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# MANTHAN

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**A General Awareness Weekly**

**28<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 to 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2021**

# PREFACE

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**Dear Students,**

The 'Current Affairs' section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the Week. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfill aspirations.

**Happy Reading**

**Team CL**



Career  
Launcher

## National



### India unfurls Blue Flags on its beaches

- **India**, which has become the first country in the world to receive the Blue Flag Certification for 8 beaches in a single attempt, hosted the Blue flags in all its beaches. **India unfurled the 8 Blue Flags on its beaches** which once again showcases a national level campaign to safeguard its coastal region.
- National level campaign integrated with the **BEAMS (Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services)** program for continuous awareness and education of people for Blue Flag certification journey.
- **BEAMS** is an **Integrated Coastal Zone Management** initiatives undertaken for sustainable development of **13 coastal regions of the country**, with a prime objective to conserve the pristine coastal and marine ecosystems.

**Blue Flag certification** is given by the **non-governmental organisation (NGO) the Foundation for Environmental Education**, the Blue Flag is a **well-recognised voluntary eco-label** given to a beach, marina, or sustainable boating tourism operator which meets its standards. It is **headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark**. A beach has to meet **33 criteria** including environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria fixed by the FEE to get the tag.

### The 1818 battle of Bhima-Koregaon

- The 1818 battle of Bhima-Koregaon, should be included in the history textbooks, said Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale who is also president of the Republican Party of India (A). Mr. Athawale visited the battle's victory obelisk or ranstambh at Perne near Koregaon-Bhima village and offered tributes.
- **Bhima-Koregaon**, a small village in Pune district of Maharashtra, has a rich Maratha history. Two hundred years ago, on January 1, 1818, a few hundred Mahar soldiers of the East India Company, led by the British, defeated the massive Peshwa army, led by Peshwa Bajirao II, in Koregaon.
- Being the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the gathering in Bhima Koregaon 2018 was much larger than usual. **Many Dalit and Bahujan groups collectively organised a public conference in the name of Elgar Parishad at Shaniwar Wada**, which was the seat of the Peshwas until 1818. On January 1, 1927, Bhimrao Ambedkar started the ritual of holding a commemoration at the site of this pillar, one that is repeated every year.

**The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to prevent atrocities against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The Act is popularly known as the **SC/ST Act**, **POA**, the **Prevention of Atrocities Act**, or simply the **Atrocities Act**. It was enacted when the provisions of the existing laws (such as the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and Indian Penal Code) were found to be inadequate to check these crimes (defined as 'atrocities' in the Act). **Recognising the continuing gross indignities and offences against Scheduled Castes and Tribes**, the Parliament passed the '**Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989**'. The rules for the Act were notified on **31 March 1995**. The **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015** to ensure more stringent provisions for prevention of Atrocities against Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

## Madhya Pradesh: India's 1<sup>st</sup> tiger reserve hot air balloon safari launched

- Recognised as the 'Tiger State' of India, Madhya Pradesh has launched India's first hot air balloon safari in its famous Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve located in Umaria district. It is the first in any tiger reserve in the country. Now like Africa's forests, tourists in India will also enjoy hot air balloon wildlife safari.
- Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a consistent rise in its tiger population. According to the Tiger Census report 2019, the state topped the survey with total 526 tigers compared to 308 tigers in 2014. It took over Karnataka which enjoyed the title of Tiger State in previous years.

Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure. Kailash Sankhala was the first director of Project Tiger. As the Bengal Tiger is the national animal of India, this project aims to stem the dwindling population of the big cats and work to increase their numbers.

## PM Modi flagged off 100<sup>th</sup> Kisan Rail from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the 100<sup>th</sup> Kisan Rail from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal through video conferencing.
- The multi-commodity train service will carry vegetables such as cauliflower, capsicum, cabbage, drumsticks, chillies, onion, as well as fruits like grapes, oranges, pomegranate, banana and custard apple. Kisan Rail has been a game changer in ensuring fast transportation of agriculture produce across the nation. It provides a seamless supply chain of perishable produce.
- Loading and unloading of perishable commodities will be permitted at all enroute stoppages with no bar on size of consignment. The Central Government has extended a subsidy of 50 per cent on transportation of fruits and vegetables.
- The first Kisan Rail was introduced from Devlali to Danapur on 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2020, which was further extended upto Muzaffarpur. As a result of good response from the farmers, its frequency was also increased from weekly to three days in a week.

## MoRTH extends validity of vehicular documents till 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the validity of vehicular documents such as driving licenses (DLs), registration certificates (RCs) and Permits till 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 in the light of need to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
- The Ministry had earlier issued advisories on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 9<sup>th</sup> June and 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 regarding extension of validity of documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989. It was advised that the validity of Fitness, Permit (all types), License, Registration or any other concerned documents may be treated to be valid till 31<sup>st</sup> of December this year.

Nitin Jairam Gadkari was served as the President of the BJP from 2010-2013. He is the current Minister for Road Transport & Highways of India and Shipping Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Government of India. Gadkari represents Lok Sabha from Nagpur constituency, Maharashtra.

## Indian & Vietnamese Navy conclude naval passage exercise PASSEX in South China Sea

- Indian and Vietnamese Navy concluded the two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX in the South China Sea as part of efforts to boost maritime cooperation between the two countries. Indian Naval Ship Kiltan, carrying humanitarian assistance reached Vietnam's Nha Rong Port in Ho Chi Minh City to deliver 15 tonnes of relief material for flood-affected people under Mission Sagar-III.
- This mission of INS Kiltan was part of India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries during the ongoing pandemic. Mission Sagar-III is being undertaken in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region) and reiterates India's position as a dependable partner, and the Indian Navy as the Preferred Security Partner and First Responder.

The South China Sea is a marginal sea of the Western Pacific Ocean. The South China Sea disputes involve both island and maritime claims by several sovereign states within the region, namely Brunei, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan), Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The nine-dash line area claimed by the Republic of China, later the People's Republic of China (PRC), which covers most of the South China Sea and overlaps with the exclusive economic zone claims of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

### PM Modi inaugurated New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor in Uttar Pradesh via video conferencing. The 351-km section, which has been built at a cost of Rs 5,750 crore, will open new avenues for local industries in Uttar Pradesh.
- PM also inaugurated the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor's (EDFC) operation control centre at Prayagraj. "We have planned to start two dedicated freight corridors. The first one will connect Punjab's Ludhiana to Dankuni in West Bengal. The second one will connect JNPT (Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust), Maharashtra to Dadri in Uttar Pradesh, which will be close to Jewar Airport," PM Modi said.
- First 2 DFC, Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC), from Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC), Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal. Two DFC will decongest railway network by moving 70% of India's goods train to these two corridors, are both on track for completion in December 2021. The EDFC route covers Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The World Bank is funding a majority of the EDFC.
- The WDFC covers Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. It is being funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL) is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) corporation run by the Government of India's Ministry of Railways to undertake planning, development, and mobilisation of financial resources and construction, maintenance and operation of the "Dedicated Freight Corridors" (DFC). The DFCCIL was registered as a company under the Companies Act 1956 in 2006.

### India's first pollinator park opens in Uttarakhand's Haldwani

- The Uttarakhand forest department dedicated the newly built Pollinator Park to the public, claiming it to be the country's first such park, spread over 4 acres in Haldwani in Nainital district.
- The park has more than 40 pollinator species with displays on the mechanism of pollination of plant species by various species of butterflies, honeybees, birds, insects, moths, beetles, wasps, and small mammals. The park also has small water bodies for mud puddling of butterflies through which they take certain nutrients like salt and arrangement of ultraviolet light to attract night pollinators like moths.

Uttarakhand is often referred to as the Devbhumi, due to many Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state. On 9 November 2000, Uttarakhand became the 27<sup>th</sup> state of the Republic of India, being created from the Himalayan and adjoining northwestern districts of Uttar Pradesh. Trivendra Singh Rawat is the eighth and current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. Baby Rani Maurya is serving as the seventh governor of Uttarakhand since 26 August 2018. The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun, the largest city of the state, which is a rail head. Gairsain, a town in Chamoli district is the summer capital of Uttarakhand. The High Court of the state is located in Nainital.

### Jharkhand's Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana

- Jharkhand's Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana will take three months to come into effect. It is a compensation scheme aimed at providing security cover to Jharkhand farmers in case of crop damage due to natural calamity. It will cover both land owning and landless farmers.
- The Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Co-operative will be the implementing agency and it will work in association with a project management unit, which will be a consultancy firm that will take care of technical requirements.



**Jharkhand** is a state in eastern India, carved out of the southern part of Bihar on **15 November 2000**. The city of **Ranchi** is its capital and **Dumka** its sub capital. **Draupadi Murmu** is the current and first woman Governor of **Jharkhand**. **Hemant Soren** is the current Chief Minister of **Jharkhand**. Previously, he had also served as the Chief Minister of **Jharkhand** from July 2013 to December 2014. He is the son of **Shibu Soren**, former Chief Minister of **Jharkhand**. “**Jharkhand**” means ‘land of bush or forest’.

### Punjab CM launches DigiNest app

- **Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh** virtually launched a mobile application ‘**DigiNest** to give people access to the state government’s directory, which can be synced with a smartphone.
- The Chief Minister also rolled out an online **Punjab Advertisement Release Order System** to bring transparency and efficiency in the process of releasing state advertisements and payments to media houses. The system would help streamline the process of issuance of advertisements and release of payments.

The state capital of **Punjab** is **Chandigarh**, a Union Territory and also the capital of the neighboring state of **Haryana**. The five rivers from which the region took its name were **Sutlej, Ravi, Beas, Chenab and Jhelum**; **Sutlej, Ravi and Beas** are part of the Indian Punjab. **Captain Amarinder Singh** is currently the **26<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister** of Punjab and **Vijayendrapal Singh Badnore** is the current Governor of Punjab.

### Chhattisgarh signs contract to set up state’s 1<sup>st</sup> ethanol plant under PPP model

- The **Chhattisgarh** government signed a contract to set up the first ethanol plant in the state under the Public-private partnership (PPP) model.
- As per official release, the contract was signed by **Bhoramdev Cooperative Sugar Factory Kawardha** and **Chhattisgarh Distillery Limited’s subsidiary NKJ Biofuel** for a period of 30 years.
- This is the first example in the country to set up an ethanol plant by PPP model. Chhattisgarh will also have an important contribution in the production of biofuels in the country by setting up an ethanol plant in the state.”

