



Rajasthan Current Affairs
of
July - August 2020



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PERSON in NEWS

Persons on Important Posts: RAJASTHAN

Post (Rajasthan)	First	Current (August 2020)
Chief Justice of Rajasthan	Sir Sarat Kumar Ghosh (1949)	Indrajit Mahanty (37th)
Chief Electoral Officer of Rajasthan (CEO)		Praveen Gupta
State Election Commissioner of Rajasthan (SEC)		Prem Singh Mehra
Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)	M. D. Kaurani	
RPSC Chairman	Sir DR. S K GHOSH	Deepak Upreti
Rajasthan Financial Commission Chairman		Dr. Jyoti Kiran (5th)
Advocate General of Rajasthan	G.C. Kasliwal	Mahendra Singh Singhvi
Lokayukta of Rajasthan	ID Dua (1973)	-
Rajasthan State Human Rights Commission	Kanta Kumari Bhatnagar	Mahesh Chandra Sharma (Acting)
Chief Secretary Rajasthan	K. Radhakrishnan	Rajeeva Swarup
Pro-Term Speaker	Maharav Sangram Singh	Gulab Chand Kataria
Speaker Vidhan Sabha	Narottam Lal Joshi	Dr. C. P. Joshi
Leader of Opposition	Jaswant Singh	Gulab Chand Kataria
Governor of Rajasthan	Maharaj Man Singh II (1949) Reorganised State 1956 - Gurumukh Nihal Singh	Kalraj Mishra
Deputy Chairman - Chief Minister's Economic Transformation Advisory Council		Arvind Mayaram
Chairperson State Commission for Women		-
DGP Rajasthan Police		Bhupendra Singh

Persons on Important Posts: NATIONAL

Post (India)	First	Current (August 2020)
Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)	V. Narahari Rao	Girish Chandra Murmu
Chief Justice of India	H. J. Kania	Sharad Arvind Bobde
Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)	Sukumar Sen	Rajiv Kumar
Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)	Wajahat Habibullah	Bimal Julka
Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC)	Nittoor Srinivasa Rau	Sanjay Kothari
UPSC Chairman	Sir Ross Barker	Pradeep Kumar Joshi
RBI Governor	Osborne Smith	Shaktikanta Das
Lokpal of India	Pinaki Chandra Ghose	Pinaki Chandra Ghose
Financial Commission Chairman	K. C. Neogy	Nand Kishor Singh (15th)(2020-2025)
Law Commission Chairman		Balbir Singh Chauhan (21st)
National Commission for SC		Ram Shankar Katheria
National Commission for ST		Nand Kumar Sai
Chairman - National Commission for Minorities		Syed Ghayorul Hasan Rizvi
Chairperson, National Commission for backward classes		Bhagwan Lal Sahni
National Human Rights Commission - Chairperson		Justice H.L.Dattu
Chairperson, National Commission for Women		Rekha Sharma
Cabinet Secretary	N. R. Pillai, ICS	Rajiv Gauba
National Security Adviser		Ajit Kumar Doval
Attorney General of India		K.K Venugopal

Speaker Lok Sabha	G. V. Mavalankar	Om Birla
Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission		Kamlesh Nilkanth Vyas
Chairman, ISRO		Kailasavadivoo Sivan
Principal Scientific Adviser		K. VijayRaghavan
Chairman, University Grants Commission		D.P.Singh
Chairman, Central Water Commission of India		Narendra Kumar
Chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)		Ajay Tyagi
Chairman, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India		Subhash Chandra Khuntia
Chairman, 7th Pay Commission		Ashok Kumar Mathur
Chairman, SIDBI		Muhammad Mustafa
Chairman, NABARD		Govinda Rajulu Chintala
Chairperson, State Bank of India		Rajnish Kumar
Chairman, IDBI		Mahesh Kumar Jain
Chief Economic Advisor		Krishnamurthy Subramanian
Chief of Army Staff		Manoj Mukund Naravane
Chief of Air Staff		Rakesh Kumar Bhaduria
Chief of Naval Staff		Karambir Singh
Chief of Integrated Defence Staff		R Hari Kumar
Chief of Defence Staff		Bipin Rawat

Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha Important Committees & their Chairman

S.No.	Committee's Name	Chairman
1.	Rules Committee/Rules Sub Committee	C. P. Joshi
2.	Committee on Government Assurances	Bhanwar Lal Sharma
3.	Committee on Environment	Manju Devi
4.	Committee on Estimates "A"	Rajendra Pareekh
5.	Committee on Estimates "B"	Dayaram
6.	Committee on Ethics	Deependra Singh
7.	Committee on Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions	Dr. Rajkumar Sharma
8.	Committee on Petitions	Arjunlal Jenagar
9.	Committee on Privileges	Shankuntala Rawat
10.	Committee on Public Accounts	Gulab Chand Kataria
11.	Committee on Public Undertaking	Hemaram Choudhary

Megha Harsh

Megha Harsh from Bikaner has been awarded genius book of record for the largest drawing in the world.

Shri Rajeeva Swarup

On 2nd July 2020, the State Government has appointed **shri Rajeeva Swarup** has the new **Chief Secretary of Rajasthan**. He was currently additional chief secretary (home).

D B Gupta

On 2nd July 2020, the 1983 batch, Senior IAS officer Shri D B Gupta, was removed from the post of chief secretary and [Rajeeva Swarup](#), a 1985-batch IAS officer has been named the new chief secretary.

Later on 5th July 2020, Shri D B Gupta has been appointed as an **adviser to Rajasthan chief minister** Ashok Gehlot. The [appointment order](#) was issued by the Department of Personnel of Rajasthan.

IAS Officer Tina Dabi

IAS officer and Ganganagar Zila Parishad CEO Tina Dabi has been appointed honorary advisor to the BRICS CCI Young Leaders (India) Steering Committee. Tina Dabi, will hold the post for three years (up to 2023).

BRICS CCI is a registered body under Societies Registration Act 1860, Government of India, and empanelled with [NTI Aayog](#) (highest policy-making body of Govt of India) and recognized by United Nations. BRICS CCI has launched a young leaders' initiative to connect the youth of the five countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Prof. Pradeep Kumar Joshi

On 7th August 2020, Professor Pradeep Kumar Joshi, member of Union Public Service Commission ([UPSC](#)) Commission since 2015, was appointed as the new UPSC Chairman. His tenure as the chairman of the UPSC will be till May 12, 2021.

Dr. Ajay Yadav

CM Ashok Gehlot, released the book "Mystery of Corona " written by Homeopathic Doctor Ajay Yadav.

Janardan Singh Gehlot

Janardan Singh Gehlot has been again elected unopposed as the chairman of Rajasthan Olympic Association for the period of 2020-2024. He has been holding this position since 1981.

Sandesh Nayak

Churu District Collector Sandesh Nayak has been conferred with the prestigious Scotch Award for outstanding work towards women upliftment and women empowerment through Rajivika Women Self Help Groups.

Dr. Anula Maurya

Dr. Anula Maurya has been appointed as the Chairperson of State Committee for drafting of State Vedic Sanskar & Shiksha Board.

Places in NEWS

Plasma Bank inaugurated in Kota

State health minister Dr Raghu Sharma on 01st August 2020 inaugurated the plasma bank in Kota Medical College Hospital through video conferencing.

Chomp Village, Jaipur

Rajasthan Cricket Association is planning to construct a state-of-the-art 75,000 seater capacity cricket stadium at Chomp village, which is 25 kms from Jaipur, on Sikar road.

Earlier, Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) allotted 23 acres free of cost to establish the Rajasthan ILD Skills University (RISU) at Chop village on Sikar Road under 'Knowledge City' project.

Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur

Recently, the Centre allocated Rajasthan a 25,000 MW ultra mega renewable energy park. The state government has identified land bank of 125,000 hectares in three districts — Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur—for this park.

Environment

International Day of Clean Air For Blue Skies

The world celebrated the very first **International Day of Clean Air for blue skies**, today on September 7th, 2020. The United Nations General Assembly adopted the [resolution](#) to hold an International Day of Clean Air for blue skies on December 19, 2019, during its 74th session.

UNGA also invited the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) to facilitate the observance of the International Day, in collaboration with other relevant organizations. The Climate and Clean Air Coalition ([CCAC](#)) worked with UNEP and the Republic of Korea to advocate for the day in the lead up to the decision. The first celebration will set a precedent for an important and exciting new international day for clean air to be celebrated annually.

Objectives of Celebrating International day of Clean Air For Blue Skies

The Day aims to:

1. Raise public awareness at all levels—individual, community, corporate and government—that clean air is important for health, productivity, the economy and the environment.
2. Demonstrate the close link of air quality to other environmental/developmental challenges such as – most and foremost – [climate change](#) and the global [Sustainable Development Goals](#).
3. Promote and facilitate solutions that improve air quality by sharing actionable knowledge best practices, innovations, and success stories.
4. Bring together diverse international actors working on this topic to form a strategic alliance to gain momentum for concerted national, regional and international approaches for effective air quality management.

International Day of Clean Air For Blue Skies in India

Union Environment Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar will be chairing a webinar on the first-ever International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies on September 7, 2020. Shri Javadekar will also be reviewing the progress of the activities under National Clean Air programme (NCAP) during the course of the webinar.

Shri Javadekar alongwith Minister of State, Shri Babul Supriyo and Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Shri R P Gupta launched a *brochure* on **Integrated Measures to Combat Air Pollution** under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

The Program focuses on multi-sectoral sources of pollution including power plants, industries, vehicles, open burning of waste, construction & demolition activities etc and suitable interventions aiming towards a clean air environment.

Breathe Life Campaign

Breathe Life Campaign is a joint campaign led by the WHO, United Nations Environment and the Climate & Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) to mobilize cities and individuals to protect our health and planet from the effects of air pollution. The campaign combines public health and climate change expertise with guidance on implementing solutions to air pollution in support of global development goals.

The global campaign covers three core strategic goals:

- Engage city, subnational and national governments to commit to achieving WHO Air Quality Guidelines by 2030
- Halve the number of air pollution related deaths by 2030
- Slow the pace of climate change by 0.5 degrees Celsius by 2050

Panel to study salt mining at Sambhar lake

In July 2020, Rajasthan High Court directed the advocate general, additional solicitor general and amicus curiae to suggest names of officials and scientists to form a committee to carry out inspection of Sambhar lake and assess impact of salt mining.

The division bench of chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty and Justice Prakash Gupta gave the direction during the hearing of a suo motu petition on the death of migratory birds at Sambhar lake last winter. The names have to be given to court within seven days, while posting the matter for next hearing on 27 July 2020.

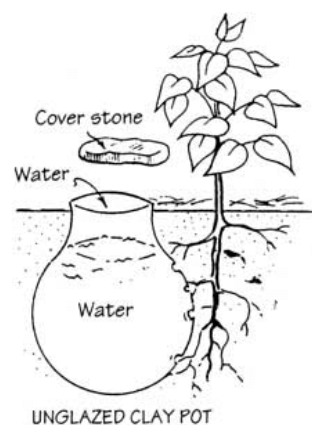
Buried Clay Pot Plantation Technique to Save Water

In July 2020, there was news that, the forest department of Rajasthan has adopted an ancient, **clay pot plantation technique** to increase the survival rate of plants in the desert state. The move was initiated after receiving desirable results last year at the Jhalana forest Reserve. This technique is used by the forest department mainly to grow fruit trees.

What is Buried Clay Pot Plantation Technique

Earthen or clay plot plantation technique is an adaptation of an ancient method of irrigation that is thought to have originated in Africa 4,000 years ago. Terracotta Earthen Jar, also known as Olla, has been used to create self-watering irrigation system in agriculture. It uses the porous nature of clay pots to allow osmotic pressure to deliver the water into the soil where it is needed.

In this technique, an earthen or clay plot is buried along with the plants. These unglazed, porous clay pots are filled with water to provide controlled moisture and water to plants. The water seeps out through the pot wall at a rate that is influenced by the plant's water use. The buried pot has a capacity of 15 litres of water. Generally, the water given to the plant is evaporated or dries within a few hours. The pot buried near the roots provide moisture and water to the plant for at least five days.



Benefits of this technique

The success rate of this method is 90% and it has very high efficiency, even better than drip irrigation. As plantation in [Rajasthan](#) is difficult and survival remains a challenge, this method is very effective in saline soil and desert conditions. It has proved useful for land restoration in very arid environments.

Advantages

- It is the most suitable method for vegetable and orchard crops where plants are widely spaced.
- High water use efficiency. It can save 50-70 % of water without depriving the tree.
- It can be easily used in sandy and undulating lands.
- Saline water can be used because salts are deposited at the bottom of the pot.
- Simple and comparatively cheap method.

