

Current Affairs Today – 23.05.2020

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CURRENT AFFAIRS: DAYS

World Turtle Day



- **World Turtle Day** is celebrated on **May 23** in order to bring attention and increase knowledge and our respect for **turtles and tortoises**.
- The day is also celebrated to encourage human actions that will help the turtles survive and thrive in their natural habitat.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL

Prakash Javadekar launches NBA-UNDP India's Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme



- **Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar** launched NBA-UNDP India's Biodiversity **Samrakshan Internship Programme** and addressed the virtual celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity
- On the occasion, he launched the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** and **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Biodiversity Samrakshan Internship Programme** which proposes to engage 20 students with postgraduate degrees for a period of one year through an open, transparent, online competitive process.
- The programme wishes to engage dynamic and creative students, who are willing to learn about natural resource management and biodiversity conservation and to support the projects of NBA in various states and Union Territories and to technically assist the State Biodiversity Boards in discharge of their mandates.
- The virtual event also saw the launch of UNEP Campaign on Illegal Trafficking of Endangered Species: 'Not all Animals Migrate by Choice'. Illegal trade in wildlife carries the risk of spreading dangerous pandemics, it was emphasised.
- The campaign, launched by the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau with UNEP, seeks to address these environmental challenges, to raise awareness, and to advocate solutions.

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- An awareness campaign supported by WWF to highlight the crucial role played by nature through its free ecological services provided for humankind was also launched during the course of the event.

About Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change:

- Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Minister of Information and Broadcasting and Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises- Prakash Javadekar
- Constituency: Maharashtra

CURRENT AFFAIRS: INTERNATIONAL

Australian researchers achieve world's fastest Internet speeds



- Researchers from Monash, Swinburne, and RMIT universities of **Australia** have successfully tested and recorded the **world's fastest internet data speed**. The researchers achieved this from a single optical chip – capable of downloading 1000 high definition movies in a split second, as per the Swinburne Institute's official release.
- The breakthrough finding can help Australia to bolster its telecommunications capacity for the next 25 years. This can also be rolled out across the world.
- This technology has the capacity to support the **high-speed internet connections** of 1.8 million households in Melbourne. This can also address the problem of virtual jams across the world during peak periods.
- Researchers achieved these quick speeds using existing communications infrastructure where they were able to efficiently load-test the network.
- They used a new device called **micro-comb** that replaces 80 lasers, which is smaller and lighter than existing telecommunications hardware. It was planted into and load-tested using existing infrastructure, which mirrors that used by the NBN.
- It is the first time any micro-comb has been used in a field trial and possesses the highest amount of data produced from a single optical chip.

About Australia:

- Capital: Canberra
- Currency: Australian dollar
- Prime Minister: Scott Morrison

U.S. to pull out of Open Skies treaty



- The **United States** stated it would withdraw from the **35-nation Open Skies treaty** allowing unarmed surveillance flights over member countries, the Trump administration's latest move to pull the country out of a major global treaty.
- The administration stated Russia had repeatedly violated the pact's terms. Senior officials stated the pullout would formally take place in six months, but President Donald Trump held out the possibility that Russia could come into compliance.
- His decision deepens doubts about whether Washington will seek to extend the 2010 New START accord, which imposes the last remaining limits on U.S. and Russian deployments of strategic nuclear arms to no more than 1,550 each. It expires in February.
- Mr. Trump's arms control negotiator mounted a full-blown defense of the administration's arms control policies, focusing on the president's proposal that China join the United States and Russia on a replacement for New START.
- The Open Skies treaty, proposed by U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower in 1955, was signed in 1992 and took effect in 2002. The idea is to let member nations make surveillance flights over each other's countries to build trust.
- The officials cited a years-long effort by Russia to violate the terms, such as by restricting U.S. overflights of Russia's neighbour Georgia and the Russian military enclave in Kaliningrad on the Baltic coast.
- In addition, they stated Russia had been using its own overflights of American and European territory to identify critical U.S. infrastructure for potential attack in time of war.

