

NEWS TODAY

NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK (NIRF) INDIA RANKINGS 2020 RELEASED

- NIRF 2020 gave rankings for **10 different categories of institutions**, including 1 new category- Dental colleges. (refer infographics).
- Overall, 3,771 institutions registered in the ranking framework this year, 20% higher than last year.
- NIRF was approved by **Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)** in 2015, to rank institutions across the country and promote quality in education and encourage competition to perform better.
 - NIRF rank both private and public institutions.
 - It evaluates institutions on five broad parameters:**
 - Teaching, Learning and Resources
 - Research and Professional Practice
 - Graduation Outcomes
 - Outreach and Inclusivity (on basis of gender, geographical, socio-economic diversity, differently abled students)
 - Perception
 - Significance of Rankings**
 - Acts as a **guide to students** for selection of universities based on a set of criteria
 - Helps universities to improve their performance** on various ranking parameters and identify gaps in research and areas of improvement.
 - Instills a competitive spirit amongst institutions** to perform better and secure higher rank in international ranking.
- Ranking is different from **Accreditation, which is a 5 yearly comprehensive assessment of the institution** as a whole.

Category	Institute	2019 Rank	2020 Rank
Overall	■ IIT Madras	1	1
	■ IISc	2	2
University	■ IISc	1	1
	■ Jawaharlal Nehru University	2	2
Engineering	■ IIT Madras	1	1
	■ IIT Delhi	2	2
Management	■ IIM Ahmedabad	2	1
	■ IIM Bangalore	1	2
Colleges	■ Miranda House, Delhi	1	1
	■ Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi	5	2
Pharmacy	■ Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi	1	1
	■ Panjab University, Chandigarh	2	2
Medical	■ AIIMS, New Delhi	1	1
	■ PGIMER, Chandigarh	2	2
Architecture	■ IIT Kharagpur	1	1
	■ IIT Roorkee	2	2
Law	■ NLSIU, Bangalore	1	1
	■ NLU, New Delhi	2	2
Dental	■ Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences, Delhi	NR	1
	■ Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Udupi	NR	2

INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH (ICMR) RELEASES FIRST SEROLOGICAL SURVEY RESULTS

- Serological (blood) test detects presence of coronavirus antibodies** in a person and indicates whether he/she had contracted the virus.
 - Antibody tests were performed **using a testing kit, "COVID Kavach Elisa"**.
 - It is especially helpful in understanding the spread among asymptomatic people.
- Key findings**
 - 0.73% of population in non-containment zone districts** was found to have contracted Sars-Cov-2 virus.
 - Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the virus and disease is COVID-19.
 - Risk of people contracting virus in **urban slums was 1.89 times higher than rural areas**, while risk in other urban areas was 1.09 times higher compared to rural areas.
 - Fatality rate** was very low at 0.08 %.
 - Large proportion of India's population was **still susceptible to the disease**.
 - Infection in containment zones was found to be high with significant variations.
 - India is **not in community transmission** phase yet
 - Community transmission is said to be taking place **when source of contagion is not known**. It implies that virus is now circulating in community, and can infect people with no history.
 - It suggested to continue strategy of **testing, tracing, tracking, quarantine and containment measures**.

What Is Serological Survey

Blood samples are collected from general population and tested for IgG antibodies

If a person is IgG positive, it means they were infected with SARS-CoV-2 in the past

ICMR conducted the first survey in May 2020



Districts were divided into four groups based on no. of reported Covid-19 cases:

- ZERO CASES**
- LOW INCIDENCE**
- MEDIUM INCIDENCE**
- HIGH INCIDENCE**

Minimum 15 districts from each group were selected; 400 individuals from each district



Findings give **health policy makers and epidemiologists data that can be used in disease control and mitigation measures**.

FIFTH STATE OF MATTER OBSERVED IN SPACE FOR FIRST TIME

- NASA unveiled **first results from Bose-Einstein condensates (BECs) experiments** aboard International Space Station (ISS).
 - ISS is a **large spacecraft in orbit around Earth**. It is collaboration of 15 nations (India is not its part) working together to create a state-of-the-art **orbiting research facility**.