Lantana shrub poses threat to Sajjangarh sanctuary

The [Sajjangarh Wildlife Sanctuary](#) in [Udaipur](#) is facing a threat from the invasive toxic species of Lantana shrub. The weed has rapidly spread over an area of around 200 hectares in the sanctuary which sprawls in an area of 519.61 hectares.

What is Latana Shrub

The foliage and ripe berries of the lantana shrub contain toxic substances which affect cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, guinea pigs and rabbits. Lantana spread rapidly & obstructs the pathway of wild animals and doesn't allow grass species to grow which in turn affects the availability of food for the wild animals. This results in fodder scarcity and migration or decline of herbivores. This can lead to starvation of leopards and other carnivores at the top of the food chain.

What is the Department Doing ?

To arrest its growth, which is feared to be very fast after receiving favourable conditions like rains, the forest department has embarked on a drive to remove the bushes before formation and shedding of seeds.

Forest Department Plans Turtle Conservation

The Rajasthan forest department is planning will launch a project for conservation of turtles in the state. The department aims to protect rich aquatic biodiversity of the [chambal river](#) and preserve all those species which act as natural cleaning agents. Many turtles, being carnivorous, can help scavenging and naturally aid in cleaning the river water.

The proposal has been forwarded to the ministry of environment, forest and climate change (MoEFCC). The department is expecting the approval from the ministry in October 2020. Once the proposal receives a green signal, the project will be set up on (60:40) cost sharing pattern.

Turtle Species planned for Conservation

The primary focus of the turtle conservation project will be protecting **nine species of turtle** and their nesting sites on Chambal River bank in Sawai Madhopur and Dholpur districts. The species include:

1. Red crowned roof turtle (*listed as endangered species as per IUCN*)
2. Three-striped roof turtle (*listed as endangered species as per IUCN*)
3. Crowned river turtle,
4. Indian tent turtle,
5. Indian roofed turtle,
6. Indian narrow-headed soft shell turtle,
7. Indian softshell turtle,
8. Indian peacock softshell turtle,
9. Indian flapshell turtle.

Turtle Conservation Project Proposal

- As per the proposal, the conservation plan will include locating turtle nesting sites in a scientific manner, excavation, and relocation of eggs to the hatchery site. To protect eggs from predators and poaching a net garden fencing will be erected to protect the hatchery.
- For the conservation of turtles (hard shell and soft shell), the department to establish a network of hatcheries at four locations.
- The hatcheries have been proposed at three locations in Dholpur and one at Palighat at Chambal
- As per the initial proposal, while 60% cost will be borne by the state government, the Centre would provide 40% share.
- The project would also generate employment for locals as community participation will be involved for managing turtle hatchery sites, locating and relocating of turtle nests.
- The project is cost effective and one hatchery at site could be developed after spending Rs 2 lakh.

Project Dolphin:

On the 74th Independence day 2020, PM Modi announced the launch of Project Dolphin to boost the conservation of both river and sea dolphins in India. Later on 17th August 2020, Union Environment Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar announced that Project Dolphin will be launched within 15 days.

Ganga River Dolphin

- According to the **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)**, the Gangetic river dolphins were officially discovered in 1801 and are one of the oldest creatures in the world along with some species of turtles, crocodiles and sharks.
- The Ganges river dolphin is primarily found in the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers and their tributaries in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- In India, it is found across seven states namely, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.
- The Gangetic river dolphin is India's **national aquatic animal** and is commonly known as 'Susu'.
- The Gangetic river dolphins can *only live in freshwater, are blind and catch their prey in a unique manner, using ultrasonic sound waves.*

The Gangetic river dolphins is among the four freshwater dolphins in the world- the other Three are:

1. The 'Baiji' now likely extinct from the Yangtze River in China,
2. The 'Bhulan' of the Indus in Pakistan, and
3. The 'Boto' of the Amazon River in Latin America.

Present Conservation Status:

- The species is listed endangered by the IUCN and is placed in Schedule I in the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is also listed on **CITES** Appendix-I.

- On 5th October 2009, the Ganga River Dolphin have been formally adopted as the National Aquatic Animal.
- They are also one among the 21 species identified under the centrally sponsored scheme, “Development of Wildlife Habitat”.
- **Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS) in Bihar’s Bhagalpur** district is India’s only sanctuary for its national aquatic animal.
- Setting up of the Conservation Action Plan for the Gangetic Dolphin (2010-2020).

Need for Project Dolphin

- Often known as the *Tiger of the Ganga* the river dolphin is an indicator animal and has the same position in a river ecosystem as a tiger in a forest. The presence of the species indicates a healthy river ecosystem.
- The Ganges river dolphin is still hunted for meat and oil, both used medicinally.
- The population of dolphin in 1982 was estimated to be between 4000-5000 in India. As per official figures, there are about 3,700 Gangetic river dolphins in the Indian river systems ([Source](#)).
- Their numbers have dwindled mainly because of direct killing, habitat fragmentation by dams and barrages and indiscriminate fishing.

Project Dolphin

Project Dolphin will focus on both types of dolphins living in the rivers and in the seas. This will also give a boost to biodiversity and create employment opportunities.

- It involves conservation of Dolphins and the aquatic habitat through the use of modern technology—specially in enumeration and anti-poaching activities.
- It will engage the fishermen and other rivers and ocean dependent population, and will strive for improving the livelihood of the local communities.

The conservation of Dolphin will also envisage activities which will also help in the mitigation of pollution in rivers and the oceans

Social Development

Mental Health Helpline Kiran Launched

On 07th September 2020, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Thaawar chand Gehlot launched a 24x7 Toll-Free Mental Health Rehabilitation Helpline “**KIRAN**” (1800-500-0019) to provide relief and support to persons with Mental Illness. Shri Gehlot also released the poster, brochure and resource book on the Mental Health Helpline Kiran.

Objectives of Kiran Helpline:

The objectives of the Helpline are:

- Early Screening; First Aid;
- Psychological support;
- Distress management;
- Mental well-being;
- Preventing deviant behaviors;
- Psychological crisis management and
- Referral to mental health experts.

Salient Features of Kiran Helpline

- The Kiran Helpline will offer mental health rehabilitation services with the objective of early screening, first-aid, psychological support, distress management, mental wellbeing, promoting positive behaviours, psychological crisis management etc.
- It aims at serving people experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, panic attacks, adjustment disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, pandemic induced psychological issues & mental health emergencies.

- This Toll Free Helpline will be operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the Technical Coordination of BSNL. 25 Institutions including 8 National Institutes are involved in this Helpline.
- It is backed by 660 Clinical / Rehabilitation Psychologists and 668 Psychiatrists.
- It will function as a lifeline to provide 1st stage advice, counselling and reference in 13 languages.
- The 13 languages covered in the Helpline are: Hindi, Assamese, Tamil, Marathi, Odia, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Punjabi, Kannada, Bengali, Urdu and English.

MHRD launches Manodarpan to for Mental Health Well-being of Students

On 21st July 2020, Union HRD Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched the **Manodarpan** initiative of HRD Ministry to provide psychosocial support to students for their Mental Health and Well-being.

Salient Features of Manodarpan Initiative

Manodarpan will cover a wide range of activities to provide Psychosocial Support to students for their Mental Health & Well-being during the [COVID outbreak](#) and beyond. The initiative has been included in the [Atmanirbhar Bharat](#) Abhiyaan, as a part of strengthening human capital and increasing productivity and efficient reform and initiatives for the Education sector.

Components of Manodarpan Initiative

- **Advisory Guidelines** for students, teachers and faculty of School systems and Universities along with families.
- **National level database and directory of counsellors** at School and University level whose services can be offered voluntarily for Tele-Counselling Service on the National Helpline.
- Dedicated **National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632)** has been launched. This unique helpline shall be managed by a pool of experienced counselors/ Psychologists and other mental health professionals and will continue beyond the [coronavirus pandemic situation](#). Through this

helpline tele-counselling will be provided to the students to address their mental health and psychosocial issues.

- Launch of a [special web page](#) of Manodarpan on the portal of HRD Ministry. The Web-page contains advisory, practical tips, posters, podcasts, videos, do's and donts for psychosocial support, FAQs and online query system.
- [Handbook on Psychosocial Support: Enriching Life skills & Wellbeing of Students'](#) to be published online. The booklet will include FAQs, Facts & Myths and will also cover ways and means to manage emotional and behavioural concerns (from young children to college youth) during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- **Interactive Online Chat Platform** for contact, counselling and guidance by psychologists and other mental health professionals which will be available for students, teachers, and families during COVID-19 and beyond.
- **Webinars, audio-visual resources including videos, posters, flyers, comics, and short films** to be uploaded as additional resource materials on the webpage.
- Crowd sourcing from students all over the country will be encouraged as peer support.

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2020

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an international measure of multidimensional poverty covering 107 developing countries. The Index was launched in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for UNDP's Human Development Reports.

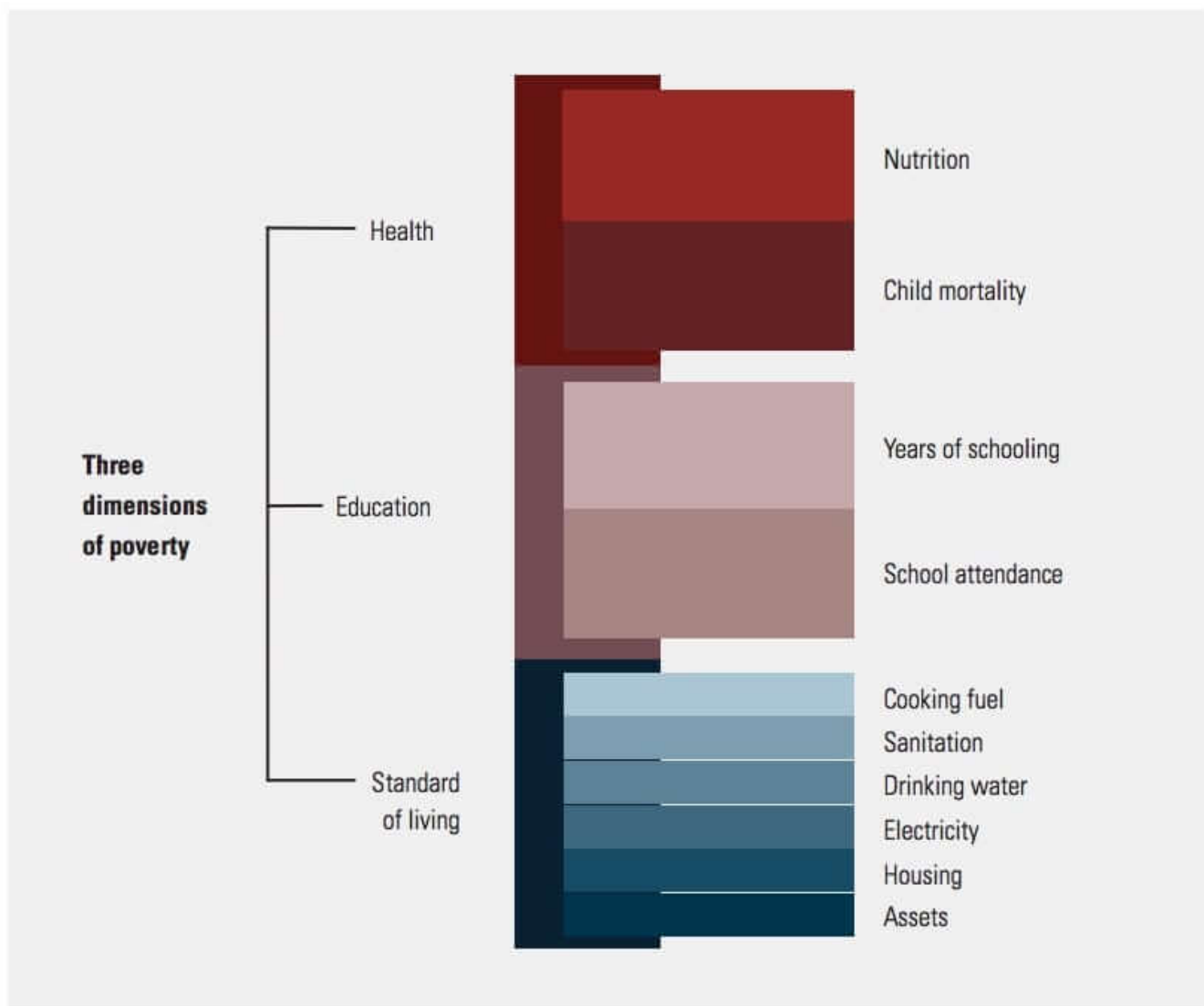
What is the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) ?

[Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 1](#) aims to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Although previously defined only in monetary terms, poverty is now understood to include the lived reality of people's experiences and the multiple deprivations they face.

Structure of MPI

The global MPI examines each person's deprivations across 10 indicators in three equally weighted dimensions—

- Health,
- Education
- Standard of living



Source: QPHI 2018.

