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Preface

Dear Readers,

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 month for the upcoming exams like Banking, Insurance, CLAT, MBA etc. 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 fulfil aspirations.

Happy Reading!

Best Wishes

Team CL



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh via video conferencing on 4 February 2021. The Prime Minister also released a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura centenary during the event.
- “Incident of Chauri Chaura was not limited to a police station being set on fire. The message of the incident was huge. Due to various reasons, it was treated as a minor incident, but we should see it in context. The fire was not just in the station but in the hearts of people,” PM Modi said.
- Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath was also present on the occasion. The centenary celebrations and various events planned by the State government began in all 75 districts of the state. The Uttar Pradesh government has planned to develop the ‘Chauri Chaura Shaheed Memorial’ in Gorakhpur as a heritage tourist spot ahead as the state government decides to hold yearlong celebrations to mark 100 years of the ‘Chauri Chaura’ incident.
- On 5 February 1922, participants of the Non-cooperation movement clashed with police resulting in the deaths of about 22 policemen and 3 civilians at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district in the United Provinces (present-day Uttar Pradesh).

On 1 August, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi had launched the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British government. It involved using swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods, especially machine made cloth, and legal, educational and administrative institutions, “refusing to assist a ruler who misrules”. On 4 February, about 2500 people marched towards the Chauri Chaura market in order to picket a shop selling liquor. One of their leaders was arrested. A group of people then marched towards the police station demanding the release of the arrested leader. The police fired into the crowd killing some people and injuring many volunteers. In retaliation, the crowd proceeded to set the police station on fire. Some of the policemen who tried to escape were caught and battered to death. A lot of police property, including weapons, was destroyed. Mahatma Gandhi condemned the crime of the policemen’s killing. The volunteer groups in nearby villages were disbanded, and a Chauri Chaura Support Fund was set up to demonstrate “genuine sympathy” and seek atonement. Gandhi decided to stop the Non-Cooperation Movement, which he saw as having been tainted by unforgivable violence. He bent the Congress Working Committee to his will, and on 12th February, 1922, the satyagraha (movement) was formally suspended. Other leaders like Motilal Nehru and CR Das recorded their dismay at Gandhi’s decision and decided to establish the Swaraj Party.

VP M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated National Tribal Festival ‘Aadi Mahotsav’ in Delhi

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Aadi Mahotsav, a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the National Capital. It will continue till 15th of this month. The Tribal Affairs Ministry said, the Aadi Mahotsav - A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce is a successful annual initiative that was commenced in 2017. The festival was an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.

- The festival at Dilli Haat in INA will comprise display and sale of tribal art and craft, medicine, cuisine and folk performances. Around one thousand tribal artisans, artists and chefs from more than 20 States of the country will participate and provide a glimpse of their rich traditional culture.
- Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED), as the nodal agency under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has been working to improve the income and livelihoods of the tribal people, while preserving their way of life and traditions.

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) launched Van Dhan Samajik Doori Jagrookta Abhiyaan, which is aimed at educating Tribals engaged in gathering Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in forest areas, on covid-19 response, key preventive behaviour like social distancing, home quarantine, and hygiene tips. Van Dhan Kendras, established under the scheme initiated by TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs are leading the way in helping tribals generate their livelihood in these distressed times. TRIFED is a national level cooperative body under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. It was established under the Multi-state co-operative societies act 1984 under the former Ministry of Welfare. Arjun Munda is the current Minister of Tribal Affairs.

Uttar Pradesh: Varanasi receives second cruise boat under PRASAD scheme

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, received the second cruise boat under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme of the Central Government.
- This two-tier cruise boat will run in waters of Ganga River and show the tourists the spectacular view of 84 ghats of Kashi. The cruise named UP tourism ferry reached through waterways from Goa to Varanasi via Kolkata, Odisha, Patna and Ghazipur in more than two months and hundreds of localites gathered at Ramnagar terminal to get the first look of it.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state's Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addresses inaugural ceremony of ASEAN India Hackathon

- Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addressed the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN India Hackathon. Hackathon will provide a unique opportunity to India and ASEAN broad themes of "Blue Economy" and "Education".
- ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon is an initiative taken by the Ministry of Education. The ASEAN India Hackathon is being organized online from 1st -3rd February 2021 and prize distribution will take place on 4th February 2021. This unique hackathon offers opportunities for all the 10 ASEAN countries and India to forward their economic and cultural ties through collaboration in education, science and technology.
- The ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon is an initiative taken by Ministry of Education on the clarion call of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi. This unique hackathon offers opportunities for all the 10 ASEAN countries and India to forward their economic and cultural ties through collaboration in education, science and technology.

The Ministry of Education (MoE), previously the Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020), is responsible for the implementation and formulation of the National Policy on Education approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. The Ministry is held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He represents the Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand in the 17th Lok Sabha. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is the First Minister of Education in the Indian. He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning 'Our Master' and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.

Defence Minister inaugurated Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's second LCA production line

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's second LCA production line in Bengaluru. The indigenously designed 4.5 generation Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas is the lightest and smallest fly by wire multirole combat aircraft. The inauguration of a second plant for LCA will enable HAL to produce 16 aircraft annually.
- The Defence Minister will be felicitated by the state Government for clearing the proposal of procuring 83 LCA Mk 1A aircraft from HAL. 48000 crore rupees deal will generate jobs in the state and also support the aerospace industries in Karnataka.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. The Indian Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Ministry of Defences are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation. A military department was created by the supreme government of the British East India Company at Kolkata in the year 1776. Rajnath Singh is currently serving as the Defence Minister of India. He has been Member of parliament, Lok Sabha two times from Lucknow (Lok Sabha constituency) and once from Ghaziabad (Lok Sabha constituency).

Agricultural credit target enhanced to 16.5 lakh crore rupees in the next fiscal

- To provide adequate credit to farmers, the government has enhanced the agricultural credit target to 16.5 lakh crore rupees in next fiscal with focus on ensuring increased credit flows to animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries.
- Government has also enhanced the allocation to the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund from 30,000 to 40,000 crore rupees. It has enlarged the scope of Operation Green Scheme to include 22 perishable products besides tomatoes, onions, and potatoes. Government has also decided to integrate 1,000 more mandis with e-NAM to ensure transparency and competitiveness in the agricultural market.
- The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund will be made available to APMCs for augmenting their infrastructure facilities. Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) will be launched to provide universal water supply in all 4,378 Urban Local Bodies.

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. Narendra Singh Tomar is the Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Minister of Rural Development in the Second Modi ministry. He is a member of the 17th Lok Sabha from Morena, Madhya Pradesh.

137 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity installed in country, says RK Singh

- The New and Renewable Energy Ministry said that around 137 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity has been installed in the country which is 36.48 per cent of the total installed electricity generation capacity in the country.
- Foreign Direct Investment up to 100 per cent under the automatic route has been permitted by the government and Project Development Cell has been set up for attracting and facilitating investment. India has committed that 40 per cent of its installed power generation capacity shall be from non-fossil fuel by the end of 2030 as a part of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions as per Paris Accord.

Raj Kumar Singh is the current Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Power, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Minister of State in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. He is a Member of the Indian Parliament for Arrah, Bihar.

2021 to be Indo-French Year of the Environment

- The Union environment ministry launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment along with Barbara Pompili, the French Minister for Ecological Transition.
- The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on five main themes including environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, renewable energy and energy efficiency according to a statement by the ministry.
- From the French side, it will be implemented by the Ministry of Ecological Transition along with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. From the India, the projects will be coordinated by MoEFCC along with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

World Environment Day, hosted by Colombia this 2020, is the most renowned day for environmental action. Since 1974, it has been celebrated every year on 5 June: engaging governments, businesses, celebrities and citizens to focus their efforts on a pressing environmental issue. This year, the theme is biodiversity – a concern that is both urgent and existential. Recent events, from bushfires in Brazil, the United States, and Australia to locust infestations across East Africa – and now, a global disease pandemic – demonstrate the interdependence of humans and the webs of life, in which they exist.

India's first wetland conservation centre comes up in Chennai

- Coinciding with the World Wetland Day, India got its first specialised institution - Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCN) - in Chennai which will work as a knowledge hub for various stakeholders for conserving wetlands that occupy 4.6% of the country's total land area. The new governmental centre was announced by the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Babul Supriyo on World Wetland Day on 2 February 2021.
- It will address specific research needs and knowledge gaps to address wetlands and their management and bring capacity development and cutting-edge research to wetlands in India. It is also positioned to apply integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of India's 42 globally-significant 'Ramsar' wetland sites.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed in 1971. Ramsar convention is an inter-governmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO and came into force in 1975. A Ramsar site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' victory flame received at Air Force Station Adampur

- As part of 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' celebration commemorating 50 years of the 1971 war triumph against Pakistan, one of the victory flames was received at Air Force Station Adampur.
- The flame was received in a grand reception by Air Commodore GKJ Reddy. On the occasion many Air veterans were felicitated for their invaluable contribution towards the nation. The ceremony was also attended by next of kin of Late Flying Officer Nirmaljit Singh Sekhon.
- Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day is being observed. This day is celebrated on 14th of January every year to honour services rendered by veterans of the Army. This year is being celebrated as Swarnim Vijay Varsh. It marks 50th Anniversary of 1971 Indo-Pak War. The Army Chief said, this entire year will be celebrated as Swarnim Vijay Varsh to mark 1971 war victory.

Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, and its professional head is the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), who is a four-star general. Two officers have been conferred with the rank of field marshal, a five-star rank, which is a ceremonial position of great honour. General Manoj Mukund Naravane is a Four Star general of the Indian Army and the 28th Chief of the Army Staff (COAS).

Punjab CM launches ‘Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai’ mission

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh virtually launched the ‘Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai’ mission as part of the government’s campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households by March next year.
- The Chief Minister also inaugurated one Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme covering 85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.

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 26th Chief Minister of Punjab and Vijayendrapal Singh Badnore is the current Governor of Punjab.

Uttar Pradesh Shravasti tops Niti Aayog aspirational district ranking in December

- Shravasti in Uttar Pradesh has topped in the ranking of aspirational districts by government think tank Niti Aayog in December 2020. Dhalai (Tripura) and Garhwa (Jharkhand) have been placed at the second and the third positions, respectively, Niti Aayog said.
- Baksa (Assam) and Bokaro (Jharkhand) have been ranked fourth and fifth, respectively. The delta rankings took into account incremental progress made by over 112 aspirational districts across six developmental areas in December 2020.
- Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure were the development areas that were taken into consideration for the ranking.
- Aspirational districts programme, launched in January 2018, aims to transform districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development. The ranking of aspirational districts is done every month.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. It was established to replace the Planning Commission which followed a top-down model. NITI Aayog is the premier policy ‘Think Tank’ of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current vice chairman is Dr. Rajiv Kumar and the current chief executive officer is Shri Amitabh Kant.

CM Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates first heliport of Assam in Majuli district

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the first heliport of the state in Majuli district.
- The heliport having facility for simultaneous landing of three helicopters was constructed at an expenditure of Rs 50 lakh. Chief Minister Mr. Sonowal said that the heliport was built with an aim to boost tourism in Majuli, which has a distinct identity as the world’s largest river island.

Jagdish Mukhi is the current Governor of Assam and Assam is known for Assam tea and Assam silk. Dispur is the capital of the state of Assam. Guwahati is the largest city of Assam and Northeastern India. Sarbananda Sonowal is current the Chief Minister of Assam. In 1874, on the formation of Assam as the Chief Commissioner’s Province, it was chosen as the headquarters of the new administration because of its convenient location between the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys and more so because the climate of Shillong was much cooler than tropical India. Shillong remained the capital of undivided Assam until the creation of the new state of Meghalaya on 21 January 1972, when Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya, and Assam moved its capital to Dispur in Guwahati.

Himachal Pradesh becomes first State to implement e-cabinet

- Himachal Pradesh has become first State in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing e-cabinet application. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated first e-cabinet at Shimla.

- The entire process from initiation of a cabinet memo, approval of the cabinet memo through concerned Secretary, Chief Secretary, concerned Minister and finally by Chief Minister to place in the cabinet has been made online.
- It will also be possible to monitor the status of implementation of cabinet decision more effectively through this application. The date of cabinet meeting will also be notified through this system after the approval of Chief Minister. The cabinet proceedings and recording of the cabinet decisions on respective agenda items and further issuance of advice to the concerned departments will also be done through the e-cabinet application.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh declared Dharamshala as the second capital of the state after Shimla, making it the third Indian state to have more than one capital. 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. While Maharashtra has Mumbai and Nagpur as its capitals, Srinagar and Jammu are the respective summer and winter capitals of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

India & Bahrain join hands for Renewable Energy

- India and Bahrain have agreed to forge deeper engagement in the field of renewable energy. The Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy which held its first meeting in virtual format underscored the importance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals.
- The two sides presented the initiatives taken, progress made and future targets set by their governments. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in July 2018 between India and Bahrain for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

Bahrain is a sovereign state in the Persian Gulf. Manama is the capital and largest city of Bahrain. Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa is the heir apparent and first deputy Prime Minister of the Bahrain. The dinar is the currency of Bahrain. The kingdom shares maritime borders with Iran, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

Kejriwal Launches 'Switch Delhi' Campaign, Plans Electric Vehicle Adoption to Fight Air Pollution

- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched 'Switch Delhi', an electric vehicle mass awareness campaign, to sensitize citizens about the benefits of switching to electric vehicles. Delhi government has rolled out incentives on the purchase of electric vehicles (EVs) among all the states.
- "Our vision is that by 2024, 25 per cent of new vehicles must be electric. Approximately Rs 30,000 subsidies are to be given for 2/3-wheelers while Rs 1.5 lakh for 4-wheelers. We are starting the 'Switch Delhi' campaign to make people aware of clean vehicles".

Delhi bordered by Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east. According to the 2011 census, Delhi city proper's population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai. Anil Baijal is the current & 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7th Chief Minister of Delhi. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be formally known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Gujarat to set up Indian Institute of Skills in Gandhinagar

- In Gujarat, the State Government has asked the Tata group to start the work on setting up Indian Institute of Skills- IIS. IIS is being set up by the Labour and Employment Department of Gujarat along with Tata Group at Nasmed village of Gandhinagar. The State Government has allotted around 20 acres of land for Tatas to start Indian Institute of Skills.
- The foundation stone for the proposed IIS at Nasmed was performed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah who is also Lok Sabha Member from Gandhinagar constituency in Gujarat. Proposed IIS at Nasmed is located in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.

- The institute is being developed on a Not-for-profit Public Private Partnership mode by the Tata Group along with the state's Labour and Employment Department. While the State Government has provided land for the Institute, Tata Education Development Trust is contributing the capital investment. In addition to Ahmedabad, the Centre has also approved Indian Institutes of Skills in Mumbai and Kanpur.

Gujarat is a state on the western coast of India with a longest coastline of India 1,600 km (990 mi). Its capital city is Gandhinagar, while its largest city is Ahmedabad. Gujarat International Finance Tec-City is a business district promoted by the Government of Gujarat through a joint venture company. GIFT City is India's first operational smart city in the Ahmedabad and international financial services centre. Acharya Devvrat is Governor of Gujarat and Vijay Rupani is the current Chief Minister of Gujarat. Gujarat has become the first state to implement newly-introduced 10 per cent reservations in government jobs and higher education for the economically weaker sections in the general category and followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

India falls to 53rd position in EIU's Democracy Index

- India slipped two places to 53rd position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, which said the "democratic backsliding" by authorities and "crackdowns" on civil liberties has led to a further decline in the country's ranking.
- However, India is ranked higher than most of its neighbouring countries. India's overall score fell from 6.9 in 2019 to 6.61 in the Index that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 167 countries.
- "With mounting pressure on India's democratic norms, India's score fell from a peak of 7.92 in 2014 to 6.61 in 2020 and its global ranking slipped from 27th (in 2014) to 53rd as a result of democratic backsliding" under the current regime. The EIU report said that in India and Thailand, "democratic backsliding by the authorities and crackdowns on civil liberties led to a further decline in their global rankings".
- Norway topped The Economist Intelligence Unit's latest Democracy Index report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?" with Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada making up the top five.
- Out of 167 countries, the Democracy Index classifies 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes, and 57 as authoritarian regimes. India has been classified as a "flawed democracy" along with countries such as the US, France, Belgium, and Brazil.
- Among India's neighbours, while Sri Lanka, at 68th rank, is classified as a flawed democracy, Bangladesh (76), Bhutan (84), and Pakistan (105) are classified in the "hybrid regime" category. Afghanistan is ranked 139th and classified as an "authoritarian regime" in the index.
- The Asia and Australasia region includes top-scoring New Zealand, which retained its fourth position in the global ranking (out of 167 countries), and persistent laggard North Korea at the bottom of the global ranking in 167th place, the EIU said in a statement.
- The region's overall score fell in 2020, but it now has five "full democracies" with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan moving up the rankings compared with 2019.

India hosts Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave

- India hosted Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers' Conclave on the sidelines of Aero India 2021. The broad theme of the conclave is 'Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'.
- There is total confirmed physical participation from 18 countries including Defence Ministers of four countries -Maldives, Comoros, Iran and Madagascar. The conclave is an initiative to promote dialogue in an institutional, economic and cooperative environment that can foster the development of peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.
- It will also address Information-sharing towards increased maritime domain awareness, maritime surveillance and co-operation, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Marine Pollution Response activities, Development of technologies and capabilities for harnessing marine resources.

- India is geographically central to the Indian Ocean and has a vast coastline of 7,500 kms. India's vision for Security and Growth for All (SAGAR), as articulated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, cannot be realised without close cooperation and engagements amongst countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Indian Ocean is the **third-largest** of the world's oceanic divisions, covering 70,560,000 km² or 19.8% of the water on Earth's surface. It is **bounded by Asia to the north, Africa to the west and Australia to the east**.

Move to declare Kaliveli wetlands a sanctuary: first declaration issued

- In a major push to declare **Kaliveli wetlands**, the **second-largest brackish water lake in South India** after **Pulicat Lake**, a bird sanctuary, the Villupuram district administration has issued the **first declaration under the Section 18 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- The decision is seen as a big win for Forest Department officials and conservationists, and their efforts to **protect this wetland that remains a safe haven for diverse flora and fauna**. The **Kaliveli wetland in Tamil Nadu is ecologically important** and the decision is expected to enhance the conservation activities in the biodiversity hotspot.

As per the 2004 report by the Indian Bird Conservation Network and Bird Life International, the **Kaliveli wetlands support around 20,000 birds every year**. The lake also works as a **feeding ground for long-distance migrants who migrate from the cold subarctic Central Asia and Siberia**. Some of the **migratory birds include Black-tailed Godwits, White Stork, Eurasian Curlew, Ruff and Dublin**. This is why; there is a demand to convert the wetlands into a bird sanctuary.

Pact signed to establish India's first geothermal field development project in Leh

- A historic tripartite agreement for establishing India's first-ever geothermal field development project has been signed, with Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur terming it a step towards achieving the goal of carbon-neutral Ladakh.
- The pact was signed between Union Territory Administration Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)-Leh and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Energy Centre in presence of Mr. Mathur and MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal on the sidelines of the first developmental conclave.
- "The signing of the MoU with ONGC for the first geothermal project in India is a promising initiative towards innovative and sustainable development of Ladakh and also a step towards achieving the goal of carbon-neutral Ladakh."

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 re-constituted the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, **Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**, with effect from **31 October 2019**. **Girish Chandra Murmu** is the first lieutenant governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. **Manoj Sinha** is the second and current Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. **Ladakh** is a region administered by India as a **union territory**; **Radha Krishna Mathur** is the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

First ever Digital Budget 2021-22 presented

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented the **Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament**, which is the first budget of this new decade and also a digital one in the backdrop of unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. Laying a vision for **AatmaNirbhar Bharat**, she said this is an expression of 130 crore Indians who have full confidence in their capabilities and skills. She said that Budget proposals will further strengthen the **Sankalp of Nation First, Doubling Farmer's Income, Strong Infrastructure, Healthy India, Good Governance**, Opportunities for youth, Education for All, Women Empowerment, and Inclusive Development among others. Additionally, also on the path to fast-implementation are the 13 promises of Budget 2015-16-which were to materialize during the AmrutMahotsav of 2022, on the 75th year of our Independence.
- The key highlights of the Union Budget 2021-22 are as follows: **6 pillars of the Union Budget 2021-22:**
1. Health and Wellbeing

2. Physical & Financial Capital, and Infrastructure

3. Inclusive Development for Aspirational India

4. Reinvigorating Human Capital

5. Innovation and R&D

6. Minimum Government and Maximum Governance

• 1. Health and Wellbeing

- There is substantial increase in investment in Health Infrastructure and the **Budget outlay for Health and Wellbeing is Rs 2,23,846 crore in BE 2021-22 as against this year's BE of Rs 94,452 crore, an increase of 137 percentage.** The Finance Minister announced that a new centrally sponsored scheme, **PM AatmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana**, will be **launched with an outlay of about Rs 64, 180 crore over 6 years.** This will develop capacities of primary, secondary, and tertiary care Health Systems, strengthen existing national institutions, and create new institutions, to cater to detection and cure of new and emerging diseases.
- **Provision of Rs 35,000 crore made for Covid-19 vaccine in BE 2021-22. The Pneumococcal Vaccine, a Made in India product, presently limited to only 5 states, will be rolled out across the country aimed at averting 50,000 child deaths annually.**

• 2. Physical and Financial Capital and Infrastructure: AatmaNirbhar Bharat-Production Linked Incentive Scheme

- Finance Minister said that for a **USD 5 trillion economy, our manufacturing sector has to grow in double digits on a sustained basis.** Our manufacturing companies need to become an integral part of global supply chains, possess core competence and cutting-edge technology. **To achieve all of the above, PLI schemes to create manufacturing global champions for an AatmaNirbhar Bharat have been announced for 13 sectors.** For this, the government has **committed nearly Rs.1.97 lakh crore in the next 5 years starting FY 2021-22.**
- **The National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) which the Finance Minister announced in December 2019 is the first-of-its-kind, whole-of-government exercise ever undertaken. The NIP was launched with 6835 projects; the project pipeline has now expanded to 7,400 projects. Around 217 projects worth Rs 1.10 lakh crore under some key infrastructure Ministries have been completed.**

• 3. Inclusive Development for Aspirational India

- Under the pillar of Inclusive Development for Aspirational India, the Finance Minister **announced to cover Agriculture and Allied sectors, farmers' welfare and rural India, migrant workers and labour, and financial inclusion.**
- Dwelling on agriculture, she said that the Government is committed to the welfare of farmers. **The MSP regime has undergone a sea change to assure price that is at least 1.5 times the cost of production across all commodities.** The procurement has also continued to increase at a steady pace. This has resulted in increase in payment to farmers substantially.

• 4. Reinvigorating Human Capital

- The Finance Minister said that the **National Education Policy (NEP) announced recently has had good reception, while adding that more than 15,000 schools will be qualitatively strengthened to include all components of the National Education Policy.** She also announced that **100 new Sainik Schools will be set up in partnership with NGOs/private schools/states.** She also proposed to set up a **Higher Education Commission of India, as an umbrella body having 4 separate vehicles for standard-setting, accreditation, regulation, and funding.** For accessible higher education in Ladakh, Government proposed to set up a **Central University in Leh.**
- According to the Finance Minister's speech, **for 2021-22 a total amount of Rs 93,224 crore will be allocated for the Ministry of Education.** This consists of Rs 54,874 crore for Department of School Education and Literacy and Rs 38,350 crore for the Department of Higher Education. **The allocation for 2021-22 in respect to Education is 6.13% less than the allocation made by the Union Government in 2020-21.** In 2020-21, the

budgeted estimate for the Ministry of Education was Rs 99,312 crore, which was revised to Rs 85,089 crore (Revised Estimate).

- **5. Innovation and R&D**

- The Finance Minister said that in her Budget Speech of July 2019, She had announced the **National Research Foundation and added that the NRF outlay will be of Rs. 50,000 crore, over 5 years**. It will ensure that the overall research ecosystem of the country is strengthened with focus on identified national-priority thrust areas.
- **Government will undertake a new initiative – National Language Translation Mission (NTLM)**. This will enable the wealth of governance-and-policy related knowledge on the Internet being made available in major Indian languages.
- **The New Space India Limited (NSIL), a PSU under the Department of Space will execute the PSLV-CS51 launch**, carrying the Amazonia Satellite from Brazil, along with a few smaller Indian satellites.
- **As part of the Gaganyaan mission activities, four Indian astronauts are being trained on Generic Space Flight aspects, in Russia**. The first unmanned launch is slated for December 2021.

- **6. Minimum Government, Maximum Governance**

- Dwelling on the last of the six pillars of the Budget, the Finance Minister proposed to take a number of steps to bring reforms in Tribunals in the last few years for speedy delivery of justice and proposes to take further measures to rationalised the functioning of Tribunals. **Government has introduced the National Commission for Allied Healthcare Professionals Bill in Parliament**, with a view to ensure transparent and efficient regulation of the 56 allied healthcare professions. She also announced that the **forthcoming Census could be the first digital census in the history of India** and for this **monumental and milestone-marking task, Rs. 3,768 crore allocated in the year 2021-2022**.
- On Fiscal position, she underlined that the pandemic's impact on the economy resulted in a weak revenue inflow. Once the health situation stabilised, and the lockdown was being slowly lifted, Government spending was ramped up so as to revive domestic demand. **As a result, against an original BE expenditure of Rs. 30.42 lakh crore for 2020-2021, RE estimates are Rs. 34.50 lakh crore and quality of expenditure was maintained**. The capital expenditure, estimated in RE is Rs. 4.39 lakh crore in 2020-2021 as against Rs. 4.12 lakh crore in BE 2020-21.
- The Finance Minister said fiscal deficit in RE 2020-21 is pegged at 9.5% of GDP and it has been funded through Government borrowings, multilateral borrowings, Small Saving Funds and short term borrowings. She added that the Government would need another Rs 80,000 crore for which it would be approaching the markets in these 2 months. **The fiscal deficit in BE 2021-2022 is estimated to be 6.8% of GDP**. The gross borrowing from the market for the next year would be around 12 lakh crore.
- Smt Sitharaman announced that the Government plan to **continue the path of fiscal consolidation, and intend to reach a fiscal deficit level below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-2026** with a fairly steady decline over the period. "We hope to achieve the consolidation by first, increasing the buoyancy of tax revenue through improved compliance, and secondly, by increased receipts from monetisation of assets, including Public Sector Enterprises and land", she said.
- **In accordance with the views of the 15th Finance Commission**, Government is allowing a normal ceiling of net borrowing for the states at 4% of GSDP for the year 2021-2022.
- The FRBM Act mandates fiscal deficit of 3% of GDP to be achieved by 31st March 2020-2021. The effect of this year's unforeseen and unprecedented circumstances has necessitated the submission of a deviation statement under Sections 4 (5) and 7 (3) (b) of the FRBM Act which the Finance Minister laid on the Table of the House as part of the FRBM Documents.
- **On 9th December 2020, the 15th Finance Commission submitted its final report**, covering the period 2021-2026 to the Rashtrapati. The Government has laid the Commission's report, along with the explanatory memorandum **retaining the vertical shares of the states at 41%**. On the Commission's recommendation, the Budget provided Rs. 1,18,452 crore as revenue deficit grant to 17 states in 2021-22.
- **Part-B**

- The Budget seeks to reduce compliance burden on senior citizens who are of 75 years of age and above. Such senior citizens having only pension and interest income will be exempted from filing their income tax return.
- The Budget proposes to notify rules for removing the hardship of non-Resident Indians returning to India on the issue of their accrued incomes in their foreign retirement account. The Budget proposes to make dividend payment to REIT/InvIT exempt from TDS. For Foreign Portfolio Investors, the Budget proposes deduction of tax on dividend income at lower treaty rate. The Budget provides that advanced tax liability on dividend income shall arise only after the declaration or payment of dividend.
- Stating the resolve of the Government to reduce litigation in the taxation system, the Finance Minister said that the Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Scheme announced by the Government has been received well. Until 30th January, 2021, over one lakh ten thousand tax payers have opted to settle tax dispute of over Rs. 85 thousand crores under the Scheme. To further reduce litigation of small tax payers, she proposed to constitute a Dispute Resolution Committee. Anyone with a taxable income upto Rs. 50 lakh and disputed income upto Rs. 10 lakh shall be eligible to approach the Committee. She also announced setting up of National Faceless Income Tax Appellate Tribunal Centre.
- The Finance Minister proposed to extend the eligibility period for claim of additional deduction for interest of Rs. 1.5 lakh paid for loan taken for purchase of an affordable house to 31st March, 2022.
- To incentivize digital transaction and to reduce the compliance burden of the person who is carrying almost all of the transactions digitally, the Budget proposes to increase the limit for tax audit for persons who are undertaking 95 per cent of their transaction digitally from Rs. 5 Crore to Rs. 10 Crore.
- In order to promote International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in GIFT City, the Budget proposes more tax incentives. In order to reduce compliance burden on the small charitable trust running educational institutions and hospitals, the Budget proposes to increase the limit on annual receipts for these trusts from present Rs.1 Crore to Rs. 5 Crore for non-applicability of various compliances.
- The Finance Minister said that a phased manufacturing plan for solar cells and solar panels will be notified to build up domestic capacity. She announced raising duty on solar inverter from 5 per cent to 20 percent and on solar lanterns from 5 per cent to 15 per cent.
- Since the interest on contribution made by an employee enjoys tax exemption without there being any upper limit, the government has proposed that interest accrued in respect of employee's contribution in excess of Rs. 2.50 lakhs every year shall become taxable in the hands of the employee. So the interest in respect of annual contribution of Rs. 2.50 lakhs only will come tax-free and any interest accrued on excess contribution shall become taxable in the hands of the employee year after year.
- To boost infrastructure, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a record sum of ₹1,10,055 crore for railways of which Rs. 1,07,100 crore is for capital expenditure only. Indian Railways papered a National Rail Plan for India 2030, said finance minister adding, "The plan is to create a future ready railway system by 2030 bringing down the logistic cost for industry is at the core of the strategy to enable Make In India." She also mentioned 100% broad gauge route electrification electrification would be completed by December 2023.

The Union Budget of India also referred to as the Annual Financial Statement in the Article 112 of the Constitution of India, is the annual budget of the Republic of India. The Government presents it on the first day of February so that it could be materialised before the beginning of new financial year in April. Until 2016 it was presented on the last working day of February by the Finance Minister in Parliament. The budget, which is presented by means of the Finance bill and the Appropriation bill has to be passed by Lok Sabha before it can come into effect on 1 April, the start of India's financial year. As of January 2021, Morarji Desai has presented 10 budgets which is the highest count followed by P Chidambaram's 9 and Pranab Mukherjee's 8. Yashwant Sinha, Yashwantrao Chavan and C.D. Deshmukh have presented 7 budgets each while Manmohan Singh and T.T. Krishnamachari have presented 6 budgets.

A glacier break is suspected to have caused the flash floods in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district

- A glacier break is suspected to have caused the flash floods in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. Last October, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which is headed by PM Narendra Modi, had issued detailed guidelines on how to reduce and deal with disasters caused by what is scientifically called Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).
- When glaciers melt, the water in glacial lakes accumulates behind loose, natural "glacial/moraine dams" made of ice, sand, pebbles and ice residue. A GLOF refers to the flooding that occurs when the water dammed by a glacier or a moraine is released suddenly.
- According to NDMA, glacial retreat due to climate change occurring in most parts of the Hindu Kush Himalaya has given rise to the formation of numerous new glacial lakes, which are the major cause of GLOFs. Since glaciers in the Himalayas are in a retreating phase, glacial lakes are growing and pose a potentially large risk to downstream infrastructure and life.
- NDMA has recommended use of Synthetic-Aperture Radar imagery to automatically detect changes in water bodies, including new lake formations, during the monsoon months.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is the apex statutory body for disaster management in India. The NDMA was formally constituted on 27th September 2006, in accordance with the Disaster Management Act, 2005 with Prime Minister as its Chairperson and nine other members, and one such member to be designated as Vice-Chairperson. NDMA is responsible for framing policies, laying down guidelines and best-practices for coordinating with the State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) to ensure a holistic and distributed approach to disaster management. The responsibility of managing disasters in India is that of the State Government. The 'Nodal Ministry' in the central government for management of natural disasters is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). In terms of Section 6 (2) (i) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act, 2005), National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), on being satisfied that the country is threatened by the spread of COVID – 19 pandemic, has been directing Union Home Secretary, being the Chairperson of the National Executive Committee (NEC), to take measures and to issue necessary guidelines so as to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the country. Accordingly, NEC has been issuing guidelines about the Lockdown and Unlock phases in the country from time to time.

Balasore to get India's first thunderstorm research testbed

- Odisha's Balasore will get India's first thunderstorm research testbed, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said. The objective of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimise human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.
- First-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal. The thunderstorm testbed will be established in a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- IMD Director-General Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, while speaking with a private television channel, also revealed that a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal. Mohapatra, often referred to as the 'Cyclone Man of India' for his accurate prediction of cyclones in the Indian subcontinent, pointed out that many lives are lost in Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand due to lightning strikes every year between April and June.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology. IMD is headquartered in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica. Regional offices are at Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur, Guwahati and New Delhi. IMD is also one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organisation. It has the responsibility for forecasting, naming and distribution of warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region, including the Malacca Straits, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The first meteorological observatories were established in India by the British East India Company. These included the Calcutta Observatory in 1785, the Madras Observatory in 1796 and the Colaba Observatory in 1826.

Uttar Pradesh announces 16-digit Unicode to identify landholdings

- The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the first six digits based on the population of the land. Every piece of land in the state will have its own unique identity from now onwards that would check cases of land disputes and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters.
- The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the first six digits based on the population of the land, the next 4 digits determining the unique identity of the land. **The digits from 11 to 14 will be the number of the division of the land.** The last 2 digits will have the details of the category, through which, the agricultural, residential and commercial land will be identified.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state's Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

Prime Minister inaugurated 'World Sustainable Development Summit' 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on 10th of February via video conferencing. The theme of the summit is 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.
- The 20th edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event- the **World Sustainable Development Summit** was held online from 10th to 12th February. The summit brought together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth and the civil society in the fight against climate change.
- Energy and industry transition, adaptation and resilience, nature based solutions, climate finance, circular economy, clean oceans and air pollution, are amongst the range of topics to be discussed during the summit. **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences** are key partners of the summit.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all". Formerly known as the **World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)**, the mission of the **Brundtland Commission** is to **unite countries to pursue sustainable development together**. The SDGs were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. They are included in a UN Resolution called the **2030 Agenda or what is colloquially known as Agenda 2030**. The 17 SDGs are: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals.

First Indo-US combat drill of Biden era commenced in Rajasthan

- India and the US are kicked off a major combat exercise in Rajasthan in the first such bilateral wargame after the **Biden administration took charge** in Washington and reiterated India's role as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific as well as the **need to strengthen the "Quad"**. The 14-day exercise is focused upon **joint training on Counter Insurgency and terrorism** under the United Nation's mandate.
- The '**Yudh Abhyas**' exercise, which is being held at the **Mahajan Field Firing ranges** from February 8 to 21, will once again underscore the continuing upward trajectory in defence cooperation with the US, which enjoys bipartisan support among the Democrats and Republicans. "The aim is to further **enhance interoperability in counter-terrorist operations in a semi-urban, semi-desert terrain**, along with attack helicopters and infantry combat vehicles".

- A number of aerial platforms including newly inducted indigenous Advance Light Helicopter WSI 'RUDRA', MI - 17, Chinooks, Stryker Vehicles of US Army and BMP-2 Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicles of Indian Army, will be utilised in the exercise.

Yudh Abhyas is a joint military exercise, bilaterally occurring between India and the US. It started in 2002 and is undertaken by the armies of both countries to promote defence cooperation. The Yudh Abhyas exercise took place from 5th September 2019 to 18th September 2019 at Joint Base Lewis McChord in Washington, USA. India and the US participate in the following joint exercises apart from Yudh Abhyas: 1. Cope-India (Air Force), 2. Vajra Prahar (Special Forces) and A few multilateral exercises that India and the US participate in are: MALABAR, RED FLAG and RIMPAC.

Major Port Authorities Bill 2020 passed by Rajya Sabha

- Rajya Sabha passed the Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020. The Bill aims to provide for the regulation, operation and planning of Major Ports in India and to vest the administration, control and management of such ports upon the Boards of Major Port Authorities and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. Minister of State for Ports Mansukh L. Mandaviya had said that the Bill was moved so that India's major ports can compete with major world-class ports.

India has a coastline spanning 7516.6 kilometres, forming one of the biggest peninsulas in the world. According to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, around 95 per cent of India's trading by volume and 70 per cent by value is done through maritime transport. It is serviced by 13 major ports (12 Government-owned and one private) and 187 notified minor and intermediate ports. Port Blair which was notified as major port in 2010 was removed of its status recently. Government of India plans to modernise these ports and has approved a project called Sagarmala.

Centre allocates Rs 16,000 cr for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

- Government has allocated 16 thousand crore rupees for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for 2021-22 to boost the safety of farmers' crops. Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry said, this will ensure maximum benefit of crop insurance reaches to farmers.
- The Ministry said, this is a budgetary increase of around 305 crore rupees as against the previous fiscal year 2020-21, which reiterates the government's commitment towards growth of agriculture sector in the country.
- The scheme extends coverage for the entire cropping cycle from pre-sowing to post-harvest including coverage for losses arising out of prevented sowing and mid-season adversities. Government had approved this flagship crop insurance scheme, five years ago, on 13th January 2016.
- The scheme was conceived as a milestone initiative to provide a comprehensive risk solution at the lowest uniform premium across the country for farmers. The Ministry said, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is globally the largest crop insurance scheme in terms of farmer participation and 3rd largest in terms of premium. Over five crore 50 lakh farmer applications are received on year-on-year basis.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) launched on 13 January 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an insurance service for farmers for their yields. It was formulated in line with One Nation–One Scheme theme by replacing earlier two schemes National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) by incorporating their best features. It aims to reduce the premium burden on farmers and ensure early settlement of crop assurance claim for the full insured sum.

Govt launches new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs

- The Ministry of Agriculture has said that the government has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)' and it has committed resources in this regard with a budgetary provision of Rs 6,865 crore.
- The Ministry in a statement said that FPOs are to be developed to produce clusters, wherein agricultural and horticultural products are grown for leveraging economies of scale and improving market access for members. It said, under this Central Sector Scheme with funding from Government of India, formation and Promotion

of FPOs are to be done through implementing agencies and at present, nine such agencies have been finalized.

- It said, implementing agencies will **engage Cluster- Based Business Organizations (CBBOs) to aggregate, register and provide professional handholding support to each FPO for a period of five years.** CBBOs will be the platform for an **end to end knowledge for all issues related to FPO promotion.** The Ministry said, FPOs will be **provided financial assistance upto Rs 18 lakh per FPO for a period of three years.**
- In addition to this, provision has been made **for matching equity grant up to two thousand rupees per farmer member of FPO with a limit of 15 lakh rupees per FPO and a credit guarantee facility upto Rs two crore of project loan per FPO** from eligible lending institutions to ensure institutional credit accessibility to FPOs.
- The Ministry said, formation and promotion of FPOs is the **first step for converting Krishi into Atma Nirbhar Krishi.** This will enhance cost-effective production and productivity and higher net incomes to the members of the FPO. It will also improve rural economy and create job opportunities for rural youths in villages itself and this was the major step towards improving farmers' income substantially.

FPO stands for Farmers Producers Organisation. It is an **organisation of farmer-producers that provide support to small farmers with end-to-end services** covering almost all aspects of cultivation from inputs, technical services to processing and marketing. **FPO is one type of Producers Organisation where the members of the organisation are the farmers.** These are also known as farmers' producer companies (FPC).

Karnataka digital economy mission office inaugurated

- The office of the **Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM)** which has the **objective of increasing digital economy contribution to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to 30 per cent** was **inaugurated** and the **"Beyond Bengaluru" report** which facilitates to achieve this target was launched.
- Deputy Chief Minister Dr CN Ashwatha Narayana said, "The government wanted KDEM to be more industry-friendly and keeping this in mind it has **allowed for 51 per cent stakes to industry associations while retaining a minority holding of 49 per cent for itself.** The government wants to act rather as a facilitator than an authority".

Karnataka is a state in the south western region of India. It was **formed on 1 November 1956**, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. **Originally known as the State of Mysore**, it was **renamed Karnataka in 1973.** The capital and largest city is Bengaluru. **Bookanakere Siddalingappa Yediyurappa** is serving as the 19th and current Chief Minister of Karnataka. **Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala** is currently serving as the Governor of Karnataka.

By 2023, Noida likely to get north India's first medical device park

- **By 2023, Noida likely to get north India's first medical device park.** Noida: In two years, **Gautam Budh Nagar** will get northern India's first medical equipment and device Manufacturing Park.
- **Other four parks are in the southern states of AP, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.** For the first Medical Device Park of the UP, about 250 acres of land has been identified in Sector 28 near Yamuna Expressway in Noida.
- **Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority** has been **named the State Implementing Agency for the Medical Device Park.** The Medical Device Parks are **aimed to support the Make in India initiative** and provide world-class products at an affordable price for treatment in the country.

Indian Railways rolls out its first AC 3-tier economy class coach

- **Railways rolled out its first air conditioned three-tier economy class coach** which is being touted by the ministry to be "synonymous with the **cheapest and best AC travel in the world**".
- These coaches, officials said, will be "economical" and in between the current AC three-tier and non-AC sleeper class. **This LHB coach was rolled out from Rail Coach Factory (RCF) Kapurthala to Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) Lucknow** for the upcoming trial.

- It was conceived by RCF and work on its design started on war footing in October 2020. The new coach can carry more passengers as the berths have been increased from 72 to 83. **“Innovative AC 3 tier economy class coach manufactured in Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala in Punjab,”** Piyush Goyal said.

Indian Railways (IR) is the **fourth-largest railway network in the world by size**. There are a total of **18 Railway zones**. **South Coast Railway Zone** is the newest and **18th railway zone**, headquartered at **Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**. **Piyush Vedprakash Goyal** is currently serving as the **Minister of Railways and Commerce** in the Government of India. He was elected as the **BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016**. The practice of a separate **Railway Budget** was started by the British in **1924** under the recommendation of a **10-member Acworth Committee** headed by British economist **William Mitchell Acworth** in **1920-21**. On **21 September 2016**, Government of India approved the merger of the **Railway Budget** with the **Union budget of India**, and thus came to end — a **92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets**.

Odisha launches citizen-centric on-line services of State Transport department

- Odisha launched various citizen-centric on-line services of the State Transport department**. Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik** said that the digital initiative will **allow freedom to the vehicle owners to choose any transport office of the state for vehicle related services**.
- Odisha is the first state in the country to introduce document upload through digital signature**, using the **NIC platform**. The state rolled out as many as **nine on line services** that include vehicle registration and ownership transfer.

