

# International News

## OAS Prelims 2020 Current Affairs

January 2020

- The UAE Cabinet has validated the Multi-entry Tourist Visa which would be valid for 5 years for all nationalities visiting the UAE.
- The Iranian parliament has designated US Armed Forces & Pentagon as 'Terrorist Entities' with a motion passed at an open parliament session. It also seeks the allocation of 200 Million Euros to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force.
- Zoran Milanovic has won Croatia's presidential election.
- The Ukrainian aircraft "Boeing 737" boarding 176 people crashed in Tehran, Iran shortly after taking off from Imam Khomeini International Airport located in Tehran, Iran.
- The United Nations has declared Pakistani education activist and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai as "Most Famous Teenager of The Decade" in its 'Decade in Review' report.
- United States President Donald Trump has signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act and hence authorised the establishment of US Space Force which will become the 6th branch of the armed forces and would be the part of the Department of the Air Force.
- The 18th Dhaka International Film Festival begins at Dhaka, Bangladesh. The theme of the festival is 'Better Film, Better Audience and Better Society'.
- Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq al Said has took over as Sultan of Oman. He will succeed Sultan Qaboos bin Said who passed away recently.
- First phase of "Bishwa Ijtema" has commenced in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is the second largest congregation of Muslim community after Hajj.
- Tsai Ing-wen has won the Taiwan presidential election. She wins the second term as Taiwan president.
- The World Future Energy Summit commences in Abu Dhabi with the theme "Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment".
- The Treasury Department of United States has removed China from the designation as "currency manipulator". The decision was taken just before the commencement of first phase of US-China trade agreement.
- Union Minister of State for Shipping (I/C) Mansukh Mandaviya participated in the High-level roundtable of United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) programme at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland with theme "Access for all: Leveraging Innovations, Investments and Partnerships for Health".
- The Parliament of Greece has elected Katerina Sakellariopoulou as the country's first female president.



- Britain has unveiled a new 50 pence coin minted to mark Brexit (British exit). Brexit is the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU). The coin bears the inscription "Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations".
- Qatar's emir has appointed Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdelaziz Al Thani as new Prime Minister.
- The European Union parliament has approved United Kingdom Brexit deal.
- US President Donald Trump has signed the new United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA) North American trade pact with Canada and Mexico into law.
- World Health Organization has declared an international emergency over the novel coronavirus from China. The organization has declared an emergency as the disease has spread to 18 other countries apart from China where it originated.
- NASA Astronaut Christina Koch has created a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman. She has surpassed the earlier record of 288 days in space which was previously established by NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson in 2017.
- President of Nepal launched the "Visit Nepal Year 2020" during the ceremony held at historic Dasaratha Rangashala in Kathmandu. Mythical creature Yeti has been selected as mascot of the campaign.
- The Pacific nation of Palau has become the first country to ban sun cream which is harmful to corals and sea life. The ban prohibits sun cream containing any of the 10 ingredients which includes oxybenzone and octinoxate, that absorbs ultraviolet light.
- Umaro Cissoko Embalo has won the Guinea-Bissau's presidential election. According to the National Electoral Commission of Guinea-Bissau, Umaro won the presidential election with 53.55% of votes. He will replace the incumbent President Jose Mario Vaz.
- Iran's top commander General Qassim Soleimani has been killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad.
- Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei named the Deputy Head of the Revolutionary Guards' foreign operations arm Esmail Qaani to replace Qasem Soleimani as its commander.

### February 2020

- Katy Perry has become the ambassador of the British Asian Trust's Children's Protection Fund for India, recently unveiled by Britain's Prince Charles.
- Romania's pro-European government led by Prime Minister Ludovic Orban has collapsed in a parliamentary no-confidence vote after only 3 months in office.
- The United States President Donald Trump has been acquitted of all impeachment charges.
- Sri Lanka celebrated its 72nd Independence Day on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The major change in the celebration ceremony was the National Anthem of Sri Lanka as it was sung only in Sinhala and not in Tamil language.
- Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi was appointed as Iraq's new Prime Minister by President Barhim Salih. Former PM Adil Abdul-Mahdi resigned in November 2019 due to anti-government protests.
- Maldives has returned to Commonwealth after its exit in 2016 and hence, has become the 54th member of the global body.
- Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan has declared a national emergency in the country to battle locust swarms.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved the funding of USD 2 million to combat the spread of novel coronavirus (nCoV). The funds will also help in boosting the supply of diagnostic and laboratory equipment for rapid testing to help in fight against the outbreak.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially named the disease caused by the new coronavirus as "Covid-2019". The new name "Covid-2019" has been taken from the words