Each of the dimension weighs equally (1/3) and so individual indicators in health & education weigh 1/6 and individual indicators in standard of living dimension 1/18.

A person is **multidimensionally poor** if she/he is deprived in one third or more (means 33% or more) of the **weighted indicators** (out of the ten indicators). Those who are deprived in one half or more of the weighted indicators are considered living in **extreme multidimensional poverty**.

The overall MPI ranges from 0 to 1, and higher values imply higher poverty.

Indicators - Household deprived if:	Weights	HH1 4 members	HH2 7 members	HH3 5 members
One or more children have died	1/6 16.7%	1	1	0
At least one member is malnourished	1/6 16.7%	0	0	1
No one has completed 6 years of schooling	1/6 16.7%	0	1	0
At least one school-age child not enrolled in school	1/6 16.7%	0	1	1
Household uses "dirty" cooking fuel	1/18 5.6%	1	1	0
Sanitation facility not improved	1/18 5.6%	0	1	1
No access to clean drinking water	1/18 5.6%	0	0	0
Household has inadequate housing	1/18 5.6%	0	0	1
Household has no electricity	1/18 5.6%	0	1	0
No access to information or mobility related assets	1/18 5.6%	0	1	1
Deprivation Score:		22.3%	72.5%	50.2%
MPI Poor:		No	Yes	Yes

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020

In July 2020, **Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020** was released by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI)**.

The global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2020 covers 107 countries—28 low income, 76 middle income and 3 high income and and 5.9 billion people in developing regions.

Key Findings:

- Across 107 developing countries, 1.3 billion people—22 percent—live in multidimensional poverty.
- About 84.3 percent of multidimensionally poor people live in Sub-Saharan Africa (558 million) and South Asia (530 million).
- 65 countries reduced their global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) value significantly in absolute terms. Those countries are home to 96 percent of the population of the 75 countries studied for poverty trends.
- Ten countries, including China, came close to halving their MPI value.
- Four countries halved their MPI value.
- The study finds that on average, **poverty levels** will be set back **3 to 10 years** due to [Covid-19](#).
- Neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka (25th), Bhutan (68th), Nepal (65th), Bangladesh (58th), China (30th), Myanmar (69th) and Pakistan (73rd) are also ranked in this index.

India:

- India (2005/2006–2015/2016) did so nationally and among children and had the biggest reduction in the number of multidimensionally poor people (273 million).
- India is 62nd among 107 countries with an MPI score of 0.123 and 27.91% headcount ratio, based on the NFHS 4 (2015/16) data.
- For India, MPI utilises the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) which is conducted under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS).

Global Multidimensional Poverty Index and India

[NITI Aayog](#) as the nodal agency has been assigned the responsibility of leveraging the monitoring mechanism of the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to drive reforms.

[NITI Aayog](#) has constituted a Multidimensional Poverty Index Coordination Committee (MPICC). The MPICC, chaired by Ms Sanyukta Samaddar, Adviser (SDG) has members from relevant Line Ministries and Departments. These Ministries/ Departments have been mapped to the ten parameters of the index. Experts from OPHI and UNDP, as the publishing agency, have also been onboarded for their technical expertise.

The inaugural meeting of the MPICC was held on 2 September 2020. Preparation of a MPI Parameter Dashboard to rank States and UTs, and a State Reform Action Plan (SRAP) are at an advanced stage of development. The MPICC will next be organising a workshop with representatives of States and UTs for taking the SRAP forward.

India T.B. Report 2020

Recently, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched the **annual Tuberculosis (TB) Report 2020**.

Highlights India TB Report 2020

- India is the highest TB burden country in the world having an estimated incidence of 26.9 lakh cases in 2019 (WHO).
- India is committed to eliminating tuberculosis from the country by 2025, five years ahead of the global target by the WHO (2030).
- The national programme on TB has been renamed from the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) to National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP).
- The programme has comprehensively moved closer to near-complete online notification of all TB cases in the country through the NIKSHAY portal.
- Rajasthan is among top 5 states in number of TB cases with Uttar Pradesh (20%), Maharashtra (9%) Madhya Pradesh (8%), Rajasthan (7%) and Bihar (7%) of total notified cases

- On the basis of the score in **State TB Index**, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh were the top three best-performing states for tuberculosis control under the category of states with 50 lakh population.

Rajasthan School Shiksha Parishad

The State Government has integrated Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education and Rajasthan Council of Secondary Education and has formed Rajasthan School Shiksha Parishad. The new body will be responsible for integrated development of education from pre-primary to Class XI.

One School in each panchayat to get internet

The state government has ordered all the district education officers to start the process of connecting one government school in every gram panchayat with internet.

Economy

BRAP 2019 Ranking of States Announced

On 5th September 2020, Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, announced the 4th edition of Business Reform Action Plan - BRAP 2019 ranking of states.

What is BRAP ?

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) spearheaded a dynamic national level exercise that commenced in 2014 to rank all the States/UTs in the country on the reforms undertaken by them on designated parameters. The aim of this exercise is to create conducive business environment by streamlining regulatory structures and creating an investor-friendly business climate by cutting down red tape.

Subsequently, a report titled “Assessment of State implementation of Business Reforms” was released in September 2015 capturing the findings of reforms implemented by States/UTs.

To give this exercise momentum, 18 joint workshops were conducted in partnership with the World Bank Group to help States/UTs to better understand the essence of these reforms.

In 2016, DPIIT released a 340-point action plan which was drafted in consultation with all States/UTs. It included recommendations on 58 regulatory processes, policies and process spread across 10 reform areas spanning the lifecycle of a typical business. Such an action plan was the first of its kind in India which promoted both competitive and cooperative federalism among the States/UTs. Consequently, an online portal (www.eodb.dipp.gov.in) showcasing dynamic real time rankings was developed and launched in April 2016.

BRAP Ranking of States:

First BRAP Rankings: Ranking of States based on the implementation of Business Reform Action Plan started in the year 2015.

Second BRAP Rankings: Final ranking of States/UTs on implementation of the 340 points were released in November, 2016. The national implementation average stood at 48.93% significantly higher than 2015's national average of 32% and 12 States achieved more than 90% implementation score.

Third BRAP Rankings: BRAP 2017-18 was updated to 372 action points with addition of new sectors such as Healthcare and Hospitality, Central Inspection system, Trade License, Registration under Legal Metrology, and Registration of Partnership Firms & Societies.

BRAP 2019 Ranking of States

The Business Reform Action Plan 2018-19 includes 180 reform points covering 12 business regulatory areas such as Access to Information, Single Window System, Labour, Environment, etc.

The larger objective of attracting investments and increasing Ease of Doing Business in each State was sought to be achieved by introducing an element of healthy competition through a system of ranking states based on their performance in the implementation of Business Reform Action Plan.

The ranking this time gives full weightage to the feedback from over thirty thousand respondents at the ground level, who gave their opinion about the effectiveness of the reforms. State rankings will help attract investments, foster healthy competition and increase Ease of Doing Business in each State.

Results: BRAP 2019 Ranking of States

The top ten states under State Reform Action Plan 2019 are:

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Uttar Pradesh
3. Telangana
4. Madhya Pradesh
5. Jharkhand
6. Chhattisgarh
7. Himachal Pradesh
8. Rajasthan
9. West Bengal
10. Gujarat

BRAP Rankings & Rajasthan

In the first BRAP States Ranking released in 2015, Rajasthan stood at 6th Position but in [2016 the state slipped two positions and Rajasthan stood at 8th Position](#).

In BRAP 2017-18, Rajasthan again slipped one position to rank at 9th position. Now in BRAP 2019, released in September 2020 - Rajasthan has reclaimed the **number 8th position** again.

Covid-19: Raj. Government declares Austerity Measures

On 4th September 2020, the Rajasthan government announced several austerity measures in the wake of the [coronavirus pandemic](#) hitting the finances of the state. The measures include curbs on purchase of new vehicles and equipment, travel restrictions, and ban on state banquets, setting up of new offices and exhibitions and seminars. The finance department, GoR has issued a circular in this regard.

Important Austerity Measures:

- Departments have been asked to limit the expenditure to 70 per cent of the amount sanctioned. These include office expenses, travel expenses, computer maintenance, stationery, printing and writing, publications, library and magazines.
- Expenditure against the approved provision under fuels will also be limited to 90 per cent.
- Travelling for government functions will be kept to a minimum.
- Purchase of new vehicles have also been prohibited.
- Meetings will have to be conducted through video conferencing as much as possible.
- Officers who are entitled air travel will use economy class. There will also be a complete ban on airfare for travelling abroad on state expenditure.
- All kinds of machinery, equipment, tools, plant and other new items will not be procured except for necessary materials and equipment for prevention, treatment and assistance of victims of [Covid-19](#).
- No new office will be allowed to open in the financial year 2020-21 with 100% state funds. Instructions have been issued to departments to take necessary action by identifying posts

which have become irrelevant at present due to changes in departmental functioning and due to application of information technology.

- State banquet and gifts and hospitality expenses will be banned till further orders.
- All state programmes, bhoomi poojan and inauguration ceremonies will be conducted observing simplicity and austerity and through video conferencing if possible.
- New sanctions for cash payment in lieu of accrued holiday payable to state officials and employees will be postponed in this financial year.
- In the current financial year, all types of training, seminars, workshops, festivals and exhibitions will be organised online as much as possible. In the most urgent circumstances, they could be organised only in state institutions, government buildings or state premises. Along with training, tours and conference expenses, instructions have also been issued in the circular to reduce at least 50 per cent of the amount available in the budget head for festivals and exhibitions.
- The guidelines will be applicable to all state undertakings, companies, boards, universities, aided institutions, bodies and all the organisations financially dependent on the state government, wholly or partially.

Earlier, the state has cabinet had also decided to deduct two day's remuneration of officers belonging to all-India and state services and one-day's salary of other employees from September to mobilise resources for Covid relief fund. The cabinet also decided to deduct one week's gross salary of chief minister and ministers. While the MLAs will donate one day's net salary, the employees of other departments, excluding high court and subordinate court, medical and health, medical education, and police constable from level I to IV, will also donate one-day's salary to the relief fund.

Rajasthan ranks 4 in Export Preparedness Index-2020

[Rajasthan](#) has been ranked at 4th place after Gujarat, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu in the Niti Aayog's Export Preparedness Index-2020. The state emerged as a top performer among 11 landlocked states.

What is Export Preparedness Index 2020 ?

India's vision of becoming a USD5 trillion economy by 2024 is intricately linked with an export-oriented approach. So [NITI Aayog](#) has taken an initiative of developing the first-ever Export Preparedness Index for Indian states. The Index ranks states and union territories on critical parameters required for promoting the country's exports.

Methodology

The Index framework is an aggregation of four pillars, 11 sub-pillars, and 55 indicators, which capture the export landscape of sub-national governments in the country.



Weightage structures of the pillars and sub-pillars

Results:

- Gujarat (75.2) emerged as the top-performing state in the 'Coastal States' category, followed by Maharashtra (75.1) and Tamil Nadu (64.9).
- In the category of 'Landlocked States', Rajasthan (62.6) was the best-performing state.
- Among 'Himalayan States' and 'City-States', Uttarakhand and Delhi are the top performing states respectively.

Rajasthan Scorecard**Rajasthan Pillar-Wise Performance:**

- Policy - Rank 5
- Business Ecosystem - Rank 7
- Export Ecosystem - Rank 3
- Export Performance - Rank 15

Index Of Eight Core Industries: July 2020

As per the [recent release](#) by the Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade the growth rate of Index of Eight Core Industries for July 2020 declined by 9.6% (provisional).

The combined Index of Eight Core Industries stood at 119.9 in July, 2020, which declined by 9.6 (provisional) per cent as compared to the Index of July, 2019. Its cumulative growth during April to July, 2020-21 was -20.5%.

Eight Core Industries

The Eight Core Industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). The eight core industries include **coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity**. These are called core industries because of their likely impact on general [economic activity](#) as well as other industrial activity.

The Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)

The **monthly Index** of Eight Core Industries (ICI) is a production volume index. ICI measures collective and individual performance of production in selected eight core industries viz. Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity.

The Index is compiled and released by Office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

The inter-se weights of these eight industries are largely in alignment with the respective weight of these industries in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

The **base year of the ICI has been revised to 2011-12** from 2004-05 in alignment with the new series of IIP. Combined weight of these eight core industries is **40.27 percent of IIP** with base 2011-12. The Index is calculated by using the **Laspeyre's formula** of weighted arithmetic mean of quantity relatives.

