal function, electrolyte balance, and digestive system match those in the human body.

7

Disadvantage with xenotransplantation: fear of transmission of viruses from animals to humans and high rejection rate (human body's immune system starts working against any foreign organ)

# COVID-19 declared 'PANDEMIC' by WHO

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



**1**

A pandemic is a measure of the spread of a disease.

**2**

When a new disease spreads over a vast geographical area covering several countries and continents, and most people do not have immunity against it, the outbreak is termed a pandemic.

**3**

It implies a higher level of concern than an epidemic, which the US Centers of Disease and Control Prevention (CDC) define as the spread of a disease in a localised area or country.

**4**

There is no fixed number of cases or deaths that determine when an outbreak becomes a pandemic.

**5**

The Ebola virus, which killed thousands in West Africa, is an epidemic as it is yet to mark its presence on other continents.

**6**

Other outbreaks caused by corona viruses such as MERS (2012) and SARS (2002), which spread to 27 and 26 countries respectively, were not labelled pandemics because they were eventually contained.

**7**

The last pandemic declared by the WHO was in 2009, for H1N1.

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# India's First Global Hyperloop Pod Competition

Indian Institute of Technology Madras is organizing India's first Global Hyperloop Pod Competition to increase awareness and enthusiasm about Hyperloop in India. The competition is open globally and the final round will take place in the IIT Madras campus in July 2020.

Called the 'Indian Hyperloop Pod Competition', the objective is to encourage student teams in India and abroad to develop a Hyperloop Pod and compete to build the fastest, most innovative and efficient design and prototype Of the relevant technologies in the field.

This competition is open to all the engineering colleges across the world, to ideate, design and implement their ideas for the Hyperloop Pods.



Hyperloop is the 5th mode of transportation, a high-speed train that travels in a near-vacuum tube.

The reduced air resistance allows the capsule inside the tube to reach speeds of more than 1000 km/h, conveying people or objects at high speed while being very efficient, thereby drastically reducing travel times over medium-range distances.

Mr. Elon Musk, founder of SpaceX and CEO of Tesla, proposed the idea of Hyperloop to the world in 2013 through a whitepaper 'Hyperloop Alpha'.

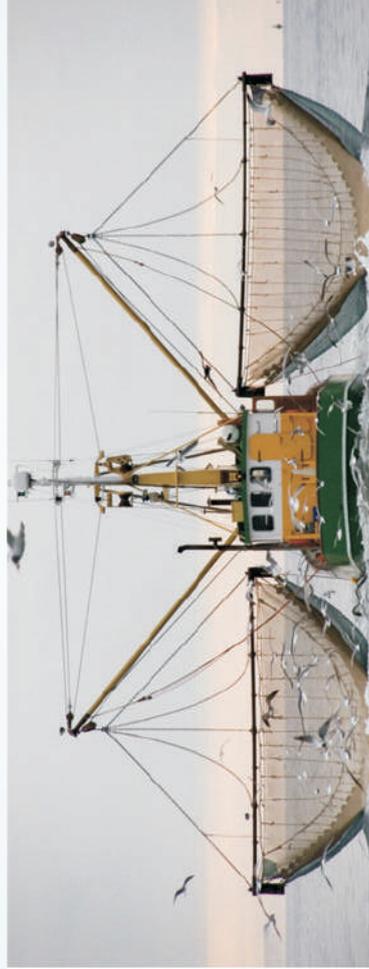
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# ISRO's Assistance in finding Rich Fishing Areas



**01**

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Hyderabad has reported that Oceansat Satellite data from Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) are used to prepare the Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories on the potential rich fishing areas and provide to the sea taring fishermen in all states.

**02**

ISRO has developed the methodology for the generation of fishery advisories and transfer to INCOIS since 2002 as an operational service for providing PFZ advisories.

**03**

This service utilizes data on chlorophyll concentration (Chl) obtained from ISRO's Oceansat-2 satellite and the sea surface temperature from National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA / USA satellites).

**04**

INCOIS has reported that a study conducted by National Council for Applied Economic Research revealed that the emission of carbon in the environment is reduced due to the savings in diesel consumption and reported a carbon credit equivalent to an annuity of Rs. 36,200 crore.

