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# MANTHAN

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**A General Awareness Weekly**

**11<sup>th</sup> January to 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2021**

# PREFACE

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**Dear Students,**

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

**Happy Reading**

**Team CL**



Career  
Launcher

## National



### India ranked high in the latest edition of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) released by non-profit Germanwatch

- **India ranked high along with the European Union and the United Kingdom** in the latest edition of the **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)** released by non-profit **Germanwatch**, December 7, 2020. However, the country needed to focus more on renewable energy, both, as a mitigation strategy and for its post-novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) green recovery, the report said.
- **No country was doing enough to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement**, according to the index. Six G20 countries were ranked among very low performers. **The United States, with a rank of 61, was the worst performer.**
- **India, for the second time in a row, continued to remain in the top 10.** The country scored 63.98 points out of 100. It received high ratings on all CCPI indicators except ‘renewable energy’, where it was categorised as having a ‘medium’ performance.
- **Last year, India had been ranked at the ninth position, with an overall score of 66.02.** The CCPI is an independent monitoring tool for tracking countries’ climate protection performance. It has been **published annually since 2005.**
- Political momentum on climate policy was **growing despite the postponement of the 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**, as several countries had updated their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the report said. But India’s performance under ‘climate policy’ was rated as ‘medium’. **India’s reluctance to update its NDC might be due to fears of lack of reciprocity from the developed countries**, the report said.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

### Jallikattu is a bull-taming sport held in Tamil Nadu

- **As Pongal celebrations began in Tamil Nadu on 14 January 2021**, Congress leader **Rahul Gandhi witnessed an Jallikattu event near Madurai** and spoke of the “Tamil spirit” and “emotions of the Tamil people”.

- **Jallikattu is a bull-taming sport that has traditionally been part of the festival of Pongal.** The festival is a celebration of nature, and thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, of which cattle-worship is part.
- Governments at the state and Centre have wrestled with **formulating a regulatory mechanism for Jallikattu, and a matter relating to whether Tamil Nadu can conserve it as a cultural right under Article 29(1) of the Constitution** — “Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same” — is before the Supreme Court.
- **In 2014, the Supreme Court had ruled that the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, “over-shadows or overrides the so-called tradition and culture”.** The court drew upon Upanishadic wisdom and advised Parliament to “elevate rights of animals to that of constitutional rights... so as to protect their dignity and honour”.
- **A tradition over 2,000 years old, Jallikattu is a competitive sport as well as an event to honour bull owners who rear them for mating. It is a violent sport in which contestants try to tame a bull for a prize; if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize.**

**Article 51 (G) of the Indian Constitution states that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life, and to have compassion for living creatures. Kambala is an annual race held in Karnataka where people sprint 142m through paddy fields with buffalo.** During the race, the racers try to bring the buffaloes under control by holding their reins tight and whipping them, making it amply clear that the animal plays an equally important role in achieving the timing.

### **Home Minister Amit Shah launched ‘Single Window Clearance System’ for coal mines**

- **Ministry of Coal launched Single Window Clearance Portal, a unified platform that facilitates grant of clearances and approvals required for starting a coal mine in India.**
- **Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah launched the portal in presence of Union Minister of Coal & Mines Shri Pralhad Joshi in an event organized in New Delhi to execute agreements with successful bidders of India’s first ever commercial coal mine auctions.**
- **Shri Shah said that 19 successful bidders have been allotted mines under the country’s first commercial coal mining auction. This will give the states estimated revenue of about Rs 6,500 crore per year and will also create more than 70,000 jobs.**

**Amit Anilchandra Shah is currently serving as the Minister of Home Affairs.** He served as the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from 2014 to 2020. He was **elected to the lower house of Parliament, Lok Sabha, in the 2019 Indian general elections from Gandhinagar.** Earlier, he had been elected as a member of the upper house of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, from Gujarat in 2017. Sworn in at the age of 54, he is the youngest serving full-time Home Minister.

### **Ramesh Pokhriyal inaugurated virtual International Akhand Conference EDUCON-2020**

- **Union Education Minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ inaugurated the two-day Virtual International Akhand Conference ‘EDUCON 2020’ through a video the conferencing platform on January 7, 2021.**
- **This two-day International Conference is being organised by the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in collaboration with the Global Education Research Association (GERA) under the patronage of Prof (Dr) Raghavendra P Tiwari, Vice-Chancellor, CUPB & Padma Shri Dr Mahendra Sodha (Patron, GERA).**
- **The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 is Envisioning education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace.** This International Conference commenced with the inaugural address by Hon’ble Minister of Education Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’.

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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

### High Level Committee to commemorate 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

- A **High Level Committee**, headed by the **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, has been **constituted to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** in a befitting manner. Union Culture Ministry has said that the High Level Committee will decide on the activities for a one year long commemoration, **beginning 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2021**.
- The Commemoration is being held as a tribute and as a mark of gratitude to the colossal contribution Netaji made to India’s freedom struggle. **The members of the Committee** will include experts, historians, authors, family members of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**, as well as eminent persons associated with **Azad Hind Fauj-INA**.
- The Committee will also lend guidance to the **commemoration activities in Delhi, Kolkata and other places associated with Netaji and Azad Hind Fauj**, both in India as well as overseas.

**Subhas Chandra Bose** was an **Indian nationalist whose defiant patriotism made him a hero in India**, but whose attempt during World War II to rid India of British rule with the help of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan left a troubled legacy. **The honorific Netaji (“Respected Leader”)** first applied in early 1942 to **Bose in Germany** by the Indian soldiers of the Indische Legion and by the German and Indian officials in the Special Bureau for India in Berlin, was later used throughout India. **He rose to become Congress President in 1938**. However, soon after being reelected in 1939, he was ousted from Congress leadership positions following differences with **Mahatma Gandhi** and the Congress high command. **The Provisional Government of Free India (Arzi Hakumat-e-Azad Hind) or, more simply, Azad Hind** founded on **21 October 1943**, the government was inspired by the concepts of **Subhas Chandra Bose** who was also the leader of the government and Head of State. He died from third-degree burns received when his plane crashed in Taiwan on **18 August 1945**.

### Madhya Pradesh’s Kuno Palpur to be India’s first cheetah sanctuary

- **More than 70 years after Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo of Koriya drove the last of India’s Asiatic cheetahs into extinction**, the animal is set to return to India. And the **Kuno-Palpur wildlife sanctuary**, which was **upgraded to a national park in 2018**, has been **designated the new habitat of the fastest animal on land**, which can sprint at **speeds of 80-128 km per hour**.
- **Located in the Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh**, the **Kuno-Palpur National Park** is spread over an area of 750 square kilometres. It currently has leopards, jackals, spotted deer, sambhar, neelgai, chinkara, wild boar and the four-horned antelope, a prey base ideal for felids.
- The sanctuary was also chosen for the **lion reintroduction project in 2013**, despite strong objections from **Gujarat**, which claimed that lions were part of the state’s heritage, that MP had a poor record in wildlife management, that Kuno Palpur had other big cat species which would jeopardise lion relocation.
- **Kuno Palpur**, therefore, was well on its way to become the only wildlife sanctuary in the world to host all four major cat species—lion, tiger, cheetah and leopard.

### Prime Minister urges youth to be part of Startup India International Summit ‘Prarambh’

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** said events’ being held **virtually** has given a **great opportunity for youngsters to be a part of many interesting domestic and global forums**. **Prarambh**, the **Startup India International Summit**, which is being held on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of this month is one such opportunity.
- This Summit seeks to bring together the top minds from industry, academia, investment, banking, finance and young start up leaders. Nation would also be marking 5 years since the **Start-Up India** initiative began. This initiative has propelled **India to be among the most attractive start-up eco-systems globally**.



**Startup India** is an initiative of the Government of India. The campaign was **first announced by Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi** during his speech in **15 August 2015** address from the Red Fort, in New Delhi. A startup defined as an entity that is headquartered in India, which was opened less than 10 years ago, and has an annual turnover less than Rs.100 crore (US\$14 million).

### Nitin Gadkari launched “Khadi Prakritik Paint” developed by KVIC

- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari **launched an innovative new paint developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission**. The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called “**Khadi Prakritik Paint**” is a **first-of-its-kind product**, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.
- Based on cow dung as its main ingredient, the paint is cost-effective and odourless**, and has been **certified by Bureau of Indian Standards**. **Khadi Prakritik Paint is available in two forms** - distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint. Production of Khadi Prakritik Paint is aligned with Prime Minister’s vision of increasing farmers’ income.

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

### Indian Navy coordinated second edition of largest coastal defence exercise Sea Vigil-21

- Indian Navy coordinated the second edition of the largest coastal defence exercise Sea Vigil-21** starting. The two-day **biennial pan-India coastal defence exercise**, inaugural edition of which was conducted in January 2019, was undertaken **along the entire 7,516-kilometre long coastline**.
- The exercise also includes **Exclusive Economic Zone of the country and will involve all the 13 coastal States and Union Territories** along with other maritime stakeholders. It also included the fishing and coastal communities. **The entire coastal security set up was reorganised after the 26/11 Terror attack at Mumbai** which was launched via the sea route.
- SEA VIGIL and TROPEX together covered the entire spectrum of maritime security challenges**, including transition from peace to conflict. Assets of the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, Customs and other maritime agencies participated in **SEA VIGIL**. The exercise is also **facilitated by the Ministries of Defence, Home Affairs, Shipping, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Fisheries, Customs, State Governments and other agencies of Centre and State**.

### India to set up \$ 1 million financial facility for academic collaboration with Arab world

- India decided to set up one million dollar facility for academic collaboration with the Arab World** in a step that will have far reaching impact on people to people contacts between Delhi and its extended neighbours.
- This was decided **at third Senior Officials Meeting of the Arab-India Cooperation Forum** held via video conference. The financial facility will be a rolling one and continue to be replenished.

**The Arab world also known as the Arab nation consists of the 22 Arab countries** which are members of the Arab League. **A majority of these countries are located in Western Asia, North Africa, and the Horn of Africa;** the southernmost member, the Comoros, is an island country off the coast of East Africa.

