

# 1 Arun Kumar nominated as the Vice-Chairman of International Union of Railways

On July 22, 2020, Shri Arun Kumar was nominated as the Vice-Chairman of the International Union of Railways. Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav is the chairman.

## Highlights

The decision was taken at the UIC General Assembly. The International Union of Railways is also called Union Internationale Des Chemins (UIC).

## About UIC

The headquarters of UIC is in Paris. It is empowered to develop policy on behalf of rail sector in matters relating to security of persons, installations, and property. It promotes exchange of information among security agencies of UIC. Also, it proposes common interest projects and activities in the field of railway security.

## International Union of Railways

It was founded in 1922 with 51 members. Today there are 194 members. India is an active member of the union. It has established classification of locomotives, axle arrangements, goods wagons and coaches.

## Significance

UIC is the largest mover of passengers and freight after China. India has future international rail linkages to Russia.

## International North-South Transport Corridor

The International North-South Transport Corridor is a 7,200 km long ship, road and rail route moving freight between India, Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Central Asia and Europe.

## **2 Actor Sonu Sood launches “Pravasi Rojgar App”**

Actor Sonu Sood launched “Pravasi Rojgar App”. The application provides all necessary information to find jobs and offer specific job training programmes.

### **Highlights**

The actor has been helping migrant workers reach their homes during lock down. The application “Pravasi Rojgar” will act as a platform for the workers to find right job opportunities.

### **About the Application**

The application is free of cost. It will provide all the necessary linkages and information to find jobs. The application is to be supported by community outreach in the villages to find right employment opportunities for migrant workers. The online platform has more than 500 companies that are related to apparel, construction, health care, BPOs, engineering, automobile, logistics, ecommerce, etc. A Toll free number was also launched that is to be operated 24/7.

### **About actor Sonu Sood**

The actor has helped 1000s of stranded migrant workers to reach their homes through buses, trains and flights.

### **3 India successfully test fires “Dhruvastra” anti-guided missiles**

India successfully conducted the flight trial of Dhruvastra anti-guided missile at the Interim Test Range of Odisha.

#### **Highlights**

The trials of the helicopter launched Nag Missile (HELINA) were successful. The missile has now been renamed as “Dhruvastra”.

#### **About the Missile**

Helina is a third-generation anti-tank guided missile mounted on Advanced Light Helicopter. The

missile system can engage targets in direct hit mode and attack mode. Also, the system has allweather day and night capability, defeat battle tanks with conventional armour and explosive reactive armour. It is to be noted that the DRDO (Defence Research Development Organization) has carried out three successful test firings of NAG missiles in the Pokhran firing range. Nag was one of the five strategic missiles that were planned to be developed under Integrated Missile Development Programme that was launched in 1980s. The other missiles included under programme were Agni, Prithvi and Akash

## 4 Kakrapar Atomic Power Plant reaches criticality

PM Modi congratulated Kakrapur Atomic Plant of Gujarat to reach its criticality. Criticality is reaching normal operating condition.

### Highlights

The Kakrapar Atomic Plant produces power from indigenously built reactors and is a major step of Gol in promoting Make in India campaign. The reactor generates 700 MW of power.

### Background

The Kakrapur Nuclear Power Plant began its commercial nuclear power production in 1993. In 2015, two of its units were shut down due to coolant leaks. Later, in 2018 the power plant reached partial criticality. The leaks were due to corrosion and cracks

### Nuclear Power in India

There are 22 nuclear power reactors in India. Till 1990s, Russia was the major supplier of Uranium to India. The waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2008 allowed India to commence International Nuclear Trade. Later India signed Nuclear Energy Technology Cooperation with countries such as US, UK, South Korea and Canada. India has also signed agreements on Uranium supply with Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Argentina.

In 2011, large deposits of Uranium were discovered in Tummlapalle belt in Andhra Pradesh and Bhima basin of Karnataka. Today, India has 44,000 tonnes of natural Uranium reserves. This is one of top 20 uranium reserve discoveries in the world.