About USA:

- Capital: Washington, D.C.
- President: Donald Trump
- Currency :United States Dollar

CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATES

Madhya Pradesh CM to inaugurate 'Everybody will get employment' scheme through video conferencing



- In **Madhya Pradesh**, **Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** will inaugurate the '**Everybody will get employment' scheme** through video conferencing. Under this scheme, **MNREGA job cards** will be distributed to the labourers.
- The Chief Minister will also hold a discussion with the heads of village administrative committees through video conferencing.
- Additional Chief Secretary Panchayat and Rural Development Manoj Shrivastava informed that the state government is committed to provide employment to migrant labourers and those labourers who have gone out of the state in search of employment, in their village and gram Panchayat area itself.
- For this, a large number of employment oriented activities have been started under MNREGA scheme. New labourers will be engaged in these activities.

About Madhya Pradesh :

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- Capital: Bhopal
- Chief minister: Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- Governor: Lalji Tandon

Madhya Pradesh CM inaugurates 'Shram Siddhi Abhiyan' to provide jobs to labourers



- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan interacted with labourers and Sarpanchs of different districts via video conference after inaugurating '**Shram Siddhi Abhiyan**' under which jobs will be provided to labourers.
- Under 'Shram Siddhi Abhiyan', labourers will be registered under **skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled categories** and work will be provided to them accordingly, Shivraj Singh Chouhan stated.
- He requested Sarpanchs to remain alert regarding the COVID-19 situation and spread awareness about it in villages.

Recent news about Madhya Pradesh :

- MP, the First State to launch innovative Scheme “FIR Aapke Dwar Yojana”
- Chief Minister COVID-19 Yoddha Kalyan Yojana: 1 lakh Anganwadi workers benefitted
- The city of Indore of Madhya Pradesh has become the first city in the country to deploy drones to sanitize city areas against the coronavirus outbreak by sprinkling chemicals.
- The 3 day Namaste Orchha Festival commenced in Madhya Pradesh to showcase the regions’ historical buildings, architecture, culture and heritage. Namaste Orchha Festival is a 3 day festival conducted in Orchha in Madhya Pradesh.
- As per the recent notification issued by the Ministry of Environment, the National Chambal Sanctuary was declared as eco-sensitive zone (ESZ).

CURRENT AFFAIRS: MOU

ONGC, NTPC sign MOU to set up joint venture for renewable energy business



- India's top oil and gas producer **ONGC** and country's biggest electricity generator **NTPC** have signed a preliminary agreement to set up a joint venture company for **renewable energy projects**.
- The MoU will enable both companies to achieve their respective targets in renewable energy business.
- NTPC and ONGC will explore and set up renewable power assets including offshore wind, in India and overseas, and explore opportunities in the fields of sustainability, storage, e-mobility and ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) compliant projects.
- **ONGC's Energy Strategy 2040** document calls for the company to invest in renewable energy sources with a target to create **5-10 gigawatts** portfolio with a focus on offshore wind power.

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- ONGC has a renewable portfolio of 176 MW comprising of 153 MW wind power and 23 MW of solar plants.
- NTPC, with a 920 MW of installed renewable power capacity in its portfolio with about 2,300 MW of renewable energy projects under construction and aspiring to reach **32 GW by 2032**, will benefit from this tie up by expanding its footprint in offshore wind and overseas renewable energy projects as well.

About ONGC

- Chairman & Managing Director – Sashi Shanker
- Headquarters – New Delhi

About NTPC

- Chairman & Managing Director – Gurdeep Singh
- Founded- 1975
- Headquarters- New Delhi, India

CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION

Assam's Jahnabi Phookan appointed FICCI FLO National President



- Assam-based entrepreneur **Jahnabi Phookan** has been appointed as the **National President of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)**, the women wing of the leading industry chamber of the country.
- Phookan took over from **outgoing National President Harjinder Kaur Talwar** at the 36th FLO Annual Session in presence of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.
- FICCI FLO represents over 8,000 women entrepreneurs and professionals across 17 chapters nationally and works towards promoting economic empowerment and equal opportunities for women.
- She has worked for the cause of women weavers of Assam and runs her own signature line as Tribal Heritage and Lahe Looms since 2014.
- She is also a member of the National Board of Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) under the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development since 2012 and was the Founder Vice Chairperson of FLO North East chapter in 2007.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan assumes Chair of the WHO's Executive Board



- **Dr Harsh Vardhan**, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, India, assumed the Chair of the **World Health Organization's Executive Board**.
- WHO's Executive Board comprises of 34 members elected for three-year terms. The Chair of the Executive Board is elected by its members on being nominated by the Regional Committees of the six WHO Regions, by rotation.