**Chhattisgarh** was formed on **1 November 2000** by partitioning **10 Chhattisgarhi** and **6 Gondi** speaking southeastern districts of **Madhya Pradesh**. It is a land locked state of India. The capital city is **Raipur**. **Anusuiya Uikey** is present Governor of **Chhattisgarh**. **Bhupesh Baghel** is serving as the third and current Chief Minister of **Chhattisgarh**.

### PM Narendra Modi dedicated Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to nation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** dedicated the **Kochi - Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline** to the nation through video conferencing. The event marks an important milestone towards the creation of **One Nation One Gas Grid**. The **450 kilometre long pipeline** has been built by **GAIL (India) Limited**. It has transportation capacity of **12 Million Metric Standard Cubic Metres** per day.
- It will carry natural gas from the **Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Regasification Terminal at Kochi, Kerala to Mangaluru, Karnataka**, while passing through **Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur** and **Kasaragod** districts. The total cost of the project was about three thousand crore rupees and its construction created over **12 lakh man-days** of employment.

**National Grid** is the high-voltage electric power transmission network in mainland India, connecting power stations and major substations and ensuring that electricity generated anywhere in mainland India can be used to satisfy demand elsewhere. All the willing rural households would be provided with cooking gas and electricity connection by **2022** that is by the **75<sup>th</sup> year of India’s independence**. India is the **third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases** after the **US and China**. The Grid would be helpful in meeting emission reduction targets that were signed at **Paris Agreement** which would be done by increasing the usage of natural gas and Green fuel.



### Hours before the Brexit transition period ended on New Year's Eve, Spain announced it had struck a deal with the UK to maintain free movement to and from Gibraltar

- Hours before the Brexit transition period ended on New Year's Eve, **Spain announced it had struck a deal with the UK to maintain free movement to and from Gibraltar** – a small portion of land on the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula that Britain controls but Spain claims as its own. Officially remaining a British Overseas Territory, **Gibraltar will now be part of the Schengen zone and follow EU rules**, thus ensuring that a hard border does not separate it from the rest of Europe.
- **Gibraltar, with an area of just 6.8 sq km and a population of around 34,000 people**, has been the **subject of intense dispute between Spain and Britain for centuries**. This is mainly because of its strategic location. The territory, which is connected to Spain by a small strip of land and surrounded by sea on three sides, serves as the only opening from the Atlantic Ocean into the Mediterranean Sea, making it a key location on the shortest sea route between Europe and Asia via the Suez Canal.
- Due to its strategic importance, **Gibraltar came to be highly fortified by Britain since the 18<sup>th</sup> century**, thus earning its commonly known name– “the Rock”. Gibraltar fell into British hands after a war in 1713, and has since remained with Britain despite several attempts by Spain to retake it.
- However, free movement will now **continue thanks to the Spain-UK deal**, as **Gibraltar is being placed in the Schengen area**, with Spain acting as a guarantor. The Schengen passport-free zone includes **22 countries from the EU**, and four others –Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The UK has never been a part of this zone.

The Schengen Area is an area that has officially abolished all passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders. The area mostly functions as a single jurisdiction for international travel purposes, with a common visa policy. The area is named after the 1985 Schengen Agreement signed in Schengen, Luxembourg. Of the 27 EU member states, 22 participate in the Schengen Area. Of the five EU members that are not part of the Schengen Area, four – Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, and Romania – are legally obliged to join the area in the future; Ireland maintains an opt-out. At present, Schengen passport-free zone comprised of 26 countries which includes 22 countries from the EU, and four others –Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The UK has never been a part of this zone.

### Thailand to host first-ever trail and mountain running worlds in 2021

- **Thailand's northern city of Chiang Mai will host the inaugural world mountain and trail championships in 2021**. The championship, which will be staged from Nov. 11-14, will feature **vertical uphill mountain races, short and long trail races for senior athletes and the classic mountain races** for both seniors and under-20s.
- The new biennial event was **first announced in 2018 when the World Mountain Running Association (WMRA), the International Association of Ultrarunners (IAU) and the International Trail Running Association (ITRA) combined forces with World Athletics**.

Thailand formerly known as Siam is a country in Southeast Asia. The capital and largest city is Bangkok. Maha Vajiralongkorn is King of Thailand since 2016. The baht is the official currency of Thailand. Prayut Chan-o-cha is currently serving as Prime Minister of Thailand.

## World's largest radio telescope in China

- The world's largest radio telescope, the Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Telescope or FAST has been installed in Pingtang in China's Guizhou province.
- FAST started full operations in January 2020 and is about to open its doors for foreign astronomers. Work on FAST began in 2011. It cost 1.1 billion yuan to build. FAST boasts of a 500-metre giant satellite dish, the size of which can cover the area of 30 football pitches. This is also the world's largest.
- FAST is surrounded by a five-kilometre "radio silence" zone where mobile phones and computers are not allowed. Thousands of villagers were displaced to make room for this telescope.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies.

## Ethiopia crisis

- Ethnic strife is once again threatening to tear apart Ethiopia, an African nation with a vast and multi-ethnic population, after fresh war erupted between the federal government and the powerful regional government of Tigray.
- Since the fighting began on November 4, Ethiopia is facing a slew of crises like never before: refugees are streaming out by the hundreds of thousands into neighbouring Sudan, the country is struggling under a second COVID-19 surge, and the worst locust outbreak in decades has destroyed crops and threatened food insecurity.
- Ethiopia has multiple regional federations. Minority Tigray, governed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), had a disproportionate say in the workings of the federal government based in the Addis Ababa capital. The Tigray government, which also has multiple militia forces and a powerful army, was often condemned as "repressive and regressive".
- Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray regional forces regard each other as illegal after a falling-out when Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali came to power in 2018, sidelining the once-dominant Tigray leaders amid sweeping political reforms. Abiy Ahmed Ali broke apart the powerful ruling coalition led by the TPLF and brought in a new Prosperity Party, which the Tigray region saw as a power grab and a ploy to weaken the federation.

Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa. It shares borders with Eritrea to the north, Djibouti and Somaliland to the northeast, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south, South Sudan to the west and Sudan to the northwest. The Horn of Africa (HoA) is a peninsula and the easternmost projection of the African continent. It lies along the southern side of the Red Sea and extends hundreds of kilometers into the Gulf of Aden, Somali Sea and Guardafui Channel. The Horn of Africa consists of the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. The birr is the unit of currency in Ethiopia.

## Argentina becomes first big country in Latin America to legalize abortion

- Argentina's Senate voted to legalize abortion, a first for a big country in Latin America and a triumph for women's rights campaigners achieved over the visceral objection of the Catholic Church.
- Abortion is extremely rare in a region where the Church has held cultural and political sway for centuries. Previously, it was allowed on-demand only in Communist Cuba, tiny Uruguay and parts of Mexico. Until now, Argentine law has only allowed abortion when there is a serious risk to the health of the mother or in cases of rape.

Argentina is a country located mostly in the southern half of South America. Buenos Aires is the capital and largest city of Argentina. Alberto Fernandez is serving as the current president of Argentina since 2019. The peso (established as the peso convertible) is the currency of Argentina.



## Algerian president signs new constitution into law

- **Algeria's president signed the country's new constitution into law**, his office said, after the document was approved in a November referendum on record low turnout as its leader received treatment abroad for Covid-19.
- **The Hirak first launched vast street demonstrations in early 2019 to oppose then-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term in office.** President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who returned to Algeria this week after two months in Germany, had promoted the new constitution as the "cornerstone of the new Algeria", as he sought to turn the page on the long-running Hirak mass protest movement.

Algeria is a country in the Maghreb region of North Africa. The capital and most populous city is Algiers. The dinar is the monetary currency of Algeria. Algeria is Africa's largest country by area, and Nigeria is its largest by population. Africa is often called Dark Continent in the world.

## India begins its two-year tenure as a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC

- **India**, which has been at the forefront of the years-long efforts to reform the UN Security Council, **on 1 January 2021, began its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the powerful organ of the world body.**
- **India will sit in the 15-nation United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2021-22 term as a non-permanent member - the eighth time that the country has had a seat on the powerful horseshoe table.**
- In 2021, India, Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico join non-permanent members Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam and the five permanent members China, France, Russia, UK and the US in the Council. **India will be UNSC President in August 2021 and will preside over the Council again for a month in 2022.** The presidency of the Council is held by each of the members in turn for one month, following the English alphabetical order of the Member States names.

**United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.** Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (also known as the Permanent Five, Big Five, or P5) are China (formerly the Republic of China), Russia (formerly the Soviet Union), France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Antonio Guterres is a Portuguese politician and diplomat who is serving as the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. Previously, he was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees between 2005 and 2015.

## India to open missions in Estonia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic

- **The government announced that it would open three missions in Estonia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic in 2021**, after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the proposal from the Ministry of External Affairs.

## Australia changes word in anthem to honour indigenous people

- **Australia has changed one word in its national anthem to reflect what the Prime Minister called "the spirit of unity" and the country's indigenous population.**
- **Prime Minister Scott Morrison on New Year's Eve announced that the second line of the anthem, Advance Australia Fair, has been changed from "For we are young and free" to "For we are one and free."** The change took effect January 1.

**Australia is the largest country in Oceania and the world's sixth-largest country by total area.** Australia's capital is Canberra, and its largest city is Sydney. Scott Morrison is serving as the current Prime Minister of Australia. Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon. The country's other major metropolitan areas are Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and Adelaide. Australia is a highly developed country, with the world's fourteenth-largest economy.



## Goods and Services Tax collections for December 2020 rose to Rs 1.15 lakh crore, the highest ever since the implementation of the nationwide tax

- Goods and Services Tax collections for December rose to Rs 1.15 lakh crore, the highest ever since the implementation of the nationwide tax from 1 July 2017, the Finance Ministry said in a statement on January 1, 2021. The GST Compensation Act, 2017 guaranteed states that they would be compensated for any loss of revenue in the first five years of GST implementation, until 2022, using a cess levied on sin and luxury goods.
- The GST revenues during December 2020 have been the highest since the introduction of GST and it is the first time that it has crossed Rs. 1.15 lakh crore. The highest GST collection till now was Rs. 1, 13,866 crore in the month of April 2019. The December 2020 revenues are significantly higher than last month's revenues of Rs. 1,04,963 crore. This is the highest growth in monthly revenues since last 21 months. This has been due to combined effect of the rapid economic recovery post pandemic and the nation-wide drive against GST evaders and fake bills along with many systemic changes introduced recently, which have led to improved compliance.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) is an indirect tax (or consumption tax) used in India on the supply of goods and services. It is a **comprehensive, multistage, destination-based tax**: comprehensive because it has **subsumed almost all the indirect taxes except a few state taxes**. Goods and services are **divided into five different tax slabs** for collection of tax - 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%. However, **petroleum products, alcoholic drinks, and electricity are not taxed under GST** and instead are taxed separately by the individual state governments, as per the previous tax system. The tax came into effect from 1 July 2017 through the implementation of the **One Hundred and First Amendment of the Constitution of India** by the Indian government. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is governed by the GST Council. Article 279 (1) of the amended Indian Constitution states that the GST Council has to be constituted by the President within 60 days of the commencement of the Article 279A. The Chairman of the GST council is Union Finance Minister.

