

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – MAY 25, 2021

STATES

- **Maharashtra Government – has applied for World Heritage Tag to 14 forts in the state**
- ✓ In this regard, the state has submitted a tentative “serial” nomination for 14 forts from the era of 17th century Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji



- ✓ The nomination has been submitted on the theme of Maratha Military Architecture in Maharashtra.
- ✓ The serial nomination was forwarded by the Archaeological Survey of India to UNESCO through the Ministry of Culture.
- ✓ UNESCO has accepted the nomination in Tentative Lists of its World Heritage Site
- ✓ The 14 forts are Shivneri fort, Raigad Fort, Torna fort, Rajgad Fort, Lohagad, Mulher fort, Salher Fort, Rangana Fort, Ankai Tankai Forts, Kasa Fort, Sindhudurg Fort, Alibag Fort, Suvarnadurg and Khanderi Fort.
- ✓ They have historical significance to either Peshwa rule or associated in the battle between Marathas & Mughals.
- ✓ Some forts have also served as naval or army bases for Maratha fighters.
- ✓ A World Heritage Site is a location with an “outstanding universal value” signifying exceptional cultural/natural significance

- ✓ These sites are administered by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
 - ✓ As of June 2020, there exists 1,121 World Heritage Sites across 167 countries.
 - ✓ China and Italy are the countries having most number of heritage sites with 55 each
- **The Telangana government – has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Health Authority (NHA) to implement Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana across the state recently**
- ✓ The state government has also linked the Ayushman Bharat Scheme with the similar state scheme “Aarogyasri”.
 - ✓ Together, they are being called Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY Aarogyasri.
 - ✓ With this, Ayushman Bharat scheme has been implemented in 33 states and Union Territories across the country
 - ✓ The Ayushman Bharat Scheme aims to provide free healthcare facilities to around 50 crore people from the under privileged sections of the society
 - ✓ Under the Scheme, beneficiaries get free healthcare coverage for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation of up to Rs 5 lakhs per family per year.
 - ✓ The beneficiaries can avail these health services in any of 22,000 empanelled public and private hospitals across India as scheme is portable.

NATIONAL

- **The high-powered committee to select the CBI director – has shortlisted three IPS officers for the top post, which has been lying vacant since February this year**
- ✓ The three names being considered by the panel are former Maharashtra director general of police Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, director general of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Kumar Rajesh Chandra, and home ministry special secretary V.S.K. Kaumudi



- ✓ Jaiswal, the senior-most, is reportedly the frontrunner.
 - ✓ The panel comprised of PM Narendra Modi, CJI N V Ramana and the opposition representative from leader of Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury
 - ✓ During the discussions, CJI Ramana insisted that a police officer with less than six months of service should be not considered for the post referring to a particular Supreme Court judgement.
 - ✓ Apparently, it is for the first time such a rule has been put forward during the selection of a new CBI director
 - ✓ Therefore, it has eliminated Rakesh Asthana, the Border Security Force chief retiring on August 31, and National Investigation Agency chief Y.C. Modi, retiring on May 31 – the two names which have been at the top of the recommendations in the government’s shortlist
 - ✓ Frontrunner Subodh Jaiswal, a 1985-batch IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre, is currently serving as the chief of CISF.
 - ✓ Earlier, he held the positions of Mumbai police commissioner and the Maharashtra DGP before being called for central deputation earlier this year.
 - ✓ He has had long stints in the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)
 - ✓ In Maharashtra, Jaiswal had carried probe into the Telgi scam, which was later taken over by CBI.
 - ✓ Jaiswal was then heading the State Reserve Police Force, following which he joined the Maharashtra Anti Terrorism Squad
 - ✓ Another shortlisted IPS officer is the current director general of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) K.R. Chandra.
 - ✓ Earlier, he held positions in the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Special Protection Group (SPG), which provides security to the prime minister.
 - ✓ The third shortlisted name is the 1986-batch IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre V.S.K. Kaumudi, who is currently serving as special secretary in the ministry of home affairs since April 19, 2020
 - ✓ He was earlier the chief of the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D).
- **The Minister of State for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Anurag Thakur – launched the first phase of MCA21, the country’s first mission mode e-governance project, on May 24, 2021**
- ✓ This MCA 21 version 3.0 (V3.0) is being implemented in two phases with the second and final phase likely to be launched in October 2021.
 - ✓ MCA21 V3.0 was part of this year’s Budget announcement
 - ✓ It utilises latest technologies to further streamline the Corporate Compliance and stakeholder’s experience.
 - ✓ The first phase comprised of revamped website, new email services for MCA Officers and two new modules, namely, eBook and eConsultation.



