
MANTHAN

A General Awareness Weekly

18th January to 24th January, 2021

PREFACE

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

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Career
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National



Parakram Diwas celebrations mark 125th birth anniversary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's, 125th birth anniversary on 23 January 2021 is observed as Parakram Diwas.** The day is celebrated to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation. **The day is being celebrated as Parakram Diwas.** The Government has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Netaji as 'Parakram Diwas' every year.
- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897, in Cuttack in Odisha.** He graduated from Kolkata and proved his mettle by **becoming an Indian Civil Services (ICS) officer.** But he left the comfort and amenities that came with his job and decided to be part of the freedom struggle. **With the slogan "Give me blood and I will give you freedom", he awakened the country towards fighting against the British.**
- **At the time of India's Independence, Clement Attlee the British Prime Minister** said that the **loyalty of the Indian army and navy to the British state** was declining due to the increasing military activities of Bose's Azad Hind Fauj and this was one of the major reasons that nudged Britishers into leaving India.
- **The All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) is a left-wing nationalist political party in India.** It emerged as a faction within the Indian National Congress in 1939, led by Subhas Chandra Bose. The party re-established as an independent political party after the independence of India.
- **A High Level Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, has been constituted to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose** in a befitting manner. Union Culture Ministry has planned a number of activities and projects for this year-long commemoration.
- **The Ministry of Education proposed to establish five chairs on Netaji in five Indian Universities,** organize online Lectures and Webinars on teachings of Netaji. NFDC under I&B Ministry will organize a short-film competition on - How to fulfill Netaji's dreams for India.

Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj (Free Indian Army) was an armed force formed by Indian nationalists and Imperial Japan in 1942 in Southeast Asia during World War II. Its aim was to secure Indian independence from British rule. The army was first formed in 1942 under Mohan Singh, by Indian PoWs (Prisoners of war) of the British-Indian Army captured by Japan in the Malayan campaign and at Singapore. Rash Behari Bose handed over INA to Subhas Chandra Bose. It was revived under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose after his arrival in Southeast Asia in 1943. Netaji built a force known as the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) giving the slogan of "Dilli Chalo". By 1938 Bose had become a leader of national stature and agreed to accept nomination as Congress President. Subhas Chandra Bose was re-elected as the Congress' president in 1939, defeating Pattabhi Sitaramaiah at the Tripuri Congress which prompted Mahatma Gandhi to label Pattabhi Sitaramaiah's defeat as his own. This, Chandra Kumar Bose claims, is very 'unfortunate' as Netaji had 'great respect for Mahatma Gandhi' and pointed out that it was **Subash Chandra Bose** who first hailed Gandhi as the 'Father of the Nation' while leading the Azad Hind Forces. His mentor was Chittaranjan Das who was a spokesman for aggressive nationalism in Bengal. Subhas Chandra Bose's death occurred from third-degree burns on 18 August 1945 after his overloaded Japanese plane crashed in Japanese-ruled Formosa (now Taiwan).

Govt launches PMKVY 3.0 to empower youth with new-age skills to boost employability

- The government launched the third phase of its **flagship skilling scheme Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0)** in a bid to empower the country's youth with employable skills by making over 300 skill courses available to them.
- **PMKVY 3.0 envisages training 8 lakh candidates** over the scheme period of 2020-2021 with an outlay of Rs 948.90 crore. The third phase of the scheme is designed towards making skill development more demand-driven and decentralised in its approach, with focus on digital technology and Industry 4.0 skills.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is a **skill development initiative scheme** of the Government of India for recognition and standardisation of skills. The aim of the pmkvy scheme is to encourage aptitude towards employable skills and to increase working efficiency of probable and existing daily wage earners, by giving monetary awards and rewards and by providing quality training to them. **National Skill Development Council (NSDC)** has been made **coordinating and driving agency** for the same.

Private space: On public notices under Special Marriage Act

- In a significant judgment affecting inter-faith couples seeking to get married under the Special Marriage Act, 1954, the Allahabad High Court has ruled that it would be optional and not mandatory for them to publish a notice about their intended marriage.
- The provision for mandatory publication of notice, derived through “simplistic reading” of the particular law, “would invade in the fundamental rights of liberty and privacy, including within its sphere freedom to choose for marriage without interference from state and non-state actors, of the persons concerned,” the court said in a judgment delivered on January 12.
- Since the matter relates to protection of fundamental rights of a large number of persons, the judge directed the senior registrar of the court to send a copy of the order to U.P. Chief Secretary. The same is to be communicated “to all the marriage officers in the State and other concerned authorities as expeditiously as possible”. The Allahabad High Court has struck down the provisions under Section 5 of the Special Marriage Act that required parties to give a 30-day mandatory public notice of their intention to marry.
- Justice Vivek Chaudhary mandated that while giving notice under Section 5 of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 it shall be optional for the parties to the intended marriage to make a request in writing to the marriage officer to publish or not to publish a notice under Section 6 and follow the procedure of objections as prescribed under the Act.

Basis of Judgement is progressive rulings by the Supreme Court: Aadhaar case (2017) which made the right to privacy a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Hadiya Marriage Case (2018) which held that the right to choose a partner is a fundamental right. Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India case (2018) in which the court decriminalised homosexuality striking down the Section 377 of IPC.

India's first pull-push Rajdhani Express to run daily

- CR's Rajdhani Express became India's first train to run on Push-Pull technology empowering the Government's “Mission Raftar” thus achieving another milestone in Railway history. In Push-Pull mode i.e. running the train with one engine at the front and one in the rear thereby eliminating the need to attach-detach bankers in the ghat section, saving precious time and thereby reducing journey time.

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

TRIFED and IFFDC enter into MoU to work together for tribal livelihood generation

- The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and Indian Farm Forestry Development Co-operative Ltd (IFFDC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together for tribal livelihood generation.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs in a statement said that the two organizations have agreed to partner with each other to organise training programmes for tribal artisans in the area of entrepreneurship skill and business development. They will also collaborate further to identify and implement Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and tribal development efforts.

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

First India-EU IPR dialogue held to strengthen relation

- The first India-EU IPR dialogue between the European Union (EU) Commission and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) was held through a virtual platform.
- “The meeting was jointly hosted by EU Commission and DPIIT and was co-chaired by the Joint Secretary of DPIIT Ravinder and Carlo Pettinato, Head of Unit Investment & Intellectual Property, Directorate-General for Trade European Commission”.
- The India Co-Chair provided an overview of various IPR developments, with an aim to meet the objectives set forth in the National IPR policy 2016. He also reiterated importance of legislative reforms brought in by India to stimulate innovation and creativity among start-ups and MSMEs.

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. EU policies aim to ensure the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the internal market. Passport controls have been abolished for travel within the Schengen Area. A monetary union was established in 1999, coming into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 EU member states which use the euro currency. The United Kingdom became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020. The EU traces its origins to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), established, respectively, by the 1951 Treaty of Paris and 1957 Treaty of Rome. The latest major amendment to the constitutional basis of the EU, the Treaty of Lisbon, came into force in 2009. It is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician and physician who has been the president of the European Commission since 1 December 2019. Charles Michel is a Belgian politician serving as President of the European Council since 2019.

MoRTH notifies Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules 2021

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021 which would facilitate and regulate the movement of passenger and goods vehicles between India and neighbouring countries.
- As per the rules, the State Transport Authority has been given the power to grant the Inter Country Transport Permit after thoroughly examining the application. The permit will remain valid for a period of one year from the date of its issue and it will be renewable for a period of five years on yearly basis.
- The decision has been taken considering the requests made by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to notify rules under provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act 1988 to facilitate movement of vehicles carrying goods and passengers between India and neighbouring countries. The frequency can be reviewed by the State Transport Department and it can be increased as per the demand.

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.

Madhya Pradesh takes lead in undertaking power sector reforms stipulated by Department of Expenditure

- Madhya Pradesh has taken the lead in undertaking power sector reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance.
- As part of the reforms, the State has started Direct Benefit Transfer of electricity subsidy to farmers in one district of the state with effect from December last year. Thus, the State has successfully implemented one out of the three stipulated reforms in the power sector.
- The Ministry of Finance in a statement said that successful implementation of the reform has made the State eligible to mobilise additional financial resources equivalent to 0.15 per cent of its Gross State Domestic Product.
- The Department of Expenditure has granted permission to the State to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs 1,423 crore through Open Market Borrowings. It has provided the much needed additional financial resources to the State to fight COVID-19 pandemic.
- Power Sector reforms stipulated by the Ministry of Finance aim at creating a transparent and hassle free provision of power subsidy to farmers and prevent leakages. They also aim at improving the health of power distribution companies by alleviating their liquidity stress in a sustainable manner.

In view of the resource requirement to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of India had on 17th May, 2020 enhanced the borrowing limit of the States by 2 percent of their GSDP. Half of this special dispensation was linked to undertaking citizen centric reforms by the States. The States get permission to raise additional funds equivalent to 0.25 percent of GSDP on completion of reforms in each sector. The four citizen centric areas identified for reforms were (a) Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System, (b) Ease of doing business reform, (c) Urban Local body/ utility reforms and (d) Power Sector reforms.

Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani announces 'Horticulture Development Mission'

- In Gujarat, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (Bagayat Vikas Mission). Mr. Rupani said that the aim of this mission is to double the income of farmers involved in medicinal and horticulture farming.
- Under this mission, the waste land of the government will be given on 30-year lease for farming of horticulture and medicinal crops. As per an estimate, the government has about 50,000 non-cultivated land waste lands. The government intends to convert this land into cultivation. A list of land blocks for land allotment in transparent manner will be released on I-Khedut portal.

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

NITI Aayog releases 2nd edition of India Innovation Index-2020

- NITI Aayog released the second edition of the India Innovation Index-2020. The index demonstrates the government's continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy. The index illustrates that India is on the right path and the states are endeavouring to improve their innovative ecosystem.

- In the India Innovation Index-2020, the States and Union Territories have been **divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and nine Union Territories and Small States** for effectively comparing their performance.
- In the 2020 ranking, **Karnataka retained its first position in the Major States category**. Maharashtra moved one position higher and stood at 2nd spot while Tamil Nadu slid to 3rd position. Bihar stands last in the **Major States category**.
- In the North East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh stands at first position followed by Uttarakhand and Manipur while Meghalaya stands last in the same category. Delhi stands at the first position while Chandigarh retained its second spot in the Union Territories and small States category while Lakshadweep stands last in the same category.