“corona”, “virus” and “disease”, with 2019 representing the year in which it emerged. The virus was also designated as SARS-CoV-2 by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses.

- The Mobile World Congress, the annual telecoms industry gathering that draws more than one lakh visitors to Barcelona, was cancelled over coronavirus fears.
- The UK-based OneWeb company has sent 34 satellites into orbit on a single Soyuz rocket, from Baikonur port, Kazakhstan.
- Rishi Sunak has been appointed as the Finance Minister of the United Kingdom. He will replace Pakistani Chancellor Sajid Javid
- Bangladesh has observed the “Shaheed Dibash” which is also known as ‘Amar Ekushey’ to commemorate and to pay tribute to the martyrs of language movement.
- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to keep Pakistan on the FATF Grey List till June 2020. • Pakistan has successfully completed the flight test of the air-launched cruise missile Ra’ad-II.
- Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos has announced the launch of “Bezos Earth Fund” to combat Climate Change with a contribution of \$10 billion.
- The government of Nepal has observed the 70<sup>th</sup> National Democracy Day on 19th February.
- Ashraf Ghani has won the Presidential elections of Afghanistan and will become the President of Afghanistan for the 2nd time.
- Bangladesh and Nepal have agreed to sign a Free Trade Agreement to enhance trade between the two countries.
- External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar will inaugurate Indian Pavilion at 70th Berlin International Film Festival in Germany.
- Indian-origin Alok Sharma has been named the new UK Minister in charge of the crunch UN climate talks to be hosted by Britain.
- South Sudan rebel leader Riek Machar has been sworn in as first vice president. He is formally rejoining the government in the latest effort to bring peace to a nation ravaged by war.
- Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has announced his resignation over political issues. He will act as an interim PM.
- Sri Lankan Government formally notified the United Nations that it will withdraw from the UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) resolution for investigating alleged war crimes. The case was dealing with a decade-old clash with Tamil separatists.

### March 2020

- Janez Jansa will replace Marjan Sarec as Prime Minister of Slovenia.
- Luxembourg has become the 1st country in the world to abolish fares for trains, trams and buses.
- The World Bank has announced 12 billion USD aid to assist countries that are grappling with economic impacts of coronavirus.
- Indian-American health policy consultant Seema Verma has been appointed as one of the key members of the White House Coronavirus Task Force constituted by US President.
- The presidency of United Nations Security Council for March 2020 has been taken over by China. The presidency of the council rotates every month among its 15 members.
- Asian Development Bank provide a USD 4 million (about ₹29 crores) to help developing countries in Asia and Pacific to fight the outbreak of novel coronavirus.
- Muhyiddin Yassin has become the new Prime Minister of Malaysia. He has been appointed after the resignation of Mahathir Mohamad.
- Ukraine parliament approved Denys Shmygal as a new prime minister of Ukraine. He is the nominee of Volodymyr Zelensky, the President of Ukraine.

- Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani was sworn in for a second term as his rival Abdullah Abdullah held a parallel inauguration that could plunge the country deeper into crisis ahead of peace talks with the Taliban.
- “COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator” is a new fund which has been launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome and Mastercard. The \$125 Million fund has been launched to accelerate technologies to fight against the COVID-19 epidemic and has been designed to identify, assess, develop and scale treatments to the COVID-19 disease outbreak.
- The High Court of Bangladesh has declared ‘Joy Bangla’ as the national slogan of Bangladesh. The court has directed the authorities to ensure that teachers and students use the slogan after assembly.
- The World Health Organization has officially declared COVID-19 as a pandemic as it spread freely to more than 100 countries around the world.
- The Olympic Flame was handed over to Tokyo 2020 organizers after the Greece leg of torch relay suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To ensure sick leave to Americans workers who fall ill from the new coronavirus, US President Donald Trump has signed a \$100-billion emergency aid package to strengthen the protective measures against the pandemic caused by COVID-19.
- Iraqi President Barham Salih has appointed Adnan al-Zurfi as the country’s new prime minister.
- The United States has started phase one of the clinical Human trial of an investigational vaccine, designed to protect against the coronavirus disease.
- The Phillipines has become the first country of the world to suspend all financial markets in response to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Niue has become the world’s first whole country recognised as a ‘Dark Sky Place’ by the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA).
- The world’s largest streaming media service, Netflix Inc (NFLX.O) has announced the formation of \$100 million fund. The fund has been created to help workers on film and television productions that have been impacted due to the global coronavirus outbreak.
- Canada has become the first country in the world to withdraw from Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The decision has been taken in view of the coronavirus pandemic. The Canadian Olympic Committee announced that holding the Tokyo 2020 Olympics as per schedule would threaten the health of its athletes.
- Indian footballer Sunil Chhetri chosen for FIFA campaign against Covid-19. FIFA and the World Health Organization (WHO) have teamed up to combat the coronavirus by launching a new awareness campaign led by world-renowned footballers.
- The International Monetary Fund has launched a “Tracker of Policies Governments are Taking in Response to COVID-19”. The policy tracker outlines the key economic responses taken by the government of various countries in order to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The policy tracker has the updated data till March 24, 2020.
- The United Nations Space Force has launched an Advanced Extremely High-Frequency satellite (AEHF-6) for its military communications. With the launch of the satellite, the United States has begun its first National Security Mission. The Lockheed Martin AEHF-6 (Advanced



Extremely High Frequency) satellite was launched on the Atlas V551 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

- United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres launched a \$2 billion coordinated global humanitarian response plan to fight COVID-19 in 51 countries across South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

#### April 2020

- NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg has announced the appointment of a group of experts to support his work in a reflection process to further strengthen NATO's political dimension.
- United States has announced \$2.9 billion aid for India through the US Agency for International Development to help India in its fight against COVID-19 and to also provide care for those who are affected and help the local communities with the tools to stop the pandemic spreading in the country.
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Development Fund (SDF) has allocated \$5 million for COVID-19 related projects in its member states.
- Asian Development Bank assured of \$2.2 billion (about Rs 16,500 crore) support package to India to fight against COVID-19 pandemic.
- Asian Development Bank has increased the size of its COVID-19 Response Package from \$6.5 billion to \$20 Billion as ADB's response to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Managing Director of International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva has named a group of prominent individuals to serve as her new External Advisory Group which includes former RBI governor, Raghuram Rajan.
- The Lebanese parliament has passed the legislation to legalize the cannabis cultivation for medical and industrial purposes. Earlier, the farming of cannabis was illegal in Lebanon, but now the cannabis farming would be regulated within the country.
- Iran has successfully launched its first-ever military satellite named "Noor" into the orbit. This satellite is launched by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [IRGC], a branch of the country's armed forces.
- G-20 has launched a "Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator" under the presidency of Saudi Arabia to improve connections as well as to leverage interdependencies for collective partnership, mobilizing, problem-solving, and guiding investments for new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics as well as vaccines.
- Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz al-Saud has abolished the death penalty for crimes committed by minors.

#### May 2020

- Russia has planned to launch the 1st satellite named Arktika-M to monitor the Arctic climate and environment by the end of 2020. The launch will take place on Soyuz -2,1b carrier rocket with frigate booster.
- Former intelligence chief of Iraq Mustafa al-Kadhimi becomes new Iraqi prime minister. Former PM Adil Abdul Mahdi resigned in November last year.
- China has successfully launched a new rocket named "Long March 5B" into space as it steps up Moon landing plans. This rocket is launched in Wenchang launch site that is located on the island of Hainan, China.
- Government of Iran recently took a decision of changing the name of its currency to a "Toman". Under the bill, Iran national currency is going to be changed from the rial to the Toman, which is adequate to 10,000 rials.