- At the 72nd Regional Committee Session of WHO South-East Asia in September 2019, member states had nominated India to be a member of the WHO Executive Board from the region. India was to replace Sri Lanka whose term expired in May 2020 and also to lead 147th and 148th Sessions of the Executive Board as Chairperson.
- The other countries from the WHO South-East Asia Region in the Executive Board are Bangladesh (2019-2022) and Indonesia (2018-2021).
- The main functions of the Board are to implement the decisions and policies of the Health Assembly and advise and facilitate its work.
- The annual Board meeting is held in January when the members agree upon the agenda for the World Health Assembly and the resolutions to be considered by the health assembly. A second shorter meeting takes place in May, as a follow-up to the health assembly.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan, who took over from Dr Hiroki Nakatani of Japan, would chair the 148th session of the Executive Board in January 2021. At the Executive Board meeting in May 2021, he will hand over to the next Chair from another WHO Region. However, he will continue to be a member of the Executive Board until 2023.

About WHO:

- Director-General: Tedros Adhanom
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland
- Founded: 7 April 1948

CURRENT AFFAIRS: MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

CCI approves 100% acquisition of Emami Cement by NVCL



- The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved acquisition of **100%** of the total issued and paid up share capital of **Emami Cement Limited (ECL)**, on a fully diluted basis, by **Nuvoco Vistas Corporation Limited (NVCL)**.
- The **Emami group and Nuvoco** had signed a deal to open the **account with Kotak Bank**.
- Emami had entered into a binding agreement on 6 February with Nuvoco Vistas for the divestment of its 100% equity stake in Emami Cement Ltd for an enterprise value of **Rs.5,500 crore**. At the time of announcing the sale of the cement business, Emami had mentioned that the transaction was expected to be completed in three-four months.
- This is **Nirma's second cement acquisition** in east India. **In 2016, Nirma acquired Lafarge India's cement assets** at an enterprise value of **\$1.4 billion**. Lafarge India operated three cement plants and two grinding stations with a total capacity of around 11mtpa.
- The combined operations will span three facilities in Chhattisgarh, two each in Rajasthan and West Bengal and one each in Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Haryana.

About NVCL

- NVCL is a Nirma promoter group company and currently operates cement manufacturing units in the states of (i) Chhattisgarh, (ii) Jharkhand, (iii) West Bengal, (iv) Rajasthan and (v) Haryana.
- **Chairman**– K. K. Patel

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About ECL

- ECL is a part of the Emami group and owns and operates cement manufacturing units in the states of (i) West Bengal, (ii) Chhattisgarh, (iii) Bihar and (iv) Odisha.
- **Founder & Executive Chairman**– R S Agarwal

KKR to buy 2.32% Jio Platforms stake for Rs.11,367 crore



- Private equity giant **KKR** will buy **2.32% stake** in **Jio Platforms** for **Rs11,367 crore**.
- The latest transaction gives Jio Platforms an equity valuation of **Rs4.91 trillion** and an enterprise value of **Rs5.16 trillion**.
- This is the **fifth stake sale deal** that RIL has announced in its subsidiary, all combining to give India's largest private sector conglomerate **Rs78,562 crore** against **17.12% stake** of **five foreign investors**.
- The last transaction was private equity **General Atlantic** bought **1.34%** in **Jio** for **Rs.6,598 crore**.
- The **first and the largest stake** sale out of the five was that of **9.99% to Facebook** for **Rs43,573.62 crore**.
- US private equity firm **Silver Lake** said it will invest **Rs 5,655.75 crore** (\$747 million) in **Jio Platforms** for a **1.15% stake**.
- Private equity firm **Vista Equity Partners** will invest **Rs11,367 crore** in **Jio Platforms** for a **2.32%** stake.

