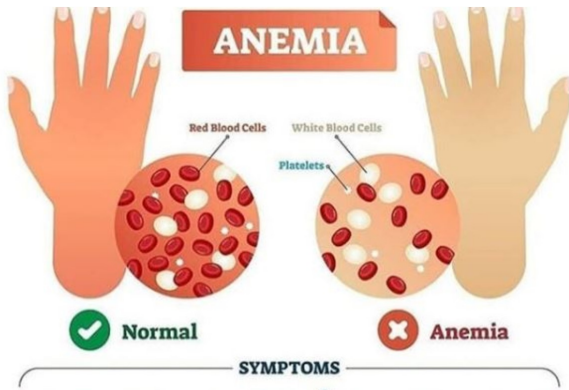


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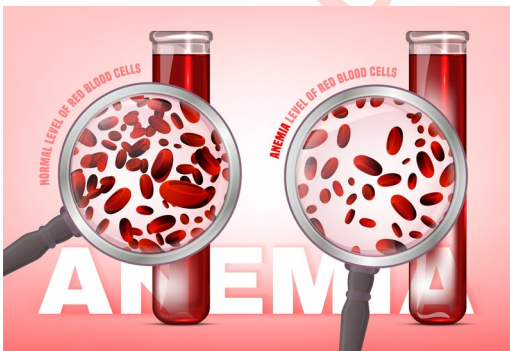
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Exposure to PM 2.5 raises anaemia risk in kids under 5



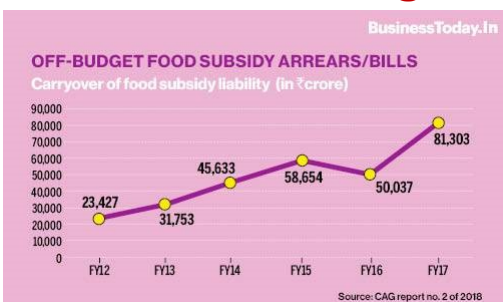
- A STUDY conducted by IIT-Delhi has found that extended periods of exposure to PM 2.5 can lead to anaemia among children under the age of 5 years.
- The study, titled 'The Association Between Ambient PM 2.5 Exposure and Anaemia Outcomes Among Children Under Five Years of Age in India', published in the journal Environmental Epidemiology, has found that for every 10 micro grams per meter cube increase in PM2.5 levels exposure, there is a decrease of 0.07 grams per dL in average haemoglobin levels.
- The introduction of the National Iron Plus Initiative in 2011 sought to expand the beneficiaries of the National Nutritional Anaemia Prophylaxis Program to children with 6–59 months of age and although anaemia decreased by about 11 percent between 2006 and 2016, it remains a major issue

India carries largest burden of anaemia



- ANAEMIA, measured via low-blood haemoglobin concentration, is characterised by a decreased oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.
- Globally, India carries the largest burden of anaemia, especially among women and children.
- There are numerous types of anaemia-- the most common kinds are dietary iron deficiency, followed by chronic systemic inflammation.
- Exposure to air pollution, especially PM 2.5, has been shown to induce systemic inflammation.

What are off-budget borrowings?



- Off-budget borrowings are loans that are taken not by the Centre directly, but by another public institution which borrows on the directions of the central government.
- Such borrowings are used to fulfil the government's expenditure needs

- But since the liability of the loan is not formally on the Centre, the loan is not included in the national fiscal deficit.
- This helps keep the country's fiscal deficit within acceptable limits.

How are off-budget borrowings raised?



- The government can ask an implementing agency to raise the required funds from the market through loans or by issuing bonds. For example, food subsidy is one of the major expenditures of the Centre.
- In the Budget presentation for 2020-21, the government paid only half the amount budgeted for the food subsidy bill to the Food Corporation of India.
- The shortfall was met through a loan from the National Small Savings Fund.

