

## CURRENT AFFAIRS= 14/15-03-2020

### India Granted USD 500 mn Aid for Maldives Connectivity Project & USD 250 mn as Budgetary Support

India has granted a US\$250 million as budgetary support and US\$500 million for the 6.7 Km Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) during a virtual conversation between India's Union Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Maldivian Counterpart Abdulla Shahid.

The financial package of US\$250 million will support the Maldives in meeting the Government's financing gap, and support its efforts in responding to Covid19. While the financial package of US\$500 million consist of a grant of US\$100 million and a new Line of Credit (LoC) of US\$400 million. The US\$400 million LoC comes in addition to a previous LoC of US\$800 million that was announced by India in December 2018.

#### Key Points:

-The GMCP will be the largest civilian infrastructure project in Maldives, connecting its capital city Male with three neighbouring islands viz. Villingili, Gulhifahu and Thilafushi. It will boost economic activity, generate employment and promote holistic urban development in the Male region.

-India has also decided to start air travel bubble with Maldives to facilitate movement of people from both sides for employment, tourism, medical emergencies.

Maldives is the first neighbouring country with which an air bubble is being operationalized by India which is expected to commence on August 18, 2020.

-India also decided to renew quotas for supply of essential commodities to Maldives for the year 2020-21 which include food items like potatoes, onions, rice, wheat, flour, sugar, dal and eggs as well as river sand and stone aggregates.

### India aims to Achieve Zero Road Fatalities by 2030: Union Minister Nitin

#### Gadkari

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Jairam Gadkari while addressing the Indo-Australian Chamber of Commerce and Womenovator on Trade Investment and collaborations in Road infrastructure, has underlined India's

initiatives to achieve **Zero Road Fatalities by 2030**.

**Key Points:**

- i.**The **World Bank** and **Asian Development Bank** have committed Rs. 7,000 crores each on initiatives to reduce road accidents.
- ii.**Better road engineering, increased public awareness and upgradation programmes are expected to bring 50% reduction in road accidents.
- iii.**Under the **Indian Road Safety Assessment Programme** 21,000 km road has been assessed 3,000 Kilometre road length is under technological upgradation.
- iv.**Social awareness, education, improving emergency services, pressing for medical insurance, providing more hospitals are looked upon key areas to achieve the Road Safety Targets.

**Note** – India reported the world’s highest road accidents in 2018 with 4.67 lakh accidents claiming 1,51,417 lives.

**Odisha retains Top Position in Implementation of AMRUT Scheme**

Odisha has retained top position in the implementation of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme. According to rankings released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Odisha regained its top position by securing a score of 85.67 percent, followed by Union Territory of Chandigarh (75.08) and Telangana (74.04).

**Cities Covered in Odisha:**

Nine cities of Odisha are covered under the AMRUT Scheme – Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela, Baripada, Balasore, Bhadrak, Berhampur and Puri.

Top 3 States in Implementation of AMRUT Scheme:

Position	State	Score
1	Odisha	85.67
2	Chandigarh (UT)	75.08
3	Telangana	74.04

**Key Notes:**



i. Around 400 kilometers of pipeline have been laid/replaced for the Universal Coverage of piped water supply. All the nine AMRUT cities are expected to have 100 percent network coverage by December, 2020.



ii. Out of the total 191 projects started under the AMRUT scheme, 148 projects have been implemented and other projects are expected to be completed before the deadline in March, 2021.

iii. Under the AMRUT scheme, parks with well-conceived landscaping and rejuvenation facilities, open gyms and jogging trails have been developed.

iv. All the projects have been geo-tagged to ensure ease of monitoring on a real-time basis, transparency, accuracy, management and validation of projects.

Renewable Energy Resources:

i. Installation of Solar-Powered Pumps in Pump houses of Berhampur and Baripada with an aim to reduce dependency on non-renewable energy resources.

