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NEWS IN SHORT

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NEWS ②: Zero malaria cases in 2020

NEWS ③: CCMB announced that COVISHILED vaccine protects against B.1.617 variant.

NEWS ④: DCGI provided "Restricted Emergency Use Approval" for the use of "Virafin".

NEWS ⑤: Mustard production to 17 million tonnes by 2025-26

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Exemption from basic health cess on import of oxygen-related equipment

- The Government of India has granted **complete exemption from basic health cess** on **import of oxygen-related equipment** and customs duty for a period of three months.
- The GoI has planned to **import 50,000 tonnes of Oxygen**.

Zero malaria cases in 2020

- The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare reported that as many as **116 districts in India** have reported **zero malaria cases in 2020**.
- In 2020, India had **reduced the disease burden of Malaria by 84.5%**. Also, India has reduced the **deaths due to Malaria by 83.6%**.

COVISHIELD

- The **Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology** announced that **COVISHILED vaccine protects** against **B.1.617 variant**.
- It is also called the **double mutant strain**. The vaccines were tested against the double mutant variety using the **Vitro Neutralisation assay**.

"Virafin"

- The **Drug Controller General of India** provided **"Restricted Emergency Use Approval"** for the use of **"Virafin"**.
- Virafin is used to treat **Hepatitis B and C**. Now it is to be used to treat moderate **COVID-19 infections**. It will help to reduce the need for **oxygen support**.

Mustard production

- The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare** announced that it is to bring **nine million tonnes of land under mustard cultivation**.
- This will increase mustard production to **17 million tonnes by 2025-26**. The average mustard production in India between 2015 and 2019 was 7.7 million tonnes.

'Red Book' on COVID practices

- A **'COVID-19 Red Book'** comprising best practice guidelines was released by **Apollo Hospitals group**.
- The **Red Book encapsulates** a standard protocol of managing COVID-19, making these available for the benefit of everyone in solidarity of our **fight against COVID**.



CJI Bobde's tenure draws to a close

- The 47th Chief Justice of India, Sharad A. Bobde, completed his last working day in office after steering the **Supreme Court** through unprecedented months of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- The baton of the top judge will pass to **Justice N.V. Ramana**, the **seniormost judge of the court**.

STATE AFFAIRS

Two aircraft to airlift oxygen from Odisha

- The **Telangana government** has pressed **two military air craft (C17)** into service to **bring oxygen tankers from Odisha** to ensure there is no shortage of medical oxygen in the State as part of COVID treatment.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

China's national security office to open permanent base in HK

- **Hong Kong** is set to grant a site on the **western Kowloon peninsula**, close to the **high speed railway to the main land**, to **Beijing's national security office** for its permanent base in the city.
- The former **British colony of Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997** with the guarantee of continued freedoms.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

NBFCs to function in GIFT city, Gujarat

- The **International Financial Service Centre** granted permission for the **Non-Banking Finance Companies** to operate in **Gujarat GIFT City**.
- The NBFCs will now be allowed to offer whole range of services such as **loans, investment banking, exotic derivative trades** and **third-party product sales**.

RBI extends State's Ways and Means credit to September

- The **Reserve Bank of India** decided to continue with the **existing interim Ways and Means Advances scheme limit** of **Rs. 51,560 crore** for all States/ UTs shall for six months i.e., up to **September 30**, given the prevalence of COVID19.

RIL buys U.K's Stoke Park club for £57 million

- **Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd.** has bought **Britain's iconic country club and luxury golf resort, Stoke Park**, which has featured in **James Bond movies** for **£57 million (about Rs.592 crore)**.
- The acquisition is said to add to RIL's current stake in Oberoi hotels.

ENVIRONMENT & GEOGRAPHY

Glacier burst

- A **Glacier burst** occurred in **Sumna, Neeti Valley** located in **Chamoli district** in **India-China border**.
- A **Border Road Organisation Camp** came under the **avalanche**. The Glacier Bursts are caused by the **build-up of water pressure**.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Tuhin Kanta Pandey

- The **Cabinet's Appointments Committee** gave **DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey** additional charge of the post of **Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)**.
- The charge is being given due to MoCA Secretary P.S. Kharola's "leave of absence".

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Panchayati Raj Day

- **National Panchayati Raj Day** is celebrated on **April 24**. The first National Panchayati Raj day was declared by **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh** on April 24, 2010.
- It is celebrated on April 24 as the **Panchayati Raj System of India** came into effect on **April 24, 1993**.