### Defence Secretary co-chairs 13<sup>th</sup> India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue with his Vietnamese counterpart

- Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar co-chaired the 13<sup>th</sup> India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue** along with his Vietnamese co-chair **Sr Lt Gen Nguyen Chi Vinh, Deputy Defence Minister of Vietnam**. During virtual interaction, both of them expressed satisfaction at the ongoing defence cooperation between the two countries in spite of the limitations imposed by COVID 19.
- During the interaction, the Defence Secretary and the Deputy Defence Minister exchanged views on the **plan of action that has emanated from the recently concluded Virtual Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc in December 2020.**

**Vietnam is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam. The dong has been the currency of Vietnam since May 3, 1978. Nguyen Phu Trọng is the current President of Vietnam. Nguyen Xuan Phuc is the current Prime Minister of Vietnam.**

### **India's first Fire Park comes up in Odisha**

- **Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'Fire Park', a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures. He also launched a dynamic online portal, 'AgnishamaSeva' of Odisha Fire Service on virtual platform. Located inside the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.**

**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 13<sup>th</sup>-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. Naveen Patnaik is the current and 14<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Odisha.**

### **NIC and CBSE to jointly launch CollabCAD Software**

- **National Informatics Centre and Central Board of Secondary Education, CBSE jointly launched CollabCAD Software to provide a total engineering solution for students and Faculty of Engineering Graphics Curriculum. This initiative aims to provide a great platform to students across the country to create and modify 3D digital designs with a free flow of creativity and imagination.**
- **This software will also enable students to collaborate over designs across the network and concurrently access the same design data for storage and visualization. National Informatics Centre, NIC, CBSE, and Atal Innovation Mission also jointly released a comprehensive e-book on CollabCAD 3D modeling. The Electronics and IT Ministry said, it will guide CAD students, beginners, and professionals in understanding and using CollabCAD Software.**

**National Informatics Centre (NIC) is an attached office under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) established in 1976 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.**

### **India proposes 8 point agenda to UN Security Council to combat terrorism**

- **External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar has said that COVID-19 has further aggravated the terrorism concerns for the world. Speaking at the United Nations Security Council open debate on the topic of Threats to International Peace and security caused by terrorist acts, Dr Jaishankar said the economic uncertainty caused due to the pandemic has made the radical extremist ideologies more susceptible towards terrorist activities.**
- **External Affairs Minister proposed an eight point action plan in order to combat the menace of terrorism. He said, the council should not countenance double standards in their battle against terrorism. Dr. Jaishankar added that there are no good and bad terrorists. He asserted, those who propagate such distinctions have an agenda and those who cover up for terrorists are equally culpable.**

**Subrahmanyam Jaishankar is the current Minister of External Affairs of the Government of India since 31 May 2019. He is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party and is a Member of Indian Parliament in the Rajya Sabha since 5 July 2019, representing Gujarat. He has previously served as the Foreign Secretary from January 2015 to January 2018. He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1977.**

### **Farmers in Maharashtra benefiting from 'Rin Samadhan Yojna'**

- **State Bank of India has provided a major relief to farmers under its loan settlement schemes. Many farmers in Maharashtra are benefiting from this Rin Samadhan Yojna. The bank has appealed to the borrower farmers to immediately contact their respective SBI branch to avail the benefit of this loan waiver scheme.**

- Under the Rin Samadhan Yojna, if the farmer, who has borrowed loan, pays 20 per cent of the principal amount of the total dues, pending since two years, then the entire loan will be waived. At the same time, new agricultural loans are also being given to these farmers. This is providing a great relief to the farmers.

Maharashtra is India's second-most populous state and third-largest state by area. Nagpur is Maharashtra's second capital and hosts the winter session of the state legislature. Pune is its cultural capital. Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray takes oath as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Uddhav Thackeray is the first of his family to be the chief minister of Maharashtra. His father Bal Thackeray founded the Shiv Sena over five decades ago. Bhagat Singh Koshiyari is serving as the current Governor of Maharashtra.

### Kevadiya, India's first railway station with green building certification

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off eight trains connecting different regions of the country to Kevadiya, Gujarat via video conferencing. Kevadiya station is India's first railway station with a Green Building Certification. Kevadia is home to the Statue of Unity dedicated to Vallabhbhai Patel, in Gujarat.

### India's first Labour Movement museum to come up in Kerala

- India's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, will be launched in Kerala's houseboat tourism hub, Alappuzha.
- The museum will feature a huge repository of documents and exhibits that shaped the labour movements across the continents and impacted Alappuzha, the cradle of the labour movement in the country, in particular and Kerala in general.
- A trade union can be defined as an organised association of workers in a trade or profession, formed to further their rights and interests. In India, Trade Unions in India are registered under the Trade Union Act (1926).

### In a first in India, Haryana launches Air Taxi services

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated air taxi services from Chandigarh to Hisar from Chandigarh Airport under UDAN scheme of the central government. For the first time in the country, a small aircraft in the form of an air taxi is being used for services.
- The launch of the flight operations under UDAN RCS is in sync with the government's objective to provide air connectivity with metros to the Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities of the country. The second phase services for Hisar to Dehradun started on January 18. On January 23, in the third phase, two more routes from Chandigarh to Dehradun and Hisar to Dharamshala will be added.

Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) was launched as a regional connectivity scheme under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016. The scheme is implemented by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and is operational for a period of 10 years. In April 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first Shimla-New Delhi flight under a government scheme to boost regional air connectivity. The first flight operations from Belgaum (Karnataka) to Surat (Gujarat) to Kishangarh (Ajmer) were flagged off under the RCS-UDAN (Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) of the Government of India.

### In A First for India, Bhopal Issues ID Cards for Third Gender

- In a first for India, the local administration in Bhopal has started issuing ID cards to people from the third gender to help them avail the benefits of the state government's welfare schemes. Through the ID cards, the third gender would be eligible for the schemes that are run by the social justice department in the state. Bhopal is the first district in the country to give ID cards to the transgender community.

Third gender, or third sex, is a concept in which individuals are categorized, either by themselves or by society, as neither man nor woman. In 2014, In National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India case, the Supreme Court of India declared transgender people to be a 'third gender'. It also affirmed that the fundamental rights granted under the Constitution of India will be equally applicable to transgender people, and gave them the right to self-identification of their gender as male, female or third-gender.





### Twitter permanently suspends US President Donald Trump's account

- US President Donald Trump has been **permanently suspended from social network app Twitter due to the risk of further incitement of violence**. In a statement Twitter said the decision was made after close review of recent Tweets from the @realDonaldTrump account. **At the time of permanent suspension, Trump had 88.7 million followers and followed 51 people.**
- The San Francisco-based company announced the ban two days after Trump was initially suspended for posting a series of tweets that misled users about the presidential election results, and appeared to encourage violent rioters who had mobbed the US Capitol. One included a video message of Trump expressing love for the insurgents and calling the election “fraudulent.”
- **Hundreds of Trump supporters entered the US Capitol as the US Congress attempted to certify Joe Biden's victory in the presidential election.** The ensuing violence led to the death of four civilians and a police officer. Twitter had warned then that it would ban Mr Trump permanently if he breached the platform's rules again.
- Soon after a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol, **his social media accounts were suspended by Big Tech companies like Twitter and Facebook for his alleged role in inciting violence and spreading misinformation.** The incident spurred a renewed debate about **Section 230 of the US' Communications Decency Act** — the controversial piece of internet legislation that permitted these tech companies to flex their powers and ban the president in the first place.
- **Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act was passed in 1996** and provides legal immunity to internet companies for content that is shared on their websites. The act was first introduced to regulate pornography online. **Section 230 is an amendment to the act, which holds users responsible for their comments and posts online.**
- Trump posted two tweets. **“The 75,000,000 great American Patriots who voted for me, AMERICA FIRST, and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, will have a GIANT VOICE long into the future. They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form!!!”**
- Twitter said that Trump's tweet that he would not be attending Biden's inauguration was being received by a number of his supporters as further confirmation that the Nov. 3 election that he lost was not legitimate.

**Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as “tweets”.** Registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Users access Twitter through its website interface or its mobile-device application software (“app”), though the service could also be accessed via SMS before April 2020. **Twitter, Inc. is based in San Francisco, California. Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July of that year.**

### Israel appoints Honorary Consul in Northeast India

- The Embassy of Israel in India has appointed Joyshree Das Verma as Honorary Consul in the region with jurisdiction over the States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim. As part of efforts to increase its presence and collaborations in India's Northeast, Israel has appointed an Honorary Consul in the region who will be based in Assam.

- During the visit, the Ambassador had laid the **foundation stone of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Vegetables in Khetri, Assam. The region's first Indo-Israeli Centre of Excellence was inaugurated in Mizoram in 2018.**

Israel is a country in the Middle East, Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital, however, neither claim is widely recognized internationally. Knesset is the unicameral national legislature of Israel. Israeli new shekel is the currency of Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu is serving as the 9<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of Israel since 2009. Reuven Rivlin is serving as the 10<sup>th</sup> and current President of Israel since 2014.

### British Indian minister Alok Sharma given sole charge of UN climate summit

- **Alok Sharma, one of the Indian-origin ministers in U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Cabinet,** relinquished his role as Business Secretary in a mini-reshuffle to **take sole charge as President of COP26 – the United Nations climate summit scheduled for Glasgow, Scotland, in November.**
- **The Agra-born minister, who was until now in charge of dual roles, will focus entirely on what has been dubbed as the largest summit the U.K. has ever hosted, bringing together representatives from nearly 200 countries, including India.**

### Bangladesh is country of focus at 51<sup>st</sup> International Film Festival of India

- **Bangladesh is the country of focus at the 51<sup>st</sup> International Film Festival of India (IFFI) starting at Goa on January 16. The festival will conclude on 24<sup>th</sup> January. It is being organised in a hybrid format considering the Corona pandemic.**
- **Four films from Bangladesh have been included in this section to recognise the cinematic excellence and contribution of the country.** The country of focus section included Jibandhuli directed by Tanvir Mokammel, Meghmallar directed by Zahidur Rahman Anjan, Under Construction by Rubaiyat Hossain and Sincerely Yours, Dhaka by Nuhash Humanyun, Syed Ahmed Shawki and 9 other individual directors.

### Trump administration labels Cuba as 'state sponsor of terrorism'

- **The United States has designated Cuba as a "state sponsor of terrorism",** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced, the latest move in the final days of the Trump administration that **observers say will complicate President-elect Joe Biden's foreign policy plans.**
- **The US recently added a Cuban bank to its restricted entities list, alleging that the financial institution had ties to the Cuban military and its profits helped fund the country's "interference" in Venezuela.**

**Cuba is located in the northern Caribbean where the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean meet. Havana is the capital city, largest city, and leading commercial center of Cuba. The convertible peso is one of two official currencies in Cuba, the other being the Cuban peso. Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermudez is serving as the 19<sup>th</sup> and current President of Cuba. He was previously First Vice President from 2013 to 2018.**

### Donald Trump becomes first US President to be impeached twice

- **Donald Trump has become the first US president to be impeached twice. The House of Representatives voted to charge him with inciting last week's mob attack on US Congress.** Trump was impeached by 232 - 197 vote by the US House on a single charge of incitement of insurrection that left five dead and **the Capitol ransacked.**
- **Impeachment refers only to the House, the lower chamber of Congress, bringing charges, or Articles of Impeachment.** The next major step is for the Senate, the upper chamber, to have a trial to determine Trump's guilt. **A two- third majority is needed to convict Trump.** If all 100 senators are present for the vote, at least 17 Republicans need to join the Democrats to convict Trump.
- **The House approved a single article of impeachment — a formal charge — accusing Trump of "incitement of insurrection,"** focused on a speech he delivered to **thousands of supporters shortly before the pro-Trump mob rampaged through the Capitol. Trump is likely to argue at trial that his remarks were free speech protected by the Constitution's First Amendment** and that, while he told supporters to "fight," he did not intend it as a literal call to violence.

