

30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

### **Government gives Moderna emergency use nod, may first come in only as donations**

The national drug regulator granted emergency use authorisation to US biotechnology firm Moderna for its vaccine against the novel coronavirus, paving the way for its Indian partner Cipla to import the first mRNA Covid-19 vaccine into the country for commercial use. This is also the first internationally developed vaccine to be granted a waiver from conducting bridging trials in India.

While the government said details on the quantity of doses to be imported to India by Cipla are still under consideration, the vaccine is initially expected to be provided to India in limited quantities — as donations by the US drug maker.

There are four vaccines with licensure: Covaxin, Covishield, Sputnik, and Moderna. And efforts to invite and to have other internationally developed vaccines, specifically Pfizer and Johnson & Johnson, also continues.

### **Delhi students win Diana Award for work during the pandemic**

Three students from Delhi — Kaif Ali, an undergraduate student of Jamia Millia Islamia; Sana Mittar, an undergraduate from the University of Warwick; and Devanshi Ranjan, a final-year student at Lady Shri Ram College — have won the prestigious Diana Award 2021 for their contribution to society during the Covid pandemic. While Mittar (19) won the award for fundraising activities during the pandemic, Ali got the award for designing a “prefabricated sustainable shelter” to reduce the virus’s transmission. Ranjan, during this period distributed books, stationery and other resource material to underprivileged children, especially girl students, in semi-urban and rural areas of Delhi-NCR.

The Diana Award is established in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and is given out by a charity of the same name, which is supported by her sons, William, the Duke of Cambridge, and Harry, the Duke of Sussex.

### **Jaishankar flags vaccine equity at G-20 meeting**

Stressing that “institutional multilateralism has been found wanting”, External Affairs minister S Jaishankar flagged the issue of “vaccine equity” at the G-20 Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Matera, Italy.

Addressing the meeting, Jaishankar said that international cooperation was key to solving the Covid-19 crisis and the challenges it has posed. This was especially important when it came to impartial access to vaccines.

Jaishankar arrived in Italy from Greece on the second leg of this two-nation tour to attend the G-20 ministerial meetings.

The G-20 summit is scheduled to be held in Italy in October. India is expected to hold the presidency of the G-20 in 2022.

The G-20 is an influential bloc that brings together the world's major economies. The G-20 member countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

### **Atul Keshap is new US Chargé d'Affaires in India**

US diplomat Atul Keshap will be departing for New Delhi to serve as Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim, following the retirement of US ambassador to India Daniel Smith, said an announcement from Washington.

Keshap served previously at the US embassy here and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia. A career member of the US Foreign Service, he has also served as the US ambassador to Sri Lanka and Maldives.

### **Discovery of a new source of gravitational waves: Collisions between Neutron Star and Black Hole**

First confirmed detection of a neutron star-black hole (NS-BH) collision being reported. This ground breaking discovery of gravitational waves from a pair of NS-BH mergers was published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters

Until now, the LIGO-Virgo collaboration (LVC) of gravitational waves detectors has only been able to observe collisions between pairs of black holes or neutron stars. For the first time, in January 2020, the network of detectors made the discovery of gravitational waves from a pair of NS-BH mergers.

### **Sydney McLaughlin of US creates new world record in women's 400-meter hurdles at 51.90 seconds**

Sydney McLaughlin broke the women's 400 metres hurdles world record with a time of 51.90 seconds in the final of the U.S. Olympic athletics trials

The 21-year-old, who booked her spot at the Tokyo Games, seized the lead around the final bend and into the home stretch to power home and beat Rio Olympic champion Dalilah Muhammad's previous mark of 52.16.