**05**

Another study, conducted the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in Maharashtra during 2013-14, under National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), reported that a fishing village of 32 fishing boats in Maharashtra could save 70,000 litres of diesel in a month as the PFZ advisories helped them in avoiding the unwanted search for fish shoals.

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# Low Cost Corona Testing Kit



- 1** Government of Bangladesh granted approval for the production of the locally developed low cost Corona testing kit.
- 2** The kit requires some chemical reagents which need to be imported. The approval to import raw materials was given by the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA).
- 3** The kit has been developed by Gonoshasthaya Kendra, a Bangladesh based public health organization that runs hospitals and medical research work in the country especially for the rural areas.
- 4** After producing the kit, Gonoshasthaya Kendra will have to send the kit to DGDA for final approval of WHO.
- 5** Gonoshasthaya Kendra claims that the kit will be able to detect Corona virus positive cases quickly within 15
- 6** According to the Gonoshasthaya Kendra, the kit will cost approximately 250-300 Taka.
- 7** The standard method of diagnosis of Corona virus is by reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) which uses sequencing from a nasopharyngeal swab or sputum sample.

# The World's First Aerogels made from Scrap Rubber Tyres

**1** A team of NUS researchers has achieved a major technological breakthrough by converting waste rubber tyres into super-light aerogels that have a wide range of applications. This is the first time that aerogels are made from waste rubber tyres.

**2** The new rubber aerogels demonstrate remarkable properties they are extremely light, highly absorbent, very durable, and they are also very efficient at trapping heat and sound.

**3** By upcycling waste rubber into products of a higher commercial value, this new technology promotes a wider use of scrap tyres, and offers an eco-friendly way to recycle used rubber.

**4** This novel technology was published in the print version of scientific journal Colloids and Surfaces A: Physicochemical and Engineering Aspects in September 2019, and a patent has been filed.

**5** To create the rubber aerogels, recycled car tyrefibres are first blended into finer fibres. These fine rubber fibres are then soaked in water and very small amount of chemical cross-linkers.



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SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY



## Eklavya Model Residential Schools

**1** Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) are set up in States/UTs with grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India.

**2** The scheme of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) was introduced in the year 1997-98.

**3** The objective is to provide quality middle and high-level education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in remote areas in order to enable them to avail of reservation in high and professional educational courses and get jobs in government and public and private sectors.

**4** The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India.

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POLITY

# Government invoke Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897



- 1** The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 is a law which was first enacted to tackle bubonic plague in Bombay state in former British India.
- 2** The law is meant for containment of epidemics by providing special powers that are required for the implementation of containment measures to control the spread of the disease.
- 3** The Epidemic Diseases Act is routinely enforced across the country for dealing with outbreaks of diseases such as swine flu, dengue, and cholera.
- 4** Section 2 empowers state governments/UTs to take special measures and formulate regulations for containing the outbreak.
- 5** Section 3 provides penalties for disobeying any regulation or order made under the Act. These are according to section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant).
- 6** Section 4 gives legal protection to the implementing officers acting under the Act.

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POLITY

# Innovate for Accessible India Campaign

**1** Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation announced the launch of the Innovate for Accessible India campaign in partnership with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology and ERNET (National Research and Education Network under MeitY).

**2** Innovate for Accessible India is a nation-wide innovation challenge aimed at empowering people with disabilities with the technology and tools required for better integration into society and access to equal opportunities.

**3** The campaign will be an aggregator of workable technology solutions developed using Microsoft Cloud, Artificial Intelligence and other technologies that address gaps faced by people with disabilities, especially in acquiring services and support in education, skill building, employment, mobility, rehabilitation and other government services.

**4** The winning innovations stand to win a grant of INR 10 lakhs each in the established projects category (pilot testing with a group of more than 25 beneficiaries) and a grant of INR 5 lakhs each in the early stage category (working prototype tested by less than 25 people).



  
 Department of Empowerment of Persons Disabilities  
 Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
 Government of India  
[www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in](http://www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in), [www.mjgovt.nic.in](http://www.mjgovt.nic.in)  
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

# Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana



**1** The Government distributed Assistive Aids and Devices to senior citizens and differently-abled belonging to BPL category.

**2** This is a Central Sector Scheme, fully funded by the Central Government. The expenditure for implementation of the scheme will be met from the "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund".

**3** Under the scheme, the physical aids will be provided only to the senior citizens of the nation. This implies those who are aged above 60 years will get free assisted living aids and physical devices which are required for their sustainability.