**For the first time on December 18, 2019, Donald Trump was impeached for conditioning military aid and a White House meeting for Ukraine on the announcement of a pair of investigations: one into his potential rival for the White House in the 2020 election, Joe Biden, and son Hunter; and a second into a conspiracy theory that Ukraine, instead of Russia, was behind foreign tampering in the 2016 US election. According to Article 61 of the Constitution of India, when a President is to be impeached for violation of the Constitution, the charge shall be preferred by either House of Parliament.**

### **Estonia's PM resigns over corruption scandal in his party**

- **Estonia's Prime Minister has handed in his resignation to the Baltic country's president after a corruption scandal investigated by the police and prosecutors in his Center Party.** The move automatically prompts the resignation of Estonia's three-party coalition government.
- **Estonian Prime Minister Juri Ratas said on his Facebook page that he would step down as "the suspicion expressed by the Public Prosecutor's Office.... does not mean that someone is definitely guilty but they will inevitably cast a serious shadow over all those involved."**

**Estonia is a country on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea in Northern Europe. Tallinn is the capital city. Kersti Kaljulaid is the current President of Estonia. Euro is the official currency of it.**

### **World's oldest known cave painting found in Indonesia**

- **Archaeologists have discovered the world's oldest known cave art — a life-sized picture of a wild pig that was painted at least 45,500 years ago in Indonesia. The cave painting uncovered in South Sulawesi consists of a figurative depiction of a warty pig, a wild boar that is endemic to this Indonesian island.**
- **The researchers noted that the Sulawesi warty pig painting, dated to at least 45,500 years ago, is part of a rock art panel located above a high ledge along the rear wall of Leang Tedongnge.**

**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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.**

### **19<sup>th</sup> Dhaka International Film Festival to pay tribute to Satyajit Ray**

- **The 19<sup>th</sup> Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) was inaugurated on 16<sup>th</sup> January. The film festival this year is dedicated to the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.**
- **The festival Director Ahmed Muztaba Zamal said that 225 films from 73 countries are being screened during the 9 day long festival between 16-24 January. The festival will have 10 categories including Cinema of the world, Children's Film, Women Film Maker's section, Spiritual Films, Bangladesh Panorama, Tribute and Retrospective among others.**
- **A special category on the leaders who changed the world has been introduced in the festival. It will show films relating to the life of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Mahatma Gandhi, Lenin, Yaser Arafat, Fidel Castro and others during the festival. Spring Blossom, a film from France, directed by Suzanne Lindon will be the opening film of the festival.**
- **The tribute section of the festival will be dedicated to the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray to commemorate his birth centenary. The section will showcase Pather Panchali, Aparajito, Jalsaghar, Sonar Kella and Hirok Rajar Deshe directed by Satyajit Ray.**

### **North Korea unveils new submarine-launched ballistic missile**

- **North Korea has unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile described as the world's most powerful weapon. Pyongyang unveiled the missile during a military parade. The event did not showcase North Korea's largest intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which was unveiled at a much larger military parade in October.**



- **That colossal weapon** is believed to be able to **deliver a nuclear warhead to anywhere in the US**, and its size had surprised even seasoned analysts when it was put on show last year.

**North Korea is a country in East Asia constituting the northern part of the Korean Peninsula.** The country is bordered to the north by China and by Russia and to the south by South Korea, with the **heavily fortified Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)** separating the two. **Pyongyang is the capital** and largest city of North Korea. **Kim Jong-un is currently serving as Supreme Leader of North Korea since 2011.** The **North Korean won** is the official currency of North Korea.

### At 18 million, India has the world's largest diaspora population

- **India has the largest diaspora population in the world with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020**, according to a report by the United Nations, which says the UAE, the US and Saudi Arabia host the largest number of migrants from India.
- The report '**International Migration 2020 Highlights**', by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) released, said the **spatial distribution of transnational populations varies greatly and India's diaspora, the largest in the world**, is distributed across a number of major countries of destination.
- Other countries with a large diaspora included Mexico and Russia (11 million each), China (10 million) and Syria (8 million). The US remained by far the largest country of destination of international migrants with **51 million migrants in 2020, equal to 18 per cent of the world's total**. Germany hosted the second largest number of migrants worldwide at around 16 million, followed by Saudi Arabia (13 million), Russia (12 million) and the UK (9 million).
- The report said according to World Bank projections, the **Covid-19 pandemic may reduce the volume of remittances sent to low-and middle-income countries from USD 548 billion in 2019 to USD 470 billion in 2021**, a decline of 14 per cent. **India is the main country of recipient of remittances worldwide and in 2019 received USD 83 billion in remittances from its diaspora.** The World Bank projects that in 2020, the amount will decline by around 9 per cent to about USD 76 billion.

### UN Human Rights Council picks Fiji in first-ever presidential vote

- The **UN Human Rights Council elected Fiji's ambassador as its president in 2021**, following an unprecedented secret ballot after a diplomatic stand-off blocked the usual consensus decision.
- **Fiji's ambassador in Geneva, Nazhat Shameem Khan, who served as the council's vice president in 2020** and is considered a rights champion, won with 29 out of 47 votes.
- The council's presidency rotates each year between the regions and the candidate is typically agreed upon by consensus within each regional group. That meant the council, which **for the first time in its 15-year history began the year with no president**, was forced to hold unprecedented vote among all 47 members.

**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. Nazhat Shameem is a Fijian judge and diplomat serving as the President of the United Nations Human Rights Council since 2021.**

### Maldives' first foreign funded project of 2021 backed by India inaugurated

- **The first foreign funded project in Maldives in 2021 that was backed by India was inaugurated.** Ekuveni synthetic running track in Male' was inaugurated by the President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.
- **It is the 1<sup>st</sup> India-funded grant project to be inaugurated in 2021 and overall, the 8<sup>th</sup> Indian grant project in the Maldives to be completed in the last six months.**

**Maldives is a South Asian country, located in the Indian Ocean, situated in the Arabian Sea. Male is the capital and most populated city, traditionally called the "King's Island" for its central location. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is the current President of the Maldives.**



## Museveni wins 6<sup>th</sup> term amid allegations of rigged election

- **Uganda's Yoweri Museveni has won a sixth term in office, extending his 35-year rule** after an election which took place under heavy security and an Internet blackout, and which his main rival said was marred by fraud and violence.
- The 76-year-old leader, **who took power in 1986, is one of Africa's longest serving Presidents**, and was accused of crushing the opposition and media ahead of one of the most violent election campaigns in recent years.
- **Mr. Museveni won with 58.6% of votes**, seeing off a stiff battle from the former ragga singer Bobi Wine, 38, whose turn to politics fired up a youthful population where three quarters are under 30 years old.

**Uganda is a landlocked country in East-Central Africa. Kampala is the capital** and largest city of Uganda. **Uganda's current president is Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**, who took power in January 1986 after a protracted six-year guerrilla war. **The shilling is the currency of Uganda.**

## Most powerful passports 2021: Japan tops list, India ranks 85; Pakistan continues to be in worst

- **Japan tops the list of being the most powerful passport in the world for the year 2021**, according to the **latest report by the Henley Passport Index. India ranks 85<sup>th</sup> in the most powerful passport report** with a visa-free score of 58.
- While, **Pakistan (rank 107) and Nepal (rank 104) continue to be in the 'worst passports to hold' category as reported by CNN with Pakistan having a visa-free score of 32 countries and Nepal having a score of 38 destinations. Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan continue to be the countries with the worst passport to hold with a passport score of 29, 28 and 26 respectively.**
- According to the report released on January 5, **Japanese citizens can travel to as many as 191 countries visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 191 destinations** around the world. Singapore is in second place (with a score of 190) and South Korea ties with Germany in third place (with a score of 189).
- **Countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Switzerland are tied at the seventh position** with regard to the most powerful passports in the world with a visa-free score of 185. Australia stands at the 8<sup>th</sup> position with a visa score of 184.
- **Dr. Christian H. Kaelin, Chairman of leading residence and citizenship advisory firm Henley & Partners and the inventor of the passport index concept**, says that the latest ranking provides an opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary upheaval that characterised 2020.

## Adani Group to invest in Colombo Port terminal

- In his government's first admission yet of **Indian involvement in developing a container terminal at the strategically coveted Colombo Port**, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said **49% of the investment will come from the "Adani Group and other stakeholders"**.
- In May 2019, the predecessor government led by Maithripala Sirisena and Ranil Wickremesinghe signed a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with India and Japan for the project.**
- The three countries agreed that the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) would retain **100% ownership**, while a jointly-owned Terminal Operations Company 51% stake with Sri Lanka, and 49% with India and Japan would run the terminal.

**Adani Group is an Indian multinational conglomerate company headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. It was founded by Gautam Adani in 1988 as a commodity trading business, with the flagship company Adani Enterprises Limited (previously Adani Exports Limited). Gautam Adani is the chairman.**



## India's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$758 million to reach a record high of \$586.082 billion

- **India's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$758 million to reach a record high of \$586.082 billion** in the week ended January 8, 2021, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed. In the previous week ended January 1, the reserves had increased by \$4.483 billion to \$585.324 billion. In the reporting week, **foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves, rose by \$150 million to \$541.791 billion.**
- After remaining unchanged during the week ended January 8, 2021, **the special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by \$5 million to \$1.515 billion.** The country's reserve position with the IMF rose by \$35 million to \$5.181 billion in the week, according to data from the banking regulator.
- **The Reserve Bank functions as the custodian and manager of forex reserves,** and operates within the overall policy framework agreed upon with the government. The RBI allocates the dollars for specific purposes. The RBI also uses its forex kitty for the orderly movement of the rupee. **The rising reserves have also helped the rupee to strengthen against the dollar.**

The foreign exchange reserves to GDP ratio is around 15 per cent. Reserves will provide a level of confidence to markets that a country can meet its external obligations, demonstrate the backing of domestic currency by external assets, assist the government in meeting its foreign exchange needs and external debt obligations and maintain a reserve for national disasters or emergencies. **The major reason for the rise in forex reserves is the rise in investment in foreign portfolio investors in Indian stocks and foreign direct investments (FDIs).**

## New Foreign Trade Policy to come into effect from April 1

- The meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry was held on the subject "New Foreign Trade Policy 2021-26". **The new Foreign Trade Policy-FTP will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 for a period of five years.**
- **The policy will strive to make India a leader in the area of international trade and channelize the synergies gained through merchandise and services exports for growth and employment with a goal to make India a 5 trillion dollar economy. The FTP 2015-20 came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and the same was extended by one year till 31 March this year due to Covid-19 pandemic.**

**Foreign trade refers to the trade between different economies of the world.** It usually includes the trade of goods and services between the residents of different nations. **The Indian foreign trade policy is regulated by the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.**

## India's first toy cluster to come up in Bhanapur village of Koppal district

- **Bhanapur, a remote village in Koppal district, is poised to attain star status with the Karnataka government the laying foundation stone for the country's first toy manufacturing cluster in the village.**
- **The manufacturing campus is being promoted by Aequs SEZ Pvt Ltd in partnership with Karnataka.** Bhanapur village in Koppal district, which has a population of less than 2,000 people, is located 365 km from Bengaluru.

