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# Big NEWS

(Compilation of Analytical Discussion of Daily News Articles on  
YouTube)

*for*

*the **3rd Week** of*

# July 2020

*(13th July - 18th July)*

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## 1. Information Asymmetry

**Nepotism**

**Mental Health**

**Change in CBSE Syllabus**

**Religion vs Corona**

**Trade**

**Judiciary**

**Police Reforms**

**University Rankings**

**Social Issues**

**Disaster Management**

**Try To Answer an Ethics Question**

- There is a disaster prone state having frequent landslides, forest fires, cloudbursts, flash floods and earthquakes, etc. Some of these are seasonal and often unpredictable. The magnitude of the disaster is always unanticipated. During one of the seasons a cloudburst caused a devastating floods and landslides leading to high casualties. There was major damage to infrastructure like roads, bridges and power generating units. This led to more than 100000 pilgrims, tourist and other locals trapped across different routes and locations. The people trapped in your area of responsibility includes senior citizens, patients in hospitals, women and children, hiker, tourist, ruling parties, regional presidents along with his family, additional chief secretary of the neighboring state and prisoners in jail.
- As a civil services officer of the state, what would be the order in which you would rescue these people and why? Give Justifications (20 Marks) (200 Words)

## 2. Rewa Solar Power Plant – Largest in Asia?

**Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power Project**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday inaugurated “Asia’s largest solar power plant” in Madhya Pradesh’s Rewa district
- The 750MW ultra mega solar power plant is spread over 1,590 acres of land.
- The project comprises three solar generating units of 250 MW each located on a 500-hectare plot of land inside a solar park with a total area of 1500 hectare.
- The Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power Project is one of the largest single-site solar power plants in India and the world.

**Largest Solar Plant?**

**But is it?**

- While it is one of the largest single-site solar power plants in India, it is not the largest in Asia.



- The distinction of the world's second largest photovoltaic power station goes to the Bhadla Solar Park, with a capacity of 2,245 MW, in Jodhpur district in Rajasthan, and the Pavagada Solar Park in Tumkur district, Karnataka, which has a capacity of 2,050 MW.
- Bhadla Solar Park - 2,250MW: The Bhadla Solar Park is located in Bhadla village, in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district, is claimed to be the largest solar power plant in the world. It has an area of 14,000 acres and has been installed with a capacity of nearly 2,250 megawatts (MW). It is fully operational.
- Shakti Sthala solar power project - 2,050 MW: The Pavagada park was developed by the Karnataka Solar Park Development Corporation Limited (KSPDCL), a joint venture between the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and the Karnataka Renewable Energy (KREDL).
- According to data from Bloomberg New Energy Finance, there are nine solar plants that are bigger than the one at Rewa.

### **Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL)**

- The solar park is developed by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL), a joint venture company of Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (MPUVN) and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a central public sector undertaking.
- Mahindra Renewables Private Ltd, ACME Jaipur Solar Power Private Ltd and Arinsun Clean Energy Private Ltd were selected by RUMSL through a reverse auction for developing the three solar generating units.
- The process of reverse auction in bidding for projects was tried for first time in India for this project.
- This is the first solar project in India where different categories of customers have contracted to buy power – Madhya Pradesh Power Management Company Limited (which will get 76 per cent of the power from the plant) and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC being an open access consumer).

### **Reverse Auction**

- A reverse auction mechanism is an auction approach to procurement, wherein sellers which meet certain minimum criteria are eligible to submit non-negotiable price bids.
- The buyer (typically a utility) then selects winning sellers based on the lowest priced bids.
- An auction is held to such that developers of system-side renewable distributed generation projects bid the lowest prices they would be willing to accept to develop renewable energy projects.
- It has been used to let the competitive market determine the price paid for renewables.
- Developers are paid a price that is sufficient to bring projects online, but also provide ratepayer protection against “overpayment”.