The **modern state of Odisha** was established on **1 April 1936**, as a province in **British India**. The ancient kingdom of **Kalinga**, which was invaded by the **Mauryan emperor Ashoka** in **261 BCE** resulting in the **Kalinga War**, coincides with the borders of **modern-day Odisha**. **Konark Sun Temple** is a **13th-century CE sun temple** at **Konark** about **35 kilometres northeast from Puri on the coastline of Odisha, India**. The temple is attributed to king **Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty** about **1250 CE**. **Ganeshi Lal** is current **Governor of Odisha**.

PM Modi to inaugurate Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March**. Minister of **Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya** said, around **20 thousand delegates** will participate, **24 partner countries** will join and **more than 400 Projects are set to be showcased in the 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit 2021** to be held virtually from **2nd March to 4th March**.
- Maritime India Summit** is going to provide a powerful platform for international collaboration and bring in partner countries for mutual exchange of knowledge and opportunities. **The event is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner**. **Maritime States of India** will participate in the Summit through dedicated sessions.

India's first Museum of Illusions comes up in Delhi

- Museum of Illusions is a mind-bending “edutainment” experience** where guests enter the fascinating world of mental deception, has opened to the public on **10th February 2021**. **Situated on Connaught Place, New Delhi**, this is the **first India outpost and 30th location for the rapidly expanding Museum of Illusions brand that started in Zagreb, Croatia in 2015**.
- With over **50 intriguing exhibits**, **Museum of Illusions, offers more eye-fooling fun** than any other destination in **New Delhi**. The museum's collection of interactive, immersive, and distinctly incomprehensible exhibits is based on **math, science, and psychology**. Visitors are prompted to learn about the tricks of perception and how the human brain works as they move through each exhibit.
- Imaginations can run free in the vast expanse of the Infinity Room, defy the laws of gravity in the Reverse Room**, and shrink to miniature size in the **Ames Room** - all while capturing a coveted, baffling photo. With uniquely mind-boggling backdrops - including several designed just for the **New Delhi location** - the museum offers photo opportunities that visitors will not find anywhere else in the area.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates 'Jalabhishekam' campaign in Madhya Pradesh

- Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated more than 57,000 water structures constructed in Madhya Pradesh under 'Jalabhishekam' campaign with public participation will be helpful in achieving the goal of water conservation and building self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.
- Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar also attended the program virtually organised in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan at Bhopal. These water structures were created during COVID era by linking the work with the MNREGA scheme. Union Minister Mr Rajnath Singh said that the 'Jalabhishekam' Campaign is fulfilling the intention of 'water for every farm and work for every hand'. This will prove to be helpful in the betterment of the villages.
- Under the campaign, 57,000 water structures costing over Rs. 2,000 crores have been inaugurated under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Irrigation Scheme. The structures were created in the COVID-19 era.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. The Indian Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Ministry of Defence are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation. A military department was created by the supreme government of the British East India Company at Kolkata in the year 1776. Rajnath Singh is currently serving as the Defence Minister of India. He has been representing the 17th Lok Sabha from Lucknow constituency. He also served as Union Home Minister of India from 2014 to 2019.

PM hands over indigenously designed and manufactured Arjun Main Battle Tank to the Army

- The Prime Minister said India has undertaken massive effort to become self-reliant in the defence sector. The Prime Minister also handed over the indigenously designed and manufactured Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Army.
- It has been indigenously designed and manufactured by the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment of Defence Research and Development Organisation. Prime Minister said, a tank made in Tamil Nadu will be used in our northern borders to keep the nation safe. This showcases India's unity- Bharat's Ekta Darshan". The Prime Minister said that the focus on making India Aatmanirbhar in the defence sector will keep moving at full speed.
- The Arjun features a 120 mm main rifled gun with indigenously developed armour-piercing fin-stabilized discarding-sabot ammunition, one PKT 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun, and a NSVT 12.7 mm machine gun.
- Among the projects, Prime Minister inaugurated the Chennai Metro Rail Phase-I extension, completed at a cost of 3770 crore rupees, and flagged off the passenger services from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar.

Arjun is a third generation main battle tank developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), for the Indian Army. The tank is named after Arjun, the archer prince who is the main protagonist of the Indian epic Mahabharata.

PM Narendra Modi unveils several development projects worth Rs 6100 cr in Kerala

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled several key development projects worth 6,100 crore rupees at INS Garuda Naval Air Station at Kochi. Prime Minister said, the projects inaugurated will energize the growth trajectory of India.
- The Prime Minister Indians can do wonders in achieving the target of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The Prime Minister said, India has the ability to rise to the occasion and contribute to the global good. The Prime Minister also inaugurated country's first full-fledged international cruise terminal, Sagarika at Cochin Port and Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd.

- Among the projects unveiled by the Prime Minister include the **Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation**. Mr Modi said, Propylene Derivatives Petrochemical complex of Kochi Refinery, will help strengthen the country's journey towards being Atmanirbhar.
- Prime Minister also **dedicated to the nation the Ro-Ro Vessels at Willingdon Islands in Kochi**. Ro-Ro service will benefit trade as a result of reduced transportation cost and transit time, and will also lead to reduced congestion on the roads of Kochi. Apart from this, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the reconstruction of South Coal Berth at Cochin Port.
- Mr Modi said, **through the national infrastructure pipeline, 110 lakh crore rupees being invested**. In this, special attention is being given to coastal parts, the North east and mountain areas. The Prime Minister said, India is embarking on an ambitious program of broadband connectivity to every village.

Vigyan Jyoti programme spreads to 100 districts in 2nd phase initiated on International Day of Women & Girls in Science

- The second phase of Vigyan Jyoti programme was commenced on the occasion of International Day of Women and Girls in Science on February 11, 2021, which will spread the programme for encouraging girls to take interest in science and build a career in STEM to 50 more districts adding to the existing 50 districts across the country.
- Vigyan Jyoti programme, a new initiative to encourage girls to take interest in science and build career, was launched by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls to pursue STEM. It had been running successfully in 50 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNV) since December 2019 and has now been expanded to 50 more JNVs for the year 2021-22.
- The programme addresses the underrepresentation of women in certain areas of STEM. As a first step, the programme has been started at school level for meritorious girls of Class IX to Class XII to encourage and empower them to pursue STEM courses in reputed institutions of the country.

NAFED to develop Integrated Solid Waste Management Project at Kot Bhalwal in 2 years

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir the Administrative Council (AC) has approved the establishment of an Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) project by the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED).
- To implement the project, the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) will sign an agreement with NAFED to set up a 350 MT capacity ISWM plant along with an ancillary bio-CNG generating plant and bio-landfill at Kot Bhalwal, Jammu. At the estimated project cost of Rs. 74.41 crore and project timeline of 2 years, NAFED will establish a scientific system for waste management.

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 re-constituted the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, with effect from 31 October 2019. Girish Chandra Murmu is the first lieutenant governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Manoj Sinha is the second and current Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory; Radha Krishna Mathur is the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. Article 370 of the Indian constitution gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, a region located in the northern part of Indian subcontinent which was administered by India as a state from 1954 to 31 October 2019, conferring it with the power to have a separate constitution, a state flag and autonomy over the internal administration of the state.

Minority Affairs Ministry organising 26th Hunar Haat in New Delhi

- Minority Affairs Ministry is organised 26th Hunar Haat of indigenous artisans and craftsmen from across the country at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. More than 600 artisans and craftsmen, including a large number of women artisans, from more than 31 States and Union Territories were participated in the event.
- The Hunar Haat was organised with the theme of **Vocal for Local** from 20th February to 1st March this year. Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has said that the Hunar Haat is a perfect platform to promote indigenous products of artisans and craftsmen from across the country. It has provided employment and employment opportunities to more than five lakh artisans, craftsmen and artists yet.

- **Hunar Haat** is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the minority communities. These are organised by the Ministry of Minority Affairs under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme.

Mallikarjun Kharge replaced Azad as Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha

- The Congress nominated veteran leader **Mallikarjun Kharge** as the new **Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha** to succeed **Ghulam Nabi Azad**, who is retired on February 15. Seventy-eight year old **Kharge** had led the Congress in Lok Sabha between 2014 and 2019.
- **Kharge**, a two time Lok Sabha MP and nine-time MLA had led the Congress in Lok Sabha in an aggressive fashion and had earned the respect of the leadership. A hard-boiled Congressman considered loyal to the Gandhi family, Kharge is one of the party's prominent Dalit faces.
- He was also the **Leader of the Opposition in Karnataka**. In UPA's second tenure, he held the portfolios of **Labour and Railways**. His elevation was on the cards when he was brought to Rajya Sabha last year after he suffered the first electoral setback in his political career in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

Rajya Sabha or Council of States is the upper house of the bicameral Parliament of India. It currently has a maximum membership of 245, of which 233 are elected by the legislatures of the states and union territories using single transferable votes through Open Ballot while the President can appoint 12 members for their contributions to art, literature, science, and social services. The potential seating capacity of the Rajya Sabha is 250 (238 elected, 12 appointed), according to article 80 of the Indian Constitution. Members sit for staggered terms lasting six years, with elections every year but almost a third of the 233 designates up for election every two years, specifically in even-numbered years. The Vice President of India (currently, Venkaiah Naidu) is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. **Thaawar Chand Gehlot** is currently the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.

SAARC virtual meet: India invites Pakistan to COVID-19 workshop

- India hosted a health secretary-level meet virtually with other South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Pakistan has also been invited to attend the workshop.
- It is a virtual workshop on management of Covid-19, response to the pandemic and exchange of best practices amid the pandemic. On March 15, 2020, during a video conference of the SAARC Heads of State, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had proposed a Coronavirus Emergency Fund for the region.
- This emergency fund was set up in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The initiative seeks to mitigate the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic in the South Asian region with India contributing USD10 million to it. Other members of the SAARC expressed their support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his proposal for the coronavirus emergency fund.
- India is also running an initiative called 'Vaccine Maitri,' (Vaccine Friendship), which was launched on 20 January 2021, wherein India is extending support to neighboring countries like Nepal, The Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Brazil, and even Seychelles. India has already donated 5 million vaccines to its neighbours including 1.5 lakh doses to Bhutan, 20 lakh doses to Bangladesh, and 10 lakh doses to Nepal.
- SAARC groups together Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. November 2014, when Nepal hosted a SAARC leaders' summit, was the last time that leaders of these nations had shared a platform. Since then, India has refused to participate in the summit as it is due to be hosted in Pakistan.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. Afghanistan joined the SAARC as its eighth member state in April 2007. Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The first SAARC summit was held in Dhaka on 7–8 December 1985.

Shabnam is the first woman to be hanged in independent India

- For the first time in the history of India's Independence, a woman on death row will be executed at the country's lone female execution room in Mathura.
- According to multiple media reports, **Shabnam**, one of the two convicts in the sensational Amroha murder case, will be executed. This case is of the Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh, where a girl named Shabnam murdered all the 7 people in her family because she wanted to marry her lover and the family was against their marriage. Shabnam felt that if she removes her family members from the way, then she will get married and will also get possession of the house property. But Shabnam was arrested along with her lover after the crime and both of them were sentenced to death by the court of Amroha in 2010. She is the first woman in the country who is set for gallows after in independent India. But the execution date is not finalised yet.

Government announces Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) in Union Budget 2021-22

- Government of India has announced the **Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)** in the Union Budget 2021-22 on the lines of **Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural)**. In her budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, it will be implemented over five years, with an outlay of two lakh 87 thousand crore rupees.
- Government has set aside **50 thousand crore rupees for drinking water and ten thousand crore rupees for sanitation**. The budget has been increased to provide tap water connection to the houses of the villages, the poor and the farmer. The government has taken this important step to **provide pure drinking water in villages as well as cities**.
- The work to provide tap water connections to over 19 crore rural households under the Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural) by 2024 was going on at a rapid pace. **Goa and Telangana have now access to 100 per cent potable tap water in the rural households**.
- **Goa has earned itself the unique distinction of becoming first 'Har Ghar Jal' State** in the country as it successfully provides **100% Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs)** in the rural areas covering 2.30 lakh rural households.

Jal Jeevan Mission, a central government initiative under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, aims to ensure access of piped water for every household in India. The mission's goal is to provide to all households in rural India safe and adequate water through individual household tap connections by 2024. The Har Ghar Jal programme was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget 2019-20 speech. This programme forms a crucial part of the Jal Jeevan Mission. The programme aims to implement source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation, and rain water harvesting.

PM Modi inaugurates first full-fledged international cruise terminal at Cochin Port in Kerala

- Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several developmental projects worth over **8000 crore rupees** at Chennai in Tamil Nadu.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated India's first full-fledged international cruise terminal, Sagarika at Cochin Port and Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd.
- Prime Minister said, Thanjavur and Pudukkottai will be specially benefited after the foundation for the extension, renovation and modernization of six hundred and thirty six kilometre long Grand Anicut Canal System was laid. It will improve irrigation facilities for 2.27 lakh acres of land in the delta districts. The Prime Minister lauded the farmers of Tamil Nadu for record food grain production and good use of water resources. He emphasized the need to remember the mantra of Per Drop More Crop.

Bihar in pact with UNEP to chalk out a climate-resilient development pathway

- In a first for an Indian State, Bihar signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN Environment Programme to achieve climate resilience and low carbon development by 2040.
- Over the next two years, UNEP would lead a multi-stakeholder team to assess the carbon footprint of various sectors in the State before chalking out a plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increasing carbon sinks. UNEP will provide technological assistance to put together the State's greenhouse fuel stock and have out local weather effects state of affairs and vulnerability evaluation.

- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** is responsible for coordinating responses to environmental issues within the United Nations system. It was established by Maurice Strong, its first director, after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972. It is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.

Bihar is the **third-largest state of India by population**, according to the census 2011. It is a **land-locked state**, although the outlet to the sea through the port of Kolkata is not far away. **Nalanda University** is located in the town of **Rajgir**, in the northern Indian state of Bihar. It was a **Buddhist center of learning from 427 to 1197 CE**. It has been called “one of the first great universities in recorded history”. **Phagu Chauhan** is the **current Governor of Bihar**. **Nitish Kumar** is the **current Chief Minister of Bihar**.

PM Narendra Modi addressed NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** addressed the **NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF)** via video conferencing.
- The three-day 29th edition of NTLF is organised till 19th of February. It is a **flagship event of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)**.
- **The theme of this year’s event is ‘Shaping the future towards a better normal’**. The event hosted 1,600 participants from more than 30 countries. Over 30 products will be showcased during the talks.

National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) is an **Indian non-governmental trade association and advocacy group** focused mainly on **Information Technology (IT)** and **Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)** industry. Established in 1988, NASSCOM is a **non-profit organisation**. NASSCOM initiated a program called ‘**10,000 Startups**’ in 2013. The purpose of 10000 Startup is to support and impact 10,000 startups in India by 2023. **UB Pravin Rao** is the **current Chairman** and **Debjani Ghosh** is the **first women and current President of NASSCOM**.

National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws Bill passed in the Rajya Sabha

- **Rajya Sabha** passed the **National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021**. The bill seeks to replace the ordinance brought to the same effect by the President.
- The legislation aims to amend the **National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act, 2011**. Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs **Hardeep Singh Puri** said that ordinance in this regard was necessary since the Winter Session of the Parliament was suspended in view of the Corona pandemic and the 2011 Act was valid till 31st of December 2020. Mr. Puri said that if the ordinance was not brought into effect, the state agencies in Delhi could have **started sealing operations against the set-ups in the unauthorised colonies**.
- He said, **the NDA Government is committed to provide a house for everyone till 2022**. Mr. Puri added that out of the **total target of building one crore 12 lakh houses under the PM AWAS Yojana in the country**, construction of nearly one crore 11 lakh houses have already been sanctioned. He said the legislation will benefit over one crore 35 lakh people living in the unauthorised colonies in the city of Delhi.

Delhi bordered by **Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east**. According to the 2011 census, **Delhi city proper’s population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai**. **Anil Baijal** is the **current & 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi**. **Arvind Kejriwal** is the **current and 7th Chief Minister of Delhi**. The **Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991** declared the **Union Territory of Delhi** to be formally known as the **National Capital Territory of Delhi**.

‘Schools under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to be renamed after Subhas Chandra Bose’

- **Schools and hostels under the Ministry of Education’s Samagra Shiksha scheme** will now be **renamed after Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**. The Ministry of Education said the **association of these schools with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** will “**act as an inspiration**” to children and also motivate teachers, staff and administration to enable them to achieve high standards of excellence.

- “The Ministry of Education has decided to **name residential schools and hostels funded under Samagra Shiksha of MoE as ‘Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose residential schools and hostels’**,”. “This will also help create awareness about the facility of these residential schools and hostels in difficult areas and inspire these schools to achieve high standards of quality education,”.
- The Ministry of Education under **Samagra Shiksha provides financial assistance to states and union territories for opening and running of residential schools and hostels in hilly terrain, small and sparsely populated areas for children** who are in need of shelter and care, in addition to the provision of regular schools.
- “**The objective is to ensure universal enrolment and provide schooling facilities in areas**, which are sparsely populated (mostly tribal areas) where opening of schools may not be viable, and for children in urban areas who are in need of care and protection. **“The residential facilities are also provided to child labour rescued, migrant children who belong to poor landless families, children without adult protection, separated from their families, internally displaced persons, and children from the areas of social and armed conflict and natural calamities,** the statement said.

The **Ministry of Education (MoE)**, previously the **Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020)**, is responsible for the **implementation and formulation of the National Policy on Education** approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. The Ministry is **held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank**. He represents the **Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand** in the 17th Lok Sabha. **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad** is the **First Minister of Education** in the Indian. He is **commonly remembered as Maulana Azad**; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning ‘Our Master’ and he had adopted **Azad (Free)** as his pen name.

The legend of Suheldev

- The legend goes that over a millennia back when invaders were conquering one region after another in India, it was **Raja Suheldev of Shravasti** who gathered heads of different communities likes Tharu and Banjara as well as small kings to **block the invasion**.
- It is said that it was **his army which defeated and killed Ghazi Salar Masud, the nephew of Mahmud of Gazni at Bahraich**. In local folklore, **Suheldev is said to be a Rajbhar**. **Legend of Suheldev: King Who Saved India** is the **eighth book by Amish Tripathi**, and the **first book from The Immortal Writers’ Centre**. It was released on 20 June 2020 and is published by Westland Publications. It is **based on the legendary Indian king Suheldev who defeated the army of Salar Maqsud in the Battle of Bahraich in 1034 CE**.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has **launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban, JJM-U**. It will be **conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water** through a challenge process.
- **As part of the survey, ‘Pey Jal Survekshan’**, data will also be **collected on wastewater management and condition of water bodies in the cities**. As a first step, the Ministry has **decided to launch the Survekshan in 10 cities-** Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission Urban is designed to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal - 6**. The total outlay proposed for JJM (U) is 2 lakh 87 thousand crore rupees which includes 10 thousand crore rupees for continuing financial support to AMRUT Mission.

Hardeep Singh Puri is the current **Civil Aviation Minister of India** and **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** in India. He is a **1974 batch Indian Foreign Service officer** who served as the **Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations from 2009 to 2013**. He formerly served as **President of the United Nations Security Council** and he represents **Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh**.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stone of key projects of power and urban sector in Kerala virtually

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of key projects of power and urban sector in Kerala** through video conferencing. He inaugurated the **320 KV Pugalur - Thrissur Power Transmission Project**. It is a Voltage Source Converter based High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Project and has **India's first HVDC link featuring state-of-the-art VSC technology**. Built at a cost of **Rs 5070 crore**, it will facilitate transfer of 2000 MW power from the western region and help meet the growth in load for the people of Kerala.
- PM Modi laid the **foundation set for the Rs 94-crore Integrated Command and Control Centre project at Thiruvananthapuram**. It is being set up to host Smart Solutions for Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, and will act as a common point of action during emergency situations.

Kerala is a state on the southwestern, Malabar Coast of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956 following the States Reorganisation Act by combining Malayalam-speaking regions. Kerala has the highest literacy rate 93.91% in the 2011 census; the highest life expectancy, 77 years; and the highest sex ratio, 1,084 women per 1,000 men. Arif Mohammad Khan is the current Governor of Kerala. Kerala is known as "God's own country" and is one of the popular tourist destinations in India. Pinarayi Vijayan is the current Chief Minister of Kerala, in office since 25 May 2016. As per the census 2011, Haryana has the lowest child sex ratio i.e.834 per thousand males.

2 Gujarat villages first in India to get LiFi

- In the **first step towards creating smart villages in Gujarat**, an Ahmedabad startup has powered up two villages with high-speed internet using LiFi-based technology. Akrund and Navanagar villages in Aravalli district of Gujarat have become India's first smart villages with LiFi-based internet connectivity.
- With this facility from the startup, **Nav Wireless Technology**, schools, hospitals, post offices, and government offices in these two villages will get faster and safer internet connection through existing electricity lines. Till now, only large, well-funded organizations have been able to develop LiFi – Wireless Optical Communication technology such as Nav Wireless Technologies Pvt Ltd in India.

Li-Fi (LiFi) is a wireless communication technology which utilizes light to transmit data and position between devices. The term was first introduced by Harald Haas during a 2011 TEDGlobal talk in Edinburgh. In technical terms, Li-Fi is a light communication system that is capable of transmitting data at high speeds over the visible light, ultraviolet, and infrared spectrums. In its present state, only LED lamps can be used for the transmission of visible light. In terms of its end use, the technology is similar to Wi-Fi — the key technical difference being that Wi-Fi uses radio frequency to induce a voltage in an antenna to transmit data, whereas Li-Fi uses the modulation of light intensity to transmit data. Li-Fi can theoretically transmit at speeds of up to 100 Gbit/s. Li-Fi's ability to safely function in areas otherwise susceptible to electromagnetic interference (e.g. aircraft cabins, hospitals, military) is an advantage.

Tribes India 'Aadi Mahotsav' ends successfully

- The Tribes India 'Aadi Mahotsav' held from 1-15 February, 2021 at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi. The closing ceremony was presided by Ramesh Chand Meena, Chairman, TRIFED in the presence of Krishnadhan Das, Chairman, Tripura MARKFED and Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED.
- The fortnight-long National Tribal Festival held at New Delhi saw the participation of thousands of tribal artisans, chefs, artists and cultural troupes from 25 states across the country. The Aadi Mahotsav witnessed a heavy footfall.

Aadi Mahotsav is a national tribal festival and a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED). It commenced in 2017 and is held annually. It is an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.

Kiran Bedi removed as Puducherry Lieutenant-Governor

- President Ram Nath Kovind has removed Dr. Kiran Bedi as Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry and appointed Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana, to discharge the functions of the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry. This is in addition to her own duties.
- Puducherry is a union territory which is governed by Article 239A of the Constitution. The Government of Union Territories Act, 1963 provides for a Legislative Assembly of Puducherry, with a Council of Ministers to govern the UT. The same Act says that the UT will be administered by the President of India through a Lieutenant Governor. The Lt. Governor is appointed by the President for a term of five years.

Puducherry also known as Pondicherry is a union territory of India. It was formed out of four territories of former French India, namely Pondichéry (now Puducherry), Karikal (Karaikal), Mahé and Yanaon (Yanam), excluding Chandannagar. It is named after the largest district, Puducherry. Historically known as Pondicherry, the territory changed its official name to Puducherry on 20 September 2006. Puducherry, the capital of the territory was once the original headquarters of the French in India. It was under the French rule for 138 years and merged with the Indian Union on 1st November 1954.

What is Sandes, the government's new Instant Messaging platform like WhatsApp

- The National Informatics Centre has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp. Like WhatsApp, the new NIC platform can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone with a mobile number or email id.
- After security scares, the Ministry of Home Affairs had in April last year issued an advisory to all government employees to avoid using platforms like Zoom for official communication. This was after the Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In) had also posted an advisory against Zoom over safety and privacy concerns.
- The idea for a secure communication network dedicated exclusively to government employees has been in the works for the past four years. The execution of the idea was accelerated during the last year.
- In August 2020, the NIC released the first version of the app, which said that the app could be used by both central and state government officials “for intra and inter-organisation communication.” The app was initially launched for Android users and then the service was extended to iOS users.

National Informatics Centre (NIC) is an attached office under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in the Indian government. The NIC provides infrastructure to help support the delivery of government IT services and the delivery of some of the initiatives of Digital India. The NIC was established in 1976 and based in Delhi.

India's first centralised AC railway terminal to come up at Bengaluru

- India's first centrally air-conditioned Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway Terminal at Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru will soon be inaugurated at Bengaluru and will have state-of-art facilities.
- The railway terminal situated in Bengaluru's Byappanahalli area is fully covered and is expected to be operational by February-end, as per reports. It is named after Bharat Ratna Sir M. Visvesvaraya. The terminal will handle more trains connecting the city with other railway stations within Karnataka and outside.

Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016. The practice of a separate Railway Budget was started by the British in 1924 under the recommendation of a 10-member Acworth Committee headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India, and thus came to end — a 92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets.

25 cities selected for Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge

- The Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, announced twenty-five(25) shortlisted cities for the ‘Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge’ cohort, in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) and technical partner WRI India. The Challenge is a 3-year initiative aimed at supporting early childhood-friendly neighbourhoods under the government’s Smart Cities Mission.
- The selected cities were Agartala, Bengaluru, Coimbatore, Dharamshala, Erode, Hubballi-Dharwad, Hyderabad, Indore, Jabalpur, Kakinada, Kochi, Kohima, Kota, Nagpur, Rajkot, Ranchi, Rohtak, Rourkela, Salem, Surat, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruppur, Ujjain, Vadodara, and Warangal.
- Under its prime objective of inclusive development, the Government of India is committed to enhancing opportunities in urban areas for all vulnerable citizens, especially young children. The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge, launched on November 4th, 2020, invited participation from all Smart Cities, capitals of States and UTs, and other cities with population above 5 lakhs were eligible to participate.

Smart Cities Mission is an innovative initiative under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of people by enabling local development and harnessing technology as a means to create smart outcomes for citizens. “100 Smart Cities Mission” was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 June 2015. The Mission covers 100 cities for the duration of five years starting from the financial year (FY) 2015-16 to 2019-20.

‘Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of Sikkim’ initiative to benefit around 1,500 students

- Sikkim Chief Minister P. S. Tamang launched the ‘Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of Sikkim’ initiative at Gangtok. The initiative will benefit around 1,500 students who would be provided 200 mls of milk every day.
- Government initiatives to achieve the vision such as an incentive of Rupees eight per litre of milk produced by dairy farmers in addition to the standard price as well as other benefits for agricultural practices in Sikkim.

Sikkim is a state in northeastern India. Sikkim’s capital and largest city is Gangtok. In 1975, after the Indian Army took over the city of Gangtok, a referendum was held that led to the deposition of the monarchy and On 16 May 1975, Sikkim became the 22nd state of the Indian Union. To enable the incorporation of the new state, the Indian Parliament amended the Indian Constitution. First, the 35th Amendment laid down a set of conditions that made Sikkim an “Associate State”, a special designation not used by any other state. A month later, the 36th Amendment repealed the 35th Amendment, and made Sikkim a full state, adding its name to the First Schedule of the Constitution.

Indian and Indonesian Navies Conduct Exercise in Arabian Sea

- The Indian and Indonesian navies carried out a military exercise in the Arabian Sea to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation.
- “Enhancing Interoperability & strengthening Bilateral Maritime Cooperation Indian Navy Ship INS Talwar and Indonesian Navy’s multirole Corvette KRI Bung Tomo, conducted Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the Arabian Sea”. India’s maritime cooperation with Indonesia witnessed a renewed momentum in the last few years.
- In November 2020, India hosted the Malabar exercise, in which the navies of the US, Japan and Australia participated. India invited Australia for the exercise, effectively making it a drill by all the Quad member nations.

Indonesia is a sovereign state in Southeast Asia, between the Indian and Pacific oceans. It is the world’s largest island country, with more than thirteen thousand islands. With over 261 million people, it is the world’s 4th most populous country as well as the most populous Muslim-majority country. Java is the world’s most populous island. Jakarta is the country’s capital. The rupiah (Rp) is the official currency of Indonesia. Joko Widodo also known as Jokowi is the seventh and current President of Indonesia.

First joint commands to be launched

- India is set to begin a formal roll-out of its long-awaited theaterisation plan to best utilise its military's resources amid growing security threats, with the Air Defence Command and the Maritime Theatre Command set to be launched by May.
- The commands are being set up in the backdrop of border tensions with China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh and Pakistani hostility along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir, with a joint threat from the two nuclear-armed neighbours being acknowledged as a reality by the country's military leadership, and at a time when India is demonstrating a muscular stance in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The Air Defence Command, which can come up in Prayagraj (Allahabad), would be the first to be arranged in April. It is going to manage the air defence assets of all of the three providers, and might be tasked with defending navy belongings from airborne enemies. The Maritime Theatre Command, to be headquartered in Karwar on the west coast, will come up the next month and be chargeable for securing India from seaborne threats and can have military and air power parts underneath it.

Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces (CDS) is the head of the military staff of the Indian Armed Forces and the chief executive of the Department of Military Affairs. As the highest ranking officer of the armed forces, the CDS is the commanding officer and chairperson of the Joint Commanders and Staff Committee and here the CDS has an operational role where he is responsible as the chief military adviser to the government of India and the Ministry of Defence. As the head of the armed forces, the Chief of Defence Staff is also aided by the newly formed office of Vice Chief of Defence Staff, the nation's second highest ranking military officer, and the three chiefs of staff of the army, navy and air force, who are the leaders of each respective branch. The first and current CDS is General Bipin Rawat, who took office on 1 January 2020. The position was first officially suggested in 1999 following the Kargil War through the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee.

Assam CM lays foundation of first Skill University of Eastern India

- Assam's Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundations for the first East India Skills University in Darrang district, which aims to educate more than 10,000 students in 12 disciplines. The university is also being built at a cost of Rs. 1000 crore. The Skill University is reportedly expected to be completed and have an agreement with countries such as Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan and England by 2026. The chief minister also said that he decided to create prestigious institutions in different districts of the state

Jagdish Mukhi is the current Governor of Assam and Assam is known for Assam tea and Assam silk. Dispur is the capital of the state of Assam. Guwahati is the largest city of Assam and Northeastern India. Sarbananda Sonowal is current the Chief Minister of Assam. In 1874, on the formation of Assam as the Chief Commissioner's Province, it was chosen as the headquarters of the new administration because of its convenient location between the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys and more so because the climate of Shillong was much cooler than tropical India. Shillong remained the capital of undivided Assam until the creation of the new state of Meghalaya on 21 January 1972, when Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya, and Assam moved its capital to Dispur in Guwahati.

Go Electric campaign launched to ensure energy security in the country

- The Union Minister of Road, Transport, and Highways Nitin Gadkari on February 19, 2021, launched the 'Go Electric Campaign' in order to spread awareness regarding the benefits of EV Charging Infrastructure and e-mobility as well as electric cooking in India.
- The Central Government launched the Go Electric campaign to boost the adoption of electric mobility vehicles and electric cooking appliances to ensure energy security in the country. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said, Go Electric is a future of India which will promote cost effective, environment friendly and indigenous electric products.

- Expressing concern over the huge imported cost of fossil fuel, he said, **carbon emission from transport vehicles is a major challenge and the country needs to promote use of such kinds of vehicles which operate on alternative mode of fuels like electric batteries, CNG and Bio-fuel.** He said, India would become the number one manufacturer of electric vehicles in the next five years. **India is the fourth largest auto market in the world** and some estimates suggest there are close to 170 active investors in EV startup ecosystem in the country.

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.**

India's first Digital Varsity comes up in Kerala

- Digital University is set up by upgrading two-decade-old Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K).** The university is starting with five schools of knowledge. Each school will be offering master level programmes in computer science, informatics, applied electronics and humanities with various specialization of the industry 4.0 world.
- The university is starting with five schools of knowledge**—School of Computer Science and Engineering; School of Digital Sciences; School of Electronic Systems and Automation; School of Informatics; and School of Digital Humanities and Liberal Arts, covering science, technology and humanities aspects of the Digital world.

EAM S Jaishankar launches BRICS-2021 website

- External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar launched the BRICS-2021 website.** The website will provide a comprehensive snapshot of the strong BRICS engagement and the exhaustive calendar of events during BRICS under the Chair ship of India. He also soft launched the upgraded facilities at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan that will serve as the Secretariat for BRICS Summit.

BRICS is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as “BRIC” (China, Brazil, Russia and India), before the induction of South Africa in 2010. In 2009, the first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia.

ISA to launch World Solar Bank at global climate meet in Nov

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) plans to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow** in November a development that will support India's attempt to secure leadership in the climate arena.
- The development assumes significance, given that green finance will be among priority themes at the climate meet called COP-26, which comes in the backdrop of US re-joining the Paris climate accord.

The **International Solar Alliance** is a common platform for cooperation among sun-rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. The initiative was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris at the end of 2015 by the then, President of France and the Prime Minister of India. In January 2016, Narendra Modi, and the then, French President François Hollande jointly laid the foundation stone of the **International Solar Alliance headquarters** and inaugurated the interim Secretariat at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gwalpahari, Gurugram, India.

In a first, Hydrogen fuel bus service to start on Delhi-Jaipur route

- In a first, India's largest energy conglomerate, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC Ltd) is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route.** This will be the first FCEV bus service used for intercity commute.
- Green mobility is gaining momentum in the country and apart from establishing a complete EV supporting infrastructure;** the Indian government is now also planning more options towards alternative fuels in order to reduce dependence on traditional fuels. While electric cars and taxis are been promoted heavily by the government, it is now also conducting a feasibility study on hydrogen fuel buses.

- Recently, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari and Power Minister R K Singh launched the “Go Electric” Campaign to spread awareness on the benefits of e-mobility and EV Charging Infrastructure as well as electric cooking in India. During the event, it was announced that NTPC is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route. However, no specific timeline has been provided for when the service would be started.

NTPC Limited, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is an Indian Public Sector Undertaking, engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities. It is a company incorporated under the Companies Act 1956 and is promoted by the Government of India. The headquarters of the company is situated at New Delhi. NTPC’s core business is the generation and sale of electricity to state-owned power distribution companies and State Electricity Boards in INDIA.

India kicks off BRICS chairship with inaugural three-day long Sherpas’ meeting

- India kicked off its BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Chairship with the inaugural three-day-long Sherpas’ meeting, said Anurag Srivastava, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson.
- On February 19, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar launched India’s BRICS 2021 website at the BRICS Secretariat at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan. Chinese President Xi Jinping may visit India later this year for BRICS summit. Russia hosted the most recent 12th BRICS summit on 17 November 2020 virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Heirs of father of woman can inherit property under Hindu Succession Act: SC

- The Supreme Court has said heirs of the father of a woman can inherit property under the Hindu Succession Act and they cannot be held as “strangers”. A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy referred to Section 15(1)(d) of the Hindu Succession Act and said the heirs of the parental side of a Hindu woman are covered under persons entitled to succession of property.
- “A perusal of Section 15(1)(d) indicates that heirs of the father are covered in the heirs who could succeed. When heirs of the father of a female are included as person who can possibly succeed, it cannot be held that they are strangers and not the members of the family qua the female,” the bench said.
- Section 15(1)(d) of the Hindu Succession Act relates to general rules of succession in the case of female Hindus and says that property can be inherited upon the heirs of the father. The top court said the term “family” has to be understood in a wider sense so as to include within its fold not only close relations or legal heirs but “even those persons who may have some sort of antecedent title, a semblance of a claim or even if they have a spes successionis”.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to amend and codify the law relating to intestate or unwilled succession, among Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs. The Act lays down a uniform and comprehensive system of inheritance and succession into one Act. The Hindu woman’s limited estate is abolished by the Act. Any property possessed by a Hindu female is to be held by her absolute property and she is given full power to deal with it and dispose it of by will as she likes. A part of this Act was amended in 2005 by the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, amended Section 4, Section 6, Section 23, Section 24 and Section 30 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. It revised rules on coparcenary property, giving daughters of the deceased equal rights with sons, and subjecting them to the same liabilities and disabilities. The amendment essentially furthers equal rights between Hindu males and females in the society through legislation.

National anthem played in Nagaland assembly for first time in almost 6 decades

- Almost 60 years after Nagaland attained statehood, the national anthem was played inside its assembly for the first time this February.

- The move is historic for a state that has been ravaged by decades of secessionist violence and protracted peace talks that still hang fire. **Nagaland attained statehood on December 1, 1963, and was the 16th state of the Union. The anthem was first played on January 24, 1950, when the Constitution was adopted and the Constituent Assembly was adjourned sine die**".

Jana Gana Mana is the national anthem of India. It was originally composed as Bharoto Bhagyo Bidhata in Bengali by polymath Rabindranath Tagore. The first stanza of the song Bharoto Bhagyo Bidhata was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India as the National Anthem on 24 January 1950. A formal rendition of the national anthem takes approximately 52 seconds. A shortened version consisting of the first and last lines (and taking about 20 seconds to play) is also staged occasionally. It was first publicly sung on 27 December 1911 at the Calcutta (now Kolkata) Session of the Indian National Congress.

Sonam Wangchuk builds world's first solar-heated tent for Indian Army at higher altitudes

- Ladakh based engineer and education reformer, and the man behind the character of 'Phunsukh Wangdu' in the Bollywood blockbuster '3 Idiots' **Sonam Wangchuk has built the world's first solar heated military tent** and we cannot be more proud. Wangchuk, has **built the military tent for the Indian Army at the Galwan Valley**. The tent can accommodate 10 jawans and is fully portable. The weight of the tent is less than 30 kilos and it can be fully set up in under a day and very quickly too.
- **Indian Army jawans posted at higher altitudes have to brave harsh temperatures every winter.** With the lack of access to electricity, their only option is to turn to other heating solutions like burning firewood, kerosene or diesel.

Uttar Pradesh presents biggest ever budget of Rs 5, 50,270 Cr

- **Uttar Pradesh government presented the biggest ever budget of the state, which was to the tune of around 5 lakh 50 thousand 270 lakh crores rupees. The first paperless budget presented by state finance minister Suresh Khanna in the state assembly was also the first paperless budget of any state in the country.**
- State Finance minister Suresh Khanna said that the budget of the government is **focused on four sectors infrastructure development, public health, human resource development and agriculture primarily. Fiscal deficit of the state budget is 90721 crores rupees.**
- Around 27598 crores rupees have been allocated for the new schemes and projects launched by state government in this budget. Atmnirbhar Krishak Samanvit Vikas Yojna has been launched for the welfare of the farmers of state. Yogi Adityanath government has also **announced to provide financial help to destitute women under Mahila Samarthya Yojna till they get alimony from Court.**

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state's Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

Punjab Cabinet approves mission 'Lal Lakir' in all villages

- **The Punjab Cabinet approved implementation of mission 'Lal Lakir' aimed at facilitating villagers to monetise property rights** and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state. **As no record of rights is available for such properties within the 'Lal Lakir', the same cannot currently be monetised as per real value of the property and no mortgages can be created on such properties.**
- There are households within the 'Lal Lakir', **which do not own property other than the areas within the 'Lal Lakir',** and are thus at a disadvantage when it comes to monetising or realising the real value of the property, according to a government statement. 'Lal Lakir' refers to land that is part of the village 'abaadi' (habitation) and is used for non-agriculture purposes only.

- Under the mission, **the right of record of properties within ‘Lal Lakir’** in the villages of the state will be prepared with the cooperation of the government of India under the **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas)** scheme. This will enable mapping the land, households, habitation and all other areas falling within ‘Lal Lakir’.

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 26th Chief Minister of Punjab and Vijayendrapal Singh Badnore is the current Governor of Punjab**.

Andhra Deputy CM gives birth to baby girl, becomes first to have child while in office

- Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Sreevani gave birth to a baby girl at a hospital to become the first deputy chief minister in the country to have a child while in office**. The 34-year-old Sreevani, who holds the **tribal welfare portfolio in Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy-led Cabinet**.
- This is the first child for Sreevani, one of the youngest deputy CMs in the country, and her husband Sathrucharla Parikshith Raju**. When **YSRCP came to power in 2019, Jagan Mohan Reddy picked Sreevani as one of the five deputies**. She is the **youngest minister in Jagan cabinet**.

Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have Five Deputy Chief Ministers one each from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, backward, minority and Kapu communities. **YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the current Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh**. **Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have three capital cities; there are Visakhapatnam (Executive capital), Amaravati (Legislative capital) and Kurnool (Judiciary)**. **Andhra Pradesh High Court imposed a stay on implementation of 3 capitals**. **Andhra Pradesh is the first state to be formed on a linguistic basis in India on 1 October 1953**. **On 2 June 2014, Telangana was separated from the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed state with Hyderabad as its capital**.

Uttarakhand brings ordinance to give co-ownership rights to women in husband's property

- The Uttarakhand government has brought an ordinance giving co-ownership rights to women in their husband's ancestral property**. The ordinance has been brought keeping in view **large-scale migration of men from the hill areas of the state in search of livelihood**.
- The ordinance aims to provide economic independence to women who are left behind and have to depend on agriculture to sustain themselves**. Agriculture Minister Subodh Uniyal said **Uttarakhand is the first state to give co-ownership rights to women in their husband's ancestral property**.

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 27th 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**.

In favour of 4 sub-categories of OBCs, says NCBC chairman

- The Justice Rohini Commission has been studying sub-categorisation of OBCs and is expected to submit its report to the government in July**. NCBC Chairman Sahni said: **“The Commission for Backward Classes, in principle, is in favour of roughly four categories of OBCs as being suggested by the Justice Rohini Commission**.
- These sub-categories will broadly be about OBC sections which have either benefited adequately or less benefited from reservation**. The other two categories are about least benefited and those who have not at all benefited from the present reservation structure for OBCs.” **The Justice Rohini Commission was constituted on October 2, 2017**. It was given 12 weeks to submit its report, but has been given several extensions since.

- OBCs are granted 27 per cent reservation in jobs and education under the central government. In September last year, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court reopened the legal debate on **sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservation**. The debate arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the over 2,600 included in the central list of OBCs have secured a major part of this 27 per cent quota. The argument for sub-categorisation — or creating categories within OBCs for reservation — is that it would ensure “equitable distribution” of representation among all OBC communities.

National Commission for Backward Classes is a constitutional body (123rd constitutional amendment bill 2017 and 102nd amendment 2018 in constitution to make it constitutional body) (Article 338B of the Indian Constitution) under India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment established on 14 August 1993. It was constituted pursuant to the provisions of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The commission was the outcome of *Indra Sawhney & Ors. Vs. Union of India*. The NCBC Bill, passed by Parliament of India inserted Article 338B into the Constitution after Articles 338 and 338A which deal with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SC) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (ST) respectively.

National Urban Digital Mission launched

- The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry **launched the National Urban Digital Mission**, which was aimed at **creating a shared digital infrastructure for cities**. HUA Minister Hardeep Puri said the Ministry had to support all urban local bodies for delivering on the promise of serving all citizens. Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said cities would become smarter only if digital technology was leveraged properly.
- The Ministry also **launched the India Urban Data Exchange**, which was developed by the Smart Cities Mission and the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. The open-source platform would allow data providers and users to share and access datasets regarding cities.