## RBI Financial Stability Report: Banks gross NPA may rise to 13.5% by September 2021

- **Banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to 13.5% by September 2021, from 7.5% in September 2020** under the baseline scenario, according to **Financial Stability Report (FSR)** released by the Reserve Bank of India.
- If the macroeconomic environment worsens into a severe stress scenario, the **GNPA ratio may escalate to 14.8%, the report said.** "The stress tests indicate that the **GNPA ratio of all scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) may increase from 7.5% in September 2020 to 13.5% by September 2021 under the baseline scenario,**" the FSR report added.
- **State-run banks are seen being the worst-affected among bank groups with their GNPA ratio expected to increase to 16.2 per cent by September 2021** under the baseline scenario from 9.7 per cent in September 2020. And to a high of 17.6 per cent in a severe stress scenario.

A non-performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remained overdue for a period of 90 days. Banks are required to classify NPAs further into Substandard, Doubtful and Loss assets. 1. Substandard assets: Assets which has remained NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months. 2. Doubtful assets: An asset would be classified as doubtful if it has remained in the substandard category for a period of 12 months. 3. Loss assets: As per RBI, "Loss asset is considered uncollectible and of such little value that its continuance as a bankable asset is not warranted, although there may be some salvage or recovery value."

## Digital Evolution Scorecard 2020: India ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in 'Break Out Economies'

- **Rapidly digitalising India was ranked highly among "Break Out Economies"** in the third edition of the Digital Evolution Scorecard developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard.
- **Third rank Indonesia, and India,** which ranks number four in momentum, have displayed increasing digital momentum suggesting the potential to **rapidly digitalise for both post-COVID economic recovery and longer-term transformation.**
- **China which leads the countries in the "Break Out Economies" group is more evolved digitally** due mainly to its combination of rapidly growing demand and innovation.

## FSS and India Post Payments Bank join hands to promote financial inclusion

- **FSS (Financial Software and Systems), a leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, has partnered with India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to promote financial inclusion** among underserved and unbanked segments.
- As part of the collaboration, **IPPB will use FSS' Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) to deliver interoperable and affordable doorstep banking services to customers across India.** FSS' AePS solution combines the low-cost structure of a branchless business model, digital distribution, and micro-targeting that lowers acquisition costs and improves reach.

**Financial software or financial system software is special application software that records all the financial activity within a business organization.** Basic features of this system not only includes all the modules of accounting software like accounts payable, accounts receivable, ledger, reporting modules and payroll but also to explore alternative investment choices and calculate statistical relationships.

## RBI to introduce LEI for large-value transactions in RTGS/NEFT from April

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to introduce the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) system for all payment transactions of value Rs 50 crore and above undertaken by entities (non-individuals) using the Reserve Bank-run Centralised Payment Systems with effect from April 1, 2021.**
- **LEI is a 20-digit number used to uniquely identify parties to financial transactions worldwide.** It was conceived as a key measure to improve the quality and accuracy of financial data systems for better risk management post the global financial crisis. **RBI introduced LEI in a phased manner for participants in the over-the-counter (OTC) derivative and non-derivative markets as also for large corporate borrowers.**



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.

### 11 Indian cos in top-500 globally by value, country ranked 10<sup>th</sup>

- Total 11 private Indian firms have made it to the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world, and the country is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> on the chart, as per a report. The total value of these 11 companies grew 14 per cent and has been pegged at USD 805 billion or nearly a third of the Indian GDP.
- All these companies in the list of non-state enterprises have gained in value during 2020, which was hit by the pandemic, barring tobacco major ITC and second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank, as per the ‘Hurun Global 500’ report.
- Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries leads among the local enterprises with a 20.5 per cent jump in valuation to USD 168.8 billion as of December 1 and is ranked 54<sup>th</sup> globally, as per the list. Tata Consultancy Services’ value grew by nearly 30 per cent during the year to take its value to USD 139 billion, ranking it 73<sup>rd</sup> globally and making it the second most valuable Indian firm.
- Of the 11 most valuable companies, seven have their headquarters in the financial capital (Mumbai), followed by one each in Pune, Bengaluru, Kolkata and New Delhi, it said.
- The list of 500 is led by consumer technology major Apple with a valuation of USD 2.1 trillion and is followed by Microsoft and Amazon at USD 1.6 trillion. The US accounted for nearly half of the enterprises with 242 of the 500 entries, followed by China at 51 and Japan at 30 companies.

### Yes Bank launches wellness themed credit card

- Yes Bank has announced its partnership with Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited to launch the ‘YES BANK Wellness’ and ‘YES BANK Wellness Plus’ Credit Cards – aimed at the holistic health, self-care and wellness of consumers.
- As consumers face new realities of home-schooling of children, working from home and lack of physical contact with loved ones and colleagues, this is an innovative step to encourage and promote self-care, mental and physical well-being. Consumers can now enjoy the bouquet of complimentary health benefits by simply registering on the Aditya Birla Multiply App.

Yes Bank Limited is an Indian private sector bank headquartered in Mumbai, India and was founded by Rana Kapoor and Ashok Kapur in 2004. On 5 March 2020 in an attempt to avoid the collapse of the bank, which had an excessive amount of bad loans, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took control of it. RBI later reconstructed the board and named Prashant Kumar, former Chief financial officer of SBI, as new MD & CEO at Yes Bank. Yes Bank is owned by State Bank of India who has a 30% stake in the company as of 28 July 2020.

### PayPal becomes first foreign firm in China with full ownership of payments business

- PayPal Holding Inc has become the first foreign operator with 100% control of a payment platform in China, according to Chinese government data, as the U.S. fintech giant eyes a bigger foothold in a booming market for online payments.
- PayPal acquired the 30% stake it doesn’t already own in China’s GoPay, formally known as Guofubao Information Technology Co., on Dec. 31, 2020, according to shareholder data from the National Enterprise Credit Information Publicity System. Financial details weren’t disclosed in the data. The stake purchase came a year after PayPal bought a 70% stake in GoPay for an undisclosed amount then becoming the first foreign company licensed to provide online payment services in China.



**PayPal Holdings, Inc. is an American company operating an online payments system** in the majority of countries that support online money transfers, and serves as an electronic alternative to traditional paper methods like checks and money orders. **PayPal was originally established by Max Levchin, Peter Thiel, and Luke Nosek in December 1998 as Confinity**, a company that developed security software for handheld devices. **Daniel H. Schulman is president and CEO of PayPal.**

### **IDFC First Bank enters credit card business**

- **A credit card allowing cash withdrawal – and interest free – sounds too good to be true. But IDFC First Bank is offering one, claiming another industry first perquisite** by way of the lowest finance charges that would be synchronized with customer ratings.
- **The lender is set to levy finance charges at an annual rate of 9% for the best rated customer, climbing up to 36% for lower rated customers.** Generally, the annual percentage rate or the APR for other banks ranges 34-40%. Customers can also use interest-free cash withdrawal facilities at ATMs of up to 48 days.
- **They will have to pay a nominal fee of Rs 250 per transaction against Rs 500 charged and interest charges levied by other major lenders.**

**IDFC First Bank (formerly IDFC Bank) is an Indian banking company with headquarters in Mumbai** that forms part of IDFC, an integrated infrastructure finance company. The bank started operations on 1 October 2015. **IDFC FIRST Bank was founded as a new entity by the merger of Erstwhile IDFC Bank and Erstwhile Capital First on December 18 2018.** On 11 March 2020, the bank announced that it has signed **Mr. Amitabh Bachchan**, as its first brand ambassador. **The bank IDFC Bank is the first in India to launch Aadhaar-linked cashless merchant solution.** **V. Vaidyanathan is MD and CEO of IDFC First Bank Ltd.**

### **Milind Pant, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and Edward Knight join USIBC Board as vice chairs**

- **Three top corporate leaders, including Milind Pant, CEO of Amway and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson, Biocon, have joined the 2021 Global Board of Directors of US India Business Council (USIBC) as vice chairs.**
- **Besides Pant and Mazumdar-Shaw, Edward Knight, vice chair, Nasdaq has also been inducted in the leadership team of the leading business advocacy organisation.** The induction of three top corporate leaders strengthens the USIBC's leadership team as the Council engages a new US administration and advocates for stronger US-India commercial ties in an increasingly complex world.

**The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and United States to enhance investment flows.** The organization serves as a direct link between business and Government leaders, resulting in increased trade and investment to strengthen ties between the two nations. **Former United States Department of State official Nisha Desai Biswal serves as the current chairman of USIBC.** She is assisted by a board of directors.

### **RBI forms working group on digital lending**

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a working group on digital lending — including online platforms and mobile apps — to study all aspects of digital lending activities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players.**
- **“Digital lending has the potential to make access to financial products and services more fair, efficient and inclusive. From a peripheral supporting role a few years ago, FinTech-led innovation is now at the core of the design, pricing and delivery of financial products and services,”.**
- **The working group consists of both internal and external members. The internal members include Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI (Chairman); Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Chief General Manager in-charge, Department of Supervision, RBI; S.P. Vasudevan, Chief General Manager, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, RBI; and Manoranjan Mishra, Chief General Manager, Department of Regulation, RBI (Member Secretary). The external members are Vikram Mehta, co-founder, Monexo Fintech; and Rahul Sasi, cyber security expert and founder of CloudSEK.**

## India's m-cap to GDP ratio crosses 100% for first time in over a decade

- The combined market capitalisation of all listed companies in India has crossed the country's GDP for the first time in more than 10 years. This happened last in September 2010, when the market capitalisation to GDP ratio was 100.7 per cent.
- The current ratio is, however, much lower than the all-time high of 149.4 per cent in December 2007. In the past 15 years, the ratio has seen a low of around 52 per cent in March 2005, with a median value of 78.6 per cent. The m-cap to GDP ratio on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) reached Rs 197.7 trillion on January 14, against India's nominal GDP of around Rs 190 trillion during the year ended December 2020.
- The GDP number is based on the advance estimates for FY21 released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). According to the NSO's estimate, the nominal size of India's gross domestic product (GDP) in the current year would be around Rs 195 trillion, lower than the current market capitalisation of the companies listed on BSE.