### **Finance**

- The total cost of the project is expected to be around Rs 4000 crore.
- A central financial assistance of Rs 138 crore has been provided to RUMSL for the development of the park.
- International Finance Corporation, a World Bank group company, has invested close to \$440 million or Rs 2,800 crore in the project and Power Grid Corporation of India has developed the 220/400 KV

inter-state transmission system under green corridor to facilitate evacuation of power from the project site to consumers.

- It is also the first project to get funding from The World Bank and Clean Technology Fund in India.

## Environment

- The 750-MW solar plant is quite large in terms of scale, and is expected to reduce the country's emission drastically, by an amount equivalent to 15 lakh tonne of carbon dioxide annually.
- It also exemplifies India's commitment to attaining the target of 175GW of installed renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, including 100GW of solar installed capacity, the government has said.
- India has set itself a target of 175 gigawatt (GW) RE capacity by 2022, mainly in the form of 100 GW solar and 60 GW wind, by December 31, 2022.
- 175 GW interim target is 100 GW of solar, 60 GW of wind, 10 GW of bio-mass and 5 GW of small hydro.

## Significance

- The Rewa project is being acknowledged for its robust structuring and innovations.
- Its payment security mechanism is expected to reduce risks to power developers and has been recommended as a model to other states by the Renewable Energy Ministry.
- The payment security mechanism mandates that distribution companies would offer a letter of credit to generating firms as an assurance of payments for the supply of power.
- The Rewa Solar Project is first solar project in the country to break the grid parity barrier.
- Grid parity occurs when an alternative energy source can generate power at a cost of electricity that is less than or equal to the price of power from the electricity grid.
- "The idea behind 'One World, One Sun, One Grid' is to fulfill the energy needs of many smaller nations on the planet", the PM said while inaugurating it.
- The PM gave this mantra at the 2nd Global RE-Invest meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association and the first assembly of the International Solar Alliance.

## Future

- Odisha is aiming at increasing its solar capacity to 1500MW in a couple of years.
- Punjab is hoping that the PM-KUSUM, a 10GW grid scheme to solarise agriculture pumps will help cut its massive expenditure on subsidised electricity to farmers.
- Indian Railways is installing solar power plants in vacant land, with an aim to make the state-run rail network 'net zero' carbon emission by 2030. The projects include those in Raebareilly (UP), Bina (MP), Bhilai (Chhattisgarh) and Diwana (Haryana).
- Power from the Bina installation is expected to be operational by next week.

## The China Factor

- A vast majority of the photo-voltaic (PV) 'solar panels', not to mention other infrastructure equipment, are dependent on China.
- Last year, India's power sector imported Rs 70,000 crore worth of gear from abroad, a good chunk of it from China.
- In the wake of the Galwan clash, for imported solar panel from China, duty on solar cells will be 15 per cent now and up to 40 per cent next year (Although there is a proposal to exempt firms which have power purchase agreements with procuring states)
- Stricter quality specifications and limiting govt funding for projects using Chinese equipments are also on the anvil.
- According to a power ministry report, all but five or so critical items used for generating, transmitting and distributing power is available locally. Yet, they are generally imported from China since it tends to be cheaper.
- Indian solar companies are highly dependent on China in terms of importing components as over 80 per cent of solar cells and modules are imported from the country because of its competitive pricing compared to domestic manufactures.
- The proficient but not pre-eminent alternative could be exploiting the industry in Vietnam and Taiwan.
- China has worked aggressively on ramping up not just renewable energy generation, but production and manufacturing as well and is currently the world's largest exporter and installer of solar panels.
- To scale up local manufacturing, we need to put in place a long-term policy, coupled with infrastructure and the right incentives to support the same. Investment into R&D is imperative.
- India needs to think about complete vertical integration if we want to attempt self-sufficiency in solar equipment manufacturing.

## 3. Padmanabhsawamy Temple and the Supreme Court verdict

### Why in News?

- The Supreme Court on July 13th 2020 upheld the right of the Travancore royal family to manage the property of deity at Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram.
- The court said that, as per customary law, the shebait rights (right to manage the financial affairs of the deity) survive with the members of the family even after the death of the last ruler.