Uttar Pradesh receives award for fastest implementation of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana

- **Uttar Pradesh received award for fastest implementation of Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana**. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, **Narendra Singh Tomar** awarded the **top-performing States and Districts for their exemplary work with respect to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme**.
- **Uttar Pradesh has been awarded in the category of fastest take off in year 2020-21**. Nearly 1.53 crore farmers were registered during the period of Dec 2018 to Mar 2019 in state. The Union Minister distributed the awards during an event in New Delhi organized to celebrate the 2nd-year completion of the PM-KISAN scheme. The states were awarded based on the criteria such as correction of data, addressing farmer grievances, timely physical verification exercise.

The **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** scheme was **launched in February 2019 to provide income support by way of a cash benefit to all landholding farmers (subject to certain exclusion criteria)** to enable them to fulfill their agricultural requirements and support their families. **Under the scheme, the financial benefit of Rs.6000/- per year is provided to eligible beneficiary farmers in three equal installments**. On 24 February 2019, **Narendra Modi** launched the scheme in **Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur** by transferring the first instalment of Rs. 2,000 each to over one crore farmers.

Manipur CM N Biren Singh launches PM FME Scheme

- In Manipur, the State Chief Minister **N. Biren Singh** **launched the Prime Minister Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) Scheme**. The launching of the Scheme was done during the inaugural function of Conference Cum Buyer Meet at Hotel Imphal.
- The **PM FME Scheme aims to provide financial, technical and business support to micro food processing units, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs)**. The Scheme will also **promote One District One Product** to reap the benefit of scales in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.

Manipur is a state in northeastern India, with the city of Imphal as its capital. It is bounded by the Indian states of Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the south and Assam to the west. **Najma Heptulla** is the current Governor of Manipur and the **Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia**. **Nongthombam Biren Singh** is the current Chief Minister of Manipur.

Rajasthan budget: Gehlot announces Universal Health Care scheme worth Rs. 3,500 crore

- **Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government presented the Budget for 2021-22** and said it will bring a **Universal Health Care scheme worth Rs. 3,500 crore**, under which every family in the State will get medical insurance benefit of up to **Rs. 5 lakh**. In a first, the Congress government presented its **first paperless budget** in the state assembly.

Rajasthan literally means “The Land of Kings”. Rajasthan is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. Jaipur is the capital city and also known as the **Pink City**, due to the dominant color scheme of its buildings. On 6 July 2019, UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed Jaipur the “**Pink City of India**” among its World Heritage Sites. The city is also home to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites **Amber Fort** and **Jantar Mantar**. **Ashok Gehlot** is serving as the current Chief Minister of Rajasthan. **Kalraj Mishra** is serving as the current Governor of Rajasthan.

EPS inaugurates Asia’s largest Livestock Research Centre in Salem

- **Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami inaugurated the Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS), the largest in Asia, near Thalaivasal, Tamil Nadu.** The facility was constructed at Rs 1,023 crore and spans 1,100 acres. Water for the AIIRLAS is drawn from the Cauvery River from Poolampatti at a cost of Rs 260 crore.
- The Chief Minister also laid the foundation for a desalination project and a fishing harbour near **Marakanam in Villupuram**. Palaniswami also inaugurated various completed projects, including the building for a special maternity ward in Government Villupuram Medical College Hospital in Mundiampakkam. He also laid the foundation for **Nandan Canal project**.

Tamil Nadu lies in the southernmost part of the Indian subcontinent and is bordered by the union territory of Puducherry and the South Indian states of Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. Its capital and largest city is **Chennai**. Its official language is **Tamil**, which is one of the longest-surviving classical languages in the world. **Banwarilal Purohit** is the current Governor of Tamil Nadu.

Government announces new social media rules

- To prevent the misuse of social media, the Union government announced new rules that make it mandatory for platforms such as WhatsApp to aid the government in identifying the “originator” of certain messages containing unlawful information, while also requiring social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to remove such content within 36 hours of being notified.
- As per the **Information Technology (Guidelines for intermediaries and digital media ethics code) Rules, 2021**, social media platforms will also be required to provide information, including related to verification of identity, to lawfully authorised agencies within **72 hours**. The rules, a draft of which were released in 2018, comes close on the heels of a tussle between the government and Twitter over removal of certain content related to the ongoing farmers’ protests.
- The government has also been at loggerheads with WhatsApp for over two years on the issue of tracing the **originator of the messages**. The Facebook-owned firm has in the past denied to comply with the government’s request to trace the origin of a fake message, stating that the move will undermine the private nature of the platform.
- At a press conference, **Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad** said, “Social media is welcome to do business in India, they have done exceedingly well, they have done good business, they have empowered ordinary Indians. He noted that **WhatsApp had about 53 crore users in India, YouTube about 48 crore users, Facebook about 41 crore users and about 1.75 crore people used Twitter.**

The Information Technology Act, 2000 was enacted by Parliament of India on 9 June 2000 and it is in force since 17 October 2000. Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 empowers the central government to block the online content and arrest the culprit. This is the primary law that deals with cyber-crime and electronic commerce in India.

New guidelines for social media platforms, digital news media & OTT content providers

- The Union government announced new rules to regulate digital content and establish a Code of Ethics and a three-tier grievance redressal framework for news websites and OTT platforms. Concerns have been raised about rampant abuse of social media platforms, spread of fake news, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in his address to the media. The rules will empower users of social media, he said.
- The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 prescribes, for the first time, how digital news organisations, social media platforms and OTT streaming services will be regulated by the government. The rules include a strict oversight mechanism involving several ministries and a code of ethics that bans content affecting “the sovereignty and integrity of India” and that threatening national security. Social media giants will be required to appoint India-based compliance officers. If they remove content, they will be required to inform users, give reasons for taking down their post and hear them out.
- The oversight mechanism will include a committee with representatives from the ministries of Defence, External Affairs, Home, I&B, Law, IT and Women and Child Development. This committee will have “suo motu powers” to call hearings on complaints of violation of the Code of Ethics if it wants. The committee can warn, censor, admonish or reprimand violators, seek an apology besides other actions.

India, Uzbekistan agree to strengthen multilateral cooperation

- India and Uzbekistan agreed to strengthen multilateral cooperation. Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov and Dr S. Jaishankar discussed the bilateral relations concerning both the nation. Both countries have been actively cooperating in the regional and multilateral formats, including the UN, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the India-Central Asia Dialogue, it added.
- Jaishankar and Kamilov also discussed the evolving situation in Afghanistan and noted the importance of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan for regional peace, stability and security, the MEA said.

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.

Saras Aajeevika Mela, bringing rural women SHGs under one platform, opens at Noida Haat

- The Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 is underway at Noida Haat. The fair was inaugurated by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. It will continue till 14th March. More than 300 rural self-help groups and craftsman from 27 states are participating in the Mela which is being by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- Mr Tomar said that the Ministry of Rural Development is working to include more women in Self Help Groups (SHGs). He said these SHGs played a vital role in increasing family income and improving quality of life.

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare finalizes products for ODOFP

- Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product, (ODOFP). The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country.
- The lists of products have been finalized after taking inputs from the States and UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research. These products include paddy, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, spices, fruits, honey, and processed products among others. These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries which provides incentives to promoters and micro-enterprises.

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.

Karnataka Government to set up Flower Processing Centre

- The Horticulture Department of Karnataka and the International Flower Auction Bangalore- IFAB will collaborate to set up a flower processing centre in order to convert unsold flowers into various forms of useful products.
- M. Vishwanath, the MD of IFAB and Joint Director of Horticulture informed that the unit will be able to process all kinds of flowers and it will come up at IFAB in March or April 2021. He added that a large number of flower growers from the state will be benefitted from the unit instead of dumping their produce or abandoning the gardens. The state accounts for 14% of India's total area under flower production.

Karnataka is a state in the south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. The capital and largest city is Bengaluru. Bookanakere Siddalingappa Yediyurappa is serving as the 19th and current Chief Minister of Karnataka. Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala is currently serving as the Governor of Karnataka.

Sevapuri in Prime Minister's seat being developed as India's first model block

- Amini, a little known village panchayat in Sevapuri, Varanasi, can boast of a panchayat secretariat equipped with Internet connection, a proper road, a wellness centre, sports ground surrounded by a boundary, garbage bins, and rickshaw carts to collect and dispose of waste, a newly built community toilet and a veterinary center. But Amini isn't alone: All 87 village panchayats in Sevapuri are being developed by Varanasi district administration as India's first model block.
- Niti Aayog selected Sevapuri block in the beginning of 2020 to turn it into a model ideal block by ensuring 100% implementation of Central and state government developmental and social welfare schemes in all of its 87 village panchayats.

Narendra Damodardas Modi is an Indian politician serving as the 14th and current Prime Minister of India since 2014. He was the Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014 and is the Member of Parliament for Varanasi. He is the first prime minister outside of the Indian National Congress to win two consecutive terms with a full majority and the second to complete more than five years in office after Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Task force on river-linking Okays Mahandadi-Godavari link

- The task force on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) has agreed and approved the preparation of final detailed project report (DPR) on the proposed Mahandi (Barmul)-Godavari (Dowlaiswaram) link by ensuring utilisation of the allocated Godavari waters by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, en route the link canal of the project.
- The decision, considered a major foot forward on the interlinking of rivers involving the two Telugu States, has been taken at the 13th meeting of the task force on ILR held in New Delhi. The meeting discussed mainly three proposals put forward by the task force chairman based on the draft DPR prepared on the diversion of water from Godavari basin to Cauvery basin.
- The meeting was chaired by Chairman of the task force Sriram Vedire, who is also Advisor to the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC) S.K. Halder, Director General of National Water Development Agency (NWDA) Bhopal Singh and several others from the Department of Water Resources and other agencies concerned.

The interlinking project aims to link India's rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals that will allow for their water capacities to be shared and redistributed. **India accounts for 18% of the world population and about 4% of the world's water resources.** One of the solutions to solve the country's water woes is to Link Rivers and lakes. **The project is being managed by India's National Water Development Agency (NWDA),** under its Ministry of Water Resources. NWDA has studied and prepared reports on 14 inter-link projects for Himalayan component, 16 inter-link projects for Peninsular component and 37 intrastate river linking projects. **On 16 September 2015, first linking was completed of rivers Krishna and Godavari.**

Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International to conduct a study on the “economic impact” of various judgments

- **Government think tank NITI Aayog has asked Jaipur-headquartered research organisation Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) International to conduct a study on the “economic impact” of various judgments** delivered by Supreme Court, the high courts, and quasi-judicial bodies such as the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the “judicial activism” of such courts and tribunals.
- **The findings will be used as a training input for judges of commercial courts, NGT, High Courts and SC.** It would contribute to **public discourse among policymakers for promoting an “economically responsible approach by judiciary” in its decisions.** The study is also a part of the larger umbrella project undertaken by NITI Aayog under which it wants to establish a **judicial performance index**, which would measure the performance of judges at district courts and subordinate levels.
- **The first study is on the economic impact of the ban that was imposed by the apex court in March 2019 on the construction of a Greenfield airport at Mopa in Goa.** The top court had suspended an economic clearance granted for the airport and had then asked the Expert Appraisal Committee to revisit its decision. The ban on construction was lifted by an order of the top court in January 2020 but had several revised conditions.
- **Article 142 allows the Supreme Court to pass any order necessary to do “complete justice” in any case.** “The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it...” the Article states.

CUTS International (Consumer Unity & Trust Society) began its journey in 1983 in Rajasthan, from a rural development communication initiative, a wall newspaper Gram Gadar (Village Revolution). This monthly wall newspaper is published regularly and has been instrumental in providing a forum for the oppressed classes to get justice.

International



China's first Hualong One nuclear reactor starts commercial operation

- China National Nuclear Corp said the first of its Hualong One units, third-generation pressurised water nuclear reactors, began commercial operations.
- The reactor in Fuqing in China's southeastern province of Fujian was first connected to the grid on November 27 last year, following more than five years of construction work. "This marks that China has mastered independent third-generation nuclear power technology following the United States, France, Russia and others". The Hualong One units, designed to have a 60-year lifespan, have an installed capacity of 1.161 million kilowatts each.

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. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line.

Nepal decides to award hydropower project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam

- Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 megawatt Lower Arun Hydropower Project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN). This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.
- The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method. Similar to the Arun III hydel project, which will provide 21 per cent free power to Nepal during the concession period, the developer of the Lower Arun hydel project should also prioritise providing certain percent of power free of cost. The developer will hand over the ownership of the project to the government of Nepal after 20 years of commercial operation.

Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia located in the Himalaya. Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Constitution of Nepal is the present governing Constitution of Nepal. Nepal is governed according to the Constitution which came into effect on September 20, 2015, replacing the Interim Constitution of 2007. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli is currently serving as the Prime Minister of Nepal. He was the first elected prime minister under the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal.

World's first biofuel rocket takes flight for the first time

- A rocket company that hopes to become the "Uber for space" has launched the world's first biofuel-powered rocket.
- Brunswick-based bluShift Aerospace's 20 ft prototype hit an altitude of around 4,000 ft in a first run designed to test the rocket's propulsion and control systems. Sascha Deri, founder of bluShift Aerospace, told the BBC the rocket's biofuel took six years to create and is sourced from farms. He would not expand on exactly how it is made.

Dubai to have the world's first Clothespin Tower

- The Clothespin Tower is the first conceptual building of its kind that turns the mundane clothespin into an icon of eternal love and unity. While most buildings and skyscrapers boast of height and architecture but lack truth and philosophy, the Clothespin Tower, based on the famous artwork of Zygo, can be called a “monument of art”.
- The concept behind the Clothespin tower shows two halves complementing each other, just like the everyday Clothespin. A leading team of his is planning to create the first Clothespin Tower in Dubai using innovative design and cutting-edge technology to build the 40-floor tower as a symbol of love, peace and hope between the world and the UAE.

World Bank to provide USD 500 million to Bangladesh for improving Road and Digital Connectivity

- The government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with the World Bank for the upgradation of rural roads and connectivity in the western region.
- The project is expected to benefit over 20 million people in the western region of Bangladesh. The project will help upgrade the 48 kilometre two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah road to a modern 4-lane highway. It will also help improve 600 kilometre of connecting rural roads and build or develop new rural markets.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country's largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16th and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh. India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh (4,096-kilometer) (2,545-mile).

World's First 3-D Printed School to open in Madagascar

- The American philanthropist and founder of the Thinking Huts nonprofit, Maggie Grout, has come up with an innovative concept to help make education more accessible around the world: a life-size 3D-printed school. The first such school is due to open its doors in Madagascar.
- To bring this school project to life, Maggie Grout teamed up with the architectural design agency Studio Mortazavi, based in San Francisco. The pilot project will be built on the university campus of the Ecole de Management et d'Innovation Technologique (EMIT), in the city of Fianarantsoa in Madagascar, and will welcome students from preschool through high school.

Myanmar military announces new State Administrative Council

- The regime in Myanmar headed by the Army has announced a new State Administrative Council. The council headed by the Army Chief General Min Aung Hlaing has eleven members out of which eight are from the military.
- The State Administration Council is the current executive body governing Myanmar following the Myanmar coup d'état in February 2021. The council was formed on 2 February 2021, and has 16 members. Myint Swe is a Burmese politician, currently serving as the acting president of Myanmar.

Aung San Suu Kyi is a Myanmar politician, diplomat, author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1991). She is the leader of the National League for Democracy and the first and served as State Counsellor of Myanmar (equivalent to a prime minister) and Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2016 to 2021. She is also the first woman to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Myanmar's capital city is Naypyidaw and kyat is the currency of Myanmar. Sittwe Port is a deep-water port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal. Situated at the mouth of the Kaladan River, the USD 120 Million port is being financed by India as a part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, collaboration between India and Myanmar. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project is a project that will connect the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar by sea.

Denmark to create world's first energy island in the North Sea

- **Denmark approved a plan to build the world's first energy island in the North Sea** that will produce and store enough green energy to cover the electricity needs of 3 million European households.
- **The artificial island**, which in its initial phase will be the size of 18 football fields, will be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines and will supply both power to households and green hydrogen for use in shipping, aviation, industry and heavy transport.
- The move came as the European Union unveiled plans to transform its electricity system to rely mostly on renewable energy within a decade and increase its offshore wind energy capacity 25-fold by 2050.

Denmark (Danish) is a Nordic country in Northern Europe. The Kingdom of Denmark is constitutionally a unitary state comprising Denmark proper and the two autonomous territories in the North Atlantic Ocean: the Faroe Islands and Greenland. Copenhagen is the capital and most populous city of Denmark. The krone is the official currency of Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. Mette Frederiksen has been Prime Minister of Denmark since June 2019.

Kyrgyzstan appoints new prime minister

- **Kyrgyzstan appointed Ulukbek Maripov as the country's new Prime Minister bringing a long-running political crisis to a close.** A new government was formed after Sadyr Japarov, who won presidential elections held on Jan. 10, resigned as prime minister.
- Party leaders who formed a coalition **nominated Maripov for the premiership.** He was then serving as chairman of the Accounting Chamber, a state auditing institution. **Maripov won a vote of confidence in the polls**, which were held to determine the new prime minister and cabinet members.

Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country in Central Asia. Bishkek is the capital and largest city of Kyrgyzstan. The som is the currency of the Kyrgyz Republic. Sadyr Japarov is the current President of Kyrgyzstan. Supreme Council is the unicameral Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, a businessman has chosen as Libya's new interim Prime Minister

- **Abdul Hamid Dbeibah**, a businessman-turned-politician, has been chosen as Libya's new interim Prime Minister following lengthy United Nations-sponsored talks aimed at ending a decade of conflict in the North African country.
- Dbeibah, along with a three-member Presidential Council, will have the crucial and difficult task of preparing the ground for fair and transparent national elections in December, as well as ensuring the safe participation of Libyans in the electoral process.
- The choice of Dbeibah came as a surprise to many, given the construction mogul's close association with Libya's former longtime ruler, Muammar Gaddafi. Gaddafi's rule ended in 2011, when he was overthrown in a NATO-backed uprising and later killed.

Libya is a country in the Maghreb region in North Africa, The largest city and capital is Tripoli. On 5 February 2021, Mohamed Yunus al-Menfi was chosen as the president of the Libyan Presidential Council at the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum. The dinar is the currency of Libya.

Mario Draghi secures support from key parties to form new Italian government

- **Mario Draghi secured preliminary support from two key parties for forming a new government** that will decide how to spend more than 200 bn euros (£175 bn) in European Union funds to help relaunch Italy's pandemic-ravaged economy.
- The populist 5-Star Movement and the rightwing League both signalled support for a Draghi-led government. Draghi, the former president of the European Central Bank, completed a first round of talks with political parties. Italy's president asked Draghi to form a government after the resignation of ex-premier Giuseppe Conte, who lost support of a small but key coalition party.

Italy is located in Southern Europe and is also considered part of Western Europe. A unitary parliamentary republic with Rome as its capital. Sergio Mattarella is serving as the current President of the Italian Republic, since February 2015. Euro is the official currency of it.

U.S. moves to rejoin UN rights council, reversing Trump anew

- The Biden administration is set to announce that it will reengage with the much-maligned U.N. Human Rights Council that former President Donald Trump withdrew from almost three years ago. The decision reverses another Trump-era move away from multilateral organizations and agreements.
- Trump pulled out of the world body's main human rights agency in 2018 due to its disproportionate focus on Israel, which has received by far the largest number of critical council resolutions against any country, as well as the number of authoritarian countries among its members and because it failed to meet an extensive list of reforms demanded by then-US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world. The UNHRC has 47 members elected for staggered three-year terms on a regional group basis. The headquarters of UNHRC is in Geneva, Switzerland.

India, Afghanistan sign MoU to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul

- India and Afghanistan signed an agreement to build the Shahtoot Dam in Kabul to provide drinking water facility in the Afghan capital.
- In a virtual summit, external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Afghan counterpart Mohammed Haneef Atmar signed the MoU in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani.

Afghanistan is a landlocked country located within south-central Asia. Kabul is the capital of Afghanistan and its largest city. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai is the current President of Afghanistan. The afghani is the currency of Afghanistan, issued by the central bank Da Afghanistan Bank. Abdullah Abdullah leads the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), which is expected to lead the intra-Afghan peace talks with the Taliban. He served as Chief Executive Officer of the Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan from September 2014 until March 2020. India shares its international boundary with 7 countries including Afghanistan.

Mario Draghi sworn in as Italy Prime Minister

- The ex-head of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, was sworn in as Italian Prime Minister. He has secured the support of almost all the main political parties, following the collapse of the previous administration last month.
- Italy is still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and is also facing its worst economic crisis in decades. In this regard, Draghi, an economist with experience at the highest levels of the European Union and as governor of the Bank of Italy is being seen as a safe pair of hands.

US and Russia to extend New START Treaty by 5 years

- US and Russia to extend the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) by five years. The United States and Russia have extended a crucial nuclear arms control treaty until 2026, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.
- The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or New START is the last nuclear treaty between the two countries and was set to expire Feb. 5, 2021. Renewing the agreement was one of the first national security challenges facing President Joe Biden's administration.
- Signed in 2010 by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev of Russia, the agreement placed the lowest limits in decades on American and Russian deployed nuclear warheads, and the land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers that deliver them.

- The five-year extension comes less than 24 hours after the U.S. criticized the nearly three-year prison sentence handed to Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, along with other members of the Group of Seven, or G-7 — the informal group of seven large industrialized countries including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation with the formal name of Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. It was signed on 8 April 2010 in Prague and, after ratification entered into force on 5 February 2011. It is expected to last until 5 February 2026, having been extended in 2021. New START replaced the Treaty of Moscow (SORT), which was expired in December 2012. The treaty calls for halving the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers. A new inspection and verification regime will be established, replacing the SORT mechanism.

US Prez Joe Biden announces launch of China task force to counter challenges posed by Beijing

- US President Joe Biden has announced the launch of a new China task force that will provide recommendations on military strategy to the Department of Defense (DoD) to counter growing challenges posed by Beijing.
- President Biden said, the task force will work quickly, drawing on civilian and military experts across the department. The task force will provide recommendations to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on key priorities and decision points to facilitate a strong path forward on China-related matters.

Joe Biden is the current and the 46th President of the United States. At 78, Biden is the oldest president in US history and only the second Roman Catholic President. A member of the Democratic Party, he served as the 47th Vice President from 2009 to 2017 under Barack Obama and represented Delaware in the United States Senate from 1973 to 2009. In January 2017, Barack Obama awarded Biden the Presidential Medal of Freedom with distinction.

China celebrates Lunar New Year

- China is celebrated Lunar New Year as it ushered into the Year of the Ox. It is one of the most important Chinese festivals, also known as the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival.
- In China, the festival lasts 15 days, starting with a feast the night of New Year's Eve and ending this year with the Spring Lantern Festival. People wear special clothes, write Spring Festival couplets, make dumplings, hang up lanterns and the characters for luck. Festivities started in the last lunar month on Laba Festival.

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. 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.

IAE says India's solar energy output to match coal-fired power by 2040

- The share of solar energy in India's power generation could equal coal-fired output by 2040, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said driven by falling renewable tariffs and a government push to increase green energy use.
- Coal currently dominates India's electricity sector, accounting for over 70% of overall generation with only about 4% produced through solar. India was on track to exceed its commitments as a part of the 2015 Paris agreement, the IEA said.
- "This dramatic turnaround is driven by India's policy ambitions, notably the target to reach 450 GW of renewable capacity by 2030, and the extraordinary cost-competitiveness of solar," the agency said. India has

the potential to become a world leader in battery storage, the IEA said, adding the country could add 140-200 GW capacity of battery by 2040. India is the world's second-largest coal market and holds the world's fifth-largest coal reserves. The nation's coal demand is estimated to rise by over nearly a third by 2040, with share of imports shrinking to below 30%.

Biden administration appoints 2 Indian-origin experts to key positions

- Two Indian-origin experts in public service have been appointed by the Biden administration to key positions at AmeriCorps, the federal agency for volunteering and service.
- Sonali Nijhawan has been named Director of AmeriCorps State and National, and Sri Preston Kulkarni, 42, was appointed the new Chief of External Affairs. Though having run for Congress twice unsuccessfully in Texas, Kulkarni was certainly noticed by the leadership in Washington.

In a first, Indian and Saudi Arabia armies to undertake joint bilateral exercises

- In a significant development, Indian and Saudi armies will undertake joint bilateral exercises. This will be the first such exercises of both the armies together. The Indian forces contingent will be travelling to Saudi Arabia for the exercises which will be taking place in the next financial year.
- In December 2020, in another significant development, Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane had visited Saudi Arabia. It was the first time any Indian Army chief had visited the West Asian country in what is a clear sign of growing ties between New Delhi and Riyadh.
- Saudi Arabia identifies India as one of the Kingdom's Strategic Partner Countries under its 'Vision 2030'.

Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab state in Western Asia. Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East. Riyadh is the capital and most populous city of Saudi Arabia. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has been King of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques since 23 January 2015. Mohammad bin Salman is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, also serving as First Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs and Minister of Defense—the world's youngest office holder at the time. Saudi riyal is the currency of Saudi Arabia.

India to overtake EU as world's third largest energy consumer by 2030: IEA

- India will overtake the European Union as the world's third-largest energy consumer by 2030, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said as it forecast India accounting for the biggest share of energy demand growth over the next two decades.
- In its India Energy Outlook 2021, IEA saw primary energy consumption almost doubling to 1,123 million tonnes of oil equivalent as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) expands to USD 8.6 trillion by 2040. India at present is the fourth -largest global energy consumer behind China, the United States and the European Union.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organisation established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. Fatih Birol is a Turkish economist and energy expert, who has been the Executive Director of the International Energy Agency (IEA) since 1 September 2015.

Canada's Securities Regulator clears launch of world's first Bitcoin Exchange Traded Fund

- Canada's main securities regulator has cleared the launch of the world's first bitcoin exchange-traded fund, an investment manager providing investors greater access to the cryptocurrency that has sparked an explosion in trading interest. The Ontario Securities Commission has approved the launch of Purpose Bitcoin ETF, Toronto-based asset Management Company Purpose Investments Inc. said in a statement.
- The OSC confirmed the approval in a separate statement to Reuters. "The ETF will be the first in the world to invest directly in physically settled Bitcoin, not derivatives, allowing investors easy and efficient access to the emerging asset class of cryptocurrency," Purpose Investments said.

- Investors have been able to trade bitcoin using futures contracts on the CME derivatives exchange. They can also buy closed-end investment funds, such as the Bitcoin Fund on the Toronto Stock Exchange.
- Elon Musk's Tesla revealed it had bought \$1.5 billion worth of the cryptocurrency and would soon accept it as a form of payment for its cars, while the cryptocurrency has been gaining acceptance among mainstream financial firms.

Canada is a country located in the northern part of North America. Canada is the world's second-largest country by total area. 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. Its capital is Ottawa, and its three largest metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Canadian dollar is the currency of Canada. Justin Pierre James Trudeau is serving as the 23rd and current Prime Minister of Canada since 2015.

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.

Italy gets Inexperienced Super-ministry as Draghi Eyes EU Funds

- Prime Minister Mario Draghi has put climate change at the heart of his plans to run Italy by creating a super ministry to ensure a transition to green energy drives recovery and makes full use of European Union funds. Draghi's first job will be to redraft Italy's Recovery Plan, which must be handed to the European Commission by April to tap more than USD 240 billion of funds needed to revive the recession-hit economy.
- The creation of the new ministry helped to win over Italy's 5-Star Movement, which prides itself on its green credentials but had faced internal strife over the prospect of joining a cabinet containing its political foes. Under a European Union agreement, 37 percent of this money must be dedicated to the transition to a low carbon economy.

Italy is located in Southern Europe and is also considered part of Western Europe. A unitary parliamentary republic with Rome as its capital. Sergio Mattarella is serving as the current President of the Italian Republic, since February 2015. Euro is the official currency of it.

Nigeria's Okonjo-Iweala named first female, African WTO boss

- Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the first female and first African head of the beleaguered World Trade Organization (WTO), saying a stronger WTO would be vital for the global coronavirus recovery.
- The WTO called a virtual special general council meeting at which member states officially selected the former Nigerian finance minister and World Bank veteran as the global trade body's new director-general. She will take up her post on March 1 and her term, which is renewable, will run until August 31, 2025.

World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade between nations. It officially commenced operations on 1 January 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which was established in 1948. The WTO is the world's largest international economic organization, with 164 member states representing over 96% of global trade and global GDP. The WTO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as Director-General of the World Trade Organization. Her term will begin on 1 March 2021, when she will become the first woman and the first African to hold the office. Roberto Azevedo is a Brazilian career diplomat who served as Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) from 2013 until 2020.

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria. Muhammadu Buhari has been President of Nigeria since 2015. The Naira is the currency of Nigeria.

‘Pahela Phagun’ spring festival celebrated in Bangladesh

- The first day of the spring called ‘Pahela Phagun’ was celebrated in Dhaka despite the continued shadow of Corona pandemic in the country.
- Cultural organisations held programmes at different venues in the city to herald the beginning of the spring. Programmes were held at the Suhrawardy Udyan, Nandan Manch of Shilpakala Academy and several other locations

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country’s largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16th and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.

India joins Iran-Russia’s two-day navy exercise

- India has joined Iran and Russia in a two-day navy exercise dubbed “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021” in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.
- The drill will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles). It will include shooting at sea and air targets and liberating hijacked ships, as well as search and rescue and anti-piracy operations.

Indian Ocean is the third-largest of the world’s oceanic divisions, covering 70,560,000 km² (27,240,000 sq mi) or 19.8% of the water on Earth’s surface. It is bounded by Asia to the north, Africa to the west and Australia to the east. Atlantic Ocean is the second-largest of the world’s oceans. Pacific Ocean is the largest and deepest of Earth’s oceanic divisions. Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, located in the western north Pacific, is the deepest point in the world, reaching a depth of 10,928 meters (35,853 feet).

Britain’s Karim Khan elected International Criminal Court prosecutor

- Parties to the International Criminal Court elected Britain’s Karim Khan as the new prosecutor for a nine-year term starting on June 16. Mr. Khan won a secret ballot against three other candidates to replace lead prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. The 123-member Hague-based court, which began work nearly 20 years ago, handles war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and crimes of aggression.
- British barrister Karim is best known for heading the United Nations’ special investigative team looking into Islamic State crimes in Iraq.
- In his 27-year law career Mr. Khan, who is also Queens Counsel, has worked for almost every international criminal tribunal in roles in prosecution, defence and as counsel for victims. At the ICC Khan is best known for being a lead defence counsel who has worked on cases from Kenya, Sudan and Libya.

International Criminal Court (ICC or ICCT) is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal that sits in The Hague, Netherlands. The ICC is the first and only permanent international court with jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for the international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. The ICC began operations on 1 July 2002, upon the entry into force of the Rome Statute, a multilateral treaty that serves as the court’s foundational and governing document. States which become party to the Rome Statute become members of the ICC, serving on the Assembly of States Parties, which administers the court. As of December 2020, there are 123 ICC member states; 42 states have neither signed nor become parties to the Rome Statute.

DR Congo President appoints Sama Lukonde as new Prime Minister

- Congo President Felix Tshisekedi appointed Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, director-general of Gécamines (General Quarries and Mines) as the new DRC Prime Minister.
- The 43-year-old, who was appointed to Gécamines by Tshisekedi, is a former sports minister and an ex-party member of the former governor of Katanga Moïse Katumbi, who recently postured his political lean in support of the President.

Democratic Republic of the Congo or simply either **Congo** or the **Congo**, and historically **Zaire**, is a country in **Central Africa**. **Kinshasa** is the **capital** and the largest city of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**. The **Congolese franc** is the **currency** of the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.

Bangladesh Supreme Court launches AI based translation software ‘Amar Vasha’

- The **Bangladesh Supreme Court** launched the **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** based translation software ‘**Amar Vasha**’ through a virtual event. The software will **translate orders and judgements** of the **Supreme Court** from **English to Bangla**.
- **Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain**, **Law Minister Anisul Haq**, **Law Secretary Md. Golam Sarwar** and **High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami** spoke during the virtual function.
- The Software has been developed with ‘**EkStep**’ foundation of **India**. It is based on their ‘**Anuvaad**’ translation software used in **India** to **translate from English to Indian languages** including **Bangla**. **Anuvaad** was deployed by the **Supreme Court of India** as **SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software)** from **November 2019**.

Georgia’s PM resigns over move to arrest opposition leader

- **Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia** announced his **resignation**, following a **court ruling** that ordered the **arrest of a man** who leads the **ex-Soviet nation’s top opposition party**.
- **Mr. Gakharia** said he was **stepping down because of disagreements** within his own team over the decision to **arrest Nika Melia**, chairman of the **United National Movement opposition party**.

Georgia is a country located at the intersection of **Eastern Europe and Western Asia**. **Tbilisi** is the **capital** and the largest city of **Georgia**. **Salome Zourabichvili** is currently serves as the **5th President** of **Georgia**. The **Lari** is the **currency** of **Georgia**.

India-Myanmar Kaladan project in final stages

- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** said the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project** was in the final stages despite delays due to various challenges. The visit to **Guwahati** follows a virtual meeting of the **India-Japan Act East Forum** which reviewed **hydropower** and connectivity projects in the northeast.
- The **\$484 million Kaladan project**, originally scheduled to be completed by **2014**, will connect the **Kolkata seaport with Sittwe in Rakhine State of Myanmar by sea**. In **Myanmar**, it will link the **Sittwe seaport with Paletwa in the Chin State** via the **Kaladan river boat route**, and then from **Paletwa by road to Mizoram**.

Aung San Suu Kyi is a **Myanmar politician, diplomat, author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1991)**. She is the leader of the **National League for Democracy** and the first woman to serve as **State Counsellor of Myanmar** (equivalent to a prime minister) and **Minister of Foreign Affairs** from **2016 to 2021**. She is also the first woman to serve as **Minister for Foreign Affairs**. **Myanmar’s capital city is Naypyidaw** and **kyat** is the **currency of Myanmar**. **Sittwe Port** is a **deep-water port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal**. Situated at the mouth of the **Kaladan River**, the **USD 120 Million port** is being financed by **India as a part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**, collaboration between **India and Myanmar**. **Min Aung Hlaing** is a **Burmese army general** who has been serving as **Chairman of the State Administration Council of Myanmar** since **February 2021**, a position which makes him the country’s **de facto leader**.

UK is building the world’s first airport for flying cars

- The **Air-One** facility will be open for just one month, and is collaboration between government agencies, private-sector businesses and the aviation industry.
- It has been developed by **Urban Air Port**, with the involvement of the **Urban Air Mobility Division** of **Hyundai Motor Group** and **Coventry City Council**.

- **The pop-up airport is being built as a proof of concept of a zero-emissions hub for future modes of travel.** Electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) vehicles are being suggested as a low-carbon way to ease congestion as people travel between urban centres.
- **“Cars need roads. Trains need rails. Planes need airports. eVTOLs will need Urban Air Ports,” said Ricky Sandhu, founder and executive chairman of Urban Air Port.** “Flying cars used to be a futuristic flight of fancy. Air-One will bring clean urban air transport to the masses and unleash a new airborne world of zero emission mobility.”

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK or U.K.), or Britain, is a sovereign country in north-western Europe, off the north-western coast of the European mainland. **The United Kingdom includes the island of Great Britain, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and many smaller islands within the British Isles. The United Kingdom’s capital is London. Boris Johnson has been Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party since July 2019. Elizabeth II (Elizabeth Alexandra Mary) is Queen of the United Kingdom and 15 other Commonwealth realms. Pound sterling is the official currency of the United Kingdom.**

Pakistan to remain on FATF ‘greylist’

- **The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to retain Pakistan on the “greylist” till the next review of its performance on the recommendations during the June Plenary session.**
- **Pakistan, which continues to remain on the “grey list” of FATF, had earlier been given the deadline till the June to ensure compliance with the 27-point action plan against terror funding networks.** It has been under the FATF’s scanner since June 2018, when it was put on the Grey List for terror financing and money laundering risks.
- **FATF president Marcus Pleyer said although Pakistan had made a significant progress, it was still to fully comply with three of the 27-point action plan** it had been presented with in June 2018 when it was first put on the “greylist”.
- **The three points on which the FATF has sought urgent action by Pakistan pertain to effective steps — in terms of financial sanctions and penalties — against the terror funding infrastructure and the entities involved.** After assessing the measures taken during the June session, the FATF would verify the implementation and test the sustainability of reforms undertaken by Pakistan to this end. **As of 21 February 2021, only two countries were on the FATF blacklist: North Korea and Iran.**

FATF is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering. The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris. It holds three Plenary meetings in the course of each of its 12-month rotating presidencies. As of 1 March 2021, FATF currently comprises 37 member jurisdictions and 2 regional organisations (Gulf Co-operation Council and European Commission), representing most major financial centres in all parts of the globe. India became an Observer at FATF in 2006. Since then, it had been working towards full-fledged membership. On June 25, 2010, India was taken in as the 34th country member of FATF.

India Signs Free Trade Pact with Mauritius, the First of Its Kind with African Nation

- In one of the significant outcomes of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar’s visit to Mauritius, **India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Mauritius.**
- It is the first such arrangement that India struck with any African country. **Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth hailed the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation & Partnership Agreement (CECPA) as “far-reaching” and said that it would unleash new as well as expanded opportunities in trade, goods & services, investment, economic cooperation & technical assistance.**

Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean about 2,000 kilometres off the southeast coast of the African continent, east of Madagascar. The capital and largest city, Port Louis. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth is the current Prime Minister of Mauritius. Mauritian rupee is the currency of Mauritius.

US officially re-join Paris climate agreement overturning Donald Trump's decision to exit

- **The United States has officially rejoined the Paris Agreement.** Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a tweet said it is a good day in our fight against the climate crisis, as the **United States is once again a Party to the Paris Agreement.**
- **Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius,** compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to **reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible** to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century.
- The Paris Agreement is **a landmark in the multilateral climate change process because, for the first time, a binding agreement brings all nations into a common cause** to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

In 2015, ahead of the UN significant climate conference in Paris, India announced three major voluntary commitments called the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC): 1. Improving the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33–35% by 2030 over 2005 levels. 2. Increasing the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40% by 2030. 3. Enhancing its forest cover, thereby absorbing 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, was adopted by 196 parties at the 21st Conference of Parties in Paris, on December 12, 2015, and was enforced on November 4, 2016. On June 1, 2017, United States President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation and withdrawal took effect on November 4, 2020, one day after the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

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- **Ghana has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery of 6,00,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine** made by the Serum Institute of India.
- **The vaccines, delivered by UNICEF, arrived at Accra's Kotoka International Airport** and are part of the first wave of COVID-19 vaccines that COVAX is sending to several low- and middle-income countries. **Ghana is among 92 countries that have signed onto the COVAX programme.**

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UN body recommends Bangladesh graduation from LDC

- **The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of Bangladesh from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC) as it fulfilled the eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability.**
- **This is the second consecutive time since 2018 that the CDP has made recommendation for Bangladesh for graduation from LDC category.** The decision was taken during the triennial review meeting of the CDP held between 22-26 February.
- **The CDP decides on the LDC status of a country based on three criteria- per capita income, a human assets index and an economic vulnerability index. A country must achieve at least two of the three criteria at two consecutive triennial reviews to be considered for graduation.**

- It has met for the second time all the three eligibility criteria for graduating from the LDC category to the category of developing nations. The proposal will be sent to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for endorsement in June to be finally approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September this year.
- Bangladesh will get time upto 2026 to prepare for the transition to the status of a developing country. Usually countries are given three years for transition but this year due to the Corona pandemic, Bangladesh has been given five years for the process.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country's largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16th and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.

China displaces US to become India's top trade partner in 2020 despite curbs

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- Although that was lower than the previous year's \$85.5 billion total, it was enough to make China the largest commercial partner displacing the U.S. — bilateral trade with whom came in at \$75.9 billion amid muted demand for goods in the middle of a pandemic. Total imports from China at \$58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the U.S. and the U.A.E, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively.

Mohamed Bazoum declared Niger's new president

- Niger's electoral commission has declared the governing party candidate, Mohamed Bazoum, the winner of the country's Presidential election runoff.
- Bazoum had secured 55.75 percent of the votes cast beating former President Mahamane Ousmane who garnered 44.25 percent, Issaka Souana, chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), announced.
- Outgoing President Mahamadou Issoufou is voluntarily stepping down after two five-year terms, opening the way to Niger's first handover of power between elected leaders since independence from France in 1960.

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Setback to Prime Minister Oli as Nepal SC reinstates House of Representatives

- In a major setback to the government of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, the Supreme Court of Nepal **reinstated the House of Representatives**, the lower house of the Nepalese Parliament.

- A special constitutional bench of the Supreme Court, which **declared the verdict in response to 13 writ petitions, ordered that the 275-member House should convene** within 13 days.
- The development comes two months after **President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the lower house**, following the **recommendation from Prime Minister Oli-led cabinet**. President Bhandari had also announced that polls should be held during April-May.
- In his letter recommending **President Bhandari to dissolve the House**, Oli had argued that he controlled **64 per cent of majority in the House**, that there was **no possibility of forming a new Government** and that the country needed a fresh mandate of the people to ensure stability.

Nepal is a **landlocked country in South Asia** located in the Himalaya. **Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal**. **Constitution of Nepal is the present governing Constitution of Nepal**. Nepal is governed according to the Constitution which came into effect on **September 20, 2015**, replacing the Interim Constitution of 2007. **Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli is currently serving as the Prime Minister of Nepal**. He was the **first elected prime minister under the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal**.

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Japan appoints Minister of Loneliness to tackle suicide rates

- In a bid to tackle the rise in suicide rates for the first time in 11 years due to the coronavirus crisis, **Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has appointed Tetsushi Sakamoto as its first-ever Minister for Loneliness.**
- **Besides this, Sakamoto is also in charge of managing the nation's falling birth rate and strengthening regional economies.** Following Britain's lead, Japanese government created an isolation/ loneliness countermeasures office in its cabinet to counter issues like suicide and child poverty.

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ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

Government to set up Rs 20,000 crore DFI to promote infra financing

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government will **set up a Rs 20,000 crore Development Finance Institution (DFI)** with a view to mobilise Rs 111 lakh crore required for funding of the ambitious national infrastructure pipeline.
- Unveiling the Union Budget 2021-22, the Finance Minister said that a **professionally-managed DFI to be set up to provide, enable and catalyze infrastructure financing**. The government proposes Rs 20,000 crore to capitalise this institution and aims to have a lending portfolio of at least Rs 5 lakh crore in three years.

Tax holiday for startups extended for another year till March 2022

- In order to incentivise start-ups in the country, the Government has extended the eligibility for claiming tax holiday for start-ups by one more year - till 31st of March, 2022.
- The Government has also extended the capital gains exemption for investment in start-ups by one more year - till 31st of March, 2022 to incentivise funding of the start-ups.
- The Government has increased FDI limit from 49 to 74 per cent in Insurance Companies and allowed foreign ownership and control with safeguards. The Government has proposed to infuse 20 thousand crore rupees to re-capitalized Public Sector Banks.