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

Joint exercise of IAF and Air and Space force of France Desert Night-21 commences at Jodhpur Airforce station

- **Joint exercise of Indian Air Force and Air and Space force of France Desert Night-21 commenced at Jodhpur Airforce station.** On the first day, air commodores of both the forces had courtesy meeting and communicated about the daily schedule to each other.
- **French Air Force has come with 4 Rafale fighter jet planes** for 5 day long joint exercise. These Rafale aircrafts cooperated with the customised Rafale aircraft handed over to India about war strategy.
- Along with these, **Air bus A-330, Multirole tanker transport and A-400 M Tactical transport aircrafts** are also participated in the joint exercise from French side. **It is the first time that Rafale fighter jets have taken part in any war exercise in India.** Through this exercise both the forces are aimed to exchange latest war techniques and strategies.

Telangana, Gujarat join Hands to help Women Entrepreneurs

- **In a first, two state governments have joined hands to boost women-led start-ups in various focus sectors.** **Telangana government's WE Hub has partnered with Gujarat government's I-Hub, to support women entrepreneurs** in both the states.
- For the initiative to be implemented, **around 240 women entrepreneurs** will be **selected for the pre-incubation programme**. A total of 20 will be shortlisted for the co-incubation programme. The initiative was **launched by IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao**. The partnership is expected to assist female entrepreneurs, so that, they can excel through their start-ups and set a new benchmark across sectors.
- **WE Hub was announced in November 2017.** Looking back in the last two years, Rama Rao said, "WE Hub has changed the narrative of democratising entrepreneurship by pushing the boundaries for women entrepreneurs that exist in the industry through its work."

Telangana is a state in India situated on the **south-central stretch of the Indian peninsula on the high Deccan Plateau**. On **2 June 2014**, the area was separated from the **northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh** as the newly formed state with **Hyderabad as its capital**. It is a **land locked state in India**. **Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhar Rao** has been **serving as the first and current Chief Minister of Telangana since 2014**. **Tamilisai Soundararajan** is an Indian medical doctor **serving as current Governor of Telangana**.

Kochi Airport, World's First To Fully Run On Solar Power

- **The Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL)** which created history by becoming the first airport in the world to run fully on solar energy has commissioned one of the biggest floating solar power plants in the state with a capacity of 452-kilowatt hour (KWh).

- According to CIAL, with this, the total installed capacity of the airport has increased to 40 MWp, helping it produce around 1.6 lakh units of power a day, against its daily consumption of nearly 1.3 lakh units. **The floating solar plants were installed in two artificial lakes located in the 130-acre CIAL golf course and use French technology which mounted 1300 photovoltaic panels for the best cost effective power generation.**

Ladakh tableau participated in Republic Day parade for first time this year

- **A tableau from Union Territory of Ladakh has participated in the Republic Day Parade on Rajpath for the first time this year. Ladakh's tableau depicts the iconic Thiksey Monastery located on top of a hill in Thikse in Leh district, and is one of the most-visited tourist sites in the region.**
- **It also showcases the Indian Astronomical Observatory, located in Hanle near Leh, one of the world's highest sites for optical, infrared and gamma-ray telescopes. Ladakh tableau also highlights the vision for Ladakh to be carbon-neutral.**

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

Large scale Joint Military exercise – ‘Exercise Kavach’ to be conducted

- **A large scale Joint Military exercise - Exercise Kavach involving assets of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard was conducted under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command.**
- **The exercise involves synergised application of maritime surveillance assets, coordinated air and maritime strikes, air defence, submarine and landing operations. The joint force has executed multi-domain, high-intensity offensive and defensive manoeuvres in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. The tri-services exercise aims to fine tune joint war-fighting capabilities and Standard Operating Procedures towards enhancing operational synergy.**

European Train Control System to Be Adapted For First Time in India

- **With the country's premier semi-high speed rapid rail coming up between Delhi and Meerut, India is all set to adopt the European Train Control System (ETCS) in mainline railways for the very first time.**
- **Recently, multinational rolling stock manufacturer Alstom won a contract worth €106 million to design, supply, and install the train control, signalling, and telecommunication system for the 82 km-long Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut regional rapid transit system (RRTS) corridor. The country's first regional rapid rail corridor will reduce the travel time between Delhi and Meerut to just 55 minutes.**

Madhya Pradesh becomes first state to get additional funds for capital projects

- **Madhya Pradesh has become the first state to get additional funds for capital projects for successfully carrying out reforms in various citizen-centric areas.**
- **The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has allocated additional 660 crore rupees to the state for capital expenditure for undertaking the One Nation, One Ration Card Reforms, Ease of Doing Business Reforms, and Urban Local Bodies Reforms. The State has also completed a part of the fourth reform- the Power Sector reform. 50 percent of the approved amount has also been released to the state as 1st instalment for the approved projects.**
- **The scheme of “Special Assistance to States for capital expenditure” was announced by the Finance Minister on 12th October last year under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat package. The Scheme is aimed at boosting capital expenditure by the State Governments who are facing a difficult financial environment this year due to a shortfall in tax revenue arising from the COVID 19 pandemic.**
- **So far, the capital expenditure proposals worth Rs.10,657 crore of 27 States have been approved by the Ministry of Finance. The capital expenditure projects have been approved in diverse sectors of the economy such as water supply, health, power, irrigation, education, urban development, transport etc.**

Madhya Pradesh (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its **capital is Bhopal**. Nicknamed the **“Heart of India”** due to its geographical location in India. **Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan**. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. The current governor of Madhya Pradesh is Anandiben Patel. Shivraj Singh Chouhan is the current Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

Prime Minister announces Startup India Seed Fund Scheme of Rs 1000 cr for startups

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has said that **Startups have the potential to change the future of India**. **Startups during Prarambh: StartUpIndia International Summit** through video conferencing, Mr Modi said, the confidence that all Startups have, should never fade away and always remain.
- **The government will launch a Rs 1,000-crore seed fund for startups, called Startup India Seed Fund**, which will help startups with the initial capital for growth and operations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.
- **This century is also called the century of Asia**. The youth and entrepreneurs from BIMSTEC countries are joining this Summit with the experiences that all have, from the fight against Corona to the making of the vaccine.

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

MoU signed between Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, IIT Roorkee

- **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee** signed an MoU in New Delhi for continuation of **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Professorial Chair focusing on research and development**, teaching and training in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.
- This collaboration of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with IIT-Roorkee will **strengthen Research and Development activities in Road Sector** and the Chair professor is expected to provide leadership in conducting and coordinating research, development and teaching in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.

Centre invested Rs 27,000 cr for schemes relating to blue economy

- **Union Minister for Fisheries Dr. Giriraj Singh** has said that the **Centre has invested 27 thousand crore rupees for schemes relating to blue economy**. Laying the foundation stone for the Aquatic Quarantine facility at Aquatic Animal Quarantine Centre at Padappai, the Minister said that the **ornamental fish export amounts to one lakh crore rupees**.
- The Minister said that **fishermen could earn one lakh to one a half lakh rupee every month due to the scheme**. He also said that sea-weed production will also be given a boost in the blue economy schemes launched by the government.

Blue economy is a term in economics relating to the exploitation and preservation of the marine environment. The concept was introduced by Gunter Pauli in his 2010 book- **“The Blue Economy: 10 years, 100 innovations, 100 million jobs”**. It is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health. This is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 14), which calls to **conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**.



Britain to host first G7 summit of Biden era in June

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited by the United Kingdom to attend the G7 summit to be held in the country's Cornwall region in June. The group that includes the world's seven leading democratic economies – UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the USA – and the European Union, will discuss global issues like the coronavirus pandemic, climate change and open trade.
- UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who had cancelled his India visit for this year's Republic Day event because of the detection of the mutant strain of the virus in Britain, is likely to visit the country "ahead of the G7", a press statement read. Apart from India, Australia and South Korea have also been invited to the summit.
- Britain will host a G7 summit in June announcing what will be the first face-to-face meeting of the group since the start of Joe Biden's US presidency. Outgoing US President Donald Trump was forced to cancel last year's meeting of the G7 – the world's most advanced economies – due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Britain, which holds the rotating presidency of the G7 in 2021, has invited leaders from Australia, India and South Korea to attend as guest countries.

The Group of Eight (G8) was an inter-governmental political forum from 1997 until 2014. It had formed from incorporating the country of Russia into the Group of Seven, or G7, and returned to its previous name after Russia was disinvited in 2014. The forum originated with a 1975 summit hosted by France that brought together representatives of six governments: France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, thus leading to the name Group of Six or G6. The summit came to be known as the Group of Seven, in 1976 with the addition of Canada. Russia was added to the political forum from 1997, which the following year became known as the G8. In March 2014, Russia was suspended indefinitely following the annexation of Crimea, whereupon the political forum name reverted to G7. The Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit.

Saudi Arabia ranked first in Arab world for road hazards technology

- Saudi Arabia provides the best technology-driven hazard alert system in the Arab world, according to the road warning hazards index.
- According to the report, measured as part of the GCC developmental index, the Saudi Transport Ministry has covered more than 58 km of the country with road warning hazards technology. This produces warning sounds when a driver loses concentration due to tiredness, using a mobile phone or suffering poor vision because of bad weather or road conditions.

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

Covid-19: Jordan becomes first country in the world to vaccinate refugees

- **Jordan has become the first country in the world to administer the coronavirus vaccine to refugees**, the United Nations has reported. **“The country has included refugees in every aspect of the public health response to the pandemic**, including the national vaccination campaign, proving how it should be done if we are to keep everyone safe.”
- **Jordan plans to inoculate at least 20 to 25 percent of its population with the coronavirus vaccine**, including refugees and asylum seekers, who are entitled to receive the shot free of charge.