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 10<sup>th</sup> largest stock exchange. Ashishkumar Chauhan (Ashish Chauhan) is the current managing director and chief executive officer of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

## IRFC IPO Set To Be First Government-owned NBFC to Go Public

- Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), valued at Rs 4,633 crore, is set to hit the market with its initial public offer (IPO). The IPO's price band will be of Rs 25-26 per equity share.
- IRFC is the finance arm of Indian Railways. It raises financial resources for expansion through capital markets and other borrowings. At the upper end of the price band, IRFC hopes to raise Rs 4,633 crore, and at the lower end, Rs 4,455 crore.
- The anchor book opened allocating up to 50 per cent of the portion reserved for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), to build investor confidence on the IPO. This is the first time that a PSU is using the anchor-investor route to raise funds.

## ICICI Bank ties up with Niyo to issue prepaid cards to MSMEs

- ICICI Bank has tied up with Niyo, a new age fintech, to issue prepaid cards to workers of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- MSMEs will now be able to get 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' powered by Visa, for their blue-collar workers, who are mostly under-banked. With this, MSMEs can upload the salaries of their workers on the card, which the workers can then utilise as per their need in a seamless manner.
- The 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' allows an individual to receive funds up to Rs.1 lakh into the card account. It offers convenience and safety of digital banking to the blue-collar workforce while providing a state-of-the-art salary disbursement solution to the employers.

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.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



## Inventions/Discoveries

### ISRO to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across country to promote education

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will adopt one hundred (100) Atal Tinkering Labs across the country to promote education in the field of Space Education and Space Technology related innovations for school students.**
- **The Department of Space (DOS) and Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, announced that out of 100 ATLs, Isro adopted 45 in phase 1 on January 11 and the remaining 55 will be adopted soon, to promote education in STEM, space education and space technology related innovation for school students.**
- **An Atal Tinkering Lab provides activity-based learning in the identified schools across the country where young minds can give shape to their ideas for societal problems. It also fosters entrepreneurship and innovation, enabling over 3 million students between class VI to class XII to acquire a problem solving, tinkering and innovative mindset.**
- **An Atal Tinkering Lab provides a makerspace where young minds can give shape to their ideas through hands on do-it-yourself mode and learn innovation skills. To foster entrepreneurship and innovation, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog has established over seven thousand Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.**

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

### Earth is losing 2% bugs every year. Scientists call it 'insect apocalypse'.

- **World's top bug experts believe that the insect kingdom, which is intrinsic to the functioning of our ecosystems, is quickly dying. Referring to what's happening as "death by a thousand cuts", bug experts blamed the dwindling populations on climate change, herbicides, invasive species, insecticides, along with changes in how we use land. Owing to such changes, Earth is losing 1 to 2 per cent of insects ever year. Scientists need to ascertain whether loss in insect populations is bigger than how it is with other species.**

### RS Sharma, former Trai chief, to head empowered panel for Covid-19 vaccine

- **The Union government has appointed RS Sharma, former Trai chief, as the chairperson of an empowered committee for administration of Covid-19 vaccine. This has come days ahead of the mega vaccination drive is to start in India.**
- **He has also been included as a member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19 that was formed in August 2020 and is headed by Niti Aayog member, VK Paul. Sharma was the first person to officially initiate a discussion on vaccination delivery in the government in the summer of 2020 when Covid-19 cases peaked.**



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. WHO first learned of this new virus on 31 December 2019, following a report of a cluster of cases of 'viral pneumonia' in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are, Fever, Dry cough and Fatigue. The standard diagnosis method is by real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) from a nasopharyngeal swab. In India, the first case was reported in Kerala.

### Cabinet approves MoU on scientific and technical cooperation between India, UAE

- The Union Cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on scientific and technical cooperation between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and the National Centre of Meteorology of the UAE.
- The MoU provides for sharing of knowledge, data and operational products for meteorological, seismological and oceanic services such as radar, satellite, tide gauges, seismic and meteorological stations.
- The pact will pave the way for deployment of meteorological observation networks on mutual agreement over ocean waters, cooperation in the development of special capacities of tsunami models researches for their faster and more reliable forecasts propagating through the Oman Sea and the Arabian Sea which affect the coastal areas of India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

### Delhi's international airport will get its first genome sequencing laboratory

- A first of its kind genome sequencing laboratory is being launched at the New Delhi international airport for testing samples of all travellers arriving into the country who test positive for Coronavirus disease (Covid-19).
- The positive samples will be genome sequenced to identify and contain the new mutant variant of Sars-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, detected in UK and other countries.
- Dr Vinod Paul, member (health) Niti Aayog and chairman, national expert group on vaccine administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC) inaugurated the laboratory, in the presence of Dr Anurag Agrawal, director, CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, Ajay Singh, chairman and managing director, SpiceJet, and Avani Singh, chief executive officer, SpiceHealth.

### Two Friends to send India's first Private Remote Sensing Satellite on ISRO Rocket

- Pixxel, a private satellite-imaging company, will launch its first remote-sensing satellite on the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) workhorse rocket Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) in early 2021. For this, the Bengaluru-based firm has entered into an agreement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under the Department of Space. Earlier, the company's first satellite was scheduled to be launched towards the end of this year on a Russian Soyuz rocket.
- The agreement with NSIL is one of its kind and one of the first since the setting up of IN-SPACe, the authorisation and regulatory body under the Department of Space (DoS) to enable private players undertaking space activities in India.
- Pixxel is a young aerospace start-up from India, started by two BITS Pilani graduates Awais Ahmed and Kshitij Khandelwal in February 2019. It has become Asia's only space start-up to qualify for the 2019 Techstars Starburst Space Accelerator in Los Angeles.

### Indian Army Major indigenously develops world's first universal bulletproof jacket 'Shakti'

- In a significant development, a major-rank Indian Army officer, Anoop Mishra has indigenously developed the world's first universal bulletproof jacket 'Shakti' which can be used by both male and female combatants. The jacket is also the world's first flexible body armour.
- This is not his first such innovation by Major Anoop as the officer of the Indian Army's College of Military Engineering had developed a ballistic helmet in February 2020, which has the ability to stop an AK-47 bullet round fired from a distance of 10 meters. He had also developed a full-body protection bulletproof jacket which can withstand even sniper rifles. Major Anoop got into the development of bulletproof jackets after he had received gunshots on his vintage bulletproof jacket.



- **The Indian Army's College of Military Engineering jointly with a private firm had earlier developed India's first and world's cheapest gunshot locator.** It can locate the exact location of the bullet from a distance of 400 meters which will help to locate and neutralise terrorists faster.

### Panel to study NFHS-5 findings

- **The Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a technical expert group to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey-5** and “recommend programmatic and policy interventions to improve” indicators pertaining to malnutrition, stunting, anaemia, and C-section.
- **The committee is chaired by Joint Secretary Preeti Pant** and includes experts from medicine and nutrition. There are also State programme officers from Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. “The technical expert group is to meet regularly and share its recommendations as soon as possible,” reads a government order issued on December 29. However, no date has yet been fixed for the first meeting of the group, it is reliably learnt.

### Adaptation Gap Report 2020

- **The UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2020 finds that while nations have advanced in planning, huge gaps remain in finance for developing countries and bringing adaptation projects** to the stage where they bring real protection against climate impacts such as droughts, floods and sea-level rise.
- **Public and private finance for adaptation must be stepped up urgently**, along with faster implementation. **Nature-based solutions – locally appropriate actions** that address societal challenges, such as climate change, and provide human well-being and biodiversity benefits by protecting, sustainably managing and restoring natural or modified ecosystems – must also become a priority.

### Doppler weather radar installed in Kufri near Shimla

- **The accurate weather forecast is not only vital for the farmers to protect their crops from natural calamities;** it also helps in tourism development as the tourists can decide about their travel plans according to the climate.
- This was stated by Union Minister for Earth Sciences, Health and Family Welfare and Science and Technology **Dr Harsh Vardhan** after virtual inauguration of **First Doppler Weather Radar (DWR)** installed at Kufri, Shimla and at Mukteshwar, Nainital in Uttarakhand on the occasion of 146<sup>th</sup> India Meteorological Department Foundation Day.

### One Planet Summit: No climate fix without biodiversity

- **A UN-backed summit of political leaders and CEOs pledging to reverse the accelerating destruction of the natural world** was long on promises and short on cash. **The French-led One Planet Summit, backed by the United Nations and the World Bank**, saw more than 50 nations support a plan to create protected areas covering 30 percent of global lands and oceans.
- **The so-called “30-30” initiative could become the cornerstone of a critical biodiversity meet in Kunming, China**, postponed last year due to the coronavirus pandemic. “Until now, we have been destroying our planet, abusing it as if we had a spare one,” **UN chief Antonio Guterres** told the Paris meeting via a video link from New York. **The planet is on the cusp of a mass extinction event – only the sixth in half-a-billion years – in which species are disappearing at 100 to 1,000 times the normal “background” rate**, most scientists agree.
- A landmark 2019 UN report warned that one million species, **about one-in-eight, are threatened**, mostly due to **habitat loss and our ever-expanding appetites**. **So far, during the entire history of the Earth, there have been five mass extinctions. The five mass extinctions that took place in the last 450 million years have led to the destruction of 70-95 per cent of the species of plants, animals and microorganisms that existed earlier.**

**The term “sixth mass extinction/sixth extinction” is referred to Mankind’s over-exploitation/misuse of natural resources, fragmentation/loss, natural habitats, destruction of ecosystems, pollution and global climate change.**

## MISCELLANEOUS

### Nepali climbers make history by becoming first to scale K2 peak in winter

- Pakistan felicitated a team of 10 Nepali climbers for making history by becoming the first to scale in winter the world's second highest mountain K2, considered as the world's most dangerous and challenging peak.
- K2 with its daunting 8,611 meters height is located in Gilgit-Baltistan side of the Karakoram Range. It was the only one among 8,000-meter high peaks that was never scaled in winter. The history was made by a group of 10 Nepali climbers. The achievement was the result of a collaborative effort between the climbers affiliated with multiple teams: one led by Nirmal Purja and the other by Mingma Gyalje Sherpa.

### National Youth Festival to be organized from January 12

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is organized a week long National Youth Festival in the country commencing from the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month. Every year, the festival is being held to commemorate the birth anniversary of youth icon Swami Vivekananda.

### Prakash Javadekar releases MEE of 146 National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries

- Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar released Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of 146 National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the country.
- At present, India has a network of 903 Protected Areas in the country covering about five per cent of the total geographic area of the country. In order to assess the efficacy of Protected Areas, evaluation of management effectiveness is required.
- The Minister also announced that from this year onwards ten best National Parks, five Coastal and Marine parks and top five Zoos in the country will be ranked and awarded every year.