- ✓ MCA21 is the online portal of corporate affairs ministry (MCA) that has made all company related information accessible to various stakeholders and general public.
- ✓ It was initially launched in 2006.
- ✓ The entire project of MCA 21 V3.0 is proposed to be launched within this Financial Year and will be data analytics and machine learning driven.
- ✓ The Mission Mode e-governance initiative was launched in 2002 by Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- ✓ It is one among 31 Mission Mode Projects of National e-Governance Plan.
- ✓ The project is being implemented by Tata Consultancy Services under Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT) model.

- **The first total lunar eclipse of 2021 - will take place on May 26, 2021.**
- ✓ It will be visible partially in India and can be totally observed in Australia, United States, western South America, Pacific and South-East Asia
- ✓ This lunar eclipse is also called a 'blood moon' as the moon will appear slightly reddish-orange in colour.
- ✓ Also, this is for the first time since January 21, 2019, a total lunar eclipse is taking place
- ✓ The Moon will have the nearest approach to Earth on May 26, and therefore will appear to be the closest and largest Full Moon or "supermoon" of 2021
- ✓ Significantly, a supermoon and a total lunar eclipse have not occurred together in nearly six years.
- ✓ A supermoon occurs when the Moon's orbit is closest to the Earth at the same time that the Moon is full.
- ✓ The total lunar eclipse takes place when the Earth comes between the sun and the moon, blocking the sun's rays from directly reaching the Moon.
- ✓ A Lunar eclipse only occurs at Full Moon
- ✓ According to NASA, the term supermoon was coined by astrologer Richard Nolle in 1979

INTERNATIONAL

- **Singapore - has approved a Covid breath test which can detect and show the accurate results in less than a minute.**



- ✓ The test has been developed by a start-up company, Breathonix.
 - ✓ It functions in a similar manner to a standard breathalyzer test which is used by police to check drunken drivers
 - ✓ Singapore is now planning to use this method for testing the incoming travellers from Malaysia for Covid-19
 - ✓ Earlier, it was screening the incoming travellers with antigen rapid tests.
 - ✓ Anyone who tests positive in the breath test would be screened in a confirmatory PCR swab test.
 - ✓ Breathonix test has undergone three clinical trials, with two of them in Singapore and one in Dubai.
 - ✓ It indicated a sensitivity of 93% and specificity of 95% on about 180 patients subjected to trial tests.
- **The sniffer dogs - can help prevent the spread of Covid-19 infection by detecting SARS-CoV2 virus, as per a new study**



- ✓ The study was conducted by a group of scientists from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Durham University.
 - ✓ According to this study, the sniffer dogs can be 88% accurate in sniffing the deadly virus, much faster than the conventional RT-PCR test.
 - ✓ During the study, the researchers found that the sniffer dog screening, followed by swab testing, picked up 91% of infections.
 - ✓ The researchers concluded that two sniffer dogs can together screen 300 people in half an hour, thereby supporting their usage in 'super spreader' events
 - ✓ However, the researchers recommended that the sniffer dogs should be used as an additional screening tool alongside more conventional Covid tests.
 - ✓ In view of the success of the research, several countries like Finland, Dubai and Switzerland have already started training the dogs to catch the Covid infection.
- **The World Health Organisation (WHO) – has set new vaccination targets to protect people in poorest nations.**
- ✓ According to WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, 75% of all vaccines has been administered in just 10 countries.
 - ✓ WHO and GAVI Vaccine alliance are running COVAX facility to ensure 'equitable' vaccine distribution among the various countries
 - ✓ Under this initiative, 72 million vaccine doses have been delivered to 125 countries since February 2021, which is just 1% of their population.
 - ✓ WHO has asked the developed countries to donate vaccine doses to COVAX so that, it can cover vaccination for 10% of populations by September 2021 and 30% by December 2021.
 - ✓ Thus, it has set a target of vaccinating 250 million more people in four months.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and Israel - have signed a three-year joint work programme agreement to enhance cooperation in agriculture till the year 2023**