Budget 2021 unveils scheme for setting up mega textile parks in India

- The government unveiled a scheme for setting up mega textile parks in the country, as part of the Centre's efforts to position India as a fully integrated, globally competitive manufacturing and exporting hub for the sector. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made the announcement while presenting the Budget 2021-22.
- The textile ministry had recently said a scheme and a **Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (MITRA) Park**, in over 1,000 acres of land with state-of-the-art infrastructure, common utilities and Research and Development (R&D) lab, are under consideration.
- So far, 59 textile parks have been sanctioned under the scheme for integrated textile parks, out of which 22 have been completed. The production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, announced earlier for 10 key sectors including textile and automobiles, would help India become self-reliant, boost manufacturing and enhance exports.

15th Finance Commission recommends Rs 1,075 crore embankment-cum-road for Majuli

- Assam's Majuli will have a new embankment-cum-road around the island as the 15th Finance Commission has recommended for it along with a project for comprehensive development of the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati.
- The commission has recommended Rs 1,075 crore for the construction of the new embankment-cum-road around the world's largest inhabited riverine island and Rs 300 crore for the comprehensive development of the Kamakhya temple complex.

Majuli or Majoli is a river island in the Brahmaputra River, Assam and in 2016 it became the first island to be made a district in India. The island is formed by the Brahmaputra River in the south and the Kherkutia Xuti, an anabranch of the Brahmaputra, joined by the Subansiri River in the north.

The Finance Commission is a Constitutionally mandated body that is at the centre of fiscal federalism. Set up under Article 280 of the Constitution, its core responsibility is to evaluate the state of finances of the Union and State Governments, recommend the sharing of taxes between them, lay down the principles determining the distribution of these taxes among States. The Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV-FC or 15-FC) is an Indian Finance Commission constituted in November 2017 and is to give recommendations for devolution of taxes and other fiscal matters for five fiscal years, commencing 01-04-2020. The commission's chairman is Nand Kishore Singh, with its full-time members being Ajay Narayan Jha, Ashok Lahiri and Anoop Singh. In addition, the commission also has a part-time member in Ramesh Chand. Shaktikanta Das served as a member of the commission from November 2017 to December 2018.

Power ministry to launch manufacturing programme for critical equipment

- The Ministry of Power will launch a domestic manufacturing programme for critical power and renewable energy equipment at an outlay of Rs 1,500 crore in the coming financial year.
- The scheme titled 'Manufacturing Zones under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package' in the Union Budget would entail setting up three manufacturing zones in a year.
- These zones are divided into three categories– coastal, land-locked and hilly states. The scheme would call for offers from the states to submit applications to set up these zones. The three selected zones would get Rs 500 crore each for the development of manufacturing hubs.

Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala first woman, African national to head World Trade Organisation

- Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was poised to become the first African and first woman to lead the embattled World Trade Organization, after a South Korean rival withdrew and the United States reversed its previous opposition.
- The government of President Joe Biden expressed its strong support for Okonjo-Iweala, lauding her experience at the World Bank and leading Nigeria's finance ministry, and pledging to work with her on needed reforms.
- The twin developments ended months of uncertainty over the leadership of the global trade body, and cleared the way for WTO members to conclude a consensus-based process and confirm Okonjo-Iweala as the next WTO director-general.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. World Trade Organization has replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which commenced in 1948. Roberto Azevedo is the current Director-General of the WTO. The WTO has 164 members and 23 observer governments. Liberia became the 163rd member on 14 July 2016, and Afghanistan became the 164th member on 29 July 2016.

National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture aims rapid agri development through ICT

- A Centrally sponsored scheme namely National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) was initially launched in 2010-11 in 7 pilot states, which aims to achieve rapid development in India through use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for timely access to agriculture related information to the farmers.
- In 2014-15, the scheme was further extended for all the remaining states and two union territories. The scheme has been extended up to March 31, 2021. Under Phase-II of the scheme, funds were released to states for carrying out the activities such as site preparation of offices for installation of hardware and establishment of computer training labs, procurement, installation and accounting of hardware and system software.

- The back-up power arrangements, wherever required, **setting-up of State Project Management Unit (SPMUs) and hiring of manpower on contract basis**, connectivity for the locations for installation of hardware and data digitisation customisation of applications as per state's and UT's specific requirements.

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**.

India's stock market now 7th biggest in the world as BSE m-cap surges to \$2.7 trillion

- India's stock market is now bigger than Canada, Germany and Saudi Arabia. Worth mentioning here is that India's stock market is the **second-best performer among the top 15 countries in 2021** and soon it may overtake France to become the **sixth biggest in the world**. Total market capitalisation of France now stands at \$2.86 trillion.

BSE Limited, formerly known as the Bombay Stock Exchange Ltd., is an Indian stock exchange located at Dalal Street, Mumbai. Established in 1875, the BSE Ltd., the oldest stock exchange in Asia. It is the **world's 10th largest stock exchange**. Ashishkumar Chauhan (Ashish Chauhan) is the **current managing director and chief executive officer of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)**.

Etihad Airways becomes world's first airline to vaccinate all crew members

- Etihad Airways, the national airline of the **United Arab Emirates**, became the **first airline in the world to vaccinate 100% of its onboard crewmembers**.
- The airline has vaccinated all of its onboard crew members through the **airline's "Protected Together" initiative, which began January 2021**. Seventy-five percent of all of its employees have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

India becomes the first Asian country to allow small investors to directly lend to the government

- In a landmark move, the Reserve Bank of India that retail investors in India will be given online access to **invest in government securities**. Right now, there is a way for **small investors to buy government bonds via the goBID platform** on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).
- However, with the latest announcement from RBI, **small investors who do not like the risk of stock markets will have a new platform — dubbed Retail Direct — just like the trading platforms for stocks, which will be directly under the central bank**.

National Coal Index

- Ministry of Coal has started **Commercial Auction of coal mines on revenue share basis**. In order to arrive at the revenue share based on market prices of coal, **one National Coal Index (NCI) was conceptualized**. The NCI is a **price index** which reflects the change of price level of coal on a particular month relative to the fixed base year.
- The base year for the NCI is **FY 2017-18**. Prices of coal from all the sales channels of coal, including import, as existing are taken into account for compiling the NCI. **The amount of revenue share per tonne of coal produced from auctioned blocks would be arrived at using the NCI by means of defined formula**. NCI has already been rolled out on 4th June 2020 and the same is placed on the website of the Ministry of Coal.
- NCI is composed of a set of five sub-indices: **three for Non Coking Coal and two for Coking Coal**. The three sub-indices for Non Coking Coal are combined to arrive at the Index for Non Coking Coal and the two sub-indices for Coking Coal are combined to arrive at the Index for Coking Coal. Thus, indices are separate for Non-coking and Coking Coal. **As per the grade of coal pertaining to a mine, the appropriate sub-index is used to arrive at the revenue share**.

Coal is a combustible black or brownish-black sedimentary rock, formed as rock strata called coal seams. Coal is **mostly carbon** with variable amounts of other elements; chiefly hydrogen, sulfur, oxygen, and nitrogen. **The largest consumer and importer of coal is China. China mines almost half the world's coal, followed by India** with about a tenth.

India's first ever CNG Tractor launched

- In an initiative that could help farmers save over Rs 1 Lakh per annum towards fuel costs, **Union Road Minister Nitin Gadkari launched India's first-ever Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) tractor.**
- **This will help farmers increase their income, by lowering costs** and help to create job opportunities in rural India. The most important benefit for the farmer will be to **save more than one lakh rupees annually on fuel costs**, which will help them to improve their livelihood. It will also help farmers to **save up to 50 per cent on the fuel cost** as the current Diesel prices are around 77 rupees per litre whereas CNG is only 42 rupees per kilogram.

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.

'Government of India to work with RBI on bank privatisation'

- **Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the government will work with the Reserve Bank of India for execution of the bank privatisation plan** announced in the Union Budget 2021. The FM, however, did not reveal the name of banks chosen for privatisation.
- In the budget, Sitharaman did not **announce any change in income tax slabs for individuals taxpayers**, but made some changes in the rules for income tax ease compliance. "The honest taxpayer need not worry at all. Sitharaman, in her Union Budget speech on February 1, had **proposed privatisation of two banks as part of its disinvestment plan.** Bank unions have opposed the move.

Privatisation means transfer of ownership, management and control of public sector enterprises to the private sector. Privatisation of the public sector undertakings by selling off part of the equity of PSUs to the private sector is known as disinvestment. Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was also Finance Minister nationalised the 14 largest private banks on July 19, 1969. The idea was to align the banking sector with the socialistic approach of the then government. State Bank of India had been nationalised in 1955 itself, and the insurance sector in 1956. A second round of nationalizations of six more commercial banks followed in 1980. Many committees had proposed bringing down the government stake in public banks below 51%: The Narasimham Committee proposed 33%. The P J Nayak Committee suggested below 50%. An RBI Working Group recently suggested the entry of business houses into the banking sector. Presently, India has 22 private banks and 10 small finance banks.

CDSL becomes India's first depository to open 3-crore active demat accounts

- **Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL) has become India's first and only listed depository to open three crore plus (30 million) active demat accounts. CDSL is currently the largest depository in the country in terms of active demat accounts. The depository facilitates holding and transacting in securities electronically and facilitates settlement of trades on stock exchanges.**

Demat Account is an account that is used to hold shares and securities in electronic format. The full form of Demat account is a dematerialised account. In India, depositories such as NSDL and CDSL provide Free Demat account services.

World Bank signs up for US\$56m slice of renewables developer's first green bond

- **Morgan Stanley-owned Indian commercial and industrial renewables developer Continuum Green Energy Ltd had a helping hand from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) as it launched its first green bond. The IFC private-sector arm of multilateral development lender the World Bank invested in 10% of the over-subscribed financial instrument as Continuum raised \$561 million (INR4,080 crore) to refinance its debts.**

- The developer, which provides solar and wind projects for commercial customers in India, and has been controlled by U.S. finance giant Morgan Stanley since 2012, claims to have developed 2 GW of clean power generation capacity across India to date.

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. The World Bank Group comprises five institutions managed by their member countries. It was established in 1944, the World Bank Group is headquartered in Washington, D.C. David Robert Malpass is an American economic analyst and former government official serving as President of the World Bank Group since 2019. Together, IBRD and IDA form the World Bank, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, while IBRD assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries.

Union Cabinet approves production-linked incentive scheme for telecom sector

- The Union Cabinet approved a production-linked incentive scheme for the telecom sector. Electronic and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said, the production-linked incentive worth Rs 12,195 Crore has been cleared for the telecom sector.
- Production Linked Incentive Scheme intends to promote manufacture of Telecom and Networking Products in India and proposes a financial incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract investments in the target segments of telecom and networking products in order to encourage Make in India.
- The scheme will also encourage exports of telecom and networking products 'Made in India'. Support under the Scheme will be provided to companies and entities engaged in manufacturing of specified telecom and networking products in India.
- Cabinet has also approved amendments in the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection of Children Act, 2015. Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said, the amendments allow District Magistrates along with Assistant District Magistrates to monitor the functions of the agencies implementing JJ Act in every district.

India's telecommunication network is the second largest in the world by number of telephone users (both fixed and mobile phone) with 1171.80 million subscribers as on 31 Oct 2020. It has one of the lowest call tariffs in the world enabled by mega telecom operators and hyper-competition among them.

Government will work with the Reserve Bank for execution of the bank privatisation plan announced in the Union Budget 2021-22

- To facilitate privatisation of public sector banks, the government is likely to bring amendments to two legislations later this year. Amendments would be required in the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980 for privatisation, sources said. These Acts led to nationalisation of banks in two phases and provisions of these laws have to be changed for privatisation of banks, they said.
- As the government has already announced the list of legislative business for the Budget session, it is expected that these amendments may be introduced in the Monsoon session or later during the year, sources added. The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting Budget 2021-22 had announced privatisation of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) as part of disinvestment drive to garner Rs 1.75 lakh crore.
- Many committees had proposed bringing down the government stake in public banks below 51%: The Narasimham Committee proposed 33%. The P J Nayak Committee suggested below 50%.
- "Other than IDBI Bank, we propose to take up the privatization of two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company in the year 2021-22," she had said. The government last year consolidated 10 public sector banks into four and as a result the total number of PSBs came down to 12 from 27 in March 2017.
- In a first three-way merger, Bank of Baroda merged Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with itself in 2019. SBI had merged five of its associate banks - State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Travancore and State Bank of Hyderabad- and also Bharatiya Mahila Bank effective April 2017.

Privatisation means transfer of ownership, management and control of public sector enterprises to the private sector. Privatisation of the public sector undertakings by selling off part of the equity of PSUs to the private sector is known as disinvestment. Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who was also Finance Minister nationalised the 14 largest private banks on July 19, 1969. The idea was to align the banking sector with the socialistic approach of the then government. State Bank of India had been nationalised in 1955 itself, and the insurance sector in 1956. A second round of nationalizations of six more commercial banks followed in 1980. An RBI Working Group recently suggested the entry of business houses into the banking sector. Presently, India has 22 private banks and 10 small finance banks.

Government at centre has finalized the privatisation of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL)

- In a significant move that is likely to trigger public outcry in Andhra Pradesh, the Narendra Modi government at the Centre has finalized the privatisation of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), the public sector corporate entity of Vizag Steel Plant (VSP).
- Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL) was wholly owned by the Government of India. In November 2010, the company was granted the Navratna status by the Government of India.
- According to the report submitted by the Union Ministry of Steel, Vizag Steel Plant is the only steel-manufacturing PSE in the country that has no captive iron ore mine. The losses were majorly due to the lack of captive mines due to which the RINL is procuring the iron ore supplies at market price, resulting in a loss of at least Rs.5,000 on every ton produced.

The current Hon'ble Minister of Steel is Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. According to the data provided by the World Steel Association, the biggest steel producing country is currently China, which accounted for 53.3% of world steel production in 2019. Asia produced 1,374.9 Mt of crude steel in 2020, an increase of 1.5% compared to 2019. China's crude steel production in 2020 reached 1,053.0 Mt, up by 5.2% on 2019. China's share of global crude steel production increased from 53.3% in 2019 to 56.5% in 2020. India's crude steel production for 2020 was 99.6 Mt, down by 10.6% on 2019. Japan produced 83.2 Mt in 2020, down 16.2% on 2019. South Korea produced 67.1 Mt, down 6.0% on 2019.

E-Daakhil portal, launched by National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC)

- E-Daakhil portal for Consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 States/UTs. Department of Consumer Affairs is now proactively following up with the states to launch e-filing portal at their ends. E-filing was launched by National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) on 7th September, 2020.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which has come into force from 20th July, 2020, has provision for e-filing of consumer complaints in the Consumer Commissions and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint.
- A web application for E-filing of consumer complaints named “edaakhil.nic.in” has been developed by NIC for the purpose. This digital software for filing consumer complaints has the many features like e-Notice, case document download link & VC hearing link, filing written response by opposite party, filing rejoinder by complainant and alerts via SMS/Email.
- The e-daakhil portal empowers the consumer and their advocates to file the consumer complaints along with payment of requisite fees online from anywhere for the redressal of their complaints. It also facilitates the consumer commissions to scrutinize the complaints online to accept, reject or forward the complaint to the concerned commission for further processing.
- To facilitate the rural consumers for e-filing, it has been decided to integrate the Common Service Centres (CSC) with the e-daakhil portal. As many consumers at Gram Panchayat level may either not have access to electronic modes of communication or unable to use the tools, they may avail the services of CSCs in filing their complaints in the Consumer Commission. The work for integration of this portal with CSC is in under process.

- **Delhi was the first to implement it on 8th September, 2020.** Later Maharashtra, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chandigarh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka & Haryana implemented facility of e-filing in their respective States/UTs.

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) of India is a quasi-judicial commission in India which was set up in 1988 under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Its head office is in New Delhi. The commission is headed by a sitting or retired judge of the Supreme Court of India. The present head is Justice R K Agrawal, former judge of the Supreme Court of India.

Pune International Centre to co-chair this year's Asia Economic Dialogue

- **The Pune International Centre was co-chaired this year's Asia Economic Dialogue that was addressed by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and his counterparts from Japan, Australia, Maldives, Mauritius and Bhutan.**
- **The conference under the theme of 'The post-COVID global trade and finance dynamics' begins with an inaugural session on 'Resilient global growth in post-pandemic world' featuring industrialist Naushad Forbes in conversation with Minister for External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar and Australian Minister Marise Payne.**

The Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) is the flagship geoeconomics conference of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India. The AED 2021 is jointly convened by the MEA and Pune International Centre (PIC). This is the fifth edition of the AED, and the second one organised by PIC. The theme for this year's conference is "Post Covid-19 Global Trade and Finance Dynamics".

India Ratings raises banking sector outlook to 'stable'

- **India Ratings and Research revised its outlook on the overall banking sector to 'stable' for the FY22 from 'negative' even as it saw higher stress emerging in the retail loan segment, going ahead. For public sector banks (PSBs), the outlook has been revised to 'stable' from 'negative' and for private banks, the agency continues to have 'stable' outlook. It estimated that overall stressed assets (gross non-performing assets + restructured assets) could rise 30% for the banking system; the increase is almost 1.7 times in the retail segment in the second half of FY22.**

BIAL Kempegowda becomes first Indian airport to get a disabled aircraft recovery kit

- **Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAB/ BLR Airport) became the first in India and South Asia to own Disabled Aircraft Recovery Equipment kit that will enable faster resumption of operations during aircraft incidents on the runways thus receiving a boost to its runway emergency handling capabilities.**
- **The transportable kit is capable of recovering the world's largest passenger aircraft, Airbus A380, in addition to all other aircraft during an aircraft incident on the runway, ensuring that runway closure is minimised. Disabled aircraft on the runway has the potential to cripple airport operations, resulting in flight delays, diversions and loss of revenue for both airlines as well as airport operators.**

Kempegowda International Airport is an international airport serving Bangalore, the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka, in the southern part of India. It is owned and operated by Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL), a public-private consortium. The airport opened in May 2008 as an alternative to increased congestion at HAL Airport, the original primary commercial airport serving the city. It is named after Kempe Gowda I, the founder of Bangalore.

India gets its first inflatable hangar at Hyderabad airport

- **The GMR Aero Technic (GAT), the MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) division of GMR Air Cargo and Aerospace Engineering Ltd. (GACAEL) in Hyderabad airport has added a new "Inflatable Hangar" in addition to its existing permanent and immovable hangars on its sprawling premises.**
- **GAT is the only MRO in the Asia region to have installed such a hangar. The Inflatable Hangar can be used for multiple purposes including scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, engine or landing gear**

replacement. The one bay narrow body Inflatable Hangar can take one B737 or A320 series aircraft. **This Inflatable Hangar is one additional bay to GAT's already existing seven-bay capacity.**

GMR Group is an **infrastructural company** headquartered in **New Delhi**. The company was **founded in 1978 by Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao**. Employing the **Public Private Partnership model**, the Group has implemented several infrastructure projects in India. **GMR Group chairman Grandhi Mallikarjuna Rao, a first-generation entrepreneur hailing from Rajam in Srikakulam District in Andhra Pradesh.** **Rajiv Gandhi International Airport** is an **international airport that serves Hyderabad**, the capital of the Indian state of Telangana. It is **named after Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India**. It is the **only airport in India ranking in AirHelp's list of top 10 airports in the world.**

India hosts first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021

- **India hosted the first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021 in virtual mode according to a statement from the finance ministry.**
- **The meeting was co-chaired by Tarun Bajaj, economic affairs secretary and Michael Patra, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India, under the theme, 'BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation'.**

Ministry of Corporate Affairs and CBIC sign MoU Delhi for data exchange

- **The Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs signed a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi for data exchange between the two organisations. It is in line with the vision of both organisations to harness data capabilities to ensure effective enforcement.** Both are going to benefit from access to each other's databases which include details of import-export transactions and consolidated financial statements of companies registered in the country.
- **The data sharing arrangement gains significance in light of development of MCA21 Version 3** which will utilise state of the art technology for enhancing ease of doing business in India and **improve the regulatory enforcement and similar steps by CBIC like the launch of Advanced Analytics in Indirect Taxation ADVAIT**, a 360-degree taxpayer profiling tool.
- **The MoU will facilitate the sharing of data and information between the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes** on an automatic and regular basis. The MoU will ensure that both organisations have seamless linkage for regulatory purposes. The MoU comes into force and is an ongoing initiative of Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes, who are already collaborating through various existing mechanisms.

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (erstwhile Central Board of Excise & Customs) is a part of the **Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance, Government of India**. It **deals with the tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs, Central Excise duties, Central Goods & Services Tax and IGST, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Central Excise, Central Goods & Services Tax, IGST and Narcotics to the extent under CBIC's purview.** **The Customs & Central Excise department was established in the year 1855 by the then British Governor General of India, to administer customs laws in India and collection of import duties / land revenue.** It is **one of the oldest government departments of India.** **Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC)** is headed by **M. Ajit Kumar, IRS** and at present consists of five Members of CBIC.

Banks in News

RBI to set up a 24x7 helpline for digital payment services

- **RBI has announced certain measures of protection of common bank account holders in Monetary policy statement. It includes setting up of 24*7 helpline for digital payment services**, integrated ombudsman scheme, CTS across all bank branches and allowing retail investors to open Gilt accounts with RBI.
- As a result, digital transactions have registered massive growth in recent times. But some users face difficulties during transaction has to suffer a lot for grievance redressal. **The Payment Systems Vision document of RBI envisages setting up a 24x7 helpline for addressing customer queries** in respect of various digital payment products.
- **The helpline will, in addition to building trust and confidence, also reduce expenditure on both financial and human resources**, otherwise incurred for addressing queries and grievances.

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.

RBI directs select NBFCs, UCBs to implement risk-based internal audit system

- The Reserve Bank has **directed select Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Urban Co-operatives Banks (UCBs) to implement a risk-based internal audit system.**
- The RBI said **all deposit taking NBFCs, all non-deposit taking NBFCs with asset size of 5,000 crore rupees and above and all urban cooperative banks with asset size of 500 crore rupees and above will have to implement the system by March 2022.**
- **Currently, all the entities supervised by the RBI have their own approaches on internal audit**, resulting in certain inconsistencies, risks and gaps in the system.

State Bank of Sikkim under Reserve Bank of India’s regulatory purview

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has brought State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview.** The bank, established five years before Sikkim acceded to India in 1973, provides treasury operations for the state government.
- **It only operates within Sikkim and is wholly-owned by the state government.** The bank currently has 42 branch offices and operates three revenue counters for government works. **The bank’s ownership structure will not change, but it will be regulated by the RBI on a par with other banks.**

State Bank of Sikkim (SBS) is a state owned banking institution headquartered at Gangtok, Sikkim, India. The Bank operates within the jurisdiction of the State of Sikkim and in addition to banking services, State Bank of Sikkim handles treasury functions of State Government of Sikkim. **An autonomous body under the Government of Sikkim, it is not regulated by Reserve Bank of India unlike other banks in India and now it was brought under the regulatory purview of RBI.**

RBI projects GDP at 10.5 percent in 2021-22

- In the last bi-monthly monetary policy meet for the current fiscal year, **the Reserve Bank of India projected India’s GDP growth rate at 10.5 percent for the fiscal year 2021-22.**

- The growth outlook has improved significantly, and the vaccination drive will further boost the economic rebound, RBI said. **The apex bank expects the Indian economy to grow in the range of 8.3 percent to 26.2 percent in the first half of FY22, followed by a 6 percent growth in Q3FY22.**
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that the **monetary policy review has decided to continue with an accommodative stance of monetary policy to maintain status quo on key policy rates.** This will continue as long as necessary at least through the current financial year and into next year to revive growth and mitigate the impact of Covid 19.
- **The repo rate is kept unchanged at 4 percent and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent.** While announcing the policy review the **RBI governor Shaktikant Das said that the GDP growth is projected at 10.5 percent in the Financial Year 2021-22.** CPI inflation has been revised to 5.2 percent for the fourth quarter of the current financial year.

ICICI Bank signs MoU with Japan's MUFG Bank

- **ICICI Bank announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MUFG Bank, Japan's premier bank, for collaboration towards catering to the banking requirements of Japanese corporates present in India.**
- **The MoU establishes a framework of the partnership between the banks across various domains including trade, investment, treasury, corporate and retail banking. It also paves way for the two banks to combine their individual strengths and cater holistically to the banking requirements of Japanese corporates operating in India. Japan is the fifth largest investor in India's economy with cumulative FDI inflows of \$34.15 billion from April 2000 to September 2020, contributing 7% to India's total FDI inflows during the period.**

ICICI Bank Limited is an Indian multinational banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra with its registered office in Vadodara, Gujarat. ICICI Bank was established by the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), an Indian financial institution, as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1994. ICICI Bank is one of the Big Four banks of India others banks are SBI, Bank of Baroda and HDFC. Sandeep Bakhshi is the current MD & CEO, ICICI Bank since October 2018.

Union Bank of India raised Rs 1,000 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant bonds on a private placement basis

- **State-owned Union Bank of India said it has raised Rs 1,000 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant bonds on a private placement basis. The bank has issued Basel III-compliant Perpetual Debt Instruments in the nature of debentures eligible for inclusion in Additional Tier 1 Capital to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore, according to a regulatory filing. The coupon rate on the bonds is 8.64% per annum, payable annually.**
- **Basel III is a global, voluntary regulatory framework on bank capital adequacy, stress testing, and market liquidity risk. This third installment of the Basel Accords was developed in response to the deficiencies in financial regulation revealed by the financial crisis of 2007–08.**

Union Bank of India is one of the largest government-owned banks of India with 120+ million customers and a total business of US\$106 billion. After the amalgamation with Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank, which came into effect on 1 April 2020, the amalgamated entity becomes the fourth largest bank in terms of branch network. Union Bank of India (Union Bank) was registered on 11 November 1919 as a limited company in Mumbai and was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi.

One nation one ombudsman: RBI to integrate consumer grievance redressal scheme

- **The RBI is targeting to roll out the e-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme in June 2021. The Reserve Bank announced it will be integrating consumer grievances redressal under a single ombudsman as against three schemes working at present.**
- **There are dedicated ombudsman schemes devoted to consumer grievance redressal in banking, non-bank finance companies and digital transactions, respectively, at present. The RBI had operationalised complaint**

management system (CMS) portal as one stop solution for alternate dispute resolution of customer complaints not resolved satisfactorily by the regulated entities.

Banking Ombudsman Scheme is an expeditious and inexpensive forum for bank customers for resolution of complaints relating to certain services rendered by banks, which was introduced under the Banking Regulation Act of 1949 by RBI with effect from 1995. Presently the Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006 (As amended upto July 1, 2017) is in operation. The Banking Ombudsman is a senior official appointed by the Reserve Bank of India to redress customer complaints against deficiency in certain banking services. One can file a complaint before the Banking Ombudsman if the reply is not received from the bank within a period of one month after the bank concerned has received one's complaint, or the bank rejects the complaint, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the reply given by the bank. The RBI introduced an NBFC Ombudsman scheme to redress complaints with regard to NBFCs in 2018.

RBI releases Annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes for 2019-20

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes for the year 2019-20. There was an increase of around 65 per cent in the receipt of complaints out of which almost 92 per cent have been disposed of.
- RBI has three Ombudsmen- Banking, Non-Banking Finance Company (i.e. NBFC) and digital transactions. A common man can approach these Ombudsmen for their grievances.
- Banking Ombudsman received major complaints regarding ATM & Debit Cards, Mobile & Electronic Banking while NBFC's Ombudsmen received most complaints about non-observance of regulatory guidelines, lack of transparency in contract/ loan agreement and levy of charges without notice.
- Digital Transactions Ombudsmen received most complaints about fund transfer. RBI has taken various measures for creating awareness among various stakeholders to minimise the grievances.

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.

Bank of Maharashtra ties up with LoanTap Credit for co-lending to MSMEs

- Bank of Maharashtra has entered into a co-lending agreement with Pune-based non-banking financial company LoanTap Credit Products for MSME loans.
- LoanTap offers a range of business, vehicle and personal loans to the underserved segment. BoM has a tie-up with fintech company Atyati Technologies, but it was limited to sourcing proposals. With LoanTap, the bank would be getting into faceless sanction and disbursements using mobile app.

Bank of Maharashtra is a major public sector bank in India. The Government of India holds 92.49% of the shares. It has the largest network of branches of any public sector bank in the state of Maharashtra. The bank was founded by V. G. Kale and D. K. Sathe in Pune, India.

Financial Literacy Week Begins; RBI Sets Responsible Borrowing As Theme

- The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Financial Literacy Week on the theme of 'Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions'.

- As a part of nationwide campaign, Reserve Bank of India, Delhi is **observed Financial Literacy Week from February 8-12, 2021**, to propagate financial education, an official statement said.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been **conducting Financial Literacy Week (FLW)** every year since 2016 to propagate financial education messages on a particular theme across the country. The theme selected for current year FLW is **‘Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions’** which will be observed from February 8-12, 2021.
- This theme is one of the strategic **objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education 2020-2025**. Focus will be on responsible borrowing; borrowing from formal institutions and timely repayments.

ICICI Bank launches ‘Namma Chennai Smart Card’

- ICICI Bank announced the launch of a Common Payment Card System (CPCS) in partnership with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) to provide citizens with a one-stop solution for making various kind of payments within the city and beyond.**
- Called ‘Namma Chennai Smart Card’, the Rupay powered co-branded, contactless prepaid card** will facilitate various digital payments like tax and utility bill payments at the GCC centres. Additionally, the prepaid card facilitates retail payments within Chennai as well as in retail stores and e-commerce websites across the country.

ICICI Bank Limited is an **Indian multinational banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra** with its registered office in Vadodara, Gujarat. **ICICI Bank** was established by the **Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI)**, an Indian financial institution, as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1994. **ICICI Bank** is one of the **Big Four banks of India** others banks are **SBI, Bank of Baroda and HDFC**. **Sandeep Bakhshi** is the current MD & CEO, **ICICI Bank** since October 2018.

Kotak Mahindra Bank launches Kotak Remit on mobile to send money abroad directly from phone

- Kotak Mahindra Bank launched its outward forex remittance service, Kotak Remit, hence allowing its users to directly send money abroad from their phones.** The feature is already live on the **Kotak Mobile Banking App**.
- For the first time, Kotak** customers can conveniently transfer money internationally to their beneficiaries straight from their mobile. The private sector lender said that it is an industry-first move, and customers will not have to furnish any physical documents for transactions up to **\$25,000** or equivalent seamlessly to permissible geographies across the world.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited is an **Indian private sector bank headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra**. In 1985, **Uday Kotak** founded what later became an Indian financial services conglomerate. In February 2003, **Kotak Mahindra Finance Ltd. (KMFL)** became the first non-banking finance company in India to be converted into a bank. As of April 2020, it is the second largest Indian private sector bank by market capitalization.

Reserve Bank of India forms expert panel for urban co-operative banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of its former Deputy Governor **N.S. Vishwanathan** on Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks.
- The eight-member panel will take stock of the regulatory measures taken by the Reserve Bank and other authorities in respect of urban co-operative banks (UCB) and assess their impact over the last five years to identify key constraints and enablers, if any, in fulfilment of their socio-economic objective.
- The other members of the committee include former **NABARD Chairman Harsh Kumar Bhanwala, Mukund M. Chitale**, who is a Chartered Accountant, **M.S. Sriram**, of IIM Bangalore among others. The panel will also draw up a vision document for a vibrant and resilient urban co-operative banking sector having regards to the principles of cooperation as well as depositors’ interest and systemic issues.

Reserve Bank issues rules for HFCs

- The RBI issued directives to housing finance companies (HFCs) on maintenance of liquidity coverage ratio, risk management, asset classification and loan-to-value ratio. It said the directions, took immediate effect and were aimed at protecting the interests of investors and depositors. “All non-deposit taking HFCs with asset size of Rs. 100 crore and above and all deposit taking HFCs shall pursue liquidity risk management, to gap limits, making use of liquidity risk monitoring tools and adoption of stock approach to liquidity risk.”

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.

Reserve Bank to conduct purchase of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for an aggregate amount of Rs.20, 000 crore

- The Reserve Bank of India has decided to conduct purchase of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for an aggregate amount of Rs.20, 000 crore on February 25. This announcement comes in the wake of sharp jump in yields of government bonds over the past two weeks. After the announcement, India 10-year bond yield eased to 6.034% as compared to previous close of 6.071%.
- Holding policy interest rates unchanged at record lows, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das assured investors that its stance on liquidity remained accommodative and that the government’s Rs.12.06 trillion borrowing programme for the fiscal year starting April would be managed in a smooth and orderly manner.
- Eligible participants should submit their bids in electronic format on the Reserve Bank of India Core Banking Solution E-Kuber system between 10:00 am and 11:00 am on February 25, 2021. Only in the event of system failure, physical bids would be accepted.

Open market operations is the sale and purchase of government securities and treasury bills by RBI or the central bank of the country. The objective of OMO is to regulate the money supply in the economy. When the RBI wants to increase the money supply in the economy, it purchases the government securities from the market and it sells government securities to suck out liquidity from the system. RBI carries out the OMO through commercial banks and does not directly deal with the public. OMO is one of the tools that RBI uses to smoothen the liquidity conditions through the year and minimise its impact on the interest rate and inflation rate levels.

HDFC Bank’s market capitalisation tops Rs 9 trillion as shares hit record high

- HDFC Bank Ltd saw its market capitalisation cross Rs.9 trillion after shares of the lender hit a record high of Rs1,635 apiece in early deals on the BSE. With a market cap of Rs9.01 trillion, it is the third company in the country has achieved this milestone.
- Billionaire Mukesh Ambani’s Reliance Industries Ltd is India’s most valued firm with a market cap of Rs13.25 trillion, followed by TCS at Rs11.17 trillion.

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. It is the largest bank in India by market capitalisation as of March 2020. Sashidhar Jagdishan is the MD of HDFC Bank.

Firms in News

BSE sets up innovation sandbox web portal

- **Leading stock exchange BSE has set up an “innovation sandbox” web portal** where fintech firms and individuals may use the environment for offline testing of their applications in a test environment. This will help in creating an ecosystem which promotes innovation in the securities market.
- **The portal is a workflow-based platform**, where applicants will be able to access application programming interfaces (APIs), test data of stock exchanges, depositories and qualified registrar and share transfer agents, among others.

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) is an Indian stock exchange located at Dalal Street, Mumbai. It was established in 1875. BSE is Asia's first stock exchange. BSE claims to be the world's fastest stock exchange, with a median trade speed of 6 microseconds.

Google is almost running out of AR/VR projects to kill off

- **Google is almost running out of AR/VR projects to kill off.** The company announced in an email to Poly users that they will be shutting down the 3D-object creation and library platform “forever” 2021. The service will shut down on June 30, 2021 and users won't be able to upload 3D models to the site starting April 30, 2021. Poly was introduced as a 3D creation tool optimized for virtual reality.
- **Users could easily create low-poly objects with in-VR tools.** The software was designed to serve as a lightweight way to create and view 3D assets that could in turn end up in games and experiences, compared to more art and sculpting-focused VR tools like Google's Tilt Brush and Facebook's (now Adobe's) Medium software.

Alphabet Inc. is an American multinational conglomerate headquartered in Mountain View, California. It was created through a restructuring of Google on October 2, 2015, and became the parent company of Google and several former Google subsidiaries. Larry Page and Sergey Brin announced their resignation from their executive posts in December 2019, with the CEO role to be filled by Sundar Pichai, also the CEO of Google. Page and Brin remain co-founders, employees, board members, and controlling shareholders of Alphabet Inc.

Jeff Bezos to step down as Amazon CEO

- **Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos will step down as the chief executive of the company** -- which he founded almost 27 years ago. Bezos will transition to the role of executive chairman in the third quarter of 2021. Andy Jassy, CEO of Amazon Web Services would take over as CEO of Amazon.

Amazon.com, Inc. is an American multinational technology company based in Seattle, Washington, which focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence. It is one of the Big Five companies in the U.S. information technology industry, along with Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook. Amazon was founded by Jeff Bezos in Bellevue, Washington, on July 5, 1994. It started as an online marketplace for books but expanded to sell electronics, software, video games, apparel, furniture, food, toys, and jewelry.

Reliance gets world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from United States

- **Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US** as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.
- **Reliance, which operates the world's largest single location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year, got 2 million barrels of consignment Permian basin.** Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), a division of US oil major Occidental, delivered carbon-neutral oil to Reliance.

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) is an Indian conglomerate holding company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. On 18 October 2007, **Reliance Industries** became the first Indian company to breach **\$100 billion market capitalization**. On 10 September 2020, Reliance Industries became the first Indian company to cross **\$200 billion in market capitalisation**. It is also the **highest income tax payer in the private sector in India**. **Dhirubhai Ambani** founded Reliance Industries in Bombay with his cousin. **Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani** is the current chairman, managing director, and largest shareholder of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL).

The government of India awarded Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) a Rs. 48,000 crore contract to supply 83 LCA Mk-1A jets to the Indian Air Force

- On the opening day of Aero India 2021 on February 3, 2021, the government of India awarded state-owned plane maker **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** a **Rs. 48,000 crore** contract to supply **83 LCA Mk-1A jets** to the Indian Air Force.
- Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on **January 13** approved the proposal to buy **83 advanced Tejas jets** to bolster the IAF's combat potential, with defence minister **Rajnath Singh** calling the largest indigenous defence procurement deal **"a game changer for self-reliance in the Indian defence manufacturing"** sector. The CCS approval came 10 months after the ministry gave a green light to the purchase of 83 LCA (light combat aircraft) Mk-1A jets from HAL. The aircraft to be ordered include **73 Mk-1A fighter jets** and **10 LCA Mk-1 trainer aircraft**.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is an Indian state-owned aerospace and defence company headquartered in **Bangalore**, India. It is governed under the management of the Indian Ministry of Defence. The government-owned corporation is primarily involved in the operations of the aerospace and is currently involved in the design, fabrication and assembly of aircraft, jet engines, helicopters and their spare parts.

Aditya Birla Health Insurance Introduces India's First Health Insurance Plan With Up To 100 Percent Return On Premium

- Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd. (ABHICL)**, the Health Insurance subsidiary of **Aditya Birla Capital Limited**, a significant non-banking financial services company, announced an industry-first initiative of up to **100 per cent health insurance premium returns** and other significant product offering upgrades.
- The newly designed version of its flagship product **'Activ Health'** will inspire customers to lead a healthy lifestyle. The **Activ Health** policy is a feature-rich product that provides comprehensive health protection with extensive wellness benefits.
- Aditya Birla Health Insurance** is the only insurance company offering up to **100 per cent premium returns**, i.e. **HealthReturnsTM**, rewards and up to **100 per cent reload of Sum Insured** through its enhanced version of **'Activ Health'** policy.

Tesla to Set up India's First Manufacturing Unit in Karnataka

- U.S.-based electric car giant Tesla** would set up its manufacturing unit in Karnataka. Tesla founder and CEO **Elon Musk** had confirmed the electric car company's debut in India.

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.

BHEL commissions 800 MW unit at Gadawara project in Madhya Pradesh

- "Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)"** has successfully commissioned the second unit (800 MW) of the **2x800 MW Gadawara Super Thermal Power Project Stage-I** in Madhya Pradesh.

- **The project is being developed by NTPC Ltd.** The first unit of 800 MW of this project was commissioned by BHEL in 2019 and is presently under commercial operation.
- **BHEL is India's largest manufacturer of power generating equipment** with an installed base of over 1,90,000 MW of power equipment globally.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) is an Indian public sector engineering and manufacturing company based in New Delhi, India. Established in 1964, BHEL is India's largest power generation equipment manufacturer.

Piramal gets RBI nod for DHFL deal

- **Piramal Capital and Housing Finance (PCHFL)** has received a nod from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to take over **Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL)**. The regulator has cleared Piramal's bid for the stressed mortgage financier under its 'fit and proper' framework.
- **The administrator at DHFL** will now move the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Mumbai**, to seek approval of PCHFL's resolution plan for DHFL. With a total consideration of Rs 34,250 crore, PCHFL's resolution plan had received 94% votes by committee of creditors (CoC). Piramal's resolution plan will enable lenders to recover around 40% of their dues, out of the total admitted claims at Rs 87,082 crore as per sources.

Piramal Group is an Indian conglomerate diverse interests in pharma, financial services, real estate and glass packaging. It presence across various sectors such as healthcare, life sciences, drug discovery, healthcare information management, specialty glass packaging, financial services and real estate. **In the early 1980s, Ajay Piramal took over the reins of the Piramal.** Ajay Piramal is an Indian billionaire industrialist, and the chairman of the Piramal Group.

Indian Oil signs pact with Greenstat Norway for hydrogen fuel

- **Days after India unveiled a national hydrogen mission to accelerate plans to generate the carbon-free fuel from renewables**, state-owned **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** signed a pact with **Greenstat Norway** for setting up a **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen**.
- In the Union Budget for 2021-22, the government pledged to focus on generating hydrogen from green power sources as well as build more diverse and efficient energy infrastructure. "This association aims to develop a **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H)** including **CCUS and Fuel Cells by IndianOil** and M/s **Greenstat** for clean energy in cooperation with Indo-Norwegian Hydrogen Cluster companies/organizations".

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.

Wipro named in Human Rights Campaign Foundation's CEI

- **Wipro** has been named to the **Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2021 Corporate Equality Index (CEI)**. The company scored 95 out of 100 marks in multiple categories, including workplace protections and inclusive benefits.
- The CEI is a premier benchmarking survey and report on U.S. corporate policies and practices relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workplace equality, administered by the Human Rights Campaign. This is the third time that Wipro has been included in the CEI.

Azim Hashim Premji is an Indian business tycoon, investor, engineer, and philanthropist, who was the **chairman of Wipro Limited**. Premji remains a **non-executive member of the board and founder chairman**. He is informally known as the **Czar of the Indian IT Industry**. **Wipro Limited** is an Indian multinational corporation that provides information technology, consulting and business process services. It is headquartered in **Bangalore, Karnataka**.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



In a first, Tata to build military aircraft in India as it acquires IP rights

- **In a first for the industry, the Tata Group will develop and manufacture a military aircraft in India**, having acquired intellectual property rights for a German-origin platform.
- **The high-altitude, twin-engine aircraft, capable of playing multiple roles** from signal intelligence to cross-border surveillance, is currently in the final stages of testing in Germany.
- It is likely to arrive in India in the next three months for further integration. This would be the **first time that an Indian private entity is looking at making a full military-grade aircraft**, which until now has been the domain of the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL).

Tata Group is an Indian multinational conglomerate headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Founded in 1868 by Jamsetji Tata, the company gained international recognition after purchasing several global companies. It is one of the **biggest and oldest industrial groups in India**. Each Tata company operates independently under the guidance and supervision of its own board of directors and shareholders. **Natarajan Chandrasekaran is an Indian businessman and chairman of Tata Sons**. He became the **first non-Parsi and professional executive to head the Tata Group**.