### Centre merges J&K cadre officers with AGMUT

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Centre has merged J&K cadre for all India Services Viz; IAS, IPS and IFS officers with that of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT), also called the Union Territory cadre, through an ordinance.
- The government said the President has promulgated an ordinance to amend J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 and make IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service officers of existing cadre of J&K a part of AGMUT cadre.
- The move will help tackle the shortage of All India Services Officers in J&K owing to an earlier rule fixing the ratio of direct recruits in Civil Services to promotees from J&K State Civil Services (Kashmir Administrative Service) at 50:50 instead of 67:33 formula followed in other states.

### First ever Ice climbing festival celebrated in Nubra valley

- In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in Nubra valley. The Seven Day event was organized by Nubra Adventure Club. Ice climbing is a popular winter sport abroad. Taking the cue, local adventure sports lovers have explored several ice climbing spots in Nubra valley to attract the adventure tourists to the region.

### Govt notifies rules for renewal of International Driving License while traveling abroad

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a notification to facilitate the issuance of International Driving Permit (IDP) for Indian citizens whose IDP has expired while they are abroad. There was no mechanism for its renewal while citizens were abroad and their IDP expired.
- After this amendment, Indian citizens can apply for renewal through Indian Embassies and Missions abroad, from where these applications will move to the VAHAN portal in India, to be considered by the concerned Road Transport Officers (RTOs).
- The International Driving Permit will be couriered to the citizen at his or her address abroad by the respective RTOs. The Ministry said that the notification also removes the conditions of a Medical Certificate and a valid visa at the time of making the request for the IDP in India.

- The idea is that a citizen who has a valid driving licence should not have a requirement for another medical certificate. Further, there are countries where the Visa is issued on arrival or Visa is issued at the last moment and in such cases, **VISA is not available when applying for the IDP in India before travel. Therefore, IDP application can now be made without VISA.**

### India's first indigenously developed driverless Metro Car unveiled

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled **India's first indigenously designed and developed Driverless Metro Car at the BEML manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.**
- State-of-the-art driverless metro cars, being manufactured at the company's **Bangalore Complex**, are made up of stainless-steel body with a capacity of carrying **2280 passengers in six-cars Metro train-set.**

### PM Modi to address National Youth Parliament Festival- 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the **National Youth Parliament Festival - 2021.** The Festival is organised on **12<sup>th</sup> January** on the occasion of the **National Youth Day** in order to encourage the youth in the age group of **18-25 years** to engage with public issues and understand the common man's point of view.

### PM Modi to lay foundation stone of Ahmedabad, Surat Metro Rail Projects

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone of **Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project Phase-II and Surat Metro Rail Project** through video conferencing.
- The Metro Projects will provide an **environment friendly 'Mass Rapid Transit System'** to these cities. Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project Phase-II is **28.25 kilometres** long with two corridors. The two Metro Projects will provide an environment friendly 'Mass Rapid Transit System' to these two fastest growing cities.
- The length of Corridor-1 of phase-II is **22.8 kilometers** from Motera Stadium to Mahatma Mandir which is a completely elevated corridor. **The length of Corridor-2 is 5.4 Kilometres from GNLU to GIFT City with 2 elevated stations,** having interchange facility at GNLU and a bridge over Sabarmati River.

### Union Minister Nitin Gadkari lays foundation stone virtually for construction of elevated corridor in Hubballi, Karnataka

- Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari **laid the foundation stone for the construction of an elevated corridor at Rani Chennamma Circle in Hubballi** in a virtual mode.
- Speaking on the occasion, the Minister announced that a decision is taken for **13 highway projects of 847 kilometres at a cost of Rs 21,000 crore in North Karnataka.** This will include four laning of Hubballi-Dharwad bypass and Dharwad-Belagavi stretch of the highway.

# PERSONS IN NEWS

## Sweden's postal service issues stamps featuring Greta Thunberg

- **Climate activist Greta Thunberg is to feature on a set of stamps issued by Sweden's postal service.** She will join a hall of fame of Swedish personalities, from Zlatan Ibrahimovic to Greta Garbo, who have been depicted on the country's postage stamps. The stamps go on sale from PostNord and show Thunberg in her familiar yellow raincoat standing on a rocky coast looking out at a flock of birds.
- **Greta Thunberg is a Swedish environmental activist** who is internationally known for challenging world leaders to take immediate action against climate change. **She attended the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit.** Her speech there, in which **she exclaimed "how dare you,"** was widely taken up by the press and incorporated into music.
- She received numerous honours and awards including an honorary Fellowship of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, **inclusion in Time's 100 most influential people, being the youngest Time Person of the Year, inclusion in the Forbes list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women (2019) and two consecutive nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize (2019 and 2020).**

## Joe Biden appoints Indian-American Sumona Guha as senior Director for South Asia

- **The Biden-Harris transition team announced the appointment of Indian American Sumona Guha to the role of Senior Director for South Asia at the National Security Council.**
- **Ms Guha co-chaired the South Asia foreign policy working group** on the Biden-Harris campaign, and was a member of the transition team. She will succeed the Trump administration's Lisa Curtis in the role.
- **Ms Guha, a former Foreign Service officer, has been a Senior Vice President since mid-2018** at the Albright Stonebridge Group, whose chair is former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

## Biden ropes in 20 Indian-Americans, 17 in key White House positions

- **U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has nominated at least 20 Indian-Americans, including 13 women, to key positions in his incoming administration,** a record for the small ethnic community that constitutes one per cent of America's population. As many as 17 of them would be part of the Biden administration in the powerful White House complex.
- **The January 20<sup>th</sup> inauguration, where Mr. Biden, 78, would be sworn in as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the U.S., is already historic as it is for the first time ever that a woman, Kamala Harris, would be sworn as the Vice-President of the country.** Ms. Harris, 56, is also the first ever Indian-origin and African-American to be sworn in as the Vice-President of the U.S.
- It is also **for the first time ever that so many Indian-Americans have been roped into a presidential administration ever before the inauguration.** Mr. Biden, a Democrat, is still quite far away from filling all the positions in his administration.
- Topping the list is **Neera Tanden, who has been nominated as Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget and Dr. Vivek Murthy, who has been nominated as the U.S. Surgeon General.**

## Shilpa Shirodkar becomes first Bollywood star to get COVID-19 vaccine

- **Bollywood star Shilpa Shirodkar has become the first Indian celebrity to get a vaccination against the deadly coronavirus.** She is currently in Dubai and has been trending after she revealed getting a COVID-19 vaccine.



# AWARDS

## Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan felicitates Kayakalp awards

- **Public and Private Health Facilities** were felicitated with Kayakalp award for high standards of Sanitation and Hygiene.
- Applauding the **importance of the Kayakalp scheme**, Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan said Kayakalp has **not only been able to facelift the condition of public health facilities** but has also made a significant impact in improving the behaviour of masses.
- The government had **launched a National Initiative ‘Kayakalp’ on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015** to ensure hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India.

## Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda to receive SKOCH Challenger Award virtually

- Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda virtually received SKOCH Challenger Award conferred to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for e-Governance.
- The award has been given to the Ministry for its IT-led initiatives and other transformational initiatives leading to outcome-based performance improvement. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has taken up several transformational initiatives recently.
- It has digitalised all the processes leading to a paperless office, monitoring is data driven and a performance dashboard is d on a real time basis. There is transparency with tribal related data available in the public domain.

## Paradip refinery receives National energy conservation award 2020

- Paradip Refinery has won First prize under the 30<sup>th</sup> National Energy Conservation Awards-2020 in the “Petroleum Refinery Sector”.
- The award is instituted by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under The Ministry of Power, Government of India to give national recognition to industries and establishments that have taken **exemplary efforts on energy conservation while maintaining their production.**

## Janaagraha’s Best State award won by Odisha

- Odisha took home Janaagraha’s Best State and the Best Civic Agency award, while Gujarat took home the Best State Election Commission, Kerala bagged the Best State Finance Commission, Indore secured Best Municipality award for its PPP based integrated solid waste management.
- The second edition of Janaagraha’s City Governance Awards was a virtual event held. The awards recognise ground-breaking work in decentralisation in the urban context by institutions across government. **The awards were presented by Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri.**

# IMPORTANT DAYS

## World Hindi Day 2021

- **World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on January 10.** Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is the **third most-spoken language in the world with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.** Being one of the most popular languages in the world, there is a huge interest among students from across the world to pursue a career in Hindi language.

## Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day observed

- **Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day** is being observed. This day is **celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> of January every year to honour services rendered by veterans of the Army.**
- This year is being **celebrated as Swarnim Vijay Varsh.** It marks **50<sup>th</sup> 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.** He added that several events will be organised across the country.

## International Day of Education: 24 January

- **International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on January 24** and is dedicated to education.
- On December 3, 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution **proclaiming January 24 as International Day of Education,** in celebration of the role of education for bringing global peace and sustainable development.

### References:

The Hindu

The Economics Times

Indian Express

Press Information Bureau of India

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Business Standard

News on AIR

Hindustan Times

# QUESTIONS

1. Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Single Window Clearance System', an online platform to obtain clearances for smooth operationalisation of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Coal mines (b) Gold mines (c) Copper mines (d) Mica mines
2. Who among the following will take sole charge as President of COP26 – the United Nations climate summit scheduled for Glasgow, Scotland?  
(a) Mahesh Jain (b) Rishi Sunak (c) Alok Sharma (d) Deepak Mahajan
3. National Youth Festival is being held to commemorate the birth anniversary of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Swami Vivekananda (b) Major Dhyanchand  
(c) Sachin Tendulkar (d) Swami Dayananad Saraswati
4. A High Level Committee, headed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been constituted to commemorate the \_\_\_\_\_ birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in a befitting manner.  
(a) 100<sup>th</sup> (b) 125<sup>th</sup> (c) 130<sup>th</sup> (d) 150<sup>th</sup>
5. Who among the following addressed the National Youth Parliament Festival – 2021?  
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b) President Ramnath Kovind  
(c) Vice President Venkai Naidu (d) Home Minister Amit Shah
6. The Embassy of Israel in India has appointed \_\_\_\_\_ as Honorary Consul in the region with jurisdiction over the States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim.  
(a) Joyshree Das Verma (b) C Rumona Devi (c) Anamika Ray (d) Anjali Zakaria
7. Name the famous personality who has been permanently suspended from social network app Twitter due to the risk of further incitement of violence.  
(a) Leonardo Di Caprio (b) Emma Watson (c) Donald Trump (d) Mike Pence
8. Recently, The Biden-Harris transition team announced the appointment of Indian American \_\_\_\_\_ to the role of Senior Director for South Asia at the National Security Council.  
(a) Sumona Guha (b) Meenakshi Guha (c) Shivangi Mohapatra (d) Aditi Kwatra
9. India's first toy cluster to come up in Bhanapur village of Koppal district in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
10. Who has become the first Indian celebrity to get a vaccination against the deadly coronavirus?  
(a) Sushmita Sen (b) Shilpa Shirodkar (c) Dia Mirza (d) Urmila Matondkar
11. Which of the following is India's first cheetah sanctuary?  
(a) Nagarhole National Park (b) Kaziranga National Park  
(c) Kuno-Palpur wildlife sanctuary (d) Hemis National Park
12. What is the name of the Startup India International Summit?  
(a) Shurut (b) Prarambh (c) Ready (d) Innovation
13. Indian Navy is coordinated the second edition of largest coastal defence exercise \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Sea Vigil-88 (b) Sea Vigil-21 (c) Ocean Search-7 (d) Sea Search-09
14. At present, India has a network of \_\_\_\_\_ Protected Areas in the country covering about five per cent of the total geographic area of the country.  
(a) 298 (b) 399 (c) 657 (d) 903