## Uzbekistan signs loan and guarantee agreements for its first solar plant

- The Uzbek government signed loan and guarantee agreements with three development banks to finance construction of the Central Asian nation's first solar photovoltaic power plant. The World Bank's International Finance Corporation and ADB will lend up to \$60 million for the plant that will be built in the central Navoi region by Abu Dhabi Future Energy, the World Bank said.
- The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will provide an equity bridge loan of up to \$60 million to Masdar for the construction and operation of the plant. The World Bank will also provide a \$5.1 million payment guarantee for the Uzbek government to backstop payment obligations of the project.

Uzbekistan is a country in Central Asia. It is surrounded by five landlocked countries: **Kazakhstan** to the north; **Kyrgyzstan** to the northeast; **Tajikistan** to the southeast; **Afghanistan** to the south and **Turkmenistan** to the southwest. Along with Liechtenstein, it is one of two doubly landlocked countries. Tashkent is the capital city. The so' m is the currency of Uzbekistan.

## Indian Oil Corporation launches India's first 100 Octane petrol

- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) launched India's first 100 Octane petrol**, helping India join a select league of nations globally that have such superior quality fuel.
- **Launching the fuel**, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel **Dharmendra Pradhan** said **XP100 premium petrol will initially be available at select outlet of IOC in 10 cities** – Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Agra, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad.
- **The fuel is manufactured at IOC's Mathura refinery in Uttar Pradesh** and supplied at select petrol pumps. Octane ratings are measures of fuel stability. **It is a measure of a fuel's ability to avoid knock.**
- **Knock occurs when fuel is prematurely ignited in the engine's cylinder**, which degrades efficiency and can be damaging to the engine. **The higher the octane number, the more resistant the petrol mixture is to knock.**
- **Worldwide, 100 Octane petrol has a niche market for luxury vehicles** that demand high performance and is available only in six countries of USA, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Malaysia and Israel.
- **Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) had recently launched Octane 99 and now IOC has come to the market with XP100.** Previously, the nation leapfrogged from BS-IV (Euro-IV) emission compliant fuel to BS-VI from April 1 this year.

An octane rating, or octane number, is a standard measure of the performance of an engine or aviation gasoline. The higher the octane number, the more compression the fuel can withstand before detonating. In broad terms, fuels with a higher octane rating are used in high-performance gasoline engines that require higher compression ratios. In contrast, fuels with lower octane numbers (but higher cetane numbers) are ideal for diesel engines, because diesel engines (also referred to as compression-ignition engines) do not compress the fuel, but rather compress only air and then inject fuel into the air which was heated by compression.

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is an Indian state owned oil and Gas Company with registered office at Mumbai and primarily headquartered in New Delhi. It is the largest commercial enterprise in the country.

## UNDP and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond

- **Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) recently signed an MoU with UNDP India to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond (SIB).**
- **"As part of this unique investment tool, the PCMC administration will only have to bear the costs of a public welfare project associated with the bond if the pre-defined project targets are fulfilled"**.
- **This type of bond lays down outcome-based targets to be achieved at the start of the contract.** This feature allows for tracking the progress of the outcomes, thus ensuring transparency for investors. This mechanism also ensures that funds are used effectively and efficiently towards the project. **This SIB will support the PCMC in improving healthcare services for its citizens, especially with respect to the pandemic while incurring minimum investment risks"**.
- **This is the first time that a government body will act as the 'outcome funder' in a bond**, whereas traditionally most government-funded public projects require large and early investments by the government with a substantial gestation period of outcomes and involve various kinds of risks, officials said.

## Bank of Baroda unveils digital lending platform for retail customers

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB) has unveiled a digital lending platform to enable prospective retail clients to get loans digitally through a paperless process.**
- **Pre-approved micro personal loan is offered to existing selected customers to shop anything through offline / online partner channels and pay later in easy EMIs.**
- **Customers can also avail the amount into their Savings bank account and convert it to EMIs from 3 to 18 months through m-Connect+ (Bank's mobile banking app) in 60 seconds.**



**Bank of Baroda (BOB)** is an Indian multinational, public sector banking and financial services company. It is the third largest public sector bank in India. The government of India announced the merger of Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank on September 17, 2018, to create the country's third largest lender. The amalgamation is the first-ever three-way consolidation of banks in the country. The Maharaja of Baroda, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, founded the bank on 20 July 1908 in the Princely State of Baroda, in Gujarat.

### World's First Physical Cryptocurrency Bank Opens in India

- The cryptocurrency market is flourishing in India despite the regulatory uncertainty. Unicas, a joint venture between the financial services companies Cahsaa and United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society, announced the launch of the world's first physical branch of a cryptocurrency bank in the Indian city of Jaipur.
- Cashaa mentioned that Unicas is the first crypto bank in the world to open a physical branch. Unicas users will be able to execute transactions in cryptocurrencies and local currency (INR) through the same account.
- The newly launched crypto bank provides the same services as a traditional bank, including buying and selling of cryptocurrency assets and issuance of loans against digital assets.

A blockchain originally block chain, is a growing list of records, called blocks that are linked using cryptography. Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data (generally represented as a Merkle tree). The blockchain was invented by a person (or group of people) using the name Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008 to serve as the public transaction ledger of the cryptocurrency bitcoin.

### Tata Sons increases stake in AirAsia India to 83.67%

- AirAsia Group Berhad had executed a share purchase agreement with Tata Sons Private Ltd to sell 32.67% equity stake held by AirAsia Investment Ltd (AAIL) in AirAsia (India) Ltd (AAI) for \$37,660,000. With this the holding of Tatas in AirAsia India has increased from 51% to 83.67%.
- AirAsia Berhad is a Malaysian low-cost airline headquartered near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is the largest airline in Malaysia by fleet size and destinations.

### Former Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakraborty to be next HDFC Bank chairperson

- India's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank is set to appoint former economic affairs secretary Atanu Chakraborty as the next chairman of the bank.
- The tenure of current chairman Shyamala Gopinath will end on January 1, 2021. Gopinath, a former RBI deputy governor, has been serving in the position since January 2, 2015.

HDFC Bank Limited is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. HDFC Bank is India's largest private sector lender by assets. In 1994 HDFC Bank was incorporated, with its registered office in Mumbai, India. Sashidhar Jagdishan is the MD of HDFC Bank.

### No charges on transaction through UPI: NPCI

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said transaction through Unified Payment Interface platform would continue to be free. Presently, no charges are levied on transaction done through UPI. Set up in 2008, NPCI is an umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- UPI is currently the biggest among the NPCI operated systems including NACH, IMPS, AEPS, BBPS, RuPay, etc. As of October FY21, out of 3.39 billion retail transactions on all NPCI platforms, 2.07 billion transactions were recorded on UPI followed by 340.03 million transactions with respect to NFS inter-bank ATM cash withdrawals.
- Importantly, the Reserve Bank of India had launched a 'composite Digital Payments Index (DPI)' to measure the extent of digitisation of payments in India based on parameters including payment enablers, payment infrastructure – demand-side and supply-side factors, payment performance, and consumer centricity, according to the RBI.



**National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. **Founded in 2008**, the NPCI is a not-for-profit organisation registered under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013, established by Reserve Bank of India & IBA. It is headquartered in Mumbai.

## **RBI's Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India in FY20**

- **The financial and asset quality profile of urban co-operative banks (USBs) deteriorated in the financial year 2019-20 (FY20)**, with the sector reporting net loss, an uptick in bad loans, and a fall in the provision coverage ratio.
- **Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) rose from 7.3 per cent in 2018-19 to 10.8 per cent in FY20**. In absolute terms, NPAs worth Rs 10,900 crore were added, taking the tally to Rs 33,010 crore by March 2020.
- **The rise in NPAs may partly be attributable to stagnant growth in loans and advances** and weak balance sheets, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Trends and Progress of Banking in India report.

The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1 April 1935 to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled "The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution" and presented to the Hilton Young Commission. The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton–Young Commission. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-headed government nationalised 14 major commercial banks. Upon Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, a further six banks were nationalised. The first Governor of the RBI was British banker Osborn Smith and C.D. Deshmukh was the first Indian Governor of RBI. Shashikant Das is the current Governor of RBI.

## **IFSCA becomes member of International Organization of Securities Commissions**

- **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has become an associate member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions**. The International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) works closely with the G20 and the Financial Stability Board in setting up the standards for strengthening the securities markets.
- **The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in the country has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in Gandhinagar**. To regulate such institutions, the government established IFSCA on April 27 last year with its head office in Gandhinagar.

**Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City** located on the banks of the Sabarmati River and is around 12 km (7.5 mi) from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport and is India's first operational smart city and international financial services centre. It was promoted by the Government of Gujarat as a Greenfield project. The city is designed for walk to work concept and includes commercial and residential complexes. The city is connected through 4-6 lane State and National Highways. A double corridor metro system is being constructed to connect GIFT City to the nearby airport and various parts of Ahmedabad.

## **Adani Green bags 600 mw wind-solar hybrid power unit project**

- **Adani Green Energy's subsidiary has received the contract to build a 600 megawatts (mw) wind-solar hybrid power project**, taking the company's total project portfolio to 14,795 mw. "The LOA of 600 mw wind-solar hybrid power project is in line with our ambition to achieve renewable power capacity of 25 gigawatts by 2025 and becoming the world's largest renewable power company by 2030.
- With the new award, Adani Green has built a renewable energy portfolio of 14,795 MW, of which 2,950 MW of operational capacity and 11,845 MW of projects under implementation. The Indian firm has set a goal of having 25 GW of renewables capacity in operation by 2025.

## **IDBI Bank sells 23% stake in its life insurance arm to Ageas for Rs 507 cr**

- **Private lender IDBI Bank has concluded the sale of 23 per cent stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company Ltd (IFLI) to Ageas Insurance International NV** for a consideration of Rs 507 crore. With this, Ageas will hold 49 per cent stake in insurance venture, which is now being rebranded as Ageas Federal Life Insurance Company.