- ✓ Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare represented the country in the event
- ✓ Under new work programme, 13 'Centres of Excellence' (CoEs) will be set up to make Indian farmers aware of Israeli farm and water technologies.
- ✓ A new model agricultural ecosystem called 'Villages of Excellence' (VoE) will also be created across eight states within 75 villages.
- ✓ This VoE program will focus on three main aspects - Modern Agriculture infrastructure, Capacity Building and Market linkage
- ✓ It is aimed at transforming traditional farms into modern-intensive farms on the basis of Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP) standards.
- ✓ India and Israel have jointly set up 29 operational Centres of Excellence (COEs) across India in 12 States till now
- ✓ These Centres of Excellence generate knowledge, demonstrate best practices and train farmers.
- ✓ India and Israel have had bilateral relations since 1993 in the agricultural sector and the latest agreement is the 5th IIAP, following the successful completion of four action plans

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The Minister of Science and Technology, Health & Family Welfare and Chairman of WHO Executive Board, Dr Harsh Vardhan - chaired 74th World Health Assembly in virtual mode on March 24, 2021.**



- ✓ The Director-General of World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, also participated in the event.
- ✓ During the meeting, the executive board has asked the countries to ensure fair and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines under COVAX Facility.
- ✓ It further recommended endorsing the updated comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan for 2013 to 2030
- ✓ The board had also encouraged WHO to work in collaboration with World Organisation for Animal Health and Food & Agriculture Organisation so that source of zoonotic virus can be identified.

- ✓ It asked members to take action on addressing diabetes as a public health problem and recommended to present a road map related to “global action plan for prevention & control of non-communicable diseases” by end of 2030.
- ✓ The World Health assembly is key decision-making body of WHO.

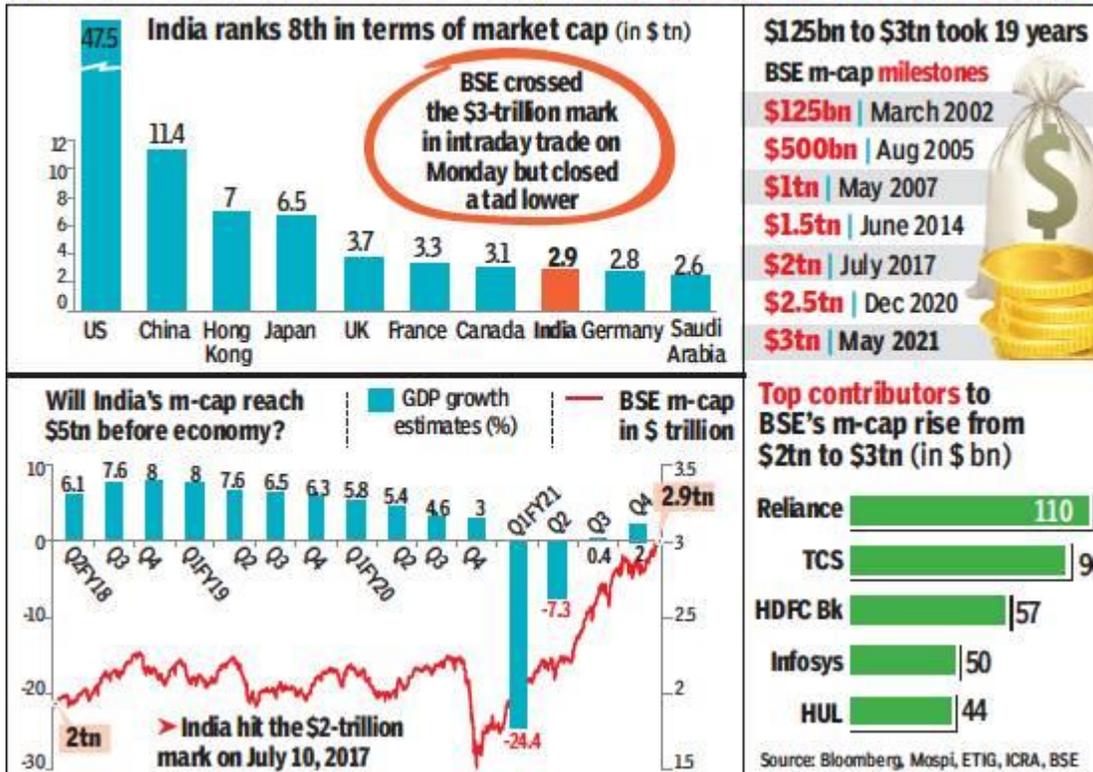
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Panacea Biotec and Russia’s sovereign wealth fund Russian direct investment fund (RDIF) - announced the commencement of production of the Sputnik V vaccine**
- ✓ Under a tie-up, RDIF and Panacea have agreed to produce 100 million doses per year of the vaccine.
- ✓ The first batch produced at Panacea Biotec’s facilities at Baddi will be shipped to Russia’s Gamaleya Center for “quality control”
- ✓ The facilities comply with GMP (good manufacturing practices) and are prequalified by WHO.
- ✓ Sputnik V was registered in India under the emergency use authorization procedure on April 12, and vaccination with the Russian vaccine started on May 14.
- ✓ The initial roll-out has been done with doses imported from Russia by RDIF’s partner, Dr Reddy’s, with the vaccine priced around ₹995 per dose.