15. Name the eco-friendly, non-toxic paint which was developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission.  
 (a) Khadi Prakritik Paint (b) Khadi Natural Paint  
 (c) Natural Khadi Paint (d) Prakritik Eco friendly Paint
16. Recently, the Centre has merged Jammu and Kashmir cadre for all India Services Viz; IAS, IPS and IFS officers with that of \_\_\_\_\_, also called the Union Territory cadre, through an ordinance.  
 (a) Punjab (b) AGMUT (c) Haryana (d) Lakshadweep
17. The country of focus at the 51<sup>st</sup> International Film Festival of India (IFFI) starting at Goa on January 16 is  
 (a) Bangladesh (b) Nepal (c) Sri Lanka (d) Malaysia
18. According to Digital Evolution Scorecard 2020 developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard, India ranks \_\_\_\_\_ in 'Break Out Economies'.  
 (a) 1<sup>st</sup> (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> (c) 4<sup>th</sup> (d) 7<sup>th</sup>
19. In India, Financial Stability Report (FSR) is released by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Reserve Bank of India (b) NITI Aayog  
 (c) Finance Ministry (d) NABARD
20. World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) January 8 (b) January 9 (c) January 10 (d) January 12
21. In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Nubra valley (b) Dabyan Valley (c) Aru Valley (d) Gurez Valley
22. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to introduce the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) system for all payment transactions of value \_\_\_\_\_ and above undertaken by entities (non-individuals) using the Reserve Bank-run Centralised Payment Systems with effect from April 1.  
 (a) Rs 10 crore (b) Rs 25 crore (c) Rs 50 crore (d) Rs 100 crore
23. Recently, The United States has designated \_\_\_\_\_ as a "state sponsor of terrorism".  
 (a) Cuba (b) Mexico (c) Belgium (d) Somalia
24. India decided to set up \_\_\_\_\_ facility for academic collaboration with the Arab World in a step that will have far reaching impact on people to people contacts between Delhi and its extended neighbours.  
 (a) one million dollar (b) five million dollar (c) ten million dollar (d) twenty million dollar
25. The French-led One Planet Summit, backed by the United Nations and the World Bank, saw more than 50 nations support a plan to create protected areas covering \_\_\_\_\_ of global lands and oceans.  
 (a) 10% (b) 15% (c) 20% (d) 30%
26. Recently, FSS (Financial Software and Systems), a leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, has partnered with \_\_\_\_\_ to promote financial inclusion among underserved and unbanked segments.  
 (a) India Post Payments Bank (b) State Bank of India  
 (c) Union Bank of India (d) Jio Payments Bank
27. As per the 'Hurun Global 500' report, how many private Indian firms have made it to the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world?  
 (a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 11 (d) 15
28. According to the latest report by the Henley Passport Index, which country tops the list of being the most powerful passport in the world for the year 2021?  
 (a) China (b) USA (c) Australia (d) Japan



29. Recently, bug experts blamed the dwindling populations on climate change, herbicides, along with changes in how we use land. Owing to such changes, Earth is losing \_\_\_\_\_ of insects every year.  
 (a) 0.5 to 0.75% (b) 1 to 2 % (c) 1.5 to 3% (d) 2.5 to 5%
30. “Kayakalp Awards” are awarded in the field on:  
 (a) Film & Theatre (b) Finance  
 (c) Hygiene & Sanitation (d) Sports
31. Which of the following Indian states inaugurated the ‘Fire Park’ a first of its kind initiative in the country to bring awareness on fire safety measures?  
 (a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
32. The Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a technical expert group to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey-5. The committee is chaired by:  
 (a) Anita Madan (b) Sharmishtha Mukherjee  
 (c) Priya Sudan (d) Preeti Pant
33. The new Foreign Trade Policy-FTP will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ years.  
 (a) Two (c) Three (c) Five (d) Ten
34. Recently, Donald Trump has become the \_\_\_\_\_ US president to be impeached twice.  
 (a) First (b) Second (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
35. Which of the following countries Prime Minister Juri Ratas resigned over corruption scandal in his party?  
 (a) Lithuania (b) Latvia (c) Estonia (d) Ireland
36. Which of the following Indian companies is developing a container terminal at the strategically coveted Colombo Port?  
 (a) Adani Group (b) Reliance Group  
 (c) Godrej Group (d) JSW Group
37. Which of the following refineries has won the first prize under the 30<sup>th</sup> National Energy Conservation Awards-2020 in the “Petroleum Refinery Sector”?  
 (a) Jamnagar Refinery (b) Paradip Refinery  
 (c) Mangalore Refinery (d) Kochi Refinery
38. Recently, A first of its kind genome sequencing laboratory is being launched at the \_\_\_\_\_ for testing samples of all travellers arriving into the country who test positive for Coronavirus disease (Covid-19).  
 (a) New Delhi international airport (b) Indore international airport  
 (c) Lucknow international airport (d) Mumbai international airport
39. Which of the following states took home Janaagraha’s Best State awards recently?  
 (a) Haryana (b) Rajasthan (c) Odisha (d) Madhya Pradesh
40. Which of the following banks has announced its partnership with Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited?  
 (a) Yes Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) RBL Bank (d) IDFC First Bank
41. Recently, a major-rank Indian Army officer, Anoop Mishra has indigenously developed the world’s first universal bulletproof jacket \_\_\_\_\_ which can be used by both male and female combatants.  
 (a) ‘Shakti’ (b) ‘Suyogya’ (c) ‘Power’ (d) ‘Samriddhi’
42. Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day is being observed every year on:  
 (a) 4<sup>th</sup> January (b) 8<sup>th</sup> January (c) 11<sup>th</sup> January (d) 14<sup>th</sup> January

43. National Informatics Centre and Central Board of Secondary Education, CBSE jointly launched \_\_\_\_\_ Software to provide a total engineering solution for students and Faculty of Engineering Graphics Curriculum.  
(a) CollabCAD (b) MollabNAC (c) CollanFAD (d) KollarKLO
44. Recently, Archaeologists have discovered the world's oldest known cave art — a life-sized picture of a wild pig that was painted at least 45,500 years ago in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Malaysia (b) Indonesia (c) South Korea (d) Thailand
45. Who among the following has not joined the 2021 Global Board of Directors of US India Business Council (USIBC) as vice chairs?  
(a) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (b) Aditya Puri  
(c) Milind Pant (d) Edward Knight
46. Which of the following banks has provided a major relief to Maharashtra farmers under its loan settlement schemes "Rin Samadhan Yojna"?  
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) State Bank of India (c) Union Bank of India (d) Canara Bank
47. Recently, PayPal Holding Inc has become the first foreign operator with 100% control of a payment platform in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Japan (b) China (c) South Korea (d) USA
48. In 2021, Climate activist Greta Thunberg is to feature on a set of stamps issued by \_\_\_\_\_ postal service.  
(a) Iceland's (b) Sweden's (c) Netherland's (d) Norway's
49. The 19<sup>th</sup> Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) was inaugurated on 16<sup>th</sup> January. The tribute section of the festival was dedicated to the legendary filmmaker \_\_\_\_\_ to commemorate his birth centenary.  
(a) Satyajit Ray (b) Basu Chatterjee (c) Bimal Roy (d) Guru Dutt
50. The Union Cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on scientific and technical cooperation between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and the National Centre of Meteorology of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Mexico (c) UAE (d) Canada
51. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a working group on digital lending — including online platforms and mobile apps — to study all aspects of digital lending activities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players. The Chairperson of this working group is  
(a) Ajay Kumar Choudhary (b) S.P. Vasudevan  
(c) Jayant Kumar Dash (d) Manoranjan Mishra
52. Recently, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated air taxi services from Chandigarh to \_\_\_\_\_ from Chandigarh Airport under UDAN scheme of the central government.  
(a) Hisar (b) Bhopal  
(c) New Delhi (d) Darjeeling
53. The combined market capitalisation of all listed companies in India has crossed the country's \_\_\_\_\_ for the first time in more than 10 years.  
(a) NNP (b) GDP (c) GNP (d) NPP
54. Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), valued at Rs 4,633 crore, is set to hit the market with its initial public offer (IPO). The headquarters of IRFC is:  
(a) Mumbai (b) Bhopal (c) Vadodara (d) New Delhi
55. Which of the following countries has unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile described as the world's most powerful weapon by its country media?  
(a) South Korea (b) North Korea (c) Thailand (d) China

56. The UN Human Rights Council elected \_\_\_\_\_ ambassador as its president in 2021, following an unprecedented secret ballot after a diplomatic stand-off blocked the usual consensus decision.  
 (a) Mexico's (b) Fiji's (c) Canada's (d) Maldives's
57. In a first for India, the local administration in \_\_\_\_\_ has started issuing ID cards to people from the third gender to help them avail the benefits of the state government's welfare schemes.  
 (a) Indore (b) Bhopal (c) Lucknow (d) Chandigarh
58. According to a report by the United Nations, India has the largest diaspora population in the world with \_\_\_\_\_ people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020.  
 (a) 10 million (b) 18 million (c) 27 million (d) 45 million
59. Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda virtually received SKOCH Challenger Award conferred to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Effective Leading (b) e-Governance  
 (c) Planning Implementation (d) Program Leading
60. International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on \_\_\_\_\_ and is dedicated to education.  
 (a) January 11 (b) January 14 (c) January 18 (d) January 24
61. India's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, will be launched in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Karnataka (b) West Bengal (c) Kerala (d) Puducherry
62. India's first railway station with a Green Building Certification is  
 (a) Guntur Station (b) Kevadiya station  
 (c) Navsari station (d) Shimla station
63. Recently, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled India's first indigenously designed and developed Driverless Metro Car at the BEML manufacturing facility in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) New Delhi (b) Chennai  
 (c) Pune (d) Bengaluru
64. Who among the following recently released "Adaptation Gap Report 2020"?  
 (a) UNDP (c) IMF  
 (c) Greenpeace International (d) UNEP
65. Recently, The first foreign funded project Ekuveni synthetic running track in \_\_\_\_\_ in 2021 that was backed by India was inaugurated.  
 (a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) Seychelles
66. Yoweri Museveni has won a sixth term as President, extending his 35-year rule after an election in which of the following countries?  
 (a) Nigeria (b) Liberia (c) Uganda (d) The Gambia
67. U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has been sworn in as the \_\_\_\_\_ President of the U.S.  
 (a) 42<sup>nd</sup> (b) 45<sup>th</sup> (c) 46<sup>th</sup> (d) 49<sup>th</sup>
68. Which of the following banks has tied up with Niyo, a new age fintech, to issue prepaid cards to workers of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)?  
 (a) HDFC Bank (b) ICICI Bank  
 (c) Axis Bank (d) RBL Bank