Jordan is an Arab country in the Levant region of Western Asia, on the East Bank of the Jordan River. **Jordan is bordered by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Israel and Palestine (West Bank).** **Amman is the capital and largest city** of Jordan. **The Jordanian dinar has been the currency of Jordan since 1950.** **Bisher Al Khasawneh is a Jordanian politician and diplomat who has been serving as Prime Minister of Jordan.**

The Flint Water Indictments

- **The Flint water crisis is an ongoing public health crisis that began in 2014 when the City of Flint in Michigan—which has a population of roughly 100,000—changed its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint River.** This switch caused the water distribution pipes to corrode, as a result of which lead and other contaminants were leached into the municipal drinking water.
- **This led to an outbreak of Legionnaires’ disease, a serious type of pneumonia caused by the Legionella bacteria** and other health complications in thousands of its residents. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **people can get sick from this if they breathe in mist or accidentally swallow bacteria-containing water into the lungs.**
- While the water supply was switched back in 2015, the damage was long-lasting and many residents of the city continued to suffer. **In January 2016, the state of Michigan declared a state of emergency and in October the same year; residents of the city were advised not to drink the municipal tap water unless it was filtered.**

India and Japan sign MoC to promote movement of skilled workers from India to Japan

- **India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC), a Basic Framework for Partnership for Proper Operation of the System Pertaining to Specified Skilled Worker (SSW).**
- The MoC was signed by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Ambassador of Japan to India Suzuki Satoshi. The MoC will **help to promote the movement of skilled workers from India to Japan.**
- **The MoC covers 14 categories of specified skills under which skilled workers from India** who meet the skills requirement and Japanese language tests would be eligible for employment in Japan on a contractual basis.

Naruhito is the Emperor of Japan. He acceded to the Chrysanthemum Throne on 1 May 2019, beginning the Reiwa era, following the abdication of his father, Emperor Akihito, on 30 April 2019. He is the 126th monarch according to Japan’s traditional order of succession. Yoshihide Suga is serving as Prime Minister of Japan. He was the chief cabinet secretary under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe from 2012 to 2020. Tokyo is the capital city of Japan and yen is the official currency of Japan and it is the third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the United States dollar and the euro.

Qatar Airways Awarded World’s First 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating by Skytrax

- **Qatar Airways has become the first global airline in the world to achieve the prestigious 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating** by international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax.
- **The announcement follows an audit, carried out by the Skytrax team in December 2020, which assessed how effectively and consistently the airline’s stringent COVID-19 hygiene and safety standards and procedures are adhered to, from flight check-in to on-board aircraft.**
- This included a full review of procedural efficiency checks, visual observation of hygiene and safety levels at all stages of the passenger journey, and **on-board Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) sampling tests to measure the potential level of contamination of contact surfaces.**

Joe Biden takes the oath of office as the 46th President of the United States.

- **Joe Biden became the 46th president of the United States** with a call to unity, vowing to bridge deep divides and defeat domestic extremism two weeks after a mob attack tried to undo his election victory. **At 78, Biden is the oldest president in US history and only the second Roman Catholic president.**
- **On a frigid but sunny day at the very Capitol building that was assaulted on January 6,** Biden swore the oath of office moments after **Kamala Harris, who became America's first woman vice president, turning the page on Donald Trump's tumultuous four years.** Biden, who was vice president under Barack Obama and first ran for president in 1987, plans to kick off his tenure with a flurry of 17 orders.

Joseph Robinette Biden served as the 47th vice president of the United States from 2009 to 2017. In January 2017, Barak Obama awarded Biden the Presidential Medal of Freedom with distinction.

Kamala Harris sworn in as America's first woman Vice President

- **Indian-origin Kamala Harris was sworn in as America's first woman Vice President** during a historic inauguration at the West Front of the Capitol. **Harris the 49th US Vice President, will serve as the deputy of President Joe Biden,** who also took the oath of office, becoming the 46th US President. **Harris took over the office of the US Vice President from Mike Pence.** Biden succeeded President Donald Trump.

Kamala Devi Harris has served as the junior United States senator from California since 2017. Born in Oakland, California, Harris began her career in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, before being recruited to the San Francisco District Attorney's Office and later the City Attorney of San Francisco's office. **In 2003, she was elected district attorney of San Francisco. She was elected attorney general of California in 2010, and re-elected in 2014. She defeated Loretta Sanchez in the 2016 Senate election to become the second African-American woman and the first South Asian American to serve in the United States Senate.**

Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons

- **The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the Conference (by a vote of 122 States in favour, with one vote against and one abstention) at the United Nations on 7 July 2017,** and opened for signature by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 September 2017.
- Following the deposit with the Secretary-General of the 50th instrument of ratification or accession of the Treaty on 24 October 2020, **it enter into force on 22 January 2021 in accordance with its article 15 (1). The treaty is the first legally binding international agreement that aim to eliminate nuclear weapons completely.**
- **The nuclear-weapon states (NWS) are the five states—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States—officially recognized as possessing nuclear weapons by the NPT. India, Israel, and Pakistan never joined the NPT and are known to possess nuclear weapons.**

India does not support the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. India is committed to the policy of "No First Use" against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. India is also committed to negotiations regarding the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty. FMCT is a proposed international agreement. The agreement prohibits production of enriched Uranium and Plutonium. **India has also not signed Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.**

Mongolian Prime Minister submits resignation after Covid-19 protests

- **Mongolia's Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa submitted his resignation to parliament after protests in the capital Ulaanbaatar over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.** Mongolia's deputy prime minister and health minister also tendered their resignations.

Mongolia is a landlocked country in East Asia. Ulaanbaatar is the capital and largest city of Mongolia. Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene has been the Prime Minister of Mongolia since 27 January 2021. The togrog or tugrik is the official currency of Mongolia.



International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected an 11.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected an 11.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021, making the country the only major economy of the world to register double-digit growth this year amidst the coronavirus pandemic. The International Monetary Fund's growth projections for India in its latest **World Economic Outlook Update** released reflected a strong rebound in the economy, which is estimated to have contracted by eight per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic.
- China is next with 8.1 per cent growth in 2021 followed by Spain (5.9 per cent) and France (5.5 per cent). Revising its figures, the IMF said that in 2020, the Indian economy is estimated to have contracted by eight per cent. China is the only major country which registered a positive growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2020. India's economy, the IMF said, is projected to grow by 6.8 per cent in 2022 and that of China by 5.6 per cent. With the latest projections, India regains the tag of the fastest developing economies of the world.

Andorra has joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to become its 190th member. Andorra is a microstate situated between France and Spain. However, it is the largest microstate in Europe. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 190 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 190 countries that make up its near-global membership. Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, from Bulgaria, is Managing Director and Chairman of the Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) from October 1, 2019. Prominent Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath has joined as the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, becoming the first woman to occupy the top post at the global lender. The latest currency that was added to the basket of currencies by the International Monetary Fund to determine the value of XDR is the Chinese renminbi in 2016. The other international currencies in the basket of currencies are British Pound, Japanese Yen, US Dollar, and Euro. XDR is the currency code of Special Drawing Rights.

Kotak Mahindra AMC signs up with Climate Action 100+

- Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company has become a signatory to Climate Action 100+, which drives focus on clean energy transition and helps achieve the Paris Agreement's goals.
- In April 2018, KMAMC became the first domestic asset management company to sign up with the Principles for Responsible Investment supported by the United Nations.
- Climate Action 100+ is an investor-led initiative to ensure the world's largest corporate greenhouse gas emitters take necessary action on climate change. Five investor networks, including the PRI, jointly support the initiative. The underlying sustainability agenda is that the Indian corporate sector, individually and collectively, reduces greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the Paris Agreement's goals.

Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company Limited (KMAMC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Kotak Mahindra bank Limited (KMBL), is the Asset Manager for Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund (KMMF). KMAMC started operations in December 1998 in Mumbai. Mr. Nilesh Shah is the Managing Director of it.

Google removes 30 loan apps from Play store after RBI red flag

- Google has begun to remove money-lending apps that do not comply with the country's banking regulations from its Android Play Store following directions from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to monitor the glut of fintech applications hosted on the search giant's platform.
- "The (banking) regulator has communicated its unhappiness over the proliferation of unregulated fintech apps on Google Play Store and advised them to take such applications down,".
- Apps such as Cashguru, 10MinuteLoan, RupeeClick, Finance Buddha among others have also been removed in the last few days as per a list curated by policy researcher Srikanth L of Cashless Collective.

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

Western Spain set to get Europe's largest solar power plant

- Spain's largest utility Iberdrola SA and the French food giant Danone SA sealed an accord to build 590 MW-capacity photo-voltaic plant, the largest in Europe. The 300 million-euro (\$364 million) project will be located in the western province of Caceres. The utility will provide power to Danone's 29 supply points for 10 years, starting from April 2022 under a power purchase agreement.
- The plant will avoid the emission of 245,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Spain is by far Europe's busiest subsidy-free photo-voltaic market, and leads the sector's booming growth in the region.

Spain is a country in Southwestern Europe with some pockets of territory across the Strait of Gibraltar and the Atlantic Ocean. Madrid is the capital and most-populous city of Spain. Pedro Sanchez has been Prime Minister of Spain since June 2018. The euro is the official currency of it.

Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at Hazira, Gujarat

- Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at its LNG terminal at Hazira in Gujarat. This will now augment Shell's natural gas supply offerings in India to include supply of LNG via trucks.
- This infrastructure will also help support in the development of LNG as a clean transportation fuel. The Government of India is promoting natural gas through various policy and regulatory reforms towards making India- a gas-based economy by increasing the share of gas in India's primary energy mix to 15 per cent.

Petroleum & Natural Gas Ministry launches SAKSHAM campaign to spread awareness about green energy

- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry launched month-long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about green and clean energy. The pan-India campaign will focus on adoption of cleaner fuels.
- The Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Tarun Kapoor launched the campaign in New Delhi. The campaign will spread awareness about seven key drivers that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently mentioned. They include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive bio-fuels and increased use of electric vehicles.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between PCRA and EESL for promotion of Energy Efficient PNG Stove on the occasion.

Dharmendra Debendra Pradhan is currently serving as the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Minister of Steel in the Second Modi Ministry. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in March 2018 from Madhya Pradesh.