### All about the Padmanabhaswamy Temple

- The Padmanabhaswamy temple is a Hindu temple located in Thiruvananthapuram, the state capital of Kerala, India.
- The name of the city of Thiruvananthapuram in Malayalam translates to "The City of Lord Ananta", referring to the deity of the Padmanabhaswamy temple.
- The temple is built in an intricate fusion of the Chera style and the Dravidian style of architecture, featuring high walls, and a 16th century gopura.

- The principal deity Padmanabhaswamy (Vishnu) is enshrined in the "Anantha Shayana" posture, the eternal yogic sleep on the serpent Adi Shesha.
- The Lord's right hand is placed over a Shiva lingam. Sridevi-Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity and Bhudevi the Goddess of Earth, two consorts of Vishnu are by his side.
- The Temple has been referred to in the (only recorded) Sangam period of literature between 500 BCE and 300 CE several times.
- The temple is one of the 108 principal Divya Desams ("Holy Abodes") in Vaishnavism, and is glorified in the Divya Prabandha.
- The ancient late-Tamil-Sangam epic Silappatikaram, speaks of the then Chera King Cenkuttuvan receiving gifts of gold and precious stones from a certain 'Golden Temple' which is believed to be the Padmanabhaswamy Temple.
- The foundation of the present gopuram was laid in 1566. The temple has a 100-foot (30 m), 7-tier gopuram made in the Pandyan style. The temple stands by the side of a tank, named Padma Theertham (meaning the lotus spring).
- Padmanabhaswamy is the tutelary deity of the royal family of Travancore.
- The Padmanabhaswamy Temple and its property were controlled by the Ettara Yogam (King and Council of Eight) with the assistance of Ettuveetil Pillamar ("Lords of the Eight Houses"). It is believed that eight members of Ettara Yogam (seven Potties and the Maharaja of Travancore) received their rights from Lord Parashurama himself.

### What is the case about?

- The central legal question was whether Utradam Thirunal Marthanda Varma, the younger brother of Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma, the last Ruler of Travancore, could claim to be the "Ruler of Travancore" after the death of the ruler in 1991.
- The court examined this claim within the limited meaning of that term according to the Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950 to claim ownership, control and management of the ancient Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple.
- All the temples which were under the control and management of the erstwhile Princely States of Travancore and Cochin were under the control of the Travancore and Cochin Devaswom Boards before 1947.
- However, as per the Instrument of Accession signed between the princely states and the Government of India, since 1949, the administration of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple was "vested in trust" in the Ruler of Travancore. The state of Kerala was carved out in 1956 but the temple continued to be managed by the erstwhile royals.
- In 1971, privy purses to the former royals were abolished through 26th constitutional amendment stripping their entitlements and privileges. The move was upheld in court in 1993 and the last ruler of Travancore who died during the pendency of this case continued to manage the affairs of the temple till then.
- In 1991, when the last ruler's brother took over the temple management, it created a furore among devotees who moved the courts leading to a long-drawn legal battle. The government joined in;

supporting the claims of the petitioner that Marthanda Varma had no legal right to claim the control or management of the temple.