69. Recently, Union Minister for Earth Sciences Dr Harsh Vardhan virtually inaugurated first Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) installed at \_\_\_\_\_ in Himachal Pradesh on the occasion of 146<sup>th</sup> India Meteorological Department Foundation Day.  
(a) Chamba (b) Manali (c) Kufri (d) Dalhousie
70. Recently, Pakistan felicitated a team of 10 Nepali climbers for making history by becoming the first to scale in winter the world's second highest mountain \_\_\_\_\_ considered as the world's most dangerous and challenging peak.  
(a) Trishul (b) K2 (c) Kangchenjunga (d) Lhotse



Career  
Launcher



## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Single Window Clearance System', an online platform to obtain clearances for smooth operationalisation of coal mines.
2. c Alok Sharma, one of the Indian-origin ministers in U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Cabinet, relinquished his role as Business Secretary in a mini-reshuffle to take sole charge as President of COP26 – the United Nations climate summit scheduled for Glasgow, Scotland, in November.
3. a The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is organizing a week long National Youth Festival in the country commencing from the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month. Every year, the festival is being held to commemorate the birth anniversary of youth icon Swami Vivekananda.
4. b A High Level Committee, headed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been constituted to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in a befitting manner.
5. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the National Youth Parliament Festival - 2021.
6. a The Embassy of Israel in India has appointed Joyshree Das Verma as Honorary Consul in the region with jurisdiction over the States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Sikkim.
7. c US President Donald Trump has been permanently suspended from social network app Twitter due to the risk of further incitement of violence.
8. a The Biden-Harris transition team announced the appointment of Indian American Sumona Guha to the role of Senior Director for South Asia at the National Security Council.
9. d Bhanapur, a remote village in Koppal district, is poised to attain star status with the Karnataka government the laying foundation stone for the country's first toy manufacturing cluster in the village.
10. b Bollywood star Shilpa Shirodkar has become the first Indian celebrity to get a vaccination against the deadly coronavirus.
11. c The Kuno-Palpur wildlife sanctuary, which was upgraded to a national park in 2018, has been designated the new habitat of the fastest animal on land, which can sprint at speeds of 80-128 km per hour.
12. b Prarambh, the Startup India International Summit, which is being held on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of this month is one such opportunity. He urged the youth to be a part of it.
13. b Indian Navy coordinated the second edition of largest coastal defence exercise Sea Vigil-21
14. d At present, India has a network of 903 Protected Areas in the country covering about five per cent of the total geographic area of the country.
15. a Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari will be launching an innovative new paint developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called "Khadi Prakritik Paint" is a first-of-its-kind product, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.
16. b The Centre has merged J&K cadre for all India Services Viz; IAS, IPS and IFS officers with that of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT), also called the Union Territory cadre, through an ordinance.

- 17. a** Bangladesh is the country of focus at the 51<sup>st</sup> International Film Festival of India (IFFI) starting at Goa on January 16, 2021.
- 18. c** Third rank Indonesia, and India, which ranks number four in momentum, have displayed increasing digital momentum suggesting the potential to rapidly digitalise for both post-COVID economic recovery and longer-term transformation.
- 19. a** Banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to 13.5% by September 2021, from 7.5% in September 2020 under the baseline scenario, according to Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India.
- 20. c** World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on January 10. Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is the third most-spoken language in the world with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.
- 21. a** In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in Nubra valley. The Seven Day event was organized by Nubra Adventure Club. Ice climbing is a popular winter sport abroad.
- 22. c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to introduce the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) system for all payment transactions of value Rs 50 crore and above undertaken by entities (non-individuals) using the Reserve Bank-run Centralised Payment Systems with effect from April 1.
- 23. a** The United States has designated Cuba as a "state sponsor of terrorism", US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced.
- 24. a** India decided to set up one million dollar facility for academic collaboration with the Arab World in a step that will have far reaching impact on people to people contacts between Delhi and its extended neighbours.
- 25. d** The French-led One Planet Summit, backed by the United Nations and the World Bank, saw more than 50 nations support a plan to create protected areas covering 30 percent of global lands and oceans.
- 26. a** FSS (Financial Software and Systems), a leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, has partnered with India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to promote financial inclusion among underserved and unbanked segments.
- 27. c** Total 11 private Indian firms have made it to the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world, and the country is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> on the chart, as per a report.
- 28. d** Japan tops the list of being the most powerful passport in the world for the year 2021, according to the latest report by the Henley Passport Index.
- 29. b** Bug experts blamed the dwindling populations on climate change, herbicides, invasive species, insecticides, along with changes in how we use land. Owing to such changes, Earth is losing 1 to 2 per cent of insects ever year.
- 30. c** The government had launched a National Initiative 'Kayakalp' on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015 to ensure hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India.
- 31. b** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'Fire Park', a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures.
- 32. d** The committee is chaired by Joint Secretary Preeti Pant and includes experts from medicine and nutrition. There are also State programme officers from Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
- 33. c** The new Foreign Trade Policy-FTP will come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 for a period of five years.

- 34. a** Donald Trump has become the first US president to be impeached twice.
- 35. c** Estonia's prime minister has handed in his resignation to the Baltic country's president after a corruption scandal investigated by the police and prosecutors in his Center Party.
- 36. a** In his government's first admission yet of Indian involvement in developing a container terminal at the strategically coveted Colombo Port, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said 49% of the investment will come from the "Adani Group and other stakeholders".
- 37. b** Paradip Refinery has won First prize under the 30<sup>th</sup> National Energy Conservation Awards-2020 in the "Petroleum Refinery Sector".
- 38. a** A first of its kind genome sequencing laboratory is being launched at the New Delhi international airport for testing samples of all travellers arriving into the country who test positive for Coronavirus disease (Covid-19).
- 39. c** Odisha took home Janaagraha's Best State and the Best Civic Agency award.
- 40. a** Yes Bank has announced its partnership with Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited to launch the 'YES BANK Wellness'.
- 41. a** A major-rank Indian Army officer, Anoop Mishra has indigenously developed the world's first universal bulletproof jacket 'Shakti' which can be used by both male and female combatants.
- 42. d** Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day is being observed. This day is celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> of January every year to honour services rendered by veterans of the Army.
- 43. a** National Informatics Centre and Central Board of Secondary Education, CBSE jointly launched CollabCAD Software to provide a total engineering solution for students and Faculty of Engineering Graphics Curriculum.
- 44. b** Archaeologists have discovered the world's oldest known cave art — a life-sized picture of a wild pig that was painted at least 45,500 years ago in Indonesia.
- 45. b** Three top corporate leaders, including Milind Pant, CEO of Amway and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson, Biocon, have joined the 2021 Global Board of Directors of US India Business Council (USIBC) as vice chairs.
- 46. b** State Bank of India has provided a major relief to farmers under its loan settlement schemes. Many farmers in Maharashtra are benefiting from this Rin Samadhan Yojna.
- 47. b** PayPal Holding Inc has become the first foreign operator with 100% control of a payment platform in China.
- 48. b** Climate activist Greta Thunberg is to feature on a set of stamps issued by Sweden's postal service.
- 49. a** The tribute section of the festival will be dedicated to the legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray to commemorate his birth centenary.
- 50. c** The Union Cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on scientific and technical cooperation between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and the National Centre of Meteorology of the UAE.
- 51. c** The working group consists of both internal and external members. The internal members include Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI (Chairman); Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Chief General Manager in-charge, Department of Supervision, RBI; S.P. Vasudevan, Chief General Manager, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, RBI; and Manoranjan Mishra, Chief General Manager, Department of Regulation, RBI (Member Secretary).

- 52. a** Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated air taxi services from Chandigarh to Hisar from Chandigarh Airport under UDAN scheme of the central government.
- 53. b** The combined market capitalisation of all listed companies in India has crossed the country's GDP for the first time in more than 10 years. The current ratio is, however, much lower than the all-time high of 149.4 per cent in December 2007.
- 54. d**
- 55. b** North Korea has unveiled a new submarine-launched ballistic missile described as the world's most powerful weapon. Pyongyang unveiled the missile during a military parade.
- 56. b** The UN Human Rights Council elected Fiji's ambassador as its president in 2021, following an unprecedented secret ballot after a diplomatic stand-off blocked the usual consensus decision.
- 57. b** In a first for India, the local administration in Bhopal has started issuing ID cards to people from the third gender to help them avail the benefits of the state government's welfare schemes.
- 58. b** India has the largest diaspora population in the world with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020.
- 59. b** Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda virtually received SKOCH Challenger Award conferred to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for e-Governance.
- 60. d** International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on January 24 and is dedicated to education.
- 61. c** India's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, will be launched in Kerala's houseboat tourism hub, Alappuzha.
- 62. b** Kevadiya station is India's first railway station with a Green Building Certification.
- 63. d** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled the country's first indigenously designed and developed Driverless Metro Car at the BEML manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.
- 64. d** The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has released the 2020 Adaptation Gap Report.
- 65. b** The first foreign funded project in Maldives in 2021 that was backed by India was inaugurated.
- 66. c** Uganda's Yoweri Museveni has won a sixth term in office, extending his 35-year rule after an election which took place under heavy security and an Internet blackout.
- 67. c** U.S. President-elect Joe Biden has been sworn in as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the U.S
- 68. b** ICICI Bank has tied up with Niyo, a new age fintech, to issue prepaid cards to workers of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- 69. c** Union Minister for Earth Sciences, Health and Family Welfare and Science and Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan after virtual inauguration of First Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) installed at Kufri, Shimla and at Mukteshwar, Nainital in Uttarakhand on the occasion of 146<sup>th</sup> India Meteorological Department Foundation Day.
- 70. b** Pakistan felicitated a team of 10 Nepali climbers for making history by becoming the first to scale in winter the world's second highest mountain K2, considered as the world's most dangerous and challenging peak.