About RIL

- HQ– Mumbai, Maharashtra
- Chairman & MD– Mukesh D. Ambani

About KKR

- Headquarters- New York, United States.
- CEO- George R. Roberts

IRDAI allows Union Bank of India to continue 30% holding in IndiaFirst Life Insurance



- **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has allowed **Union Bank of India's** proposal to continue with its **30 percent holding** in **IndiaFirst Life Insurance** with the condition that the lender will hold no control in the management of the insurer.
- Earlier, the bank was expected to divest either the entire stake in IndiaFirst Life Insurance, or a considerable part of it, as IRDAI guidelines restrict a lender to own more than **10 percent stake in two insurance companies**.
- The state-owned lender also holds **25.1 percent** stake in **Star Union Dai-Chi Life** and it received a promoter stake in IndiaFirst Life Insurance in April previously held by Andhra Bank following its 'mega' merger on April 1 with Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank.

About UBI

- Headquarters- Mumbai

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- CEO- Rajkiran Rai G.
- Tagline- Good people to bank with

About IndiaFirst Life Insurance

- Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra
- MD & CEO– RM Vishakha

CURRENT AFFAIRS: AWARDS AND HONOURS

HSL India Wins ET Iconic Brand for Year 2019-20



- **Hahnemann Scientific Laboratory (India) Pvt Ltd**, popularly known as **HSL (India)** wins **Economic Times Iconic Brand for the year 2019-20**.
- As a yearly ritual, Economic Times brings together the most iconic brands that have gained traction not just in India but also globally for their track record of excellence, in the process carving out a distinct identity that resonated with audiences. ET Iconic Brands, started in 2017 as an endeavour to recognize successful brands of Indian origin.
- HSL (India), is a GMP certified company and was established in 1962 by Dr K B Rastogi with an aim of promoting homeopathy among masses and providing benefits of this proven science to the mankind.
- With the increase in health awareness and fitness among the masses a sturdy drift from allopathy is being observed and this can provide a golden opportunity for homeopathy to expand. HSL (India), with their sustainable and effective medication can surely capitalise on the opportunity and emerge as one of the strongest and most popular Indian homeopathic brands in the coming years.

About HSL:

- Located: Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
- Head :Dr K B Rastogi

Tennis star Naomi Osaka becomes world's highest paid female athlete



- **Japanese** tennis star **Naomi Osaka** has become the **highest paid female athlete** in the world, topping **American great Serena Williams**.
- Osaka earned \$37.4 million in the last 12 months from prize money and endorsements, \$1.4 million more than Williams, setting an all-time earnings record for a female athlete in a single year. Maria Sharapova previously held the record with \$29.7 million in 2015, news agency IANS reported.
- Since Forbes began tracking women athletes' income in 1990, tennis players have topped the annual list every year.

- Osaka, a two-time Grand Slam champion, ranks No. 29 on the 2020 Forbes list of the world's 100 top-paid athletes while Williams is No. 33.
- The complete Forbes list, due to be released next week, has not featured two women since 2016, the magazine says.
- The ascension puts an end to a decisive winning streak for Williams, who has been the world's highest-paid female athlete each of the past four years, with annual pre-tax income ranging from \$18 million to \$29 million.
- The 23-time Grand Slam champion has collected almost \$300 million during her career from endorsers that have swarmed the 38-year-old star.
- Osaka, the winner of 2018 US Open and 2019 Australian Open, has secured lucrative deals with global brands like Procter & Gamble, All Nippon Airways and Nissin.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Researchers at IIT-M develop solar parabolic trough collector



- A **new trough collector** equipped with enhanced energy to serve industries has been developed by **Indian Institute of Madras (IIT-M)**.
- The '**Parabolic Trough Collector**' is a lightweight and low-cost system with high energy efficiency and can operate under the country's varied climatic conditions.
- It can pave way for sustainable energy solutions in agriculture and industrial process heat sectors.
- The '**Trough Collector**' focuses sunlight on a small area where it is absorbed and then utilised for heating and subsequently into energy generation.
- The system can help manufacturers in solar energy devices with higher efficiency
- The concept also follows the Centre's National Solar Mission which has set a target of providing 20,000 MW solar power by 2022.
- **IIT-M professor K Srinivas Reddy** said solar energy is a most propitious technology for clinching sustainability in the energy domain.
- States like Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat have great potential to harness this energy.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: RANKING

After China, India is now the second largest producer of PPE coveralls during the COVID-19 pandemic





- **India** has become the **world's second-largest manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE)** body coveralls within a short time span of two months.
- **China** is the **world's leading producer** of PPE body coveralls, crucial to safeguard against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The ministry has taken steps to ensure that only certified players across the entire supply chain are allowed to supply body coveralls to governments.