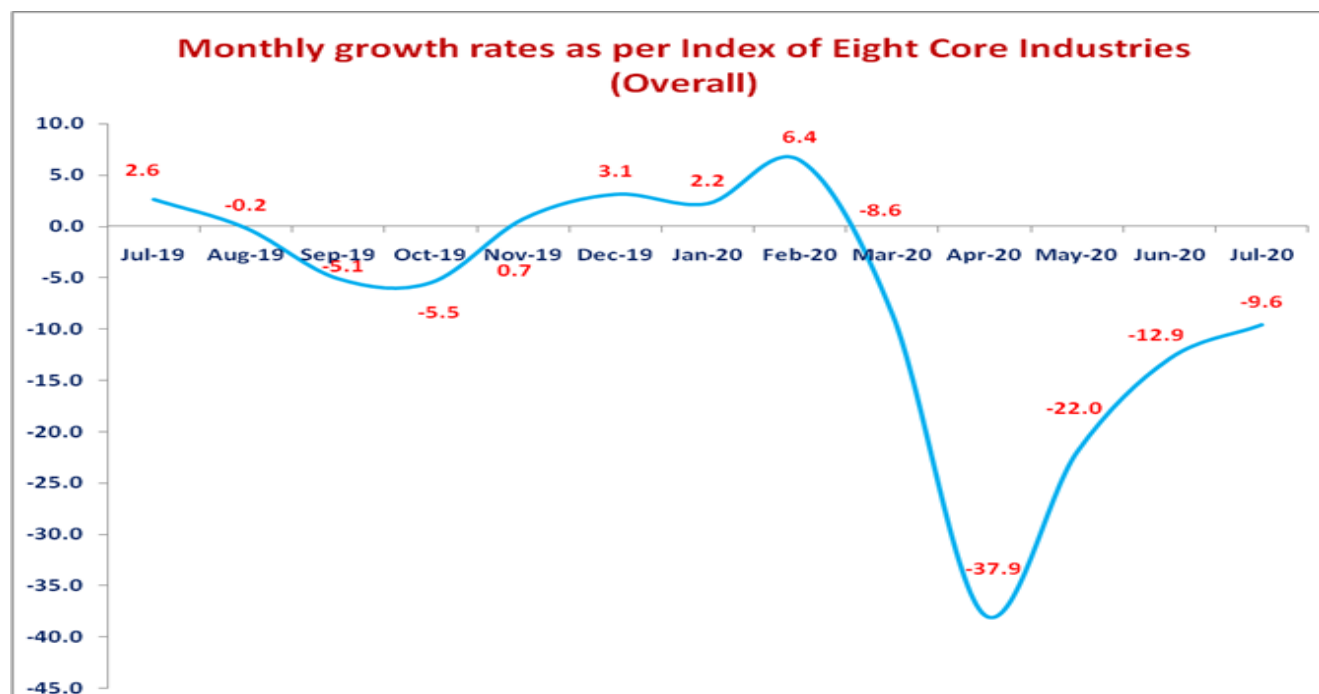
ICI for a reference month is released with a time lag of one month on last day of the next month, which is about twelve days prior to the release of IIP for the reference month. The monthly index is released on the last working day of every month at 5.00 P.M. If last day happens to be a holiday then it is released on the first working day of the next month. The index is released through Press Information Bureau (PIB) as well as on website of the Office of the Economic Adviser.

Eight Core Industries and their weightage in index are:

S. No	Industry	Percentage
1	Coal	10.33%
2	Natural Gas	8.98%
3	Crude Oil production	6.88%
4	Petroleum Refinery	28.04%
5	Fertilizers	2.63%
6	Steel	17.92%
7	Cement production	5.37%
8	Electricity generation	19.85%
	Total	100%

ICI for July 2020

As per the [recent release](#) by the Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade the growth rate of Index for July 2020 declined by 9.6% (provisional).



Monthly growth rates of the Index

In view of nationwide lockdown during April & May 2020 due to [COVID-19](#) pandemic, various industries viz. Coal, Cement, Steel, Natural Gas, Refinery, Crude Oil etc. experienced substantial loss of production. However, the rate of fall in the Index of Eight Core Industries **decelerated** on a sequential basis on account of partial opening of economic activities during July 2020.

The combined Index of Eight Core Industries stood at 119.9 in July, 2020, which declined by 9.6 (provisional) per cent as compared to the Index of July, 2019. Its cumulative growth during April to July, 2020-21 was -20.5%.

Final growth rate of Index of Eight Core Industries for April'2020 is revised at -37.9%.

One Stop Shop Scheme (OSS) to Fast-track Investments

In July 2020, the state cabinet has approved **One Stop Shop scheme** for fast-tracking investment and capacity expansion proposals by facilitating time-bound approvals and clearances in Rajasthan. A similar scheme earlier is known as single window clearance system.

Salient Features of One Stop Shop Scheme

- Entrepreneurs investing above Rs 10 crore will be able to get 98 types of clearances under one roof at the 'One Stop Shop' (OSS) Scheme.
- One Stop Shop Scheme will function under the Bureau of Investment Promotion ([BIP](#)) of the industries department.
- Officers from 14 departments like industries, [RIICO](#), energy, labour, urban development, local self-governance, [pollution control board](#), consumer affairs, tourism, revenue, factories and boilers, public works and [PHED](#) will be deputed to the One Stop Shop cell and will ensure that investment-related issues concerning multiple departments are received and addressed at one location to avoid unnecessary delay in clearances.

Rajasthan's plug and play policy to boost manufacturing

Rajasthan is planning to build manufacturing facilities, where manufacturers can directly move in the machinery and start production. The plug and play policy is expected to boost manufacturing, as the built in spaces already have basic facilities such as electricity, water, etc. and eliminates the need for complicated processes such as land acquisition.

Consequently, RIICO has started working on a couple of plug-and-play facilities, which will facilitate entrepreneurs and startups to set up units at minimum investment and at the earliest. As per RIICO officials, the plug-and-play facility in Sitapura will be built on a 4,000sqmtr area where entrepreneurs and startups from gem and jewellery sector will be given space on rent. Similarly, the facility at Jagatpura will be developed over 6,000 sqmtr which would be dedicated to apparels and textile.

Governance

MBC & EWS Reservation in Rajasthan Judicial Services

The department of personnel (DOP), Government of [Rajasthan](#), issued a notification on 20th August 2020, that provides 5% reservation to (More Backward Classes) MBC & 10% reservation to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in direct recruitment for Rajasthan Judicial Services. Through the notification, the state government has amended the Rajasthan Judicial Service Rules 2010.

Amendment:

As per the notification, In exercise of the powers conferred by Article 233 and 234 read with proviso to Article 309 of the Constitution of India and all other powers enabling him in this behalf, the [Governor of Rajasthan](#) in consultation with the Rajasthan Public Service Commission and the High Court of Judicature for Rajasthan has made following rules further to amend the Rajasthan Judicial Service Rules, 2010.

- In the rule on category of sections eligible for reservation expressions 'More Backward Classes,' & 'Economically Weaker Sections' shall be inserted.
- MBC to have 5% reservation.
- Reservation of vacancies for Economically Weaker Sections shall be 10% in direct recruitment in addition to the existing reservation.
- In the event of non-availability of eligible and suitable candidate amongst Economically Weaker Sections in a particular year, the vacancies so reserved for them shall be filled in accordance with the normal procedure.

Who are covered under Economically Weaker Section

The notification also provides explanation regarding **Who are covered under Economically Weaker Sections** as:

For the purpose of this rule "Economically Weaker Sections" shall be the persons who are bonafide resident of Rajasthan and not covered under the existing scheme of reservations for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Backward Classes, the More Backward Classes and whose family has gross annual income below rupees 8.00 lakh.

Family for this purpose will include the person who seeks benefit of reservation, his/her parents, siblings below the age of 18 years, his/her spouse and children below the age of 18 years. The income shall include income from all sources i.e. salary, agriculture, business, profession etc. and it will be income for the financial year immediately preceding the year of application.

Question Hour and Zero Hour & their Importance

In view of the [Covid-19 pandemic in the country](#), the Union Government had initially decided to **suspend the Question Hour** and **curtail the Zero Hour** for Monsoon Session 2020 of the Parliament. However, considering the uproar from the opposition members, the central government on 3rd September allowed the Question Hour of 30 minutes duration. Additionally, only unstarred questions will be taken up during the upcoming Monsoon Session. This article explains the concept of Question Hour and Zero Hour in Indian Parliamentary System & various concepts associated with it.

The Monsoon Session of Parliament is all set to begin from September 14 till October 1. Parliament will meet later this month after being in recess for 174 days. It is the longest gap between the budget and monsoon sessions in the last twenty years, if not more. The Rajya Sabha will work during the first half, and after sanitisation of the parliament premises, the Lok Sabha will begin working in the second half.

Question Hour

The **first hour of every parliamentary sitting** is slotted for the Question Hour. However, in 2014 the Question Hour **was shifted in the Rajya Sabha from 11 am to 12 noon**.

During this one hour, Members of Parliament (MPs) ask questions and the ministers usually give the answers. The questions can also be asked to the private members (MPs who are not ministers). Usually, facts relating to policies, etc. are questioned and Ministers are made answerable for their ministry's actions.

Types of Questions asked:

A question asked, can be of three types: starred, unstarred & short notice question.

- **Starred question** (distinguished by an asterisk) - requires an *oral answer* and hence supplementary questions can follow.

- **Unstarred question** - requires a *written answer* and hence, supplementary questions cannot follow.
- **Short notice question** is one that is asked by giving a notice of less than ten days. It is answered orally.

Occurrence:

Question Hour in both Houses is held on all days of the session. But there are two days when an exception is made.

- When the **President addresses MPs from both Houses**. The President's speech takes place at the beginning of a new Lok Sabha and on the first day of a new Parliament year.
- On the day the Finance Minister presents the **Budget**.

Mentions:

The Question Hour is mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. It is regulated according to parliamentary rules. The presiding officers of the both Houses (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha) are the final authority with respect to the conduct of Question Hour.

The Zero Hour

The Zero Hour is usually used to raise matters that are urgent and cannot wait for the notice period required under other procedures. For raising matters during the Zero Hour, MPs give notice before 10 am to the Chairman on the day of the sitting. The notice must state the subject they wish to raise in the House. The Chairman decides whether to allow the matter to be raised. Short notice questions too are taken up during the Zero Hour.

The zero hour starts immediately after the question hour and lasts until the agenda for the day (i.e. regular business of the House) is taken up. In simple terms, the time gap between the question hour and then agenda is known as the **Zero Hour**.

Zero Hour is an Indian parliamentary innovation and unlike Question Hour it is not mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. Zero hour has been in existence since 1962.

Over the years, presiding officers of both Houses have given directions to streamline the working of Zero Hour to make it even more effective. Its importance can be gauged from the support it receives from citizens, media, MPs and presiding officers despite not being part of the rulebook.

Difference between Question Hour & Zero Hour:

Detailed guidelines regulate the functioning of Question Hour. Zero Hour, on the other hand, is not mentioned in the rulebook and is an Indian parliamentary innovation.

Importance of Question Hour & Zero Hour:

- Member of Parliament questioning ministers is a robust mechanism for Parliament's scrutiny of government functioning and makes government of the day accountable to the public.
- The oral answering of questions is the part of Question Hour that is visible to the public. While majority of the questions are answered in writing and written responses do provide valuable information about government functioning. But it is the oral questioning whose live broadcasting which puts pressure on the government ministers and makes functioning of the democracy visible.

Uncovering Independent India's First Financial Scandal

In 1957, Ram Subhag Singh, a Lok Sabha MP from Bihar utilised Question Hour to question Finance Minister TT Krishnamachari about an investment made by the state-controlled Life Insurance Corporation of India in the company of a Kolkata-based businessman called Haridas Mundhra.

The questioning set in motion process for the uncovering of the first financial scandal in the newly independent country, additionally, the outcome was the decision that LIC would only make investments in blue-chip companies. The enquiry report by Justice Chagla's led to Finance Minister TT Krishnamachari's resignation from the council of ministers of PM Nehru.

Swachh Survekshan 2020 Rankings & Awards

On 20th August 2020, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri released the rankings for Swachh Survekshan 2020. The 2020 Survekshan marks the completion of 5th edition of the largest urban sanitation survey. Swachh Survekshan 2020 surveyed a total of 4242 cities, 62 Cantonment Boards and 97 Ganga Towns and saw an unprecedented participation of 1.87 crore citizens.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) Updates:

Since its launch in 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) has made significant progress in the area of both sanitation and solid waste management. 4,324 Urban ULBs have been declared ODF, 1,319 cities certified ODF+ and 489 cities certified ODF++ as per MoHUA's sanitation protocols.

This has been made possible through construction of more than 66 lakhs individual household toilets and over 6 lakhs community/ public toilets, far exceeding the Mission's targets. Additionally, over 59,900 toilets across 2900+ cities have been made live on Google Maps. In the area of solid waste management, 96% of wards have complete door-to door collection while 66% of the total waste generated is being processed – a jump of nearly 4 times over 2014 levels of 18% processing.

