

Jharkhand govt launches 'PRAGYAAM' App to issue e-passes to everyone associated with delivery of essential services amid lockdown

The Jharkhand Government has launched a mobile app named PRAGYAAM to issue e-passes to those associated with delivery of essential services such as regular supply services, medical, banking and other necessary services, during the national lockdown to combat COVID-19.

The District Transport Officers have been given authority to issue e-passes to vehicles through online mode after verification of the documents uploaded through the app.

Officials can also verify the status of the e-passes on the app and other details, including mobile number and identity card of the person engaged in such duties to curb the chances of fake e-passes.

Nomura lowers India's 2020 GDP growth forecast to -0.5%

Nomura has predicted India's GDP growth rate for the year 2020 at -0.5%. The earlier prediction was 4.5%.

The announcement was made by Sonal Varma, MD and chief India economist at Nomura.

Centre Extends Foreign Trade Policy for One Year till March 2021

The government has extended the existing foreign trade policy (2015-20) for one year till March 2021.

The foreign trade policy 2015-20 was earlier valid up to March 31, 2020.

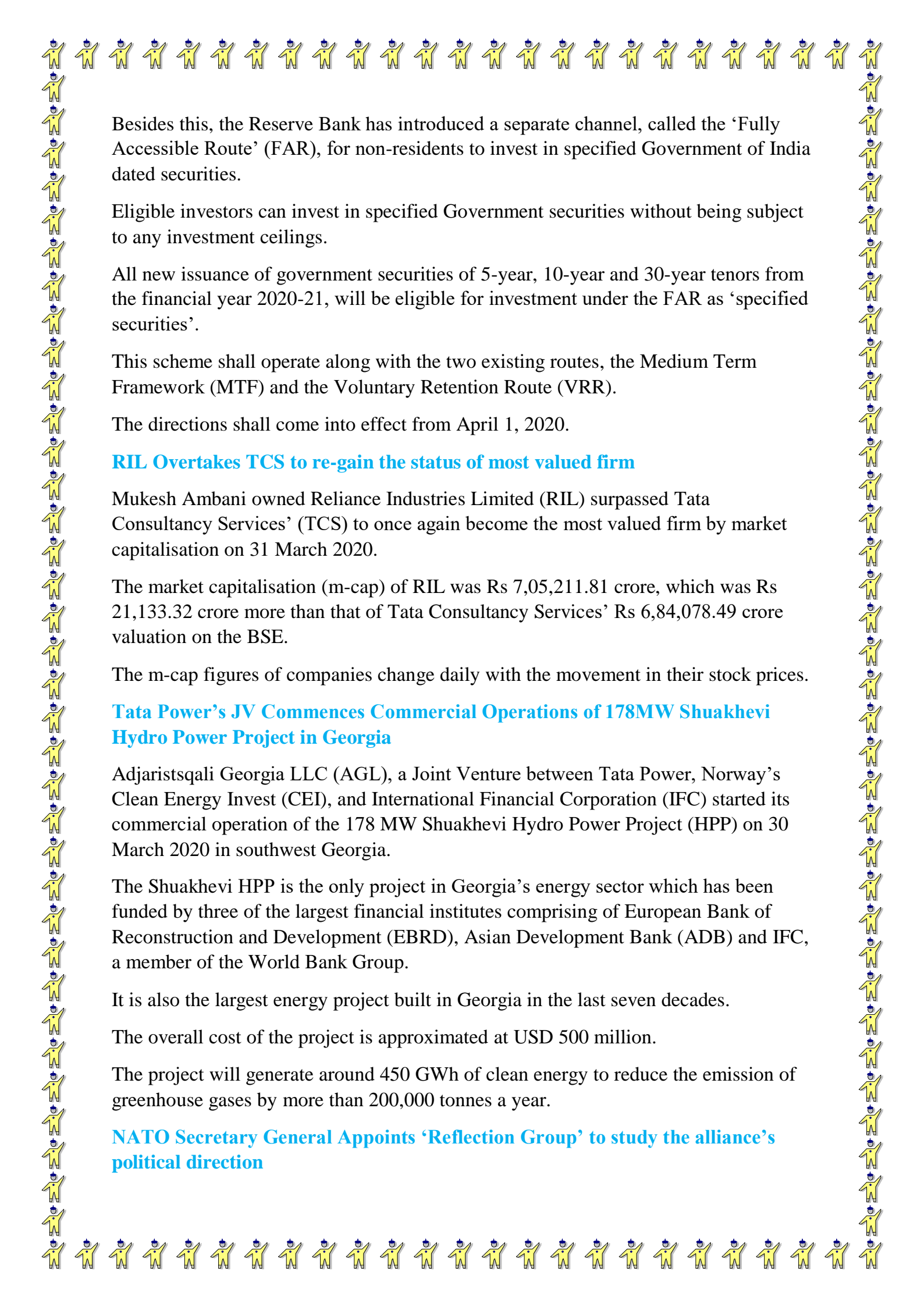
The extension has been given amid coronavirus outbreak and the lockdown to contain the virus spread.