Telegram, pro-democracy tool, struggles over new fans from far right



- The messaging app Telegram has long been an engine of resistance and an annoyance for tyrants. Authoritarian leaders in Russia and Iran have tried to ban it.
- When protests broke out recently in Belarus and Hong Kong, Telegram was the glue that held democracy movements together in the face of violent onslaughts by powerful security services
- Telegram is quickly becoming an online refuge for a different kind of resistance

Silent Cyber Risks



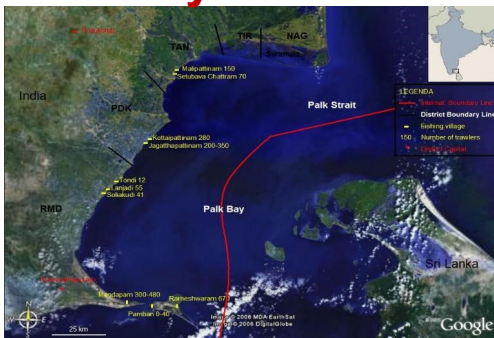
- SILENT CYBER is the unknown exposure in an insurer's portfolio created by a cyber peril, which has not been explicitly excluded or included.
- This is also known as "unintended" or "non-affirmative" cyber coverage .
- A cyber event can trigger losses across various lines of insurance
- A cyber event can trigger losses across various lines of insurance—property damage and business interruption, resulting from computer systems failure or virus under property insurance, siphoning money through phishing under crime insurance, product liability or recalls from security vulnerabilities under product liability / recall insurance, breach of contract or negligence claims under E&O (technology error sando missions) insurance and for managerial negligence under D&O (directors and officers) insurance. Cyber risks, involving unknown developments through the debit and credit cards, mobile phones and online deals, have raised concerns for insurers and the insured.

'2021: Global economy likely to grow at 5.5%



- The global economy, ravaged by Covid-19, is projected to grow at 5.5 per cent in 2021 and 4.2 percent in 2022, the IMF said Tuesday, reflecting the expectation of a vaccine-powered strengthening of business activities later in the year and additional policy support in a few large economies. "We project global growth for 2021 at 5.5 percent, 0.3 percentage point higher than our October forecast, moderating to 4.2 percent in 2022"

Palk Bay Conflict



- Recently, four fishermen from Tamil Nadu died in yet another instance of the unresolved fisheries conflict in the Palk Bay
- Palk Bay is a semi-enclosed shallow water body with a water depth maximum of 13m. It is located between the southeast coast of India and Sri Lanka

Green tax to be imposed on older vehicles



- The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways has approved a proposal to levy a "Green Tax" on old vehicles which are polluting the environment. The proposal will now go to the states for consultation before it is formally notified.
- It has been proposed to dissuade people from using vehicles that damage the environment, motivate them to switch to newer, less polluting vehicles and to reduce overall pollution level and make the polluter pay for it.

The main principles to be followed while levying the Green Tax are:

- Transport vehicles older than 8 years could be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of fitness certificate, at the rate of 10 to 25 % of road tax
- Personal vehicles to be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of Registration Certification after 15 years
- Public transport vehicles, such as city buses, to be charged lower Green tax
Higher Green tax (50% of Road Tax) for vehicles being registered in highly polluted cities
- Differential tax, depending on fuel (petrol/diesel) and type of vehicle

- Vehicles like strong hybrids, electric vehicles and alternate fuels like CNG, ethanol, LPG etc to be exempted
- Vehicles used in farming, such as tractor, harvester, tiller etc to be exempted Revenue collected from the Green Tax to be kept in a separate account and used for tackling pollution, and for States to set up state of-art facilities for emission monitoring

The benefits of the “Green Tax” could be :

- To dissuade people from using vehicles which damage the environment
- To motivate people to switch to newer, less polluting vehicles
- Green tax will reduce the pollution level, and make the polluter pay for pollution.

The Minister also approved the policy of deregistration and scrapping of vehicles owned by Government department and PSU, which are above 15 years in age. It is to be notified, and will come into effect from 1st April, 2022.

O-SMART Scheme



- The O-SMART (Ocean Services, Modelling, Applications, Resources, and Technology) Scheme , The umbrella scheme has been implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The services rendered under the O-SMART will provide economic benefits to a number of user communities in the coastal and ocean sectors, namely, fisheries, offshore industry, coastal states, Defence, Shipping, Ports etc.
- It seeks to address issues relating to SDG-14, which aims to conserve the use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.
- It also provides the necessary scientific and technological background required for the implementation of various aspects of Blue Economy.
- The State of Art Early Warning Systems established Scheme will help in effectively dealing with ocean disasters like Tsunami, storm surges.
- The technologies being developed will help in harnessing the vast ocean resources of both living and non-living resources from the seas around India.
- A fleet of research vessels viz., Technology Demonstration vessel SagarNidhi, Oceanographic Research Vessel SagarKanya, Fisheries and Oceanographic Research Vessel SagarSampada and Coastal Research Vessel SagarPurvi have been acquired to provide required research support.