ECONOMY

- ✓ **The country’s combined market capitalization of BSE-listed firms - crossed the \$3-trillion mark on May 24 for the first time ever**
- ✓ The stock market made a remarkable turnaround since March 2020, when it had slipped below \$1.5 trillion at the peak of the Covid-induced sell-off.
- ✓ On May 24, the BSE said its market cap crossed \$3 trillion, nearly four years since crossing the \$2 trillion mark in July 2017.
- ✓ At the close of trade on the day, the figure was at Rs 218 lakh crore or a little over the \$3-trillion mark.
- ✓ BSE’s market cap is taken as the representative of aggregate market value of India since a larger number of companies are listed on the BSE than on the NSE.
- ✓ According to Bloomberg and BSE data analysed by ETIG, of the \$1 trillion addition during the last four years, Reliance Industries added the most, \$110 billion, with TCS at \$96 billion close behind.
- ✓ Among the top 10 contributors are also bluechip companies like HDFC Bank, Infosys and ICICI Bank.
- ✓ The list includes Bajaj Finance, which recorded a significant jump in the last few years and Adani Transmission that saw its market value jump nearly 12 fold, from \$2 billion to almost \$24 billion.

VALUE OF LISTED COS SURGED BY \$500BN IN 6 MONTHS



- ✓ India's market cap crossed this milestone much ahead of its GDP, which is estimated to cross the \$3 trillion mark by the end of 2021, as per a recent report by the IMF.
- ✓ In March 2002, BSE had a market cap of \$125 million which crossed the \$1 trillion mark in May 2007 and then the \$2-trillion mark by July 2017.

AWARDS

- The forest range officer of Ramanathapuram subdivision of Gulf of Mannar marine National park, S Satish – has won the 'India Biodiversity Award - 2021'



- ✓ The award has been given from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the United National Development Programme (UNDP)
- ✓ Sathish won the award under the 'Sustainable use of Biological Resources' category for his remarkable work in 'Kaarankadu Community based Eco tourism' project, which is located at 35 kms from the Ramanathapuram district headquarters
- ✓ The award, carrying ₹2 lakh cash prize and citation, was declared on May 22, 2021 during the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) 2021.
- ✓ The award was conferred by the minister of state for MoEFCC Babul Supriyo through video conferencing
- ✓ In April 2021, Sathish was among the 10 rangers world over to win the 'International Ranger Award' 2021 from the IUCN, Switzerland, and three other organisations.
- ✓ It includes a cash reward of ₹7.2 lakh for the forest department
- ✓ **Apart from Satish, Shaji .N.M., fondly called as 'Tuber Man' of Kerala has been awarded in the individual category of 'Conservation of domesticated species'.**
- ✓ Shaji conserves a wide array of around 200 tuber crops including greater yam, lesser yam, elephant foot yam, arrow root, sweet potato and Chinese potato in his farm
- ✓ His farm has 40-odd varieties of turmeric and 30 varieties of ginger, apart from conserving many paddy varieties, which are on the verge of extinction.
- ✓ He has received State awards seven times and also received the Plant Genome Savior Reward 2015, instituted by PPV&FR Authority, New Delhi.
- ✓ **Further, Krishi Avam Paristhitiki Vikas Sansthan (KRAPAVIS) won the award under the category 'Sustainable Use of Biological Resources'**
- ✓ **Khonoma Nature Conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary (KNCTS) in Nagaland won the award under 'Sustainable Use of Biological Resources' category.**
- ✓ The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated globally to raise awareness about the issue of a significant reduction in biological diversity due to certain human activities
- ✓ Theme 2021 - "We're part of the solution"
- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly in December 2000, adopted May 22 as International Day for Biological Diversity.

