

## Current Affairs Today – 21.04.2020

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### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: DAYS**

#### **World Liver Day**



- **World liver day** is observed on every **19 April**, to spread awareness about liver related disease.
- The liver is the second largest and the most complex organ in the body, with the exception of the brain. It is a key player in your body's digestive system.

#### **UN Chinese Language Day**



- **UN Chinese Language Day** is observed annually on **April 20**.
- The event was established by the **UN Department of Public Information in 2010**, seeking "to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as to promote equal use of all six of its official working languages throughout the organization".

#### **National Civil Service Day**



- **Every year on 21 April Civil Service Day** is celebrated to rededicate and to recommit themselves to the cause of the people.
- On this day Civil servants from various parts of the country come together, share their experiences and also learn other's experiences of working in the public sector.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL**

#### **BRO constructs bridge in record time on a key road connecting strategic areas in AP**



- **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** constructed bridge over **Subansiri river** in **Arunachal Pradesh** in a record span of just 27 days.
- Chief Minister **Pema Khandu** inaugurated the bridge over video conferencing and opened it for public use. Amidst the nationwide lockdown, BRO undertook the developmental work for construction of the **Daporijo bridge** maintaining utmost precautions against COVID-19.
- The bridge is of utmost importance in strategic connectivity as it links roads leading upto the LAC between India and China.
- The construction has been done keeping in view of the future Infrastructure based developmental requirements of Upper Subansiri district in the state.

#### About Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Director General: Lt. Gen. Harpal Singh

#### Fifteenth Finance Commission to assess implications of COVID-19 pandemic on GDP growth



- The **Economic Advisory Council** of the **Fifteenth Finance Commission** will meet this month to discuss implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on GDP growth.
- The council members will meet on **23rd and 24th of this month** through online medium which will be presided over by Chairman of the Commission, **N. K. Singh**.
- The members would also be discussing on the possible assumptions for tax buoyancy and revenue in the current and next financial year.

Finance Commission	Year of establishment	Chairman	Operational duration
Twelfth	2002	C. Rangarajan	2005–10
Thirteenth	2007	Dr. Vijay L. Kelkar	2010–15
Fourteenth	2013	Dr. Y. V Reddy	2015–20
Fifteenth	2017	N. K. Singh	2020–25

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: INTERNATIONAL

### China begins testing of digital currency



- **China's central bank** has started testing its **official digital currency**, pressing ahead with its plan to roll out a virtual money payment system, days after Facebook-backed Libra scaled back its ambitions to become a global currency.
- The Digital Currency Research Institute of the People's Bank of China (PBC), China's central bank, stated that the research and development work of China's official digital currency, dubbed as **DC/EP**, is proceeding steadily, and the internal pilot tests are carried out in four cities and will be carried out in scenarios of the 2022 Winter Olympics Games in Beijing.
- China's official digital currency is undergoing testing and has not been officially released.
- Insiders stated the trial run will be piloted within a small range of banks and end users, and spread to a wider range with an improved technology and system, the Global Times reported.
- More banks will continue to participate in the test of the DC/EP, in a bid to improve the technology, security and stability of the payment tool, Chen Bo, director of the Finance Research Centre at the Institute of Finance and Economics at the Central University of Finance and Economics told the daily.
- **The Agricultural Bank of China**, one of the country's big four state-owned banks, has tested the **DC/EP (digital currency/electronic payment)** in four cities in an app launched.

#### About China :

- President: Xi Jinping
- Capital: Beijing
- Currency: Renminbi

### Nirmala Sitharaman appreciates New Development Bank's 1 bn dollar emergency assistance to India to combat COVID-19 pandemic



- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** appreciated efforts of **New Development Bank** on fast tracking of financial assistance of about **five billion dollars** to **BRICS countries** including Emergency Assistance of **one billion dollar to India** to combat COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing the 5th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors through video conference, Ms. Sitharaman also suggested that, assistance under this facility to be enhanced to 10 billion dollars.
- Ms Sitharaman also outlined various measures taken in India to respond to the COVID-19 including allocation of 15 thousand crore rupees for strengthening the healthcare system and announcement of a scheme of social support measures amounting to **25 billion dollars** to alleviate the hardship of the poor and the vulnerable.

- She also strongly encouraged NDB to take appropriate actions to join **G-20 forum** along with other Multilateral Development Bank and International Financial Institutions. Ms. Sitharaman urged NDB to follow innovative practices in supporting the BRICS nations for achieving their Sustainable Development Goals.
- The NDB was established by the BRICS countries -Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa in 2014. NDB has so far approved 14 indian projects for an amount of 4,183 million dollar.
- The purpose of the Bank is to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging market economies and developing countries to complement the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development.

#### About New Development Bank:

- Headquarters location: Shanghai, China
- President: K. V. Kamath

#### India approves USD 1 million to Antigua as project outlay



- **India** has approved **USD 1 million** to **Antigua** as project outlay, with immediate assistance of **USD 1,50,000** for medical equipment to combat coronavirus crisis.
- India supplies medical aid across the world to fight COVID19. India approves US\$1 mn to Antigua as project outlay, with immediate assistance of US \$150k for medical equipment etc," India has sent medical supplies including hydroxychloroquine tablets to several countries.
- India announced that it will send **hydroxychloroquine** to 55 nations to fight COVID19 including **Kazakhstan**.
- Hydroxychloroquine has been deemed as an important medicine for the treatment of a patient suffering from coronavirus.

#### About Antigua:

- Capital: Saint John's
- Head of State- Queen Elizabeth II
- Currency: Eastern Caribbean dollar

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: BANKING AND FINANCE

#### RBI raises WMA limit to Rs.2-lakh crore in H1 FY21



- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, in consultation with the Government of India, has revised the limit for **Ways and Means Advances (WMA)** for the remaining part of the first half of FY21 (April 2020 to September 2020) to **Rs.2-lakh crore**.
- On March 31, the WMA limit for the first half of FY21(April 2020 to September 2020) was upped to **Rs.1.20-lakh crore** against **Rs.75,000 crore** in the year-ago period. The hike in the limit comes in the wake of expectation that the Central government will step up expenditure on the social sector, including health and sanitation, following outbreak of the pandemic.
- The central bank provides financial accommodation to the government to tide over temporary mismatches in the cash flow of its receipts and payments as WMA. This is intended to provide a cushion to the government to carry on its essential activities and normal financial operations.

#### About Ways and Means Advances (WMA):

- Ways and means advances is a mechanism used by Reserve Bank of India under its credit policy to provide to States, banking with it, to help them tide over temporary mismatches in the cash flow of their receipts and payments.

#### About RBI:

- Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Formation– 1 April 1935
- Governor– Shaktikanta Das
- Deputy Governors– 3 (Bibhu Prasad Kanungo, Mahesh Kumar Jain, Michael Debabrata Patra)

### ICICI Bank launches voice banking services on Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant



- **ICICI Bank** has launched **voice assistance-based banking services** for its customers and they can check balance, seek credit card details as well as ask other queries among others through this application.
- The bank has integrated its artificial intelligence (AI) powered multi-channel **chatbot iPal** with **Amazon Alexa** and **Google Assistant** through which its retail banking customers can undertake host of banking services through **voice commands**.
- This novel facility offers customers yet another way to connect with their bank from home at a time when they are advised to stay indoors in the wake of the nationwide lockdown.
- WhatsApp-based ICICI Stack offers nearly 500 services that covers almost all banking requirements including digital account opening, loan solutions, payment solutions, investments and care solutions. To get the benefit of the voice banking offering, customers need to download the Alexa/Google Assistant and link their ICICI Bank account through a secure two factor authentication process.

#### About ICICI

- Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra
- MD and CEO- Sandeep Bakhshi
- Tagline - Hum Hai Na, Khyal Apka

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## RBI announces calendar of MPC meetings for current financial year



- The **Reserve Bank of India** has announced the calendar of the meetings of the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** for the current financial year. The decision of the first meet will be announced on **June 5**, this year.
- As per the schedule announced by the RBI, the next Monetary Policy Committee meeting will take place during **June 3 to 5**.
- The MPC decision is announced on the last day of the meeting. It stated that the other meetings will take place on August 4 to 6, 2020; September 29-30 and October 1, 2020; December 2 to 4, 2020; and February 3 to 5, 2021.
- The previous MPC meeting was advanced in view of the COVID-19 outbreak to March 24, 26 and 27 from originally scheduled for March 31, April 1 and 3.

### About Monetary Policy Committee:

- The Monetary Policy Committee is responsible for fixing the benchmark interest rate in India. The meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee are held at least 4 times a year.
- The committee comprises six members - three officials of the Reserve Bank of India and three external members nominated by the Government of India. The Governor of Reserve Bank of India is the chairperson ex officio of the committee.
- **Shaktikanta Das, IAS**, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India and ex-officio chairperson

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATES

### Kerala's Pathanamthitta launches Tiranga vehicle for rapid screening of symptoms



- The vehicle, called **Tiranga – Total India Remote Analysis Nirogya Abhiyaan** – is painted amid the tricolour on the vehicle so that people would immediately recognise it as an initiative of the government and leave the health workers alone.
- This is the newly-launched Tiranga initiative, by the **Pathanamthitta district** administration, to make it easier to screen people for COVID-19, without the risk of exposure.
- Inside the vehicle is a medical volunteer, a non-medical volunteer and a driver.
- Screening will be done in containment zones and buffer zones and in the camps for migrant workers and destitute people.
- The vehicle is equipped with thermal scanning— an infrared thermometer mounted on the bonnet, a two-way microphone system by which people inside and outside the vehicle can talk to each other, a mobile camera that will click photos of their identity cards and so on.

- These vehicles are called RSV – 1 (Rapid Screening Vehicle - 1), which will be primarily used for screening people. The idea is that for every four RSV-1 vehicles, there will be an RSV-2. This second vehicle will be used for collecting samples, once we get the required approval.

#### About Kerala

- Capital- Trivandrum
- CM- Pinarayi Vijayan
- Governor- Arif Mohammed Khan

### Himachal Pradesh to provide free online medical consultation to sick people through e-sanjeevani-opd



- The Himachal **Pradesh Health Department** has come up with a unique idea of providing **free online medical consultation** to sick people at their residence through **e-sanjeevani-opd**.
- This free online health service has been started throughout the state and now people can consult to take health advice from the doctors of different medical colleges from **9:30 AM to 4:00 PM** on all working days.
- In view of COVID-19 pandemic sick people were feeling uncomfortable to visit hospitals, hence for this, the state government with the health department has come up with an idea of 'esanjeevaniopd' through which general health advice will be provided to the people at their residence throughout the state.
- Under '**esanjeevaniopd**', 16 doctors of various medical colleges of state will provide free health care advice on all working days from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM. To take advantage of this facility one should have a computer, laptop, tablet with webcam mike, speaker and internet connection.
- To avail, free medical consultation one has to log in to 'esanjeevaniopd.in'. Soon this facility will also be made available on mobile phones in state.

#### About Himachal Pradesh:

- Governor: Bandaru Dattatreya
- Capitals: Shimla (Summer), Dharamshala (Winter)
- Chief minister: Jai Ram Thakur

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

#### Kapil Dev Tripathi appointed Secretary to President Ram Nath Kovind



- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet** headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Mr. **Kapil Dev Tripathi** was appointed **Secretary to President Ram Nath Kovind**.

- The 1980-batch retired IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre will replace **Sanjay Kothari**, who was selected as the Chief Vigilance Commissioner in February. Mr. Tripathi's tenure is on a contract basis and is co-terminus with the tenure of the President.
- Mr. Tripathi, who retired as the Secretary in the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** in June 2018, was heading the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) that does top-level recruitments in the central public sector enterprises.
- His appointment comes nearly two months after Mr. Kothari, a 1978 batch (retired) IAS officer of Haryana cadre, was selected as the next CVC. However, the government has not notified the appointment as finding his successor took time.

## US Prez Trump appoints Indian-American to country's top science board



- **US President Donald Trump** appointed **Indian-American Sudarsanam Babu** to country's **top science board**.
- Babu, who is from the prestigious Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), has been appointed as a member of the National Science Board for a six-year term, stated the White House.
- Babu would be the third Indian American in this prestigious board. The other two being Sethuraman Panchanathan from the Arizona State University and Suresh V Garimella from University of Vermont.

## RBI gives nod to Kamakodi's reappointment as MD & CEO of City Union Bank



- **The Reserve Bank of India** has given its approval for the re-appointment of **N Kamakodi** as **MD & CEO of City Union Bank (CUB)** for three years with effect from May 1, the private sector bank stated in an exchange filing.
- Kamakodi has been associated with the **Kumbakonam (Tamil Nadu)-headquartered CUB** since 2003. He was elevated as MD and CEO in 2011.

### About City Union Bank (CUB):

- Headquarters: Kumbakonam
- CEO: Dr. N. Kamakodi
- Tagline :Trust and Excellence since 1904

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

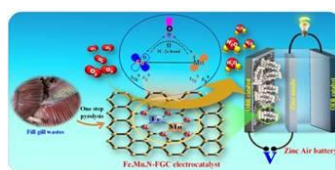
### Cognizant hit by 'Maze' ransomware attack





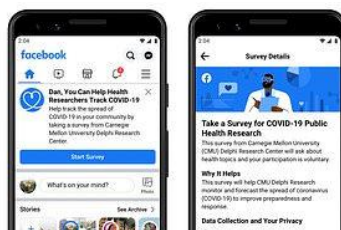
- **New-Jersey headquartered** IT services provider **Cognizant** had faced a **ransomware** that has caused disruptions to its clients.
- Cognizant can confirm that a security incident involving our internal systems, and causing service disruptions for some of our clients, is the result of a Maze ransomware attack.
- The **Maze ransomware** was discovered in 2019.
- Typically the goal of any ransomware attack is to infect computers in a network and encrypt files on these computers and then demand a ransom to recover the files. Maze, however is different. The attacker in this case has the ability to exfiltrate or transfer the data onto his or her server. The data is then held on this server until a ransom is paid to recover it. If the victim does not pay the ransom, the attackers then publish the data online.

### Fish gills used to develop efficient low-cost electro-catalysts for rechargeable metal-air battery



- Scientists at the **Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST), Mohali**, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India, have recently come up with an efficient, **low-cost electro-catalyst from fish gills** that can help develop **environmentally friendly energy conversion devices**.
- This bio-inspired carbon nanostructure can help overcome the bottleneck in the realization of several renewable energy conversion and storage technologies such as fuel cell, biofuel cell, and metal-air battery.
- INST have explored a **highly active Oxygen Reduction Reaction (ORR) electrocatalyst** based on binary transition metals Iron (Fe), and Manganese (Mn) and N-doped porous carbon (Fe, Mn, N-FGC), **derived from fish gills (FG)** acquired as **animal waste**, which has a unique porous structure and could provide conductive carbon networks after heat treatment and could be an efficient electrode material. The catalyst was able to show active oxygen reduction reaction in a wide range of pH ( $\text{pH} < 1$ , 7, and  $> 13$ ) and outperformed the commercial Pt/C catalyst.

### Facebook to roll out its Covid-19 symptom tracking survey globally to identify potential hotspots



- **Facebook** announced that it will be working on expanding its Covid-19 surveys globally.
- Facebook had launched a **self-assessment pop-up survey** for Facebook users in the United States displaying it on top of a user's News Feed.
- The survey which was created in collaboration with the **Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Delphi Research Center** was part of the social media giant's symptom mapping project to better understand where the next wave of the pandemic is likely to hit.
- It was meant to generate new insights for developing response strategies to combat the pandemic in the US including heat maps of self-reported symptoms.

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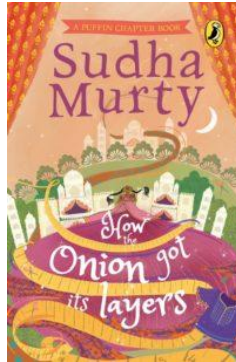
- Facebook produced its first report on the project along with new interactive maps based on the data.
- The tech giant will now be working with faculty from the University of Maryland to expand the program globally.

**About Facebook:**

- CEO: Mark Zuckerberg
- Headquarters: California, United States

**CURRENT AFFAIRS: BOOKS AND AUTHORS**

**Sudha Murty's first-ever audio book 'How the Onion Got Its Layers'**



- **Sudha Murty's book** will be out in an **audio format** for the first time with the popular storyteller.
- **"How the Onion Got Its Layers"** seeks to answer several questions related to the bulb like its many layers and why it brings tears to the eyes when cut. It will also be available as an e-book, **published by Puffin**.
- This is the second book of the chapter series by Murty, the first being **"How the Sea Became Salty"**.
- "How the Onion Got Its Layers" marks the first ever audio book by Murty and will be released on **World Book Day, ie, April 23**

**DAILY CA 19<sup>TH</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> APR**

- Union Minister **Prahlad Singh Patel** launches the **National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)** of India in **New Delhi**
- Govt constitutes **6 Inter-Ministerial Central Teams** to make on-spot assessment of COVID-19 situation
- Govt launches online **data pool of critical human resource** for combating and containing COVID-19
- Centre forms **high-level task force** to develop vaccines, drugs
- **Facebook** launches third party fact checking in **Bangladesh**
- **Fitch** cuts India's GDP growth forecast to **1.8%**
- **ADB Ventures** raises **\$50 million**, exceeding fund capitalisation target
- **Uttar Pradesh** becomes first state to **geotag community kitchens**
- **Rajasthan** Government Partners With Healthcare App '**Aayu**' to Tackle Coronavirus Pandemic
- **Delhi govt** uses '**Assess Koro Na**' **app** for door-to-door survey in containment zones

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- **IIM-Kozhikode** student-led team develops one-stop COVID-19 platform for accessing **emergency services**
- **Instagram** founders launch **COVID-19 tracking website**
- SC Collegium Recommends Appointment Of New Chief Justices For Bombay, Meghalaya and Odisha High Courts
- 44th Session of **UNESCO's World Heritage Committee** postponed
- **Kerala** Institute Makes **New Diagnostic Test Kit** That Can Confirm Covid-19 Samples in 2 Hrs for **Rs 1,000**
- **Six-planet system** found in almost perfect orbital harmony
- **Microsoft** to launch **plasmabot** to encourage COVID-19 recovered patients to donate plasma
- Abba Kyari Chief of staff to **Nigeria's president Buhari** Passes away
- Tom and Jerry, Popeye director **Gene Deitch** dies at 95 in Prague

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- **World Liver Day -19<sup>th</sup> april**
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- China begins testing of **digital currency**
- Nirmala Sitharaman appreciates **New Development Bank's 1 bn dollar** emergency assistance to India to combat COVID-19 pandemic
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- RBI raises **WMA limit** to **Rs.2-lakh crore** in H1 FY21
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