FinCEN and FIU-IND



- Recently, over 2100 Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) were filed by banks with the United States Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)

Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN)

- FinCEN is a bureau of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and its mission is receiving and maintaining financial transactions data.
- It serves as the leading global regulator in the battle against money laundering.
- FinCEN's mission is to safeguard the financial system from illicit use.
- Also global cooperation with counterpart organizations in other countries and with international bodies.
- FinCEN serves as the foreign financial intelligence unit (FIU) for the United States.
- They act as a watchdog in order to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.
- Besides FinCEN used to follow money trails also have been applied to investigating and disrupting terrorist groups, which often depend on financial and other support networks.

Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND)

- Financial Intelligence Unit – India was set by the Government of India as the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.
- FIU-IND is also responsible for coordinating and strengthening efforts of national and international intelligence, investigation and enforcement agencies in pursuing the global efforts against money laundering and related crimes.
- FIU-IND is an independent body reporting directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC) headed by the Finance Minister.
- Main function of FIU-IND is Collection of Information Analysis of Information Sharing of Information Act as Central Repository Coordination, Research and Analysis

Lepakshi temples



- A tableau on Lepakshi temple has been selected for the Republic Day parade to be held in New Delhi, representing Andhra Pradesh.
- The Lepakshi temple is a 500-year-old marvel of Ancient Indian Architecture.
- It is also known as Veerabhadra Swamy temple and was built by the brothers Virupanna and Veeranna, who were initially in the service of the Vijayanagar kings.
- Built in the 16th century, the architectural features of the temple are in the Vijayanagara style with the profusion of carvings and paintings on almost every exposed surface of the temple.
- It contains idols of Ganesha, Veerabhadra, Shiva, Bhadrakali, Vishnu and Lakshmi.
- There is a very large Nandi (bull), about 200 meters away from the temple which is carved from a single block of stone, which is said to be one of the largest of its type in the world is one of the main attractions in Lepakshi.
- The place where this temple is located is the place where Jatayu(the Vulture that stopped Ravana while abducting Sita to Lanka) died.This place has got the name when Rama told Jatayu-Le Pakshi-Get up Bird when Jatayu was dying.
- But this temple is not a Rama Temple but is a Veerabhadra Temple.(Veerabhadra was born from Lord Shiva's hair-Jadamudi).

Architect Significance Lepakshi Temple

- I. Hanging Pillar of Lepakshi
 - II. Largest Monolithic Nandi in India
 - III. Largest Monolithic Nagalinga in India
 - IV. Lepakshi Saree Designs
 - V. Unfinished Kalyana Mantapa
 - VI. Durga Padam
 - VII. Eyes of Virupanna
 - VIII. Mural Paintings which include the largest portrait painting in the world (Portrait of Veerabadra Swamy in the ceiling, in front of the main temple)
 - IX. Carved Ganesha Statues
 - X. Hanging Pillar
- Every pillar here is a masterpiece.
 - One of the most interesting one is that of the suspended pillar in the main hall supposed to be the reception hall of Shiva Parvathy marriage. This is the pillar which does not rest on the ground fully.