## United Nations' FAO names 4 Asian tea cultivation sites as Globally Important Agri Heritage Systems

- The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has recognised four tea producing sites spanning across three countries as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).
- All the four sites chosen by the FAO are in the Asian continent and include two tea production sites from China- the world's largest producer- and one each from Korea and Japan, according to the information provided on the FAO website.
- However, India which is the second largest producer of the beverage and one of the biggest exporters of tea to several countries could not find a place in the chosen GIAHS sites.
- The FAO while selecting the sites of tea production put into consideration the idea of sustainability and past traditions as prime factors and hence some of the oldest sites of tea production in the tea producing countries found the mention on the list.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security. Its Latin motto, *fiat panis*, translates to "let there be bread". It was founded in October 1945. The FAO is headquartered in Rome, Italy and maintains regional and field offices around the world, operating in over 130 countries. The Director-General, currently Qu Dongyu of China, serves as the chief administrative officer.

## ADB to provide USD 231-mn loan to enhance power generation capacity in Assam

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a USD 231-million loan to augment electricity generation capacity in Assam through construction of a 120-megawatt (MW) hydroelectric power plant. ADB and the Government of India signed the loan agreement.
- The proposed hydroelectric project is run-of-the-river project over Kopili river which will help increase electricity supplied from clean energy by 469 gigawatt-hour (GWh) by 2025 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3.6 lakh tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. Masatsugu Asakawa, by career a Japanese civil servant, is the president of the Asian Development Bank. Asakawa, who took office on 17 January 2020, is the 10<sup>th</sup> president of ADB.

## Tesla opens world's largest Supercharger station in China's Shanghai

- Tesla is adding more and more electric vehicles to the roads and to support its ecosystem, the EV maker has also been quickly expanding its Supercharger network. The company has now opened the world's largest Supercharger station in China's Shanghai with 72 charging stalls.
- With the new charging station, Tesla beat its own record of single-point EV super-charging station with 56 stalls opened in California. The station is located at the Jing'an International Center in Shanghai, as per Electrek. Few images of the EV charging station have been shared on Twitter by a Tesla owner in Shanghai.

Tesla, Inc. (formerly Tesla Motors, Inc.) is an American electric vehicle and clean energy company based in Palo Alto, California. Tesla's current products include electric cars, battery energy storage from home to grid scale, solar panels and solar roof tiles, as well as other related products and services. Founded in July 2003 as Tesla Motors, the company's name is a tribute to inventor and electrical engineer Nikola Tesla. Elon Musk, who contributed most of the funding in the early days, has served as CEO since 2008.

## World's negative-yield debt pile at \$18 trillion for first time

- The world's stockpile of negative-yielding debt has swelled to a fresh record in a sign that demand for havens is just as intense as that for riskier assets. The market value of the Bloomberg Barclays Global Negative Yielding Debt Index rose to \$18.04 trillion the highest level ever recorded. Spanish 10-year bonds were the latest to join the club, with rates sliding below 0% for the first time.

- About \$1 trillion of bonds have seen their yields turn negative this week, meaning 27% of the world's investment-grade debt is now sub-zero. Thanks to the slew of global issuance in 2020 as governments and companies wrestle with the impact of the coronavirus, that remains below the 30% peak reached last year.

### HDFC Bank top among 100 BFSI firms; Google Pay No.1 in UPI payments

- HDFC Bank has emerged as the top player among the 100 Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) companies in the country. The country's largest private lender topped because of its customer service, monetary management, and innovative offerings amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- According to BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020 report by Wizikey, HDFC Bank's involvement in various ventures such as launching 'summer treats', offering no-cost EMI options and no down payment for large appliances, etc, became the key factors for the bank to become the winner in BFSI segment.
- Apart from HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India (SBI) ranked second and third, respectively, for showing a quick transformation to serve the citizens through the arterial reach.
- Neo Banks was another category that received a lot of buzzes this year, thanks to digitization. YONO emerged as number one and was followed by Niyo and Kotak 811 at ranks 2 and 3 respectively in the same category. In the payments bank category, the Airtel Payments Bank was ranked no. 1, followed by Paytm Payments Bank and Jio Payments Bank.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an instant real-time payment system developed by National Payments Corporation of India facilitating inter-bank transactions. The interface is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India and works by instantly transferring funds between two bank accounts on a mobile platform.

### Union Minister Nitin Gadkari says, 22 Green Express Highways under construction

- Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari has said that the government is fully committed towards development in the field of infrastructure. Construction of 22 Green Express Highways which is in progress will prove to be a game changer in the field of transportation and traveling. Mr. Gadkari also spoke about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and making India a number one global economy.

### Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates Virtual Agri-hackathon 2020 in New Delhi

- Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the Virtual Agri-hackathon 2020 in New Delhi. The Agri India Hackathon is being organised.
- The Minister said, agriculture is the backbone of the country and plans are afoot to strengthen this backbone with youth engagement, employment generation, technology and digitization. The two month long event is the first of its kind and the largest virtual event in the history of Indian agriculture.
- It will bring together the most important stakeholders from industry and government alongside India's young bright minds, creative startups and smart innovators who will build new, fast and frugal solutions to tackle the big questions the country is facing.
- With the launch, the application of the hackathon was made live on MyGov.in and will remain open till 20 January next year. The hackathon will happen in three elimination rounds and the final 24 winners will get a cash prize of Rs one lakh along with incubation support, tech and business mentoring and various other benefits. T

The agriculture contribution in India's GDP in 2019 is 15.96 percent. According to latest report, agriculture is primary source of livelihood for 58% population in India. The Primary sector of the economy includes any industry involved in the extraction and production of raw materials, such as farming, logging, hunting, fishing, and mining. India is a global agricultural powerhouse. It is the world's largest producer of milk, pulses, and spices, and has the world's largest cattle herd (buffaloes), as well as the largest area under wheat, rice and cotton. It is the second largest producer of rice, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, farmed fish, sheep & goat meat, fruit, vegetables and tea.





## Inventions/Discoveries

### Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

- **Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, PCV. The vaccine named Pneumosil has been developed by the Serum Institute of India Private Limited (SIPL) in collaboration with partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.**
- **Recognizing SIPL as the world's largest manufacturer of vaccines by number of doses** and its contribution to India's economy, Dr. Harsh Vardhan remarked that Serum Institute's Vaccines are used in 170 countries and every third child in the world is immunized with the manufacturer's vaccine.
- He reminded the audience that **SIPL developed and got license of first indigenous Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) from Government of India during COVID-19 pandemic lock-down** in line with Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi ji's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, **"Serum Institute's first Indigenous Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine will be available in the market under brand name *"Pneumosil"* at an affordable price in single dose (vial and pre-filled syringe) and Multidose (vial) presentations.**

The **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** is an Indian government ministry charged with **health policy in India**. It is also responsible for all government programs relating to family planning in India. The Minister of Health and Family Welfare holds cabinet rank as a member of the Council of Ministers. **The current minister is Harsh Vardhan.** **Rajkumari Bibiji Amrit Kaur** was the **first Health Minister of India in 1947** and remained in office until 1957.

### Dr Harsh Vardhan releases report - Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat prepared by TIFAC

- **Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan released the report – 'Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat' prepared by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) in New Delhi.**
- Dr Harsh Vardhan said the ideas contained in the report should be taken forward with the implementing agencies. **The ultimate outcome of the report has to be addition to quality of life and how our efforts can contribute to Atmanirbhar Bharat.**
- The comprehensive report on Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat is a consequential follow-up of the TIFAC's White Paper on **Focused Interventions for Make in India: post COVID -19** which was released.

### Uttarakhand: First tiger translocation

- **The Rajaji Tiger Reserve is welcomed the first big cat from Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve in the first such relocation in Uttarakhand** aimed at tiger population management.
- **A total of five big cats from the Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve** — nearly eight years since conceptualisation of the project and four years after clearance from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) — are **scheduled to be translocated from Jim Corbett to Rajaji.**



## ISRO to open Regional Academic Centre for Space at IIT Varanasi

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will establish a Regional Academic Centre for Space at IIT-Varanasi to facilitate short and long term projects at the institute.
- ISRO and the Indian Institute of Technology-Varanasi (BHU) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and the move can help propel the culture of research and development among students. “Under this agreement, ISRO-IIT (BHU) will open the Regional Academic Center for Space (RAC-S) in the institute.

ISRO is the space agency of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. ISRO was formed in 1969. ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan is current the chairperson of the ISRO. Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) or Sriharikota Range (SHAR) is a rocket launch centre operated by ISRO. It is located in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

## China launches remote sensing satellite

- China has successfully launched a new remote sensing satellite into space. The satellite was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.
- The satellite, Yaogan-33, was launched aboard a Long March-4C rocket and entered the planned orbit successfully. It was the 357<sup>th</sup> flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

## India's first artificial intelligence community center launched in Hyderabad

- Hexagon Capability Center India (HCCI), the largest product development unit of the technology major Hexagon AB has launched the nation's first Artificial Intelligence Community Centre, HexArt, was launched in Hyderabad.
- The purpose of HexArt is to democratize AI knowledge cum skill to the masses and provide free education on AI to the community. The fundamental and advanced-level courses are designed for students from Class 8 to Class 12 and senior engineering graduates respectively.

## Skyroot Aerospace becomes first Indian company to test-fire solid-fueled rocket engine

- Indian Space startup, Skyroot Aerospace, has proven the crucial propulsion technology of their maiden rocket Vikram-1, with the latest test-firing of an engine. Vikram-1 rocket is powered by four engines - three solid-fuel stages and one Liquid-fuel stage that the firm has designed and developed.
- In August this year, the company had tested its liquid-fueled engine and now has proven the technology of the solid-fueled engine (Kalam-5), by successfully test-firing a miniature version. Solid motors or solid-fueled engines are high thrust, low-cost rocket engines with propellant in solid form. They are highly reliable as they have very few moving parts.

## Union Minister of Earth Sciences Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates country's highest Meteorological Centre at Leh

- Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan, virtually inaugurated India's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh. After Itanagar Centre in Arunachal Pradesh, Leh Met centre at 3500 meters highest from mean sea level is the highest in the Himalayan region.
- With four Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) a Meteorological Department centre for Ladakh region started working. Despite Covid pandemic, within Nine months of time the new centre is established to cater the arid cold desert and geo politically all-important Ladakh weather requirements.