MeitY collaborates with Amazon to set up India's first quantum computing lab

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced a **collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to develop a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country.**
- **The lab is meant to provide access to quantum computing development environment** for the developer, scientific and academic communities. **Amazon will provide hosting with technical and programmatic support for the lab.** As an emerging field in technology, quantum computing has drawn interest from huge companies worldwide.
- **This includes names like Google, IBM, Microsoft and many more.** Countries, like the US and China, have also been interested in gaining a foothold in the race to quantum supremacy. According to reports, **China has invested over \$10 billion in its National Laboratory for Quantum Information Sciences.**

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

India debuts largest domestically-built nuclear reactor with more planned

- **India's success in connecting its largest domestically-built nuclear reactor** to the grid is a boost for plans to deploy the technology **to help the world's third-biggest polluter limit emissions**, according to the official overseeing the plans.
- **The 700-megawatt pressurized heavy water reactor of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station in Gujarat is the first of 16 planned units** that will help balance the grid against growing intermittent renewable generation. **India is counting on its nuclear program to help meet its Paris climate commitments** to reduce the emissions intensity of its economy by a third from 2005 levels by 2030.
- **Nuclear Power Corp. of India Ltd., also known as NPCIL**, which connected the reactor to the grid, expects to start five more units through March 2027, and is **placing orders for another ten to be commissioned by 2031.** **The combined cost of the fleet is estimated at about 1.5 trillion rupees (\$20.4 billion).**

The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited is an Indian public sector undertaking based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is wholly owned by the Government of India and is responsible for the generation of nuclear power for electricity. NPCIL is administered by the Department of Atomic Energy. NPCIL was created in September 1987 under the Companies Act 1956.

ICICI Bank launches 'InstaFX' mobile app

- **ICICI Bank announced the launch of a new mobile application for authorised money changers to help customers of any bank get 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' swiftly.** Called 'InstaFX', the app **enables the authorised money changers, who are partners of the Bank, to complete the KYC verification and validation of customers digitally and on a real-time basis.**
- **This facility significantly improves customer convenience as the 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' gets activated swiftly within a few hours**, as against the industry practice of up to two-days.
- **ICICI Bank is the first bank in the country to offer such facility to money changers.** "InstaFX mobile app enhances the convenience of customers, even if they are not customers of our bank, as it facilitates swift activation of the 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card'.

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.

World Economic Forum releases the Global Risks Report 2021

- Each year the World Economic Forum publishes a report looking ahead to the short term and long term risks facing organizations around the world. The 2021 Global Risks Report has now been published, alongside a call for the world to ‘wake up to long term risks’.
- The report says that in 2020, the world saw the catastrophic effects of ignoring long-term risks. While the pandemic has shown the reality of such risks, the emergence of vaccines provides an exit. With other long term risks, such as environmental concerns, there will be no way out. Instead, understanding and acting on the threat in advance provides the only chance of reducing the impacts.
- For the first time, the Global Risks Report rates risks according to when respondents perceive they will pose a critical threat to the world. Clear and present dangers (0-2 years) reveal concern about lives and livelihoods – among them infectious diseases, employment crises, digital inequality and youth disillusionment.
- In the medium-term (3-5 years), respondents believe the world will be threatened by knock-on economic and technological risks, which may take several years to materialize – such as asset bubble bursts, IT infrastructure breakdown, price instability and debt crises.
- Existential threats (5-10 years) – weapons of mass destruction, state collapse, biodiversity loss and adverse technological advances – dominate long-term concerns.

The World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologne, Geneva Canton, Switzerland, is an international NGO, founded in 1971. The WEF’s mission is stated as “committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas”. The WEF hosts an annual meeting at the end of January in Davos, a mountain resort in Graubunden, in the eastern Alps region of Switzerland. The WEF was founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab.

Cabinet approves investment of over Rs 5200 crore for 850 MegaWatt Hydro Power Project in J&K

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the investment of over Rs 5200 crore for 850 megawatt Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project located on Chenab river in Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir.
- This will be a new Joint Venture Company (JVC) of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and Jammu with equity contribution of 51 per cent and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDC) with 49 per cent.
- The Government is also supporting the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir by providing a grant of Rs 776.44 crore for Equity contribution of JKSPDC in the JVC to be set up for construction of Ratle HE Project. The Ratle Hydro Electric Project shall be commissioned within 60 months. The Power generated from the Project will help in providing balancing of Grid and will improve the power supply position.

India’s largest multi-model logistic park to come up at Virochan Nagar in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- India’s largest multi-model logistic park will come up at Virochan Nagar near Sanand in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat. A Memorandum of Understanding-MoU was signed between the Gujarat Government and Adani Port and SEZ Ltd. in the presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar.
- According to the details shared by the State Government, the proposed 1,450-acre park will also have a dedicated air cargo complex with 4.6-kilometre long runway to handle even large sized cargo aircraft.
- It will provide direct air, rail and road connectivity. The park will have provision of direct rail connectivity with a dedicated freight corridor which is part of the Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor.
- The multi-model logistic park will be set up with an estimated investment of Rs 50,000 crore. It will have potential to generate direct and indirect employment for 25,000 persons. The project will be completed in phased manner in next three years. Works on this project will be started within six months after various clearances and permissions.

IFFCO ranks first among top 300 cooperatives of the world

- The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has stepped up to 65th position in overall turnover ranking from 125th position in last financial year and now is at the top spot among 300 leading cooperatives in the world.
- The ranking is based on the ratio of turnover over the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. IFFCO with more than 36,000 member cooperatives and a group turnover of nearly 7 billion dollars, it is amongst the biggest cooperative institutions in the world.

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited, also known as IFFCO is a Multi-state cooperative society engaged in the business of manufacturing and marketing of fertilisers headquartered in New Delhi, India. Started in 1967 with 57 member cooperatives it is today the **biggest co-op in the world by turnover on GDP per capita** with around 35,000 member cooperatives reaching over 50 million Indian farmers.

WIPRO group gears up to act as knowledge partner of Madhya Pradesh govt.

- In Madhya Pradesh, WIPRO group is all set to act as knowledge partner of the State Government. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, while holding a discussion with Mr Azim Premji of WIPRO through video conference informed that the company has taken **initiative for establishment of a university in the State**. For this purpose, the State Government will extend all possible support to the Foundation.
- The Wipro Group will also **set up a Software Development Centre in Bhopal**. The Chief Minister said, such centres will go a long way in providing more opportunities to the youth in the Information Technology sector.
- Azim Premji Foundation has been allotted 50 acres of land for the proposed university in Bhopal. Its First Phase will start soon. The goal is to start the university in the next 18 months. The Chief Minister said, **this university will emerge as an important institution in the field of higher education in the State**.

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

FM launches Union Budget mobile app, Halwa Ceremony conducted

- Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the Union Budget mobile app even as final stages of FY 2021-22 Budget preparations began with the Halwa ceremony.
- The customary halwa ceremony was held in North Block and is performed every year before the “lock-in” process of Budget preparation begins. The mobile app will provide easy and quick access to Union Budget information to all stakeholders, as the **Budget will be delivered in paperless form for the first time**.
- The mobile App facilitates complete access to 14 Union Budget documents, including the Annual Financial Statement (commonly known as Budget), Demand for Grants (DG), Finance Bill etc. as prescribed by the Constitution.

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



Inventions/Discoveries

India sends 1 million doses of COVID vaccine to Nepal as gift under ‘Vaccine Maitri’ Initiative

- **India sent 1 million doses of a COVID vaccine to Nepal as a gift under the ‘Vaccine Maitri’ Initiative.** Nepal health minister Hridayesh Tripathi said the vaccine gifted by India will be given to health workers and other front-line personnel within a week to 10 days. ‘Vaccine Maitri’ reaffirms the highest priority accorded by India to relations with Bangladesh.
- In a major announcement, **Indian Government said that it will send COVID-19 vaccines to Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles and supplies to Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Mauritius will commence after confirmation of necessary regulatory clearances.**
- **India is one of the world’s biggest drugmakers,** and an increasing number of countries have already approached it for procuring the Coronavirus vaccines.

India’s decision to selectively allow export is a step as **India would be recognised as a globally responsible stakeholder in the fight against the pandemic and reaffirms India’s designation of pharmacy to the world.** India enjoys an important position in the global pharmaceuticals sector, as **India is the largest provider of generic drugs globally. The Indian pharmaceutical industry meets over 50% of global demand for various vaccines, 40% of generic demand in the U.S. and 25% of all medicine in the U.K.**

India home to both species of red panda, says ZSI study

- A couple of recent scientific publications by the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** have resolved the mystery on the demography and speciation in red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), one of the most iconic species in terms of its importance relating to global conservation.
- **Scientists from the ZSI have concluded that India is home to both the (sub) species — Himalayan red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) and the Chinese red panda (*Ailurus styani*) and the Siang river in Arunachal Pradesh splits the red panda into these two phylogenetic species.**
- **The red panda was considered a monotypic species till 2020 until the scientists studied its genetic make-up with respect to the geographical distribution and described the occurrence of the two species.**

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), founded on 1 July 1916 by Government of India Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, as premier Indian organisation in zoological research and studies to promote the survey, exploration and research of the fauna in the country.

Chilika has 22% of India’s sea grass area, says survey

- The Chilika Development Authority (CDA) said **scientists and government officials sighted 156 endangered Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika, Asia’s largest brackish water lagoon.** Chilika, which boasts of highest single lagoonal population of the aquatic mammal in the world, was surveyed by 20 teams comprising 100 personnel. **“The annual survey was conducted by ‘Transact Survey Method’ followed worldwide for population of aquatic mammals. Each survey team was equipped with binoculars, GPS, range finder and data recording sheets.**

- **Irrawaddy dolphins are protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.** A total of 12,42,000 birds of 105 water bird species, and 26,405 birds of 76 wetland dependent species, were counted from the entire lagoon.