A total of 6 cities (Indore, Ambikapur, Navi Mumbai, Surat, Rajkot and Mysuru) have been rated as 5-star cities, 86 cities as 3-Star and 64 cities as 1-Star, as per MoHUA's Star Rating Protocol for Garbage Free Cities.

What is Swachh Survekshan

Swachh Survekshan is an annual ranking exercise taken up by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India to assess urban areas of country on their levels of cleanliness and active implementation of Swachhta mission initiatives in a timely & innovative manner.

The objective of survey is to encourage large scale citizen participation and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards making towns & cities a better place to live in.

In addition, survey also seeks to promote a spirit of healthy competition between towns & cities; to improve the quality of their services to people, and create cleaner cities and towns. MoHUA started an annual ranking of cities in the year 2016.

Swachh Survekshan 2020

Swachh Survekshan 2020 marks the completion of 5th edition of the largest urban sanitation survey. In 2020 the coverage of survey was 4242 cities (including 62 Cantonment Boards). The data collected through multifarious sources for 57 indicators (40 – Service Level Progress, 9 – Direct Observation and 8 – Citizen Feedback) have been compiled for ranking the cities.

Award Categories: A total of 130 awards under Swachh Survekshan 2020, are given at the national level, state level, zonal level and cantonment board level. The cities/town that have a population of more than 1 lakh, or are small state capitals and UTs are eligible for the national level awards.

Swachh Survekshan 2020 Rankings:

While **Indore** won the coveted title of the **Cleanest City of India**, Surat and Navi Mumbai won the second and third position respectively (in the > 1 lakh population category).

Chhattisgarh won the prestigious title of the Cleanest State of India in the > 100 ULB category while **Jharkhand** was adjudged the Cleanest State of India in the <100 ULB category.

Swachh Survekshan 2020 Rankings: Rajasthan

Overall, [Rajasthan](#) ranked at 11th position in State's ranking (*Chhattisgarh ranked first Kerala came last*). Following Cities from [Rajasthan](#) made their way to Swachh Survekshan 2020.

ULB with more than 10 lac population:

- 28/47 - Jaipur
- 29/47 - Jodhpur ('Fastest Mover' Big City - National Level Award)
- 44/47 - Kota

ULB with 1-10 lac population:

- 54 - [Udaipur](#)

ULB with less than 1 lac population:

- 20 - Dungarpur

Other Awards to Rajasthan cities:

- Dungarpur won Best City in Citizens Feedback for West Zone

Cabinet Approves National Recruitment Agency (NRA), to conduct Common Eligibility Test (CET)

On 20th August 2020, the Union Cabinet chaired by the PM Modi approved creation of **National Recruitment Agency** (NRA), paving the way for a transformational reform in the recruitment process for [central government](#) jobs. NRA will conduct **Common Eligibility Test** to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non-technical) posts and will provide a level playing field to all candidates.

Background

At present, candidates seeking government jobs have to appear for separate examinations conducted by multiple recruiting agencies for various posts, for which similar eligibility conditions have been prescribed. Candidates have to pay fee to multiple recruiting agencies and also have to travel long distances for appearing in various exams. These multiple recruitment examinations are a burden on the candidates, as also on the respective recruitment agencies, involving avoidable/repetitive expenditure, law and order/security related issues and venue related problems.

On an average, 2.5 crore to 3 crore candidates appear in each of these examinations. A common eligibility Test would enable these candidates to appear once and apply to any or all of these recruitment agencies for the higher level of examination. This would indeed be a boon to all the candidates.

National Recruitment Agency (NRA)

The National Recruitment Agency (NRA) will be a multi-agency body that will conduct a Common Eligibility Test (CET) to screen/shortlist candidates for the Group B and C (non-technical) posts. NRA will come into force from next year and will be headquartered in Delhi.

NRA will have representatives of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance/Department of Financial Services, the SSC, RRB & IBPS.

NRA is envisioned to be a specialist body bringing the state-of-the-art technology and best practices to the field of Central Government recruitment. State Governments will also be advised to come on board in a true spirit of Cooperative Federalism. The government hopes that in near future private sector will also join the NRA.

Salient Features of NRA:

- **Standardised Testing:** NRA shall conduct a separate CET each for the three levels of graduate, higher secondary (12th pass) and the matriculate (10th pass) candidates for those non-technical posts to which recruitment is presently carried out by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) and by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS). Based on the screening done at the CET score level, final selection for recruitment shall be made through separate specialised Tiers (II, III etc) of examination which shall be conducted by the respective recruitment agencies. The curriculum for this test would be common as would be the standard. This would greatly ease the burden of candidates who are at present required to prepare for each of the examinations separately as per different curriculum.
- **Access to Examination Centres:** Examination Centres in every District of the country would greatly enhance access to the candidates located in far-flung areas.
- **Cost Savings & reduced hassle for Candidates:** A single examination would reduce the financial burden on candidates occurring because of multiple examination fees, and additional expenses for travel, boarding, lodging etc. It will also improve chances for women & rural background candidates.
- **Score Validity for 3 years, no bars on attempt:** There will be two tests per year under NRA and the scores of the candidates will remain valid for three years. The best of the valid scores shall be deemed to be the current score of the candidate. There shall be no restriction on the number of attempts to be taken by a candidate to appear in the CET subject to the upper age limit.
- **Multiple languages:** Besides Hindi and English, tests will be conducted in 12 languages in due course and efforts will be made to include all the languages mentioned in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.
- **Shortening the recruitment cycle:** A single eligibility test would significantly reduce the recruitment cycle.
- **Financial Outlay:** The Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1517.57 crore for the National Recruitment Agency (NRA). The expenditure will be undertaken over a period of three years. Apart from setting up the NRA, costs will be incurred for setting up examination infrastructure in the 117 Aspirational Districts.

Cabinet approves Mission Karmayogi

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved launching of Mission Karmayogi - a **National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)** with the following institutional framework:-

1. Prime Minister's Public Human Resources (HR) Council,
2. Capacity Building Commission.
3. Special Purpose Vehicle for owning and operating the digital assets and the technological platform for online training,
4. Coordination Unit headed by the Cabinet Secretary.

Background

Capacity of Civil Services plays a vital role in rendering a wide variety of services, implementing welfare programs and performing core governance functions. A transformational change in Civil Service Capacity is proposed to be affected by organically linking the transformation of work culture, strengthening public institutions and adopting modern technology to build civil service capacity with the overall aim of ensuring efficient delivery of services to citizens.

A **Public Human Resources Council** comprising of select Union Ministers, [Chief Ministers](#), eminent public HR practitioners, thinkers, global thought leaders and Public Service functionaries under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister will serve as the apex body for providing strategic direction to the task of Civil Services Reform and capacity building.

Salient Features

NPCSCB has been carefully designed to lay the foundations for capacity building for Civil Servants so that they remain entrenched in Indian Culture and sensibilities and remain connected, with their roots, while they learn from the best institutions and practices across the world. The Programme will be delivered by setting up an **Integrated Government Online Training- iGOTKarmayogi** Platform. The **core guiding principles** of the Programme will be:

1. Supporting Transition from 'Rules based' to 'Roles based* HR Management. Aligning work allocation of civil servants by matching their competencies to the requirements of the post.

2. To emphasize on 'on-site learning' to complement the 'off-site' learning,
3. To create an ecosystem of shared training infrastructure including that of learning materials, institutions and personnel,
4. To calibrate all Civil Service positions to a **Framework of Roles, Activities and Competencies (FRACs)** approach and to create and deliver learning content relevant to the identified FRACs in every Government entity,
5. To make available to all civil servants, an opportunity to continuously build and strengthen their **Behavioral, Functional and Domain Competencies** in their self-driven and mandated learning paths.
6. To enable all the Central Ministries and Departments and their Organizations to directly invest their resources towards co-creation and sharing the collaborative and common ecosystem of learning through an annual financial subscription for every employee,
7. To encourage and partner with the best-in-class learning content creators including public training institutions, universities, start-ups and individual experts,
8. To undertake data analytics in respect of data emitted provided by iGOT-Karmayogi pertaining to various aspects of capacity building, content creation, user feedback and mapping of competencies and identify areas for policy reforms.

Objectives

It is also proposed to set up a **Capacity Building Commission**, with a view to ensure a uniform approach in managing and regulating the capacity building ecosystem on collaborative and co-sharing basis.

The role of Commission will be as under-

- To assist the PM Public Human Resources Council in approving the Annual Capacity Building Plans.
- To exercise functional supervision over all Central Training Institutions dealing with civil services capacity building.
- To create shared learning resources, including internal and external faculty and resource centers.

- To coordinate and supervise the implementation of the Capacity Building Plans with the stakeholder Departments.
- To make recommendations on standardization of training and capacity building, pedagogy and methodology
- To set norms for common mid-career training programs across all civil services.
- To suggest policy interventions required in the areas of HR Management and Capacity Building to the Government.

iGOT-Karmayogi platform brings the scale and state-of-the-art infrastructure to augment the capacities of over two crore officials in India. The platform is expected to evolve into a vibrant and world-class market place for content where carefully curated and vetted digital e-learning material will be made available. Besides capacity building, service matters like confirmation after probation period, deployment, work assignment and notification of vacancies etc. would eventually be integrated with the proposed competency framework.

Mission Karmayogi aims to prepare the Indian Civil Servant for the future by making him more creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled. Empowered with specific role-competencies, the civil servant will be able to ensure efficient service delivery of the highest quality standards.

Financial implications

- To cover around 46 lakh Central employees, a sum of Rs.510.86 crore will be spent over a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25.
- A wholly owned Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for NPCSCB will be set up under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013. The SPV will be a "not-for-profit" company and will own and manage **iGOT-Karmayogi** platform.

National Council for Transgender Persons Constituted

On 21st August 2020, the Central Government has constituted a National Council for Transgender Persons. The Council has been constituted in exercise of the powers conferred by section 16 of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 (40 of 2019).

Definition of Transgender Person

As per the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, "transgender person" means a person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned to that person at birth and includes trans-man or trans-woman (whether or not such person has undergone Sex Reassignment Surgery or hormone therapy or laser therapy or such other therapy), person with intersex variations, genderqueer and person having such socio-cultural identities as kinner, hijra, aravani and jogta.

National Council for Transgender Persons

The Central Government hereby constitutes a National Council for Transgender Persons consisting of the following members, with effect from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, namely

I. Chairperson (ex-officio);

- Union Minister, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment;

II. Vice-Chairperson (ex-officio):

- Minister of State, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment;

III. Ex-Officio Members:

IV. Nominated Members:

V. Member Secretary (ex-officio):

- Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment dealing with the welfare of the transgender persons.

A Member of National Council, other than ex officio member, shall hold office for a term of three years from the date of his nomination.

Functions:

The National Council of Transgender Persons shall perform the following functions, namely:

- (a) to advise the Central Government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons;
- (b) to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgender persons;
- (c) to review and coordinate the activities of all the departments of Government and other Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations which are dealing with matters relating to transgender persons;
- (d) to redress the grievances of transgender persons; and
- (e) to perform such other functions as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

World Tribal Day to be a public holiday in Rajasthan

The [Rajasthan government](#) has decided to declare **August 9** as a public holiday throughout Rajasthan on the occasion of World Tribal Day. On World Tribal Day, the tribal people living in different areas of Rajasthan organise religious, social and cultural programs.

Consumer Protection Act 2019 Summary

On 20th July 2020, the Consumer Protection Act 2019 came into force. The Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan on July 8, 2019. The Bill replaces the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

The new Consumer Protection [Act](#) 2019 seeks to revamp the process of administration and settlement of consumer disputes, with strict penalties, including jail term for adulteration and misleading ads by firms.

Salient Features of the Consumer Protection Act 2019

Definition of consumer:

A consumer is defined as a person who buys any good or avails a service for a consideration. It does not include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose. It covers transactions through all modes including offline, and online through electronic means, teleshopping, multi-level marketing or direct selling.

Rights of consumers:

Six consumer rights have been defined in the Bill, including the right to:

1. The right to be protected against the marketing of goods, products or services which are hazardous to life and property
2. The right to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of goods, products or services at competitive prices;
3. The right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods, products or services, as the case may be, so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices;
4. The right to be heard and to be assured that consumer's interests will receive due consideration at appropriate fora
5. The right to seek redressal against unfair trade practice or restrictive trade practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers;
6. The right to consumer awareness;

Central Consumer Protection Authority:

The central government will set up a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers. It will regulate matters related to violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements. The CCPA will have an investigation wing, headed by a Director-General, which may conduct inquiry or investigation into such violations. The headquarters of the Central Authority shall be at such place in the National Capital Region of Delhi.

