

# NEWS TODAY

## BORROWING LIMIT FOR STATES HIKED BUT SUBJECT TO REFORMS

- Centre raised **borrowing limits for states from 3% to 5% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** for current fiscal year which is equivalent to Rs 4.28 trillion, subject to their carrying out specific reforms.

> **States have been urging for a hike in the cap on borrowings (currently 3%) prescribed under Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.**

- Of the 200 basis points raise, the 50 basis points will be unconditional while 150 points are conditional which includes

> 100 basis points for reforms in **universalization of one nation one ration card, ease of doing business, power distribution and urban local body revenues.**

⇒ Weightage of each reform is 25 basis points

> **50 basis points of extra borrowing** will be allowed if **milestones were achieved in at least three** out of the four reform areas.

- Respective Central ministries, power, housing & urban development, commerce & industry and food will monitor and assess states' performance against reforms.

### THE CONDITIONS

#### One Nation One Ration Card

- Aadhar-seed all the ration cards from the respective state
- Install Point-of-Sale machines in all fair-price shops in the state

#### Ease of doing business

- District-level assessment of ease of doing business as per DPIIT norms
- State industrial, commercial licenses to businesses to be automatically renewed

- Make inspections randomised with prior notice and full transparency

#### Power Sector

- Reduce ATC Losses
- Reduce ACS-ARR Gap
- Provide power subsidy to farmers through DBT

#### Urban Local bodies

- Notify property tax floor rates in consonance with circle property rates
- Notify water and sewerage charges

Sourie: Govt sources

## A CHANGED DYNAMIC ALONG INDIA-CHINA BORDER

- Indian and Chinese troops have been involved in stand-off in areas near **Galwan river and Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh and in Naku La in North Sikkim.**

- India has been upgrading its infrastructure along the border. This allowed Indian troops to patrol with greater depth and frequency into areas where the Chinese had, by virtue of favourable terrain and better infrastructure, established a more frequent presence. That is now being challenged.

> By December 2022, all 61 strategic roads along the border, spread across Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, will be completed, adding up to 3,417 km in length.

### Protocols to handle such incidents

- 2005 protocol on modalities for implementing confidence-building measures **states that neither shall use force or threaten to use force** and both sides shall treat each other with courtesy and refrain from any provocative actions.
- 2013 Border Defence Cooperation Agreement states that **patrols shall not follow or tail patrols of other side in areas where there is no common understanding of LAC** and called for both sides to exercise maximum self-restraint.

## 73<sup>rd</sup> WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (WHA)

- WHA had unanimously adopted a resolution that seeks to-
  - > **Establish the origins** of the novel coronavirus.
  - > **Impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation on the response** of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to the coronavirus crisis.
- It also urged WHO **to help investigate zoonotic source of virus** and route of introduction to the human population.
- It called for nations to commit to ensuring **"transparent, equitable and timely access" to any treatments or vaccines developed against COVID-19.**
- The WHA also **elected India along with nine other member states in the executive board** of the WHO for a period of three years.
- Taiwan's re-entry into WHA as an observer has been postponed.
  - > China has blocked Taiwan from attending the WHA meeting since 2016.

### About WHA

- It is the **decision-making body of WHO.**
- It is **attended by delegations from all WHO Member States** and focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board.
- Main functions:** to determine policies of Organization, appoint Director-General, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed programme budget.
- It is **held annually in Geneva, Switzerland.** This year's Assembly was the first-ever virtual assembly.

## MOHUA ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF STAR RATING OF GARBAGE FREE CITIES (GFC)

- For assessment year 2019-2020**, six cities have been certified as **5-Star** (see infographic), 65 cities as 3-Star and 70 cities as 1-Star.

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) had launched **"Star Rating of GFC" in 2018 to institutionalize a mechanism for cities to achieve Garbage Free status, and to motivate cities to achieve higher degrees of cleanliness.**

- Star rating of GFC is different from Swachh Survekshan (conducted by MoHUA) which is a **ranking exercise for fostering spirit of healthy competition among towns and cities.**

- It is supported by a **robust verification mechanism to ensure transparency and standardisation.**

> Cities are required to carry out **self-assessment and self-verification** for achieving a certain star rating which will be **further verified through an independent third-party agency** appointed by MoHUA.

- A **revised protocol** was also launched for the Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities.