DRDO hands over Motor Bike Ambulance Rakshita to CRPF

- **Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Delhi based DRDO laboratory, handed over Rakshita, a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle to Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in a ceremony held at CRPF HQ in New Delhi.**
- **Rakshita is fitted with a customized reclining Casualty Evacuation Seat (CES), which can be fitted in and taken out as per requirement. Other major features are the head immobilizer, safety harness jacket, hand and foot straps for safety, adjustable footrest, physiological parameter measuring equipment with wireless monitoring capability and auto warning system for the driver.**

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

Centre for Networking Intelligence at IISc gets a new state-of-the-art networking lab

- **The Centre for Networked Intelligence at the Indian Institute of Science has got a new state-of-the-art networking lab recently. The lab, housed in IISc's Department of Electrical Communication Engineering, was inaugurated by Krishna Sundaresan, vice president, Engineering, Cisco India and SAARC.**
- **The lab, developed in collaboration with Cisco, has a network test-bed which will enable researchers and students to develop applications, algorithms, and experiments in emerging areas in communication and computer networking such as software-defined networking, network function virtualisation, and network slicing, the IISc said.**

Road Transport and Highways Ministry and DRDO sign MoU for technical exchange on sustainable geo-hazard management

- **Road Transport and Highways Ministry and Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration in the field of technical exchange and co-operation on sustainable geo-hazard management.** The MoU was signed by Secretary Ministry of Road and Transport Giridhar Aramane and Secretary DRDO Dr Satieesh Reddy.
- **It has been agreed that both will co-operate in the areas of mutual benefit including, conceptual planning of integrated avalanche and landslide protection schemes for all weather connectivity in snow bound areas of the country. This initiative will ensure safety of road users on National Highways in the country and safeguard them from the adverse effects of landslides and other natural calamities.**

Chinese scientists develop gene therapy which could delay ageing

- **Scientists in Beijing have developed a new gene therapy which can reverse some of the effects of ageing in mice and extend their lifespans, findings which may one day contribute to similar treatment for humans.**
- **The method, detailed in a paper in the Science Translational Medicine journal earlier this month, involves inactivating a gene called kat7 which the scientists found to be a key contributor to cellular ageing. The specific therapy they used and the results were a world first, said co-supervisor of the project Professor Qu Jing, 40, a specialist in ageing and regenerative medicine from the Institute of Zoology at the CAS.**

World's first ammonia fuel-ready vessel being built in China

- **The world's first ammonia fuel-ready vessel is under construction for Greek shipowner Avin International at a Chinese shipyard. "Ammonia is a promising zero-carbon fuel that can help meet the IMO's GHG reduction target for 2050. It offers ship-owners and operators a zero-carbon tank-to-wake emissions profile but is not without challenges, not the least of which is the greater prescriptive requirements for containment and equipment than most of the other alternative fuels under consideration."**

The world's first coral conservation facility in Australia

- **The world's first dedicated coral conservation facility** will be located at the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef in Port Douglas, North Queensland, Australia. The Living Coral Biobank aims to secure the long-term future and biodiversity of corals worldwide which are under severe threat due to climate change.
- **Designed by Australian architects Contreras Earl Architecture, with leading engineering and sustainability consultants Arup and Werner Sobek for the Great Barrier Reef Legacy, the primary goal of the facility is to keep alive and nurture over 800 species of the world's hard corals.** The new building typology – a 'living ark' – will be the only dedicated facility of its kind in the world. Through its innovative design and engineering it will be a world leader in next-generation renewable energy design, creating optimal conditions for coral storage while minimising energy consumption and solar gain.

Study reveals how efficient brain circuitry develops spontaneously

- **A KAIST team's mathematical modelling has revealed that efficient brain circuitry develops spontaneously** by showing that the topographic tiling of cortical maps originates from bottom-up projections from the periphery.
- **This new finding provides advanced insights into the mechanisms underlying a biological strategy of brain circuitry for the efficient tiling of sensory modules.** Researchers have explained how the regularly structured topographic maps in the visual cortex of the brain could arise spontaneously to efficiently process visual information.
- **This research provides a new framework for understanding functional architectures in the visual cortex during early developmental stages.** A KAIST research team led by Professor Se-Bum Paik from the Department of Bio and Brain Engineering has demonstrated that the orthogonal organization of retinal mosaics in the periphery is mirrored onto the primary visual cortex and initiates the clustered topography of higher visual areas in the brain.

In a first, Hawk-i aircraft fires smart anti-airfield weapon off Odisha coast

- **HAL successfully test fired a Smart Anti Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from the Hawk-i aircraft off the coast of Odisha.** The indigenous stand-off weapon developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), DRDO is the first smart weapon fired from an Indian Hawk-Mk132.
- **It is the first smart weapon to be fired from an Indian Hawk Mk132 trainer aircraft.** The Hawk-i project seeks to equip the trainer jet with combat capabilities through an internally-funded HAL programme.

Two new species of ants discovered from Kerala and Tamil Nadu

- **Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in Kerala and Tamil Nadu** by a team of scientists, the Department of Science and Technology.
- **One of the two species found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala has been named Ooceraea Joshii in honour of professor Amitabh Joshi** — a distinguished evolutionary biologist from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR). **The other named Ooceraea decamera (decamera refers to the ten-segmented antennal count) was discovered from Alagarkoil in Madurai.**

DRDO, Army develop India's first indigenous machine pistol

- **India's first indigenous 9 mm machine pistol** has been jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Army, the Defence Ministry said on January 14.
 - It said the Army's infantry school in Mhow and the DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in Pune have designed and developed the weapon. The weapon has been developed in a record time of four months.
 - **"The machine pistol fires the in-service 9 mm ammunition and sports an upper receiver made from aircraft grade aluminium and lower receiver from carbon fibre. 3 dimensional printing process has been used in designing and prototyping of various parts".**
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SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Ladakh: Khelo India first Zaskar Winter Sports Festival begins

- **In Ladakh, Khelo India 1st Zaskar Winter Sports Festival began.** Engaging the Youth and opening new vistas of tourism in Zaskar are the main aims of the festival.
- **Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurated Chadar Trek to kick start** and set the tone for 13- Day Zaskar Winter Sports Festival from the confluence of Indus and Zaskar rivers near Sangam, Leh.
- **Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), formerly Khelo India School Games (KISG), means Play India Youth Games,** held annually in January or February, are the **national level multidisciplinary grassroots games in India held for two categories, namely under-17 years school students and under-21 college students.**
- **Every year best 1000 kids will be given an annual scholarship of Rs.5 lakh (US\$7,000) for 8 years to prepare them for the international sporting events. On 31 January 2018, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, inaugurated Khelo India School Games at the opening ceremony based on Guru-shishya tradition held at Indira Gandhi Arena.** From the 2019 events, Khelo India School Games were renamed to Khelo India Youth Games after Indian Olympic Association came on board earlier in September 2018. **Haryana topped medals list in the inaugural edition of the Khelo India games.**
- **On 22 February 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first edition of the Khelo India University Games in Cuttack** to give athletes the exposure of multi-disciplinary events at the university level.
- **Union Minister for sports Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated eight Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE), including one in Nagaland.** The KISCE inaugurated in other states are Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Mizoram, Odisha and Telangana.

India registers historic win over Australia in Brisbane test to seal 4-match series 2-1; Retains Border-Gavaskar Trophy

- India created history by defeating Australia by three wickets in the fourth and final Test at the Gabba in Brisbane and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. India successfully chased the 328-run target to seal the four-match series 2-1. This was the first defeat for Australia at their fortress Gabba in 32 years as Rishabh Pant's brilliant unbeaten 89, Shubman Gill's 91, and Cheteshwar Pujara's 56 run knock in the second innings guided India to the memorable Test series win. **Rishabh Pant was awarded the Man of the Match while Pat Cummins was awarded the Player of the Series.**

Union Tourism Minister inaugurates IISM branch in Kargil

- **In Kargil of Ladakh Union territory, the Union Tourism Minister Mr Prahlad Singh Patel has inaugurated a branch of Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM).** The Minister participated in various events to celebrate the National Tourism Day with National Events of Adventure Tourism, (NEAT) in Kargil district.

MISCELLANEOUS

For the first time in India a post-graduate diploma course in Buddhist heritage and Tourism

- Now, those who aspire to make a career in tourism or Buddhist studies now can fulfill their wish as Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) in association with Deccan College (Deemed University) has started a post-graduate diploma in Buddhist heritage and tourism. This is probably the first of its kind course in the country.
- The course syllabus has been jointly created by SPPU Pali Department and Deccan College. Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between SPPU Vice-chancellor Nitin Karmalkar and acting VC Prasad Joshi.
- The course will help the students to learn and make a career in Tourism besides learning about Buddhist heritage, culture, history, historical places, and traditions among others. Ellora, Ajanta, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha has got a few Buddhist historical places. Similarly, China, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri-Lanka, Cambodia, Tibet have a good population of Buddhist followers and monks.

CAQM setting up Decision Support System for air quality for Delhi-NCR

- The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas has begun the process of setting up a Decision Support System (DSS). It will have a web, Geographical Information System (GIS) and multi-model based operational and planning decision support tool.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in a statement said that this tool will help immensely in capturing the static and dynamic features of the emissions from various sources. It will have an integrated framework to handle both primary and secondary pollutants using a chemical transport model. The Ministry said, the system will also be able to handle the source specific interventions with the framework to estimate benefits of interventions.
- It will also focus on presenting the best results in a comprehensive user friendly and simple format for different users. The Commission has entrusted the task to expert groups from reputed knowledge institutions of the country for framework development of Air Quality Management Decision Support System. The System will use Artificial Intelligence(AI) to help improve the air quality over targeted sectors of Delhi and NCR.

Wonderla Bangalore becomes first theme park in India to get Covid-safe certification

- Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, amusement park Wonderla Bangalore announced that it become the first theme park in the country to secure OV-Safe certification by Bureau Veritas India. The theme park and resort in Bangalore.

PM Modi unanimously chosen as next Chairman of Shree Somnath Trust

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was unanimously chosen as the next Chairman of Shree Somnath Trust. The trust manages the world famous Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan town in Gir-Somnath district of Gujarat.
- The Trustees unanimously chose Prime Minister Modi as the next Chairman of the Trust, to guide it in the times to come. The Prime Minister accepted the responsibility and also appreciated the efforts of Team Somnath.

HM Amit Shah launches Ayushman Bharat scheme for Central Armed Police Forces

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Ayushman CAPF health scheme in Guwahati for about 28 lakh personnel of Central Armed Police Forces and their families in all the states where Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is operational. It was a great occasion coinciding with the Parakram Diwas to start Ayushman Bharat scheme for the Central Armed Police Forces.