## Two new species of ginger found from northeast

- The Mahabharatha epic describes Bhima, the second among the five pandava brothers, going in search of the Kalyanasaugandhika, a flower with a heavenly fragrance, to satisfy Panchali's desire.
- Scientists have deduced that the mythological plant described by Vyasa is *Hedychium coronarium*, also known as white ginger lily. Now researchers from the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute of Plant Sciences, Kozhikode, have discovered a close relative of *Hedychium coronarium* from the northeastern region.

## DRDO, Indian Navy conduct successful maiden test trial of SAHAYAK-NG

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** along with **Indian Navy** conducted the **successful maiden test trial of SAHAYAK-NG** India's first indigenously designed and developed **Air Dropped Container** from **IL 38SD** aircraft of Indian Navy off the coast of Goa.
- The trial was conducted by Indian Navy to enhance its operational logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering stores to ships which are deployed more than **2000 kilometres** from the coast. It reduces the requirement of ships to come close to the coast to collect spares and stores.
- **Two DRDO laboratories, NSTL, Visakhapatnam and ADRDE, Agra** were involved in the development of **SAHAYAK-NG container** along the industry partner **M/s Avantel** for GPS integration.
- **SAHAYAK-NG is an advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I.** The newly developed GPS aided air dropped container is having the capability to carry a payload that weighs upto **50 kg** and can be dropped from heavy aircraft.

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is an agency of the Republic of India, charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India. It was formed in **1958** by the merger of the **Technical Development Establishment** and the **Directorate of Technical Development and Production** with the Defence Science Organisation. **Dr G. Satheesh Reddy** is the current Chairman of DRDO.

## Govt approves export of indigenous Akash missile system

- The government has **approved the export of the indigenous Akash missile system.** **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** has welcomed the move and said it will help **India increase its revenue from defence export.**
- Mr Singh said, **under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat**, India is growing in its capabilities of manufacturing wide variety of Defence platforms and missiles. **The Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister approved the export of Akash Missile System** and a Committee for faster approvals has been created. Mr Singh said the Akash missile system is an important defence asset for the country with over **96 per cent indigenization.**
- He also noted that the **Akash is a surface-to-air missile with a range of 25 kilometres.** Developed by **DRDO**, it is **India's first indigenously designed missile system** and can target fighter jets, cruise missiles, drones and other aerial assets. The missile was **inducted in 2014 in IAF and in 2015 in Indian Army.**

## Centre launches multi-institutional consortium to track new nCov-2 strain

- **The central government set up a consortium of 10 national research institutions,** which will collaborate for carrying out effective surveillance and monitoring of the genomic variations observed in the **new SARS nCov-2 virus strain, recently identified from the United Kingdom.**
- **Called the Indian SARS CoV2 Genome Sequencing Consortium (INSACOG),** it will be a **platform for scientists, virologists, experts studying diseases and government officials** to interact and track the genomic variations of the novel coronavirus.

## First three sets of DRDO-designed 10-metre-mobile Bridge handed over to Army

- **The first three sets of a 10-metre short-span bridge, designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO),** were handed over to the Army at the facility of **Larsen & Toubro Ltd at Talegaon in Pune,** which is manufacturing these mechanically launched bridges.
- These highly mobile bridges were **developed by DRDO's Pune based facility, the Research and Development Establishment (Engineers),** which is part of the **Pune-headquartered Armament and Combat Engineering technology cluster.**
- This development has been done as per requirement of and **in coordination with the Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army.** Officials said the equipment will meet the important requirement of providing mobility to Indian forces by speedy bridging of gaps during operations.
- The DRDO has also **developed five metre and 15 metre variants of the bridge, which have already been inducted into the Army.**

## India's first 'mysterious' monolith spotted in Gujarat

- A 'monolith', the likes of which have appeared and vanished in different parts of the world since November, has now emerged in a garden in Ahmedabad city, Gujarat. This is the first appearance of a monolith, a structure made of shiny steel sheets, in India.
- However, unlike in other parts of the world, the mystery around the object did not last long as it was disclosed that a private company has installed it. **The triangular prism-shaped structure, around seven feet tall, became a hit among city dwellers** after it was spotted in a garden on SG Highway on Thursday morning.
- **The garden is jointly managed by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Symphony Ltd.** Situated near Gurudwara in Thaltej area; it was one of the attractions **inaugurated by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** recently.

## 400 million km within 163 days, China's Mars probe heads for red planet

- **China's first Mars exploration mission Tianwen-1 travelled more than 400 million km** and is expected to **enter Mars orbit** next month.
- So far, the Mars probe had flown in space for 163 days. It was about 130 million km from Earth and about 8.3 million km from Mars. **Tianwen-1 probe, weighing about five tonnes, consists of an orbiter, a lander and a rover.** It is designed to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission.

## No consensus at WTO on India, South Africa's proposal to waive IP rights on Covid vaccines

- **The World Trade Organisation (WTO)** at its meeting **could not arrive at a consensus on adopting a joint proposal by India and South Africa on temporarily waiving the intellectual property and patent rights on Covid vaccines**, medical devices and protective kits, despite a significant push by the developing countries to consider it.
- **The TRIPS Council of the Geneva-headquartered WTO took up the proposal** that was submitted **jointly by India and South Africa** in October for discussion between all the 164 member countries, and "deep divisions" emerged on it.
- **The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)** is an international legal agreement between all the member nations of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It establishes minimum standards for the regulation by national governments of different forms of intellectual property (IP) as applied to nationals of other WTO member nations. **TRIPS was negotiated at the end of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) between 1989 and 1990** and is **administered by the WTO.**

Patent system is a contract between the inventor and authority whereby the inventor gets exclusive rights for a period of 20 years in return for disclosing full details of the invention. The first legislation in India relating to patents was the Act VI of 1856. The objective of this legislation was to encourage inventions of new and useful manufactures and to induce inventors to disclose secret of their inventions. The Act VI of 1856 on protection of inventions based on the British Patent Law of 1852. Certain exclusive privileges granted to inventors of new manufacturers for a period of 14 years. **The Patent (amendment) Act 2005 came into force from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, which brought changes in the previous patent system of India wherein product patent was extended to all subjects of technology consisting of food, drugs, chemicals and microorganisms. Moreover, Section 3(d) introduced in to the said amendment act 2005 and introduces pharmaceutical product patents in India for the first time. The Patent (amendment) Act 2005 defines what invention is and makes it clear that any existing knowledge or thing cannot be patented. The provision defines that a 'novelty' standard - which, along with 'non-obviousness' or 'inventive step' and industrial applicability, are the three prerequisites for 'patentability'. "Discovery" essentially refers to finding out something which already existed in nature but was unknown or unrecognised. Therefore, discoveries are excluded from patent protection under section 3 of the Indian Patent Act 1970.**



## Sports Personalities in News

### The ICC Awards of the Decade announced

- **Virat Kohli**, who had scored 20,396 runs in all international cricket during the time period, which is more than anyone else, was also part of team India that won the ICC CWC 2011 and ICC Champions Trophy 2013. He was also named ICC Cricketer of the Year in both 2017 and 2018, so it was no surprise that he emerged as the clear jury favourite with winning the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade.
- **All-rounder, Ellyse Perry** was a clear favourite in the Female Cricketer of the Decade category and won the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award, as she had scored 4,349 runs with four centuries and took 213 wickets in all international crickets during the decade – which was also the most wickets taken by any player.
- **Steve Smith** bagged the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Decade for scoring 7,040 runs in 69 Tests in the period at an average of 65.79 with 26 centuries. He was also named the ICC Player of the Year in 2015 and ICC Test Player of the Year in 2015 and 2017. In the MRF Tyres ICC Test Player Rankings, his points tally was of 947 at the end of 2017 which is the second-highest in the history of the ICC Test batting rankings history.
- **Rashid Khan** took home the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Decade award, for taking 89 wickets at an average of just 12.62 apiece with an economy rate of 6.14 runs per over in 48 matches during the decade.
- **MS Dhoni** won the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade, chosen by fans unanimously for his gesture of calling back former England batter Ian Bell following a disputable runout at Trent Bridge in 2011.

The ICC Awards of the Decade is a one-off edition of the ICC Awards annual awards programme, aimed at celebrating the stand-out performers and moments from the past ten years of international cricket. For the first time the fans' voice will be heard in selecting the winners across categories including the Sir Garfield Sobers and Rachael Heyhoe Flint Awards, which celebrate the best overall player from the men's and women's game over the past decade. The fan vote will make up 10% of the voting, while votes from an expert panel will make up the remaining 90%. The voting panel took into account players' performance between 1 January 2011 and 7 October 2020. The announcement of the ICC World XI Teams, along with the winners of the individual ICC awards, was made on 28 December 2020.

### MP: CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan to felicitate sportspersons, coaches at Bhopal

- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** felicitated sportspersons, coaches and sports personalities with state level sports award for the year 2019 at Bhopal. Padmashri, Arjuna and Dronacharya Awardee Olympian shooter Jaspal Rana were the special guest.
- **Olympian hockey player and winner of bronze medal at 1968 Mexico Olympics Shri Inam-ur-Rehman of Bhopal** is being awarded the Life Time Achievement Award for the year 2019, recognising his outstanding contribution in the development and promotion of hockey.



- **Chief Minister Shri Chouhan** gave away state level **Vikram, Eklavya, Vishwamitra and Life Time Achievement awards** at the sports award ceremony. **As many as 28 outstanding sport persons were awarded**, including 14 players who have been nominated for Eklavya Award, 10 for Vikram Award, 3 for Vishwamitra Award and one for Life Time Achievement Award.

### Ojha to be inducted in IPL council

- **Pragyan Ojha**, the former India left-arm spinner, will **become the first Indian Premier League (IPL) champion to be included in the IPL governing council**. Ojha has been **nominated as the Indian Cricketers' Association (ICA)** representative in the council. The BCCI annual general meeting will ratify Ojha's inclusion in Ahmedabad.

### India's largest hockey stadium planned in Rourkela, will host 2023 world cup games

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** announced that **India's biggest hockey stadium will come up at Rourkela and the 20,000-capacity facility** will host matches of **FIH men's World Cup in 2023**. Spread over 15 acres of land, the stadium will be constructed in the Biju Patnaik University of Technology campus.

### Mullagh is first aborigine in Australian Hall of Fame

- **Johnny Mullagh**, who played on the 1868 Aboriginal team that was **Australia's first to tour England**, became the **first indigenous inductee into the country's cricket Hall of Fame**. The inaugural Mullagh Medal was awarded at the end of the second Test against India.