RBI Increases FPI limit in Corporate Bonds to 15% for FY21; Introduces "Fully Accessible Route" as new foreign investment category

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has hiked the limit for foreign portfolio investors' (FPI) investment in corporate bonds from 9 percent to 15 percent of outstanding stock for FY2020-21.

Currently, the FPIs can invest Rs 3.17 lakh crore in Indian corporate bonds.

With the enhanced limit, they can hold Rs 4.29 lakh crore of corporate bonds for the half year ended September 2020, and Rs 5.41 lakh crore for the half year ending March 2021.



Besides this, the Reserve Bank has introduced a separate channel, called the ‘Fully Accessible Route’ (FAR), for non-residents to invest in specified Government of India dated securities.

Eligible investors can invest in specified Government securities without being subject to any investment ceilings.

All new issuance of government securities of 5-year, 10-year and 30-year tenors from the financial year 2020-21, will be eligible for investment under the FAR as ‘specified securities’.

This scheme shall operate along with the two existing routes, the Medium Term Framework (MTF) and the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR).

The directions shall come into effect from April 1, 2020.

RIL Overtakes TCS to re-gain the status of most valued firm

Mukesh Ambani owned Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) surpassed Tata Consultancy Services’ (TCS) to once again become the most valued firm by market capitalisation on 31 March 2020.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of RIL was Rs 7,05,211.81 crore, which was Rs 21,133.32 crore more than that of Tata Consultancy Services’ Rs 6,84,078.49 crore valuation on the BSE.

The m-cap figures of companies change daily with the movement in their stock prices.

Tata Power’s JV Commences Commercial Operations of 178MW Shuakhevi Hydro Power Project in Georgia

Adjaristsqali Georgia LLC (AGL), a Joint Venture between Tata Power, Norway’s Clean Energy Invest (CEI), and International Financial Corporation (IFC) started its commercial operation of the 178 MW Shuakhevi Hydro Power Project (HPP) on 30 March 2020 in southwest Georgia.


The Shuakhevi HPP is the only project in Georgia’s energy sector which has been funded by three of the largest financial institutes comprising of European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and IFC, a member of the World Bank Group.

It is also the largest energy project built in Georgia in the last seven decades.

The overall cost of the project is approximated at USD 500 million.

The project will generate around 450 GWh of clean energy to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by more than 200,000 tonnes a year.

NATO Secretary General Appoints ‘Reflection Group’ to study the alliance’s political direction



The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has announced the appointment of a group of experts on 31 March 2020 to support his work in a reflection process to further strengthen NATO's political dimension.

The group of five men and five women will be co-chaired by former German defence minister Thomas de Maiziere and Washington's former top diplomat for Europe, Wess Mitchell and will report to the Secretary General.

The panel will offer recommendations to reinforce alliance unity, increase political consultation and coordination between allies, and strengthen NATO's political role.

The following people have been appointed to the group: Greta Bossenmaier (Canada), Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen (Denmark), Hubert Védrine (France), Thomas de Maizière (Germany), Marta Dassù (Italy), Herna Verhagen (The Netherlands), Anna Fotyga (Poland), Tacan Ildem (Turkey), John Bew (United Kingdom) and Wess Mitchell (United States).

2021 World Athletics Championships Being Moved to 2022

The World Athletics has informed that the 2021 world athletics championships in Eugene, Oregon, United States, is now being shifted to 2022 to accommodate the re-arranged Tokyo Olympics.

The 2020 Tokyo Games has been postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic and will now take place on July 23-August 8, 2021.

The world athletics championships was earlier scheduled to take place in Eugene on August 6-15, 2021. It will now take place in August 2022.

Tamil Folk Singer and Actress Paravai Muniyamma Passes Away at 83

Noted Tamil folk singer and actress Paravai Muniyamma, passed away suffering from age-related ailments. She was 83.

Muniyamma made her acting debut at the age of 66 with the 2003 film Dhool and featured in over 50 films.

International Transgender Day of Visibility: March 31

The International Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV) occurs annually on March 31 to raise awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebrate their contributions to society.

The day was founded by US-based transgender activist Rachel Crandall of Michigan in 2009.