

SSC BANKING MANTHAN

Current Affairs Supplement

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Preface

Dear Readers,

The “Current Affairs” section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the month for the upcoming exams like Banking, Insurance, CLAT, MBA etc. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfil aspirations.

Happy Reading!

Best Wishes

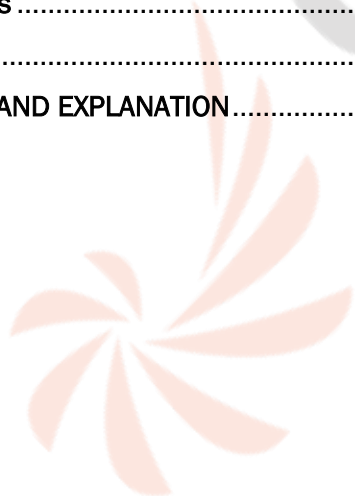
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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Shri Vijay Sampla assumes charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes

- **Shri Vijay Sampla** assumed the charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) in New Delhi. Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar, Union Minister Shri Som Prakash, former Chairman of NCSC, BJP MP Hans Raj Hans and other members of Commission were also present on the occasion.
- **Shri Vijay Sampla** has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014-19. Shri Vijay Sampla served as Chairman, Punjab Dalit Vikas Parishad; state coordinator, Anusuchit Jati Aarakshan Bachao Manch and also as Chairman, Bharat Gaurav. He served as Chairman, Khadi and Village Industries Board, Punjab from 2009-12 and subsequently his name was recommended for Rashtrapati Award.

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes is an Indian constitutional body established with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Anglo Indian communities to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. Article 338 of the Indian constitution deals with National Commission for Scheduled Castes. Article 338 A deals with National Commission for Scheduled tribes. The first Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was set up in August 1978 with Bhola Paswan Shastri as Chairman and other four members. On the 89th Amendment of the Constitution coming into force on 19 February 2003, the National Commission for scheduled Tribes has been set up under Article 338A on bifurcation of erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution. The first National Commission for Scheduled Castes was constituted in 2004 with Suraj Bhan as the chairman. The fifth schedule of Indian constitution deals with the administration and control of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Service condition and tenure is determined by President of India. Article 341 deals with notification of Scheduled Castes and Article 342 deals with notification of Scheduled Tribes.

The second edition of Global Bio-India organised from 1-3 March 2021 on digital platform

- The Biotechnology sector has emerged as an integral part of the Indian economy over the past few decades, and the Government of India is playing a transformative and catalytic role in building a USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.
- The sector is recognized as one of the key drivers for India to achieve its USD 5 trillion target. To showcase the strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community, the second edition of Global Bio-India will be organised from 1-3 March 2021 on digital platform.
- The theme for this year is "Transforming lives" and tag line "Biosciences to Bioeconomy".
- Global Bio-India is one of the largest biotechnology stakeholders' conglomerates that is being co-organised by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India along with its Public Sector Undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) in partnership with

industry association Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India.

- **The first edition of Global Bio-India 2019 at New Delhi** was a huge success that saw participation from over 25+ countries, 190 exhibitors, 2500+ delegates, 300+ start-ups, 50+incubators, 60+ Research Institutes, 800+ Bio-partnering meetings and representation from 9 states.
- **Global Bio-India 2021 has representatives from 50+ countries with Switzerland being the partner country and Karnataka as its state partner** till date. More partners are expected to join this biotechnology event.

Biobased economy, bioeconomy or biotechonomy refers to **economic activity involving the use of biotechnology and biomass in the production of goods, services, or energy**. The terms bioeconomy (BE) and bio-based economy (BBE) are sometimes used interchangeably. However, it is worth to distinguish them. **Biobased economy takes into consideration the production of non-food goods**, whilst **bioeconomy covers both bio-based economy and the production and use of food and feed**.

City Innovation Exchange (CiX) launched for fostering innovation in Urban Ecosystem