CCPA will carry out the following functions, including:

- (i) inquiring into violations of consumer rights, investigating and launching prosecution at the appropriate forum;
- (ii) passing orders to recall goods or withdraw services that are hazardous, reimbursement of the price paid, and discontinuation of the unfair trade practices, as defined in the Bill;
- (iii) issuing directions to the concerned trader/ manufacturer/ endorser/ advertiser/ publisher to either discontinue a false or misleading advertisement, or modify it;
- (iv) imposing penalties, and;
- (v) issuing safety notices to consumers against unsafe goods and services.

Penalties for misleading advertisement: The CCPA may impose a penalty on a manufacturer or an endorser of up to Rs 10 lakh and imprisonment for up to two years for a false or misleading advertisement. In case of a subsequent offence, the fine may extend to Rs 50 lakh and imprisonment of up to five years.

CCPA can also prohibit the endorser of a misleading advertisement from endorsing that particular product or service for a period of up to one year. For every subsequent offence, the period of prohibition may extend to three years. However, there are certain exceptions when an endorser will not be held liable for such a penalty.

Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission:

Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions (CDRCs) will be set up at the district, state, and national levels. A consumer can file a complaint with CDRCs in relation to:

- (i) unfair or restrictive trade practices;
- (ii) defective goods or services;
- (iii) overcharging or deceptive charging; and
- (iv) the offering of goods or services for sale which may be hazardous to life and safety.

Complaints against an unfair contract can be filed with only the State and National. Appeals from a District CDRC will be heard by the State CDRC. Appeals from the State CDRC will be heard by the National CDRC. Final appeal will lie before the Supreme Court.

Jurisdiction of CDRCs: The District CDRC will entertain complaints where value of goods and services does not exceed Rs one crore. The State CDRC will entertain complaints when the value is more than Rs one crore but does not exceed Rs 10 crore. Complaints with value of goods and services over Rs 10 crore will be entertained by the National CDRC.

Product liability:

Product liability means the liability of a product manufacturer, service provider or seller to compensate a consumer for any harm or injury caused by a defective good or deficient service. To claim compensation, a consumer has to prove any one of the conditions for defect or deficiency, as given in the Bill.

National Education Policy 2020 Summarised

After a gap of 34 years, on 29th July 2020, the Union Cabinet approved the **National Education Policy 2020**. The new policy aims to pave way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country. Additionally, the Cabinet has also approved the **renaming** of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to the **Ministry of Education**.

It is only a policy, not a law and as **education is a concurrent subject**, implementation of the proposals under the new NEP 2020 depends on further regulations by both States and the Centre.

Evolution of Education Policy in India:

- University Education Commission (1948-49)
- Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)
- Education Commission (1964-66) under Dr. D. S. Kothari
- National Policy on Education, 1968 - Passed by Parliament (**First NEP**)
- 42nd Constitutional Amendment, 1976- Education in Concurrent List
- National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 - (**Second NEP**)
- NPE 1986 Modified in 1992 (Programme of Action, 1992)

- In May 2016, 'Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy' under the Chairmanship of Late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian submitted its report. Ministry announced formation of new committee.

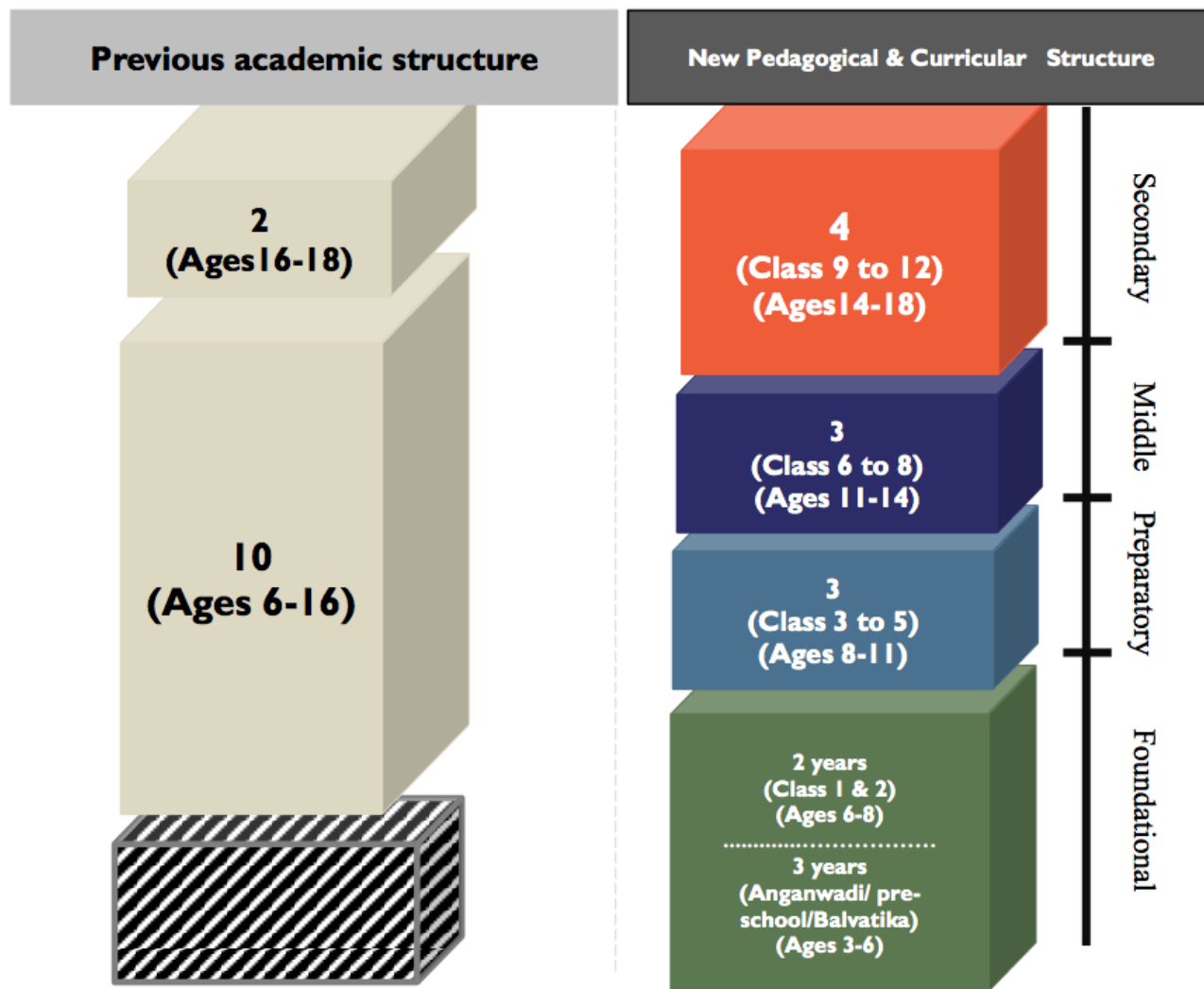
NEP 2020 Background:

- Accordingly, the Committee for Draft National Education Policy (NEP) was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in June 2017. The committee, headed by **Dr. K. Kasturirangan** submitted its report on May 31, 2019.
- Consequently, the [draft National Education Policy 2019](#) was shared by the ministry of human resource development (MHRD) for public comment.
- National Education Policy 2020 - Approved by Cabinet - (**Third NEP**)

Salient Features of National Education Policy 2020

School Education:

- **Universalization** of education from **preschool to secondary level** with **100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in school education by **2030**, aligning with [SDG4](#)
- To bring 2 crore out of school children back into the mainstream through an **open schooling system**.
- The current **10+2 system** to be **replaced** by a new **5+3+3+4** curricular structure corresponding to **3-8 years** (foundational stage), **8-11** (preparatory), **11-14** (middle), and **14-18** (secondary) **respectively**.
 - It will bring the uncovered age group of **3-6 years** under school curriculum, which has been recognized globally as the **crucial stage for development of mental faculties of a child**.
 - It will also have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre schooling.



- **Class 10 and 12 board examinations to be made easier**, to test core competencies rather than memorised facts, with all students allowed to **take the exam twice**.
- **School governance** is set to change, with a **new accreditation framework and an independent authority** to regulate both public and private schools.
- Emphasis on **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**, no rigid separation between academic streams, extracurricular, vocational streams in schools.
- **Vocational Education** to start from **Class 6 with Internships**.
- Teaching up to at least **Grade 5** to be in **mother tongue/regional language**. No language will be imposed on any student.

- Assessment reforms with **360 degree Holistic Progress Card**, tracking Student Progress for achieving Learning Outcomes
- A new and comprehensive **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2021**, will be formulated by the **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)** in consultation with [**National Council of Educational Research and Training \(NCERT\)**](#).
 - By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.

Higher Education:

- **Gross Enrolment Ratio** in higher education to be **raised to 50% by 2035**. Also, **3.5 crore seats** to be added in higher education.
 - The **current** Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is **26.3%**.
- Holistic Undergraduate education with a flexible curriculum can be of **3 or 4 years with multiple exit options** and appropriate certification within this period.
- **M.Phil** courses will be **discontinued** and all the courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level will now be interdisciplinary.
- **Academic Bank of Credits** to be established to facilitate Transfer of Credits.
- **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)**, at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country.
- The **National Research Foundation** will be created as an **apex body** for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
- **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** will be set up as a **single umbrella body** for the entire higher education, **excluding medical and legal education**. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the **same set of norms** for regulation, accreditation and academic standards. Also, HECI will be having **four independent verticals namely**,
 - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for **regulation**,
 - General Education Council (GEC) for **standard setting**,
 - Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for **funding**,
 - National Accreditation Council (NAC) for **accreditation**.

- **Affiliation of colleges** is to be **phased out in 15 years** and a stage-wise mechanism to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges.
 - Over a period of time, every college is expected to develop into either an autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

Other Changes:

- An autonomous body, the **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)**, will be created to provide a platform for the **free exchange of ideas** on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.
- National Assessment Centre- '**PARAKH**' has been created to assess the students.
- It also paves the way for **foreign universities to set up campuses** in India.
- It emphasizes setting up of **Gender Inclusion Fund, Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups.
- New Policy promotes Multilingualism in both schools and higher education. National Institute for **Pali, Persian and Prakrit**, Indian Institute of **Translation and Interpretation** to be set up.
- It also aims to **increase** the public investment in the Education sector to reach **6% of GDP** at the earliest. Currently, India **spends around 4.6 % of its total GDP on education**.

RBSE Starts digital locker for mark-sheets, certificates

The Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education has launched digital locker to get marks sheets or any certificate related to the board online. This facility will help around 60 lakh students who had appeared in different board exams of 2018, 2019, and 2020.

With digital locker, students will get record of their certificates, marks sheet and other documents online. The data will be available online even if a student loses any mark sheet or certificate. To connect with the digital locker system, students will have to download 'digital locker govt of India' app and then register with their mobile or Aadhaar number. They will get an OTP after verification. Students can thereafter generate their password on the app.

Previously, students had to approach to Rajasthan Education Board office in Ajmer to get their duplicate or other documents, but later Vidhyarti Seva Kendra were established at all district headquarters so that students do not have to rush to Ajmer. Now, the digital locker system will help students get their documents online.

Chittorgarh - Ek Pahal Initiative

Chittorgarh police has rolled out a special project 'Chittorgarh - Ek Pahal' with an aim to connect with the villagers and solve problems related not only to law and order, but improve the overall situation of health, education and livelihood.

There are eight police circles in the district and each circle officer (CO) has been assigned a village with the largest crime rate, especially community-based traditional crimes, to deter the younger generation from taking the wrong path.

New App to register voters online

Now, an eligible voter can add his name to the electoral roll online through NVSP portal or by downloading 'Voter helpline' mobile app. The voters can also make changes and delete their names from the electoral roll through this app or the portal.

Rajasthan's first law university to function from this year

Rajasthan's first dedicated law university - Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar (DBAU), Jaipur is set to start its academic session from this year.

State Government approves additional fund for upcoming new medical colleges

In August 2020, the state government has decided to accelerate the process of construction of new medical colleges in 7 districts and release additional funds for admission to 50 additional seats in five

medical colleges. According to the proposal, new medical colleges will be operated under the Rajasthan Medical Society in Bhilwara, Bharatpur, Pali, Churu, Sikar, Barmer and Dungarpur districts. In the first phase, a cost of Rs 189 crore per college was sanctioned for admission to 100 seats in these colleges in which the central and state government's share is 60:40. The Central government has also approved an increase of Rs 60 crore per college for admission to 50 additional seats in five of these medical colleges.

Devvani App for Sanskrit Learning:

Rajasthan Sanskrit Education Department has released the **Devvani mobile app** for online education of students. This app has been prepared by Rajasthan State Sanskrit Education Research & Training Institute (SSIERT), Mahapura to promote use of information technology in Sanskrit Education.