Looking for lithium toehold, India finds a small deposit in Karnataka

- The Government of India said that preliminary surveys on surface and limited subsurface by Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy have **shown presence of Lithium resources of 1,600 tonnes (inferred category) in the pegmatites of Marlagalla – Allapatna area, Mandya district, Karnataka**.
- **Lithium is a key element for new technologies and finds its use in ceramics, glass, telecommunication and aerospace industries. The well-known uses of Lithium are in Lithium ion batteries**, lubricating grease, high energy additive to rocket propellants, optical modulators for mobile phones and as convertor to tritium used as a raw material for thermonuclear reactions i.e. fusion.
- **The thermonuclear application makes Lithium as “Prescribed substance” under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962** which permits AMD for exploration of Lithium in various geological domains of the country. Due to the continuously increasing demand of Lithium ion batteries, the requirement of Lithium has increased over years.
- The development comes even as **India had last year got into an agreement with an Argentinian firm to jointly prospect lithium in the South American nation which has 17 million tonnes of lithium metal reserves**. The agreement was signed by India through a newly instituted state-owned company, **Khanij Bidesh India Limited**. The company has the specific mandate to acquire strategic mineral assets like lithium and cobalt abroad.
- **India and International Energy Agency members have signed the framework for Strategic Partnership to strengthen mutual trust** and cooperation and enhance global energy security, stability and sustainability. This partnership will lead to an extensive exchange of knowledge and would be a stepping stone towards India becoming a full member of the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organisation established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. Fatih Birol is a Turkish economist and energy expert, who has been the Executive Director of the IEA.

Square Kilometre Array approved the establishment of world's largest radio telescope

- The Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its maiden meeting and approved the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope. SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy and is headquartered in the UK.
- At the moment, organisations from ten countries are a part of the SKAO. These include Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK. The Arecibo telescope in Puerto Rico, which was the second-largest single-dish radio telescope in the world, collapsed in December 2020.
- The telescope was built in 1963 and because of its powerful radar; scientists employed it to observe planets, asteroids and the ionosphere, making several discoveries over the decades, including finding prebiotic molecules in distant galaxies, the first exoplanets, and the first-millisecond pulsar.
- The telescope, proposed to be the largest radio telescope in the world, will be located in Africa and Australia whose operation, maintenance and construction will be overseen by SKAO. The completion is expected to take nearly a decade at a cost of over £1.8 billion.

In Arab world's first interplanetary mission, spacecraft 'Amal' enters orbit around Mars

- A spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates swung into orbit around Mars in a triumph for the Arab world's first interplanetary mission.
- Mission controllers at the UAE's space center in Dubai announced that the unmanned craft, called Amal, Arabic for Hope, reached the end of its nearly seven-month, 300-million-mile journey and began circling the red planet, where it will gather detailed data on Mars' atmosphere.
- The orbiter fired its main engines for 27 minutes in an intricate, high-stakes maneuver that slowed the craft enough for it to be captured by Mars' gravity. Amal's arrival puts the UAE in a league of just five space agencies in history that have pulled off a functioning Mars mission. As the country's first venture beyond Earth's orbit, the flight is a point of intense pride for the oil-rich nation as it seeks a future in space.
- Two more unmanned spacecraft from the U.S. and China are following close behind, set to arrive at Mars over the next several days. All three missions were launched in July to take advantage of the close alignment of Earth and Mars. A combination orbiter and lander from China is scheduled to reach the planet soon. It will circle Mars until the rover separates and attempts to land in May to look for signs of ancient life.
- A rover from the U.S. named Perseverance is set to join the crowd next week, aiming for a landing Feb. 18. It will be the first leg in a decade-long U.S.-European project to bring Mars rocks back to Earth to be examined for evidence the planet once harbored microscopic life.
- About 60% of all Mars missions have ended in failure, crashing, burning up or otherwise falling short in a testament to the complexity of interplanetary travel and the difficulty of making a descent through Mars' thin atmosphere.

The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), also called Mangalyaan is a space probe orbiting Mars since 24 September 2014. It was launched on 5 November 2013 by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It is India's first interplanetary mission and it made it the fourth space agency to reach Mars, after Roscosmos, NASA, and the European Space Agency. It made India the first Asian nation to reach Martian orbit and the first nation in the world to do so on its maiden attempt. On 1 July 2020, ISRO's space probe Mangalyaan was able to capture a photo of the Mars satellite Phobos from 4200 kms away. The Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission has captured the image of Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars.

TIFAC unveils two new initiatives of Technology ‘SAKSHAM’ and a Seaweed Mission for commercial farming of seaweeds and its processing for value addition

- Two new initiatives of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) — SAKSHAM (Shramik Shakti Manch)- a dynamic job portal for mapping the skills of Shramiks vis-à-vis requirements of MSMEs to directly connect Shramiks with MSMEs and facilitate placement of 10 lakh blue-collar jobs and a Seaweed Mission for commercial farming of seaweeds and its processing for value addition towards boosting national economy were launched on the occasion of the 34th Foundation Day celebrations.
- Dr V.K. Saraswat, Member Science, Niti Ayog and Chairman-TIFAC, while underscoring the increasing nonlinearity of science in the new era, identified the technological priorities of the future like cyber-physical systems, quantum computing, green chemistry and water. He stressed that it is imperative to focus on technologies that can make India self-reliant or Atmanirbhar and are futuristic as well.
- SAKSHAM (Shramik Shakti Manch), a dynamic portal for jobs/ mapping the skills of Shramiks vis-à-vis requirements of MSMEs and other industries all across the country. The portal with the demand and supply data uses algorithm and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, for geo spatial information on demand and availability of Shramiks, and also provide analysis on skill training programmes of Shramiks. The pilot portal originally initiated with two districts is now being launched as an all India portal.
- Out of the global seaweed production of 32 million tons fresh weight valued around 12 billion US dollars. China produces 57 %, Indonesia 28% followed by South Korea, whereas India is having a mere share of 0.01-0.02%. Despite several advantages, commercial seaweeds cultivation has not been taken place in the country at an appropriate scale, as being practiced in South-East Asian countries.

HCL Tech signs MoU with IIT-K for cybersecurity

- HCL Technologies (HCL) said it has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) to collaborate in the area of cybersecurity.
- As part of the MoU, HCL will work with C3iHub, a specialised cybersecurity research centre at IITK. HCL and IITK will bring in real-world industry exposure to carry out joint initiatives and research.

HCL Technologies is an Indian multinational technology company that specializes in information technology (IT) services and consulting, headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. It is a subsidiary of HCL Enterprise. Originally a research and development division of HCL, it emerged as an independent company in 1991 when HCL entered into the software services business. Shiv Nadar is the founder and chairman of HCL Technologies Limited and the Shiv Nadar Foundation.

India successfully conducts joint user trials of indigenously developed Helina, Dhruvastra Anti-Tank Guided Missiles

- India successfully test-fired indigenously-developed anti-tank guided missile systems ‘Helina’ and ‘Dhruvastra’. This paved way for their induction into the Army and the Indian Air Force respectively.
- Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems designed and developed by DRDO were carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter platform in desert ranges.
- Five missions were carried out for evaluating the missile capabilities in minimum and maximum range. The missiles were fired in hover and max forward flight against realistic static and moving targets. Some missions were carried out with warheads against derelict tanks. A mission was carried out against a moving target from a forward flying helicopter.
- The ‘Helina’ and ‘Dhruvastra’ are third-generation anti-tank guided missiles that can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode
- The system has all weather day and night capability and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour as well as with explosive reactive armour.

- Indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, it is one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons in the world. Now the missile systems are ready for induction. Defence minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, Indian Army and Indian Air Force for this achievement.

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.

Dharmendra Pradhan urges Centre to set up Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology in Odisha

- Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged the Centre to set up a Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology in Bhubaneswar in Odisha.
- In order to strike a balance between Odisha's delicate maritime ecosystems and the growth of its blue economy, there is a need for enhanced focus on scientific research, which can be ensured by the setting up of the Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology at the Institute of Life Sciences in Bhubaneswar.

Indian-American scientist Swati Mohan leads NASA's Mars 2020 mission

- As the world witnessed the historic landing of NASA's Perseverance rover on the Martian surface, it was Indian-American scientist, Swati Mohan, who led the guidance, navigation, and control operations of the Mars 2020 mission.
- Ms. Mohan also confirmed that the rover had survived a particularly tricky plunge through the Martian atmosphere.
- Raised in Northern Virginia and Washington DC metro area, she completed her bachelor's degree from Cornell University in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, and her M.S. and Ph.D from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Aeronautics/Astronautics.
- The Perseverance Rover was launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida on July 30, 2020 – made its landing on an ancient river delta in a lake that once filled Jezero Crater.
- The Perseverance rover carried seven instruments to conduct an “unprecedented science and test new technology on the Red Planet,” according to NASA. As it spends one Mars year which is equal to two years on Earth, the rover will search for signs of ancient microbial life, which will advance NASA's mission to explore the history of habitability in Mars. The rover has a drill that it will use to collect core samples of Martian rock and soil, then store them in sealed tubes for pickup by a future mission that would take them back to Earth for detailed analysis.
- First, Perseverance carried a unique instrument, MOXIE or Mars Oxygen ISRU Experiment: which for the first time will manufacture molecular oxygen on Mars using carbon dioxide from the carbon-dioxide-rich atmosphere. There is the new push for ISRU at NASA: in NASA jargon, ISRU means In Situ Resource Utilization: or the use of local resources to meet human needs or requirements of the spacecraft. Without ISRU, exploration of Mars in the future decades will be incredibly expensive and thereby impossible.

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and the second-smallest planet in the Solar System, being larger than only Mercury. In English, Mars carries the name of the Roman god of war and is often referred to as the “Red Planet”. The latter refers to the effect of the iron oxide prevalent on Mars's surface, which gives it a reddish appearance distinctive among the astronomical bodies visible to the naked eye. The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), also called Mangalyaan is a space probe orbiting Mars since 24 September 2014. It was launched on 5 November 2013 by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It is India's first interplanetary mission and it made it the fourth space agency to reach Mars, after Roscosmos, NASA, and the European Space Agency. It made India the first Asian nation to reach Martian orbit and the first nation in the world to do so on its maiden attempt. On 1 July 2020, ISRO's space probe Mangalyaan was able to capture a photo of the Mars satellite Phobos from 4200 kms away. The Mars Colour Camera (MCC) onboard ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission has captured the image of Phobos, the closest and biggest moon of Mars.

DRDO conducts two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).
- The launches were carried out from a static vertical launcher from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. Indigenously designed and developed by the DRDO for Indian Navy, VL-SRSAM is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.
- The current launches were carried out for demonstration of vertical launch capability as part of its maiden launch campaign. On both occasions, the missiles intercepted the simulated targets with pinpoint accuracy. The missiles were tested for minimum and maximum range. VL-SRSAM with Weapon Control System were deployed during the trials.

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.

Punjab: World's first tree hospital, ambulance starts in Amritsar

- IRS Officer Rohit Mehra has started the world's first Tree and Plant clinic in Amritsar. The clinic aims to safeguard the environment by treating all the diseases of trees and plants in the city. Its Tree-Ambulance will cater to the needs of rotting and unhealthy trees.

Indians second-most attacked by cyber criminals after Japanese in Asia Pacific

- India was the second most attacked country by cyber criminals after Japan in Asia Pacific in 2020, according to an IBM report released.
- In 2020, IBM Security X-Force observed attackers pivoting their attacks to businesses for which global COVID-19 response efforts heavily relied, such as hospitals, medical and pharmaceutical manufacturers, as well as energy companies powering the COVID-19 supply chain.
- "India was the second most attacked country in the Asia Pacific. Attacks on India made up 7 per cent of all attacks X-Force observed on Asia in 2020. "Finance and insurance was the top attacked industry in India (60 per cent), followed by manufacturing and professional services," the report said.
- Ransomware was the top attack type, accounting for around 40 per cent of total cyber-attacks. In addition, X-Force observed digital currency mining and server access attacks had hit Indian companies last year.

Bangladesh becomes first country to ban all known vulture-toxic drugs

- With Bangladesh banning ketoprofen a painkiller used widely to treat cattle it became the first country to ban any of the drugs now known to be toxic to vultures since the previous veterinary diclofenac ban more than 10 years ago. Ornithologists said this is a landmark initiative to save the small remaining population of Asia's globally threatened vultures—an example for others like India, Pakistan, Nepal and Cambodia to follow.

Scientists decode how Mars may have lost its atmosphere

- Solar winds may have led to Mars losing its atmosphere, according to a computer simulation study which confirms the long held belief that planets need a protective magnetic field to block such harmful radiations in order to sustain life.
- While factors like the existence of a moderately warm, moist atmosphere and liquid water determine whether a planet can host life, the study, published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, noted that the ability of planets to generate magnetic fields around them is an overlooked aspect.
- According to the scientists, Arnab Basak and Dibyendu Nandi from the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata, these magnetic fields enveloping planets can act like a protective umbrella, shielding the atmosphere from the super-fast plasma winds of the Sun.

- On the Earth, they said a geo-dynamo mechanism generates the planet's protective magnetosphere — an invisible shield that stops the solar wind from eroding away our atmosphere. In the current study, the scientists simulated two scenarios of the Red Planet — one considering a young Mars with its magnetosphere intact, and the other with the planet without this force field.

Chandigarh: PGI launches India's first 'amputee clinic'

- The PGIMER launched its 'PGI Amputee Clinic', the first in India. The clinic, a collective effort of various experts and departments of the institute, strives to provide social, mental and physical support to its patients.
- PGIMER Director Prof. Jagat Ram formally inaugurated the clinic, which is being set up to improve amputation patient care by providing a host of services under one roof and with significant coordination.

Space station launch honors 'Hidden Figures' mathematician

- A space station supply ship named after the Black NASA mathematician featured in the movie "Hidden Figures" rocketed into orbit the 59th anniversary of John Glenn's historic launch. Northrop Grumman's Cygnus capsule — dubbed the S.S. Katherine Johnson — should reach the International Space Station following its launch from Virginia's eastern shore.
- Johnson's numbers contributed to the flight in which Glenn became the first American to orbit the world. The film, released in late 2016, depicted the effort put forth by Johnson and other Black women at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, during the early days of space exploration. Langley is 100 miles (160 kilometers) from the launch site at Wallops Island.

ISRO launches Brazil's Amazonia-1 and 18 other satellites

- The Indian Space Research Organisation on February 28, 2021, launched Polar Satellites Launch Vehicle-PSLV C51 carrying Amazonia-1 satellite of Brazil and 18 other satellites of USA and India from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- After four stages of separation, the PSLV rocket launched the Amazonia-1 satellite of Brazil, an optical earth observation satellite. The first space mission of India for 2021 has been one of the longest for PSLV rocket. This is also the first commercial mission of New Space India Limited, a company of the Indian government under the Department of Space.
- The NSIL- New Space India Limited has been undertaking this mission under a commercial arrangement with Spaceflight Inc. USA. Amazonia-1 Satellite is an optical earth observation satellite of the National Institute for Space Research. The launched satellite will further help in strengthening and reinforcing the existing structure by providing remote sensing data in order to monitor deforestation in the Amazon region. It will also provide an analysis of the diversified agriculture across the territory of Brazil.

Inventions/Discoveries

Teeth from Siberian mammoths yield oldest DNA ever recovered

- **Scientists have recovered the oldest DNA on record**, extracting it from the molars of mammoths that **roamed northeastern Siberia up to 1.2 million years ago** in research that broadens the horizons for understanding extinct species.
- **The researchers had recovered and sequenced DNA from the remains of three individual mammoths** — elephant cousins that were among the large mammals that dominated Ice Age landscapes — entombed in permafrost conditions conducive to preservation of ancient genetic material.
- While the remains were **discovered starting in the 1970s**, new scientific methods were needed to extract the DNA. **The oldest of the three, discovered near the Krestovka River, was approximately 1.2 million years old. Another, from near the Adycha river, was approximately 1 to 1.2 million years old. The third, from near the Chukochya river, was roughly 700,000 years old.**
- **Until now, the oldest DNA came from a horse that lived in Canada's Yukon Territory about 700,000 years ago.** By way of comparison, our species, *Homo sapiens*, first appeared roughly 300,000 years ago. **DNA is the self-replicating material that carries genetic information in living organisms - sort of a blueprint of life.**

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a molecule composed of two polynucleotide chains that coil around each other to form a double helix carrying genetic instructions for the development, functioning, growth and reproduction of all known organisms and many viruses. **DNA and ribonucleic acid (RNA)** are nucleic acids. Alongside proteins, lipids and complex carbohydrates (polysaccharides), nucleic acids are one of the four major types of macromolecules that are essential for all known forms of life. The two DNA strands are known as polynucleotides as they are composed of simpler monomeric units called nucleotides. Each nucleotide is composed of one of four nitrogen-containing nucleobases (cytosine [C], guanine [G], adenine [A] or thymine [T]), a sugar called deoxyribose, and a phosphate group. “Molecular Structure of Nucleic Acids: A Structure for Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid” was the first article published to describe the discovery of the double helix structure of DNA, using X-ray diffraction and the mathematics of a helix transform. It was published by Francis Crick and James D. Watson in the scientific journal *Nature* on pages 737–738 of its 171st volume (dated 25 April 1953).

For the first time, researchers are able to characterise some of the properties of Einsteinium

- With a new study published in the journal *Nature*, **for the first time, researchers have been able to characterise some of the properties of Einsteinium.** Named after Einstein, it was discovered in 1952 in the debris of the first hydrogen bomb (the detonation of a thermonuclear device called “Ivy Mike” in the Pacific Ocean).
- **Ivy Mike was detonated on November 1, 1952** as part of a test at a remote island location called Elugelab on the Eniwetok Atoll in the South Pacific. It is difficult to create and is highly radioactive. The most common isotope of the element, einsteinium 253 has a half-life of 20 days. Einsteinium-254 is one of the more stable isotopes of the element that has a half-life of 276 days.
- The element is also not visible to the naked eye and after it was discovered, it took over nine years to manufacture enough of it so that it could be seen with the naked eye. Because of its high radioactivity and short half-life of all einsteinium isotopes, even if the element was present on Earth during its formation, it has most certainly decayed.

Indian astronomers detect huge optical flare in one of the oldest astronomical objects

- **Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding super massive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae**, analysis of which can help trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission, the Department of Science and Technology.
- **Blazars or feeding super massive black holes in the heart of distant galaxies receive a lot of attention** from the astronomical community **because of their complicated emission mechanism.** They emit jets of charged particles travelling nearly at the speed of light and are one of the most luminous and energetic objects in the Universe.

Agnikul first to fire a fully 3D printed rocket engine

- Chennai-based space tech startup Agnikul Cosmos has announced that it has successfully test fired the world's first 3D-printed rocket engine or higher stage semi-cryogenic rocket engine called Agnilet.
- Co-founder Srinath Ravichandran said that Agnilet is expected to be used in the second stage of Agnikul's launch vehicle Agniban. The vehicle has been designed to carry payloads up to 100 kg to low Earth orbits (up to 700 km) with a plug-and-play engine configuration. The company is planning to launch this by the end of 2022.
- Agnilet, which will power Agnikul's orbital class vehicle Agnibaan, was made in India at roughly one-tenth of the cost of conventionally assembling a rocket engine and was could be made in less than four days. Started by Ravichandran and Moin SPM in 2017, Agnikul operates out of the National Centre for Combustion Research at IIT Chennai. Since 2018, the company has claimed to be testing its 3D engines on a smaller scale.

IIT Kharagpur develops solar-powered pest control system for smaller farm fields

- Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur have developed energy-efficient pest controlling devices for smaller agricultural tracts owned by marginal farmers. The research team has developed a self-propelled boom-type sprayer that can be operated using solar energy while safely guided through the crops in smaller tracts of land.
- The device is aimed to increase field capacity and uniformity in liquid spraying and also to reduce drudgery to the operator and dependency on fossil fuel for carrying out spraying in cropped areas. The semi-automated device, developed by Prof. Hifjur Raheman, Anup Behera Rahul K, and Prof. P.B.S. Bhadoria from the Dept. of Agricultural and Food Engineering at IIT Kharagpur, will address several challenges of the mechanized pest control system in the small farm sector.

Russia detects first case bird flu in humans, alerts WHO

- Russia said its scientists had detected the first case of transmission of the H5N8 strain of avian flu to humans and had alerted the World Health Organization.
- "Information about the world's first case of transmission of the avian flu (H5N8) to humans has already been sent to the World Health Organization". "The discovery of these mutations when the virus has not still acquired an ability to transmit from human to human gives us all, the entire world, time to prepare for possible mutations and react in an adequate and timely fashion".

H5N8 is a subtype of the Influenza A virus (sometimes called bird flu) and is highly lethal to wild birds and poultry. H5N8 is typically not associated with humans; however, seven people in Russia were found to be infected in 2021. The H5N8 virus manifests itself in various ways, from asymptomatic and sub-clinical to highly lethal in some populations. Many of the findings in wild birds are based on the discovery of dead animals. H5N8 has previously been used in place of the highly pathogenic H1N1 in studies.

Health/Disease

In World First, Britain to mix Pfizer and Oxford Vaccine Doses

- **British researchers** are to **explore mixing doses of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines** in a **world first trial** aimed at finding new ways to swiftly reduce coronavirus infections as new mutated variants emerge.
- In the UK, two vaccines are currently in use, following regulatory approval. These are the **BNT162b2 vaccine, developed by Pfizer and BioNTech** and the **ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 (AZD1222), developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca**. Both of these vaccines have been authorised for emergency use by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), as well as a vaccine developed by Moderna, which is expected to be available from Spring 2021.
- While thousands of individual changes have arisen as the virus mutates on replication and evolves into new variants, only a tiny minority are likely to be important or change the virus in an appreciable way. **The so-called British variant, known as VUI-202012/01 or B.1.1.7.**, has mutations including a change in the spike protein that the coronavirus uses to **bind to the human ACE2 receptor** - meaning that it is probably easier to catch.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a **contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)**. The first case was identified in **Wuhan, China**, in December 2019. It has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic. Symptoms of COVID-19 are variable, but often include fever, cough, fatigue, breathing difficulties, and loss of smell and taste. Symptoms begin one to fourteen days after exposure to the virus. Various testing methods have been developed to diagnose the disease. **The standard diagnosis method is by real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) from a nasopharyngeal swab.**

India becomes first country in world to identify need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

- **India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease.** While launching the operational guidelines for integration of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease with the National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke.
- The Minister said, the **abnormal accumulation of fat in the liver in the absence of secondary causes of fatty liver is a serious health concern as it encompasses a spectrum of liver abnormalities.** The vision of the Government is to move from diagnostic cure to preventive health.

NAFLD, though a non-communicable disease (NCD), is an independent predictor of future risk of cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and other metabolic syndromes like hypertension, abdominal obesity, dyslipidaemia, glucose intolerance. The operational guidelines help align existing NCD programme strategies to achieve the objectives of prevention and control of NAFLD. **NAFLD is a condition where the liver has fat accumulation and could lead to NASH a progressive disease of the liver.** This condition could progress to cirrhosis and liver failure. It is a large unmet medical need. There is currently no approved drug for the treatment of NASH anywhere in the world.

IIT Madras researchers identify a sustainable, high-yielding alternative source for anti-cancer drug Camptothecin

- **Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)** announced that they have **identified a sustainable source for the anti-cancer drug camptothecin**, which is **currently derived from two highly depleted tree species.**
- The researchers have found a way to **produce the drug using a novel microbial fermentation method that produces high yield without too much cost.** Topotecan and Irinotecan are two widely used anticancer drugs, which are produced by using camptothecin as the lead molecule. More than a dozen derivatives and conjugates of camptothecin are under various stages of clinical trials for anti-cancer applications.

Henry Ford health system first in world to test treatments for Brain Cancer

- Detroit-based Henry Ford Cancer Institute has announced it is the first site in the world to activate two treatments for glioblastoma, the deadliest form of brain cancer, as part of a patient-centered adaptive platform trial called GBM AGILE. Led by Global Coalition for Adaptive Research, GBM AGILE tests multiple therapies for patients with newly diagnosed and recurrent GBM. Henry Ford was the first in the world to enroll a patient when enrollment began in 2019.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 launched to expand immunization coverage across country

- Health and Family Welfare Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0, (IMI 3.0) to expand immunization coverage across the country.
- It will have two rounds starting from the 22nd of this month and the 22nd of March this year and will be conducted in pre-identified 250 districts and urban areas across 29 States and UTs in the country.
- IMI 3.0 is aimed at reaching the unreached population with all the available vaccines under Universal Immunisation Programme and thereby accelerates the full immunization and complete immunization coverage of children and pregnant women.
- The focus of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 will be the children and pregnant women who have missed their vaccine doses during the COVID-19 pandemic. They will be identified and vaccinated during the two rounds. Beneficiaries from migration areas and hard to reach areas will be targeted as they may have missed their vaccine doses during COVID19. The present campaign will target achieving 90 percent Full Immunization Coverage in all districts of the country and sustain the coverage through immunization system strengthening and foster India's march towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

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.

Prime Minister Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana to be launched to develop capacities in health care system over 6 years

- A new centrally sponsored scheme, PM Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, will be launched with an outlay of about 64,180 crores over 6 years. This will be in addition to the National Health Mission.
- Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 to be implemented with a total financial allocation of over 1.41 lakh crores over a period of 5 years from 2021 to 2026.
- The scheme will provide support for 17,788 rural and 11,024 Urban health and wellness centres. Establishing integrated public health labs in all the districts and setting up 3,382 public health units in 11 states. Setting up critical care hospital blocks in 12 central institutions and 602 districts.
- Strengthening the National Centre for Disease Control, its 5 regional branches as well as 20 metropolitan health surveillance units. The scheme will expand the Integrated Health Information Portal to all the UTs and states to connect all public health labs
- It will work on the operationalization of the 17 new Public Health Units. The scheme will also strengthen 33 existing Public Health Units at the Points of entry that is at 11 seaports, 32 airports, and 7 land crossings.
- Establishing 2 mobile hospitals and 15 Health Emergency Operation Centres. Establishment of a national institution for One Health, a Regional Research Platform for Southeast Asia Region of WHO, 4 regional National Institutes for Virology, and 9 Bio-Safety Level III laboratories.

National Health Mission (NHM) was launched by the government of India in 2013 subsuming the National Rural Health Mission and National Urban Health Mission. It was further extended in March 2018, to continue until March 2020. It is headed by Mission Director and monitored by National Level Monitors appointed by Government of India.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT



IIT Bombay team led Airth launches the world's first antimicrobial air purifier

- **Airth is ready to launch the first of its kind antimicrobial air purifier.** It is developed by the visionary team from IIT Bombay and uses patent filed & tested technology for protection against airborne diseases such as COVID-19.
- **The device goes a step ahead of surface sanitisers and protects people within a closed space,** such as an office. **Airth antimicrobial air purifiers stand by their words to help organisations provide clean and pathogen-free air to their customers and employees.** “These meticulously designed air purifiers use proprietary SAVE (Sanitizer for Airborne Virus Elimination) technology developed by IIT Bombay researchers.

Fossils of ‘Dickinsonia’ found at Bhimbetka

- **Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal — the 550-million-year-old ‘Dickinsonia’ — on the roof of the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters,** about 40 km from Bhopal.
- **One can identify the fossils from the white leaf-like patches with a central vertebra (central midrib) and connecting veins.** While one fossil is **17 inches long,** the other two are much smaller. The new discoveries, published in a journal, Gondwana Research, can be seen right at the beginning of the ‘Auditorium Cave’, **the first of such caves at Bhimbetka,** a UNESCO heritage site, located about 3.5 metres above the ground.

Rare Mandarin Duck Spotted in Wetland in Assam after 100 years

- **A mandarin duck was spotted in Assam earlier this week for the first time in 118 years** by a team of the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI). **The rare colourful duck was spotted in the wetland Maguri Motapung Beel, near Baghjan in Tinsukia.**
- **Maguri Beel had suffered damage last year following a blowout in one of the oil wells belonging to the Oil India limited in Baghjan.** The oil well caught fire on 9 June 2020 and burned for 170 days, before the blowout was doused in November. The mandarin duck has a distinctive, elaborate plumage and it nests in trees. **The bird is native to East Asia, but has established feral populations throughout Western Europe.** The duck has primary habitat is in eastern China and southern Japan.

IIT Madras’ home-grown e-bike

- **An IIT Madras-Incubated start-up has recently launched PiMo, a sustainable utility e-bike.** Pi Beam’s new Electric Two-Wheeler can charge faster than a smartphone.
- **Riding PiMo does not require a license or registration.** Priced at Rs. 30, 000 it is economical and eliminates fuel costs. It offers ‘Battery Swapping’ and a drained battery can be exchanged for a fully charged one at designated locations.
- **PiMo is one of the few EVs in the local market that is almost completely made in India.** 90% of its components, including the batteries and controllers, are manufactured in India.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses ‘Population versus Planet’ Conference

- **Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare participated and expressed his views in WION and Zee Media’s ‘Population versus Planet’ Conference which is a part of its year-long campaign called ‘Mission Sustainability: Population vs Planet’.**
- **This e-conclave marking the campaign’s launch will host deliberations between numerous policy experts, demographic researchers & academicians on socially important themes like population stabilisation, empowering women & youth through education among various others as the world population witnesses an increase from 1 billion in the year 1800 to 7.8 billion.**

IIT Ropar develops alternative to alcohol-based disinfectant

- **The IIT Ropar has developed a low-cost device to produce electrolysed water that could be used as an alternative to alcohol-based disinfectant.**
- **The acidic electrolysed water has a pH of 5.0-6.5 and high concentration of Free Available Chlorine (FAC). It was reported recently that freely available chlorine can potentially inactivate the virus. The electrolysed water also shows strong killing activity against bacteria, fungi and many other types of viruses.**

India engineers help build world’s first battery-electric loco

- **India engineers help build world’s first battery-electric loco. Electric cars are becoming a rage. Now, US Company Wabtec is building an electric locomotive that works on a battery. It is doing this in collaboration with BNSF Railway Co, a company owned by Warren Buffett’s Berkshire Hathaway.**

China to set up public platform to track, crack down on polluters

- **China will set up a new information platform to allow the public to track the emissions of polluting enterprises and help authorities prosecute those that break the rules or try to “evade supervision”.**
- **A total of 2.36 million companies, industrial facilities and institutions in China are legally obliged to obtain permits to emit pollutants like sulphur dioxide or wastewater. But China has struggled to collect the information required to make the system work, and has also faced obstruction and data fraud from some polluting firms. It is set to come into effect on March 1, 2021.**

Srivilliputhur–Megamalai Tiger Reserve in TN approved

- **The Central government has given its approval for the creation of a fifth tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu that will encompass the Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuaries.**
- **For nearly a decade now, environmental activists have been seeking a tiger reserve linking these two sanctuaries, adjoining the Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala, and then to connect it with the Tirunelveli Wildlife Sanctuary, and then to Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve to make it a contiguous corridor where the big cats can thrive.**
- **The Forest Department’s proposal was to declare 1.48 lakh hectares of land encompassing Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary and Tirunelveli Wildlife Sanctuary as Tamil Nadu’s fifth tiger reserve.**

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.

Black-necked crane visits Assam for the first time, gets a divine name

- **A team, comprising Nilutpal Mahanta of Gauhati University, naturalist Pranjal Sarma and bird watcher Indrani Adhyapak, confirmed that they were a pair of Black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*), native to the Tibetan plateau, and sighted for the first time in Assam.**

- **Black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*)** have been **sighted for the first time in Assam**. To celebrate this, the bird was given an Assamese name: “**Deu Korchon**” (Deu means god and Korchon means crane).
- **The black-necked crane is endemic to the Tibetan Plateau**. It is a medium-sized crane that is mostly grey with a black head and neck with a red crown on the head.

Work on India's first dolphin research centre to start soon in Patna

- **As Bihar accounts for 50% of the world's river dolphin population**, a highly endangered species **under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** and declared the National Aquatic Animal in 2009.
- **In 2018-19, around 1500 dolphins** were sighted in the Ganga during a survey by teams of experts. This also prompted the government to **build India's first observatory, Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, for the mammals in Bhagalpur**. Once it is completed, it is expected to boost eco-tourism. Another observatory is also in the pipeline at Patna.

Millions of lives saved annually by 2040 if countries raise climate ambitions to meet Paris Agreement targets: modelling study

- Adopting policies that are consistent with **achieving the Paris Agreement and prioritising health could save 6.4 million lives due to better diet, 1.6 million lives due to cleaner air, and 2.1 million lives due to increased exercise per year across nine countries**.
- **New research from The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change**, published in a special issue of The Lancet Planetary Health Journal, highlights the benefits to health if countries adopt climate plans – **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** – that are consistent with the **Paris Agreement aim of limiting warming to “well below 2°C”**.
- **The countries considered in the study represent 50 per cent of the world's population and 70 per cent of the world's emissions** – Brazil, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, the UK and the US.

In 2015, ahead of the UN significant climate conference in Paris, India announced three major voluntary commitments called the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC): 1. Improving the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33–35% by 2030 over 2005 levels. 2. Increasing the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40% by 2030. 3. Enhancing its forest cover, thereby absorbing 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, was **adopted by 196 parties at the 21st Conference of Parties in Paris, on December 12, 2015, and was enforced on November 4, 2016**. On June 1, 2017, **United States President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation and withdrawal took effect on November 4, 2020, one day after the 2020 U.S. presidential election**.

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Ajay Singh re-elected as President of Boxing Federation of India

- **Ajay Singh** has been re-elected as President of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) after defeating former Maharashtra sports minister Ashish Shelar in the polls.

Ankita Raina becomes fifth Indian woman to feature in Grand Slam main draw

- **Ankita Raina** became only the fifth Indian woman tennis player in Open era to secure a place in the main draw of a Grand Slam as she made the cut for the women's doubles event of the Australian Open. The year's first Grand Slam starts on February 8.

Rishabh Pant voted inaugural ICC Player of the Month

- India's flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman **Rishabh Pant** won the ICC's inaugural Player of the Month award for his superlative performances in the two Tests against Australia in January 2021.
- **Pant** scored a 97 at Sydney and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane that powered India to an incredible series win against arch-rivals Australia Down Under.
- South Africa's **Shabnim Ismail** was named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for January 2021 for her performances across three ODIs and two T20Is during the month. **Ismail** took seven wickets in the victorious ODI series against Pakistan, before taking five wickets in the second T20I against the same opposition.

Assam government appoints Hima Das as DSP

- Star sprinter **Hima Das**, who is currently looking to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics, has been appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police by the Assam government. **Hima** thanked Assam Chief Minister and former Union Sports Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for the job, saying it will motivate her.

Ravichandran Ashwin becomes first bowler to dismiss left-handers 200 times in Tests

- Off-spinner **Ravichandran Ashwin** became the first player in the 143-year history of Test cricket to take 200 wickets against left-handed batsmen. **Ashwin** also surpassed **Harbhajan Singh** as the second-highest wicket taker in home Tests for India. **Harbhajan** had taken 265 wickets while **Ashwin's** five-wicket haul on the second day of the Test took his tally to 268.

Australian Open 2021: Hsieh Su-Wei becomes oldest first-time quarterfinalist in Grand Slam

- In Australian Open Tennis **Hsieh Su-Wei** has become the oldest first-time quarterfinalist in a Grand Slam. Taiwanese **Hsieh Su-wei** stunned 19th seed Czech **Marketa Vondrousova** in straight sets.

Australian Open is a tennis tournament held annually over the last fortnight of January at Melbourne Park in Melbourne, Australia. It was first played at the Warehouseman's Cricket Ground in Melbourne in November 1905. The tournament is the first of the four Grand Slam tennis events held each year, preceding the French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open.

Star's Sanjog Gupta reappointed to chair FICCI's sports committee

- The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Ficci) announced the re-appointment of Sanjog Gupta, head-sports, Star India, as the chairperson to its sports committee for 2021.
- Ficci is the first national chamber of commerce to establish a dedicated sports vertical under the aegis of the sports committee.

Odisha CM lays foundation stone of country's largest hockey stadium in Rourkela

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of the country's largest hockey stadium in the steel city Rourkela during his one-day visit to Sundargarh district.
- The stadium will be named after noted freedom fighter Birsa Munda and will jointly host the men's Hockey World Cup- 2023 along with the Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- With a seating capacity of 20,000, the new stadium will be located on the Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT) campus.

Seiko Hashimoto takes over as Tokyo Olympic president

- Seiko Hashimoto appeared in seven Olympics - four Winter Olympics and three Summer Olympics. According to historian Dr. Bill Mallon, her seven appearances is the most by any "multi-season" athlete in the games.
- Hashimoto made even more history in Japan, where women are still rare in the boardrooms and positions of political power. Hashimoto was named as president of the Tokyo Olympic organising committee after a meeting of its male-dominated executive board. She replaces 83-year-old Yoshiro Mori, a former Japanese prime minister who was forced to resign after making sexist comments about women. Hashimoto had been serving as the Olympic minister in the cabinet of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

Elise Mertens, Aryna Sabalenka win women's doubles title of Australian Open

- In Tennis, the Belgian and Belarus pair of Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka has won the WOMEN'S doubles final of the Australian Open 2021. They defeated Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic.
- Earlier, Defending champions Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury won the Australian Open Semi-finals of the Men's doubles against Australia born Jamie Murray and Brazilian Bruno Soares. In the finals they will face the Croatian-Slovakian duo Ivan Dodig and Filip Polasek.

Chris Morris becomes costliest ever player at IPL auction for Rajasthan Royal

- Chris Morris became the costliest ever player at an IPL auction for Rajasthan Royal while Krishnappa Gowtham became the costliest Indian uncapped player for Chennai Super Kings at the IPL 2021 auction. The IPL 2021 auction was held in Chennai and all the 8 teams are looking to make some additions to their squad.
- The Indian Premier League (IPL) is a professional Twenty20 cricket league in India usually contested between March and May of every year by eight teams representing eight different cities or states in India. The league was founded by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 2007. The IPL has an exclusive window in ICC Future Tours Programme

Australian Open: Naomi Osaka lifts Women's title defeating Jennifer Brady

- Japan's Naomi Osaka cemented her place as the outstanding star of the women's singles game by beating American Jennifer Brady in the Australian Open final to win her fourth Grand Slam title.
- Osaka has remained unbeaten in major finals win in Melbourne. Osaka has now won two Australian Open titles after also triumphing at Melbourne Park in 2019, with her other Grand Slam successes coming at the US Open in 2018 and 2020. She has not suffered a defeat since February 2020 after winning her past 20 matches.

Indian tennis: Ankita Raina lifts first WTA title in doubles at Phillip Island Trophy

- **India No 1 Ankita Raina** added another memorable first to her Australia trip by claiming her first WTA title with a doubles win at the Phillip Island Trophy. Raina and her partner Russian Kamilla Rakhimova beat Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova in the final.

Australian Open: Men's doubles pair Ivan Dodig & Filip Polasek win first Grand Slam title

- In Tennis, ninth-seeded Croat -Slovak pair **Ivan Dodig and Filip Polasek** won the Australian Open Men's doubles title.
- They defeated defending champion and fifth-seeded pair British Joe Salisbury and American Rajeev Ram on Rod Laver Arena. This was their first Grand Slam as a team.

Novak Djokovic wins his 9th Australian Open title

- In Tennis, **Defending Champion Novak Djokovic** won his ninth Australian Open title, beating Daniil Medvedev in a one-sided final at Melbourne Park. Victory takes Djokovic's grand slam singles tally to 18 - just two behind Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Boxing: Deepak Kumar wins silver at Strandja Memorial Tournament in Bulgaria

- In Boxing, **Deepak Kumar (52 kg)** wins the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria after losing the final face-off in a split decision against Bulgaria's Daniel Asenov in the men's flyweight.

Sport Events

New Zealand become first team to qualify for World Test Championship finals

- Kane Williamson-led New Zealand became the first team to qualify for the finals of the inaugural edition of the ICC World Test Championship.
- The development comes after Australia's tour to South Africa, which was scheduled to be held later this month, was postponed due to health concerns.

Sports Ministry announces recognition of Yogasana as a competitive sport in India

- The Ministry of AYUSH, and Youth Affairs and Sports jointly announced that Yogasana will get formally recognized as a competitive sport in India. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said that they will now work towards getting Yogasana recognition as a competitive sport globally as well.
- This decision will help Yogasana get government funding. It is an important step in spreading awareness among people about the innumerable benefits of practicing yoga.

Belgium ends the 2020 as No. 1 in FIFA global rankings

- For the third consecutive year, Belgium ended the year as the top-ranked footballing nation in the world, just ahead of world champions France in the latest world rankings released on Thursday.
- Roberto Martinez's Belgium has been phenomenal in the last decade, and have topped the rankings since 2018.
- According to the rankings released by FIFA, soccer's world governing body, France followed Belgium at the No. 2 spot, Brazil were at No. 3 spot, while England and Portugal made it at No. 4 and No. 5 respectively to round out the top 5 rankings.

ICC signs Byju's as global partner for 3 years

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has signed Indian edtech start-up Byju's as global partner for three years, from 2021 to 2023.
- The agreement will see team India's jersey sponsor Byju's partner all ICC events over the period, including the forthcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup in India, and the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand. As a global partner, BYJU'S will have extensive in-venue, broadcast, and digital rights across all ICC events.

Karnataka to host Khelo India University Games 2021

- Karnataka will host the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) later this year, state chief minister BS Yediyurappa and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju announced.
- The Games will be held in Bengaluru's Jain University and other venues in the state, in partnership with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). KIUG is the largest University Games in the country and is aimed at tapping sporting talent, who can represent India in international events, including the Olympics.

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates world's largest Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad; to be called Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly constructed world's largest Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad. President Kovind also laid the foundation stone of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave at newly-built Cricket Stadium.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the newly constructed stadium will be known as the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium. Ahmedabad has become the world class sports hub with infrastructure that can host any international sports event with a short notice.
- Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium at Motera, Sardar Patel Sports Enclave and another sports complex in Naranpura area of Ahmedabad will be the part of this sports infrastructure.

- As of 2020, it is the **largest cricket stadium in the world and the second largest stadium overall**, with a seating capacity of 110,000 spectators. It is owned by the Gujarat Cricket Association. It hosted its first ever pink ball Test match on 24 February 2021 between India and England. The home team's (India) 10-wicket wins over England in the Pink-ball Test in Ahmedabad.
- The stadium was the venue of the Namaste Trump event and hosted US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi on 24 February 2020. The event mirrored the “Howdy Modi” event held in Houston, Texas.