- There are about 70 pillars at this fabulous 16th-century temple of stone in Vijayanagar style, but this one is the best known and a tribute to the engineering genius of ancient and medieval India's temple builders.
- However, it is a bit dislodged from its original position.
- It is said that during the British era, a British engineer tried to move it in an unsuccessful attempt to uncover the secret of its support.
- **Mural Paintings**
- The Lepakshi temple also has the finest specimens of mural paintings of the Vijayanagara period.
- **The 24 by 14 ft fresco of Veerabhadra on the ceiling before the main sanctum sanctorum is the largest in India of any single figure.** The rest of the frescoes are also beautiful and show an impressive attention to detail with colors strikingly contrasted — black limework against an orange-red background with some green, white, black, and shades of ochre-gold and brown mostly applied to a stucco surface specially treated with lime.
- The fresco in the ceiling of ardha mantapa (antechamber), which is said to be Asia's largest, measures 23 by 13 feet (7.0 m × 4.0 m). It has frescoes of the 14 avatars of Lord Shiva as: Yogadakshinamurthy, Chandes Anugraha Murthy, Bhikshatana, Harihara, Ardhanarishwara, Kalyanasundara, Tripuranthaka, Nataraja, Gouriprasadaka, Lingodhbava, Andhakasura Mahara and so forth.
- **Nagalinga**
- Monolithic snake structure in Lepakshi is the Largest Monolithic Nagalinga in India.
Lepakshi Nandi
- The monolithic Nandi sculpture in Lepakshi, is said to be the biggest monolithic Nandi in India.
- It is 4.5m high and 8.23m long.
- The big granite bull is on the main road, approximately 200 meters from the temple. It has been positioned such that it faces the shivalinga shielded by a huge serpent inside the temple.
- **It is the second largest monolith in India, after Gomateshwara.**
- The Nandi sports a huge kaasu malai, a bell chain, earrings and other jewelry.
- **Veerabhadra Temple**
- The Veerabhadra Temple of Lepakshi is a notable example of the Vijayanagara architectural style.
- There are many peculiarities in this temple such as a rock chain, Vastu Purush, the Padmini Race Lady, Durga Paadam, Lepakshi saree designs, 100-pillared dance hall, beautiful and intricate carvings, paintings on the ceilings, the hanging pillar that barely touches the ground, the monolithic Nagalinga, the monolithic Nandi, the unfinished wedding hall and others.

- The paintings on the roof are done in natural pigments.
- One noted spot in the temple is the “Eyes of Viroopaakshanna”.
- Connection with Ramayana

Human Capital Index 2020



- The World Bank released the Human Capital Index (HCI) report for 2020.
- The index benchmarks key components of human capital across countries.
- India has been ranked at the 116th position in the HCI 2020.

- **Human Capital:** It consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate over their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society.
- **Parameters Used in HCI:** The HCI 2020 includes health and education data of children for 174 countries up to March 2020. Thus providing a pre-pandemic baseline. It covers 98% of the world's population.
- **Outcome:** The HCI 2020 shows that pre-pandemic, most countries had made steady progress in building human capital of children, with the biggest strides made in low-income countries.
- However, despite this progress, a child born in a typical country could expect to achieve just 56% of their potential human capital, relative to a benchmark of complete education and full health.
- India's score increased to 0.49 from 0.44 in 2018, as per the Human Capital Index report released by the World Bank.
- Last year, India had raised “serious reservations” over the Human Capital Index, wherein India was ranked 115 out of 157 countries.
- This year India finds itself at 116th from among 174 countries

Raksha Mantri Launched Gallantry Awards Portal



- www.gallantryawards.gov.in
- This Portal will serve as a one-stop virtual platform to honour the immortal contribution of the fearless Gallantry Awardees of India. Nationwide Quiz and ‘Selfie For Bravehearts’ Initiatives were also launched on the portal.
- The Gallantry Awards Portal shall transform as an interactive, participative and dynamic platform that shall instil a sense of patriotism and devotion among the citizens especially the Yuva Shakti of the nation.

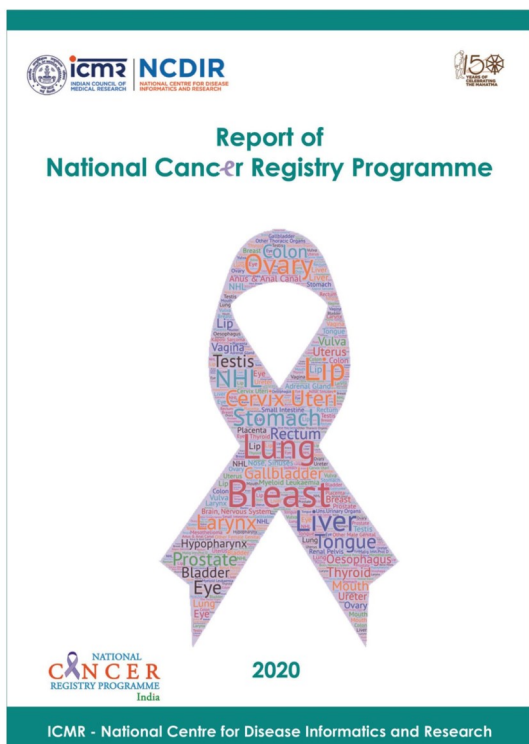
Next-Generation Surface-To-Air Akash Missile Successfully Test-Fired