### Uranium

Kazakhstan is the largest supplier of Uranium to India providing 5,000 tonnes between 2015 and 2019.

## **5 The Climate Activist Greta Thunberg was awarded the Gulbenkian Prize for Humanity.**

She was awarded with prize money of 1 million Euros.

### **Highlights**

The Climate Activist is to donate the prize money to organizations focused on environment and climate change. Miss Thunberg is the first person to receive the prize. She was selected among 136 nominees from 43 countries.

### **Greta Thunberg**

Miss Thunberg is a Swedish Environmental activist. She gained international recognition for promoting existential humanity crisis due to climate change.

**Friday for Future** It is a school climate strike movement launched by Thunberg and other students of Sweden. The movement soon gained international recognition and students from all over the world joined the movement. It is an international movement where students take off from class on Fridays participate in demonstrations demanding actions from political leaders to prevent climate change. The movement is also called youth for Climate, Youth Strike for Climate, Climate Strike.

**Gulbenkian Prize:** The Prize is awarded annually by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. It was established in 1976. The prize distribution ceremony is held in Portugal.

## **6 Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana launched in Delhi**

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched “Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana”. The scheme is to help the eligible beneficiaries get ration delivered at home.

### **Highlights**

The scheme is to run for 6-7 months. Under the scheme, the Delhi government will deliver wheat, rice, flour and sugar in hygienically packed bags. The packets are to be delivered at door step of the people. The Delhi Government is to start One Nation One Ration Card scheme and Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Yojana on the same day.

### **Significance**

The scheme will benefit lakhs of people in the capital. Currently, subsidized ration is being provided under National Security act, 2013. The new scheme will add benefit to the act.

### **One Nation One Card scheme**

Under the National Food Security Act, 2013, 81 crore people are entitled to subsidized food grains. Around 23 crore ration cards have been issued to over 80 crore beneficiaries of National Food security Act. The scheme provides intra state and inter state portability of ration cards

## **7 “Manodarpan” initiative to be launched by Ministry of HRD**

Ministry of Human Resources and Development will launch “Manodarpan” initiative under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. The initiative is being launched to provide psychosocial support to the students for their mental well being.

### **Highlights**

The Ministry of Human Resources and Development believes that it is essential to provide focus on mental health of the students along with academic importance. This will help to strengthen human capital base in the country. Also, the initiative will increase overall productivity of working-age population in the country.

### **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**

The programme aims to make India self-reliant. In order to achieve this, GoI has allocated Rs 20 lakh crores. The fund allocated is to be used in sectors that will make India, self-reliant. This includes Agriculture, MSME, fisheries, animal husbandry, dairy industry, etc.

### **How will Manodarpan help in Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan?**

For India to become self-reliant, the work force should be strong and highly skilled. Through the initiative, India will strengthen its future work force, especially during COVID-19 times. Students should be kept motivated and focused towards education. They are the backbone of skills of future India. Thus, the initiative will help the country become self-reliant.

## **8 Four P-8I aircrafts to arrive India in 2021**

The Defence Acquisition Council cleared the purchase of six P-8I aircrafts in 2019. Of this, four are to arrive in 2021. There are talks to acquire six more.

### **Highlights**

The P-8I aircrafts are mainly used for maritime surveillance purposes. India's long-range reconnaissance, anti-submarine, electronic jamming and surveillance capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region will get a boost with the arrival of P-8I.

### **About P-8I**

The P-8I is integrated with Harpoon Block II air launched missiles and lightweight torpedoes. It is capable of carrying 129 sonobuoys that locate submarines and can also launch anti-ship missiles killing the submarine.

### **Background**

The United States have already acquired a string of ports in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Iran and east Africa to contain Indian Navy and also challenge the presence of US Central command forces, British and French Navy. China's String of Ports China has 70% stake at Kyaukpyu port in Myanmar, Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, Gwadar port in Pakistan and Jask port in Iran.