### Lewis Hamilton knighted in UK honours list

- **Lewis Hamilton** has been **knighted in Britain's traditional New Year Honours list** after equalling **Michael Schumacher's** record of seven Formula One world titles.
- The list recognises **outstanding achievements in various fields** including showbusiness, sport and politics, as well as the contributions of a larger number of everyday citizens.

### Ronaldo beats Messi to be crowned Player of the Century at Globe Soccer Awards

- **Cristiano Ronaldo and Pep Guardiola** were **honoured at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai**, the duo named **player and coach of the century** respectively. Barcelona's Lionel Messi, Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and former player Ronaldinho were also in the race to bag the accolade but the Portuguese outclassed all to clinch the award.

### Ajinkya Rahane becomes first recipient of Mullagh Medal at MCG

- **Indian stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane**, who won Man of the Match for his vital ton at the **Boxing Day Test**, was **bestowed with the Mullagh Medal**. He is the **first recipient of the iconic medal** which is named after former Australian skipper and cricket **Johnny Mullagh**.

### Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67<sup>th</sup> chess Grandmaster

- While every other sport saw setbacks in the year of the pandemic, chess in India **thrived it was for the first time India won the Chess Olympiad**.
- The year 2020 concludes with yet another good news as **Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67<sup>th</sup> Grandmaster at the age of 14 years 9 months and 17 days**.
- **Leon**, who was **locked out in Europe because of the COVID-induced lockdown**, played a total of 16 tournaments lifting his ELO rating by 140 points (2452 to 2544) and achieving all three GM norms within three months. **His feat makes him the 29<sup>th</sup> youngest GM in the world**. He is also the **second GM from Goa**.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Gwalior hosts much-awaited Tansen Music Festival under strict COVID-19 guidelines in place

- In Madhya Pradesh, the much-awaited Tansen Music Festival concluded in Gwalior with strict COVID-19 guidelines in place. In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player Pt Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman. Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.
- The inaugural day events started with cross-cultural offerings of Harikatha, Milad and shehnai vadan at Tansen's samadhi sthal in Hazira. The festival concluded on December 30 at Behat village, the birthplace of the music maestro Tansen.

### Newly designed Vistadome tourist coach successfully completes 180 km/hour during speed trial

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said that the newly designed Vistadome tourist coach successfully completed 180 kilometre per hour during speed trial. The Minister said, the UNESCO world heritage site Nilgiri Mountain Railway in Tamil Nadu resumed operations from 31<sup>st</sup> December this year.

### 'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan' Project

- Tourism and Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel took a review meeting of the Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan project in New Delhi. A detailed presentation was given about the present status and progress at various monuments.
- Adopt a Heritage is a well-conceived initiative and hoped that by leveraging CSR, this project would help in providing the basic amenities such as cleanliness, safe drinking water, light and sounds in the lesser-known monuments.

### North East's first-ever specialised Ginger Processing Plant in Meghalaya is being revived

- Minister for Development of North Eastern Region, DoNER Dr Jitendra Singh has informed that North East's first-ever specialised Ginger Processing Plant at Ri-Bhoui district in Meghalaya is being revived and is likely to become functional in the beginning of 2021. It is the only Ginger Processing Plant of North East India established around the year 2004 but it has remained non-functional for many years.

### Law and Justice Ministry notifies elevation of four judges

- Law and Justice Ministry has notified the elevation of four judges as Chief Justices of Odisha, Telangana, Madras and Jammu and Kashmir High Courts. President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Dr. Justice S. Muralidhar as Chief Justice of Odisha High Court and Kumari Justice Hima Kohli as Chief Justice of Telangana.
- Justice Pankaj Mithal will be Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court and Justice Sanjib Banerjee, Chief Justice of Madras.

### Govt launches Global Pravasi Rishta portal to connect with Indian Diaspora across the world

- Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan launched the Global Pravasi Rishta portal and mobile App, to connect with Indian Diaspora across the world. The portal will act as a dynamic communication platform between our pravasis, the Ministry of External Affairs and missions abroad and will help in engaging Indian diaspora more intensively.

### PM unveils project for affordable housing

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation of six Light House Projects, as part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India) initiative, in Indore, Rajkot, Chennai, Ranchi, Agartala and Lucknow via videoconference.
- About 1,000 houses at each location are to be constructed in a year, using six distinct technologies from a basket of 54 such technologies shortlisted under the GHTC-India, 2019.

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### Sweden's fiancé minister appointed new IMFC chair

- The members of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the policy advisory committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have **selected Sweden's Minister for Finance, Ms. Magdalena Andersson, as Chair of the Committee for a term of three years.**
- Andersson, who will be the first woman to hold the position, resumes **January 18, 2021.** She succeeds Lesetja Kganyago, Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, who has chaired the IMFC since January 18, 2018.

### Major General Gautam Chauhan becomes first to head Indian Army's human rights cell

- The Indian Army has appointed a Major General rank officer to head its newly created human rights cell to give high priority to the observance of human rights convention and values.
- Major General Gautam Chauhan took charge as the first Additional Director General Human Rights in the Indian Army and will work under the India Army vice Chief Lieutenant General SK Saini.

### Biden picks first woman to serve as deputy defense secretary

- President-elect Joe Biden nominated former Pentagon official Kathleen Hicks to serve as the first female deputy defense secretary. Colin Kahl, who served as Biden's national security adviser when he was vice president, was nominated for undersecretary of defense for policy.

### ISRO Chairman K Sivan gets one-year extension

- ISRO Chairman K Sivan has been given an one-year extension, till January 14, 2022, as the secretary, Department of Space, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of tenure of K Sivan, secretary, Department of Space and chairman, Space Commission, for a period of one-year beyond January 14, 2021, that is up to January 14, 2022, it said.

### Ramesh Chandra Joshi takes charge as CBI's Chief Information Officer

- Senior Indian Information Service (IIS) officer Ramesh Chandra Joshi became the new face of the CBI for interactions with the media by taking charge as its chief information officer, a post lying vacant since March.
- A 1993-batch IIS officer, Mr Joshi was posted as the additional director general of the government's Press Information Bureau (PIB), from where he was handpicked for the high-pressure job at the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

### Col Narendra 'Bull' Kumar, who helped India secure Siachen glacier, passes away

- Ace mountaineer Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar who helped India secure the Siachen Glacier passed away at the Army Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi due to age-related illness.
- Col Kumar, who was awarded the Kirti Chakra, Padma Shri, Arjun award and the McGregor medal, carried out multiple expeditions in the Siachen glacier area in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

### Dr Harsh Vardhan nominated as member on GAVI Board by Global Alliance for Vaccines & Immunisation

- Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has been nominated a member on the GAVI Board by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan will represent India for two years starting from 2021 to 2023. The GAVI Board oversees the operations of the Vaccine Alliance and monitors programme implementation.

## AWARDS

### US President presents 'Legion of Merit' award to PM Modi for his leadership in elevating US-India strategic partnership

- US President Donald Trump presented the prestigious Legion of Merit award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power.
- India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, accepted the award on behalf of the prime minister from the US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien at the White House. Mr Modi was presented with the highest degree Chief Commander of the Legion of Merit which is given only to the Head of State or Government
- Mr Modi was given the award in recognition of his steadfast leadership and vision that has accelerated India's emergence as a global power and elevated the strategic partnership between the United States and India to address global challenges.
- The US President also presented the Legion of Merit to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The awards were received by their respective ambassadors in Washington DC.

### Haryana awarded Digital India Awards 2020 for eGovernance

- Haryana Government's efforts to employ e-Governance to make delivery of citizen-centric services to the people in a time-bound and hassle-free manner, have been recognised and rewarded by the Central Government as President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has conferred Digital India Awards 2020 to the state Government on December 30 for its Antyodaya Saral Project.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) under the category 'Excellence in Digital Governance — State/UT' conferred the award.

### Pt Satish Vyas conferred Tansen Samman at the World Music Festival

- In Madhya Pradesh, 96<sup>th</sup> Tansen Music Festival began in Gwalior with strict COVID-19 guidelines in place. In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player, Pandit Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman.
- Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.



# IMPORTANT DAYS

## World Braille Day: 4 January

- **World Braille Day is observed on January 4 every year to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille language. Born on January 4, 1809 in France, Braille is credited for developing Braille language for blind and visually impaired people.**
- **The first World Braille Day was celebrated on January 4 in 2019** after it got approval from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) via a proclamation in November 2018.
- **World Braille Day Theme spreads awareness about Braille and other accessible forms of communication.** Everyone deserves the same accommodations, service, and right of ability.

## World war orphans day on 6<sup>th</sup> January

- **The World Day of War Orphans is observed on January 6 every year.** The day aims to raise awareness about children who have been orphaned due to wars. The objective of the day ensures to voice out the predicament of war orphans and highlight the emotional, social, and physical challenges children face while growing up.
- This special day enables the international community to recognize the sufferings and plights of orphans during world War. **This day is organised by French organisation, SOS Enfants en Detresses.**
- **Displaced children are a big part of IDPs they (International Displaced Persons) who are forced to leave everything - including their homes, places of work and possessions.** It is important that they don't suffer and die of hunger and disease.