Sanskrit Education Minister Dr. Subhash Garg launched the app which will help students from class 3 to 12 to study Sanskrit subject.

Document museum to display history of 107 princely states

India's first document museum will be inaugurated by CM Ashok Gehlot on 20th August 2020. The museum will be located in the premises of Rajasthan State Archives Bikaner (RSAB) and will house a collection of farmans (royal decree issued by emperor), copper plates, nishans (issued by the royal family), patta (land records) and legal decrees of erstwhile 107 princely states including two from present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The state-of-the-art museum is divided into eight categories— document gallery, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Gallery, copper plates gallery, Maharana Pratap Gallery, exhibition gallery and Dr LP Peffitorie gallery, conservation gallery and state freedom fighters gallery. Two more additions— cartography and an auditorium — will come up in the next phase. A total of 3,000 historical articles have been kept on display at the museum.

Private Agencies can't use words like "Investigation"

Private security agencies will no longer be able to use words like “detective, investigation, surveillance, intelligence, interrogation, facility and labour suppliers” with their names. The state government has issued a notification banning the use of these words by private security agencies. It also stated, license renewal of a private security agency will not be issued if the prohibited words are used.

Constitution Parks (Savidhaan Parks)

Constitution Park will be constructed in all government universities of the state. In these parks, plaques made on preamble and fundamental duties etc. as mentioned in the Constitution of India will be displayed. It will showcase smart models of every university in the state. The decision was taken in a meeting of the coordination committee of vice chancellors held under the chairmanship of Governor at Raj Bhavan.

In addition, a university park will be built at Raj Bhavan.

New Schemes

Rajasthan launches Indira Rasoi Yojana

On the occasion of Sadhbavana Diwas (former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's birth anniversary - August 20th), Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot launched 'Indira Rasoi Yojana' via videoconferencing. Though each plate will be priced at Rs 20, the state government will grant subsidy of Rs 12 per plate and so under the scheme, food will be served at Rs 8 per meal. State government is going to spend Rs 100 crore on the scheme every year.

On 22 June 2020, [Rajasthan Chief Minister](#) Shri Ashok Gehlot announced that the state government will soon launch a new [scheme in Rajasthan](#) "Indira Rasoi Yojana" "Indira Kitchen" that will provide pure and nutritious meals to the needy on concessional rates twice a day.

Earlier in December 2016, former State Government had launched the '[Annapurna Rasoi Yojana](#)', a subsidised meal scheme offering breakfast and lunch for Rs 5 and Rs 8 respectively on the lines of 'Amma Unavagam' (mother's canteen / Amma Canteens) of Tamil Nadu. As per Secretary, Local Self Government Department, Rajasthan the tenure of the Annapurna Rasoi Yojana had expired on March 31 this year.

Salient Features of Indira Rasoi Yojana

- The basic idea behind the scheme is to ensure that "no one sleeps hungry" in the state.
- The scheme targets to serve food to 1.34 lakh people per day in the state.
- Needy people living in the jurisdiction of urban local bodies will be getting nutritious meals twice a day at concessional rates.
- The state government will spend Rs 100 crore every year on the Indira Rasoi Yojna (Indira Kitchen Scheme).
- The rate for the meals are yet to be finalised.
- Local NGOs will also be roped in for the successful implementation of the scheme .
- A committee headed by the district collector will be monitoring this Yojana and effective monitoring will be done with the help of information technology.

- CM launched 325 kitchens out of the 358 proposed Indira Rasoi in 213 urban bodies across the state.
- As part of the scheme, 100 grams of pulses, 100 grams of vegetables, 250 grams of chapati and pickles per plate will be provided to people

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

On 9th August 2020, PM Modi launched a new [Central Sector Scheme](#) of financing facility under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs. 1 Lakh Crore. The scheme will support farmers, PACS, FPOs, Agri-entrepreneurs, etc. in building community farming assets and post-harvest agriculture infrastructure. These assets will enable farmers to get greater value for their produce as they will be able to store and sell at higher prices, reduce wastage, and increase processing and value addition.

Background:

On 9th July 2020, the [Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Modi gave its approval](#) to **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund**.

Salient Features of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is a medium - long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and credit guarantee.

Under the scheme, Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans with interest subvention of 3% per annum and credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE scheme for loans up to Rs. 2 Crore.

Beneficiaries covered under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme include:

- Farmers
- Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS),
- Marketing Cooperative Societies,
- Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs),

- Self Help Group (SHG),
- Joint Liability Groups (JLG),
- Multipurpose Cooperative Societies,
- Agri-entrepreneurs,
- Startups,
- Aggregation Infrastructure Providers and Central/State agency or
- Local Body sponsored Public Private Partnership Project

The duration of the scheme shall be from FY2020 to FY2029 (10 years).

Management: Agriculture Infrastructure fund will be managed and monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform. It will enable all the qualified entities to apply for loan under the fund. The online platform will also provide benefits such as transparency of interest rates offered by multiple banks, scheme details including interest subvention and credit guarantee offered, minimum documentation, faster approval process as also integration with other scheme benefits.

National, State and District level Monitoring Committees will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feed-back.

On 9th August 2020, the first sanction of over Rs. 1000 Crore was made to over 2,280 farmer societies.

Brief About PM-Kisan Scheme

The PM-KISAN scheme was launched in December 2018 to provide income support by way of a cash benefit to all landholding farmers (subject to certain exclusion criteria) to enable them to fulfill their agricultural requirements and support their families.

Under the scheme, the financial benefit of Rs.6000/- per year is provided to eligible beneficiary farmers in three equal instalments.

On 9th August 2020, the 6th instalment under the PM-KISAN scheme of Rs. 17,000 Crore to nearly 8.5 Crore farmers. The cash benefit was transferred directly to their Aadhaar verified bank accounts.

With this transfer, the scheme has provided over 90,000 Crore in the hands of more than 10 Crore farmers since its launch on 01 December 2018.

Panel for welfare of labourers

In July 2020, Chief secretary Rajeeva Swarup has directed to form a committee to review the progress of various schemes run by the government for the welfare of workers under the **building and other construction workers (BOCW) board** and ensure job security for them post-lockdown and in the midst of Covid pandemic.

It was also decided that state government will collect the 1% labour cess from all the constructions and buildings (Post 2009) , the payment of which are still due.

Rajasthan forms committee to reduce board syllabus

In July 2020, Minister for primary and secondary education Govind Singh Dotasra announced that a committee had been formed to reduce RBSE syllabus for the current academic session since all schools are closed due to lockdown. The CBSE has already decided to rationalise its syllabus up to 30 per cent by retaining the core concept of subjects.

RRECL awards projects under Kusum Scheme

Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Ltd (RRECL) has allotted 722 megawatt to 623 farmers under the Centre's PM [Kusum scheme](#) aimed at generating income for farmers from their unfertile or semi-barren land.

Rajasthan is the first state in the country to conduct a successful bidding and allot more capacity than the target given by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

Gandhi libraries to be set up

The department of rural development and panchayati raj, GoR has identified 33 gram panchayats in 33 districts of Rajasthan for setting up of **Gandhi Gyan Kendra Pustakalay Evam Vachnalays** with the objective of spreading Gandhian values to the people.

These 33 libraries in the gram panchayat will be a model for other villages in the district to follow and set up libraries in their villages. Each library will have at least 1,000 to 1,500 books. These libraries will be launched on October 2 (Gandhi Jayanti).

The objective of these libraries will be:

- To spread Gandhian values by collecting books on Mahatma Gandhi and those written by him.
- To spread knowledge about poultry farming, agriculture, organic farming etc will also be spread.
- It will serve as a community place for discussions and meetings.
- It will be used as a training centre for various rural development schemes.
- It will also be used for community mobilization.

Maintenance of these buildings or centres will be done through convergence of schemes like MLA-LAD, MP-LAD, BADP etc.

Poshan Vatika Abhiyaan

Nutri gardens were developed under the Poshan Vatika Abhiyaan in about 62 thousand Anganwadi centers during the fortnight from July 30 to August 15. Plantation would include seasonal vegetables, fruit saplings etc.

Rajasthan Launches “Pure for Sure” Week Long Campaign

In July 2020, Raghu Sharma, State Health minister of Rajasthan launched the week long campaign “Pure for Sure” from 8th July 2020 to 14th July 2020 – to ensure the purity of the milk and dairy products.

Salient Features of Pure for Sure Campaign:

- The Food safety offices are provided with the equipment and facilities required to test the samples.
- The divisional level food testing laboratory will be used for this campaign.
- The food safety offices will upload the results and the information related to the samples on the FSSAI app and the officers are directed to update the campaign report to the headquarters on a daily basis.
- The actions will be taken according to the rules when the sample fails the tests.

SERB launches Accelerate Vigyan Scheme

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has launched a new scheme called 'Accelerate Vigyan Scheme' (AV Scheme) to provide a single platform for research internships, capacity building programs, and workshops across the country.

The primary objective of this inter-ministerial scheme is to give more thrust on encouraging high-end [scientific](#) research and preparing scientific manpower, which can lead to research careers and knowledge-based economy.

Accelerate Vigyan Scheme will initiate and strengthen mechanisms of identifying research potential, mentoring, training and hands-on workshop on a national scale. The institution is also planning to launch an app for this in the coming two months.

Salient Features of Accelerate Vigyan Scheme

The scheme includes two main programs - Sammohan & Abhyaas.

Sammohan (Bring Together)

- The Sammohan Program has been sub-divided into 'Sayonjika' and 'Sangoshti'.
- **Sayonjika** is an open-ended program to catalogue the capacity building activities in science and technology supported by all government funding agencies in the country.
- **Sangoshti** is a pre-existing program of SERB.

Abhyaas (Skill Development)

- Abhyaas is an attempt to boost research and development in the country by enabling and grooming potential PG/PhD students by means of developing their research skills in selected areas across different disciplines or fields.
- Accelerate Vigyan Scheme has already called for applications under its Abhyaas component for the Winter Season.
- It has two components Karyashala & Vritika.
- **Karyashala** includes High-End Workshops.
- **Vritika** includes Research Internships.

Sports

National Sports Awards 2020 announced

National Sports Awards are given every year to recognize and reward excellence in sports. A large number of applications were received for National Sports Awards 2020, which were considered by the Selection Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) **Mukundakam Sharma** (former Judge of Supreme Court of India) and other members comprising of eminent sportspersons, persons having experience in sports journalism and sports administration, etc.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee and after due scrutiny, the [Government has decided to confer awards](#) to selected sportspersons, coaches and entities under various categories.

Brief about National Sports Awards:

- **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award** is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of four years;
- **Arjuna Award** is given for consistent outstanding performance for four years;
- **Dronacharya Award** goes to the coaches for producing medal winners at prestigious international sports events;
- **Dhyan Chand Award** is for life time contribution to sports development
- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar** is given to the corporate entities (both in private and public sector) and individuals who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.
- Overall top performing university in inter-university tournaments is given **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy**.
- In addition to these Sports Awards, the Ministry also recognises the spirit of adventure among the people of the country by bestowing the **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award**.

The awardees will receive their awards from the Hon'ble President of India at a specially organized function through virtual mode from Rashtrapati Bhawan on 29th August, 2020.