### **India's plans**

India is being cautious that China can replicate its aggressive posture along Line of Actual Control in Indian Ocean Region as well. India is also formalizing QUAD grouping. US, Japan, Australia are the other three members of QUAD grouping.

### **COMCASA**

The purchase of P-8I has been possible because of Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement India signed with the US. The pact provided a legal framework to exchange encrypted communication.



## **9 India-US conduct PASSEX Exercise**

The US Navy carrier USS Nimitz conducted maritime drills with Indian warships in the Middle East. The PASSEX exercise comes during a period when India and China are locked in tensed border. Highlights The USS Nimitz (world's largest aircraft carrier) was on its way from South China Sea. The naval carrier recently participated in the military exercise conducted in the South China sea along with USS Ronald Reagan. About PASSEX The Indian Navy has conducted similar PASSEX with Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and French Navy. PASSEX is a passage exercise. A passage exercise is normally conducted when there is an opportunity in contrast to pre-planned maritime drills. The PASSEX was conducted even while Malabar exercise is fast approaching. Significance It is good to conduct frequent exercises with like-minded navies. This will help exchange opportunities. Malabar Exercise is usually held between India, Japan and the US. This year Australia is likely to join the trio. Generally, PASSEX is referred to practice cooperation. Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force It is the Japan Navy. It was formed after World War II. It has a fleet of 154 ships and 346 aircrafts. Since 2000, it is the fourth largest Navy in the world

# 10 India's first Charging Plaza inaugurated

The Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy Shri R K Singh inaugurated first public Electric Vehicle charging plaza at Chelmsford club in New Delhi.

## Highlights

Along with the charging plaza, the minister also inaugurated RAISE. RAISE is Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency (RAISE). It is a joint initiative of EESL and USAID.

## About the charging Plaza

The charging Plaza was established by EESL (Energy Efficiency Services Limited) and NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Council). The plaza is to host five Electric Vehicle chargers of different specifications. The EESL is working towards procuring Electric Vehicles and identify innovative business models to implement Public Charging Stations (PCS).

## RAISE initiative

The RAISE initiative will alleviate issues of bad air quality in workspaces all over the country. The RAISE was launched in partnership with US Agency for International Development (USAID) MAITREE programme. The initiative focuses to improve indoor air quality, energy efficiency and thermal comfort in the office air conditioning of EESL. RAISE has shown 80% improvement in air quality parameters with no implement hassles.

## Background

On the World Environment Day (June 5, 2020), USAID MAITREE programme and EESL launched "Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings" initiative. The initiative is to address the challenges of air conditioning system so that they are healthy and energy efficient. The RAISE initiative has been launched under this programme. It is to be extended to government offices after examining its success.

## **11 Hope: UAE launched first Mars Mission**

The United Arab Emirates launched the first ever mission to the red planet, Mars. The spacecraft is to arrive Mars in February 2021.

### Highlights

The satellite “Hope” is to be placed in orbit between 20,000 and 43,000 kilometres above the surface of Mars. The satellite will complete its orbit once in 55 hours inclined at an angle of 25 degrees.

### About Hope

The Hope Satellite has three instruments on board to carry out scientific goals. The satellite will study oxygen and hydrogen levels in the Martian atmosphere. It will make explorations and studies in the last few billion years.

### About the Mission

The mission is to last for two Martian years. One Martian year is equal to two Earth years. Therefore, the mission is to last for 4 Earth years. This is the first UAE mission to Mars. In 2022, UAE is to launch its first mission to Moon.

## **12 July 20: Space Exploration Day**

Every year on July 20, the Space Exploration Day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of man's first historic landing on the moon.

### **Highlights**

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Buzz became the first humans to land on moon's surface. The Armstrong-Aldrin duo spent 21.5 hours on the surface of the moon. Also, they spent 2.5 hours outside of their capsules. The day is mainly celebrated in the United States.