### References:

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The Economics Times  
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Press Information Bureau of India  
The Times of India  
Business Standard  
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# QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following countries will host first-ever trail and mountain running worlds in 2021?  
(a) Myanmar (b) Thailand  
(c) Japan (d) Malaysia
2. Name the first woman who has been appointed as the chairperson of International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the policy advisory committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).  
(a) Margareta Thomson (b) Andriana Matthews  
(c) Magdalena Andersson (d) Istuti Kazaka
3. The Rajaji Tiger Reserve is welcomed the first big cat from Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve in the first such relocation in \_\_\_\_\_ aimed at tiger population management.  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand  
(c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Himachal Pradesh
4. Which of the following central Asian countries signed a loan and guarantee agreements with three development banks to finance construction of the Central Asian nation's first solar photovoltaic power plant recently?  
(a) Turkmenistan (b) Tajikistan (c) Uzbekistan (d) Kazakhstan
5. Which of the following states has been awarded with Digital India Awards 2020 for eGovernance for its Antyodaya Saral Project?  
(a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Jharkhand
6. Recently, US President Donald Trump presented the prestigious Legion of Merit to \_\_\_\_\_ for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power.  
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b) President Ramnath Kovind  
(c) Home Minister Amit Shah (d) Chief Minister of Gujarat Vijay Rupani
7. Who will become the first Indian Premier League (IPL) champion to be included in the IPL governing council?  
(a) Anil Kumble (b) Sunil Joshi (c) Rajesh Chauhan (d) Pragyan Ojha
8. Recently, Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari has said that construction of \_\_\_\_\_ Green Express Highways which is in progress will prove to be a game changer in the field of transportation and traveling.  
(a) 8 (b) 12 (c) 18 (d) 22
9. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will establish a Regional Academic Centre for Space at \_\_\_\_\_ to facilitate short and long term projects at the institute.  
(a) IIT-Bombay (b) IIT-Varanasi (c) IIT-Delhi (d) IIT-Madras
10. India's first hot air balloon wildlife safari in a tiger reserve was launched in the world famous \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (b) Satpura Tiger Reserve  
(c) Pench Tiger Reserve (d) Panna Tiger Reserve
11. The first country in the world to receive the Blue Flag Certification for 8 beaches in a single attempt is  
(a) USA (b) Russia (c) China (d) India
12. Recently, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the validity of vehicular documents such as driving licenses (DLs), registration certificates (RCs) and Permits till \_\_\_\_\_ in the light of need to prevent the spread of Covid-19.  
(a) 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (b) 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021  
(c) 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021 (d) 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

13. What is the name of the India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, PCV inaugurated by Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan recently?  
(a) Pneumostat (b) Pneumopill (c) Pneumosil (d) Pneumolite
14. Recently, Indian and \_\_\_\_\_ Navy concluded the two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX in the South China Sea as part of efforts to boost maritime cooperation between the two countries.  
(a) Vietnamese (b) Indonesian (c) Malaysian (d) Singaporean
15. The much-awaited Tansen Music Festival began in:  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Rajasthan (c) Haryana (d) Madhya Pradesh
16. The world's largest radio telescope, the Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Telescope or FAST has been installed in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Chile (b) Peru (c) China (d) Canada
17. Which of the following companies launched premium-grade Petrol (100 Octane) in the country?  
(a) Bharat Petroleum (b) Indian Oil (c) Hindustan Petroleum (d) Reliance Energy Limited
18. Which of the following states has given away state level Vikram, Eklavya, Vishwamitra and Life Time Achievement awards at the sports award ceremony?  
(a) Haryana (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Maharashtra
19. Which of the following countries recently launched remote sensing satellite "Yaogan-33"?  
(a) Japan (b) South Korea (c) China (d) Thailand
20. Who among the following cricketers has been named as the ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade?  
(a) Mahendra Singh Dhoni (b) Kane Williamson  
(c) Jason Holder (d) Virat Kohli
21. Which of the following municipal corporations recently signed an MoU with UNDP India to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond (SIB)?  
(a) Pune (b) Pimpri Chinchwad (c) Kanpur (d) Shimla
22. Who has been recently nominated a member on the GAVI Board by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Rajnath Singh  
(c) Shri Piyush Goyal (d) Dr. Harsh Vardhan
23. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of \_\_\_\_\_ Dedicated Freight Corridor through video conferencing.  
(a) Eastern (b) Western (c) Northern (d) Southern
24. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said that the newly designed Vistadome tourist coach successfully completed \_\_\_\_\_ kilometre per hour during speed trial.  
(a) 120 (b) 150 (c) 180 (d) 200
25. Which of the following banks has unveiled a digital lending platform to enable prospective retail clients to get loans digitally through a paperless process and m-connect + app?  
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) Union Bank of India  
(c) Canara Bank (d) Bank of Baroda
26. Recently, Hexagon Capability Center India (HCCI), the largest product development unit of the technology major Hexagon AB has launched the nation's first Artificial Intelligence Community Centre, HexArt, in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bengaluru (b) Hyderabad (c) Jaipur (d) Bhopal

27. Indian Space startup, Skyroot Aerospace, has proven the crucial propulsion technology of their maiden rocket \_\_\_\_\_ with the latest test-firing of an engine.  
(a) Vikram-1 (b) Vikram-5 (c) Virat-6 (d) Vinay-9
28. Recently, Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan, virtually inaugurated India's highest Meteorological Centre in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Leh (b) Manali (c) Tawang (d) Rangpo
29. Who has become the first indigenous inductee into the Australia's cricket Hall of Fame?  
(a) Tom Blundell (b) David Boon (c) Chris Mcdermott (d) Johnny Mullagh
30. Who among the following took charge as CBI's Chief Information Officer?  
(a) N.K. Pant (b) Bhaskar Rao (c) Vinay Sahasrabuddhe (d) Ramesh Chandra Joshi
31. Recently, India's first pollinator park opened in:  
(a) Kolhapur (b) Udaipur (c) Guwahati (d) Haldwani
32. North East's first-ever specialised Ginger Processing Plant in \_\_\_\_\_ is being revived and is likely to become functional in the beginning of 2021.  
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Meghalaya (d) Assam
33. Who among the following released the report – 'Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat' prepared by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council, TIFAC in New Delhi?  
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
(b) Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan  
(c) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman  
(d) Home Minister Amit Shah
34. President-elect Joe Biden nominated \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as the first female deputy defense secretary.  
(a) Andriana Jose (b) Kathleen Hicks (c) Prosper Heta (d) Catherine Johnson
35. Which of the following banks is set to appoint former economic affairs secretary Atanu Chakraborty as the next chairman of the bank?  
(a) ICICI Bank (b) Axis Bank (c) HDFC Bank (d) RBL Bank
36. Recently, Unicas, a joint venture between the financial services companies Cahsaa and United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society, announced the launch of the world's first physical branch of a cryptocurrency bank in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bengaluru (b) Hyderabad (c) Jaipur (d) Bhopal
37. Name India's first indigenously designed missile system which can target fighter jets, cruise missiles, drones and other aerial assets.  
(a) Anant (b) Akash (c) Unnat (d) Prakash
38. Recently, Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO along with Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of \_\_\_\_\_ India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container.  
(a) SAHAYAK-NG (b) SAHAYATA-UG (c) SANTOSH-JK (d) UNNAT-OL
39. Who has been recently knighted in Britain's traditional New Year Honours list after winning seven Formula One world titles?  
(a) Michael Schumacher (b) Valtteri Bottas (c) Lewis Hamilton (d) Charles Leclerc
40. Who has been recently crowned as Player of the Century at Globe Soccer Awards?  
(a) Luka Modric (b) Ronaldo (c) Lionel Messi (d) Cristiano Ronaldo



41. Which of the following states is related with “Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana” a compensation scheme aimed at providing security cover to farmers in case of crop damage due to natural calamity?  
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Jharkhand
42. Which of the following states virtually launched a mobile application ‘DigiNest to give people access to the state government’s directory, which can be synced with a Smartphone?  
(a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Himachal Pradesh
43. Recently, Algeria’s president signed the country’s new constitution into law. Who is the current President of Algeria?  
(a) Abdelaziz Bouteflika (b) Abdelmadjid Tebboune  
(c) Ahmed Gaid Salah (d) Ahmed Ben Bella
44. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said transaction through Unified Payment Interface platform would continue to be free. NPCI was setup in:  
(a) 1998 (b) 2001 (c) 2005 (d) 2008
45. Which of the following releases report on Trends and Progress of Banking in India?  
(a) State Bank of India (b) SIDBI  
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) NABARD
46. The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in the country has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Rajkot (b) Gandhinagar (c) Jaipur (d) Lucknow
47. Recently, the central government set up a consortium of 10 national research institutions, which will collaborate for carrying out effective surveillance and monitoring of the genomic variations observed in the new SARS nCov-2 virus strain, recently identified from the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Germany (b) United Kingdom (c) Canada (d) France
48. Who has been recently given a one-year extension as the Secretary, Department of Space?  
(a) Sivan K (b) Natrajan H (c) Ravindran Juneja (d) Avinash Chandra
49. Name the first recipient of the iconic medal which is named after former Australian skipper and cricket Johnny Mullagh.  
(a) Virat Kohli (b) Jasprit Bumrah (c) Ajinkya Rahane (d) Ravindra Jadeja
50. World Braille Day is celebrated every year on:  
(a) 1<sup>st</sup> January (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> January (c) 4<sup>th</sup> January (d) 6<sup>th</sup> January
51. Which of the following Indian states signed a contract to set up the first ethanol plant in country under the Public-private partnership (PPP) model?  
(a) Haryana (b) Gujarat (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Jharkhand
52. Who will be new Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court?  
(a) Justice Sanjib Banerjee (b) Kumari Justice Hima Kohli  
(c) Dr. Justice S. Muralidhar (d) Justice Pankaj Mithal
53. Who has become the first person to head Indian Army’s human rights cell?  
(a) Amit Rathore (b) Deepak Razdan (c) Gautam Chauhan (d) Ravindran Murlidhar
54. Recently, who launched the Global Pravasi Rishta portal and mobile App, to connect with Indian Diaspora across the world?  
(a) Amit Shah (b) Rajnath Singh (c) V. Muraleedharan (d) Nirmala Sitharaman

55. India is beginning its \_\_\_\_\_ year tenure as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council.  
(a) One (b) Two (c) Three (d) Five
56. Recently, Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has recognised four tea producing sites spanning across three countries as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). Which of the following countries is not among the three?  
(a) China (b) India (c) Japan (d) Korea
57. The Defence Research and Development Organisation is an agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development in Ministry of Defence of the Government of India headquartered in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Delhi (b) Pune (c) Bhopal (d) Hyderabad
58. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a USD 231-million loan to augment electricity generation capacity in \_\_\_\_\_ through construction of a 120-megawatt (MW) hydroelectric power plant.  
(a) Assam (b) Nagaland (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Haryana
59. Recently, A 'monolith', the likes of which have appeared and vanished in different parts of the world since November, has now emerged in a garden in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Ahmedabad city, Gujarat (b) Pune city, Maharashtra  
(c) Lucknow city, Uttar Pradesh (d) Shimla city, Himachal Pradesh
60. Recently, Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar passed away Hospital in New Delhi. He was a:  
(a) Footballer (b) Mountaineer (c) Para Glider (d) Cricketer
61. Recently, which of the following countries has changed one word in its national anthem to reflect what its Prime Minister called "the spirit of unity" and the country's indigenous population?  
(a) New Zealand (b) Australia (c) France (d) Canada
62. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the \_\_\_\_\_ Natural Gas Pipeline to the nation through video conferencing.  
(a) Mumbai-Pune (b) Kochi – Mangaluru (c) Kolkata-Haldia (d) Lucknow-Kanpur
63. Recently, The government announced that it would open three missions after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the proposal from the Ministry of External Affairs. Which is not among three missions?  
(a) Estonia (b) Niger (c) Dominican Republic (d) Paraguay
64. Which of the following companies has recently opened the world's largest Supercharger station in China's Shanghai?  
(a) Samsung (b) Tesla (c) Hitachi (d) Huawei
65. According to BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020 report by Wizikey, which of the following banks has emerged as the top player among the 100 Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) companies in the country?  
(a) Axis Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) Yes Bank
66. China's first Mars exploration mission \_\_\_\_\_ travelled more than 400 million km and is expected to enter Mars orbit next month.  
(a) Tianwen-1 (b) Sianwen-2 (c) Diater-5 (d) Alkoz-9
67. Who among the following inaugurated the Virtual Agri-hackathon 2020 in New Delhi?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi  
(b) Shri Rajnath Singh  
(c) Shri Narendra Singh Tomar  
(d) Smt Nirmala Sitharaman