About Textiles Committee

- The Textiles Committee is a statutory body established in 1963 through an Act of Parliament and is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
- The committee is tasked with the functions of establishing laboratories for the testing of textiles and textile machinery and providing for their inspection and examination, besides other functions which flow from the main objective of ensuring the quality of textiles products and textiles machinery.
- **Ajit Chavan**, Secretary, Textiles Committee.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: SPORTS

US tennis star Jamie Hampton announces retirement



- Former World Top 25 and **US tennis star Jamie Hampton** has announced her retirement from professional tennis.
- The 30-year-old last played an official match six years ago, as she suffered numerous injuries after reaching a career-high ranking of World No.24 in July of 2013.
- The talented right-hander from Alabama began the 2014 season with a run to the semifinals of the ASB Classic in Auckland, New Zealand, but was unable to play against Venus Williams due to a hip injury.
- After that, Hampton underwent six surgeries over the next 18 months, which included two on her right hip. Hampton also reached one WTA doubles final, alongside Anna Tatishvili at the Bell Challenge in Quebec City in 2011, where they finished as runners-up to Abigail Spears and Raquel Atawo.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: OBITUARY

Renowned vocalist Shyamala G Bhave passes away



- Renowned vocalist **Shyamala G Bhave**, who had an equal command over Hindustani and Carnatic musi, has passed away.



- She was bestowed with the title of **Ubhaya Gaana Vidushi** (expert in both styles) by Sir M Visvesvaraya, the 19th Diwan of Mysore.

DAILY CA 22nd MAY

- International Tea Day- 21st may
- World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development – 21st may
- International Day for Biological Diversity- 22nd may
- Centre launches scheme to solarise entire **Konark Temple**, Konark town
- Centre clears OIL plans for drilling in Assam's **Dibru Saikhowa Park**
- Govt extends '**Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana**' by 3 years till March 2023
- Rural Livelihood Mission begins **Didi Vehicle Service** for safe delivery of rural women in Madhya Pradesh
- AP to help revive MSMEs with Rs.1,110-cr '**ReSTART**' package
- **Franklin Templeton** appoints **Kotak Mahindra Bank** to assist in monetising assets of 6 wind-up schemes
- RBI cuts repo rate by **40 bps** to 4 pct
- Economy likely to contract by **5%** in FY21: ICRA
- RBI extends moratorium for 3 more months
- RBI extends **Rs.15,000 crore credit line** for EXIM Banks
- **Edelweiss Mutual Fund** to launch second tranche of Bharat Bond ETF
- **Airtel** acquires 10 per cent stake in AI startup Voicezen
- **Baba Ramdev** Led Patanjali To Launch E-Commerce Platform '**OrderMe**' To Supply Swadeshi Goods
- World Bank names **Carmen Reinhart** as chief economist and vice president
- India's new Permanent Representative to UN presents credentials virtually
- **IIT Guwahati** discovers new ways to prevent memory loss due to Alzheimer

DAILY CA 23rd MAY

- **World Turtle Day** – 23rd may
- Prakash Javadekar launches **NBA-UNDP** India's Biodiversity **Samrakshan** Internship Programme
- **Australian** researchers achieve world's fastest Internet speeds
- U.S. to pull out of **Open Skies** treaty

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- Madhya Pradesh CM inaugurates '**Shram Siddhi Abhiyan**' to provide jobs to labourers
- **ONGC, NTPC** sign MOU to set up joint venture for renewable energy business
- Assam's **Jahnabi Phookan** appointed FICCI FLO National President
- Union Health Minister **Harsh Vardhan** assumes Chair of the **WHO's Executive Board**
- CCI approves 100% acquisition of **Emami Cement** by NVCL
- **KKR** to buy 2.32% Jio Platforms stake for Rs.11,367 crore
- **IRDAI** allows **Union Bank of India** to continue 30% holding in IndiaFirst Life Insurance
- **HSL India** Wins **ET Iconic Brand** for Year 2019-20
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- Researchers at **IIT-M** develop solar parabolic trough collector
- After China, India is now the **second largest producer of PPE** coveralls during the COVID-19 pandemic
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- Renowned vocalist **Shyamala G Bhawe** passes away