### **Background**

Back in 1960s, the then President of USA, John F Kennedy set a national goal of landing a man in the moon within a decade.

### **Missions of NASA**

Following the successful landing on the moon, NASA continued its space explorations. Between 1969 and 1972, USA launched 6 Apollo missions. NASA then launched Project Gemini and Project Apollo that took astronauts in an orbit around the moon.

In 1975, NASA teamed up with Soviet Union to launch the Apollo-Soyuz Project. It is the first international human space flight programme launched in 1975

## **13 International Trade Union Confederation: India ranked among 10 worst countries for working people**

The International Trade Union Confederation released its ranking of 144 countries on degree of respect for workers' rights. Unfortunately, India was among the least performing 10 countries in the list.

**Highlights** The other least performing countries include Brazil, Bangladesh, Columbia, Kazakhstan, Honduras, Philippines, Egypt, Zimbabwe and Turkey. The middle east region has been named the worst region in the world for working people. This is mainly due to the ongoing insecurity and conflicts in Syria, Palestine, Syria, Libya, Yemen coupled with most regressive region of worker representation and union rights.

**Key findings of the report** The ITUC report says that around 85% of the countries violated the right to strike and 80% violated right to collectively bargain. The following were the other major findings of the report

Number of countries that denied freedom of speech has increased from 54 in 2019 to 56 in 2020. The workers that were exposed to violence had restricted access to justice in 72% of the countries. The countries that impede the registration of unions have increased. The new countries that have entered the list of 10 worst countries for workers were India, Honduras and Egypt.

### **Global Rights Index**

The ranking of the countries has been made based on the value of Global Rights Index. The index is prepared based on 97 metrics. This includes workers' rights, right to strike, freedom from violent conditions.

International Trade Union Confederation The ITUC was established in 2006. It is based in Brussels, Belgium.

## **14 Scientists find Giant Sea Cockroaches in the Eastern Indian Ocean**

Scientists reported the discovery of first “Super Giant Isopod” species. It was found in the eastern Indian Ocean.

### **Highlights**

A new species of cockroach has been found deep in the Indian Ocean by a team of researchers from Singapore. The researchers found the species when they were working on the unexplored waters of Indian Ocean in Banta. Banta is in the southern coast of West Java in Indonesia.

The newly found cockroach species has been named “Bathynomus raksasa”.

### **About the species**

The cockroach belongs to the genus Bathynomus. It has 14 legs and uses them to crawl along the bed of oceans in search of food. It measured 50 centimetres in length and is big for isopods. In general, the isopods that reach to a length of 50 centimetres are generally referred to super giants. The raksasa eats dead marine animals such as fish and whales. It can also go for long periods without food. This is a common trait the raksasa shares with cockroaches.

### **Significance of the discovery**

So far, the scientific community has found five super giant species. Two of them were found in western Atlantic. This is the first discovery from Indonesia.

### **Mission**

A 31-member group from National University of Singapore conducted the project. The project studied 63 sites in weeks and returned with 12,00 specimen from the deep sea. This included sponges, jellyfish, worms, molluscs, starfish, crabs and urchins. It also included 12 other unknown species.

## **15 GoI hails KURMA mobile app to conserve Indian turtles**

The Union Environment and Information Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar hailed “KURMA” application to track and report Indian turtles.

### **Highlights**

The KURMA app was launched in May 2020 on World Turtle Day. The application was developed by Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN), The ITCAN was joined by Wildlife Conservation Society-India. The application provides database to identify a species. Also, it helps to locate the nearest rescue centre for turtles across the country. Indian Turtle conservation Action Network The ITCAN was formed to launch citizen-science initiative. It provides platform to exchange vital information on turtles, provides assistance to enforcement agencies, forest departments, etc. It will also help in observing 2020 as the YEAR OF THE TURTLE.

The World Turtle Day is marked by the Turtle Survival Alliance as well.