## Kerala High Court 2011 case

- A consequence of who has administrative rights over the temple is whether the vaults of the temple will be opened.
- In 2007, Marthanda Varma claimed that the treasures of the temple were the family property of the royals. Several suits were filed objecting to this claim and a lower court in Kerala passed an injunction against the opening of the vaults.
- The Kerala High Court in the 2011 ruling passed an order that a board be constituted to manage the affairs of the temple, ruling against the royal family. The appeal against this verdict was filed by the royal family immediately and the SC had stayed the HC verdict.
- By appointing two amicus curiae- senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam and former Comptroller and Auditor General of India Vinod Rai to prepare an inventory of items in the vaults. While five vaults were opened of the six, vault B (Kallara B) was not opened.
- The royal family had claimed that a mythical curse is associated with the opening of vault B. Amicus Curie Report by Justice Gopal Subramaniam, in April 2014, has reportedly found two more further subterranean vaults that have been named G and H.
- The Padmanabhaswamy Temple is the wealthiest place of worship in the world. It is conservatively estimated that the value of the monumental items is close to ₹1.2 lakh crore or ₹1.2 trillion (US\$17 billion). If the antique and cultural value were taken into account these assets could be worth ten times the current market price.
- The valuables are believed to have been accumulated in the temple over several thousand years, having been donated to the Deity (and subsequently stored there), by various Dynasties like the Cheras, the Pandyas, the Travancore Royal Family, the Kolathiris, the Pallavas, the Cholas and many other Kings in the recorded history of both South India and beyond, and from the rulers and traders of Mesopotamia, Jerusalem, Greece, Rome, and later, the various colonial powers from Europe, and other countries as well.
- Since 2011, the process of opening the vaults has led to the discovery of treasures within the Padmanabhaswamy temple, prompting a debate on who owns temple property and how it should be regulated.
- Despite being a secular country that separates religion from the affairs of the state, Hindu temples, its assets are governed through statutory laws and boards heavily controlled by state governments. This system came into being mainly through the development of a legal framework to outlaw untouchability by treating temples as public land; it has resulted in many legal battles.
- In its order, the Kerala high court had concluded that after the definition of 'Ruler' in Article 366 (22) of the Constitution of India was amended by the Constitution (Twenty Sixth Amendment) Act, 1971 – by which privy purses were abolished – the successor to the erstwhile royals could not claim to be in control of the Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple.
- The HC had directed the state government to take steps to set up a body or trust to take control of the temple, its assets and management and to run the temple in accordance with the traditions.

## Supreme Court Verdict

- On July 13, the Supreme Court reversed the 2011 Kerala High Court judgement after they upheld the rights of the former royal family to run the administration of the famous Padmanabhaswamy Temple in Kerala.
- There were arguments regarding on whether the 26th Constitutional Amendment, which banished rulers and privy purses, would nudge the temple and properties into the hands of the State.
- By carefully examining the Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950, the Supreme Court decided to allow the Travancore royal family to claim ownership and manage the ancient Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple.
- The Supreme Court held that the definition of Ruler would apply for the purpose of shebait rights and would devolve to the successor. Justice Lalit held, “Shebaitship was always in the royal family and the Ruler represented the unbroken line of shebait,” the judgment said. Shebaitship does not lapse in favour of the State by principle of escheat (reversion of property to the State).
- The court defined ‘shebait’ as the “custodian of the idol, its earthly spokesman, its authorised representative entitled to deal with all its temporal affairs and to manage its property”. The court traced how the shebaitship descended from King Marthanda Varma, who rebuilt the temple and installed a new idol after a fire destroyed the temple in 1686.
- Along with the controlling rights, the Supreme Court also passed the ball in the court of the royal family to decide whether the mysterious vault be open or not.
- However, the royal family had argued against the opening of the secret vault or “kallara B” as they claim it would bring misfortune to the entire state.
- Accepting the royals’ submission that the temple is a “public temple”, the court issued a slew of directions for its transparent administration in the future.
- It directed the setting up of an administrative committee with the Thiruvananthapuram District Judge as its chairperson. The other members would be a nominee of the trustee (royal family), the chief thanthri of the temple, a nominee of the State and a member nominated by the Union Ministry of Culture. This committee would take care of the daily administration of the temple.
- It also ordered a second committee to be constituted to advise the administrative committee on policy matters. This would be chaired by a retired High Court judge nominated by the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court. Both committees should start functioning within the next two months and an executive officer should be appointed without delay.
- The primary duties of the committees would be to preserve the treasures and properties. They would take a call on whether to open Kallara B, considered to be the richest among the temple vaults, for inventorisation.

## 4. Reliance Net- Debt Free

- What does it mean

### Why Discussing This Today

- Reliance recently declared itself net debt free.

## That means now Reliance has NO Debt?

- It does not mean that.
- Net debt refers to the amount of debt on the balance sheet after accounting for cash.

## What does it mean in Simple Words

- Net debt tells us whether a business has the money to pay off all its debt, if it becomes due immediately.
- Net debt is borrowings minus cash.
- Debt includes both short-term and long-term borrowings.
- Cash also includes marketable investments that can be converted to cash in quick time.
- When a business says it is net debt-free, that does not mean it has repaid all its borrowings.
- The debt is there but the business has cash equal to debt.
- So, net debt-free is not the same as zero debt.

## How it became Net Debt Free

The fund-raising included:

- Country's largest rights issue
- A series of secondary stake sales in Jio Platforms (to various foreign tech giants like Facebook, Intel, Qualcomm, Google)
- Investment by Private Equity firms
- Investment by sovereign wealth funds such as KKR, TPG and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund.
- Plans of investment by Saudi Arabian energy giant Aramco.

## 5. Trade Surplus after 20 years

### Why Discussing This Today

- For the first time since 2002, India's merchandise trade balance turned to a surplus of \$0.8 billion in June.

### What Caused the Surplus?

- Imports continued to decline at a faster pace
- Exports began to pick up.

### Why Exports are Picking Up

- Impact and the size of stimulus packages
- Faster reopening of global economies

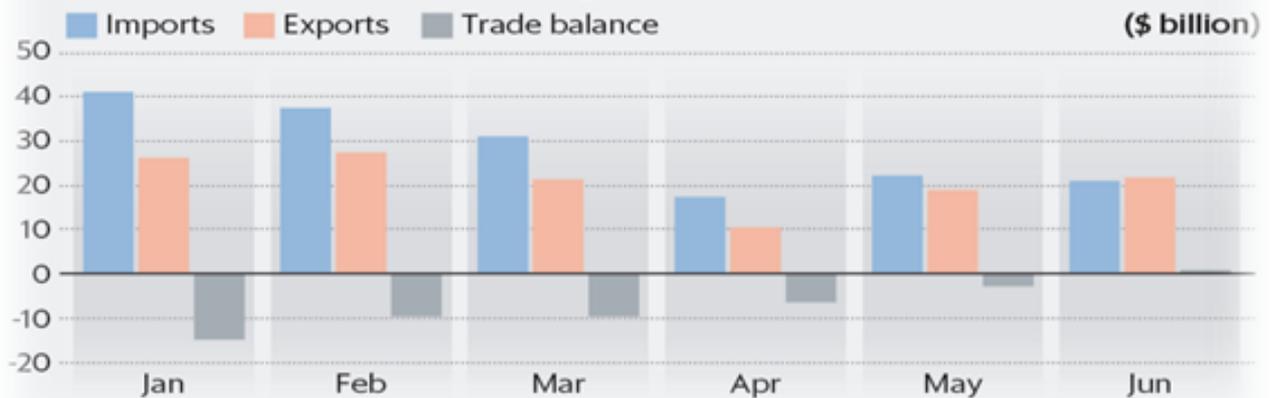
### Why Imports are Not Picking Up

- They are an indicator of poor domestic demand.

- With low oil consumption and low oil prices
- Regional lockdowns in some Indian states
- Uncertain employment scenario

## A temporary surplus?

India's trade balance turned surplus in June, as imports remained in deep contraction and exports gathered steam.