- Slovenia has become the 1st coronavirus-free country in Europe.
- The Italian Institute of Technology (IIT) has developed 'iFeel-You' bracelet for social distancing, and will help users respect social distancing rules.
- World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) have jointly released commemorative Postage Stamp on the 40th anniversary of the eradication of smallpox.
- World Health Organisation will initiate Independent Inquiry in the handling of COVID-19 and hence it will launch "Resolution on COVID-19 response" to put an end to the international blame game in the origin of COVID-19. The resolution was taken at the 73<sup>rd</sup> World Health Assembly that was held through video conference. India was represented by the Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has won the Israeli national elections, securing a record fifth term in office, after a controversial power-sharing deal with rival-turned-partner Benny Gantz.
- China has announced to provide USD 2 billion over two years to fight the coronavirus pandemic at WHO assembly.
- Lesotho Prime Minister, Thomas Thabane has formally resigned from the post. Lesotho's Finance Minister Moeketsi Majoro has been named by parliament as the interim PM of the country.
- UNICEF and Airtel Africa has partnered to support children & families affected in 13 countries across sub-Saharan Africa due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It aims to provide children with access to remote learning and enable access to cash assistance for their families through mobile cash transfers.
- European Union proposed 750 billion Euros as COVID-19 recovery fund to help the countries to recover from deep recession caused by the COVID-19. The money would be divided in the following manner: 500 billion euros given to EU countries as grants while the remaining 250 billion euros would be available as loans.

#### June 2020

- World Health Organisation has launched the 'COVID-19 Technology Access Pool' for equitable access to life-saving tech. This comes after at least 37 countries jointly appealed to the WHO for common ownership of vaccines, medicines and other diagnostic tools to combat the global health crisis.
- Lazarus Chakwera becomes the new President of Malawi. He defeated incumbent Peter Mutharika with 58.57% of votes.
- Bangladesh has launched an initiative named 'Shohojodha', which is an online network to facilitate plasma exchange between recovered patients of COVID-19 treatment.
- Myanmar military "Tatmadaw" has decided to use Facebook again to provide 'accurate' news to people.
- New Zealand has declared itself free from "Coronavirus". New Zealand achieved this milestone after 75 days of restrictions.
- Member countries of the Group of 20 (G20) has pledged more than \$21 billion to improve the global health and hence supporting the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan, Mukhammedkalyi Abylgaziev has resigned from the post.
- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has affirmed a USD 750 million (around Rs 5,714 crore) loan to India to enable the legislature to fortify its fight against the antagonistic effect of COVID-19 on poor and vulnerable households.
- World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced its 2020 cohort of Technology Pioneers. WEF has unveiled 100 new tech firms awardees which are leaders in carbon capture, alternative meat

and circular economies, while some of them aims to address food security, financial access etc. The 20<sup>th</sup> cohort of Technology Pioneers comprised 2 Indian firms namely: ZestMoney and Stellapps.

- The World Bank has approved USD 1.05 billion for three projects in Bangladesh to generate quality jobs and boost economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The three projects namely: Private Investment and Digital Entrepreneurship (PRIDE), Enhancing Digital Government and Economy (EDGE), and Second Programmatic Jobs Development Policy Credit, are expected to help the economy in its recovery by generating jobs and encouraging direct private investment in specialized economic zones.
- The Senkaku Islands dispute, or Diaoyu Islands dispute, concerns a territorial dispute over a gaggle of uninhabited islands referred to as the Senkaku Islands in Japan, the Diaoyu Islands in China and Tiaoyutai Islands in Taiwan. Recently, a local council in southern Japan has approved a bill to change the name of an area containing Senkaku Islands from Tonoshiro to Tonoshiro Senkaku.
- Pakistan will remain on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for failing to abide by the FATF's deadline to prosecute and penalise terrorist financing in the country. The plenary was held under the Chinese Presidency of Xiang Liu.

#### July 2020

- Pakistan Army has appointed Major General Nigar Johar as 1st female lieutenant general. She has been appointed as 1st female Surgeon General of Pak Army.
- French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has resigned from his post ahead of a government reshuffle.
- President of Russia, Vladimir Putin has recorded a victory in the recently held Presidential polls and he is set to stay in power until 2036.
- The Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) has been joined by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as an observer.
- Jean Castex has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of France. He has replaced the former French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe who resigned from the post ahead of a government reshuffle.
- United States has formalized to withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO) on July 6, 2021.
- Israel Defence Ministry has announced the successful launch of a new "Ofek 16" spy satellite into orbit by using a locally-developed Shavit rocket from a launch pad at Palmachim airbase in central Israel. This was the first launch of an Israeli spy satellite into space since the Ofek-11 which entered orbit in September 2016.
- According to the World Health Organisation's (WHO), South-East Asian Region (SEAR) office, Maldives and Sri Lanka are the first two countries in the WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target.
- Lee Hsien Loong has become the Prime Minister of Singapore after the ruling People's Action Party won the General Elections held in the country.
- India has become the second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United Kingdom. India invested in 120 projects and created 5,429 new jobs in the UK. United States remains the number one source of FDI for the UK.
- Andrzej Duda has been re-elected as the President of Poland.
- China has successfully launched "APSTAR-6D" telecommunication satellite via a Long March 3B carrier rocket from Xichang Satellite Launch Center. It has been developed by China Academy of Space Technology.
- Prime Minister of Tunisia, Elyes Fakhfakh has submitted his resignation.

- Indian-origin, Chandrikapersad ‘Chan’ Santokhi has been elected the president of South American country “Suriname”.
- Pakistan and China have signed an agreement for the 700 MW Azad Pattan hydel power project on the Jhelum river in Sudhoti district of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda has been appointed as the first woman prime minister of Gabon. She will succeed Julien Nkoghe Bekale.
- A mission titled as “Hope” has been launched to “Mars” by the United Arab Emirates. It will provide a complete picture of the Martian atmosphere for the first time, studying daily and seasonal changes.
- SpaceX has successfully launched South Korea’s first military satellite “ANASIS-II”. The satellite was deployed into a geostationary transfer orbit (GTO) by a Falcon 9 rocket. It was launched from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in the US of Florida.
- China has successfully launched “Tianwen-1” its first independent mission to Mars. A Long March 5 rocket carrying the spacecraft was launched from the Wenchang Space Launch Site in south China’s tropical Hainan province.
- World Trade Organization General Council has granted the “Observer” status to the central Asian country Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan has become the 25th observer of the organization.
- Russia has conducted a successful flight test of an MGTD-20 gas turbine 3D-printed aircraft engine. The flight tests were held at Kazanbash aviation centre in Tatarstan.
- The human trial of COVID-19 vaccine “AZD1222” developed by the University of Oxford and backed by AstraZeneca Plc has shown a positive result. Oxford’s vaccine is designed to reduce disease and transmission.
- International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approved USD 4.3 billion to South Africa in emergency funding to help the country in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### August 2020

- The United Arab Emirates became the first Arab country to open a nuclear power plant, when the Unit 1 of the Barakah Nuclear Plant in Abu Dhabi, got operational on 31 July 2020
- Former Guyanese housing minister, Mohamed Irfaan Ali has been named as the President of the country. He is a member of the opposition People’s Progressive Party (PPP).
- Former Chief-of-Staff of the Guyana Defence Force, Brigadier (retired) Mark Anthony Phillips has been sworn in as Prime Minister of Guyana.
- The United States Senate has unanimously passed a bill banning the Chinese-owned video-sharing app TikTok on government devices.
- A “state of environmental emergency” has been declared by the island nation of Mauritius, as a Japanese bulk carrier “MV Wakashio” ran aground on a reef in Mauritius and began leaking oil into the ocean.
- Sri Lanka’s former President, Mahinda Rajapaksa took oath as the country’s Prime Minister for the fourth time.
- President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko has won his sixth consecutive term in the country’s presidential election.
- Mohamed Ould Bilal has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Mauritania.
- Walter Roger Martos Ruiz has become the new Prime Minister of Peru.
- Russia has become the first country to register a coronavirus vaccine “Sputnik V” registered for use.
- Prime Minister of Lebanon, Hassan Diab and his entire government has resigned, in the wake of the major blast in Beirut.



- Malian President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has resigned and dissolved parliament hours after mutinying soldiers detained him at gunpoint, plunging a country already facing an insurgency and mass protests deeper into crisis.
- Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona has been sworn in as the 54th President of Dominican Republic.
- Keith Rowley sworn in as Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for a 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive 5-year term. He is from the ruling People's National Movement (PNM).
- Francisco Pascual Eyegue Obama Asue was reappointed as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for 3rd consecutive term.
- The Africa Regional Certification Commission (ARCC), an independent body set up by the World Health Organization (WHO), has certified the African continent free from wild Polio virus.
- China has successfully launched 5th Earth observation satellite, Gaofen-9 (05), from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.
- Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe has announced to step down from the post on 28 August 2020, because of the poor health conditions.

### September 2020

- World Bank has stopped the publication of its "Doing Business" report to probe data collection irregularities in the annual ranking of countries' business and investment climates.
- Mustapha Adib has been appointed as the Prime minister of Lebanon.
- President of the USA, Donald Trump has announced Wilmington, North Carolina as the first World War II Heritage City. The announcement was made at a ceremony held to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II on September 2, 2020.
- Government of Australia has appointed former cricketer, Matthew Hayden and Indian-origin politician Lisa Singh as trade envoys for advancing business ties with India.
- Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yoshihide Suga has been elected as the new Chief of country's ruling, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Prime Minister designate of Japan.
- TikTok has chosen Oracle to be its technology partner for its American operations. Microsoft was also in a bid to acquire TikTok in the United States but the Chinese owner of the video-sharing platform "TikTok" chose Oracle over Microsoft to be its technology partner for its American operations.
- Mexico has become the first country in the world to issue a sovereign bond linked to the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations. It has raised EUR 750 million (\$890 million) by such bonds. The SDG bond will mature in September 2027 and offers a yield to maturity rate of 1.603% and a coupon rate of 1.350%. This new bond was issued under Mexico's new "SDG Sovereign Bond Framework," which was released in February in partnership with French investment bank Natixis.
- Mali's former defence minister, Bah Ndaw has been named as Interim President of the country's new transition government. On 19th August 2020, Mali President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita announced his resignation with immediate effect following a military mutiny in the Republic of Mali.
- Former rebel military commander, Ishmael Toroama has been elected as president of Bougainville, an autonomous region of Papua New Guinea. This was the first general election since Bougainville voted overwhelmingly to separate from Papua New Guinea in November 2019.
- President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed has appointed Mohamed Hussein Roble as the new Prime Minister of Somalia. He will replace former Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire, who was voted out of office by parliament in July for failing to pave the way for fully democratic elections due before February 2021.

- The Prime Minister-designate of Lebanon, Mustapha Adib has announced his resignation following his failure to form a new cabinet. Mustapha Adib, Lebanon's former ambassador to Germany, was selected for the post on 31 August 2020.
- The interim President of Mali, Bah Ndaw, has named former Malian Foreign Minister Moctar Ouane as the new prime minister of Mali.

### October 2020

- An IEEE Spectrum report, the Beijing-based company is set to send the world's first mining robot named 'asteroid mining robot' into space by November 2020 to identify and extract resources. The mining robot will be launched into space by a Chinese Long March series rocket.
- The Kuwaiti government, headed by Prime Minister (PM) Sabah Al Khalid Al Sabah submitted its resignation to Emir Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber Al Sabah in anticipation of the upcoming general elections that are due to be held in November 2020. He took charge as the PM in 2019.
- Russia successfully test-fired a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile in the Arctic. The Missile was fired from the Admiral Gorshkov frigate in the White Sea, Russian Arctic. The missile covered a distance of 450 km with the maximum altitude of its trajectory at 28 km.
- King of Jordan, Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein has appointed Bishr al-Khasawneh, policy advisor to the king, as new Prime Minister of the country.
- As part of the United Nations International Day of Girl Child (11th October 2020), a 16-year old Aava Murto assumed the post of Finland's Prime Minister for one day on 7th October 2020 to raise awareness about gender equality. It was done as part of the "Girls Takeover" Program.
- Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Asia Pacific Group has kept Pakistan in its 'Enhanced Follow Up' list. The organisation had downgraded Pakistan status from "regular follow-up" to "enhanced follow up".
- Kyrgyzstan President, Sooronbai Jeenbekov has resigned from his post, following 10 days of unrest caused by protesters who have demanded his removal from office. On 4th October 2020, he was reelected as the President in Parliamentary election, causing political turmoil throughout the country.
- The Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, won a landslide victory in the country's general election, to be elected as the PM for the second consecutive three-year term.
- Singapore became the World's First Country to attach Facial verification in the National Identification Database. The function is called "SingPass Face Verification". This technology is being rolled out to the city-state's SingPass digital identity scheme, offering access to no less than 400 online services, including tax declarations and public housing applications.
- Former Lebanese Prime Minister, Saad al-Hariri has been re-appointed to the post, after winning a slim majority of votes in parliament election. Hariri received 65 parliamentary votes out of 118, giving him the mandate to form his new government. In October 2019, Hariri announced his resignation amid 2019-20 mass-protests.
- Andorra has joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to become its 190th member. Andorra is a microstate situated between France and Spain. However, it is the largest microstate in Europe.
- The global terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has announced that Pakistan will continue to remain on its grey list till February 2021. This decision has been taken since Pakistan has not been able to fulfil six out of the 27 mandates to check terror funding. FATF has strongly urged Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2021.
- Indian-origin Wavel Ramkalawan has been elected as the President of Seychelles. Seychelles has elected an opposition candidate as president for the first time since 1977. He has defeated the incumbent Danny Faure. Ramakalwan is a priest of Indian Origin whose grandfather came from Gopalganj, Bihar.

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, plans to build a headquarters for space operations at its airbase in Ramstein in Germany, to counter a rising Russian and Chinese threat.
- Alpha Condé, the incumbent president of Guinea and leader of Rally of the Guinean People Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen – RPG) party won the 3rd term as the President of Guinea by winning the 2020 presidential elections. He won the election against Cellou Dalein Diallo with 59.49 % votes. Diallo got 33.5% votes in the election. Winning the 2020 elections, Alpha Condé is set to govern the country for the next 6 years.
- Luis Arce has been chosen as the President-elect of Bolivia, after winning a landslide victory in the 2020 Bolivian general election. He captured 55.1% of the total votes. Arce will take the charge of the office on November 2020. He would succeed Jeanine Anez, who is serving as the interim President of Bolivia.
- Japanese Prime Minister, Yoshihide Suga has stated that the country will achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Prime Minister stated he intends to make a sustainable economy a pillar of his growth strategy and put maximum effort into achieving a green society.

### November 2020

- Super Typhoon Goni, claimed as the world's strongest typhoon of 2020 has hit the south of the Philippines' main island of Luzon. Goni is one of the strongest storms to hit the Philippines since 2013's Haiyan, which killed more than 6,300 people.
- Portugal MP, Duarte Pacheco has won the elections for the post the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The term of the Duarte Pacheco will be from 2020-2023. He will be the 30<sup>th</sup> President of the IPU and will succeed Mexican MP Gabriela Cuevas Barron who completed the tenure in October 2020.
- The incumbent President of Ivory Coast, Alassane Ouattara, has won a third 5-year term in a landslide victory, gaining more than 94 per cent of the votes polled.
- Bangladesh and US navies launched the 'Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Bangladesh 2020' to expand relationships and broaden maritime awareness between the two countries.
- The President of Tanzania, John Pombe Magufuli has been sworn for a second five-year term.
- The United States has officially withdrawn from the Paris climate accord on 04 November 2020. With this, the US has now become the only country to formally pull out of the deal since it was adopted in 2015.
- The second World Health Expo was inaugurated on November 11, in Wuhan, the capital city of Central China's Hubei Province. This year's Expo will focus on displaying the most cutting-edge science and technology in the global health industry, and help Wuhan build "city of global health industry".
- Indian-American Kash Patel has been named as the Chief of Staff to the Acting US Defence Secretary Chris Miller. The new appointment comes a day after Donald Trump fired Defence Secretary Mark Esper and designated Chris Miller, as the Acting Secretary. Kash Patel, currently on the National Security Council staff. He replaces Jen Stewart, who resigned earlier in the day.
- Myanmar's ruling party led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi claimed a resounding victory. National League for Democracy (NLD) party has won close to 400 seats while the opposition Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) has secured only 21 seats. Around 38 million voted to select the National League of Democracy (NLD) Party for a second term. NLD was required to win at least 2/3rd of the elected seats to win.
- Japan and Australia have signed a 'landmark' defence pact in a bid to counter China's growing influence in the South China Sea and over the Pacific island nations. The deal called Reciprocal

Access Agreement (RAA) was signed between Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison.

- Maia Sandu has won Moldova's presidential election after a run-off vote against the incumbent Igor Dodon. Ms Sandu has won 57.7% of the vote compared to Mr Dodon's 42.2%. Sandu is a former World Bank economist who favours closer ties with the European Union. Mr Dodon, meanwhile, is openly backed by Russia.
- China has launched a historic mission 'Chang'e 5' to the moon to collect 'first lunar samples'. The mission aims at the investigation of the landing area to obtain the on-site analysis data related to the lunar samples, as well as systematic and long-term laboratory analysis of the lunar samples. It is the world's first moon-sample mission in more than 40 years. Till date, only two nations, the US and the Soviet Union have been able to collect the lunar sample. The last mission was undertaken by Soviet Union's Luna 24 mission in 1976.
- Russia successfully test-fired a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile in the Arctic. The frigate Admiral Gorshkov in the White Sea fired a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile, hitting a naval target 450 km away in the Barents Sea at a speed of over Mach 8.
- Cambridge Dictionary has named 'quarantine' as Word of the Year 2020. The word has been named the word of the year based on data that showed that it was one of the most highly searched words on the Cambridge Dictionary this year.
- The first coal-based power plant of Arab Gulf country is being developed in Saih Shuaib, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The 2,400MW Hassyen clean coal power station will be built at an estimated cost of \$ 3.4 billion.

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- New Zealand has declared a "climate emergency" and promised to make its public sector carbon neutral by 2025. New Zealand now joins 32 other countries that have declared a climate emergency. They include Japan, Canada, France and the United Kingdom.
- The first coal-based power plant of Arab Gulf country is being developed in Saih Shuaib, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The 2,400MW Hassyen clean coal power station will be built at an estimated cost of \$ 3.4 billion.
- Bangladesh has signed its first Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Bhutan, which will allow duty-free access to a range of goods between the two countries and hence boost bilateral trade between them. Under the PTA, 100 Bangladeshi products will get duty free access to Bhutan, while 34 items from Bhutan will get duty free access into Bangladesh. Further items can be added in the list later on the basis of discussion between the two countries.
- China has become the second country in the world to unfurl its national flag on the moon surface. Earlier this feat was achieved only by the USA when it planted its flag on the Moon during the Apollo mission in 1969. If the return journey concludes successfully, China becomes the only third country globally to have samples from the moon. Till date, this record is maintained only by the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Kuwait Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has re-appointed Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah as prime minister. The move comes two days after Sheikh Sabah submitted his government's resignation in a procedural step following parliamentary polls.
- The Prime Minister of Romania, Ludovic Orban has stepped down from his post after his ruling National Liberal Party (PNL) lost in 2020 parliamentary election. Following this, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis appointed the Minister of National Defense, Nicolae-Ionel Ciuca as the interim prime minister of the country.
- The Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched an initiative called, the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), for its developing member countries. The bank has allocated USD 9 billion for APVAX.

- The Hawker Culture of street food in Singapore has been inducted by UNESCO in its prestigious 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'. The Hawker Culture is a popular Singaporean style of street dining and culinary practices in a multicultural urban environment.
- The Myanmar Navy has officially inducted the submarine INS Sindhuvir, which was handed over by the Indian Navy to the country in October 2020. This is the first submarine in the Myanmar Navy's arsenal. INS Sindhuvir has been renamed as UMS Minye Theinkathu by the Myanmar Navy.

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