### **Turtle Survival Alliance**

The alliance was formed in 2001 in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature for sustainable management of tortoises and turtles. The alliance arose in response to the

### **Asian Turtle Crisis.**

The Asian Turtle Crisis is the unsustainable harvest of turtles to supply to Chinese markets.

## **16 Facts Box: United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index**

The United Nations recently released the Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2020. According to the index, India recorded the largest reduction in number of people living in poverty between the period 2015-19. The data were obtained from United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).

### **Highlights**

Around 273 million people have moved out of multidimensional poverty over 10 years. The report was released by the United Nations Development Programme and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

### **Key Findings**

The data of the report shows that out of 75 countries studied by the programme, 65 have reduced their multi-dimensional poverty levels between 2000 and 2019. Of this, 50 countries have reduced the number of people living in poverty.

### **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**

According to the report, both India and Nicaragua have halved their MPI value among children of age 10 and 10.5 years respectively. The other countries that have reduced their MPI values include Armenia and North Macedonia. Poverty in Children

The report says that around 1.3 billion people in 107 developing countries live in multi-dimensional poverty. Of this more than 10 countries accounted for more than 60% of unvaccinated children. Around 2.6 million children in India are unvaccinated.

### **What is Multi-dimensional Poverty?**

The multi-dimensional poverty encloses deprivations experienced by poor people such as health, education, poor quality of work, violence, hazardous living environments and threat of violence.



## **17 July 18: Nelson Mandela International Day**

Every year Nelson Mandela International Day is marked all over the world on July 18. The day was officially declared by the United Nations in 2009 and the first UN Mandela day was observed in 2010.

### **Highlights**

The day is observed as a global call to action that celebrates the idea, “Every individual has the power to transform the world”.

### **Nelson Mandela**

He was born on July 18, 1918. Nelson Mandela International Day is celebrated on his birth anniversary. Mandela served as the president of South Africa between 1994 and 1999. He was the first blackhead of the state.

He co-founded the militant Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961. It was the armed wing of African National Congress. Nelson Mandela ended apartheid. Apartheid was a system of institutionalized racial segregation that prevailed in South West Africa and South Africa from 1948.

### **Awards**

Nelson Mandela received more than 260 awards. He won the Nobel Prize for peace in 1993. In 1990, the India Government awarded the Bharat Ratna for his role in anti-apartheid movement. Bharat Ratna is one of the highest civilian awards in India

## **18 PM SVANidhi app launched**

On July 17, 2020, PM SVANidhi app was launched by the Minister of Urban Affairs. The application aims to provide user-friendly digital interface for lending institutions and their functionaries to source and process loan applications of street vendors.

### **Highlights**

The application will help in enabling business correspondents of micro lending institutions, banks, Non-Banking Financial Corporation to get maximum coverage. The application will also provide paper-less lending facilities.

### **Key Features**

The main features of the application include e-KYC (Know Your Customer) of application, real-time monitoring, vendor search in the survey and processing of applicants.

### **PM SVANidhi**

The scheme was launched to help the street vendors. There are more than 50 lakh street vendors in the country. The scheme will provide working capital of Rs 10,000 as working loan capital to the street vendors. The capital can be repaid within a year. This will benefit the street vendors largely as they were affected by COVID-19 badl

## **19 India launches 5 portals to boost Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**

Government of India announced that five portals are being developed by different organizations to promote innovation in India. This will help boost Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

**Highlights :** The portals being developed are for specific sectors and are as follows BHEL for power sector CMFTI for manufacturing sector HMT for machine tools ICAT and ARAI for automotive sector.

**About the Portals :** The portals were launched to bring the problem solvers and solution seekers together. The portal will focus on academia, industry, research institute, startups and experts.

**Significance :** The portals will help to make their target sectors self-reliant (Atma Nirbhar). The activities in the portal will include the following

Research and Development, Technological Innovations , Manufacturing and Process Technology Development ,To conduct market research and technology surveys ,Quality problem resolution

### **ASPIRE portal**

The ASPIRE portal was prepared by ICAT (International Centre for Automotive Technology). The portal is to be completely functional to host grand challenges and provide elaborate resource databases.