**4** To get full benefits of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) scheme one must belong to BPL family and should hold valid BPL card issued by the concerned authority.

**5** The Scheme is implemented through the 'Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)', (a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) as the sole implementing Agency.

**6** The Scheme of RVY is entirely funded from Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF).

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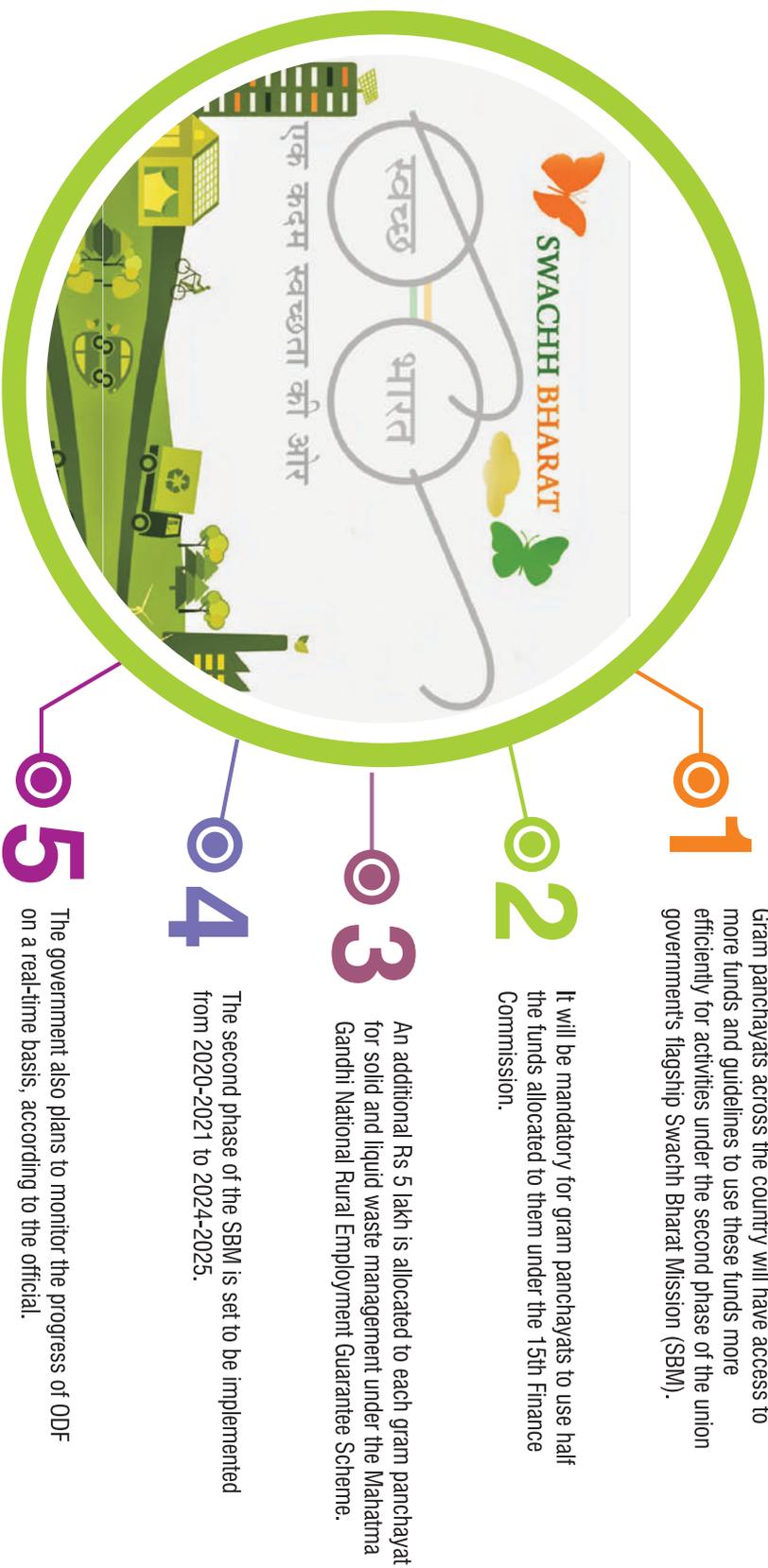
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POLITY

# Swachh Bharat Mission Phase II





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