68. Recently, Leon Mendonca becomes India's \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) India's 67<sup>th</sup> Grandmaster  
(b) India's youngest footballer  
(c) India's youngest person to attain graduate degree  
(d) India's youngest Doctor
69. World War Orphans Day is observed on:  
(a) 1<sup>st</sup> January (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> January (c) 4<sup>th</sup> January (d) 6<sup>th</sup> January
70. Who has been recently conferred with Tansen Samman at the World Music Festival in Gwalior?  
(a) Pandit Sumit Vats (b) Pandit Anupam Bhaduria  
(c) Pandit Satish Vyas (d) Pandit Sudhanshu Mukherjee



Career  
Launcher

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **b** Thailand's northern city of Chiang Mai will host the inaugural world mountain and trail championships next year.
2. **c** The members of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC), the policy advisory committee of the Board of Governors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have selected Sweden's Minister for Finance, Ms. Magdalena Andersson, as Chair of the Committee for a term of three years.
3. **b** The Rajaji Tiger Reserve is welcomed the first big cat from Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve in the first such relocation in Uttarakhand aimed at tiger population management.
4. **c** The Uzbek government signed loan and guarantee agreements with three development banks to finance construction of the Central Asian nation's first solar photovoltaic power plant.
5. **a** Haryana Government's efforts to employ e-Governance to make delivery of citizen-centric services to the people in a time-bound and hassle-free manner, have been recognised and rewarded by the Central Government as President of India, Ram Nath Kovind will confer Digital India Awards 2020 to the state Government on December 30 for its Antyodaya Saral Project.
6. **a** US President Donald Trump presented the prestigious Legion of Merit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power.
7. **d** Pragyant Ojha, the former India left-arm spinner, will become the first Indian Premier League (IPL) champion to be included in the IPL governing council.
8. **d** Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari has said that the government is fully committed towards development in the field of infrastructure. Construction of 22 Green Express Highways which is in progress will prove to be a game changer in the field of transportation and traveling.
9. **b** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will establish a Regional Academic Centre for Space at IIT-Varanasi to facilitate short and long term projects at the institute.
10. **a** India's first hot air balloon wildlife safari in a tiger reserve was launched in the world famous Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve by Madhya Pradesh forest minister Vijay Shah.
11. **d** India, which has become the first country in the world to receive the Blue Flag Certification for 8 beaches in a single attempt, hosted the Blue flags in all its beaches.
12. **b** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the validity of vehicular documents such as driving licenses (DLs), registration certificates (RCs) and Permits till 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021 in the light of need to prevent the spread of Covid-19.
13. **c** Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, PCV. The vaccine named Pneumosil has been developed by the Serum Institute of India Private Limited, SIIPL in collaboration with partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
14. **a** Indian and Vietnamese Navy concluded the two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX in the South China Sea as part of efforts to boost maritime cooperation between the two countries.
15. **d** In Madhya Pradesh, the much-awaited Tansen Music Festival began in Gwalior with strict COVID-19 guidelines in place.
16. **c** The world's largest radio telescope, the Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Telescope or FAST has been installed in Pingtang in China's Guizhou province.



- 17. b** In a move that can be a potential game-changer in the petroleum fuel retail market in India, Indian Oil launched premium-grade Petrol (100 Octane) in the country.
- 18. b** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan felicitated sportspersons, coaches and sports personalities with state level sports award for the year 2019 at Bhopal.
- 19. c** China has successfully launched a new remote sensing satellite into space.
- 20. d** Virat Kohli has been named as the ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade while Steve Smith has been adjudged as the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Decade.
- 21. b** Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) recently signed an MoU with UNDP India to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond (SIB).
- 22. d** Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has been nominated a member on the GAVI Board by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation.
- 23. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, EDFC through video conferencing.
- 24. c** Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said that the newly designed Vistadome tourist coach successfully completed 180 kilometre per hour during speed trial.
- 25. d** Bank of Baroda (BoB) has unveiled a digital lending platform to enable prospective retail clients to get loans digitally through a paperless process.
- 26. b** Hexagon Capability Center India (HCCI), the largest product development unit of the technology major Hexagon AB has launched the nation's first Artificial Intelligence Community Centre, HexArt, was launched in Hyderabad.
- 27. a** Indian Space startup, Skyroot Aerospace, has proven the crucial propulsion technology of their maiden rocket Vikram-1, with the latest test-firing of an engine.
- 28. a** Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan, virtually inaugurated India's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh.
- 29. d** Johnny Mullagh, who played on the 1868 Aboriginal team that was Australia's first to tour England, became the first indigenous inductee into the country's cricket Hall of Fame.
- 30. d** Senior Indian Information Service (IIS) officer Ramesh Chandra Joshi became the new face of the CBI for interactions with the media by taking charge as its chief information officer, a post lying vacant since March.
- 31. d** The Uttarakhand forest department dedicated the newly built Pollinator Park to the public, claiming it to be the country's first such park, spread over 4 acres in Haldwani in Nainital district.
- 32. c** Minister for Development of North Eastern Region, DoNER Dr Jitendra Singh has informed that North East's first-ever specialised Ginger Processing Plant at Ri-Bhoui district in Meghalaya is being revived and is likely to become functional in the beginning of 2021.
- 33. b** Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan released the report - Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat prepared by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council, TIFAC in New Delhi.
- 34. b** President-elect Joe Biden nominated former Pentagon official Kathleen Hicks to serve as the first female deputy defense secretary.

- 35. c** India's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank is set to appoint former economic affairs secretary Atanu Chakraborty as the next chairman of the bank.
- 36. c** Unicas, a joint venture between the financial services companies Cahsaa and United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society, announced the launch of the world's first physical branch of a cryptocurrency bank in the Indian city of Jaipur.
- 37. b** Akash is a surface-to-air missile with a range of 25 kilometres. Developed by DRDO, it is India's first indigenously designed missile system and can target fighter jets, cruise missiles, drones and other aerial assets.
- 38. a** Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO along with Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of SAHAYAK-NG India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container
- 39. c** Lewis Hamilton has been knighted in Britain's traditional New Year Honours list after equalling Michael Schumacher's record of seven Formula One world titles.
- 40. d** Cristiano Ronaldo and Pep Guardiola were honoured at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai, the duo named player and coach of the century respectively.
- 41. d** Jharkhand's Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana will take three months to come into effect.
- 42. b** Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh virtually launched a mobile application 'DigiNest to give people access to the state government's directory, which can be synced with a smartphone.
- 43. b** The current president is Abdelmadjid Tebboune, who won the 2019 Algerian presidential election on 12 December and assumed the office on 19 December 2019.
- 44. d** National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said transaction through Unified Payment Interface platform would continue to be free. Set up in 2008, NPCI is an umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- 45. c** The rise in NPAs may partly be attributable to stagnant growth in loans and advances and weak balance sheets, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Trends and Progress of Banking in India report.
- 46. b** The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in the country has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in Gandhinagar.
- 47. b** The central government set up a consortium of 10 national research institutions, which will collaborate for carrying out effective surveillance and monitoring of the genomic variations observed in the new SARS nCov-2 virus strain, recently identified from the United Kingdom.
- 48. a** Sivan K. has been given an one-year extension, till January 14, 2022, as the Secretary, Department of Space.
- 49. c** Indian stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane, who won Man of the Match for his vital ton at the Boxing Day Test, was bestowed with the Mullagh Medal.
- 50. c** World Braille Day is an international day on 4 January and celebrates awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and visually impaired people.
- 51. c** Chhattisgarh government recently signed a contract execution (MoU) for the country's first ethanol plant to be set up in the state under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.
- 52. d** Justice Pankaj Mithal will be Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court and Justice Sanjib Banerjee, Chief Justice of Madras.

- 53. c** Major General Gautam Chauhan took charge as the first Additional Director General Human Rights in the Indian Army and will work under the India Army Vice Chief Lieutenant General SK Saini.
- 54. c** Minister of State for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan launched the Global Pravasi Rishta portal and mobile App, to connect with Indian Diaspora across the world.
- 55. b** India is beginning its two-year tenure as a Non-Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council.
- 56. b** All the four sites chosen by the FAO are in the Asian continent and include two tea production sites from China- the world's largest producer- and one each from Korea and Japan, according to the information provided on the FAO website.
- 57. a** The Defence Research and Development Organisation is an agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development in Ministry of Defence of the Government of India, charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in Delhi, India.
- 58. a** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a USD 231-million loan to augment electricity generation capacity in Assam through construction of a 120-megawatt (MW) hydroelectric power plant.
- 59. a**
- 60. b** Ace mountaineer Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar who helped India secure the Siachen Glacier, passed away at the Army Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi due to age-related illness.
- 61. b** Australia has changed one word in its national anthem to reflect what the Prime Minister called "the spirit of unity" and the country's indigenous population
- 62. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Kochi - Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to the nation through video conferencing.
- 63. b** The government announced that it would open three missions in Estonia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic in 2021, after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the proposal from the Ministry of External Affairs.
- 64. b** Tesla is adding more and more electric vehicles to the roads and to support its ecosystem, the EV maker has also been quickly expanding its Supercharger network.
- 65. b** HDFC Bank has emerged as the top player among the 100 Banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) companies in the country.
- 66. a** China's first Mars exploration mission Tianwen-1 travelled more than 400 million km and is expected to enter Mars orbit next month.
- 67. c** Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the Virtual Agri-hackathon 2020 in New Delhi.
- 68. a** The year 2020 concludes with yet another good news as Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67<sup>th</sup> Grandmaster at the age of 14 years 9 months and 17 days.
- 69. d** This special day enables the international community to recognize the sufferings and plights of orphans during world War.
- 70. c** In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player, Pandit Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman.