

1. **Lockdown extended till May 31st with new relaxations. States given freedom with regard to red and green zone.**
2. **Over 5,000 cases recorded on Sunday.**
- 3.

Fifth tranche under AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN

1. **Public health : Spending decreased, more public health wellness centre. Infectious diseases hospitals and labs to be set up in all districts.**
2. **Public sector : firms in non strategised areas to be privatised. No more than 4 public sectors to remain in strategic area.**
3. **States : Borrowing ceiling increased to ₹ 10.69 lakh crore. Only 25% of this fund is unconditional the rest are linked to reform.**
4. **MGNREGS : Allocation hiked by ₹ 40000 crore to fund 300 crore person days.**
5. **Industry : Insolvency proceeding suspended for a year.**

What is the issue?

Recently, the UN Secretariat held a meeting of what it calls the “6+2+1” group on regional efforts to support peace in Afghanistan.

Though sidelined from regional discussions, India must still pursue the ample chances in the peace process.

What is the “6+2+1” group?

The group includes six neighbouring countries of Afghanistan namely China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The ‘2’ indicates the two global players - the U.S. and Russia, and ‘1’, Afghanistan itself.

India’s absence was evident, given its historical and strategic ties with Afghanistan.

Is this rejection for the first time?

This is not the first time that India is kept out of the discussions concerning Afghanistan.

In December 2001, the Indian team led by special envoy Satinder Lambah arrived in Germany’s Petersberg hotel near Bonn. [It was where the famous Bonn agreement on Afghanistan was negotiated.]

They found no reservations being made for them at the official venue.

In January 2010, India was invited to attend the “London Conference” on Afghanistan.

But India was left out of the room during a crucial meeting that decided on opening talks with the Taliban.

How has India responded?

In both 2001 and 2010, India fought back its exclusion successfully.

At the Bonn agreement, Ambassador Lambah ensured that Northern Alliance leaders came to a consensus to accept Hamid Karzai as the Chairman of the interim arrangement that replaced the Taliban regime.

After the 2010 conference, New Delhi redoubled its efforts with Kabul.

In 2011, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Afghanistan President Karzai signed the historic Strategic Partnership Agreement.

This was Afghanistan’s first such agreement with any country.

What is India’s present stance?

In 2020, the reason given for keeping India out of the discussions was supposedly that it holds no “boundary” with Afghanistan.

But in fact, it is because New Delhi has never announced its support for the U.S.-Taliban peace process.

India’s resistance to publicly talking to the Taliban has made it an awkward interlocutor at these discussions.

India maintains that only an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, and Afghan-controlled process can be allowed.

This is a principled one, but has no takers.

Kabul, or the Ashraf Ghani government, does not lead, own or control the reconciliation process today.

The U.S.-Taliban peace deal only means that the Taliban will become more potent as the U.S. withdraws soldiers from the country.

It will hold more sway in the inter-Afghan process as well, as the U.S. withdraws funding for the government in Kabul.

How has India’s stance affected it?

New Delhi’s decision to find grounds for Ashraf Ghani government has had a two-fold effect:

its voice in the reconciliation process has been limited

it has weakened its position with other leaders of the deeply divided democratic setup in Kabul such as the former chief executive

Abdullah Abdullah

Meanwhile, India's presence inside Afghanistan, painstakingly built up since 2001, is being threatened anew by terror groups. These include the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKAP), believed to be backed by Pakistan's establishment.

The recent brutal attack that killed 25 at a gurdwara in Kabul was meant for the embassy in Kabul.

Intelligence agencies had also warned of suicide car bomb threats to the consulates in Jalalabad and Herat in December 2019.

The government has said that the novel coronavirus pandemic prompted its decision to clear out both consulates in April 2020.

But the truth is that a full security reassessment is under way for them.

Either way, India's diplomatic strength in Afghanistan should not appear to be in retreat just when it is needed the most.

What affects India's goodwill in Afghanistan?

India must consider the damage done to the vast reservoir of goodwill India enjoys in Afghanistan because of recent events here in India.

This especially includes the controversy over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Afghanistan's majority-Muslim citizens, many of whom have treated India as a second home, have felt cut out of the move.

The building blocks of that goodwill are India's assistance in infrastructure projects, health care, education, trade and food security.

The reports of anti-Muslim rhetoric and incidents of violence in India have disturbed India's example as a pluralistic, inclusive democracy that inspired many.

What should India do?

New Delhi must move swiftly to regain the upper hand in the narrative in Afghanistan.

The following should assure India a leading position in Afghanistan's regional formulation:

India's assistance of more than \$3 billion in projects

trade of about \$1 billion

a \$20 billion projected development expenditure of an alternate route through Chabahar

India's support to the Afghan National Army, bureaucrats, doctors and other professionals for training

Three major projects include the Afghan Parliament, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, and the Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam (Salma dam).

These and other hundreds of small development projects have cemented India's position there, regardless of Pakistan's attempts to undermine it.

So, it would be a mistake, at this point, if India's support is only to Kabul or the Ghani government.

The Indian government must strive to ensure that its aid and assistance is broad-based, to centres outside the capital (Kabul) as well.

