
MANTHAN

A General Awareness Weekly

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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

Team CL



Career
Launcher

National



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

- In a first, India's largest energy conglomerate, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC Ltd) is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route. This will be the first FCEV bus service used for intercity commute.
- Green mobility is gaining momentum in the country and apart from establishing a complete EV supporting infrastructure; the Indian government is now also planning more options towards alternative fuels in order to reduce dependence on traditional fuels. While electric cars and taxis are being promoted heavily by the government, it is now also conducting a feasibility study on hydrogen fuel buses.
- Recently, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari and Power Minister R K Singh launched the "Go Electric" Campaign to spread awareness on the benefits of e-mobility and EV Charging Infrastructure as well as electric cooking in India. During the event, it was announced that NTPC is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route. However, no specific timeline has been provided for when the service would be started.

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

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

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

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

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

- The Supreme Court has said heirs of the father of a woman can inherit property under the Hindu Succession Act and they cannot be held as "strangers". A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan and R Subhash Reddy referred to Section 15(1)(d) of the Hindu Succession Act and said the heirs of the parental side of a Hindu woman are covered under persons entitled to succession of property.

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

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

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

- **Almost 60 years after Nagaland attained statehood, the national anthem was played inside its assembly for the first time this February.**
- **The move is historic for a state that has been ravaged by decades of secessionist violence and protracted peace talks that still hang fire. Nagaland attained statehood on December 1, 1963, and was the 16th state of the Union. The anthem was first played on January 24, 1950, when the Constitution was adopted and the Constituent Assembly was adjourned sine die”.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Punjab Cabinet approves mission 'Lal Lakir' in all villages

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

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

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

- **Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Sreevani gave birth to a baby girl at a hospital to become the first deputy chief minister in the country to have a child while in office**. The 34-year-old Sreevani, who holds the tribal welfare portfolio in Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy-led Cabinet.

- **This is the first child for Sreevani, one of the youngest deputy CMs in the country, and her husband Sathrucharla Parikshith Raju. When YSRCP came to power in 2019, Jagan Mohan Reddy picked Sreevani as one of the five deputies. She is the youngest minister in Jagan cabinet.**

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

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

- **The Justice Rohini Commission has been studying sub-categorisation of OBCs and is expected to submit its report to the government in July. NCBC Chairman Sahni said: “The Commission for Backward Classes, in principle, is in favour of roughly four categories of OBCs as being suggested by the Justice Rohini Commission.**
- **These sub-categories will broadly be about OBC sections which have either benefited adequately or less benefited from reservation. The other two categories are about least benefited and those who have not at all benefited from the present reservation structure for OBCs.” The Justice Rohini Commission was constituted on October 2, 2017. It was given 12 weeks to submit its report, but has been given several extensions since.**
- **OBCs are granted 27 per cent reservation in jobs and education under the central government. In September last year, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court reopened the legal debate on sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for reservation. The debate arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the over 2,600 included in the central list of OBCs have secured a major part of this 27 per cent quota. The argument for sub-categorisation — or creating categories within OBCs for reservation — is that it would ensure “equitable distribution” of representation among all OBC communities.**

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

National Urban Digital Mission launched

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

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

- **Amini, a little known village panchayat in Sevapuri, Varanasi, can boast of a panchayat secretariat equipped with Internet connection, a proper road, a wellness centre, sports ground surrounded by a boundary, garbage bins, and rickshaw carts to collect and dispose of waste, a newly built community toilet and a veterinary center. But Amini isn’t alone: All 87 village panchayats in Sevapuri are being developed by Varanasi district administration as India’s first model block.**

- Niti Aayog selected Sevapuri block in the beginning of 2020 to turn it into a model ideal block by ensuring 100% implementation of Central and state government developmental and social welfare schemes in all of its 87 village panchayats.

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

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

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

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

Manipur CM N Biren Singh launches PM FME Scheme

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

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

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

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

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

EPS inaugurates Asia's largest Livestock Research Centre in Salem

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

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

Government announces new social media rules

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

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

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

- **The Union government announced new rules to regulate digital content and establish a Code of Ethics and a three-tier grievance redressal framework for news websites and OTT platforms.** Concerns have been raised about rampant abuse of social media platforms, spread of fake news, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in his address to the media. The rules will empower users of social media, he said.
- **The Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 prescribes, for the first time, how digital news organisations, social media platforms and OTT streaming services will be regulated by the government.** The rules include a **strict oversight mechanism involving several ministries and a code of ethics that bans content affecting “the sovereignty and integrity of India” and that threatening national security.** Social media giants will be **required to appoint India-based compliance officers.** If they remove content, they will be required to **inform users, give reasons for taking down their post and hear them out.**

- The oversight mechanism will include a committee with representatives from the ministries of Defence, External Affairs, Home, I&B, Law, IT and Women and Child Development. This committee will have “suo motu powers” to call hearings on complaints of violation of the Code of Ethics if it wants. The committee can warn, censor, admonish or reprimand violators, seek an apology besides other actions.

India, Uzbekistan agree to strengthen multilateral cooperation

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

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

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

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

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare finalizes products for ODOFP

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

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

Karnataka Government to set up Flower Processing Centre

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

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

Task force on river-linking Okays Mahandadi-Godavari link

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

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

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

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

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



Pakistan to remain on FATF 'greylist'

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The United States has officially rejoined the Paris Agreement. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in a tweet said it is a good day in our fight against the climate crisis, as the United States is once again a Party to the Paris Agreement.

- **Its goal** is to **limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius**, compared to pre-industrial levels. To achieve this long-term temperature goal, countries aim to **reach global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible** to achieve a climate neutral world by mid-century.
- The Paris Agreement is a **landmark in the multilateral climate change process because, for the first time, a binding agreement brings all nations into a common cause** to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

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

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

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

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

Ghana is first nation in world to receive COVAX vaccines

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

AstraZeneca plc is a British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical company with its **headquarters in Cambridge, England**. AstraZeneca has a portfolio of products for major diseases including oncology, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, infection, neuroscience, respiratory and inflammation areas. **In January 2021, India approved the use of the Oxford–AstraZeneca vaccine, paving the way for a mass immunisation campaign in the world's second most populous country.** It was announced that the **Oxford–AstraZeneca shot would be made locally by the Serum Institute of India (SII) with a brand name COVISHIELD.** **Leif Johansson is currently Chairman of AstraZeneca plc.** **Pascal Soriot is the chief executive officer of the pharmaceutical multinational company AstraZeneca.**

UN body recommends Bangladesh graduation from LDC

- The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of Bangladesh from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC) as it fulfilled the eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability.
- This is the second consecutive time since 2018 that the CDP has made recommendation for Bangladesh for graduation from LDC category. The decision was taken during the triennial review meeting of the CDP held between 22-26 February.
- The CDP decides on the LDC status of a country based on three criteria- per capita income, a human assets index and an economic vulnerability index. A country must achieve at least two of the three criteria at two consecutive triennial reviews to be considered for graduation.
- It has met for the second time all the three eligibility criteria for graduating from the LDC category to the category of developing nations. The proposal will be sent to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for endorsement in June to be finally approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September this year.
- Bangladesh will get time upto 2026 to prepare for the transition to the status of a developing country. Usually countries are given three years for transition but this year due to the Corona pandemic, Bangladesh has been given five years for the process.

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

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

- China regained its position as India's top trade partner in 2020, as New Delhi's reliance on imported machines outweighed its efforts to curb commerce with Beijing after a bloody border conflict. Two-way trade between the longstanding economic and strategic rivals stood at \$77.7 billion last year, according to provisional data from India's commerce ministry.
- Although that was lower than the previous year's \$85.5 billion total, it was enough to make China the largest commercial partner displacing the U.S. — bilateral trade with whom came in at \$75.9 billion amid muted demand for goods in the middle of a pandemic. Total imports from China at \$58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the U.S. and the U.A.E, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively.

Mohamed Bazoum declared Niger's new president

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

Niger or the Niger is a landlocked country in West Africa named after the Niger River. The capital and largest city is Niamey. West African CFA franc is the currency of eight independent states in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Mohamed Bazoum will be the first Diffa Arab President of Niger and will take office on 7 April, 2021.



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

- **E-Daakhil portal for Consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 States/UTs.** Department of Consumer Affairs is now proactively following up with the states to launch e-filing portal at their ends. **E-filing was launched by National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) on 7th September, 2020.**
- **The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which has come into force from 20th July, 2020, has provision for e-filing of consumer complaints in the Consumer Commissions and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint.**
- **A web application for E-filing of consumer complaints named “edaakhil.nic.in” has been developed by NIC for the purpose.** This digital software for filing consumer complaints has the many features like e-Notice, case document download link & VC hearing link, filing written response by opposite party, filing rejoinder by complainant and alerts via SMS/Email.
- **The e-daakhil portal empowers the consumer and their advocates to file the consumer complaints along with payment of requisite fees online from anywhere for the redressal of their complaints.** It also facilitates the consumer commissions to scrutinize the complaints online to accept, reject or forward the complaint to the concerned commission for further processing.
- **To facilitate the rural consumers for e-filing, it has been decided to integrate the Common Service Centres (CSC) with the e-daakhil portal.** As many consumers at Gram Panchayat level may either not have access to electronic modes of communication or unable to use the tools, they may avail the services of CSCs in filing their complaints in the Consumer Commission. The work for integration of this portal with CSC is in under process.
- **Delhi was the first to implement it on 8th September, 2020.** Later Maharashtra, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chandigarh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka & Haryana implemented facility of e-filing in their respective States/UTs.

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

Indian Oil signs pact with Greenstat Norway for hydrogen fuel

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

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

Piramal gets RBI nod for DHFL deal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

India Ratings raises banking sector outlook to 'stable'

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

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

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

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

India gets its first inflatable hangar at Hyderabad airport

- **The GMR Aero Technic (GAT), the MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) division of GMR Air Cargo and Aerospace Engineering Ltd. (GACAEL) in Hyderabad airport has added a new "Inflatable Hangar"** in addition to its existing permanent and immovable hangars on its sprawling premises.
- **GAT is the only MRO in the Asia region to have installed such a hangar.** The Inflatable Hangar can be used for multiple purposes **including scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, engine or landing gear replacement.** The one bay narrow body Inflatable Hangar can take one B737 or A320 series aircraft. **This Inflatable Hangar is one additional bay to GAT's already existing seven-bay capacity.**

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

ICICI Bank launches 'Namma Chennai Smart Card'

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

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

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

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

HDFC Bank's market capitalisation tops Rs9 trillion as shares hit record high

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

HDFC Bank Limited is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. **HDFC Bank** is India's largest private sector lender by assets. In 1994 **HDFC Bank** was incorporated, with its registered office in Mumbai, India. It is the largest bank in India by market capitalisation as of March 2020. **Sashidhar Jagdishan** is the MD of **HDFC Bank**.

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

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

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

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

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



Inventions/Discoveries

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

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

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

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

- A team, comprising Nilutpal Mahanta of Gauhati University, **naturalist Pranjal Sarma and bird watcher Indrani Adhyapak, confirmed that they were a pair of Black-necked cranes (Grus nigricollis), native to the Tibetan plateau, and sighted for the first time in Assam.**
- **Black-necked cranes (Grus nigricollis) have been sighted for the first time in Assam.** To celebrate this, the bird was given an Assamese name: **“Deu Korchon”** (Deu means god and Korchon means crane).
- **The black-necked crane is endemic to the Tibetan Plateau.** It is a medium-sized crane that is mostly grey with a black head and neck with a red crown on the head.

IIT Council sets up panels for more autonomy

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

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

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

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

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

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

IIT Ropar develops alternative to alcohol-based disinfectant

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scientists decode how Mars may have lost its atmosphere

- **Solar winds may have led to Mars losing its atmosphere,** according to a computer simulation study which confirms the long held belief that **planets need a protective magnetic field to block such harmful radiations in order to sustain life.**
- While factors like the existence of a moderately warm, moist atmosphere and liquid water determine whether a planet can host life, the study, published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, noted that the ability of planets to generate magnetic fields around them is an overlooked aspect.
- According to the scientists, Arnab Basak and Dibyendu Nandi from the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata, these magnetic fields enveloping planets can act like a protective umbrella, shielding the atmosphere from the super-fast plasma winds of the Sun.
- On the Earth, they said a geo-dynamo mechanism generates the planet's protective magnetosphere — an invisible shield that stops the solar wind from eroding away our atmosphere. In the current study, the scientists simulated two scenarios of the Red Planet — one considering a young Mars with its magnetosphere intact, and the other with the planet without this force field.

Space station launch honors 'Hidden Figures' mathematician

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

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

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

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

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

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

Novak Djokovic wins his 9th Australian Open title

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

Karnataka to host Khelo India University Games 2021

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

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

- **President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly constructed world's largest Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad.** President Kovind also laid the foundation stone of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave at newly-built Cricket Stadium.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the **newly constructed stadium will be known as the Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium.** Ahmedabad has become the world class sports hub with infrastructure that can host any international sports event with a short notice.
- **Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium at Motera, Sardar Patel Sports Enclave and another sports complex in Naranpura area of Ahmedabad will be the part of this sports infrastructure.**
- As of 2020, it is the **largest cricket stadium in the world and the second largest stadium overall, with a seating capacity of 110,000 spectators.** It is owned by the Gujarat Cricket Association. It hosted its first ever pink ball Test match on 24 February 2021 between India and England. The home team's (India) 10-wicket wins over England in the Pink-ball Test in Ahmedabad.
- The stadium was the venue of the Namaste Trump event and hosted US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi on 24 February 2020. The event mirrored the "Howdy Modi" event held in Houston, Texas.

IOC names Brisbane as preferred bidder to host 2032 Olympic Games

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

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

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

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

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

MISCELLANEOUS

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

- **Veteran actor Kabir Bedi** will tell the story of his life “with raw emotional honesty” in his memoir which will be published this April.
- **'Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Journey of an Actor'** will take readers through the highs and lows of Bedi's professional and personal life, his relationships, including marriage and divorce, why his beliefs have changed, and his exciting days in film, television and theatre, in India, Europe and Hollywood, publishers Westland.

Dr S Jaishankar inaugurates new Indian High Commission building in Mauritius

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

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

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

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

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

Tourism Minister inaugurates Incredible India Mega Homestay Development, Training Workshop

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

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

- In Bihar, **Deputy Chief Minister Tarkishore Prasad**, who holds the finance portfolio, presented the annual budget for 2021-22 in the State Assembly. The state budget worth Rs 2,18,303 crore lays special emphasis on education, rural development and social welfare.
- **Presenting the budget with a revenue surplus of over Rs 11,789 crore**, Mr Prasad said, the proposed allocations made for 2021-22 have increased by Rs 6,541 crore as compared to that of the current fiscal year. The State Government has made the highest allocation of Rs 21,938 crore for education. Besides, Rs 16,783 crore have been allocated for rural development and Rs 8,191 crore earmarked for social welfare.

- Deputy Chief Minister Tarkishore Prasad announced that 20 lakh job opportunities will be created in government and non- government sectors during 2020- 25. Mr Prasad said, 35 per cent reservation provision has been made for women in employment.

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

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

KIDO from Karnataka to participate in India Toy Fair-2021

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

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

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

Kushinagar gets DGCA clearance, becomes third international airport in UP

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

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

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

PERSONS IN NEWS

Japan appoints Minister of Loneliness to tackle suicide rates

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

Russian supermodel Natalia Vodianova named new UN goodwill ambassador

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

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

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

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

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

AWARDS

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

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

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

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

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Science Day

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

World Civil Defence Day

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

Zero Discrimination Day

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

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Hindustan Times

QUESTIONS

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

13. Recently, Bihar presented the annual budget for 2021-22 in the State Assembly. The State Government has made the highest allocation of Rs 21,938 crore for _____.
 (a) Education (b) Urban Development (c) Rural Development (d) Social Welfare
14. The first-ever National Toy Fair is organized from 27th February to 2nd March through a virtual medium. Which of the following IIT based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) showcased its unique 75 toy creations in the fair?
 (a) IIT Gandhinagar (b) IIT Delhi (c) IIT Madras (d) IIT Kharagpur
15. Which of the following countries has officially rejoined the Paris Agreement recently?
 (a) Canada (b) USA (c) France (d) Portugal
16. Recently, India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with which of the following African countries?
 (a) Mauritius (b) Zimbabwe (c) South Sudan (d) South Africa
17. Which of the following countries recently has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease?
 (a) Sweden (b) Ireland (c) India (d) Switzerland
18. Which of the following International Centres co-chaired this year's Asia Economic Dialogue?
 (a) Pune International Centre (b) Hyderabad International Centre
 (c) Jaipur International Centre (d) Bengaluru International Centre
19. Recently, IRS Officer Rohit Mehra has started the world's first Tree and Plant clinic in _____.
 (a) Meerut (b) Gurugram (c) Amritsar (d) Bhopal
20. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has brought State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview. The bank, established five years before Sikkim acceded to India in _____, provides treasury operations for the state government.
 (a) 1956 (b) 1962 (c) 1973 (d) 1977
21. Which of the following states recently approved implementation of mission 'Lal Lakir' aimed at facilitating villagers to monetise property rights and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state?
 (a) Kerala (b) West Bengal (c) Rajasthan (d) Punjab
22. Which of the following states Deputy Chief Minister gave birth to a baby girl recently to become the first Deputy Chief Minister in the country to have a child while in office?
 (a) Bihar (b) Telangana (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Assam
23. The Justice Rohini Commission has been studying sub-categorisation of _____ and is expected to submit its report to the government in July.
 (a) ST's (b) SC's (c) OBC's (d) General's
24. In a major setback to the government which country Supreme Court reinstated the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Parliament?
 (a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Sri Lanka (d) Nepal
25. Recently, India Ratings and Research revised its outlook on the overall banking sector to _____ for the FY22.
 (a) positive (b) stable (c) negative (d) balanced
26. Which of the following Indian airports becomes first Indian airport to get a disabled aircraft recovery kit recently?
 (a) Kempegowda International Airport (b) Indira Gandhi International Airport
 (c) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (d) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport

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

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

52. Which of the following states will bring a Universal Health Care scheme worth Rs. 3,500 crore, under which every family in the State will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs. 5 lakh?
(a) Rajasthan (b) Jharkhand (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Bihar
53. As per the Information Technology (Guidelines for intermediaries and digital media ethics code) Rules, 2021, social media platforms will also be required to provide information, including related to verification of identity, to lawfully authorised agencies within _____ hours.
(a) 24 (b) 36 (c) 48 (d) 72
54. Recently, The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of _____ from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC).
(a) Nepal (b) Bangladesh (c) Maldives (d) Mauritius
55. Who was recently declared as the winner of the Niger's new President?
(a) Mohamed Bazoum (b) Mahamane Ousmane (c) Mahmud Ghaus (d) Muhammad Ghani
56. Which of the following companies announced an industry-first initiative of up to 100 per cent health insurance premium returns and other significant product offering upgrades?
(a) Tata Health Insurance Company Ltd.
(b) Reliance Health Insurance Company Ltd.
(c) Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd.
(d) Gautam Adani Health Insurance Company Ltd.
57. Which of the following countries engineers help build world's first battery-electric loco recently?
(a) India (b) Bhutan (c) USA (d) Russia
58. Which of the following became the first country to ban any of the drugs now known to be toxic to vultures since the previous veterinary diclofenac ban more than 10 years ago?
(a) Bhutan (b) Bangladesh (c) India (d) Nepal
59. Recently, The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in _____.
(a) Cairo (b) Paris (c) Lisbon (d) London
60. World Civil Defence Day is observed on _____ every year, all over the world.
(a) 25th February (b) 27th February (c) 1st March (d) 3rd March
61. Which of the following ministries has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product (ODOFP)?
(a) Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry
(b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
(c) Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
(d) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
62. The Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 is underway at _____ Haat.
(a) Lucknow (b) Noida (c) Jaipur (d) Patna
63. Recently, The task force on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) has agreed and approved the preparation of final detailed project report (DPR) on the proposed Mahandi (Barmul)-Gadavari (Dowlaiswaram) link by ensuring utilisation of the allocated _____ waters by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
(a) Krishna (b) Godavari (c) Tapi (d) Betwa
64. Name the portal for Consumer grievance redressal which is now operational in 15 States/UTs.
(a) E-Safalta (b) E-Qamayab (c) E-Entry (d) E-Daakhil

65. In a bid to tackle the rise in suicide rates for the first time in 11 years due to the coronavirus crisis, Which of the following countries has appointed its first-ever Minister for Loneliness?
(a) South Korea (b) Thailand (c) China (d) Japan
66. Recently, The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to retain _____ on the “greylist” till the next review of its performance on the recommendations during the June Plenary session.
(a) Pakistan (b) Thailand (c) Bangladesh (d) Nepal
67. According to a computer simulation study which confirms the long held belief that planet need a protective magnetic field to block such harmful radiations in order to sustain life. Solar winds may have led to _____ losing its atmosphere.
(a) Jupiter (b) Saturn (c) Mars (d) Venus
68. In Boxing, Deepak Kumar (52 kg) wins the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in _____.
(a) Sofia, Bulgaria (b) Budapest, Hungary (c) Paris, France (d) Lisbon, Portugal
69. Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the United Nations (UN) every year on _____ and other international organisations.
(a) 23rd February (b) 27th February (c) 1st March (d) 5th March
70. A space station supply ship named after the NASA mathematician featured in the movie “Hidden Figures” rocketed into orbit the 59th anniversary of _____ historic launch.
(a) Andrew Bill (b) Matthew Thomas (c) Nirtz Wilson (d) John Glenn

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. c Ladakh based engineer and education reformer, Sonam Wangchuk has built the world's first solar heated military tent and we cannot be more proud.
2. b In Leh, amidst culturally rich events, MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal inaugurated the second edition of Ladakh Winter Conclave 2021.
3. a Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the three day Incredible India Mega Homestay Development and Training Workshop in Darjeeling.
4. b Almost 60 years after Nagaland attained statehood, the national anthem was played inside its assembly for the first time this February.
5. a In a first, India's largest energy conglomerate, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC Ltd) is planning to start a premium hydrogen fuel bus service on Delhi to Jaipur route.
6. b Mathura Bikash Tripura got the award for his contribution in preserving and promoting mother languages of small ethnic groups in Bangladesh.
7. a Billionaire Ajay Piramal moved a step closer to acquiring bankrupt mortgage financier Dewan Housing Finance Corp. Ltd (DHFL) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) clearing its insolvency resolution plan.
8. a In Tennis, Defending Champion Novak Djokovic has won his ninth Australian Open title, beating Daniil Medvedev in a one-sided final at Melbourne Park.
9. a A team, comprising Nilutpal Mahanta of Gauhati University, naturalist Pranjal Sarma and bird watcher Indrani Adhyapak, confirmed that they were a pair of Black-necked cranes (*Grus nigricollis*), native to the Tibetan plateau, and sighted for the first time in Assam.
10. a Days after India unveiled a national hydrogen mission to accelerate plans to generate the carbon-free fuel from renewables, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed a pact with Greenstat Norway for setting up a Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen.
11. b The Uttarakhand government has brought an ordinance giving co-ownership rights to women in their husband's ancestral property.
12. d Uttar Pradesh government presented the biggest ever budget of the state, which was to the tune of around 5 lakh 50 thousand 270 lakh crores rupees. The first paperless budget presented by state finance minister Suresh Khanna in the state assembly was also the first paperless budget of any state in the country.
13. a The State Government has made the highest allocation of Rs 21,938 crore for education. Besides, Rs 16,783 crore have been allocated for rural development and Rs 8,191 crore earmarked for social welfare.
14. a The first-ever National Toy Fair is organized from 27th February to 2nd March through a virtual medium. IIT Gandhinagar based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) will showcase its unique 75 toy creations in the fair.
15. b The United States has officially rejoined the Paris Agreement.
16. a In one of the significant outcomes of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's visit to Mauritius, India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Mauritius. It is the first such arrangement that India struck with any African country.

- 17. c** India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease.
- 18. a** The Pune International Centre co-chaired this year's Asia Economic Dialogue that will be addressed by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and his counterparts from Japan, Australia, Maldives, Mauritius and Bhutan.
- 19. c** IRS Officer Rohit Mehra has started the world's first Tree and Plant clinic in Amritsar.
- 20. c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has brought State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview. The bank, established five years before Sikkim acceded to India in 1973, provides treasury operations for the state government.
- 21. d** The Punjab Cabinet approved implementation of mission 'Lal Lakir' aimed at facilitating villagers to monetise property rights and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state.
- 22. c** Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pamula Pushpa Sreevani gave birth to a baby girl at a hospital to become the first deputy chief minister in the country to have a child while in office.
- 23. c** The Justice Rohini Commission has been studying sub-categorisation of OBCs and is expected to submit its report to the government in July.
- 24. d** In a major setback to the government of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, the Supreme Court of Nepal reinstated the House of Representatives, the lower house of the Nepalese Parliament.
- 25. b** India Ratings and Research revised its outlook on the overall banking sector to 'stable' for the FY22.
- 26. a** Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru became the first in India and South Asia to own Disabled Aircraft Recovery Equipment kit that will enable faster resumption of operations during aircraft incidents on the runways thus receiving a boost to its runway emergency handling capabilities.
- 27. d** The IIT Ropar has developed a low-cost device to produce electrolysed water that could be used as an alternative to alcohol-based disinfectant.
- 28. c** Karnataka will host the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) later this year, state chief minister BS Yediyurappa and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju announced.
- 29. b** "Kushinagar Airport gets necessary clearances from DGCA to become 3rd licensed international airport of UP.
- 30. a** 'The Lost Soul', which comes out in the U.S., is a poetic story of a man who loses his soul in the daily rush and can only regain it in a very special way.
- 31. a** Uttar Pradesh received award for fastest implementation of Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar awarded the top-performing States and Districts for their exemplary work with respect to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme.
- 32. d** The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the National Urban Digital Mission, which was aimed at creating a shared digital infrastructure for cities.
- 33. b** All 87 village panchayats in Sevapuri are being developed by Varanasi district administration as India's first model block.

- 34. a** Anjali Bharadwaj, an Indian social activist working on issues of transparency and accountability, is one of the 12 “courageous” individuals named by the Biden administration for the newly-instituted International Anti-Corruption Champions Award.
- 35. d** Ghana has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery of 6,00,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India.
- 36. b** ICICI Bank announced the launch of a Common Payment Card System (CPCS) in partnership with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) to provide citizens with a one-stop solution for making various kind of payments within the city and beyond.
- 37. c** India hosted the first meeting of the BRICS finance and central bank deputies of 2021 in virtual mode according to a statement from the finance ministry.
- 38. c** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).
- 39. b** President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly constructed world’s largest Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad.
- 40. b** National Science Day is celebrated in India on 28 February each year to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman on 28 February 1928.
- 41. c** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated 50 artisan-based SFURTI clusters spread over 18 States.
- 42. b** On February 19, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar launched India’s BRICS 2021 website at the BRICS Secretariat at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan.
- 43. a** US President Joe Biden has nominated Indian-American lawyer and rights activist Kiran Ahuja to head the Office of Personnel Management, a federal agency that manages America’s more than two million civil servants.
- 44. b** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addresses inaugural function of DRDO Skill Development Centre at Pilakhuwa in UP.
- 45. d** China regained its position as India’s top trade partner in 2020, as New Delhi’s reliance on imported machines outweighed its efforts to curb commerce with Beijing after a bloody border conflict.
- 46. b** India was the second most attacked country by cyber criminals after Japan in Asia Pacific in 2020, according to an IBM report released.
- 47. d** Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) announced that they have identified a sustainable source for the anti-cancer drug camptothecin, which is currently derived from two highly depleted tree species.
- 48. b** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has named Brisbane, Australia as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games.
- 49. a** A “one-stop guide” on how to move towards a more sustainable lifestyle in India, Bare Necessities: How to Live a Zero Waste Life, published by Penguin, is written by environmentalist Sahar Mansoor and sustainability consultant Tim De Ridder.
- 50. c** Russian supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova became a United Nations goodwill ambassador pledging to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.

- 51. d** Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K Palaniswami inaugurated the Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS), the largest in Asia, near Thalaivasal.
- 52. a** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government presented the Budget for 2021-22 and said it will bring a Universal Health Care scheme worth Rs. 3,500 crore, under which every family in the State will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs. 5 lakh.
- 53. d** As per the Information Technology (Guidelines for intermediaries and digital media ethics code) Rules, 2021, social media platforms will also be required to provide information, including related to verification of identity, to lawfully authorised agencies within 72 hours.
- 54. b** The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended graduation of Bangladesh from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC)
- 55. a** Niger's electoral commission has declared the governing party candidate, Mohamed Bazoum, the winner of the country's presidential election runoff.
- 56. c** Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd. (ABHICL), the Health Insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited, a significant non-banking financial services company, announced an industry-first initiative of up to 100 per cent health insurance premium returns and other significant product offering upgrades.
- 57. a** India engineers help build world's first battery-electric loco. Electric cars are becoming a rage. Now, US Company Wabtec is building an electric locomotive that works on a battery.
- 58. b** With Bangladesh banning ketoprofen a painkiller used widely to treat cattle it became the first country to ban any of the drugs now known to be toxic to vultures since the previous veterinary diclofenac ban more than 10 years ago.
- 59. a** The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo.
- 60. c** World Civil Defence Day is observed on 1st March every year, all over the world.
- 61. a** Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product, ODOFP. The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country.
- 62. b** The Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 is underway at Noida Haat. The fair was inaugurated by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.
- 63. b** The task force on Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) has agreed and approved the preparation of final detailed project report (DPR) on the proposed Mahandi (Barmul)-Gadavari (Dowlaiswaram) link by ensuring utilisation of the allocated Godavari waters by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- 64. d** E-Daakhil portal for Consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 States/UTs. Department of Consumer Affairs is now proactively following up with the states to launch e-filing portal at their ends.
- 65. d** In a bid to tackle the rise in suicide rates for the first time in 11 years due to the coronavirus crisis, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has appointed Tetsushi Sakamoto as its first-ever Minister for Loneliness.
- 66. a** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to retain Pakistan on the "greylist" till the next review of its performance on the recommendations during the June Plenary session.

- 67. c** Solar winds may have led to Mars losing its atmosphere, according to a computer simulation study which confirms the long held belief that planets need a protective magnetic field to block such harmful radiations in order to sustain life.
- 68. a** In Boxing, Deepak Kumar (52 kg) wins the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- 69. c** Every year, Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated by the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations. On Zero Discrimination Day, which is commemorated every year on 1 March, UNAIDS is calling for an end to discrimination against women and girls and for equal rights, opportunities and treatment.
- 70. d** A space station supply ship named after the Black NASA mathematician featured in the movie “Hidden Figures” rocketed into orbit the 59th anniversary of John Glenn’s historic launch.



Career
Launcher