> The new protocol will consider ward-wise geo-mapping, monitoring of the solid waste management value chain through ICT (Information and Communications Technology) interventions like Swachh Nagar App and zone-wise rating in cities with a population of over 50 lakh.

### GARBAGE-FREE CITIES

- Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra)
- Surat (Gujarat)
- Ambikapur (Chhattisgarh)
- Rajkot (Gujarat)
- Mysuru (Karnataka)
- Indore (Madhya Pradesh)

# INDIA OPPOSES WTO MEMBERS' PUSH FOR PERMANENT TARIFF CUTS

- Several developed countries seek permanent tariff liberalisation on a range of health and farm products at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to use the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to gain market access for their exporters.
- India, rejecting the proposal held that:
  - > **Developing countries** seeking to shore up manufacturing capacity in medical products will **require tariff protection for their nascent domestic industry.**
  - > **Job losses** in many service sectors **have to be compensated elsewhere.**
  - > Impact of COVID-19 is disproportionate on developing countries and LDCs (least developed countries) and need special treatment.
- However, **India agrees that members may reduce customs duties on imports of certain medical or agricultural products on a voluntary basis** to zero if it serves their health and food security objectives.
- Also, India had proposed 5 markers **to combat COVID-19 at WTO** (see Infographic).

## COMBATING COVID-19: INDIA'S 5 MARKERS AT WTO

- Acknowledges the need for a coordinated global response, ensuring the availability of vital drugs such as hydroxychloroquine and paracetamol
- Says it is committed to taking emergency measures to battle the pandemic on a 'targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary' basis
- Insists that attempts to prohibit the use of export restrictions on medical and agricultural products are untenable
- Supports the use of TRIPs flexibilities to ensure access to essential medicines at affordable prices
- Emphasises the urgent need to build the capacity of poor and developing countries in areas such as digital skills

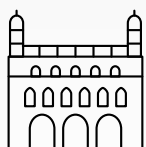
## ALSO IN NEWS

<b>WAG-12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>first 12,000 horse power (HP) electric locomotive</b> operationalised by Indian Railways.</li> <li>• It has been <b>manufactured</b> by Madhepura Electric Locomotive Pvt. Ltd. (MELPL), Bihar.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; MELPL is a joint venture between French rolling stock manufacturer Alstom and Indian railways.</li> <li>&gt; With this India became 6th country in world to produce high horse power (HP) locomotive indigenously.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• WAG12 <b>will allow faster and safer movement of heavier freight trains</b> capable to haul around 6000 tonnes at a top speed of 120 kmph.</li> </ul>
<b>mRNA-1273</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>working name of COVID-19 vaccine based on mRNA technology</b> by US-based firm Moderna that has completed phase one of the clinical trials.</li> <li>• mRNA <b>means messenger RNA</b>, which <b>carries genetic formula for coding</b> of a specific protein.</li> <li>• In this vaccine, mRNA used codes for <b>spike protein</b>, which corona virus uses to enter the cell and replicate.</li> <li>• With this, body arms itself with the antibodies that are required to act against spike protein.</li> </ul>
<b>Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) Mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a proposed mission of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), for <b>preventing an impact of Earth by a hazardous asteroid.</b></li> <li>• DART will be first demonstration of <b>kinetic impactor technique</b> to change the motion of an asteroid in space.</li> <li>• <b>Binary near-Earth asteroid (65803) Didymos</b> is target for the DART demonstration.</li> <li>• It is planned to be launched in July 2021.</li> </ul>
<b>'Profiteering' charge upheld against Park Avenue product</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under GST, suppliers of goods and services must pass on any reduction in the rate of tax or the benefit of input tax credit to consumers by way of commensurate reduction in prices.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The <b>wilful action of not passing on the above benefits</b> to the recipients in the manner prescribed is known as "<b>profiteering</b>".</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA)</b> is the statutory mechanism under GST law to check the unfair profiteering activities by the registered suppliers under GST law.</li> </ul>
<b>National Test Abhyas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is an AI-powered mobile app to enable candidates to <b>take mock tests</b> for upcoming exams such as JEE Main, NEET.</li> <li>• Students across the country can use the App free of cost.</li> <li>• It is <b>developed by National Testing Agency (NTA).</b></li> <li>• NTA has been established as a premier, autonomous and self-sustained testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in higher educational institutions.</li> </ul>

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