## **20 India forms “Air Bubble” with US, UK, UAE, Germany and France**

On July 16, 2020, the Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri announced that India is to resume operation of international commercial flights with France and US.

The Government of India has signed agreements with US, UK, France and countries in UAE. Negotiations with Germany is in its final stages. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has planned to bring down the air travel charges by 25%.

### **Agreements**

Under the agreements signed with the countries, United Airlines and Delta are to operation from the US. The Air France is to operate from France. No UK based airlines are to operate to India. Rather, Air India will fly to UK. Lufthansa of Germany will operate from Germany.

### **Who are allowed?**

According to the agreement signed, India is to allow only overseas citizens, Indian nationals and card holders and a certain category of people with business and diplomatic visas. People with valid tourist visa will not be allowed to enter India by the flights being scheduled.

### **Air Bubble**

Air Bubble is the term coined during COVID-19 times. It refers to transport and people connectivity between specific regions in the world. Especially between those regions where COVID-19 has been contained to similar levels. The scheme is being called as new avatar of “Vande Bharat

### **Mission”.**

Vande Bharat Mission Vande Bharat Mission was launched by the Government of India to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad. More than 70,000 Indians were brought back to the country under the mission

## **21 2022 FIFA World Cup to be held in Qatar**

On July 15, 2020, the Federation Internationale de Football Association announced that the 2022 World Cup is to be held in Qatar. The governing body also released schedule of matches.

### **Highlights**

The 2022 FIFA World Cup will be the first world cup to be held in Arab World and also the first in a muslim-majority country. The World Cup would be the last to involve 32 teams as the teams are to be increased to 48 in 2026 tournament. The tournament is to be held in November-December. The final match of the tournament has been scheduled on December 18, 2020, which is also Qatar National Day.

### **India**

India has never participated at the FIFA World Cup. Indian National Team ranks 108 in the latest FIFA rankings that was released in 2019. The Indian Football team has participated in AFC Asian Cup and Olympics

## 22 What is Mars Helicopter “Ingenuity”?

Ingenuity is a robotic helicopter that is to be deployed in Mars 2020 mission of NASA. Mars 2020 mission is to be launched on July 30, 2020.

### Highlights

The Helicopter being attached to the mission will check how the conditions on Mars affect aviation. Ingenuity is a technology demonstration. It is the first aircraft to perform controlled flight on another planet.

### Mars Mission 2020

The Mars mission will seek signs of habitable conditions on Mars. It will also search for bio signatures of past microbial life. The mission is a part of Mars Exploration Programme of NASA. The mission will also carry Perseverance Rover.

### Mars Exploration Programme

The Mars Exploration Programme is a long-term effort to explore planet mars. The programme is funded by NASA. It was formed in 1993. The programme has four long term goals as follows

To determine if life ever arose in Mars To characterize the climate of Mars

To characterize the Geology of Mars To prepare for human exploration of mars.

### Perseverance Rover

The rover will provide images of mars. It will collect martian rocks and dust samples. The Perseverance Rover is to deliver experimental helicopter Ingenuity. It will also perform demonstrations of technologies of future Mars mission

## **23 July 15: World Youth Skills Day**

Every year, World Youth Skills Day is celebrated on July 15. The day is celebrated to recognize the importance of equipping young people with skills of employment entrepreneurship and decent work. This year the day focuses on the following theme.

### **Theme: Skills for a resilient youth**

The day is celebrated by United Nations along with other world organizations. Events related to the day is organized by UNESCO and ILO. The main aim of the day is to achieve better socioeconomic conditions for today's youth.

**United Nations** : The UN decided to mark the day since 2014. A resolution initiated by Sri Lanka with the assistance of G77 and China was passed in December 2018. Since then July 15 is celebrated as World Youth Skills Day.