- In a major milestone in the ongoing surface-to-air missile (SAM) programme, India successfully conducted the first test of 'Akash-Next Generation' (Akash-NG) from a defence facility off Odisha coast

- The missile was launched from a mobile platform positioned at the Launching Complex – III of the Integrated Test Range at about 2.30 pm against an electronic target.
- Developed by DRDO, the weapon system can handle multiple targets and destroy manoeuvring targets like cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and fighter aircraft.
- The new Akash system can defend an area of at least 10 times better compared to any short-range SAM and is capable of engaging up to 10 targets near simultaneously.
- The two-stage new generation missile has a cylindrical body with four cropped delta fins at mid-body and four tail fins. Apart from the new propulsion system, it possesses indigenous active RF seeker, laser proximity fuse, electro-mechanical actuation and pre-fragmented warhead.
- The new system comes with an Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) multi-function radar that features all three functions – search, track and fire control in one platform.

National Cancer Registry Programme 2020



- According to the recently released National Cancer Registry Programme Report 2020, cancer cases in India are likely to increase to 15.6 lakhs by 2025, a 12% increase from the current estimated cases.
- Number of Cases: The number of cases are likely to touch 15.6 lakhs by 2025 from the current 13.9 lakhs in 2020.
- Major Cause: Tobacco-related cancers are estimated to contribute 27.1% of the total cancer burden.
- Regional Distribution: Cancers related to use of any form of tobacco were highest in the northeastern region of the country and in higher proportions in men.

- Gender Prevalence: Among women, breast cancers are estimated to contribute 14.8% and cervical cancer (tumour of the cervix, the lowermost part of the uterus) are estimated to contribute 5.4%. For both men and women, cancers of the gastrointestinal tract are estimated to contribute 19.7% of the total cancer burden.
- Cancers of the lung, mouth, stomach and oesophagus (the muscular tube that runs from the throat to the stomach) are the most common cancers among men.
- Detection and Spread: Cancers of the lung were diagnosed at a stage of spread to distant sites, while cancers of head and neck, stomach, breast and cervix were in higher proportions with a locoregional (restricted to a localized region of the body) spread.

Report Analysis

- Tobacco consumption is a huge public health issue in India and its impact is especially devastating among the poor.
- Effective tobacco control should be a top priority, both as a health issue and as a method to reduce poverty.
- Multiple determinants of tobacco consumption included socio-economic status, marriage, population growth, marketing strategies, and price.
- Report considers the tobacco burden including economic and social costs and adverse health impacts .
- Tobacco consumption in India is continuing to increase despite tobacco control policy.
- Needs are more visible and aggressive anti-tobacco campaigns including increased public awareness of tobacco harms.
- Active engagement of worksites and health professionals in promoting tobacco cessation.

Next-Generation Surface-To-Air Akash Missile Successfully Test-Fired



- Akash is India's first indigenously designed, developed and produced air defence system capable of engaging aerial threats. It is the cheapest surface to air missile ever produced in the world with supersonic powered intercept.
- With a command guidance system and multiple targets handling features, automated air defence operations, Akash stands out unique amongst the available short /medium range SAMs.
- The development of the Akash-NG was approved in September 2016 with the funding support of around ₹500 crores.

'Bharat Parv 2021'



- Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla inaugurated today the 'Bharat Parv 2021', a virtual national festival showcasing the country's diverse culture, cuisines and handicrafts.
- The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with other central Ministries is organizing this year a virtual 'Bharat Parv' event from 26th to 31st January 2021, showcasing the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.
- India has become a center of attraction for international tourists too. We are working to connect the whole country through tourism and culture
- Virtual Bharat Parv 2021 will showcase multiple videos/ films, images, brochures and other information of various organizations.
- People from across the globe can enjoy this Bharat Parv extravaganza and experience the true Spirit of India at their convenience on their mobile phones, laptops, computers & other devices by logging on to www.bharatparv2021.com

Yasmeen Batool becomes first woman to represent Ladakh in archery in 2020 Khelo India Games



- In Ladakh, gender discrimination relatively less than many places around the world. It is reflected in various traditions and practices.
- Thus, Ladakhi men and women have made their mark in fields as diverse as medicine, engineering, aviation, security forces, mountaineering, long distance running, taekwondo etc.
- One such traditional sport is archery, which has been practiced by men only. Thankfully the situation is also changing now.
- Women are coming to participate in the event. Yasmeen Batool, from Chanchik in Kargil became the first woman to represent the Union Territory of Ladakh in the 2020 Khelo India Games held in Guwahati, Assam.