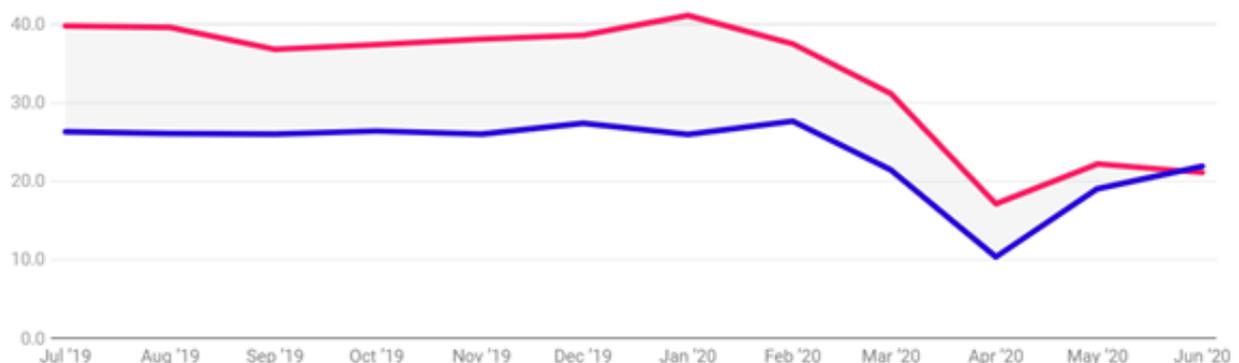


Source: Ministry of commerce, Edelweiss Research

## India Records A Trade Surplus In June 2020

In \$ Billion

Exports Imports



Source: PIB, Ministry of Commerce

Bloomberg | Quint

## Negative net debt (net cash)

Net debt defined (\$M)	
Short term interest bearing debt	5,000
Long term interest bearing debt	0
<b>Gross debt</b>	<b>5,000</b>
Less: cash and cash equivalents	20,000
<b>Net debt</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>
<b>Net cash</b>	<b>15,000</b>

## What all impacts will it have?

- It would provide some support to the depreciating Indian rupee.
- But this is not good for Exports.
- So, we can expect the RBI to intervene to avoid a sharp INR appreciation.

## Some Key Items to Know

### Key Export Items

- Those that Rose:
  - ✓ Iron ore exports
  - ✓ Exports of oil seeds
  - ✓ Organic & inorganic chemicals
- Those that Contracted:
  - ✓ Gems & jewellery
  - ✓ Leather & leather products
  - ✓ Ready made garments

### Key Import Items

Those that Contracted:

- ✓ Gold imports
- ✓ Coal, coke and briquettes
- ✓ Petroleum, crude and by-products
- ✓ Machinery
- ✓ Electronic Goods

## 6. Jio 5G

### Jio's Plan

- Jio claims to provide a complete end-to-end 5G solution prepared by the company itself that is ready for deployment once the networks are in place
- Jio Platforms will be supported by Qualcomm, an American chipmaker company, to rollout advanced 5G infrastructure and services for Indian customers
- Additionally, with Google's partnership, Jio plans to develop affordable smartphones using an optimised Android-based operating system

### What is 5G?

- 5G or fifth generation is the latest upgrade in the long term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks

- The biggest difference between 5G and 4G is the speed
- 5G is expected to be 20 times faster and unlike on a 4G network, a larger array of devices can connect to the internet on a 5G network, like drones, cars and even refrigerators
- 5G will have faster speeds with latency down to between 1-10 milliseconds from 50 milliseconds for 4G
  - ✓ Latency is the time a device takes to communicate with the network
- It uses beam tracking to follow all devices on the network to ensure consistent connection in real-time for the device
- 5G networks are also designed to multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) efficient which improves signal throughput for all devices on the network

### Evolution

- 1G: Allowed only mobile voice calls to be made
- 2G: Allowed mobile voice calls as well as sending of short text messages
- 3G: Allowed web browsing on mobile devices
- 4G: Improved speed and latency of browsing

### Spectrum Bands for 5G

- 5G networks chiefly operate on three spectrum bands
- Low-band spectrum: Great coverage and works fast even in underground conditions, but maximum speed limit is 100 Mbps
- Mid-band spectrum: Speeds are higher but limitations in coverage area and penetration of telephone signals in buildings
- High-band spectrum: Highest speed but extremely limited network coverage area and penetration capabilities. A number of smaller towers are required to ensure adequate coverage and high-speed performance.

### Gap between India and 5G

- Companies, both telecom service providers and their equipment vendors, have completed lab trials of 5G network components but are yet to commence field trials
- Telcos are waiting allocation of test spectrum from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)