IOC names Brisbane as preferred bidder to host 2032 Olympic Games

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has named **Brisbane, Australia as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games**. The IOC's future host commission recommended that the body enters “targeted dialogue” with Brisbane bid organisers and the Australian Olympic Committee.
- The state of Queensland had hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games and Brisbane was praised for its high percentage of existing venues, a good masterplan, experience in organising major events and its favourable weather.
- The delayed 2020 Olympics will be held in Tokyo, Japan in the summer, with Paris in France staging the 2024 Games and Los Angeles in the United States hosting the 2028 Olympics.
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is a non-governmental sports organisation based in Lausanne, Switzerland. Founded by Pierre de Coubertin and Demetrios Vikelas in 1894, it is the authority responsible for organising the modern Summer and Winter Olympic Games. The IOC is the governing body of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), which are the national constituents of the worldwide Olympic Movement. As of 2016, there are 206 NOCs officially recognised by the IOC. The current president of the IOC is Thomas Bach of Germany, who succeeded Jacques Rogge of Belgium in September 2013.

Indian men's skeet team wins bronze in ISSF World Cup

- The Indian trio of **Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event** at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo.
- The Indians beat the Kazakhstan team of David Pochivalov, Eduard Yechshenko and Alexandr Mukhamediyev 6-2 in the bronze medal match on the third competition day of the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament.
- The trio reached the bronze medal match when they combined to shoot a score of 491 after the qualification stage comprising seven rounds of 25 shots each on Friday evening. Russia won the gold medal, beating the Czech Republic 6-0 in the finals.

AWARDS



Tamil film ‘Pebbles’ wins Tiger Award at International Film Festival Rotterdam

- Indian drama “Pebbles”, directed by filmmaker Vinothraj PS, has won the top honour, the Tiger Award for best film, at the 50th International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).
- The Tamil language film follows an alcoholic abusive husband who, after his long-suffering wife runs off, sets out with his young son to find her and bring her back.
- Titled “Koozhangal” in Tamil, “Pebbles” stars a host of new comers and is produced by Vignesh Shivan and Nayantara.
- The Tiger Award is accompanied by a Euro 40,000 cash prize, to be shared between the director and producer of the winning film.

Steven Spielberg wins Israel’s prestigious 2021 Genesis Prize for films, philanthropy

- Steven Spielberg has been awarded Israel’s prestigious 2021 Genesis Prize in recognition of his contribution to cinema, his philanthropic works and his efforts to preserve the memory of the Holocaust.
- The \$1 million award is granted each year to a person for their professional achievements, contributions to humanity and commitment to Jewish values.
- The prize was founded in 2012 with a \$100 million endowment from five Russian philanthropists Mikhail Fridman, Pyotr Aven, German Khan, Stan Polovets, and Alexander Knaster. The prize is under the administration of the Genesis Prize Foundation, in partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel. It has been referred to as the “Jewish Nobel Prize”, causing some commentators to question the need for a “Jewish” Nobel Prize.

Andhra Pradesh CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy conferred Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award

- The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been conferred the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award. He has been selected the “SKOCH CM of the Year” on the basis of study of project level outcomes across various states of India. Quite a few of them from Andhra Pradesh stand out to be nationally significant.
- The Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman, Skoch group, Sameer Kochhar personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh. SKOCH Award, independently instituted in 2003, is India’s honest civilian honour conferred by an independent organisation as a third party assessment. It is the only award in the country that is based on felt-needs assessment and outcome evaluation based on evidence.

Anthony Fauci wins \$1 million Israeli prize for ‘defending science’

- Dr. Anthony Fauci has won the \$1 million Dan David Prize for “defending science” and advocating for vaccines now being administered worldwide to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

- The Israel-based Dan David Foundation named President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser as the winner of one of three prizes. It said he had earned the recognition over a lifetime of leadership on HIV research and AIDS relief, as well as his advocacy for the vaccines against COVID-19.

Theodore Baskaran wins Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020

- Sanctuary Nature Foundation honours conservation hero S Theodore Baskaran with Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020 for his role in wildlife conservation and his continuing legacy of writings in Tamil and English to the conservation discourse
- Writer, historian, naturalist, and activist, S Theodore Baskaran sounds hopeful as he gets talking about conservation. "There is more awareness among people, which is a good thing. Tigers and leopards have been protected, peacocks have multiplied and we have hundreds of sanctuaries providing a safe haven for wildlife,".
- Theodore is the winner of this year's Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award, instituted by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation's Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards, for his dedication to wildlife conservation and his writing prowess in English and Tamil that contribute to the conservation discourse. And, for inspiring young naturalists along the way.

WCCB receives Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020

- The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020 awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said that WCCB getting the award twice in three years is a testimony of India's commitment towards ending wildlife crime. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has been awarded this year under the Innovation category. Earlier, the Bureau had received the award in 2018 under the same category.

'Amar Ekushey' observed, four honoured with International Mother Language Award in Bangladesh

- Bangladesh observed the Language martyr's day with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President M Abdul Hamid paying tributes to the martyrs of the historic language movement by placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka.
- Ministers, members of parliament, chief of armed services and several other dignitaries also paid tributes to the martyrs of the language movement. People from various walks of life, students, members of the civil society joined others in paying tributes to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in 1952 demanding that Bangla should be the language of the nation.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave away the first International Mother Language Day award to three individuals and one organisation.
- Education Minister Dipu Moni handed over the award to renowned Nazrul scholar and national Professor Rafiqul Islam in a function in Dhaka on behalf of the Prime Minister. Mathura Bikash Tripura got the award for his contribution in preserving and promoting mother languages of small ethnic groups in Bangladesh.
- Uzbek Researcher Islaimov Gulom Mirzaevich and a Bolivian organisation named Activismo Lenguas also got the biennial prize. Activismo Lenguas is an online initiative for supporting the indigenous language digital activists in Latin America.

Manipur doctor gets Japan's highest honour for promoting ties between 2 nations

- Japan has conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration on Manipur physician and former president of state tourism forum, Dr Thangjam Dhabali Singh, to honour his contribution to strengthening ties between Japan and India, and Japan and Manipur.
- Dr Dhabali was involved in organising the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Imphal in 2014, an event attended by dignitaries from Japan, Britain and Australia. The decoration was constituted by Japanese Emperor Meiji in 1875.

- It is the highest order conferred by the government of Japan, in the name of his majesty the emperor, upon those who have made distinguished achievements in international relations, promotion of Japanese culture, achievements in their respective field, development in welfare or preservation of the environment.

Anjali Bharadwaj among 12 people named by Biden admin for newly-instituted anti-corruption award

- Anjali Bharadwaj, an Indian social activist working on issues of transparency and accountability, is one of the 12 “courageous” individuals named by the Biden administration for the newly-instituted International Anti-Corruption Champions Award.
- According to the State Department, Ms. Bharadwaj has served as an active member of the Right to Information Movement in India for over two decades. In addition to Ms. Bharadwaj, the other honourees are: Ardian Dvorani of Albania, Diana Salazar of Ecuador, Sophia Pretrick of Micronesia, Juan Francisco Sandoval Alfaro of Guatemala, Ibrahima Kalil Gueye of Guinea, Dhuha A Mohammed of Iraq, Bolot Temirov of Kyrgyz Republic, Mustafa Abdullah Sanalla of Libya, Victor Sotto of The Philippines, Francis Ben Kaifala of Sierra Leone, and Ruslan Ryaboshapka of Ukraine.



PERSONS IN NEWS

Virat Kohli remains India's most-valuable celeb, actors Akshay Kumar & Ranveer Singh follow

- Team India skipper Virat Kohli retains the top position of India's most-valuable celebrity list for the fourth consecutive year. His brand value remains steady at \$237.7 million in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar ranked second with a brand value of \$118.9 million, a jump of 13.8 per cent, followed by Ranveer Singh with a brand value of \$102.9 million.
- The overall brand value of the top 20 celebrities in 2020 is estimated at \$1 billion, a dip of approximately five per cent from last year. A recent survey conducted by Duff & Phelps released key findings from the sixth edition of its Celebrity Brand Valuation Study 2020: "Embracing the New Normal."

NASA appoints Indian-American scientist Bhavya Lal as acting chief of staff

- Indian-American Bhavya Lal was appointed by NASA as the acting chief of staff of the US space agency. NASA said Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.
- There, she led analysis of space technology, strategy, and policy for the White House office of science and technology policy and national space council, as well as federal space-oriented organisations, including NASA, the department of defence, and the intelligence community.

New York Fed's Daleep Singh to join Joe Biden administration as deputy NSA

- The Federal Reserve Bank of New York has said that Daleep Singh, the Head of the Markets Group at the bank is set to join US President Joe Biden's administration as deputy national security adviser. Singh's great grand-uncle was Daleep Singh Saund, the first Asian-American elected to the US Congress.

RS Sharma to head Ayushman Bharat

- The National Health Authority (NHA) has appointed RS Sharma as the new Chief Executive to head its health insurance scheme – Ayushman Bharat or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana – a flagship programme of the government.
- He will be replacing Indu Bhushan whose three years terms come to an end. Sharma, the former Chairman of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), also heads the Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to combat Covid-19, and is a member, National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19.

Twitter's top lawyer, UK's FM and 3 other Indian-origin people feature in TIME's 100 emerging leaders list

- Five Indian-origin personalities, including Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK's finance minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine's annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are shaping the future".
- The 2021 TIME100 Next, is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future.
- Other Indian-origin personalities on the list are Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, doctor and Executive Director of nonprofit Get Us PPE Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve Rohan Pavuluri. Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad is also on the list.

US military's first India-born female Muslim chaplain graduates from Chaplin College

- Saleha Jabeen, US military's first India-born female Muslim chaplain has graduated from Air Force Basic Chaplain Course, vowing to take her duty as a spiritual mentor very seriously.

- Jabeen was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, becoming the first female Muslim chaplain in the Department of the Defense. She came to the United States 14 years ago as an international student.

Rashmi Samant First Indian Woman to Head Oxford Students' Union

- **Rashmi Samant** has made history by becoming the first Indian woman to head the Oxford Students' Union. An alumnus of Karnataka's Manipal Institute of Technology, Ms Samant in her LinkedIn profile says she is "a sustainable energy enthusiast who believes in effective policymaking and energy equality for healing the deteriorating climate of the world". Ms Samant won the students' union election with 1,996 votes, more than all her opponents put together, the university said in a post on its website.

ISA announces Dr Ajay Mathur as its new Director-General

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members. Dr Mathur replaces Mr Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since the inception of the ISA.
- A coalition of 73 member countries, ISA was established in 2015 to accelerate the demand for and use of safe, sustainable, and affordable solar energy for all. It aims to mobilize over one trillion dollars of investment into solar projects by 2030 through focused advocacy, policy and regulatory support, capacity building, and by overcoming perceived investment barriers.

Indian-origin Preeti Sinha to lead UN Capital Development Fund

- The UN Capital Development Fund has appointed Indian-origin investment and development banker Preeti Sinha as its Executive Secretary, whose focus will be on providing micro-finance assistance to women, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises in under-served communities. Sinha commenced her tenure as UNCDF Executive Secretary, the highest leadership rank in the institution.

Russian supermodel Natalia Vodianova named new UN goodwill ambassador

- Russian supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova became a United Nations goodwill ambassador pledging to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.
- She will be a campaigner for the U.N. Population Fund, which now calls itself the U.N.'s sexual and reproductive health agency, known as UNFPA. UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem, who announced her appointment, called Vodianova "above all a passionate, longtime advocate for the rights and the needs of women and girls and in particular people living with disabilities."

Biden nominates Indian-American lawyer Kiran Ahuja to head Office of Personnel Management

- US President Joe Biden has nominated Indian-American lawyer and rights activist Kiran Ahuja to head the Office of Personnel Management, a federal agency that manages America's more than two million civil servants.
- If confirmed by the Senate nominated would become the first Indian-American to serve this top position in the US government. Ahuja served as the Chief of Staff to Director of the US Office of Personnel Management from 2015 to 2017. She has more than two decades of public service and nonprofit/philanthropic sector leadership experience.

Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's art book 'The Lost Soul' to hit bookstores

- The latest book by Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk to be translated into English is a departure for the celebrated Polish author.
 - 'The Lost Soul', which comes out in the U.S., is a poetic story of a man who loses his soul in the daily rush and can only regain it in a very special way. The book has many meanings, also inspired by its nostalgic, meditative drawings by Polish artist Joanna Concejo.
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MISCELLANEOUS

Unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities launched

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly **launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of GOBARDHAN activities across the nation. Gobardhan is an important component of Swachh Bharat Mission Phase-2 for organic solid waste management.**
- Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said, **at the rural level, earlier there was no way of proper disposal of cattle dung waste, but after the introduction of Gobardhan programme, people will be able to provide proper disposal of dung and achieve the goal of ODF Plus.**
- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar expressed confidence that the launch of unified portal of Gobardhan will further strengthen the rural economy through a convergent approach for various Biogas projects models and initiatives.

UNWTO calls Year 2020 worst year on record

- **The UN World Tourism Organization recently confirmed the Year 2020 as the ‘worst year on record’, after global tourism suffered massively due to international travel bans implemented to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. The international arrivals dropped by 74 percent and destinations across the world welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals than 2019 due to widespread travel restrictions and unprecedented fall in demand.**
- As per the latest report by the UN World Tourism Organization, **the collapse in international travel has represented an estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues, which is more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis.**

InterModal Station in Nagpur will be ecological & environment friendly

- **Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari has said that the InterModal Station (IMS) to be constructed by the National Highways Authority (NHAI) near Ajni railway station in Nagpur will be ecological and environment friendly.**
- **The first phase of this ambitious project will focus on land acquisition and rehabilitation work. The Ministry of Road Transport has allocated 1200 crore rupees for this project.** The roads, railways, metro, broad gauge metro as well as the newly proposed Nag river waterway will come together and become an intermodal station near Ajni railway station for transporting passengers seamlessly from all routes.

Felling of 300 heritage trees to construct five Railway over-bridges in West Bengal will cost India a staggering Rs. 2,23,50,00,000 (Rs. 2.2 billion)

- **The Supreme Court recently took judicial notice of its expert committee report, which said the felling of 300 heritage trees to construct five Railway over-bridges in West Bengal will cost India a staggering Rs. 2,23,50,00,000 (Rs. 2.2 billion). The 10-digit figure was arrived at by the committee after: Calculating the products these trees would produce over 100 years of their natural lifetime. This included oxygen, micro-nutrients, compost and bio-fertiliser, besides the trees being valuable members of the natural environment. Based on this, an individual tree parts with, free of cost, “products” worth Rs.74, 500 a year.**

Jharkhand passed a resolution that would allow tribals to identify with a distinct religion

- **The Jharkhand legislature passed a government-backed resolution that would allow tribals in the state to identify with a distinct religion. If the Centre approves the new Sarna code, Census 2021 would have to make space for a new religion.**
- **Currently, citizens can choose from only six religions: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. A separate column for tribe as a religious identity was included in the census from 1871 to 1951, but was subsequently dropped. The Jharkhand state cabinet passed the resolution on November 10, 2020.**

Maharashtra launches scheme for startups to help file IT patents

- In a bid to boost the startup ecosystem in Maharashtra, **Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray launched a scheme aimed at providing financial assistance to innovative startups to file for IT patents.**
- As per a statement, around 125-150 startups will be **supported in the first phase of the scheme** with the **financial help of Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh**, along with financial assistance up to Rs 2 lakh for quality testing and certification for the startup's ideas.

West Bengal: Forest Department conducts water birds census for first time

- **In West Bengal, the Forest Department has conducted water birds census for the first time.** The study was conducted from 12th of January to 2nd of February in 54 different locations across the state. More than 800 persons including Forest staff, NGOs and Bird lovers were involved in this exercise.
- The rich biodiversity of the Sundarbans attracts lots of migratory birds every year. Birdwatchers and nature lovers from across the world come here on a regular basis. **For the first time, an initiative was taken by the State Forest Department to conduct the census of water birds of the wetlands of this state including the Sunderbans.**

IIT Council sets up panels for more autonomy

- **The IIT Council has set up committees to look at greater autonomy for the elite institutions, in line with the National Education Policy recommendations,** as well as reform of the academic Senate, grooming faculty to head the IITs, and innovative funding mechanisms.
- **The IIT Council is headed by the Education Minister and includes the directors of all IITs,** and the chairs of each IIT's Board of Governors. It is meant to advise on admission standards, duration of courses, degrees and other academic distinctions, and also lays down policy regarding cadre, methods of recruitment and conditions of service of employees of all IITs.
- **It has set up 4 committees to look into the issue of greater autonomy for the IITs, as recommended by NEP, 2020.**

J&K Reorganisation Amendment Bill introduced in Rajya Sabha

- **Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy introduced the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021** in the Rajya Sabha.
- **The bill will replace Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Ordinance of 2021 which merged the J & K cadre of the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, and Indian Forest Service with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territory cadre, also known as AGMUT cadre.** The President had promulgated the ordinance last month to amend the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.

Smriti Irani inaugurates 8th India International Silk Fair

- **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal.** The fair is considered to be **India's biggest silk fair**, being held under one roof on Indian Silk Export Promotion Council's virtual platform.
- The five days event is being held virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic. **India has long history of silk production and is the 2nd largest producer of Silk.** India is the **only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk - Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.**

CRPF's anti-Naxal CoBRA unit gets first all-women battalion in world

- **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inducted women commandos in its anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit** which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal hit areas.
- According to the CRPF, **on the occasion of the 88th all-women battalion Raising Day,** these women commandos have been **inducted along with the introduction of all Mahila brass band** which will make CRPF the first force to have a women brass band. **Notably, 88th Mahila Battalion of CRPF has the distinction of being the first all-Mahila battalion in the world.**

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes first Union Territory to be corona free

- Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the first state or Union territory in the country to become Covid-19 free with active cases falling to zero in the islands. Health ministry's website reported that the last **four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared cured**. The UT had reported a total of 4,932 cases and 62 deaths from the virus.

Military Contingent of Bangladesh Marches down Rajpath

- In a first, a 122-member marching-cum-band contingent of the Bangladesh Armed Forces took part in the **72nd Republic Day parade** on the Rajpath, coinciding with the golden jubilee of that country's independence. Lt Col Abu Md Shahnur Shawon of the Bangladesh army, who spearheaded the parading contingent said, "It was an honour for us to be part of this august ceremony of India, and that too in the **50th year of our Independence**."

Kichcha Sudeep's Vikrant Rona becomes world's first movie to reveal title logo at Burj Khalifa

- Kichcha Sudeep's upcoming multilingual upcoming film, **Vikrant Rona**, created history with the movies trailer launch on the world's tallest building Burj Khalifa. The logo and a 180-second-long sneak peek of the film was superimposed on the Burj Khalifa.

'This Life at Play': Girish Karnad's memoir in English to be released on his birth anniversary

- Girish Karnad's memoir, which was to be translated from Kannada into English by the actor-playwright himself but could only finish a part of it before his death in 2019, will now be out in May after final touches by award-winning translator Srinath Perur.
- 'This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad' will be released on the director's 83rd birth anniversary on May 19 by Fourth Estate, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

Interpol created two secure and flexible services to facilitate cybercrime related communication among law enforcement agencies

- The Interpol has created two secure and flexible services to facilitate cybercrime related communication among law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders to ensure more effective and coordinated action based on timely intelligence. "Cybercrime is one of the most prolific forms of transnational crime. **Highly complex cyberthreats such as malware, Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) and ransomware bring new challenges to law enforcement** — including large volumes of data, cross-border investigations, and new areas of technical knowledge," said the Interpol in a statement.

International Criminal Police Organization, commonly known as INTERPOL is an international organization that facilitates worldwide police cooperation and crime control. Headquartered in Lyon, it has seven regional bureaus worldwide and a National Central Bureau in all 194 member states, making it the world's largest police organization. INTERPOL originated with the first International Criminal Police Congress in 1914, which brought officials from 24 countries to discuss cooperation on law enforcement matters. **Kim Jong Yang is a South Korean police officer and the President of Interpol. The Secretariat is led by the Secretary General, currently Jurgen Stock, the former deputy head of Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office. Pursuant to its charter, INTERPOL seeks to remain politically neutral in fulfilling its mandate.**

ISB ranked 1 in India and 23 globally in The Financial Times Global MBA Rankings 2021

- The Post Graduate Programme in Management (PGP) of the Indian School of Business (ISB) has been ranked **1 in India and 23 worldwide** in the Financial Times Global MBA Rankings 2021.
- Amongst Asian business schools, it ranks **5**. It is the **only B-School from India to figure in the top 25 globally**. Alumni from PGP Class of 2017 were surveyed for this ranking. The school has done exceedingly well in many areas which were considered by The Financial Times for the rankings.
- ISB is ranked **1 in India and 3 in Asia** as well as globally for the salary percentage increase for alumni. The school's career progress rank (**21 globally**) has improved indicating a better employment opportunity for the alumni.

- **ISB continued to progress in the weighted salary and career service rank (39 globally) year on year.** ISB was also acknowledged for being the **top business school from India to be featured in the research rankings (77 globally).** The school has always focused on research and this ranking bears testimony to this fact.

In a first, India has inducted two American drones — Sea Guardian, unarmed version of the deadly Predator series — into the Navy on lease

- **In a first, India has inducted two American drones — Sea Guardian, unarmed version of the deadly Predator series — into the Navy on lease under the emergency procurement in the backdrop of the tensions with China in Ladakh.** Even though the drones, MQ-9 Guardian/Predator-B, have been leased from an American firm, General Atomics, for a year for surveillance in the Indian Ocean Region, it could also be used in Ladakh, top defence sources said.

IIM Indore in Top 100 of Financial Times' Global MBA Rankings

- **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore has featured on the Financial Times (FT) Global MBA ranking 2021 at 94th spot.** The MBA Institute has made its debut on the prestigious global list for its flagship one-year Full Time Residential Post Graduate Programme for Executives (EPGP). It has **become the fourth IIM and fifth Indian business school to be included in the top 100 list.**

Robotic Spa' facility inaugurated at Visakhapatnam railway station

- **Waltair Division, in its efforts to enhance the passenger amenities at Railway stations, has commissioned another innovative facility called Robotic Spa under Non-fare revenue at Visakhapatnam railway station.**
- **The first of its kind facility at Railway station in East Coast Railway.** The Robotic Spa comprising of Relaxing Chair, Foot massager and Fish pedicure spa gives a pleasant experience to the Rail Customers waiting at Visakhapatnam railway station. The motto behind such innovative model is to facilitate the esteemed rail customers to spend quality time while waiting for trains.

Government launched website of India Toy Fair- 2021

- **The government of India launched the website of the India Toy Fair- 2021.** The website was **launched jointly by Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in New Delhi.**

Indian Railways to introduce modern Tejas AC sleeper coaches

- **The Ministry of Railways has decided to replace the rake of Agartala - Anand Vihar Terminal Special Rajdhani Express with Tejas Sleeper coaches with upgraded facilities.**
- **The Ministry said, it will offer better connectivity with the National Capital.** Provided with smart features, the coaches of this New Sleeper Type Tejas Train will offer best in class travel experience. The Ministry said, **Agartala Rajdhani Special train will run with special Tejas type Sleeper coaches.**
- **With the introduction of this modern Tejas Sleeper type train for long distance journey,** Indian Railway is making a paradigm shift in the travel experience for the passengers. A new era of train travel experience with enhanced comfort is being rolled out with the introduction of Sleeper Type Tejas Trains.
- **The Ministry has planned that 500 such Tejas type Sleeper coaches** are manufactured at Integral Coach Factory and Modern Coach Factory, production units of Indian Railways in the Financial Year 2021-2022 which will gradually replace the premium long distance trains over Indian Railways network.

IIHR organised National Horticulture Fair in Bengaluru

- **Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) is organised five days National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021 from February 8 to February 12 at the IIHR campus situated in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru.**

Prime Minister dedicated Oil, Gas and Road infrastructure projects at Haldia in West Bengal

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation projects worth four thousand and seven hundred crore rupees at Haldia, West Bengal.** He lays the **foundation stone of the Second Catalytic Dewaxing Unit at**

the Haldia Refinery of Indian Oil Corporation Limited. He also inaugurated three more projects, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, BPCL's LPG Import Terminal at Haldia, GAIL's Dobhi-Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline and NHAI's four-lane ROB cum flyover at Ranichak.

- On the other hand, Mr Modi dedicated a 347-kilometre long Dobhi - Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline built with an investment of 2,400 crore rupees as a part of the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project towards achieving 'one Nation, One Gas Grid'.
- The LPG import terminal of BPCL, built with an investment of around 1,100 crore rupees, has a capacity of one Million Metric Tonne Per Annum which will cater to the growing requirement of LPG in the eastern and north-eastern states of India.

Mahesh Sharma is first Indian MP to get COVID-19 vaccine

- In a first, Member of Parliament from Gautam Buddha Nagar, Dr Mahesh Sharma was administered the COVID-19 vaccine.

Karnataka gets 31st district; issues notification carving Vijayanagara out of Ballari

- Karnataka got its 31st district with the state government issuing an official gazette notification carving out a new Vijayanagara district from the mine-rich Ballari. The new district will have six taluks and Hosapete will be its headquarters.

NCAP to be implemented in 122 cities across country

- Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has informed that the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) will be implemented in 122 cities across the country.

IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Delhi, TERI to combat pollution in Delhi

- The Delhi government will now work with IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur and TERI to identify the sources of pollution in Delhi in real-time. The three leading institutions made a presentation to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal about the technology that has been developed in this regard. IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Delhi and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) have developed this technology after conducting research to ascertain the sources of pollution in real time.

Tripura wants new land custom station with Bangladesh to make Dumboor Mela accessible to Bangladeshi visitors

- Dumboor Mela is a traditional fair organized with support from the state government on Tirthamukh, confluence of River Raima and Saima and the Dumbur Lake, where thousands of devotees and mystics gather to take holy dip in the waters of Lake Dumboor.
- The lake is actually an artificial reservoir created to hold water from both hilly streams for Gumti hydro-electric power project in the area. Though the project had 15 MW installed capacity, it doesn't generate over 6-8 MW for most of the year now. Dumboor Lake is also one of the most popular picnic spots in Tripura, known for its astounding boating arena near 'Narikelkunj' amidst numerous 'char lands, various species of migratory birds visiting Tripura in the winters.

Government to launch portal to collect information on building & construction workers

- The government has proposed in the Union Budget to launch a portal which will collect information on building and construction workers among others and the work is on setting up of the portal by Directorate General of Labour Welfare. It will help formulate health, housing, skill, insurance, credit and food scheme for migrant workers.

1st 'India Toy Fair-2021' organized from 27th February to 2nd March

- With a view to boost toy manufacturing in the country and improve its global market shares in line with the theme of "Atmanirbhar Bharat, the 1st "India Toy Fair-2021" is being organized on a virtual platform from 27th February to 2nd March 2021.

- It is a first-of-its-kind initiative that aims to bring together all stakeholders of the Indian toy industry to create sustainable linkages. It will promote dialogue for the holistic development of the industry and present to the globe the richness and vastness of India's toy manufacturing capabilities. The website of India Toy Fair-2021 www.theindiatoyfair.in.
- The website for the 'India Toy Fair 2021' will enable children, parents, teachers, exhibitors, etc. to register themselves to participate in the virtual fair and showcase various facets of the Indian Toy ecosphere.
- It is the first ever digitally accessible exhibition and platform which will provide an opportunity to not only explore and buy a variety of toys from over 1000 exhibitors across States and UTs of India, but also to participate in insightful webinars, panel discussions and activities and network with various stakeholders of the toy industry.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launches e-Chhawani portal

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched e-Chhawani portal. Launching the portal, Mr Singh said, residents of Cantonment areas can register their complaints regarding civic issues and resolve them while sitting at home.
- The minister said, government is committed to refine the system and improve the Ease of Living for people. Mr Singh said, e-Chhawani project aims to provide online municipal services to more than 20 lakh citizens across 62 Cantonment Boards through a multi-tenancy central platform. Through this portal, online application for renewal of leases, online registration of births and deaths and online application for water and sewerage connection will be very simpler.

Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani rolls out commercial Jute seed distribution scheme

- Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani rolled out the commercial Jute seed distribution scheme. Jute Corporation of India had last year, signed an MoU with National Seeds Corporation for commercial distribution of 1 thousand Metric Tonne certified jute seeds for the year 2021-22.
- Ms. Irani said both the Agriculture Ministry and the Textile Ministry is working with enhanced synergy to extend support to the Jute growing farmers. She informed that centre's decision regarding mandatory packaging in jute materials will benefit over 4 lakh farmers directly including nearly 40 lakh agri-based households.

PM Narendra Modi launched 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' initiative and several development projects in Assam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Mahabahu-Brahmaputra, laid the foundation stone of Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge and performs Bhoomi Poojan for construction of Majuli Bridge Assam through video conferencing.
- The launch of Mahabahu-Brahmaputra, which aims to improve connectivity in the eastern states, was marked by the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari.
- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the longest river bridge of the country over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya. The 19 kilometer long 4 lane bridge will reduce the distance of 205 kilometer to be travelled by road to 19 kilometer only.

Mamata Banerjee launches 'Maa' scheme to provide meals at RS. 5 to poor people

- Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched "Maa" canteens for providing subsidised cooked meals for the poor and the destitute at a nominal cost of Rs. 5. People will get a platter of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry.

Centre for Land Warfare Studies organises Seminar-cum-Webinar, named Divya-Drishti 202

- Indian Army National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named as Divya-Drishti 202 on Multi-Domain Operations: Future of Conflicts was organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies, CLAWS.

- **Divya-Drishti 2021**, meaning divine or cognitive perception required for an informed vision, aimed to bring together national and international experts and practitioners to deliberate on the complex and emerging subject on multi-domain operations.

Women & Child Development Ministry in association with MyGov launches online campaign to celebrate Women in science

- **On the International Day of Women & Young Girls in Science**, Ministry of Women & Child Development in association with Ministry of Education and MyGov, Ministry of Electronics and Information technology launched an online campaign to celebrate women who have carved a niche for themselves in the field of STEM and also encourage young girls who aspire to excel in STEM and contribute towards nation building.
- The campaign honours our young girls from across the country who have performed well in the subjects of Maths and Science & encourage these STEM STARS to make us proud in days to come. This initiative is as per the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of “Seeding the powers of idea and innovation in schoolchildren will broaden the base of our innovation pyramid.”
- The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is the 11th day of February, by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 22 December 2015. The day recognises the critical role women and girls play in science and technology. The day’s purpose is to promote full and equal access to participation in science for women and girls.

Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the statue of Raja Suheldev in Uttar Pradesh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the statue of Raja Suheldev in Bahraich district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, maintaining that history of India, written by those who enslaved us, has not been just to martyrs like him. He also laid the foundation stone for tourism-oriented development works at Chitaura Jheel.

Filmmaker Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari turns author with ‘Mapping Love’

- Filmmaker Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari has turned author with her debut fiction novel, titled Mapping Love. The director’s book will be published by Rupa Publications in May this year. Iyer Tiwari, known for acclaimed films like Nil Battey Sannata, Bareilly Ki Barfi and Panga, said it took her three years to bring the book to life.

World famous Khajuraho Dance Festival begins in Madhya Pradesh

- In Madhya Pradesh, the seven-day 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival is organized from the 20th to the 26th of February, 2021 at the world-famous tourist destination Khajuraho.
- The Minister of Culture and Tourism of Madhya Pradesh Ms Usha Thakur inaugurated the globally acclaimed ‘Khajuraho Dance Festival. Significantly, this ceremony was held once again in the temple complex after a gap of 44 years. This gives the audience a chance to watch the performance amid the aura of the temple.

Dharmendra Pradhan addresses Joint Conference of 11th World PetroCoal Congress

- Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan said that the country is creating a global model of energy justice by balancing its accessibility and affordability. Mr. Pradhan said that India will chart its own strategy and pathway for green energy transition. He said this at the Joint Conference of the 11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit in New Delhi.
- The Minister highlighted the increase in LPG coverage from 56 per cent to nearly 99.5 per cent in less than seven years. He also mentioned that to reduce vehicular pollution, the country leapfrogged from BS-4 to BS-6 emission standards from April last year. On the gas-based economy, Mr. Pradhan said that investment of 60 billion US dollars is underway for developing gas infrastructure which includes pipelines, city gas distribution and LNG regasification terminals. He said that One Nation, One-Gas Grid will connect all corners of the country.

Kabir Bedi’s memoir ‘Stories I Must Tell’ will be released in April

- Veteran actor Kabir Bedi will tell the story of his life “with raw emotional honesty” in his memoir which will be published this April.

- ‘Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Journey of an Actor’ will take readers through the highs and lows of Bedi’s professional and personal life, his relationships, including marriage and divorce, why his beliefs have changed, and his exciting days in film, television and theatre, in India, Europe and Hollywood, publishers Westland.

Dr S Jaishankar inaugurates new Indian High Commission building in Mauritius

- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar inaugurated the new Indian High Commission building in Mauritius in the presence of Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth and Foreign Minister Alan Ganoo. Dr Jaishankar said, the green and efficient project reflects New India.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurates 50 artisan-based SFURTI clusters spread over 18 states

- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated 50 artisan-based SFURTI clusters spread over 18 States. In these clusters, over 42 thousand artisans have been supported in the traditional segments of muslin, khadi, coir, handicraft, handlooms, wood craft, leather, pottery, carpet weaving, bamboo, agro processing, tea and others.
- The MSME Ministry has funded 85 crore rupees for development of these SFURTI clusters. The Center is implementing the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) to organize traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and increase their income.

MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurates second edition of Ladakh Winter Conclave 2021

- In Leh, amidst culturally rich events, MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurated the second edition of Ladakh Winter Conclave 2021.
- Mr Namgyal said beyond Buddhism Ladakh has unique Nomad, Aryan, Balti, Sheena and Purgi cultures which needs to be explored. Winter Conclave is a tool to project the hidden treasures of Ladakh. Leh Hill Council CEC Tashi Gyaltson underlined several opportunities available in Ladakh. However, he cautioned that in Ladakh’s fragile ecology the sustainability has to be taken care.

Tourism Minister inaugurated Incredible India Mega Homestay Development, Training Workshop

- Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the three day Incredible India Mega Homestay Development and Training Workshop in Darjeeling. The concept of Homestay is getting popular in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of Northern part of West Bengal. The involvement of the local community is more than ever in this Homestay Tourism at one of the most favoured hill stations for domestic and inbound tourists.
- The aim of this robust hospitality training workshop is to upgrade the hospitality skills of local community stakeholders by capacity building. This initiative is directed towards rural development through tourism and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of local communities.

Deputy CM Tarkishore Prasad presents annual budget for 2021-22 in Bihar Assembly

- In Bihar, Deputy Chief Minister Tarkishore Prasad, who holds the finance portfolio, presented the annual budget for 2021-22 in the State Assembly. The state budget worth Rs 2,18,303 crore lays special emphasis on education, rural development and social welfare.
- Presenting the budget with a revenue surplus of over Rs 11,789 crore, Mr Prasad said, the proposed allocations made for 2021-22 have increased by Rs 6,541 crore as compared to that of the current fiscal year. The State Government has made the highest allocation of Rs 21,938 crore for education. Besides, Rs 16,783 crore have been allocated for rural development and Rs 8,191 crore earmarked for social welfare.
- Deputy Chief Minister Tarkishore Prasad announced that 20 lakh job opportunities will be created in government and non- government sectors during 2020- 25. Mr Prasad said, 35 per cent reservation provision has been made for women in employment.

First-ever National Toy Fair to be organized from Feb 27

- The first-ever National Toy Fair was organized from 27th February to 2nd March through a virtual medium. IIT Gandhinagar based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) showcased its unique 75 toy creations in the fair.
- IIT Gandhinagar is the only IIT in the country which is running such a centre for creative learning. The centre is inculcating scientific temperament among students and teachers by developing a range of scientific and educational toys.

KIDO from Karnataka to participate in India Toy Fair-2021

- The first India Toy Fair-2021 is organized on a virtual platform from 27th of February to 2nd of March with a view to boost toy manufacturing in the country and improve its global market share in line with the theme of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- This first of its kind initiative aims to bring together all stakeholders of the Indian toy industry to create sustainable linkages. The toy maker from Karnataka KIDO is one of the participants in the fair.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses inaugural function of DRDO Skill Development Centre at Pilakhuwa in UP

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that the National Democratic Alliance Government gives priority to skill development and has brought several initiatives like 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Kaushal Vikas Yojana'.
- Addressing the inaugural function of DRDO Skill Development Centre at Pilakhuwa in Uttar Pradesh, Mr Singh said, the nations who mastered skills have moved ahead. He added that 'Start-up India' and the new National Education Policy are steps which will ensure the promotion of the skills of youth either directly or indirectly.

Kushinagar gets DGCA clearance, becomes third international airport in UP

- "Kushinagar Airport gets necessary clearances from DGCA to become 3rd licensed international airport of UP. Will boost tourism in the region & facilitate travel on Buddhist circuit by providing direct aviation connectivity to the city where Lord Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana". The airport is located in the vicinity of several Buddhist cultural Sites like Sravasti, Kapilvastu and Lumbini.
- The other two international airports in Uttar Pradesh are Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport of Lucknow and Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport of Varanasi. Another one is being built in Jewar, Greater Noida.

'Bare Necessities': Book shows how to lead sustainable lifestyle in India

- A new book aims to push people to make a positive change in their life and to the environment in a fun and interactive way. A "one-stop guide" on how to move towards a more sustainable lifestyle in India, Bare Necessities: How to Live a Zero Waste Life, published by Penguin, is written by environmentalist Sahar Mansoor and sustainability consultant Tim De Ridder.
 - "The guide book draws on our experiences running workshops, events and interacting with communities across the country. It presents a broad range of opportunities to the reader that she or he can pursue in a fun and interactive step-by-step fashion."
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IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Education

- **International Day of Education** is an annual international observance day held on **January 24** and is dedicated to education.
- **“Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation”** is the theme of **International Education Day 2021** proclaimed by Unesco (United Nations) for the current year **2021**. The purpose of the **2021** theme is to strengthen and welcome the revival of education.

International Day of Human Fraternity 4 February

- The **United Nations General Assembly** proclaimed **4 February** as the **International Day of Human Fraternity**.
- The **UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)**, in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates to the UN, as well as the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, is **organized an event titled “A Pathway to the Future”** to celebrate this international day.

World Cancer Day

- **World Cancer Day** is an international day marked on **February 4** to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. World Cancer Day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, written in 2008.
- The theme for **World Cancer Day 2021** is **‘I Am and I Will.’** It is a multi-year campaign that began in 2019 and this year will mark the last year. The theme represents an empowering call-to-action urging personal commitment, it also represents the power of action taken now to have a positive impact on the future. The theme clearly focuses on **“together all our actions matter”**.

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, 6 February

- In **2012**, the **UN General Assembly** designated **February 6th** as the **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation**, with the aim to amplify and direct the efforts on the elimination of this practice.
- This year the **UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme** on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation and the **Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC)** jointly launch the **2021 theme: “No Time for Global Inaction, Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation.”**

International Day of Women and Girls in Science, 11 February

- On **11 February 2021**, the **6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly** was held at the United Nations Headquarters virtually.
- With great momentum and interest to accelerate progress in achieving the 2030 Development Agenda and its 17 Global Goals, the **6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly** theme is **‘Beyond the Borders: Equality in Science for Society’**, with a special focus on the value of the social aspects and cultural dimensions in Science, Technology and Innovation to enhance sustainable development programmes.

World Pulses Day- 10 February

- On **20 December 2013**, the **UN General Assembly** adopted a resolution proclaiming **2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP)**. The celebration of the year, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), increased the public awareness of the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.
- **World Pulses Day 2021** is under theme **LovePulses**.
- Building on the success of the International Year of Pulses and recognizing their potential to further achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with **particular relevance to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 12, 13 and 15**, **Burkina Faso** proposed the observance of **World Pulses Day**. In **2019**, the General Assembly proclaimed **10 February** as the **World Pulses Day**.

National De-worming Day

- The National Deworming Day is conducted in all states/UTs on February 10 every year, with a mop-up day on February 15. Some states/UTs also conduct a bi-annual round on 10 August, depending on worm prevalence in their state/UT.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science, 11 February

- On 11 February 2021, the 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly was held at the United Nations Headquarters virtually.
- With great momentum and interest to accelerate progress in achieving the 2030 Development Agenda and its 17 Global Goals, the 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly theme was ‘Beyond the Borders: Equality in Science for Society’, with a special focus on the value of the social aspects and cultural dimensions in Science, Technology and Innovation to enhance sustainable development programmes.

World Day of Social Justice 20 February

- On 26 November 2007, the General Assembly declared that, starting from the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, 20 February is celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice.
- The Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the UN and the International Labour Organization (ILO) will organize a virtual event to commemorate the 2021 World Day of Social Justice on the theme, “A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy.”

World Radio Day

- Proclaimed in 2011 by the Member States of UNESCO, and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day, February 13 became World Radio Day (WRD).
- This year, the theme for World Radio Day is ‘New World, New Radio.’

World Radio Day being celebrated across globe

- World Radio Day (WRD) is being celebrated across the Globe. The day was proclaimed by the member states of UNESCO in 2011 and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as an International Day.
- According to UNESCO, radio is a powerful medium for celebrating humanity and constitutes a platform for democratic discourse. Radio has the ability to reach out to the widest audience, in the process having the ability to shape a society’s experience of diversity and providing a platform for everyone to be represented and heard.
- The theme of World Radio Day 2021, “New World, New Radio”, will highlight the services rendered by the radio medium throughout the crisis.

World Day of Social Justice 20 February

- On 26 November 2007, the General Assembly declared that, starting from the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, 20 February was celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice.
- This year’s World Social Justice day theme constituted as “A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy” which thereby focusing on the necessities of the people who have no access to the resources amid rapid increase in the technology that has been resulted in “digital divide”.

International Mother Language Day 21 February

- International Mother Language Day is observed on February 21, every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. International Mother Language Day recognizes that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion and the Sustainable Development Goals’ focus on leaving no one behind. UNESCO believes education, based on the first language or mother tongue, must begin from the early years as early childhood care and education is the foundation of learning.
- The theme of the 2021 International Mother Language Day is “Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society”.