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail link Project



- The USBRL having length of 272 Km long Railway Line from Udhampur to Baramulla joining the Kashmir valley with rest of the country is a National Project.
- Out of 272 Km of USBRL Project, work has been completed and commissioned on 161 Km length.
- The aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir has to be fulfilled by completing the project so that the region gets a good transportation system to remain connected to the rest of the country all the year round.

Davos Agenda Summit, 2021



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese President Xi Jing Ping are to participate in the Davos Agenda Summit.
- The Davos Agenda Summit is organised by the World Economic Forum. The “Great Reset Initiative” of the World Economic Forum is to be launched during the Davos Agenda Summit.
- The theme of the Davos Agenda Summit, 2021 is “Stakeholders for a cohesive and sustainable world”

Objectives

- The four major objectives that are to be discussed during the Davos Agenda Summit, 2021 are as follows:
- To address the urgent climate and environmental challenges harming the global economy
- To transform industries into more inclusive business models
- To Govern technologies driving the fourth industrial revolution
- To adapt to social, demographic and technological trends reshaping employment, education and entrepreneurship

Key Highlights of Davos Agenda Summit, 2021

- The following discussions will be the key focus at the Davos Agenda Summit, 2021:
- America First: The America First policy of USA has created huge breakdown in international agreements in the last few years. It has undermined several global agreements including Paris Climate Change deal.
- Tensions in Iran: Upon the authorisation of the US President Donald Trump, General Qasem Soleimani was killed by the US army in a drone attack. This has increased the geopolitical tensions between USA and Iran.

- Russia's annexation of Crimea has strained the tensions between US and Russia more than at any time since the cold war.

We're not all in the same boat (Written by Amitabh Behar)

- Oxfam International's annual report on inequality for 2021, aptly titled 'The Inequality Virus', puts the uncomfortable but imperative spotlight on the obscene inequality between the few in "super yachts" and the overwhelming majority "clinging to the drifting debris".
- The COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a migrant crisis, lockdowns, and serious contraction of the economy, and highlighted a crumbling health system, is an unprecedented test of the republic.
- The Oxfam report highlights deeply uncomfortable truths of how the virus has exposed, fed off, and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender and race.
- The pandemic, which is the greatest economic shock since the Great Depression, saw hundreds of millions of people lose their jobs and face destitution and hunger.
- This shock is set to reverse the decline in global poverty we have witnessed over the past two decades
- It is estimated that the total number of people living in poverty could have increased by between 200 million and 500 million in 2020.
- Globally, women are over-represented in the sectors of the economy that are hardest hit by the pandemic.
- If women were represented at the same rate as men in those sectors, 112 million women would no longer be at high risk of losing their incomes or jobs.
- The unequal impact of the pandemic, in addition to this gender dimension, also has a race dimension.
- In Brazil, for example, people of Afro-descent have been 40% more likely to die of COVID-19 than white people.
- The virus has also led to an explosion in the amount of underpaid and unpaid care work
- India is a case in point.
- The country introduced one of the earliest and most stringent lockdowns in the face of the pandemic, whose enforcement brought its economy to a standstill triggering unemployment, hunger, distress migration and untold hardship.
- The wealth of Indian billionaires increased by 35% during the lockdown and by 90% since 2009.
- This is despite the fact that most of India has faced a loss of livelihood and the economy has dipped into recession.
- According to the International Labour Organization, with almost 90% working in the informal economy in India, about 40 crore workers in the informal economy are at risk of falling deeper into poverty.

- Four things could be done on priority. One, invest in free universal healthcare, education, and other public services
- Two, the virus has shown us that guaranteed income security is essential.
- Three, reintroduce wealth taxes and ensure financial transaction taxes while putting an end to tax dodging. Progressive taxation is the cornerstone of any equitable recovery, as it will enable investment in a green, equitable future.
- Four, we need to invest in a green economy that prevents further degradation of our planet and preserves it for our children.

Many vulnerabilities

- The much discussed and debated Electronic Voting Machine in India has survived intense scrutiny over its use largely because of one strong reason — the fact that this standalone single-chip device is not connected to any network.
- With the addition of the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to the EVM, “audit-ability” was added to the process even as the machine has suffered glitches, which the Election Commission of India (ECI) has managed to tackle reasonably well.
- That being said, the announcement by Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora that the ECI is commencing trials of a “remote voting project” is sure to bring back scrutiny.
- ECI officials have not elaborated or released any detailed document, but have mentioned that the system, being developed by IIT-Madras, uses the blockchain method for “two-way remote voting” at designated centres.
- Remote voting, as an option, has gained some priority during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to address social distancing.
- In the U.S., the mail-in ballot system, where registered voters received ballots and returned it via post or dropped it off at secure “drop boxes” or voting centers, was widely used, but this was entirely paper based.
- The blockchain method implements an online public bulletin board that allows for a linear ordering of data to which a user can only further append data.
- The board itself is public and available for anyone to read and verify.
- In the case of a blockchain-based voting system, the voting authority will have to authenticate this bulletin board in which users sign in using cryptographic signatures to register their votes in a ledger.
- While this system, with its cryptographic features, promises data security and verifiability, the fact that it will depend upon a network and devices could introduce vulnerabilities that are present in any Internet-based system
- The paper also points out that beyond the vulnerabilities faced by any Internet-based system, blockchains also introduce issues related to complexity and their management.

Taxing clunkers

- The Centre's proposed policy to raise road tax on vehicles of a certain age from April 1 next year has the potential to renew a big part of India's vehicular fleet, reducing air pollution, raising fuel efficiency, and improving safety standards.
- It has taken the government years to finalise a "tax on clunkers" proposal, under which commercial transport vehicles will have to pay 10%-25% extra on road tax after eight years when renewing the fitness certificate, and, similarly, personal vehicles after 15 years
- Public transport is given concessions, while hybrids, electrics and farm vehicles are exempt.
- A higher tax in the most polluted cities, and on diesel engines is also on the cards.
- India's scheme relies on penal taxation to persuade owners to scrap their old vehicles, with no cash-for-trade-in arrangement.
- For this approach to work efficiently, the additional tax proposed should exceed the resale value of the polluting motor, making its disposal more attractive, with enough safeguards to ensure that it is indeed scrapped and recycled under a monitored system.
- Equity features can be built into the scheme, offering a discount to income-vetted marginal operators such as autorickshaw drivers
- Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari envisioned a reduction in automobile prices of 20% to 30%, driven by recovery of scrap steel, aluminium and plastic, all of which would be recycled.
- Now that he has a better-scoped plan, the focus must be on building capacities in the organised sector to manage the task of efficient materials recovery.

Roots to government-private thought partnerships

- Written by K.P. Krishnan, On January 15, 2021, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0.
- This is the third phase of the scheme which was launched in 2015 to give a boost to skilling in the country.
- In this third version, the government wants to focus on matching local skilling requirements with local job opportunities.
- The thrust of PMKVY 3.0 is on empowering States and districts to implement skilling schemes by making regional-level plans.
- It is important here to emphasise that thought partnerships are different from the recruitment of consultants to provide government officials additional manpower to manage routine tasks.
- Partnerships are a structured mechanism for private entities to lend relevant strategic expertise to the government on policy design, evaluation and implementation.

- It is also not always feasible for the government itself to fund projects involving private partners, more so when such projects are unconventional thought partnerships.
- It is not the quantum of money required to fund a thought partnership that becomes a roadblock , but the process of getting requisite approvals for funding external agencies.
- several domestic and international philanthropies and impact investing firms are already investing billions of dollars into critical sectors in developing countries including India.
- In 2005, the Ashok Lahiri Committee, constituted by the Ministry of Finance, came out with a report which stated that there was not enough knowledge about external capital flows and controls in India.
- The committee's recommendation resulted in the establishment of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Department of Economic Affairs research programme.
- In late-2018, the MSDE itself started engaging with multiple private firms such as Dalberg Global Development Advisors and Samagra-Transforming Governance to conceptualise and design its vision for 2025.