Railways rename Howrah-Kalka Mail as 'Netaji Express'

- Days before the nation celebrates the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian Railways renamed the Howrah-Kalka Mail as the 'Netaji Express'. The great freedom fighter was born on January 23, 1897 and floated Azad Hind Fauj to fight for India's independence. Netaji's prakram had put India on the express route of freedom and development".

GI tag sought for India's costliest mushroom

- A geographical indication (GI) tag has been sought for one of the costliest mushrooms in the world that grows in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district. Locally called Gucchi, or Morel, the mushroom, priced at over Rs.20,000 a kg, is a forest produce collected by local farmers and tribals. Last June, saffron from the State had been granted a GI tag.

SC Railway commissions 106 kms of Electric traction of railway line in Andhra Pradesh

- In Andhra Pradesh, South Central Railway has completed and commissioned 106 kms of Electric traction of the railway line between Vijayawada-Uppaluru-Bhimavaram sections of Vijayawada Division.
- The newly commissioned Electrification work of the section includes single line with electric traction from Vijayawada to Uppaluru for a length of 18 kms and double line with electric traction from Uppaluru to Bhimavaram Town for a length of 88 kms.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah says, provide home to every citizen of country by August 2022

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the Modi Government will provide a home to every citizen of the country by August 2022. He was speaking after the e-dedication of one kilometer long Railway overbridge at Shilaj in Ahmedabad.
- Mr. Shah said that the government is undertaking the rural and urban housing projects in such a way that everyone will get home by 15th August 2022.
- The Modi government has already provided 10 crore units of affordable housing. He said that more than 13 crore poor families were provided LPG gas cylinders under the Prime Minister Ujjwala Yojana.
- The government has provided electricity to all villages in the country and now the focus is to provide drinking water to every household by 2022.

New scheme initiated in Rajasthan to make people aware about importance of nourishment of pregnant women

- A new scheme has been initiated in Sirohi district, Rajasthan to make people aware about importance of nourishment of pregnant women and children.
- The scheme called Ek Paudha Suposhit Beti Ke Naam or A plant on the name of well-nourished daughter' has been started under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme of the union government.
- Under this Scheme on the birth of a girl child a drumstick plant is being distributed by district administration this nutritional plant is taken care of by family members of girl child.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju assigned additional charge of Ministry of AYUSH

- Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has been assigned the additional charge of the Ministry of AYUSH. President's Secretariat said, during the hospitalization and treatment of AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik following a road accident, his portfolio related to the Ministry of AYUSH has been temporarily assigned to Mr Rijiju in addition to his existing portfolios. The President has directed that this arrangement may continue till Mr Naik resumes his work related to the Ministry of AYUSH.

Aadhaar grew from an idea into one of the world's largest identity platform

- Ram Sewak Sharma, the first director general of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) writes an insider's account in The Making of Aadhaar: World's Largest Identity Platform.
- Sharma recounts how he came on board, his early interactions with UIDAI's then chairman Nandan Nilekani and the groundwork for the project. He recalls how the venture moved forward despite setbacks, either in terms of the technologies that it wanted to implement or in the form of political opposition.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Jayant Khobragade named India's next envoy to ASEAN secretariat

- **India named Jayant Khobragade as its next ambassador to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat in Jakarta**, months after Pakistan declined to accept his posting as the deputy chief of mission in Islamabad.
- **Khobragade, an officer of the 1995 batch of the Indian Foreign Service**, is currently serving as a joint secretary in the external affairs ministry. India first posted a dedicated ambassador to ASEAN in 2014 following the elevation of ties between the two sides to a strategic partnership and in view of growing cooperation in areas ranging from security to trade.

Legendary Indian classical musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away

- **Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan died** at his residence in Mumbai. **Born on March 3, 1931 in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh**, Ghulam Mustafa Khan was the eldest son in a family of four brothers and three sisters. Both of his parents belonged to renowned musical background.
- He got his basic classical music training from his father and later studied music under his cousin, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan. **He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1991, followed by Padma Bhushan in 2006 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018.**

Sanitation Worker Manish Kumar becomes first Indian to get Covid-19 Vaccine in Milestone Moment

- **As India kicked off the world's biggest Covid-19 vaccination drive**, a frontline sanitation worker at Delhi AIIMS, Manish Kumar, received the first jab against the deadly respiratory disease.
- He was **inoculated in the presence of Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan**. All India Institute of Medical Sciences Director Dr Randeep Guleria also received the vaccine shot.

Austin becomes first Black Pentagon chief

- **Lloyd J. Austin, a West Point graduate who rose to the Army's elite ranks and marched through racial barriers in a 41-year career**, won Senate confirmation to become the nation's first Black secretary of defense.
- **The 93-2 vote gave President Joe Biden his second Cabinet member; Avril Haines was confirmed as the first woman to serve as director of national intelligence.** Biden is expected to win approval for others on his national security team in coming days, including Antony Blinken as secretary of state.

AWARDS

Rajendra Kumar Bhandari selected for Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

- Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society and Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management.
- Union Home Ministry announced the award every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an institution and five lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an individual.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal honoured by Canada's Hindi Writers Guild

- Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' was honoured by the Hindi Writers Guild, Canada for his literary work. Nishank was conferred with the "Sahitya Gaurav Samman" in the presence of the Governor through a virtual programme.

Indian mathematician Nikhil Srivastava is joint winner of maths prize

- Indian mathematician Nikhil Srivastava, has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison–Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs.
- Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, Adam Marcus, from the Ecole polytechnique federale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize, the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S. said in the statement.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and late singer SP Balasubramaniam were named for this year's Padma Vibhushan

- Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and late singer SP Balasubramaniam were named for this year's Padma Vibhushan while former Chief Ministers late Tarun Gogoi and Keshubhai Patel, former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan and former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan have been awarded Padma Bhushan. Ram Vilas Paswan served as the Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution who passed away in October 2020.
- Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day, are given in three categories – Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service).
- The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year. The Union Home Ministry said the President has approved conferment of 119 Padma awards – seven Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri. Twenty-nine women are among the Padma awardees and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of foreigners, NRI, PIO AND OCI and one transgender. Sixteen people have been given the award posthumously.

The Padma Vibhushan is the second-highest civilian award of the Republic of India, after the Bharat Ratna. Instituted on 2 January 1954, the award is given for "exceptional and distinguished service", without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex. The Padma Bhushan is the third-highest civilian award in the Republic of India, preceded by the Bharat Ratna and the Padma Vibhushan and followed by the Padma Shri. Instituted on 2 January 1954, the award is given for "distinguished service of a high order...without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex." Padma Shri is the fourth-highest civilian award in the Republic of India, after the Bharat Ratna, the Padma Vibhushan and the Padma Bhushan.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Education 24 January

- **The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.** The declaration calls for free and compulsory elementary education.
- **The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989,** goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all. International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on January 24 and is dedicated to education.
- **The third International Day of Education (January 24) was marked on Monday 25 January 2021 under the theme ‘Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation’.** Now is the time to power education by stepping up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery.

International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust

- **International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an international memorial day on 27 January** commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War. **It commemorates the genocide that resulted in the deaths of 6 million Jews and 11 million others, by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.**
- **The theme of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2021 is “Facing the Aftermath: Recovery and Reconstitution after the Holocaust”.**

National Tourism Day

- **On 25 January, National Tourism Day is observed every year** to raise awareness of the importance of tourism for the country's economy.
- **This year, the theme of National Tourism Day is ‘Dekho Apna Desh’.** Coronavirus pandemic has intensely affected the tourism sector due to the restrictions on travel. The Ministry of Tourism has been organizing seminars around the theme beginning from January 21 to February 22, 2021.

References:

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The Times of India
Business Standard
News on AIR
Hindustan Times

QUESTIONS

1. Who has become the first Indian to get Covid-19 Vaccine in Milestone Moment?
(a) Anant Mishra (b) Manish Kumar (c) Diwakar Bannerjee (d) Hemant Vishwas
2. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry launched month-long mass awareness campaign _____ to spread awareness about green and clean energy.
(a) 'SAKSHAM' (b) 'SAMARTH' (c) 'SARTHAK' (d) 'SAMARPAN'
3. According to the road warning hazards index, which of the following countries ranked first in Arab world for road hazards technology?
(a) Oman (b) Jordan (c) UAE (d) Saudi Arabia
4. India's first indigenous 9 mm machine pistol has been jointly developed by the _____ and the Indian Army.
(a) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
(b) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)
(c) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
(d) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)
5. Which of the following nations will host a G7 summit in June 2021?
(a) Canada (b) USA (c) United Kingdom (d) Germany
6. Recently, scientists and government officials sighted 156 endangered Irrawaddy dolphins in _____, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon.
(a) Sambhar (b) Chilika (c) Wular (d) Lonar
7. Who among the following union ministers was honoured by the Hindi Writers Guild, Canada for his literary work?
(a) Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' (b) Smriti Irani
(c) Narendra Singh Tomar (d) Prakash Javadekar
8. Recently, Scientists from the ZSI have concluded that India is home to both the (sub) species Himalayan red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) and the Chinese red panda (*Ailurus styani*) and _____ splits the red panda into these two phylogenetic species.
(a) Siang river in Arunachal Pradesh (b) Subansiri River in Assam
(c) Lohit River in Arunachal Pradesh (d) Kameng River in Arunachal Pradesh
9. Recently, Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan died. He was a famous:
(a) Hockey Player (b) Shehnai Maestro
(c) Lyricist (d) Indian classical musician
10. Name the first domestic asset management company which signed up with the Principles for Responsible Investment supported by the United Nations.
(a) IDFC First Asset Management Company
(b) Axis Asset Management Company
(c) HDFC Asset Management Company
(d) Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company
11. Which of the following has become India's first train to run on Push-Pull technology empowering the Government's "Mission Raftar" thus achieving another milestone in Railway history?
(a) New Delhi Jaipur Rajdhani Express
(b) New Delhi Bhopal Rajdhani Express
(c) New Delhi Mumbai Rajdhani Express
(d) New Delhi Kolkata Rajdhani Express