**India** : In India, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has organized a digital conclave to celebrate World Youth Skills Day. Sustainable

**Development Goals** : The Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to provide technical and vocational education and training. It ensures comprehensive and equitable quality education opportunities for all.

**Incheon Declaration** :The Declaration was adopted at the World Education Forum held in Incheon, South Korea on July 15, 2015. The declaration adopted Education 2030 framework for action recognizing lifelong learning experiences. The framework aimed to provide Education for All.

**Significance:** Between 1997 and 2017, the young population increased by 139 million. On the other hand, the population of youth labour force decreased by 58.7 million. Two out of Five young workers in developing economies live on less than 3.10 USD per day.

## 24 July 14: Bastille Day

Every year on July 14, the French Government celebrates Bastille Day. It is also called the French National Day. The day commemorates the storming of Bastille in 1789.

### Highlights

The storming of Bastille is considered as symbol of French Revolution.

**History:** On July 11, 1789, the finance minister of King Louis XVI was dismissed. The minister was sympathetic towards third estate. These third estate people made up 90% of the French population. They were peasants and wage labourers. Upon the dismissal of the minister, people of Paris rushed (or stormed) to Bastille fearing that they might be attacked by the royal army. People rushed to Bastille to get gunpowder and ammunition.

Bastille was the fortress prison in Paris. This day is marked in the French history as the beginning of French Revolution.

### French Revolution

The French Revolution overthrew the monarchy. It then established a republic and finally ended in a dictatorship under Napoleon.



## **25 13th July: Bhanu Jayanti celebrated in Sikkim**

13th July 2020 marks the 206th Birth Anniversary of Bhanubhakta Acharya, he was the first writer to translate the Great Epic of Ancient India- Ramayana from Sanskrit to Nepali. Bhanu Jayanti is also celebrated across the state of Nepal on 13th July every year.

### **Bhanubhakta Acharya**

Bhanubhakta Acharya was born in Nepal's Tanahu district. He was born on 13th July 1813 (29th Day of Hindu Ashadh month). He received his education in Sanskrit initially from his Grandfather, later he moved to Varanasi to further continue his education in Sanskrit. His translation of Ramayana in the Nepali language was one of the most notable contributions in Nepali Literature and also made Ramayana understandable for the Nepali speaking community across the world.

#### **2020 Celebrations in Sikkim**

The Nepali Sahitya Parishad organized a cultural program at Bhanu Udhyan in Gangtok. The cultural program was attended by the Chief Minister of Sikkim- Prem Singh Tamang and by the Governor of Sikkim- Ganga Prasad. The day was also celebrated in West Sikkim district. At Gyalshing (district headquarter of West Sikkim), the occasion was celebrated in the presence of Sangay Lepcha ( Deputy Speaker of Legislative Assembly of Sikkim)

## **26 DAC on talks to acquire 'Raven' and 'Spike Firefly' for the Indian Army**

Talks on sharpening the infantry of the Indian Army continues as the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) is likely to acquire the remotely controlled unmanned aerial vehicle- Raven from the United States and Israel's Spike Firefly.

As per media reports, procurement of 200 pieces of AeroVironment RQ-11 Raven and talks for purchase of Israeli flying ammunition- Spike Firefly is in advance level.

**AeroVironment RQ-11 Raven** The RQ-11 Raven is a remotely controlled unmanned aerial vehicle that is launched with hand. It is manufactured by AeroVironment (U.S. California based Defence Contractor). RQ-11 Raven can fly up to an altitude of 500 feet from the ground level with a speed of between 45-97 Kilometers per hour. RQ-11 Raven can fly up to 10 Kilometres.

### **Spike Firefly**

The Spike Firefly is developed under a joint venture of Israeli company- Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and Israel's Ministry of Defence. The Spike Firefly has loitering capability and can be carried by a soldier as a part of his kit.