This should be the case even if some lie in areas held by the Taliban.

India must also pursue opportunities to fulfil its role in the peace efforts in Afghanistan, starting with efforts to bridge the Ghani-Abdullah divide.

An understanding between Iran and the U.S. on Afghanistan is necessary for lasting peace as well, and India could play a mediatory part.

India should also use the UN's call for a pause in conflicts during the novel coronavirus pandemic, to ensure a hold on hostilities with Pakistan.

Above all, New Delhi must consider the appointment of a special envoy, as it has been done in the past, to deal with its efforts in Afghanistan.

Any tropical cyclone that hits the region is known by a name given in the list. Since the earlier list of 2004 is left with only one name – Amphan (shared by Thailand), the IMD being one of the six RSMCs in the world to provide tropical cyclone and storm surge advisories finalised the new list of 169 names.

Why name cyclones?

Naming of tropical cyclones (TCs) helps scientific community, disaster managers, media and general masses to identify each individual cyclone; create awareness of its development; remove confusion in case of simultaneous occurrence of TCs over a region; remember a TC easily and rapidly and effectively disseminate warnings to much wider audience.

How are cyclones named?

Each Tropical Cyclone basin in the world has its own rotating list of names. For cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea, the naming system was agreed by eight member countries of a group called WMO/ESCAP and took effect in 2004.

Facts for prelims:

Cyclones are given many names in different regions of the world – They are known as typhoons in the China Sea and Pacific Ocean; hurricanes in the West Indian islands in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean; tornados in the Guinea lands of West Africa and southern USA.; willy-willies in north-western Australia and tropical cyclones in the Indian Ocean.

Naming a Cyclone

There are five tropical cyclone regional bodies, i.e. ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones, RA-I Tropical Cyclone Committee, RA-IV Hurricane Committee, and RA-V Tropical Cyclone Committee.

In general, tropical cyclones are named according to the rules at a regional level.

The WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones at its twenty-seventh Session held in Muscat, Oman agreed in principal to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

After long deliberations among the member countries, the naming of the tropical cyclones over north Indian Ocean commenced from September 2004.

Eight countries — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Sri Lanka and Thailand participated in the panel and came up with a list of 64 names.

If public wants to suggest the name of a cyclone to be included in the list, the proposed name must meet some fundamental criteria, the RSMC website says.

The name should be short and readily understood when broadcast.

Further, the names must not be culturally sensitive and should not convey any unintended and potentially inflammatory meaning.

These countries submitted eight names each, which are arranged in an 8×8 table.

The first cyclone after the list was adopted was given the name in the first row of the first column — Onil, proposed by Bangladesh.

Subsequent cyclones are being named sequentially, column-wise, with each cyclone given the name immediately below that of the previous cyclone.

Once the bottom of the column is reached, the sequence moves to the top of the next column.

So far, the first seven columns have been exhausted, and Fani (again proposed by Bangladesh) is the top name in the last column.

The next cyclone will be named Vayu. The lists will wind up with Cyclone Amphan, whenever it comes.

When the lists end

After the 64 names are exhausted, the eight countries will propose fresh lists of names.

The lists for storms in the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific basins are, however, rotated.

Exception are, however, made in certain cases — if a storm causes excessive death and destruction, its name is considered for retirement and is not repeated; it is replaced with another name.

Why name cyclones?

It is generally agreed that appending names to cyclones makes it easier for the media to report on these cyclones, heightens interest in warnings, and increases community preparedness.

Names are presumed to be easier to remember than numbers and technical terms.

The practice of naming a storm/ tropical cyclone would help identify each individual tropical cyclone.

The purpose of the move was also to make it easier for people to easily understand and remember the tropical cyclone/ hurricane in a region, thus to facilitate disaster risk awareness, preparedness, management and reduction.

It does not confuse the public when there is more than one tropical cyclone in the same area.

Many agree that appending names to storms makes it easier for the media to report on tropical cyclones, heightens interest in warnings and increases community preparedness.

It's easier and less confusing to say "Cyclone Titli" than remember the storm's number or its longitude and latitude.

NORTHERN INDIAN OCEAN CYCLONE NAMES

Contributors	List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4	List 5	List 6	List 7	List 8
Bangladesh	Onil	Ogni	Nisha	Giri	Helen	Chapala	Ockhi	Fani
India	Agni	Akash	Bijli	Jal	Lehar	Megh	Sagar	Vayu
Maldives	Hibaru	Gonu	Aila	Keila	Madi	Roanu	Mekunu	Hikaa
Myanmar	Pyarr	Yemyin	Phyan	Thane	Nanauk	Kyant	Daye	Kyarr
Oman	Baaz	Sidr	Ward	Murjan	Hudhud	Nada	Luban	Maha
Pakistan	Fanoos	Nargis	Laila	Nilam	Nilofar	Vardah	Titli	Bulbul
Sri Lanka	Mala	Rashmi	Bandu	Viyaru	Ashobaa	Maarutha	Gaja	Pawan
Thailand	Mukda	Khai Muk	Phet	Phailin	Komen	Mora	Phethai	Amphan