12. Which of the following became the first theme park in the country to secure OV-Safe certification by Bureau Veritas India recently?
(a) Essel World, Mumbai (b) Imagicaa, Khopoli
(c) Kingdom of Dreams, Gurugram (d) Wonderla Bangalore
13. The Flint water crisis is an ongoing public health crisis that began in 2014 when the City of Flint in _____ which has a population of roughly 100,000—changed its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint River.
(a) California (b) Michigan (c) Nevada (d) Texas
14. Who was recently unanimously chosen as the next Chairman of Shree Somnath Trust?
(a) Shri Amit Shah (b) Shri Vijay Rupani
(c) Shri Masukhlal Mandaviya (d) Shri Narendra Modi
15. Which of the following countries has become the first country in the world to administer the coronavirus vaccine to refugees?
(a) Oman (b) Jordan (c) Russia (d) Saudi Arabia
16. India signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, MoC a Basic Framework for Partnership for Proper Operation of the System Pertaining to Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) with which of the following countries?
(a) Ireland (b) China (c) Japan (d) Mauritius
17. Google has begun to remove money-lending apps that do not comply with the country's banking regulations from its Android Play Store to monitor the glut of fintech applications hosted on the search giant's platform in which of the following countries?
(a) Sri Lanka (b) India (c) USA (d) France
18. Name one of the costliest mushrooms in the world that grows in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district which has recently sought geographical indication (GI) tag.
(a) Oyster (b) Shiitake (c) Gucchi (d) Cremini
19. Recently, Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Delhi based DRDO laboratory, handed over _____ a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle to Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) \ in a ceremony held at CRPF HQ in New Delhi.
(a) Rakshita (b) Rakshak (c) Surakshit (d) Sewarth
20. Recently, _____ and Indian Farm Forestry Development Co-operative Ltd (IFFDC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together for tribal livelihood generation.
(a) TRIFED (b) Ministry of Tribal Affairs
(c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) NABARD
21. Which of the following states recently announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (Bagayat Vikas Mission)?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Karnataka (d) Madhya Pradesh
22. Which of the following ministries recently announced collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to develop a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country?
(a) Ministry of Home Affairs
(b) Ministry of Sports & Youth Affairs
(c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
(d) Ministry of Finance
23. The first _____ IPR dialogue between the European Union (EU) Commission and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) was held through a virtual platform.
(a) India-USA (b) India-Canada (c) India-EU (d) India-Maldives

24. Which of the following nuclear plants is connecting its largest domestically-built nuclear reactor to the grid is a boost for plans to deploy the technology to help the world's third-biggest polluter limit emissions?
 (a) Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (b) Tarapur Atomic Power Station
 (c) Narora Atomic Power Station (d) Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant
25. Which of the following cricket teams retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy?
 (a) Australia (b) India (c) New Zealand (d) England
26. Buddhist studies now can fulfill their wish as _____ in association with Deccan College (Deemed University) has started a post-graduate diploma in Buddhist heritage and tourism.
 (a) Savitribai Phule Pune University
 (b) Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University
 (c) Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University
 (d) Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University
27. The Centre for Networked Intelligence at the _____ has got a new state-of-the-art networking lab recently.
 (a) IIT Madras (b) Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru
 (c) IIT Delhi (d) IIT Bombay
28. International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on _____ and is dedicated to education.
 (a) 18th January (b) 20th January (c) 23rd January (d) 24th January
29. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021. The permit will remain valid for a period of _____ from the date of its issue.
 (a) Six Months (b) One Year (c) Three Years (d) Five Years
30. Which of the following states has taken the lead in undertaking power sector reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance?
 (a) Maharashtra (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Gujarat (d) Andhra Pradesh
31. Recently, NITI Aayog released the second edition of the India Innovation Index-2020. In the 2020 ranking which of the following states retained its first position in the Major States category?
 (a) Kerala (b) Maharashtra (c) Karnataka (d) Madhya Pradesh
32. The first airport in the world to run fully on solar energy is
 (a) Rawalpindi International Airport (b) Mirpur International Airport
 (c) Cochin International Airport (d) Indore International Airport
33. Recently, The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the investment of Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project located on _____ in Jammu and Kashmir.
 (a) Jhelum River (b) Chenab River
 (c) Beas River (d) Sutluj River
34. Recently, Days before the nation celebrates the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian Railways renamed the _____ as the 'Netaji Express'.
 (a) Howrah-Kalka Mail (b) Darjeeling- Jaipur Mail
 (c) Kolkata-New Delhi Mail (d) Howrah-Chennai Mail
35. Recently, Road Transport and Highways Ministry and _____ signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration in the field of technical exchange and co-operation on sustainable geo-hazard management.
 (a) DRDO (b) NASA (c) ISRO (d) HAL

36. Which of the following organizations released the “Global Risks Report 2021”?
 (a) UNDP (b) World Economic Forum
 (c) International Monetary Fund (d) World Bank
37. Which of the following banks recently announced the launch of a new mobile application called ‘InstaFX’?
 (a) HDFC Bank (b) ICICI Bank (c) IDFC First Bank (d) Axis Bank
38. Recently, Scientists in _____ have developed a new gene therapy which can reverse some of the effects of ageing in mice and extend their lifespans, findings which may one day contribute to similar treatment for humans.
 (a) New York (b) Beijing (c) Tokyo (d) London
39. Which of the following has become the first global airline in the world to achieve the prestigious 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating by international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax?
 (a) Singapore Airlines (b) Emirates (c) Qatar Airways (d) La Compagnie
40. Recently, Joint exercise of Indian Air Force and Air and Space force of France _____ commenced at Jodhpur Airforce station.
 (a) Desert Night-21 (b) Blue Knight- 8 (c) Rafale Bling-04 (d) Nomadic Elephant
41. According to Union Minister for Fisheries Dr. Giriraj Singh the Centre has invested 27 thousand crore rupees for schemes relating to _____.
 (a) Blue Economy (b) Purple Economy (c) Golden Economy (d) Grey Economy
42. Recently, Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at its LNG terminal at _____ in Gujarat.
 (a) Bhuj (b) Hazira (c) Somnath (d) Porbandar
43. A large scale Joint Military exercise _____ involving assets of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard will be conducted under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command.
 (a) Exercise Suraksha (b) Exercise Kavach (c) Exercise Blue Sea (d) Exercise Sahayata
44. According to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the Indian Government will provide a home to every citizen of the country by August _____.
 (a) 2021 (b) 2022 (c) 2024 (d) 2025
45. Which of the following countries Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa recently submitted his resignation to parliament after protests over the government’s handling of the Covid-19 pandemic?
 (a) Kyrgyzstan (b) Mongolia (c) Turkmenistan (d) Afghanistan
46. Recently, Indian-origin Kamala Harris was sworn in as America’s first woman Vice President during a historic inauguration at the West Front of the Capitol. Kamala Harris is the _____ US Vice President.
 (a) 43rd (b) 45th (c) 47th (d) 49th
47. Which of the following country is set to get Europe’s largest solar power plant?
 (a) Spain (b) France (c) Germany (d) Ireland
48. The world’s first ammonia fuel-ready vessel is under construction for _____ Avin International at a Chinese shipyard.
 (a) Greek shipowner (b) Irish shipowner
 (c) British shipowner (d) German shipowner
49. International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an international memorial day on _____ commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War.
 (a) 24 January (b) 27 January (c) 29 January (d) 31 January

50. Recently, who has been named by India as the next ambassador to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat in Jakarta?
 (a) Aditya Mithare (b) Anjani Kashyap (c) Jayant Khobragade (d) Mahesh Deshmukh
51. Which of the following states is all set to act as knowledge partner with WIPRO group?
 (a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Rajasthan
52. India is all set to adopt the European Train Control System (ETCS) in mainline railways for the very first time between:
 (a) Lucknow and Gorakhpur (b) Delhi and Meerut
 (c) Guwahati and Dimapur (d) Rewari and Chandigarh
53. Recently, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and _____ signed an MoU for continuation of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Professorial Chair focusing on research and development, teaching and training in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.
 (a) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Delhi (b) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee
 (c) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Bombay (d) Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Madras
54. The iconic Thiksey Monastery is located in:
 (a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Nagaland (c) Ladakh (d) Manipur
55. Who won US Senate confirmation to become the nation's first Black secretary of defense?
 (a) Matthew G Marshall (b) Alexander M Thomson
 (c) Benjamin F Gooch (d) Lloyd J. Austin
56. Which of the following states has become the first state to get additional funds for capital projects for successfully carrying out reforms in various citizen-centric areas?
 (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Jharkhand (c) Odisha (d) Rajasthan
57. The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has stepped up to _____ in overall turnover ranking and now is at the top spot among 300 leading cooperatives in the world.
 (a) 34th (b) 47th (c) 65th (d) 89th
58. India's largest multi-modal logistic park will come up in:
 (a) Mumbai (b) Lucknow (c) Ahmedabad (d) Bengaluru
59. Recently, India sent 1 million doses of a COVID vaccine to Nepal as a gift under the _____ Initiative.
 (a) 'Vaccine Sahayata' (b) 'Vaccine Maitri' (c) 'Vaccine Maitri' (d) 'Vaccine Mitra'
60. National Tourism Day is observed every year to raise awareness of the importance of tourism for the country's economy on:
 (a) 15th January (b) 18th January
 (c) 21st January (d) 25th January
61. Name the Indian mathematician who has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison–Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs.
 (a) Amit Ranjan (b) Vivek Murthy
 (c) Nikhil Srivastava (d) Animesh Kataria
62. Recently, the Union Tourism Minister Mr Prahlad Singh Patel has inaugurated a branch of Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM) in:
 (a) Tawang (b) Dimapur
 (c) Chamoli (d) Kargil

63. The nation paid homage to the great freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary. Neta Ji was born in _____.
(a) Cuttack, Odisha (b) Bhubaneswar, Odisha
(c) Kolkata, West Bengal (d) Dajeeling, West Bengal
64. Which of the following Indian states initiated a scheme called Ek Paudha Suposhit Beti Ke Naam or A plant on the name of well-nourished daughter' has been started under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme of the union government?
(a) Rajasthan (b) Haryana (c) Punjab (d) Himachal Pradesh
65. Who has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for his excellent work in Disaster Management?
(a) Dr Sudhakant Vishnoi (b) Dr. Amit Vajpayee
(c) Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari (d) Dr. Suresh Malhar'
66. Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the _____ in Guwahati for about 28 lakh personnel of Central Armed Police Forces.
(a) Ayushman CAPF health scheme (b) Indian Sena CAPF health scheme
(c) Indian CAPF health scheme (d) Veer Bharat CAPF health scheme
67. Recently, the Treaty on the Prohibition of _____ enters into force on 22 January 2021.
(a) War Gas (b) Nuclear Weapons (c) Hazardous Chemicals (d) Phenol
68. Recently, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the Union Budget mobile app even as final stages of FY 2021-22 Budget preparations began with the _____ ceremony.
(a) Halwa (b) Kheer (c) Rabri (d) Jalebi –Imarti
69. Recently, Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in _____ by a team of scientists, the Department of Science and Technology.
(a) Kerala and Tamil Nadu (b) Maharashtra and Goa
(c) Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh (d) Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu
70. In India, The _____ seeks to equip the trainer jet with combat capabilities through an internally-funded HAL programme.
(a) Hawk-i project (b) Eagle project (c) Sharp project (d) Tiger project

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **b** As India kicked off the world's biggest Covid-19 vaccination drive, a frontline sanitation worker at Delhi AIIMS, Manish Kumar, received the first jab against the deadly respiratory disease.
2. **a** The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry launched month-long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about green and clean energy.
3. **d** Saudi Arabia provides the best technology-driven hazard alert system in the Arab world, according to the road warning hazards index.
4. **a** India's first indigenous 9 mm machine pistol has been jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Army
5. **c** Britain will host a G7 summit in June announcing what will be the first face-to-face meeting of the group since the start of Joe Biden's US presidency.
6. **b** Scientists and government officials sighted 156 endangered Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon.
7. **a** Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' was honoured by the Hindi Writers Guild, Canada for his literary work.
8. **a** Scientists from the ZSI have concluded that India is home to both the (sub) species — Himalayan red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) and the Chinese red panda (*Ailurus styani*) and the Siang river in Arunachal Pradesh splits the red panda into these two phylogenetic species.
9. **d** Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan died at his residence in Mumbai. He was 89.
10. **d** Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company has become a signatory to Climate Action 100+, which drives focus on clean energy transition and helps achieve the Paris Agreement's goals. In April 2018, KMAMC became the first domestic asset management company to sign up with the Principles for Responsible Investment supported by the United Nations.
11. **c** CR's Rajdhani Express became India's first train to run on Push-Pull technology empowering the Government's "Mission Raftar" thus achieving another milestone in Railway history. Indian Railways' first Rajdhani Express which operates on the push-pull technology will run daily from Mumbai to New Delhi.
12. **d** Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, amusement park Wonderla Bangalore announced that it become the first theme park in the country to secure OV-Safe certification by Bureau of Standards India.
13. **b** The Flint water crisis is an ongoing public health crisis that began in 2014 when the City of Flint in Michigan—which has a population of roughly 100,000—changed its water supply from Lake Huron to the Flint river.
14. **d** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was unanimously chosen as the next Chairman of Shree Somnath Trust.
15. **b** Jordan has become the first country in the world to administer the coronavirus vaccine to refugees.
16. **c** India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, MoC a Basic Framework for Partnership for Proper Operation of the System Pertaining to Specified Skilled Worker (SSW).

- 17. b** Google has begun to remove money-lending apps that do not comply with the country's banking regulations from its Android Play Store following directions from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to monitor the glut of fintech applications hosted on the search giant's platform.
- 18. c** A geographical indication (GI) tag has been sought for one of the costliest mushrooms in the world that grows in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district. Locally called Gucchi, or Morel, the mushroom, priced at over Rs.20,000 a kg, is a forest produce collected by local farmers and tribals. Last June, saffron from the State had been granted a GI tag.
- 19. a** Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Delhi based DRDO laboratory, handed over Rakshita, a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle to Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) \ in a ceremony held at CRPF HQ in New Delhi.
- 20. a** The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and Indian Farm Forestry Development Co-operative Ltd (IFFDC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together for tribal livelihood generation.
- 21. b** Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (Bagayat Vikas Mission).
- 22. c** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to develop a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country.
- 23. c** The first India-EU IPR dialogue between the European Union (EU) Commission and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) was held through a virtual platform.
- 24. a** The 700-megawatt pressurized heavy water reactor of the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station in Gujarat is the first of 16 planned units that will help balance the grid against growing intermittent renewable generation.
- 25. b** India created history by defeating Australia by three wickets in the fourth and final Test at the Gabba in Brisbane and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.
- 26. a** Buddhist studies now can fulfill their wish as Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) in association with Deccan College (Deemed University) has started a post-graduate diploma in Buddhist heritage and tourism.
- 27. b** The Centre for Networked Intelligence at the Indian Institute of Science has got a new state-of-the-art networking lab.
- 28. d** International Day of Education is an annual international observance day held on January 24 and is dedicated to education.
- 29. b** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021 which would facilitate and regulate the movement of passenger and goods vehicles between India and neighbouring countries. The permit will remain valid for a period of one year from the date of its issue and it will be renewable for a period of five years on yearly basis.
- 30. b** Madhya Pradesh has taken the lead in undertaking power sector reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance.
- 31. c** In the 2020 ranking, Karnataka retained its first position in the Major States category
- 32. c** The Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) which created history by becoming the first airport in the world to run fully on solar energy has commissioned one of the biggest floating solar power plants in the state with a capacity of 452-kilowatt hour (KWh).

- 33. b** The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the investment of over Rs 5200 crore for 850 megawatt Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project located on Chenab river in Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir.
- 34. a** Days before the nation celebrates the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian Railways renamed the Howrah-Kalka Mail as the 'Netaji Express'.
- 35. a** Road Transport and Highways Ministry and Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration in the field of technical exchange and co-operation on sustainable geo-hazard management.
- 36. b** Each year the World Economic Forum publishes a report looking ahead to the short term and long term risks facing organizations around the world. The 2021 Global Risks Report has now been published, alongside a call for the world to 'wake up to long term risks'.
- 37. b** ICICI Bank announced the launch of a new mobile application for authorised money changers to help customers of any bank get 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' swiftly.
- 38. b** Scientists in Beijing have developed a new gene therapy which can reverse some of the effects of ageing in mice and extend their lifespans, findings which may one day contribute to similar treatment for humans.
- 39. c** Qatar Airways has become the first global airline in the world to achieve the prestigious 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating by international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax.
- 40. a** Joint exercise of Indian Air Force and Air and Space force of France Desert Night-21 commenced at Jodhpur Airforce station.
- 41. a** Union Minister for Fisheries Dr. Giriraj Singh has said that the Centre has invested 27 thousand crore rupees for schemes relating to blue economy.
- 42. b** Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at its LNG terminal at Hazira in Gujarat.
- 43. b** A large scale Joint Military exercise - Exercise Kavach involving assets of Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard will be conducted in the coming week under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- 44. b** Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the Modi Government will provide a home to every citizen of the country by August 2022.
- 45. b** Mongolia's Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa submitted his resignation to parliament after protests in the capital Ulaanbaatar over the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 46. d** Indian-origin Kamala Harris was sworn in as America's first woman Vice President during a historic inauguration at the West Front of the Capitol. Harris the 49th US Vice President.
- 47. a** Spain is by far Europe's busiest subsidy-free photo-voltaic market, and leads the sector's booming growth in the region.
- 48. a** The world's first ammonia fuel-ready vessel is under construction for Greek shipowner Avin International at a Chinese shipyard.
- 49. b** International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an international memorial day on 27 January commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War.

- 50. c** India named Jayant Khobragade as its next ambassador to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat in Jakarta, months after Pakistan declined to accept his posting as the deputy chief of mission in Islamabad.
- 51. c** In Madhya Pradesh, WIPRO group is all set to act as knowledge partner of the State Government.
- 52. b** With the country's premier semi-high speed rapid rail coming up between Delhi and Meerut, India is all set to adopt the European Train Control System (ETCS) in mainline railways for the very first time.
- 53. b** Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee signed an MoU in New Delhi for continuation of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Professorial Chair focusing on research and development, teaching and training in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.
- 54. c** Ladakh's tableau depicts the iconic Thiksey Monastery located on top of a hill in Thikse in Leh district, and is one of the most-visited tourist sites in the region.
- 55. d** Lloyd J. Austin, a West Point graduate who rose to the Army's elite ranks and marched through racial barriers in a 41-year career, won Senate confirmation to become the nation's first Black secretary of defense.
- 56. a** Madhya Pradesh has become the first state to get additional funds for capital projects for successfully carrying out reforms in various citizen-centric areas.
- 57. c** The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has stepped up to 65th position in overall turnover ranking from 125th position in last financial year and now is at the top spot among 300 leading cooperatives in the world.
- 58. c** India's largest multi-modal logistic park will come up at Virochan Nagar near Sanand in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat.
- 59. b** India sent 1 million doses of a COVID vaccine to Nepal as a gift under the 'Vaccine Maitri' Initiative.
- 60. d** On 25 January, National Tourism Day is observed every year to raise awareness of the importance of tourism for the country's economy.
- 61. c** Indian mathematician Nikhil Srivastava, has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison–Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs.
- 62. d** In Kargil of Ladakh Union territory, the Union Tourism Minister Mr Prahlad Singh Patel has inaugurated a branch of Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM).
- 63. a** Neta Ji was born in Cuttack, Odisha.
- 64. a** A new scheme has been initiated in Sirohi district, Rajasthan to make people aware about importance of nourishment of pregnant women and children. The scheme called Ek Paudha Suposhit Beti Ke Naam or 'A plant on the name of well-nourished daughter' has been started under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme of the union government.
- 65. c** Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society and Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management.
- 66. a** Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Ayushman CAPF health scheme in Guwahati for about 28 lakh personnel of Central Armed Police Forces

- 67. b** The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the Conference (by a vote of 122 States in favour, with one vote against and one abstention) at the United Nations on 7 July 2017, and opened for signature by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 September 2017.
- 68. a** Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the Union Budget mobile app even as final stages of FY 2021-22 Budget preparation began with the Halwa ceremony.
- 69. a** Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in Kerala and Tamil Nadu by a team of scientists, the Department of Science and Technology.
- 70. a** The Hawk-i project seeks to equip the trainer jet with combat capabilities through an internally-funded HAL programme.



Career
Launcher