The Spike Firefly can be operated from a table by a single user without requiring any special skills to operate. It was the capability to identify and track the target and also to a unique abort/waveoff capability in which the operator can call the Spike Firefly back to the command safely. The weight of the Spike Firefly is 3 Kg. It is one of the newest technology developed by Israel, it has been ordered for the first time by Israel's Ministry of Defence for their Defence Forces in the month of May 2020.

## **27 IWI 'ARAD' and 'CARMEL' Rifles to be Manufactured in India's Madhya Pradesh by PLR**

The Israel Weapon Industries (IWI- Formerly owned by the Israel Government, was privatized in 2005 ) Assault Rifle's- Arad and Carmel will be

manufactured at the PLR Systems Private Ltd (PLR- Precise Lethal Reliable) in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind district. This will be a major boost to the domestic small arms industry and as well as the Make in India initiative. Both IWI Carmel Assault Rifle and Arad Assault Rifle was a caliber 5.56 X 45 mm, Carmel Assault Rifle has a Rate of Fire (RPM) in between 700-1000 rounds per min. PLR Systems Private Limited (PLR) PLR is an Indian Joint Venture Company with the Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) and is also the First Private Sector Small Arms Manufacturing Plant to be established in India. The PLR manufacturing facility is located at Malanpur Industrial Area of Bhind district. The facility was inaugurated on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. To date for the Indian Armed Forces, PLR has manufactured Small Arms and Ammunition such as TAVOR Assault Rifle, X95 Assault Rifle, NEGEV Light Machine Gun (World's Lightest Assault Machine Gun), GALIL Sniper Rifle and UZI Sub Machine Gun

## 28 11th July: World Population Day

Inspired by the 'The Day of Five Billion (observed on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1987 as an approximate day when the world population crossed 5 billion)', the World Population Day was established in 1989 as an initiative taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and was observed first on 11th July 1989.

Following this, in December 1990, by adopting resolution 45/216, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared 11th July to be observed as World Population Day. The Day is being observed every year to focus attention and create awareness on the urgency and importance of rising population issues across the world.

### 2020 World Population Day Focus

As per UNFPA, the 2020 Focus will be on: 'Peace in the Home: Safeguarding the Health and Rights of Women and Girls- Even During COVID-19' At the time of a global pandemic, the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) has decided to focus and raise awareness on the vulnerabilities and myths that exist in our societies against the Women and Girls. These vulnerabilities and myths result in unintended pregnancies and even led to gender-based violence in many countries across the world. As per UNFPA, about 47 million women across low and middle-income economies around the world won't have access to modern contraceptives if the global pandemic continues for another 6n months. This may lead to unintended 7 million pregnancies across the world.

### Rising Global Population

As estimated in March 2020, the global population is estimated to have crossed 7.8 billion. As per records, it took the human population more than 200 millennia to reach 1 billion population. Since then, it took a couple of centuries for the world human population to cross the mark of 7 billion.

## **29 Cambodian NGO Receive 'Development Marketplace Award' from World Bank Group and SVRI**

A WhatsApp chatline named 'SMARTgirl Chatline' was implemented by a Research Team from Cambodian NGO- KHANA Centre for Population Health Research. The 'Smartgirl Chatline' offered 24 hours response and support against gender-based violence to female entertainment workers in Cambodia. A cash reward of USD 100,000 was provided by the World Bank Group & SVRI- Sexual Violence

Research Initiative under the Development Marketplace Award to NGO KHANA Centre for Population Health and Research for implementation of 'Smartgirl Chatline'. Development Marketplace Award

The Development Marketplace Award is an annual global competition under which cash reward is provided to researchers for finding preventing innovative solutions for individuals and communities from gender-based violence. The Development Marketplace Award competition is organized and funded jointly by the World Bank Group and SVRI. From evidences that have emerged, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted to a lack of access to services and restrictions in freedom of movement across the world, as a result, gender-based violence against female across the world has intensified.

In the last 4 years, under the Development Marketplace Award, USD 5 Million has been awarded to research programs in more than 32 low and middle-income countries across the world.