National Science Day

- **National Science Day is celebrated in India every year on 28 February. The theme for NSD of the year 2021 is 'Future of STI: Impact on Education Skills and Work'.**
- **National Science Day is celebrated in India on 28 February each year to mark the discovery of the Raman effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman on 28 February 1928. For his discovery, Sir C.V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.**

World Civil Defence Day

- **World Civil Defence Day is observed on 1st March every year, all over the world. This day was incorporated in 1990 by the International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO).**
- **The theme of World Civil Defence Day 2021, is "Civil Defence and a first aider in every home." celebrated on 1st March 2021.**

Zero Discrimination Day

- **Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations. The day aims to promote equality before the law and in practice throughout all of the member countries of the UN.**
 - **The day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was launched by UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibe on 27 February of that year with a major event in Beijing.**
 - **Zero Discrimination Day 2021 will be observed in order to take actions which can end the inequalities that continue to persist in the modern world. Moreover, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has hit the most vulnerable people the hardest. Even after a lot of countries have succeeded in making effective vaccines, its availability in economically backward countries remains uncertain.**
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QUESTIONS

1. In a first, a 122-member marching-cum-band contingent of the Armed Forces of _____ took part in the 72nd Republic Day parade on the Rajpath, coinciding with the golden jubilee of that country's independence.
(a) Nepal (b) Suriname (c) Fiji (d) Bangladesh
2. The Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated _____ a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the National Capital.
(a) Aadi Mahotsav (b) Tribal Parv (c) Tribal Celebrations (d) Aadi Uthan Parv
3. Which is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk - Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga?
(a) China (b) India (c) South Korea (d) USA
4. Which of the following countries Hualong One units, third-generation pressurised water nuclear reactors, began commercial operations recently?
(a) South Korea (b) China (c) Japan (d) Taiwan
5. The Clothespin Tower in _____ is the first conceptual building of its kind that turns the mundane clothespin into an icon of eternal love and unity.
(a) Dubai (b) New York (c) Dublin (d) Shanghai
6. Which of the following countries has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 megawatt Lower Arun Hydropower Project to India?
(a) Afghanistan (b) Nepal (c) Myanmar (d) Bhutan
7. Recently, The _____ confirmed the Year 2020 as the 'worst year on record', after global tourism suffered massively due to international travel bans implemented to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.
(a) UN World Tourism Organization (b) World Bank
(c) UNEP (d) Greenpeace International
8. Which of the following has set up an "innovation sandbox" web portal where fintech firms and individuals may use the environment for offline testing of their applications in a test environment?
(a) NSE (b) BSE
(c) Metropolitan Stock Exchange (d) India International Exchange
9. Recently, Kichcha Sudeep's upcoming multilingual upcoming film, Vikrant Rona, created history with the movies trailer launch on the world's tallest building _____.
(a) Burj Khalifa (b) Petronas Towers
(c) World Trade Centre (d) Leaning Tower of Pisa
10. International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on _____ and is dedicated to education.
(a) January 24 (b) January 26
(c) January 29 (d) January 31
11. Who has been recently appointed as the new Chief Executive to head its health insurance scheme – Ayushman Bharat or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana – a flagship programme of the government?
(a) Amit Ranjan Vajpayee (b) Dibakar Bannerjee
(c) Nilotpal Chhatterjee (d) RS Sharma

12. 'This Life at Play: A Memoir by _____ will be released on the director's 83rd birth anniversary on by Fourth Estate, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
(a) Girish Karnad (b) Ramesh Sippy (c) Subhash Ghai (d) Kuku Kohli
13. A new centrally sponsored scheme _____ will be launched with an outlay of about 64,180 crores over 6 years.
(a) PM Atma Sakshar Swasth Bharat Yojana (b) PM Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Abhiyan
(c) PM Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana (d) PM Atma Saksham Swasth Bharat Abhiyan
14. In a first for the industry, the _____ will develop and manufacture a military aircraft in India, having acquired intellectual property rights for a German-origin platform.
(a) Tata Group (b) Wipro Group (c) Reliance Group (d) Adani Group
15. The government will set up a Rs 20,000 crore _____ with a view to mobilise Rs 111 lakh crore required for funding of the ambitious national infrastructure pipeline.
(a) Development Finance Investment (DFI) (b) Developmental Financial Investment (DFI)
(c) Development Finance Institution (DFI) (d) Development Finance Organisation (DFO)
16. Recently which union minister addressed the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN India Hackathon?
(a) Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' (b) Smriti Irani
(c) Rajnath Singh (d) Amit Shah
17. The Fiscal deficit for the financial year 2021-22 pegged at _____ percent.
(a) 4.2 (b) 5.1 (c) 6.8 (d) 7.4
18. The Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's second LCA production line in _____.
(a) Hyderabad (b) Bengaluru (c) Lucknow (d) Chennai
19. In the Union Budget recently Government has enhanced the allocation to the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund from 30,000 to _____ crore rupees.
(a) 35,000 (b) 40,000 (c) 50,000 (d) 70,000
20. In order to incentivise start-ups in the country, the Government has extended the eligibility for claiming tax holiday for start-ups till _____.
(a) 31st of December, 2021 (b) 31st of March, 2022
(c) 31st of July, 2022 (d) 31st of December, 2022
21. Recently, which of the following has become the first state or Union territory in the country to become Covid-19 free with active cases falling to zero?
(a) Puducherry (b) Lakshadweep (c) Sikkim (d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
22. Amazon CEO _____ will step down as the chief executive of the company – which he founded almost 27 years ago.
(a) Jeff Bezos (b) Mark Zuckerberg (c) Warren Buffet (d) Lary Page
23. The Union environment ministry launched 2021 as the _____ Year of the Environment.
(a) Indo-Canadian (b) Indo-French (c) Indo-Japanese (d) Indo-Korean
24. India has committed that _____ per cent of its installed power generation capacity shall be from non-fossil fuel by the end of 2030 as a part of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions as per Paris Accord.
(a) 10 (b) 20 (c) 40 (d) 50

25. Recently, Maritime body MUI urged the government to take cognisance of “_____ on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change” in the formulation of Maritime India Vision 2030.
(a) Neptune Declaration (b) Jupiter Declaration
(c) Uranus Declaration (d) Mars Declaration
26. Which of the following recently launched India’s first ‘amputee clinic’?
(a) AIIMS Delhi (b) JIPMER Puducherry
(c) AFMC Pune (d) PGI Chandigarh
27. Name the Indian-American who was appointed by NASA as the acting chief of staff of the US space agency.
(a) Rajiv Nanda (b) Bhavya Lal (c) Arindam Bhaskar (d) Sumit Bhattacharya
28. Majuli will have a new embankment-cum-road around the island as the 15th Finance Commission has recommended for it. Majuli is first island district of India located in:
(a) Assam (b) Nagaland (c) West Bengal (d) Manipur
29. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the year-long centenary celebrations via video-conferencing in Chauri Chaura. Chauri Chaura is located in:
(a) Odisha (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Jharkhand
30. Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-22 has proposed to set up _____ new Sainik Schools in the country, in partnership with NGOs, private schools and State-owned schools.
(a) 30 (b) 50 (c) 80 (d) 100
31. Which of the following countries hosted Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers’ Conclave 2021?
(a) Sri Lanka (b) Mauritius (c) Maldives (d) India
32. Which of the following states virtually launched the ‘Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai’ mission as part of the government’s campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households by March next year?
(a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
33. Which of the following Uttar Pradesh districts has topped in the ranking of aspirational districts by government think tank Niti Aayog in December 2020?
(a) Shrawasti (b) Gorakhpur (c) Maharajganj (d) Gonda
34. The World’s First 3-D Printed School is to open in _____.
(a) Fiji (b) Guyana (c) Myanmar (d) Madagascar
35. The regime in Myanmar headed by the Army has announced a new State Administrative Council. The council headed by _____.
(a) Ne Win sat (b) Min Aung Hlaing (c) Olive Yang (d) Khin Nyunt
36. Recently, which of the following states launched a scheme aimed at providing financial assistance to innovative startups to file for IT patents?
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
37. Which of the following Indian companies has sourced the world’s first consignment of ‘carbon-neutral oil’ from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035?
(a) Wipro (b) Reliance (c) Adani (d) Godrej

38. Recently, India got its first specialised institution - Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) in _____ which will work as a knowledge hub for various stakeholders for conserving wetlands that occupy 4.6% of the country's total land area.
(a) Chennai (b) Bengaluru (c) Jaipur (d) Kochi
39. Who has been re-elected as President of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI)?
(a) Shreyash Rajputra (b) Amit Malviya
(c) Ajay Singh (d) Ashish Shelar
40. The International Day of Human Fraternity is observed on:
(a) 30th January (b) 2nd February (c) 4th February (d) 6th February
41. A recent survey conducted by Duff & Phelps released key findings from the sixth edition of its Celebrity Brand Valuation Study 2020. Who among the following retained the top position of India's most-valuable celebrity list for the fourth consecutive year?
(a) Shahrukh Khan (b) Amitabh Bachchan (c) Virat Kohli (d) Vishwanathan Anand
42. Which of the following has directed selected Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Urban Co-operatives Banks (UCBs) to implement a risk-based internal audit system?
(a) SIDBI (b) Ministry of Finance (c) NABARD (d) Reserve Bank of India
43. Recently, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the first heliport of the state in _____ district.
(a) Guwahati (b) Majuli (c) Barpeta (d) Bongaigaon
44. Which of the following two countries agreed to extend the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) by five years?
(a) France & Germany (b) Poland and Netherlands
(c) USA and Russia (d) Mexico and USA
45. Recently, Union ministers jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of _____ activities across the nation.
(a) GOBARDHAN (b) GOBARKARYA (c) GOBARVARDHAN (d) SANYUKTAVIKAS
46. Which of the following states has conducted water birds census for the first time?
(a) Gujarat (b) Maharashtra (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) West Bengal
47. Which of the following countries approved a plan to build the world's first energy island in the North Sea?
(a) Norway (b) Belgium (c) Denmark (d) Germany
48. Recently, "BHEL has successfully commissioned the second unit (800 MW) of the 2x800 MW Gadawara Super Thermal Power Project Stage-I". Gadawara Super Thermal Power Project is located in:
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil nadu (d) Maharashtra
49. Which of the following union ministries will launch scheme titled 'Manufacturing Zones under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package' in the Union Budget?
(a) Ministry of Textiles
(b) Ministry of Defence
(c) Ministry of Power
(d) Ministry of Health & Family Affairs

50. Recently, Preliminary surveys by the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) are learnt to have shown the presence of 1,600 tonnes of lithium resources in the igneous rocks of the Marlagalla-Allapatna region of _____.
(a) Maharashtra (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Karnataka (d) Andhra Pradesh
51. Which of the following states has become first State in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing e-cabinet application?
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Haryana (c) Sikkim (d) Goa
52. Which is the first Asian country to allow small investors to directly lend to the government?
(a) China (b) South Korea (c) Singapore (d) India
53. India's space agency Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch Brazilian satellite _____ and three Indian payloads on 28 February in its first mission of 2021.
(a) Amazonia-1 (b) Brazilia-4 (c) Robusta-8 (d) Brasilia-1
54. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, India slipped two places to _____ position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking.
(a) 27th (b) 38th (c) 45th (d) 53rd
55. Recently, the _____ introduced a risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for select non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks (UCBs).
(a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
(b) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
(c) Ministry of Finance
(d) Small industrial Development Bank of India (SIDBI)
56. Recently, RBI has announced certain measures of protection of common bank account holders in Monetary policy statement. It includes setting up of _____ helpline for digital payment services.
(a) 8*7 (b) 12*6 (c) 18*5 (d) 24*7
57. Recently, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched _____ an electric vehicle mass awareness campaign, to sensitize citizens about the benefits of switching to electric vehicles.
(a) 'Switch Delhi' (b) 'Catch Delhi'
(c) 'Air Pollution Free Delhi' (d) 'Electronic Delhi'
58. In Gujarat, the State Government has asked the Tata group to start the work on setting up Indian Institute of Skills- IIS. The proposed IIS at Nasmed is located in _____ Lok Sabha constituency.
(a) Surat (b) Bhuj (c) Gandhinagar (d) Bhavnagar
59. Recently, India and Bahrain have agreed to forge deeper engagement in the field of _____.
(a) Renewable Energy (b) Coal (c) Copper (d) Hydropower
60. Recently, the RBI governor Shaktikant Das said that the GDP growth is projected at _____ percent in the Financial Year 2021-22.
(a) 7.5 (b) 8.7 (c) 9.4 (d) 10.5
61. A historic tripartite agreement for establishing India's first-ever geothermal field development project in _____ has been signed.
(a) Gandhinagar (b) Leh (c) Gulbarga (d) Kunnur

62. Who among the following joined US President Joe Biden's administration as deputy national security adviser?
(a) Mahesh Jain (b) Narendra Das (c) Ajay Krishnamoorthi (d) Daleep Singh
63. Which of the following Indian paramilitary forces has recently inducted women commandos in its anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal hit areas?
(a) Border Security Force
(b) Central Industrial Security Force
(c) Central Reserve Police Force
(d) Indo-Tibetan Border Police
64. Recently, Ulukbek Maripov has been appointed as the _____ new Prime Minister bringing a long-running political crisis to a close.
(a) Turkmenistan (b) Kazakhstan (c) Kyrgyzstan (d) Mongolia
65. In a world first, the researchers from _____ are to explore mixing doses of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.
(a) Britain (b) Germany (c) France (d) Ireland
66. Which of the following banks announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MUFG Bank, Japan's premier bank, for collaboration towards catering to the banking requirements of Japanese corporate present in India?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) State bank of India
(c) HDFC Bank (d) Axis Bank
67. Recently, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has become the first African and first woman to lead the embattled World Trade Organization. She hails from which of the following countries?
(a) Nigeria (b) Liberia (c) Uganda (d) Algeria
68. The Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its maiden meeting and approved the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope in:
(a) Antarctica and Africa (b) North America and Europe
(c) South America and Asia (d) Africa and Australia
69. Which of the following has recently became the first team to qualify for the finals of the inaugural edition of the ICC World Test Championship?
(a) Australia (b) New Zealand (c) England (d) India
70. The 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly was held at the United Nations Headquarters virtually on:
(a) 7th February (b) 9th February (c) 11th February (d) 15th February
71. Which of the following state governments recently announced 16-digit Unicode to identify landholdings?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh
(c) Rajasthan (d) Haryana
72. Which of the following places will get India's first thunderstorm research testbed?
(a) Rajasthan's Udaipur (b) West Bengal's Darjeeling
(c) Odisha's Balasore (d) Jharkhand's Ranchi
73. Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) is organised five days National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021 at the IIHR campus situated in _____.
(a) Bengaluru (b) Mysuru (c) Hyderabad (d) Bhopal

74. Recently, Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, a businessman-turned-politician, has been chosen as new interim Prime Minister of:
(a) Libya (b) Morocco (c) Turkey (d) Egypt
75. Name the first Member of Parliament who was administered the COVID-19 vaccine.
(a) Anurag Thakur (b) Dr Mahesh Sharma (c) Manoj Tiwari (d) Dr Harshvardhan
76. Government of India has allocated 16 thousand crore rupees for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for 2021-22 to boost the safety of farmers' crops. Government had approved this flagship crop insurance scheme in _____.
(a) 2014 (b) 2016 (c) 2017 (d) 2018
77. The RBI is targeting to roll out the e-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme in _____.
(a) June 2021 (b) December 2021 (c) March 2022 (d) September 2022
78. Recently, Mario Draghi was appointed as the new Prime Minister of:
(a) France (b) Italy (c) Greece (d) Panama
79. Recently, Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve was approved in which of the following Indian states?
(a) Kerala (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Karnataka (d) Maharashtra
80. In 2019, the General Assembly proclaimed _____ as the World Pulses Day.
(a) 5 February (b) 8 February (c) 10 February (d) 13 February
81. Recently, Karnataka got its 31st district with the state government issuing an official gazette notification carving out a new _____ district from the mine-rich Ballari.
(a) Chitradurga (b) Kodagu (c) Vijayanagara (d) Yadagiri
82. The government has proposed in the Union Budget to launch a portal which will collect information on _____ among others and the work is on setting up of the portal by Directorate General of Labour Welfare.
(a) Building and construction workers (b) Street Vendors
(c) Small & Marginal Farmers (d) Beggars
83. Recently, The Biden administration is set to announce that it will reengage with the much-maligned _____ that former President Donald Trump withdrew from almost three years ago.
(a) U.N. Human Rights Council (b) WHO
(c) WMO (d) International Monetary Fund
84. The India-US Joint Military Exercise _____ commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan with unfurling of the National Flags of both the countries.
(a) AJEYA WARRIOR (b) YUDH ABHYAS
(c) NOMADIC ELEPHANT (d) FRIENDS EXERCISE
85. Who among the following inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on 10th of February via video conferencing?
(a) President Ramnath Kovind (b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(c) Home Minister Amit Shah (d) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh
86. Which of the following companies has been named to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2021 Corporate Equality Index (CEI)?
(a) Wipro (b) Infosys (c) Indian Oil (d) Reliance

87. Recently, India's stock market is the _____ best performer among the top 15 countries in 2021 and soon it may overtake France to become the sixth biggest in the world.
(a) First (b) Second (c) Third (d) Fifth
88. Which of the following has released the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes for the year 2019-20?
(a) Reserve Bank of India (b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Ministry of Corporate Affairs (d) NABARD
89. Recently, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has informed that the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) will be implemented in _____ cities across the country.
(a) 74 (b) 85 (c) 94 (d) 122
90. Recently, Indian drama _____ directed by filmmaker Vinodhraj PS, has won the top honour, the Tiger Award for best film, at the 50th International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).
(a) "Pebbles" (b) "Stones" (c) "Miracles" (d) "Amazing"
91. Recently, In Arab world's first interplanetary mission, spacecraft _____ enters orbit around Mars.
(a) 'Nargis' (b) 'Amal' (c) 'Sulaiman' (d) 'Jamal'
92. Recently, the government of India has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of _____ Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)'.
(a) 4,600 (b) 5,900 (c) 7,400 (d) 10,000
93. The National Deworming Day is conducted in all states/UTs on _____ every year.
(a) 5th February (b) 7th February (c) 10th February (d) 13th February
94. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has signed _____ as global partner for three years, from 2021 to 2023.
(a) Amul (b) Byju's (c) Dabur (d) Patanjali
95. Which of the following banks has entered into a co-lending agreement with Pune-based non-banking financial company LoanTap Credit Products for MSME loans?
(a) Bank of India (b) Bank of Maharashtra (c) Union Bank of India (d) Punjab National Bank
96. Recently, IIT-Madras incubated space startup Agnikul Cosmos has successfully test fired its semi-cryogenic rocket engine _____ which is completely 3D printed as a single component in a single run of a 3D printer.
(a) Agniload (b) Agnighera (c) Agnilet (d) Agniflet
97. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), India will overtake the European Union as the world's _____ largest energy consumer by 2030.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
98. The Delhi government will now work with _____ IIT's and TERI to identify the sources of pollution in Delhi in real-time.
(a) IIT-Bombay & IIT-Madras (b) IIT-Delhi & IIT-Kharagpur
(c) IIT-Delhi & IIT-Kanpur (d) IIT- Hyderabad & IIT Mandi
99. Recently, Researchers from which of the following IIT's have developed energy-efficient pest controlling devices for smaller agricultural tracts owned by marginal farmers?
(a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur (b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras
(c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur (d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi

100. Recently, who won the ICC's inaugural Player of the Month award?
(a) Josh Hazlewood (b) Joe Root (c) Rishabh Pant (d) Mohammad Siraj
101. Which of the following became the first airline in the world to vaccinate 100% of its onboard crewmembers?
(a) Air India (b) Australian Airlines
(c) Etihad Airways (d) Singapore Airlines
102. The government of India launched the website of the India Toy Fair- 2021. The website was launched jointly by Minister of Textiles, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in _____.
(a) New Delhi (b) Bengaluru (c) Chennai (d) Hyderabad
103. Recently, US President Joe Biden has announced the launch of a new _____ task force that will provide recommendations on military strategy to the Department of Defense, DoD to counter growing challenges posed by _____.
(a) Japan, Tokyo (b) China, Beijing (c) India, New Delhi (d) Russia, Moscow
104. Recently, India and Afghanistan signed an agreement to build the _____ Dam in Kabul to provide drinking water facility in the Afghan capital.
(a) Shahtoot (b) Mango (c) Kabul (d) Rangjah
105. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the share of solar energy in India's power generation could equal coal-fired output by year _____.
(a) 2025 (b) 2030 (c) 2035 (d) 2040
106. By 2023, _____ likely to get north India's first medical device park.
(a) Lucknow (b) Noida (c) Meerut (d) Shimla
107. Indian Railways rolled out its first air conditioned three-tier economy class coach which is being touted the cheapest and best AC travel in the world". The new coach berths have been increased from 72 to _____.
(a) 75 (b) 83 (c) 86 (d) 90
108. Recently, which of the following launched the 'Financial Literacy Week' on the theme of 'Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions'?
(a) Reserve Bank of India (b) State Bank of India
(c) NABARD (d) SIDBI
109. Recently, The office of the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM) which has the objective of increasing digital economy contribution to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to _____ per cent was inaugurated.
(a) 20 (b) 30 (c) 40 (d) 50
110. Recently, Major Port Authorities Bill 2020 passed by Rajya Sabha. How many major ports are there in India?
(a) 8 (b) 10 (c) 13 (d) 16
111. Which is the first state in the country to introduce document upload through digital signature, using the NIC platform?
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) West Bengal (d) Bihar
112. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated more than 57,000 water structures constructed in Madhya Pradesh under _____ campaign from New Delhi.
(a) 'Jalabhishekam' (b) 'Farmahishekam'
(c) 'Daksheshkam' (d) 'Raghumanishekam'

113. The base year for the National Coal Index (NCI) is _____.
(a) FY 2015-16 (b) FY 2016-17 (c) FY 2017-18 (d) FY 2019-20
114. India's first ever CNG _____ was launched in February 2021.
(a) Bus (b) Auto (c) Motorbike (d) Tractor
115. Which of the following countries is celebrated Lunar New Year as it ushered into the Year of the Ox?
(a) Finland (b) China (c) Japan (d) Australia
116. Recently, India's First Museum of Illusions comes up in _____.
(a) Mumbai (b) Bengaluru (c) New Delhi (d) Hyderabad
117. Who among the following will inaugurate the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March?
(a) Ramnath Kovind (b) Narendra Modi
(c) Mansukhlal Mandaviya (d) Rajnath Singh
118. Who has been awarded Israel's prestigious 2021 Genesis Prize in recognition of his contribution to cinema, his philanthropic works and his efforts to preserve the memory of the Holocaust?
(a) Brad Pitt (b) Johnny Depp (c) Steven Spielberg (d) Tom Cruise
119. Recently, Star sprinter Hima Das has been appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police by the _____ government.
(a) Assam (b) West Bengal
(c) Manipur (d) Mizoram
120. The 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly was held at the United Nations Headquarters virtually on:
(a) 5th February 2021 (b) 8th February 2021
(c) 10th February 2021 (d) 11th February 2021
121. Recently, Prime Minister inaugurated India's first full-fledged international cruise terminal in _____.
(a) Maharashtra (b) Kerala (c) Gujarat (d) Karnataka
122. Recently, The Prime Minister handed over the indigenously designed and manufactured _____ Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Army.
(a) Bhim (b) Arjun (c) Karna (d) Nakul
123. Which of the following Indian union territories has approved the establishment of an Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) project by the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)?
(a) Lakshadweep (b) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
(c) Ladakh (d) Jammu and Kashmir
124. Name the new initiative to encourage girls to take interest in science and build career, which was launched by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls to pursue STEM.
(a) Vigyan Jyoti Programme (b) Vigyan Darshika Programme
(c) National Science Programme (d) Vigyan Digdarshika Karyakram
125. Minority Affairs Ministry is organised 26th Hunar Haat of indigenous artisans and craftsmen from across the country in _____.
(a) New Delhi (b) Kolkata
(c) Mumbai (d) Kanpur

126. Recently, Robotic Spa the first of its kind facility has been inaugurated at _____ in East Coast Railway.
(a) Cuttack railway station (b) Paradip railway station
(c) Visakhapatnam railway station (d) Guntur railway station
127. Who has been recently named as Director of AmeriCorps State?
(a) Sonali Nijhawan (b) Atul Mahajan (c) Preston Kulkarni (d) Aniket Bhaskar
128. Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding super massive black hole or blazar called _____.
(a) BL Lacertae (b) BL Laceru (c) GL Lustrine (d) MK Linel
129. Recently, The Ministry of Railways has decided to replace the rake of _____ Special Rajdhani Express with Tejas Sleeper coaches with upgraded facilities.
(a) Agartala - Anand Vihar Terminal (b) Tezpur- Anand Vihar Terminal
(c) Guwahati- New Delhi (d) Dispur-New Delhi
130. Dumboor Mela is a traditional fair organized with support from the _____ state government on Tirthamukh, confluence of River Raima and Saima and the Dumbur Lake.
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Tripura (d) Assam
131. Who has been recently appointed as the new Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha by Congress?
(a) Ghulam Nabi Azad (b) Mallikarjun Kharge
(c) Kapil Sibal (d) Digvijay Singh
132. A Centrally sponsored scheme namely National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) was initially launched in 2010-11 in _____ pilot states.
(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 7 (d) 9
133. In a significant development, Indian and _____ armies will undertake joint bilateral exercises. This will be the first such exercises of both the armies together.
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Oman (c) Jordan (d) Egypt
134. The ex-head of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, was sworn in as Prime Minister of:
(a) Spain (b) Greece (c) Portugal (d) Italy
135. Which of the following IIM's has been featured on the Financial Times (FT) Global MBA ranking 2021 at 94th spot?
(a) Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmadabad
(b) Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore
(c) Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore
(d) Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kolkata
136. Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL) has become India's first and only listed depository to open _____ active demat accounts.
(a) One crore plus (10 million) (b) Two crore plus (20 million)
(c) Three crore plus (30 million) (d) Five crore plus (50 million)
137. Which of the following Indian states accounts for 50% of the world's river dolphin population, a highly endangered species under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and declared the National Aquatic Animal in 2009?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Bihar
(c) Uttarakhand (d) Assam

138. Recently, _____ owned Indian commercial and industrial renewables developer Continuum Green Energy Ltd had a helping hand from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) as it launched its first green bond.
(a) Morgan Stanley (b) Ernst & Young
(c) Reliance Energy Limited (d) Amazon Inc
139. Who has become the first player in the 143-year history of Test cricket to take 200 wickets against left-handed batsmen?
(a) Shakib Al Hasan (b) Stuart Broad
(c) Ravichandran Ashwin (d) Nathan Lyon
140. Which of the following is celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice?
(a) 11th February (b) 14th February (c) 17th February (d) 20th February
141. In a first for an Indian State, which of the following states signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN Environment Programme to achieve climate resilience and low carbon development by 2040?
(a) West Bengal (b) Bihar (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh
142. The Government is working to provide tap water connections to over 19 crore rural households under the Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural) by year _____.
(a) 2022 (b) 2024 (c) 2026 (d) 2030
143. According to Union Budget 2021, FDI in insurance to be hiked to _____ from 49% now.
(a) 51% (b) 60% (c) 74% (d) 100%
144. Who is the first Indian woman to head the Oxford Students' Union?
(a) Anandita Nadar (b) Rashmi Samant (c) Yogita Kulshrestha (d) Anita Bhatia
145. Recently, Indian Army National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named as _____ on Multi-Domain Operations: Future of Conflicts was organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies, CLAWS.
(a) Divya-Drishti 202 (b) Divya-Vision 2045
(c) Divya-Drishti Vision 2021 (d) Divya-Nain 2026
146. Which of the following countries securities regulator clears launch of World's first Bitcoin Exchange Traded Fund?
(a) Canada (b) New Zealand (c) Australia (d) Mexico
147. Which of the following is building the world's first airport for flying cars?
(a) United Kingdom (b) United States of America
(c) France (d) Germany
148. The U.S.-based electric car giant Tesla will set up its manufacturing unit in _____.
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Karnataka
(c) Tamil Nadu (d) Kerala
149. Who has recently become the oldest first-time quarterfinalist in a Grand Slam?
(a) Marketa Vondrousova (b) Hsieh Su-Wei
(c) Serena Williams (d) Martina Navarotilova
150. World Radio Day is an international day celebrated on _____ each year.
(a) 4th February (b) 7th February
(c) 13th February (d) 16th February

151. Name the Filmmaker who has turned author with her debut fiction novel, titled Mapping Love.
(a) Meghana Gulzar (b) Farah Khan (c) Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari (d) Divya Khosla Kumar
152. Recently, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of its former Deputy Governor _____ on Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks.
(a) H. R. Khan (b) Usha Thorat (c) N.S. Vishwanathan (d) Viral V Acharya
153. Which of the following European countries has got a super ministry recently to ensure a transition to green energy drives recovery and makes full use of European Union funds?
(a) Portugal (b) Ireland (c) Italy (d) Finland
154. Recently, Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the first female and first African head of the beleaguered _____.
(a) World Trade Organization (b) World Bank
(c) African Development Bank (d) International Monetary Fund
155. Recently, The first day of the spring called 'Pahela Phagun' was celebrated in which of the following Asian countries?
(a) Bhutan (b) Nepal (c) Bangladesh (d) Myanmar
156. Recently, Kotak Mahindra Bank launched its outward forex remittance service, Kotak Remit, hence allowing its users to directly send money abroad from their phones. Who is the current vice chairman and managing director of Kotak Mahindra Bank?
(a) Uday Kotak (b) Rajnish Kumar (c) Sandeep Bakshi (d) Anand Mahindra
157. Recently, Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal the 550-million-year-old 'Dickinsonia' on the roof of the _____.
(a) Bagh Caves (b) Bhimbetka Rock Shelters
(c) Ellora Caves (d) Borra Cave
158. Who among the following won the \$1 million Dan David Prize for "defending science" and advocating for vaccines now being administered worldwide to fight the coronavirus pandemic?
(a) Dr Mark Albert (b) Dr Atbert Matthes (c) Dr. Anthony Fauci (d) Dr Alex Fret
159. Recently, The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) announced the re-appointment of _____ as the chairperson to its sports committee for 2021.
(a) Sanjog Gupta (b) Rajat Sharma (c) Deepa Chaurasiya (d) Sandeep Patil
160. In a recent development, Schools and hostels under the Ministry of Education's Samagra Shiksha scheme will now be renamed after _____.
(a) Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee (b) Deen Dayal Upadhyay
(c) Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (d) Atal Bihari Vajpayee
161. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the statue of Raja Suheldev in _____ district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
(a) Gorakhpur (b) Kushinagar
(c) Gonda (d) Bahraich
162. Which of the following ministries has launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban, JJM-U recently?
(a) Ministry of Rural Development (b) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
(c) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (d) Ministry of Jal Shakti

163. Recently, the Joint Conference of the 11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit was organized in _____.
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Jaipur (d) Bhubaneswar
164. Which of the following countries has joined Iran and Russia in a two-day navy exercise dubbed “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021” in the northern part of the Indian Ocean?
(a) India (b) Pakistan (c) Bangladesh (d) Mauritius
165. Recently, Japan has conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration on Manipur physician _____ to honour his contribution to strengthening ties between Japan and India, and Japan and Manipur.
(a) Dr Thangjam Dhabali Singh (b) Dr Bikram Ismail Singh
(c) Dr Makram Ibobi Singh (d) Dr Sandeep Kulshreshtha
166. Recently, Sanctuary Nature Foundation honours _____ with Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020 for his role in wildlife conservation and his continuing legacy of writings in Tamil and English to the conservation discourse.
(a) D Bhaskar Rao (b) S Theodore Baskaran
(c) Amit S Prajapati (d) M Ashwin Sundaram
167. Name the Indian-origin investment and development banker who has been appointed as Executive Secretary by UN Capital Development Fund?
(a) Preeti Sinha (b) Anita Advani (c) Gunjan Kaushik (d) Aparajita Saxena
168. Recently, Parties to the International Criminal Court elected Britain’s _____ as the new prosecutor for a nine-year term.
(a) Alfred Matthews (b) Johnson Kirchoff (c) Karim Khan (d) Mohammad Nabi Ismail
169. Recently, the foundation stone of the India’s largest hockey stadium was laid down in _____.
(a) Guwahati (b) New Delhi (c) Jodhpur (d) Rourkela
170. Who is the new Director General of International Solar Alliance (ISA)?
(a) Dr. Abhishek Mahajan (b) Dr. Ajay Mathur
(c) Dr. Deepak Rathi (d) Dr Subhendu Sarkar
171. Recently, Akrund and Navanagar villages in Aravalli district of _____ have become India’s first smart villages with LiFi-based internet connectivity.
(a) Rajasthan (b) Gujarat (c) Haryana (d) Punjab
172. Recently, The National Informatics Centre has launched an instant messaging platform called _____ on the lines of WhatsApp.
(a) Sandes (b) Chitthi (c) Aamantran (d) HumsApp
173. Recently, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged the Centre to set up a Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology in _____.
(a) Bhubaneswar in Odisha (b) Balasore in Odisha
(c) Cuttack in Odisha (d) Puri in Odisha
174. Name the Chief Minister who has been conferred the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award recently?
(a) K. Chandrashekar Rao (b) Edappadi K. Palaniswami
(c) Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy (d) Yogi Adityanath

175. Recently, An IIT Madras-Incubated start-up has recently launched _____ a sustainable utility e-bike.
(a) PiMo (b) BiNo (c) TiLo (d) EiHo
176. Which of the following companies has recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) to collaborate in the area of cybersecurity?
(a) TCS (b) HCL (c) Microsoft (d) Alphabet
177. Recently, President Ram Nath Kovind has removed Dr. Kiran Bedi as Lieutenant-Governor of _____.
(a) Puducherry (b) Lakshadweep (c) Jammu & Kashmir (d) Ladakh
178. Recently, Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of:
(a) Angola (b) The Gambia
(c) Sierra Leone (d) Democratic Republic of the Congo
179. In February 2021, The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the longest river bridge of the country over the _____.
(a) Chenab (b) Brahmaputra (c) Ganga (d) Sutluj
180. In February 2021, which of the following Indian states launched “Maa” canteens for providing subsidised cooked meals for the poor and the destitute at a nominal cost of Rs. 5?
(a) Haryana (b) West Bengal (c) Gujarat (d) Tamil Nadu
181. The centrally air-conditioned Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway Terminal will soon be inaugurated at:
(a) Mysuru (b) Bengaluru (c) Gulbarga (d) Shivmogaa
182. Recently, Assam’s Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundations for the first East India Skills University in _____.
(a) Bongaigaon district (b) Barpeta district (c) Majuli district (d) Darrang district
183. Recently, The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry announced the names of the _____ cities selected for the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge under the Smart Cities Mission.
(a) 8 (b) 12 (c) 20 (d) 25
184. Recently, The Bangladesh Supreme Court launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software _____ through a virtual event.
(a) ‘Amar Bhasha’ (b) ‘Hamar Bhasho’ (c) ‘Amar Vasha’ (d) ‘Bhalo Bhashi’
185. Recently, Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia of _____ announced his resignation, following a court ruling that ordered the arrest of a man who leads the ex-Soviet nation’s top opposition party.
(a) Columbia (b) Georgia
(c) Finland (d) Netherland
186. Which of the following issues directives to housing finance companies (HFCs) on maintenance of liquidity coverage ratio, risk management, asset classification and loan-to-value ratio?
(a) Finance Ministry (b) Reserve Bank of India
(c) NABARD (d) SIDBI
187. Which of the following Indian states recently launched the ‘Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of State’ initiative?
(a) West Bengal (b) Nagaland
(c) Sikkim (d) Meghalaya

188. Recently, Scientists have recovered the oldest DNA on record, extracting it from the molars of mammoths that roamed northeastern _____ up to 1.2 million years ago in research that broadens the horizons for understanding extinct species.
(a) Siberia (b) Serbia (c) Finland (d) Sweden
189. Airth is ready to launch the first of its kind antimicrobial air purifier on (date). It is developed by the visionary team from _____ and uses patent filed & tested technology for protection against airborne diseases such as COVID-19.
(a) IIT Bombay (b) IIT Madras
(c) IIT Kanpur (d) IIT Delhi
190. Recently, Five Indian-origin personalities feature in TIME magazine's annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are shaping the future". Who is not among the five?
(a) Rishi Sunak (b) Roshni Nadar
(c) Apoorva Mehta (d) Vijaya Gadde
191. The Central Government launched the _____ campaign to boost the adoption of electric mobility vehicles and electric cooking appliances to ensure energy security in the country.
(a) Go Electric (b) Come on Electronic
(c) Come Electric (d) Go Electronic
192. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) plans to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in _____ in November.
(a) Glasgow (b) Paris
(c) Dublin (d) Tokyo
193. The Union Cabinet approved a production-linked incentive scheme for the _____ sector.
(a) Coal (b) Telecom (c) Power (d) Environment
194. Recently, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project was in the final stages despite delays due to various challenges. Kaladan project is in:
(a) Nepal (b) Myanmar (c) Bangladesh (d) Sri Lanka
195. Who is US military's first India-born female Muslim chaplain?
(a) Saleha Jabeen (b) Rashida Biwi (c) Mumtaz Khan (d) Aliya Hasan
196. Recently, Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and _____ (Air Force Version) Missile Systems designed and developed by DRDO were carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter platform in desert ranges.
(a) Brahmastra (b) Shivastra (c) Dhruvastra (d) Chandrastra
197. Who became the costliest ever player at an IPL auction 2021 for Rajasthan Royals?
(a) Chris Morris (b) Ish Sodhi (c) Steven Smith (d) Krishnappa Gowtham
198. Recently, In Tennis, the Belgian and Belarus pair of Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka has won the WOMEN'S doubles final of the _____ 2021.
(a) French Open (b) Australian Open
(c) US Open (d) Wimbledon
199. Which of the following countries hosted a health secretary-level meet virtually with other South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis?
(a) Sri Lanka (b) India (c) Bangladesh (d) Bhutan

200. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020 awarded by the _____.
- (a) United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
(b) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
(c) World Bank
(d) Amnesty International
201. Which of the following countries is set to host 13th BRICS Summit 2021?
- (a) Russia (b) Brazil (c) South Africa (d) India
202. Digital University is set up by upgrading two-decade old _____.
- (a) Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K)
(b) Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Maharashtra (IIITM-M)
(c) Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Tamil Nadu (IIITM-TN)
(d) Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Karnataka (IIITM-K)
203. Recently, Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush _____ to expand immunization coverage across the country.
- (a) 1.0 (b) 2.0 (c) 3.0 (d) 5.0
204. Which of the following country scientists had detected the first case of transmission of the H5N8 strain of avian flu to humans and had alerted the World Health Organization?
- (a) Germany (b) Russia (c) France (d) Ireland
205. Who won the women's singles title in the Australian Open 2021?
- (a) Jennifer Brady (b) Serena Williams (c) Venus Williams (d) Naomi Osaka
206. The Indian and Indonesian navies carried out a military exercise in the Arabian Sea to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation. Name the military exercise?
- (a) RIMPAC (b) PASSEX (c) MALABAR (d) MILAN
207. Who among the following participated and expressed his views in WION and Zee Media's 'Population versus Planet' Conference which is a part of its year-long campaign called 'Mission Sustainability: Population vs Planet'?
- (a) Smt Smriti Irani (b) Shri Prakash Javadekar
(c) Shri Piyush Goyal (d) Dr. Harsh Vardhan
208. Name the Indian-American scientist who led the guidance, navigation, and control operations of the Mars 2020 mission.
- (a) Anandita Mitra (b) Deepa Bhaskar
(c) Swati Mohan (d) Meenakshi Sargam
209. Who won her first WTA title with a doubles win at the Phillip Island Trophy?
- (a) Ankita Raina (b) Parul Sehgal
(c) Deepika Pallikal (d) Amanmitra Saini
210. International Mother Language Day is held every year on:
- (a) 16th February (b) 18th February (c) 20th February (d) 21st February
211. Who among the following built the world's first solar heated military tent?
- (a) Mahesh Mahtab (b) Amit Deshmukh (c) Sonam Wangchuk (d) Gautam Rishi

212. In Leh, amidst culturally rich events, MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurated the _____ edition of Ladakh Winter Conclave 2021.
(a) First (b) Second (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
213. Who among the following inaugurated the three day Incredible India Mega Homestay Development and Training Workshop in Darjeeling?
(a) Prahlad Singh Patel (b) Amit Shah
(c) Mansukhlal Mandaviya (d) Rajnath Singh
214. Almost 60 years after attaining statehood, the national anthem was played inside _____ state assembly for the first time in February 2021.
(a) Manipur (b) Nagaland (c) Mizoram (d) Tripura
215. Which of the following Indian energy companies is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route?
(a) National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (b) Reliance Energy Limited
(c) Essar Energy (d) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
216. Who among the following got the award for his contribution in preserving and promoting mother languages of small ethnic groups in Bangladesh recently?
(a) Dipu Moni (b) Mathura Bikash Tripura
(c) Vikas Amitabh Bhattacharya (d) Rafiqul Islam
217. Who among the following billionaires moved a step closer to acquiring bankrupt mortgage financier Dewan Housing Finance Corp. Ltd (DHFL) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) clearing its insolvency resolution plan?
(a) Ajay Piramal (b) Mukesh Ambani (c) Azim Premji (d) Shiv Nadar
218. In Tennis, who won his ninth Australian Open title in Men's Single?
(a) Novak Djokovic (b) Daniil Medvedev (c) Andy Murray (d) Roger Federer
219. Recently, A team confirmed that they watched Black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*), native to the Tibetan plateau, and sighted for the first time in _____.
(a) Assam (b) Bihar (c) Nagaland (d) Manipur
220. Recently, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed a pact with Greenstat Norway for setting up a Centre of Excellence on _____.
(a) Hydrogen (b) Nitrogen (c) Argon (d) Neon
221. Which Indian state government has recently brought an ordinance giving co-ownership rights to women in their husband's ancestral property?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Bihar (d) Madhya Pradesh
222. Which of the following Indian states has recently presented the first paperless budget of any state in the country?
(a) Sikkim (b) Goa (c) Assam (d) Uttar Pradesh
223. Recently, Bihar presented the annual budget for 2021-22 in the State Assembly. The State Government has made the highest allocation of Rs 21,938 crore for _____.
(a) Education (b) Urban Development
(c) Rural Development (d) Social Welfare

224. The first-ever National Toy Fair is organized from 27th February to 2nd March through a virtual medium. Which of the following IIT based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) showcased its unique 75 toy creations in the fair?
(a) IIT Gandhinagar (b) IIT Delhi (c) IIT Madras (d) IIT Kharagpur
225. Which of the following countries has officially rejoined the Paris Agreement recently?
(a) Canada (b) USA (c) France (d) Portugal
226. Recently, India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with which of the following African countries?
(a) Mauritius (b) Zimbabwe (c) South Sudan (d) South Africa
227. Which of the following countries recently has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease?
(a) Sweden (b) Ireland (c) India (d) Switzerland
228. Which of the following International Centres co-chaired this year's Asia Economic Dialogue?
(a) Pune International Centre (b) Hyderabad International Centre
(c) Jaipur International Centre (d) Bengaluru International Centre
229. Recently, IRS Officer Rohit Mehra has started the world's first Tree and Plant clinic in _____.
(a) Meerut (b) Gurugram (c) Amritsar (d) Bhopal
220. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has brought State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview. The bank, established five years before Sikkim acceded to India in _____, provides treasury operations for the state government.
(a) 1956 (b) 1962 (c) 1973 (d) 1977
231. Which of the following states recently approved implementation of mission 'Lal Lakir' aimed at facilitating villagers to monetise property rights and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state?
(a) Kerala (b) West Bengal (c) Rajasthan (d) Punjab
232. Which of the following states Deputy Chief Minister gave birth to a baby girl recently to become the first Deputy Chief Minister in the country to have a child while in office?
(a) Bihar (b) Telangana (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Assam
233. The Justice Rohini Commission has been studying sub-categorisation of _____ and is expected to submit its report to the government in July.
(a) ST's (b) SC's (c) OBC's (d) General's
234. In a major setback to the government which country Supreme Court reinstated the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Parliament?
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) Nepal
235. Recently, India Ratings and Research revised its outlook on the overall banking sector to _____ for the FY22.
(a) positive (b) stable
(c) negative (d) balanced
236. Which of the following Indian airports becomes first Indian airport to get a disabled aircraft recovery kit recently?
(a) Kempegowda International Airport (b) Indira Gandhi International Airport
(c) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (d) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport

237. Which of the following IIT's has developed a low-cost device to produce electrolysed water that could be used as an alternative to alcohol-based disinfectant?
(a) IIT Jammu (b) IIT Mandi (c) IIT Hyderabad (d) IIT Ropar
238. Which of the following states will host the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) 2021?
(a) Kerala (b) Maharashtra (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
239. Name the airport which recently got necessary clearances from DGCA to become 3rd licensed international airport of Uttar Pradesh.
(a) Gorakhpur Airport (b) Kushinagar Airport (c) Ayodhya Airport (d) Aligarh Airport
240. What is the name of the latest book by Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk to be translated into English?
(a) 'The Lost Soul' (b) 'The Reversible' (c) 'The Mandate' (d) 'The Last Idea'
241. Which of the following states received award for fastest implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Bihar (d) Haryana
242. Which of the following ministries launched the National Urban Digital Mission, which was aimed at creating a shared digital infrastructure for cities?
(a) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
(b) Ministry of Communications
(c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
(d) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
243. All 87 village panchayats in Sevapuri are being developed by _____ district administration as India's first model block.
(a) Hisar (b) Varanasi (c) Surat (d) Siwan
244. Name the Indian social activist who is one of the 12 "courageous" individuals named by the Biden administration for the newly-instituted International Anti-Corruption Champions Award.
(a) Anjali Bharadwaj (b) Ankita Mohanty (c) Deepika Mahajan (d) Anupama Jaiswal
245. Which of the following has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery of 6,00,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India?
(a) Vietnam (b) Maldives (c) Mauritius (d) Ghana
246. Which of the following banks announced 'Namma Chennai Smart Card', the Rupay powered co-branded, contactless prepaid card which will facilitate various digital payments like tax and utility bill payments at the GCC centres?
(a) HDFC Bank (b) ICICI Bank (c) RBL Bank (d) Axis Bank
247. Which of the following countries hosted the first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021 in virtual mode?
(a) Brazil (b) Russia (c) India (d) South Africa
248. Recently, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to _____ Missile.
(a) Surface (b) Sea (c) Air (d) None of the Above
249. Recently, President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly constructed world's largest Cricket Stadium in _____.
(a) Hyderabad (b) Ahmedabad (c) Cuttack (d) Bengaluru

250. National Science Day is celebrated in India on _____ each year to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman.
(a) 25th February (b) 28th February (c) 1st March (d) 3rd March
251. Recently, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated 50 artisan-based _____ clusters spread over 18 States.
(a) URJA (b) TEJAS (c) SFURTI (d) ALANKRITA
252. In February, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar launched India's BRICS 2021 website at the BRICS Secretariat at _____.
(a) Arun Jaitley Bhawan (b) Sushma Swaraj Bhawan
(c) Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan (d) Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Bhawan
253. Recently, US President Joe Biden has nominated Indian-American lawyer and rights activist _____ to head the Office of Personnel Management.
(a) Kiran Ahuja (b) Mudita Maheshwari (c) Deepika Rana (d) Alankrita Srivastava
254. Recently, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressed inaugural function of DRDO Skill Development Centre at _____ in Uttar Pradesh.
(a) Hapur (b) Pilakhuwa (c) Kushinagar (d) Aligarh
255. According to provisional data from India's commerce ministry, which of the following countries has recently regained its position as India's top trade partner in 2020?
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) USA (d) China
256. According to an IBM report released recently, which was the most attacked country by cyber criminals in Asia Pacific in 2020?
(a) India (b) Japan (c) South Korea (d) Singapore
257. Recently, Researchers at the _____ announced that they have identified a sustainable source for the anti-cancer drug camptothecin, which is currently derived from two highly depleted tree species.
(a) Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT-D)
(b) Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K)
(c) Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B)
(d) Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M)
258. Recently, The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has named _____ as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games.
(a) Paris, France (b) Brisbane, Australia
(c) Christchurch, New Zealand (d) Calgary, Canada
259. A "one-stop guide" on how to move towards a more sustainable lifestyle in India, Bare Necessities: How to Live a Zero Waste Life, published by Penguin, is written by environmentalist _____ and sustainability consultant Tim De Ridder.
(a) Sahar Mansoor (b) Mahmood Ahmed
(c) Sajid Mir (d) Anas Khan
260. Name the Russian supermodel and philanthropist who became a United Nations goodwill ambassador pledging to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies?
(a) Irina Shayk (b) Xenia Tchoumitcheva
(c) Natalia Vodianova (d) Alena Shishkova

261. Which of the following states recently inaugurated the Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS), the largest in Asia?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Tamil Nadu
262. Which of the following states will bring a Universal Health Care scheme worth Rs. 3,500 crore, under which every family in the State will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs. 5 lakh?
(a) Rajasthan (b) Jharkhand (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Bihar
263. As per the Information Technology (Guidelines for intermediaries and digital media ethics code) Rules, 2021, social media platforms will also be required to provide information, including related to verification of identity, to lawfully authorised agencies within _____ hours.
(a) 24 (b) 36 (c) 48 (d) 72
264. Recently, The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of _____ from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC).
(a) Nepal (b) Bangladesh (c) Maldives (d) Mauritius
265. Who was recently declared as the winner of the Niger's new President?
(a) Mohamed Bazoum (b) Mahamane Ousmane (c) Mahmud Ghaus (d) Muhammad Ghani
266. Which of the following companies announced an industry-first initiative of up to 100 per cent health insurance premium returns and other significant product offering upgrades?
(a) Tata Health Insurance Company Ltd.
(b) Reliance Health Insurance Company Ltd.
(c) Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd.
(d) Gautam Adani Health Insurance Company Ltd.
267. Which of the following countries engineers help build world's first battery-electric loco recently?
(a) India (b) Bhutan (c) USA (d) Russia
268. Which of the following became the first country to ban any of the drugs now known to be toxic to vultures since the previous veterinary diclofenac ban more than 10 years ago?
(a) Bhutan (b) Bangladesh (c) India (d) Nepal
269. Recently, The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in _____.
(a) Cairo (b) Paris (c) Lisbon (d) London
270. World Civil Defence Day is observed on _____ every year, all over the world.
(a) 25th February (b) 27th February (c) 1st March (d) 3rd March
271. Which of the following ministries has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product (ODOFP)?
(a) Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry
(b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
(c) Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
(d) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
272. The Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 is underway at _____ Haat.
(a) Lucknow (b) Noida (c) Jaipur (d) Patna

273. Recently, The task force on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) has agreed and approved the preparation of final detailed project report (DPR) on the proposed Mahandi (Barmul)-Godavari (Dowlaiswaram) link by ensuring utilisation of the allocated _____ waters by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
(a) Krishna (b) Godavari (c) Tapi (d) Betwa
274. Name the portal for Consumer grievance redressal which is now operational in 15 States/UTs.
(a) E-Safalta (b) E-Qamayab (c) E-Entry (d) E-Daakhil
275. In a bid to tackle the rise in suicide rates for the first time in 11 years due to the coronavirus crisis, Which of the following countries has appointed its first-ever Minister for Loneliness?
(a) South Korea (b) Thailand (c) China (d) Japan
276. Recently, The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to retain _____ on the “greylist” till the next review of its performance on the recommendations during the June Plenary session.
(a) Pakistan (b) Thailand (c) Bangladesh (d) Nepal
277. According to a computer simulation study which confirms the long held belief that planet need a protective magnetic field to block such harmful radiations in order to sustain life. Solar winds may have led to _____ losing its atmosphere.
(a) Jupiter (b) Saturn (c) Mars (d) Venus
278. In Boxing, Deepak Kumar (52 kg) wins the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in _____.
(a) Sofia, Bulgaria (b) Budapest, Hungary (c) Paris, France (d) Lisbon, Portugal
279. Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the United Nations (UN) every year on _____ and other international organisations.
(a) 23rd February (b) 27th February (c) 1st March (d) 5th March
280. A space station supply ship named after the NASA mathematician featured in the movie “Hidden Figures” rocketed into orbit the 59th anniversary of _____ historic launch.
(a) Andrew Bill (b) Matthew Thomas (c) Nirtz Wilson (d) John Glenn

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **d** In a first, a 122-member marching-cum-band contingent of the Bangladesh Armed Forces took part in the 72nd Republic Day parade on the Rajpath, coinciding with the golden jubilee of that country's independence.
2. **a** Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Aadi Mahotsav, a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the National Capital.
3. **b** India has long history of silk production and is the 2nd largest producer of Silk. India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk - Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.
4. **b** China National Nuclear Corp said the first of its Hualong One units, third-generation pressurised water nuclear reactors, began commercial operations.
5. **a** The Clothespin Tower in Dubai is the first conceptual building of its kind that turns the mundane clothespin into an icon of eternal love and unity.
6. **b** Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 megawatt Lower Arun Hydropower Project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).
7. **a** The UN World Tourism Organization recently confirmed the Year 2020 as the 'worst year on record', after global tourism suffered massively due to international travel bans implemented to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.
8. **b** Leading stock exchange BSE has set up an "innovation sandbox" web portal where fintech firms and individuals may use the environment for offline testing of their applications in a test environment.
9. **a** Kichcha Sudeep's upcoming multilingual upcoming film, Vikrant Rona, created history with the movies trailer launch on the world's tallest building Burj Khalifa.
10. **a** International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on January 24 and is dedicated to education.
11. **d** The National Health Authority (NHA) has appointed RS Sharma as the new Chief Executive to head its health insurance scheme – Ayushman Bharat or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana – a flagship programme of the government.
12. **a** 'This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad' will be released on the director's 83rd birth anniversary on May 19 by Fourth Estate, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.
13. **c** A new centrally sponsored scheme, PM Atma Nirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, will be launched with an outlay of about 64,180 crores over 6 years. This will be in addition to the National Health Mission.
14. **a** In a first for the industry, the Tata Group will develop and manufacture a military aircraft in India, having acquired intellectual property rights for a German-origin platform.
15. **c** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government will set up a Rs 20,000 crore Development Finance Institution (DFI) with a view to mobilise Rs 111 lakh crore required for funding of the ambitious national infrastructure pipeline.
16. **a** Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addressed the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN India Hackathon.

17. c The Fiscal deficit for the financial year 2021-22 pegged at 6.8 percent.
18. b Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's second LCA production line in Bengaluru.
19. b Government has also enhanced the allocation to the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund from 30,000 to 40,000 crore rupees.
20. b In order to incentivise start-ups in the country, the Government has extended the eligibility for claiming tax holiday for start-ups by one more year - till 31st of March, 2022.
21. d Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the first state or Union territory in the country to become Covid-19 free with active cases falling to zero in the islands.
22. a Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos will step down as the chief executive of the company – which he founded almost 27 years ago.
23. b The Union environment ministry launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment along with Barbara Pompili, the French Minister for Ecological Transition.
24. c India has committed that 40 per cent of its installed power generation capacity shall be from non-fossil fuel by the end of 2030 as a part of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions as per Paris Accord.
25. a Maritime body MUI urged the government to take cognisance of "Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change" in the formulation of Maritime India Vision 2030.
26. d Chandigarh PGI launched India's first 'amputee clinic'.
27. b Indian-American Bhavya Lal was appointed by NASA as the acting chief of staff of the US space agency.
28. a Assam's Majuli will have a new embankment-cum-road around the island as the 15th Finance Commission has recommended for it along with a project for comprehensive development of the Kamakhya temple in Guwahati.
29. b Mr Modi also released a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura incident. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also present on the occasion.
30. d Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-22 has proposed to set up 100 new Sainik Schools in the country, in partnership with NGOs, private schools and State-owned schools.
31. d India hosted Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers' Conclave on the sidelines of Aero India 2021.
32. b Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh virtually launched the 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission as part of the government's campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households by March next year.
33. a Shravasti in Uttar Pradesh has topped in the ranking of aspirational districts by government think tank Niti Aayog in December 2020.
34. d World's First 3-D Printed School to Open in Madagascar.

- 35. b** The regime in Myanmar headed by the Army has announced a new State Administrative Council. The council headed by the Army Chief General Min Aung Hlaing has eleven members out of which eight are from the military.
- 36. b** In a bid to boost the startup ecosystem in Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray launched a scheme aimed at providing financial assistance to innovative startups to file for IT patents.
- 37. b** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.
- 38. a** India got its first specialised institution - Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) - in Chennai which will work as a knowledge hub for various stakeholders for conserving wetlands that occupy 4.6% of the country's total land area.
- 39. c** Ajay Singh has been re-elected as President of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) after defeating former Maharashtra sports minister Ashish Shelar in the polls.
- 40. c** The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 4 February as the International Day of Human Fraternity.
- 41. c** Team India skipper Virat Kohli retains the top position of India's most-valuable celebrity list for the fourth consecutive year. His brand value remains steady at \$237.7 million in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 42. d** The Reserve Bank has directed select Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Urban Co-operatives Banks (UCBs) to implement a risk-based internal audit system.
- 43. b** Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the first heliport of the state in Majuli district.
- 44. c** US and Russia to extend the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) by five years.
- 45. a** Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of GOBARDHAN activities across the nation.
- 46. d** In West Bengal, the Forest Department has conducted water birds census for the first time.
- 47. c** Denmark approved a plan to build the world's first energy island in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to cover the electricity needs of 3 million European households.
- 48. a** Gadawara Super Thermal Power Station is a coal based thermal power project located at near by Gangai village in Gadawara Tehsil in Narsinghpur District in Indian state of Madhya Pradesh.
- 49. c** The Ministry of Power will launch a domestic manufacturing programme for critical power and renewable energy equipment at an outlay of Rs 1,500 crore in the coming financial year.
- 50. c** Preliminary surveys by the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD), an arm of the Department of Atomic Energy, are learnt to have shown the presence of 1,600 tonnes of lithium resources in the igneous rocks of the Marlagalla-Allapatna region of Karnataka's Mandya district.
- 51. a** Himachal Pradesh has become first State in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing e-cabinet application.

- 52. d** In a landmark move, the Reserve Bank of India that retail investors in India will be given online access to invest in government securities. Right now, there is a way for small investors to buy government bonds via the goBID platform on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).
- 53. a** India's space agency Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch Brazilian satellite Amazonia-1 and three Indian payloads on 28 February in its first mission of 2021.
- 54. d** India slipped two places to 53rd position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking.
- 55. a** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced a risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for select non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks (UCBs).
- 56. d** RBI has announced certain measures of protection of common bank account holders in monetary policy statement. It includes setting up of 24*7 helpline for digital payment services.
- 57. a** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched 'Switch Delhi', an electric vehicle mass awareness campaign, to sensitize citizens about the benefits of switching to electric vehicles.
- 58. c** Proposed IIS at Nasmed is located in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.
- 59. a** India and Bahrain have agreed to forge deeper engagement in the field of renewable energy.
- 60. d** The RBI governor Shaktikant Das said that the GDP growth is projected at 10.5 percent in the Financial Year 2021-22.
- 61. b** A historic tripartite agreement for establishing India's first-ever geothermal field development project in Leh has been signed, with Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur terming it a step towards achieving the goal of carbon-neutral Ladakh.
- 62. d** The Federal Reserve Bank of New York has said that Daleep Singh, the Head of the Markets Group at the bank is set to join US President Joe Biden's administration as deputy national security adviser.
- 63. c** Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inducted women commandos in its anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal hit areas.
- 64. c** Kyrgyzstan appointed Ulukbek Maripov as the country's new prime minister bringing a long-running political crisis to a close.
- 65. a** British researchers are to explore mixing doses of the Pfizer and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines in a world first trial aimed at finding new ways to swiftly reduce coronavirus infections as new mutated variants emerge.
- 66. a** ICICI Bank announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MUFG Bank, Japan's premier bank, for collaboration towards catering to the banking requirements of Japanese corporates present in India.
- 67. a** Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was poised to become the first African and first woman to lead the embattled World Trade Organization.
- 68. d** The telescope, proposed to be the largest radio telescope in the world, will be located in Africa and Australia whose operation, maintenance and construction will be overseen by SKAO.
- 69. b** Kane Williamson-led New Zealand became the first team to qualify for the finals of the inaugural edition of the ICC World Test Championship.

- 70. c** On 11 February 2021, the 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly was held at the United Nations Headquarters virtually.
- 71. b** UP govt announces 16-digit Unicode to identify landholdings.
- 72. c** Odisha's Balasore will get the country's first thunderstorm research testbed, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said.
- 73. a** Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) is organised five days National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021 from February 8 to February 12 at the IIHR campus situated in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru.
- 74. a** Abdul Hamid Dbeibah, a businessman-turned-politician, has been chosen as Libya's new interim prime minister following lengthy United Nations-sponsored talks aimed at ending a decade of conflict in the North African country.
- 75. b** In a first, Member of Parliament from Gautam Buddha Nagar, Dr Mahesh Sharma was administered the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 76. b** Government had approved this flagship crop insurance scheme, five years ago, on 13th January 2016.
- 77. a** The RBI is targeting to roll out the e-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme in June 2021
- 78. b** Mario Draghi secured preliminary support from two key parties for forming a new government that will decide how to spend more than 200 bn euros (£175 bn) in European Union funds to help relaunch Italy's pandemic-ravaged economy.
- 79. b** The Central government has given its approval for the creation of a fifth tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu that will encompass the Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- 80. c** In 2019, the General Assembly proclaimed 10 February as the World Pulses Day.
- 81. c** Karnataka got its 31st district with the state government issuing an official gazette notification carving out a new Vijayanagara district from the mine-rich Ballari. The new district will have six taluks and Hosapete will be its headquarters.
- 82. a** The government has proposed in the Union Budget to launch a portal which will collect information on building and construction workers among others and the work is on setting up of the portal by Directorate General of Labour Welfare.
- 83. a** The Biden administration is set to announce that it will reengage with the much-maligned U.N. Human Rights Council that former President Donald Trump withdrew from almost three years ago.
- 84. b** The India-US Joint Military Exercise 'YUDH ABHYAS' commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan with unfurling of the National Flags of both the countries.
- 85. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on 10th of February via video conferencing. The theme of the summit is 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.
- 86. a** Wipro has been named to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's 2021 Corporate Equality Index (CEI).
- 87. b** India's stock market is the second-best performer among the top 15 countries in 2021 and soon it may overtake France to become the sixth biggest in the world.
- 88. a** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes for the year 2019-20.

- 89. d** Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has informed that the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) will be implemented in 122 cities across the country.
- 90. a** Indian drama “Pebbles”, directed by filmmaker Vinodhraj PS, has won the top honour, the Tiger Award for best film, at the 50th International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).
- 91. b** In Arab world’s first interplanetary mission, spacecraft ‘Amal’ enters orbit around Mars
- 92. d** The government has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled ‘Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)’ and it has committed resources in this regard with a budgetary provision of Rs 6,865 crore.
- 93. c** The National Deworming Day is conducted in all states/UTs on February 10 every year, with a mop-up day on February 15.
- 94. b** The International Cricket Council (ICC) has signed Indian edtech start-up Byju’s as global partner for three years, from 2021 to 2023.
- 95. b** Bank of Maharashtra has entered into a co-lending agreement with Pune-based non-banking financial company LoanTap Credit Products for MSME loans.
- 96. c** IIT-Madras incubated space startup Agnikul Cosmos said it has successfully test fired its semi-cryogenic rocket engine Agnilet, which is completely 3D printed as a single component in a single run of a 3D printer.
- 97. b** India will overtake the European Union as the world’s third-largest energy consumer by 2030, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said as it forecast India accounting for the biggest share of energy demand growth over the next two decades.
- 98. c** The Delhi government will now work with IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur and TERI to identify the sources of pollution in Delhi in real-time.
- 99. a** Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur have developed energy-efficient pest controlling devices for smaller agricultural tracts owned by marginal farmers.
- 100. c** India’s flamboyant wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant won the ICC’s inaugural Player of the Month award for his superlative performances in the two Tests against Australia in January.
- 101. c** Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, became the first airline in the world to vaccinate 100% of its onboard crewmembers.
- 102. a** The website was launched jointly by Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in New Delhi.
- 103. b** US President Joe Biden has announced the launch of a new China task force that will provide recommendations on military strategy to the Department of Defense, DoD to counter growing challenges posed by Beijing.
- 104. a** India and Afghanistan signed an agreement to build the Shahtoot Dam in Kabul to provide drinking water facility in the Afghan capital.
- 105. d** The share of solar energy in India’s power generation could equal coal-fired output by 2040, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said driven by falling renewable tariffs and a government push to increase green energy use.

- 106. b** By 2023, Noida likely to get north India's first medical device park.
- 107. b** The new coach can carry more passengers as the berths have been increased from 72 to 83.
- 108. a** The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Financial Literacy Week on the theme of 'Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions'.
- 109. b** The office of the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM) which has the objective of increasing digital economy contribution to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to 30 per cent was inaugurated and the "Beyond Bengaluru" report which facilitates to achieve this target was launched.
- 110. c** Thirteen major ports in the country handle a lot of volume of container and cargo traffic.
- 111. b** Odisha is the first state in the country to introduce document upload through digital signature, using the NIC platform.
- 112. a** Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated more than 57,000 water structures constructed in Madhya Pradesh under 'Jalabhishekam' campaign from New Delhi.
- 113. c** In order to arrive at the revenue share based on market prices of coal, one National Coal Index (NCI) was conceptualized. The NCI is a price index which reflects the change of price level of coal on a particular month relative to the fixed base year. The base year for the NCI is FY 2017-18. Prices of coal from all the sales channels of coal, including import, as existing are taken into account for compiling the NCI.
- 114. d** India's first ever CNG Tractor was launched. This will help farmers increase their income, by lowering costs and help to create job opportunities in rural India.
- 115. b** China is celebrating Lunar New Year as it ushered into the Year of the Ox. It is one of the most important Chinese festivals, also known as the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival.
- 116. c** India's First Museum of Illusions Comes up in Delhi.
- 117. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March.
- 118. c** Steven Spielberg has been awarded Israel's prestigious 2021 Genesis Prize in recognition of his contribution to cinema, his philanthropic works and his efforts to preserve the memory of the Holocaust.
- 119. a** Star sprinter Hima Das, who is currently looking to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics, has been appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police by the Assam government.
- 120. d** On 11 February 2021, the 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly will be held at the United Nations Headquarters virtually.
- 121. b** Prime Minister also inaugurated country's first full-fledged international cruise terminal, Sagarika at Cochin Port and Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd.
- 122. b** The Prime Minister also handed over the indigenously designed and manufactured Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Army.

- 123. d** In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir the Administrative Council (AC) has approved the establishment of an Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) project by the National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED).
- 124. a** Vigyan Jyoti programme, a new initiative to encourage girls to take interest in science and build career, was launched by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls to pursue STEM.
- 125. a** Minority Affairs Ministry is organised 26th Hunar Haat of indigenous artisans and craftsmen from across the country at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.
- 126. c** Waltair Division, in its efforts to enhance the passenger amenities at Railway stations, has commissioned another innovative facility called Robotic Spa under Non-fare revenue at Visakhapatnam railway station.
- 127. a** Sonali Nijhawan has been named Director of AmeriCorps State and National, and Sri Preston Kulkarni, 42, was appointed the new Chief of External Affairs.
- 128. a** Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding super massive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae, analysis of which can help trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission, the Department of Science and Technology.
- 129. a** The Ministry of Railways has decided to replace the rake of Agartala - Anand Vihar Terminal Special Rajdhani Express with Tejas Sleeper coaches with upgraded facilities.
- 130. c** Dumboor Mela is a traditional fair organized with support from the Tripura state government on Tirthamukh, confluence of River Raima and Saima and the Dumbur Lake, where thousands of devotees and mystics gather to take holy dip in the waters of Lake Dumboor.
- 131. b** The Congress nominated veteran leader Mallikarjun Kharge as the new Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha to succeed Ghulam Nabi Azad, who is retiring on February 15.
- 132. c** A Centrally sponsored scheme namely National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) was initially launched in 2010-11 in 7 pilot states.
- 133. a** In a significant development, Indian and Saudi armies will undertake joint bilateral exercises. This will be the first such exercises of both the armies together.
- 134. d** The ex-head of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, was sworn in as Italian Prime Minister.
- 135. c** Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Indore has featured on the Financial Times (FT) Global MBA ranking 2021 at 94th spot.
- 136. c** Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL) has become India's first and only listed depository to open three crore plus (30 million) active demat accounts.
- 137. b** Bihar accounts for 50% of the world's river dolphin population, a highly endangered species under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and declared the National Aquatic Animal in 2009.
- 138. a** Morgan Stanley-owned Indian commercial and industrial renewables developer Continuum Green Energy Ltd had a helping hand from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) as it launched its first green bond.

- 139. c** Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin became the first player in the 143-year history of Test cricket to take 200 wickets against left-handed batsmen.
- 140. d** On 26 November 2007, the General Assembly declared that, starting from the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, 20 February will be celebrated annually as the World Day of Social Justice.
- 141. b** In a first for an Indian State, Bihar signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN Environment Programme to achieve climate resilience and low carbon development by 2040.
- 142. b** The work to provide tap water connections to over 19 crore rural households under the Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural) by 2024.
- 143. c** FDI in insurance to be hiked to 74% from 49% now.
- 144. b** Rashmi Samant has made history by becoming the first Indian woman to head the Oxford Students' Union.
- 145. a** Indian Army National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named as Divya-Drishti 202 on Multi-Domain Operations: Future of Conflicts was organised by Centre for Land Warfare Studies, CLAWS.
- 146. a** Canada's main securities regulator has cleared the launch of the world's first bitcoin exchange-traded fund, an investment manager providing investors greater access to the cryptocurrency that has sparked an explosion in trading interest.
- 147. a** UK is building the world's first airport for flying cars.
- 148. b** U.S.-based electric car giant Tesla would set up its manufacturing unit in Karnataka.
- 149. b** In Australian Open Tennis Hsieh Su-Wei has become the oldest first-time quarterfinalist in a Grand Slam.
- 150. c** World Radio Day is an international day celebrated on 13 February each year.
- 151. c** Filmmaker Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari has turned author with her debut fiction novel, titled Mapping Love.
- 152. c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of its former Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan on Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks.
- 153. c** Italy has got a super ministry recently to ensure a transition to green energy drives recovery and makes full use of European Union funds.
- 154. a** Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the first female and first African head of the beleaguered World Trade Organization (WTO), saying a stronger WTO would be vital for the global coronavirus recovery.
- 155. c** The first day of the spring called 'Pahela Phagun' was celebrated in Dhaka despite the continued shadow of Corona pandemic in the country.
- 156. a** Uday Kotak is an Indian billionaire banker, and the executive vice chairman and managing director of Kotak Mahindra Bank.
- 157. b** Researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal — the 550-million-year-old 'Dickinsonia' — on the roof of the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, about 40 km from Bhopal.

- 158. c** Dr. Anthony Fauci has won the \$1 million Dan David Prize for “defending science” and advocating for vaccines now being administered worldwide to fight the coronavirus pandemic.
- 159. a** The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Ficci) announced the re-appointment of Sanjog Gupta, head-sports, Star India, as the chairperson to its sports committee for 2021.
- 160. c** Schools and hostels under the Ministry of Education’s Samagra Shiksha scheme will now be renamed after Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- 161. d** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the statue of Raja Suheldev in Bahraich district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- 162. c** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban, JJM-U.
- 163. b** The Joint Conference of the 11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit was organized in New Delhi.
- 164. a** India has joined Iran and Russia in a two-day navy exercise dubbed “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021” in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.
- 165. a** Japan has conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays decoration on Manipur physician and former president of state tourism forum, Dr Thangjam Dhabali Singh, to honour his contribution to strengthening ties between Japan and India, and Japan and Manipur.
- 166. b** Sanctuary Nature Foundation honours conservation hero S Theodore Baskaran with Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020 for his role in wildlife conservation and his continuing legacy of writings in Tamil and English to the conservation discourse
- 167. a** The UN Capital Development Fund has appointed Indian-origin investment and development banker Preeti Sinha as its Executive Secretary, whose focus will be on providing micro-finance assistance to women, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises in under-served communities.
- 168. c** Parties to the International Criminal Court elected Britain’s Karim Khan as the new prosecutor for a nine-year term.
- 169. d** Odisha’s Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of the country’s largest hockey stadium in Rourkela during his one-day visit to Sundargarh district.
- 170. b** International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members.
- 171. b** Akrund and Navanagar villages in Aravalli district of Gujarat have become India’s first smart villages with LiFi-based internet connectivity.
- 172. a** The National Informatics Centre has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp.
- 173. a** Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged the Centre to set up a Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology in Bhubaneswar in Odisha.
- 174. c** The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been conferred the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award.

- 175. a** An IIT Madras-Incubated start-up has recently launched PiMo, a sustainable utility e-bike.
- 176. b** HCL Technologies (HCL) said it has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) to collaborate in the area of cybersecurity.
- 177. a** President Ram Nath Kovind has removed Dr. Kiran Bedi as Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry and appointed Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana, to discharge the functions of the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry.
- 178. d** Congo President Felix Tshisekedi appointed Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, director-general of Gécamines (General Quarries and Mines) as the new DRC Prime Minister.
- 179. b** The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the longest river bridge of the country over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya.
- 180. b** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched “Maa” canteens for providing subsidised cooked meals for the poor and the destitute at a nominal cost of Rs. 5.
- 181. b** The centrally air-conditioned Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway Terminal at Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru will soon be inaugurated at Bengaluru and will have state-of-art facilities.
- 182. d** Assam’s Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundations for the first East India Skills University in Darrang district, which aims to educate more than 10,000 students in 12 disciplines. The university is also being built at a cost of Rs. 1000 crore.
- 183. d** The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry announced the names of the 25 cities selected for the Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge under the Smart Cities Mission.
- 184. c** The Bangladesh Supreme Court launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software ‘Amar Vasha’ through a virtual event. The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla.
- 185. b** Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia announced his resignation, following a court ruling that ordered the arrest of a man who leads the ex-Soviet nation’s top opposition party.
- 186. b** The RBI issued directives to housing finance companies (HFCs) on maintenance of liquidity coverage ratio, risk management, asset classification and loan-to-value ratio.
- 187. c** Sikkim Chief Minister P. S. Tamang launched the ‘Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of Sikkim’ initiative at Gangtok.
- 188. a** Scientists have recovered the oldest DNA on record, extracting it from the molars of mammoths that roamed northeastern Siberia up to 1.2 million years ago in research that broadens the horizons for understanding extinct species.
- 189. a** Airth is ready to launch the first of its kind antimicrobial air purifier on (date). It is developed by the visionary team from IIT Bombay and uses patent filed & tested technology for protection against airborne diseases such as COVID-19.
- 190. b** Five Indian-origin personalities, including Twitter’s top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK’s finance minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine’s annual list of 100 “emerging leaders who are shaping the future”.
- 191. a** The Central Government launched the Go Electric campaign to boost the adoption of electric mobility vehicles and electric cooking appliances to ensure energy security in the country.

- 192. a** The International Solar Alliance (ISA) plans to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in November a development that will support India's attempt to secure leadership in the climate arena.
- 193. b** The Union Cabinet approved a production-linked incentive scheme for the telecom sector.
- 194. b** The Kaladan Road Project is a US\$484 million project connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar by sea.
- 195. a** Saleha Jabeen, US military's first India-born female Muslim chaplain, has graduated from Air Force Basic Chaplain Course, vowing to take her duty as a spiritual mentor very seriously.
- 196. c** Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems designed and developed by DRDO were carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter platform in desert ranges.
- 197. a** Chris Morris became the costliest ever player at an IPL auction for Rajasthan Royals while Krishnappa Gowtham became the costliest Indian uncapped player for Chennai Super Kings at the IPL 2021 auction.
- 198. b** In Tennis, the Belgian and Belarus pair of Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka has won the WOMEN'S doubles final of the Australian Open 2021.
- 199. b** India hosted a health secretary-level meet virtually with other South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.
- 200. b** The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020 awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- 201. d** A comprehensive snapshot of our strong BRICS engagement and the exhaustive calendar of events during BRICS at 15 under the Chairmanship of India."
- 202. a** Digital University is set up by upgrading two-decade-old Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K).
- 203. c** Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0, (IMI 3.0) to expand immunization coverage across the country.
- 204. b** Russia said its scientists had detected the first case of transmission of the H5N8 strain of avian flu to humans and had alerted the World Health Organization.
- 205. d** Japan's Naomi Osaka cemented her place as the outstanding star of the women's singles game by beating American Jennifer Brady in the Australian Open final to win her fourth Grand Slam title.
- 206. b** "Enhancing Interoperability & strengthening Bilateral Maritime Cooperation Indian Navy Ship INS Talwar and Indonesian Navy's multirole Corvette KRI Bung Tomo, conducted Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the Arabian Sea.
- 207. d** Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare participated and expressed his views in WION and Zee Media's 'Population versus Planet' Conference which is a part of its year-long campaign called 'Mission Sustainability: Population vs Planet'.

- 208. c** As the world witnessed the historic landing of NASA's Perseverance rover on the Martian surface, it was Indian-American scientist, Swati Mohan, who led the guidance, navigation, and control operations of the Mars 2020 mission.
- 209. a** India No 1 Ankit Raina added another memorable first to her Australia trip by claiming her first WTA title with a doubles win at the Phillip Island Trophy.
- 210. d** International Mother Language Day is held on 21st February recognizes that languages and multilingualism can advance inclusion and the Sustainable Development Goals' focus on leaving no one behind.
- 211. c** Ladakh based engineer and education reformer, Sonam Wangchuk has built the world's first solar heated military tent and we cannot be more proud.
- 212. b** In Leh, amidst culturally rich events, MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurated the second edition of Ladakh Winter Conclave 2021.
- 213. a** Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the three day Incredible India Mega Homestay Development and Training Workshop in Darjeeling.
- 214. b** Almost 60 years after Nagaland attained statehood, the national anthem was played inside its assembly for the first time this February.
- 215. a** In a first, India's largest energy conglomerate, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC Ltd) is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route.
- 216. b** Mathura Bikash Tripura got the award for his contribution in preserving and promoting mother languages of small ethnic groups in Bangladesh.
- 217. a** Billionaire Ajay Piramal moved a step closer to acquiring bankrupt mortgage financier Dewan Housing Finance Corp. Ltd (DHFL) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) clearing its insolvency resolution plan.
- 218. a** In Tennis, Defending Champion Novak Djokovic has won his ninth Australian Open title, beating Daniil Medvedev in a one-sided final at Melbourne Park.
- 219. a** A team, comprising Nilutpal Mahanta of Gauhati University, naturalist Pranjal Sarma and bird watcher Indrani Adhyapak, confirmed that they were a pair of Black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*), native to the Tibetan plateau, and sighted for the first time in Assam.
- 220. a** Days after India unveiled a national hydrogen mission to accelerate plans to generate the carbon-free fuel from renewables, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed a pact with Greenstat Norway for setting up a Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen.
- 221. b** The Uttarakhand government has brought an ordinance giving co-ownership rights to women in their husband's ancestral property.
- 222. d** Uttar Pradesh government presented the biggest ever budget of the state, which was to the tune of around 5 lakh 50 thousand 270 lakh crores rupees. The first paperless budget presented by state finance minister Suresh Khanna in the state assembly was also the first paperless budget of any state in the country.

- 223. a** The State Government has made the highest allocation of Rs 21,938 crore for education. Besides, Rs 16,783 crore have been allocated for rural development and Rs 8,191 crore earmarked for social welfare.
- 224. a** The first-ever National Toy Fair is organized from 27th February to 2nd March through a virtual medium. IIT Gandhinagar based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) will showcase its unique 75 toy creations in the fair.
- 225. b** The United States has officially rejoined the Paris Agreement.
- 226. a** In one of the significant outcomes of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Mauritius, India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Mauritius. It is the first such arrangement that India struck with any African country.
- 227. c** India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease.
- 228. a** The Pune International Centre co-chaired this year's Asia Economic Dialogue that will be addressed by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and his counterparts from Japan, Australia, Maldives, Mauritius and Bhutan.
- 229. c** IRS Officer Rohit Mehra has started the world's first Tree and Plant clinic in Amritsar.
- 230. c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has brought State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview. The bank, established five years before Sikkim acceded to India in 1973, provides treasury operations for the state government.
- 231. d** The Punjab Cabinet approved implementation of mission 'Lal Lakir' aimed at facilitating villagers to monetise property rights and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state.
- 232. c** Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Sreevani gave birth to a baby girl at a hospital to become the first deputy chief minister in the country to have a child while in office.
- 233. c** The Justice Rohini Commission has been studying sub-categorisation of OBCs and is expected to submit its report to the government in July.
- 234. d** In a major setback to the government of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, the Supreme Court of Nepal reinstated the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Nepalese Parliament.
- 235. b** India Ratings and Research revised its outlook on the overall banking sector to 'stable' for the FY22.
- 236. a** Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru became the first in India and South Asia to own Disabled Aircraft Recovery Equipment kit that will enable faster resumption of operations during aircraft incidents on the runways thus receiving a boost to its runway emergency handling capabilities.
- 237. d** The IIT Ropar has developed a low-cost device to produce electrolysed water that could be used as an alternative to alcohol-based disinfectant.
- 238. c** Karnataka will host the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) later this year, state chief minister BS Yediyurappa and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju announced.
- 239. b** "Kushinagar Airport gets necessary clearances from DGCA to become 3rd licensed international airport of UP.
- 240. a** 'The Lost Soul', which comes out in the U.S., is a poetic story of a man who loses his soul in the daily rush and can only regain it in a very special way.

- 241. a** Uttar Pradesh received award for fastest implementation of Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar awarded the top-performing States and Districts for their exemplary work with respect to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme.
- 242. d** The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the National Urban Digital Mission, which was aimed at creating a shared digital infrastructure for cities.
- 243. b** All 87 village panchayats in Sevapuri are being developed by Varanasi district administration as India's first model block.
- 244. a** Anjali Bharadwaj, an Indian social activist working on issues of transparency and accountability, is one of the 12 "courageous" individuals named by the Biden administration for the newly-instituted International Anti-Corruption Champions Award.
- 245. d** Ghana has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery of 6,00,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India.
- 246. b** ICICI Bank announced the launch of a Common Payment Card System (CPCS) in partnership with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) to provide citizens with a one-stop solution for making various kind of payments within the city and beyond.
- 247. c** India hosted the first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021 in virtual mode according to a statement from the finance ministry.
- 248. c** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).
- 249. b** President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly constructed world's largest Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad.
- 250. b** National Science Day is celebrated in India on 28 February each year to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman on 28 February 1928.
- 251. c** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated 50 artisan-based SFURTI clusters spread over 18 States.
- 252. b** On February 19, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar launched India's BRICS 2021 website at the BRICS Secretariat at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan.
- 253. a** US President Joe Biden has nominated Indian-American lawyer and rights activist Kiran Ahuja to head the Office of Personnel Management, a federal agency that manages America's more than two million civil servants.
- 254. b** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses inaugural function of DRDO Skill Development Centre at Pilakhuwa in UP.
- 255. d** China regained its position as India's top trade partner in 2020, as New Delhi's reliance on imported machines outweighed its efforts to curb commerce with Beijing after a bloody border conflict.
- 256. b** India was the second most attacked country by cyber criminals after Japan in Asia Pacific in 2020, according to an IBM report released.
- 257. d** Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) announced that they have identified a sustainable source for the anti-cancer drug camptothecin, which is currently derived from two highly depleted tree species.

- 258. b** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has named Brisbane, Australia as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games.
- 259. a** A “one-stop guide” on how to move towards a more sustainable lifestyle in India, Bare Necessities: How to Live a Zero Waste Life, published by Penguin, is written by environmentalist Sahar Mansoor and sustainability consultant Tim De Ridder.
- 260. c** Russian supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova became a United Nations goodwill ambassador pledging to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.
- 261. d** Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K Palaniswami inaugurated the Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS), the largest in Asia, near Thalaivasal.
- 262. a** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government presented the Budget for 2021-22 and said it will bring a Universal Health Care scheme worth Rs. 3,500 crore, under which every family in the State will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs. 5 lakh.
- 263. d** As per the Information Technology (Guidelines for intermediaries and digital media ethics code) Rules, 2021, social media platforms will also be required to provide information, including related to verification of identity, to lawfully authorised agencies within 72 hours.
- 264. b** The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of Bangladesh from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC)
- 265. a** Niger’s electoral commission has declared the governing party candidate, Mohamed Bazoum, the winner of the country’s presidential election runoff.
- 266. c** Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd. (ABHICL), the Health Insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited, a significant non-banking financial services company, announced an industry-first initiative of up to 100 per cent health insurance premium returns and other significant product offering upgrades.
- 267. a** India engineers help build world’s first battery-electric loco. Electric cars are becoming a rage. Now, US Company Wabtec is building an electric locomotive that works on a battery.
- 268. b** With Bangladesh banning ketoprofen a painkiller used widely to treat cattle it became the first country to ban any of the drugs now known to be toxic to vultures since the previous veterinary diclofenac ban more than 10 years ago.
- 269. a** The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men’s skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo.
- 270. c** World Civil Defence Day is observed on 1st March every year, all over the world.
- 271. a** Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product, ODOFP. The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country.
- 272. b** The Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 is underway at Noida Haat. The fair was inaugurated by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

- 273. b** The task force on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) has agreed and approved the preparation of final detailed project report (DPR) on the proposed Mahandi (Barmul)-Godavari (Dowlaiswaram) link by ensuring utilisation of the allocated Godavari waters by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- 274. d** E-Daakhil portal for Consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 States/UTs. Department of Consumer Affairs is now proactively following up with the states to launch e-filing portal at their ends.
- 275. d** In a bid to tackle the rise in suicide rates for the first time in 11 years due to the coronavirus crisis, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has appointed Tetsushi Sakamoto as its first-ever Minister for Loneliness.
- 276. a** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to retain Pakistan on the “greylist” till the next review of its performance on the recommendations during the June Plenary session.
- 277. c** Solar winds may have led to Mars losing its atmosphere, according to a computer simulation study which confirms the long held belief that planets need a protective magnetic field to block such harmful radiations in order to sustain life.
- 278. a** In Boxing, Deepak Kumar (52 kg) wins the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- 279. c** Every year, Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations. On Zero Discrimination Day, which is commemorated every year on 1 March, UNAIDS is calling for an end to discrimination against women and girls and for equal rights, opportunities and treatment.
- 280. d** A space station supply ship named after the Black NASA mathematician featured in the movie “Hidden Figures” rocketed into orbit the 59th anniversary of John Glenn’s historic launch.