About BEC

- It is **fifth state of matter** whose existence was predicted by Albert Einstein and Indian mathematician Satyendra Nath Bose in early 1920s.
 - Gases, liquids, solids and plasmas** are other four.
- BECs are formed **when atoms of certain elements are cooled to near absolute zero (0 Kelvin/-273.15 Celsius)**.
 - At this point, **atoms become a single entity with quantum properties**, wherein each particle also functions as a wave of matter.
- BECs are **extremely fragile** and slightest interaction with external world warms them past their condensation threshold.
 - This makes their study **nearly impossible on Earth**, where gravity interferes with magnetic fields required to hold them in place for observation.
- BEC experiments will help in**
 - Tests of general relativity
 - searches for dark energy and gravitational waves
 - spacecraft navigation
 - quantum mechanics on a macroscopic level
 - prospecting for subsurface minerals on moon and other planetary bodies.

FIRST INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUST (InvIT) BY GOVERNMENT ENTITY SET FOR LAUNCH

- National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) filed an application with SEBI as it plans to offer 19 projects worth Rs 35,000 crore under InvIT model.
 - Union Cabinet in **December 2019 approved NHAI to set up InvIT** under Indian Trust Act, 1882, and complying with SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014.
 - Through InvITs, **NHAI aims to monetise its assets** and money raised through monetisation would be used for further investment in road sector.
- InvITs are investment **scheme similar to mutual funds that allow investment from individuals and institutional investors** in infrastructure projects to earn a portion of the income as return.
 - It is part of **government's plans to tap alternative sources** of financing to boost public spending in roads and infrastructure sector.
 - Benefits of InvITs:** more attractive for investors as it provides greater flexibility, Generation of specialized O&M(operation and maintenance) Concessionaires, expected to attract long-term investors etc.
 - InvIT would be the NHAI's first asset monetisation model** after it had earlier placed projects under the toll-operate-transfer (TOT) model.
 - Unlike InvIT, the responsibility of operation and maintenance in the TOT model is vested with the contractor.

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of third round of UPR process, National Human Rights Commission has given certain recommendations related to -universal basic income, child rights etc. UPR involves a review of human rights records of all UN Member States. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UPR process is under auspices of Human Rights Council (HRC). HRC is an inter-governmental body within UN system responsible for promotion and protection of all human rights. UPR aims to improve human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations wherever they occur.
<p>SC Refuses to Entertain Pleas Against Denial of OBC Reservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A petition challenged the Centre's decision not to grant 50% reservation to OBC candidates in medical seats surrendered by Tamil Nadu in all-India quota filed in SC under Article 32 as violation of Fundamental right. But SC refused to entertain the plea saying reservation is not a fundamental right under constitution.
<p>RBI releases discussion paper on 'Governance in Commercial Banks in India'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective is to improve the quality of financial intermediaries and to align the current regulatory framework with global best practices. Key proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed tenure of chief executive officers and whole-time directors. re-appointment only after expiration of three years. Majority of Board of directors (BoD) shall be independent directors. Half of BoD shall have special knowledge or practical experience in accountancy, banking, finance, law etc.
<p>National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) platform for speedy skilling of migrant returnees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will focus on in 116 most-affected districts, where states are struggling to rehabilitate livelihoods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of districts correspond to Atmanirbhar districts planned by Centre across UP, Bihar, MP, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Rajasthan Opportunities for Migrants are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> skilling at existing Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana centres Short-term training for up to 300,000 migrants, those who want to stay back for the near term will be prioritized Fast tracking of work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, along with more loans for small businesses
<p>Integrated Flood Warning System for (IFLOWS)-Mumbai</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is state of art Integrated Flood Warning system to enhance resilience of city of Mumbai by providing early warning for flooding specially during high rainfall events and cyclones. It comprises of seven modules, namely Data Assimilation, Flood, Inundation, Vulnerability, Risk, Dissemination Module and Decision Support System. It is developed by Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
<p>Gaur or Indian Bison</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First population estimation exercise of the Indian gaur was carried out in the Nilgiris Forest Division in recent years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has revealed that more than an estimated 2,000 Indian gaurs inhabit the entire division. Gaur is the world's largest and tallest bovine. It is native to Indian Subcontinent. IUCN status: Vulnerable
<p>Nature Index 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature Index is a database of author affiliation information collated from research articles published in selected group of 82 high-quality science journals. It is compiled by Nature Research as a measure of research quality. Three autonomous institutions of the Department of Science & Technology have found their place among top 30 Indian Institutions.

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