1. RAJIV GANDHI KHEL RATNA AWARD

Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Shri Rohit Sharma	Cricket
Shri Mariyappan T.	Para Athletics
Ms. Manika Batra	Table Tennis
Ms. Vinesh	Wrestling
Ms. Rani	Hockey

2. DRONACHARYA AWARD**A. Life- Time Category**

Name of the Coach	Discipline
Shri Dharmendra Tiwary	Archery
Shri Purushotham Rai	Athletics
Shri Shiv Singh	Boxing
Shri Romesh Pathania	Hockey
Shri Krishan Kumar Hooda	Kabaddi
Shri Vijay Bhalchandra Munishwar	Para Powerlifting
Shri Naresh Kumar	Tennis
Shri Om Parkash Dahiya	Wrestling

B. Regular Category

Name of the Coach	Discipline
Shri Jude Felix Sebastian	Hockey
Shri Yogesh Malviya	Mallakhamb
Shri Jaspal Rana	Shooting
Shri Kuldeep Kumar Handoo	Wushu
Shri Gaurav Khanna	Para Badminton

3. ARJUNA AWARD

Name of the Sportsperson (Shri)	Discipline
Shri Atanu Das	Archery
Ms. Dutee Chand	Athletics
Shri Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy	Badminton
Shri Chirag Chandrasekhar Shetty	Badminton
Shri Vishesh Bhriguvanshi	Basketball
Subedar Manish Kaushik	Boxing
Ms. Lovlina Borgohain	Boxing
Shri Ishant Sharma	Cricket
Ms. Deepti Sharma	Cricket
Shri Sawant Ajay Anant	Equestrian
Shri Sandesh Jhingan	Football
Ms. Aditi Ashok	Golf
Shri Akashdeep Singh	Hockey
Ms. Deepika	Hockey

Shri Deepak	Kabaddi
Shri Kale Sarika Sudhakar	Kho Kho
Shri Dattu Baban Bhokanal	Rowing
Ms. Manu Bhaker	Shooting
Shri Saurabh Chaudhary	Shooting
Ms. Madhurika Suhas Patkar	Table Tennis
Shri Divij Sharan	Tennis
Shri Shiva Keshavan	Winter Sports
Ms. Divya Kakran	Wrestling
Shri Rahul Aware	Wrestling
Shri Suyash Narayan Jadhav	Para Swimming
Shri Sandeep	Para Athletics
Shri Manish Narwal	Para Shooting

4. DHYAN CHAND AWARD

Name of the Sportsperson	Discipline
Shri Kuldip Singh Bhullar	Athletics
Ms. Jincy Philips	Athletics
Shri Pradeep Shrikrishna Gandhe	Badminton
Ms. Trupti Murgunde	Badminton
Ms. N. Usha	Boxing
Shri Lakha Singh	Boxing
Shri Sukhvinder Singh Sandhu	Football

Shri Ajit Singh	Hockey
Shri Manpreet Singh	Kabaddi
Shri J. Ranjith Kumar	Para Athletics
Shri Satyaprakash Tiwari	Para Badminton
Shri Manjeet Singh	Rowing
Late Shri Sachin Nag	Swimming
Shri Nandan P Bal	Tennis
Shri Netarpal Hooda	Wrestling

5. TENZING NORGAY NATIONAL ADVENTURE AWARDS 2019

Name of the Sportsperson	Category
Ms. Anita Devi	Land Adventure
Col. Sarfraz Singh	Land Adventure
Shri Taka Tamut	Land Adventure
Shri Narender Singh	Land Adventure
Shri Keval Hiren Kakka	Land Adventure
Shri Satendra Singh	Water Adventure
Shri Gajanand Yadava	Air Adventure
Late Shri Magan Bissa	Life Time Achievement

6. MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD (MAKA) TROPHY

Punjab University, Chandigarh

7. RASHTRIYA KHEL PROTSAHAN PURUSKAR

Category	Entity recommended for Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, 2020
Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent	Lakshya Institute Army Sports Institute
Encouragement to sports through Corporate Social Responsibility	Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Ltd.
Employment of sportspersons and sports welfare measures	Air Force Sports Control Board
Sports for Development	International Institute of Sports Management (IISM)

Haryana to host the 4th edition of Khelo India Youth Games

On 25th July 2020, the Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju announced that Haryana will host the 4th edition of Khelo India Youth Games. The Games has been scheduled to be conducted after Tokyo Olympics 2021. The Games will be held in Panchkula.

Highlights:

- Star Sports will be the Official Broadcast Partner of the 4th edition of Khelo India Youth Games.
- Usually the Khelo India Youth Games take place in January of every year. However, this time owing to the pandemic these have been postponed.
- Haryana has been consistently doing well in all three editions of KIYG. While they came second in both KIYG 2019 and 2020 editions (200 medals in 2020 and 159 medals in 2019) they won KIYG 2018 edition with 102 medals (38 gold, 26 silver, 38 bronze).
- The third **Khelo India Youth Games** was held from 10 January 2020 and 22 January 2020 in [Guwahati](#), Assam.
- Maharashtra won the 2020 edition of Khelo India Youth Games.

S&T

What are Air-Bubble or Air-Transport Bubbles in International Flights

In August 2020, there has been news that, [India](#) is negotiating with 13 countries, including Australia, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore, to establish separate bilateral air bubble arrangements for international flight operations. Further, [India](#) already has such agreements with USA, UK, France, Germany, UAE, Qatar and Maldives. This post explains the concept of air-bubble or air-transport bubble between countries in detail.

What is an Air-Bubble ?

"Air-Bubble" or "Air-Transport Bubbles" or "Air Travel Arrangements" are temporary arrangements between two countries aimed at restarting commercial passenger services when regular international flights are suspended as a result of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). They are reciprocal in nature, meaning airlines from both countries enjoy similar benefits.

Bilateral air bubble agreements

Consequently, bilateral air-bubble agreement is an agreement that provides travel corridor between two countries that wish to reopen their borders and re-establish connections with each other. This is an exclusive partnership considered between countries that have either largely eliminated the virus, or trust the testing numbers.

By definition, under a bilateral air-bubble pact, carriers of both the countries are allowed to fly passengers either way without any restrictions. In reality, airlines of both the countries can operate international flights with certain restrictions.

India's bilateral Air-Bubble Agreement Status

As per [AIR NEWS](#), India has already established bi-lateral air-bubble agreements with the US, the UK, France, Germany, the UAE, Qatar and the Maldives. India is negotiating with 13 countries, including Australia, Japan, Russia, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore.

Further, air bubbles have also been proposed with neighbouring countries Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan.

NWR gets its first electric train in Rajasthan

Rajasthan zone of the North Western Railway (NWR) got its first electric train when the Jan Shatabdi Express powered by a WAG-5 electric locomotive chugged off from Delhi Sarai Rohilla station to Ajmer in July 2020.

IIT-Jodhpur develops novel method for biofuel production

Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur ([IIT-Jodhpur](#)), using a novel catalyst concept have managed to significantly reduce the temperature and energy requirements for a key step in the chemical process in biofuel production.

The team of Professor Rakesh K Sharma and his post-doctoral researcher Dr. Krishnapriya have developed a catalytic system that has nanometre size cramped galleries in Silica-Alumina sheets (a refined form of clay). These confined galleries work as nano-reactor for catalytic reaction and convert the biomass to transport fuel under mild conditions. The process is under patent.

Solar Panels on Canal-tops in Rajasthan

Rajasthan's public health engineering department ([PHED](#)) is planning to install solar panels on top of the Rajiv Gandhi Lift Canal (RGLC) and other large reservoirs across the state. This will help in reducing the electricity costs at pumping stations and at same time help in reduction of water evaporation.

Government Instant Messaging System

The state [PHED](#) department has also developed an app GIMS or Government Instant Messaging System for messaging officials up to the level of executive engineers and junior chemist. This will be used as an alternate to WhatsApp for the exchange of internal information.

Ramgarh Crater gets Global Recognition

Rajasthan's only terrestrial Meteorite Impact Crater (MIC) located at Ramgarh, in Baran district has been recently recognized by the Meteoritical Society, the US-based world body for meteorites. Ramgarh Crater, along with nine other sites were added as confirmed meteorite impact craters to the global list, which now stands at 200.

What is a meteorite ?

A meteorite is the term given to a piece of a comet or asteroid that falls into the Earth's atmosphere and survives to hit the surface.

What is Meteorite Impact Crater (MIC) ?

A Meteorite Impact Crater (MIC) is formed when an object like a meteorite crashes into the surface of the earth.

Impact Craters in India

There are 4 impact craters in India:

- **Lonar Crater** in Buldhana District of Maharashtra (Recognised)
- **Dhala Crater** in Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh (Recognised)
- **Shiva Crater** near Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Ramgarh Crater**, in Baran, Rajasthan (Now, Recognised)

In [June 2020](#), 'meteorite'-like object fell from the sky in Sanchore town of Rajasthan's Jalore district creating a 2-3 feet deep crater. It weighed around 2.8 kg.

Ramgarh Crater in Baran, Rajasthan

Ramgarh Crater is also known as *Ramgarh structure*, *Ramgarh Dome* and *Ramgarh astrobleme*. It is located in Ramgarh village in Mangrol tehsil of Baran district in Rajasthan, India. The crater was first discovered by the Geological Survey of India in 1869. In 1869, crater was first visited by geologist Frederick Richard Mallet of GSI and later Rai Bahadur Kishan Singh Rawat (1850-1921), first mapped it on a small scale (1 : 63,360).

As per expert member of the Geo Heritage India group Prof Pushpendra Singh Ranawat of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Udaipur chapter *"It has now been concluded that the 200m-high, 4km diameter ring structure of hills in Baran district is result of collapse of the dome that had formed as a central uplift due to the impact. The complex meteorite impact crater has 10-km diameter, making it slightly smaller than the 11-km Dhala (MP) MIC, but larger than the 1.8-km Lonar (Maharashtra) MIC"*.

He further informed that the moderately oblique (45°–30°) impact occurred into a shallow water regime on the horizontally lying upper Vindhyan, 1,000-1,070 million years old, sedimentary rocks. The impact possibly occurred during upper-middle Jurassic, some 165 million years ago.

Miscellaneous

NTPC wins prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019

National Thermal Power Corporation Limited ([NTPC Ltd](#)), a central PSU under Ministry of Power and India's largest power generation company, has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019, under Outstanding Accomplishment in Corporate Excellence Category. Also, the company has received Commendation for Significant Achievement in category of [CSR](#).

National Fish Farmers Day 2020

National Fish Farmers Day 2020, was celebrated on 10th July by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying in association with the National Fisheries Development Board ([NFDB](#)) through a webinar event.

National Fish Farmers Day

National Fish Farmers Day is celebrated on 10th July every year in remembrance of scientists **Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury** who successfully demonstrated the technology of induced breeding (Hypophysation) in Indian Major Carps on 10th July, 1957 at the erstwhile 'Pond Culture Division' of CIFRI at Cuttack, Odisha (presently Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, CIFA, Bhubaneswar). The event aims to draw attention to changing the way the country manages [fisheries](#) resources to ensure sustainable stocks and healthy ecosystems.

Every year, the event is celebrated by felicitating outstanding fish farmers, aquapreneurs & fisher folks in recognition of their accomplishments in the field and their contribution in the growth of the [fisheries sector](#) in the country. Fishermen and fish farmers across the nation participate in the event apart from officials, scientists, professionals, entrepreneurs and stakeholders.

National Fish Farmers Day 2020:

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Giriraj Singh observed that in order to consolidate the achievements of Blue Revolution and pave the way from *NeeliKranti* to *ArthKranti*, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and to realise his vision of

doubling the farmer's income, the "Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana" (PMMSY) has been launched with highest ever investment of Rs. 20,050 crore during next five years. This scheme will address the critical gaps in fish production and productivity, quality, technology, post-harvest infrastructure and management, modernisation and strengthening of value chain, traceability, establishing a robust fisheries management framework and fishermen's welfare.

Fish Cryobanks

NFDB in collaboration with the NBFGR will take up the work to establish "Fish Cryobanks" in different parts of the country, which will facilitate all time availability of 'fish sperms' of desired species to fish farmers. This would be the first time in the world when "**Fish Cryobank**" will be established, which can bring a revolutionary change in the fisheries sector in the country for enhancing fish production and productivity and thereby increasing prosperity among the fish farmers.

The "**Cryomilt**" technology developed by the NBFGR in support with NFDB may be helpful in establishment of "Fish Cryobanks", which will provide good quality of fish sperms in hatcheries at any time.

Union HRD Minister releases PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education

Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released **PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education** through online medium in New Delhi on 14th July 2020.

What are Pragyata Guidelines for digital education ?

[Union Government](#) has developed Pragyata guidelines from the perspective of learners, with a focus on online/blended/digital education for students who are presently at home due to lockdown. These guidelines also provide a roadmap or pointers for carrying forward online education to enhance the quality of education. The guidelines will be relevant and useful for a diverse set of stakeholders including school heads, teachers, parents, teacher educators and students.

These guidelines for school heads and teachers describe the need assessment, planning and steps to implement digital education while ensuring cyber safety and privacy measures. It also outlines the support to be provided to students with special needs. Main emphasis is on balanced online and offline activities keeping the screen time as an essential parameter in accordance with the level of students.

For parents, the guideline helps to understand the need for physical, mental health and wellbeing along with the cyber safety measures for children at home. Guidelines for physical health and mental wellness is stressed across the guidelines for all stakeholders measures so that children do not get overly stretched or stressed, or get affected negatively (postural defects, ophthalmic issues, and other physical problems) owing to prolonged use of digital devices. Also it provides sufficient Do's and Don'ts regarding ergonomics and cyber safety.

Pragyata Guidelines: Steps for Digital and Online Education

The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of online/ digital learning that is, Plan - Review - Arrange - Guide - Yak(talk) - Assign - Track - Appreciate. These steps guide the planning and implementation of digital education step by step with examples.

Recommended screen time

Class	Recommendation
Pre Primary	On a given day for interacting with parents and guiding them, not more than 30 minutes.
Classes 1 to 12	Recommended to adopt/adapt the alternative academic calendar of NCERT at http://ncert.nic.in/aac.html
Classes 1 to 8	Online synchronous learning may be undertaken for not more than two sessions of 30-45 minutes each on the days the States/UTs decide to have online classes for primary sections
Classes 9 to 12	Online synchronous learning may be undertaken for not more than four sessions of 30-45 minutes each on the days as decided by States/UTs.