**AMRUT Scheme:**

i. The AMRUT scheme was launched in June 2015 with a focus to establish infrastructure that could ensure adequate robust sewage networks and water supply for urban transformation by implementing urban revival projects. The ii. AMRUT Mission covers around 500 cities under AMRUT scheme.

### **Around 818 million Children Across the World Lack Basic Hand Washing Facilities at their Schools: WHO & UNICEF Report**

As per the latest report, 'Progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in schools Special focus on COVID-19' released by World Health Organization (**WHO**) and United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme(JMP), **around 818 million children** across the world **lacked basic hand-washing facilities** in their **schools** which makes them prone to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and other transmittable diseases.

**About the report:**

The programme produces internationally comparable estimates of progress on drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). The programme is responsible for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and indicators related to WASH.

### Highlights of the report

- i. Of the 818 million (~) children, 355 million went to schools which had facilities with water but no soap, and 462 million to schools which had no facilities or water available for handwashing.
- ii. More than one third of these children (**295 million**) are from **sub-Saharan Africa**.
- iii. **7 out of 10 schools** lacked basic hand washing facilities and half of schools lacked basic sanitation and water services in the least developed countries.
- iv. **3 in 4 of the children in 60 countries** (at the highest risk of health and humanitarian crises from COVID-19) lacked basic hand washing service at their school at the start of the outbreak; half of these children lacked basic water service and more than half lacked basic sanitation service.
- v. **1 in 3 schools** worldwide had either limited drinking water service or no drinking water service at all.
- vi. **698 million** children lacked basic sanitation service at their school.
- vii. Around the world, 43% of schools lacked access to basic handwashing with soap and water in 2019.

### Former RBI Deputy Governor Subhash Sheoratan Mundra Appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd

Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited (IBH) appointed Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor **Subhash Sheoratan Mundra (SS Mundra)** as its **Non-Executive Chairman** with immediate effect.

**Note** – IBH's Executive Chairman Sameer Gehlaut has taken up the position of chief executive officer of another listed firm Indiabulls Ventures Ltd.

### Indian Cricketer Harbhajan Singh Appointed as Brand Ambassador of eBikeGO

eBikeGO, Amritsar based e-mobility start-up appointed Indian cricketer **Harbhajan Singh** as its **brand ambassador** for a year. He will help the

company to upgrade itself and will also have an active presence on the company's website and campaigns across media.



### Key Info

- i. The company with this association and with the recently announced government's new Electric Vehicle (EV) policy aims to build mass appeal, positive voice and widespread adoption for electric mobility thereby looking to capture 10% of electric two wheeler market share by 2022.
- ii. With existing operations spanning Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Amritsar, Jaipur and Hyderabad, the company is focussing on expanding its footprint to new markets such as Chennai and Pune among others.

### Indian Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel "Sarthak" launched;

#### Manufactured by Goa Shipyard Limited

In order to enhance maritime security, on August 13, 2020, an Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the Indian Coast Guard was launched and re-christened as Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) "Sarthak" during a ceremony held at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) which was conducted through video conferencing from Coast Guard headquarters at New Delhi. It was launched by Ms. Veena Ajay Kumar, wife of Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar.

- Sarthak, the 4th in the series of five OPVs deployed by the ICG has been designed and built indigenously by GSL on the lines of "Make in India" which has about 70% indigenous content.
- The ship will be deployed for **exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surveillance**, Coastal Security and other duties to safeguard India's maritime interests.

#### Key Features:

- The **105 Metre** ship fitted with state-of-the-art Navigation and Communication equipment, sensor and machinery can displace approximately 2350 tons.
- It has two **9100 KW** (Kilowatt) diesel engines designed to attain a maximum speed of 26 knots, with an endurance of 6000 Nautical Miles.
- It can carry a twin-engine helicopter, 4 high speed boats and one inflatable boat for swift boarding and Search & Rescue operations. It can also carry limited pollution response equipment to undertake oil spill pollution response at sea.



In addition to the 05 OPV project, there are 52 ships under construction at different Indian Shipyards and 16 Advanced Light Helicopters are under production at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bengaluru (Karnataka).



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