- **The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) platform** was **launched** by Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** at an online event in New Delhi.
- The platform will be a **significant addition to the growing innovation ecosystem of India and focuses on fostering innovative practices in cities**. CiX, through an **‘open innovation’ process**, engages with innovators to design-test-deliver on solutions to pressing urban challenges. This initiative is among the ongoing efforts of the Government to realise Prime Minister’s vision of New and AtmaNirbhar Bharat, by making cities more self-reliant and enabled to meet the needs of and provide services to their citizens.
- **Designed on the philosophy of ‘everyone is an innovator’**, the platform will **bring together Citizen Organisations-Academia- Businesses- Government to co-create for the future of Urban India** in a transparent and sustainable manner. **The Smart Cities Mission will partner and effectively collaborate with Startup India, Atal Innovation Mission, AGNi and other initiatives in the Indian Innovation ecosystem**.
- **The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) will connect cities to innovators across the national ecosystem to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges**. The platform will ease the discovery, design& validation of solutions through a robust, transparent and user centric process that will reduce barriers for innovators and cities to discover fitting solutions.
- **Built on the concept of ‘open innovation’**, the platform will **help in the flow of ideas ‘outside in and inside out’**, enhancing the skills and capacity required to deliver smart urban governance. Through interaction with the Academia and Businesses/Startups, the platform will benefit cities in the transfer of ideas from ‘labs’ to real environment. Similarly, by helping urban governments interact with citizens, the platform will ensure adoption of tested solutions that will be impactful and sustainable.
- The platform in due time will **help our cities in adopting solutions that will enhance the quality of life for its residents and significantly improve the Ease of Doing Business**. The Platform has more than 400 start-ups, 100 smart cities, more than 150 challenges statements and over 215 solutions at the time of launch.

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

Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur launches ‘e-Parivahan Vyavstha’

- **Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched ‘e-Parivahan Vyavstha’** of the State Transport Department to provide faceless services to the people of the State regarding Driving Licence/Registration Certificates/Permits etc.

- While addressing the people on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the State Government **first started e-Vidhan Sabha, then e-Budget** and now it has **started e-cabinet**. He said the e-Parivahan was a step forward in this direction.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh declared Dharamshala as the second capital of the state after Shimla, making it the third Indian state to have more than one capital. The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun, the largest city of the state, which is a rail head. Gairsain, a town in Chamoli district is the summer capital of Uttarakhand. The High Court of the state is located in Nainital. While Maharashtra has Mumbai and Nagpur as its capitals, Srinagar and Jammu are the respective summer and winter capitals of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

BCI sets up India's first law teacher training institute

- **The Bar Council of India (BCI) took the initiative to set up India's first law teacher training institute - Indian Institute of Law (IIL) - in collaboration with Kalinga Institute of Industrial Training (KIIT) at Bhubaneswar, a move that drew praises from three Supreme Court Judges - Justices U U Lalit, B R Gavai and V Ramasubramanian.**
- **Justices Lalit and Gavai would become CJIs in the next few years. IIL, being set up by the BCI through its trust (BCIT) with the support of KIIT, will be a model institute of law teachers' academy for promoting continuous legal education and research along with skill development of law teachers and practising lawyers. The first-of-its kind institute will facilitate young law school teachers of the country and advocates to enhance their expertise, professional skills and acumen.**

Bar Council of India is a statutory body established under the section 4 of Advocates Act 1961 that regulates the legal practice and legal edition in India. Its members are elected from amongst the lawyers in India and as such represents the Indian bar. It prescribes standards of professional conduct, etiquettes and exercises disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar. In March 1953, the 'All India Bar Committee', headed by S. R. Das, submitted a report which proposed the creation of a bar council for each state and an all-India bar council as an apex body. As per the Advocates Act, the Bar Council of India consists of members elected from each state bar council, and the Attorney General of India and the Solicitor General of India who are ex officio members.

Thaawarchand Gehlot launched "Sugamya Bharat App" & handbook entitled "Access- The Photo Digest"

- **Minister for Social justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually launched "Sugamya Bharat App" and a handbook entitled "Access- The Photo Digest". The App and the handbook have been developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- **Sugamya Bharat App is a means for sensitizing and enhancing accessibility. It provides for five main features of which four are directly related to enhancing accessibility. They include registration of complaints of inaccessibility across the broad pillars of built environment, transportation sector and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ecosystem, positive feedback of examples and best practices worth emulating being shared by people as jan-bhagidhari; Departmental s; and guidelines and circulars related to accessibility. The fifth feature is a special feature meant only for Divyangjan for COVID related issues.**
- **DEPwD has also prepared a handbook entitled "Access - The Photo Digest" with a collection of photographs from across different States and UTs. This Book is envisaged as a tool and guide to sensitise stakeholders about 10 basic features of accessibility and related good-bad practices in easy to understand pictorial form.**

Thaawar Chand Gehlot is currently serving as the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment in the NDA Government. He is currently the Leader of the House in the upper house of Indian Parliament. He is a member of the Rajya Sabha, upper house of Indian Parliament, representing the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Nitin Gadkari launches Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** launched the **Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas** at a function in New Delhi. Mr Gadkari said that **implementation of FASTag at toll plazas has improved electronic toll collections and facilitated ease of doing business.**
- The government has made **FASTag mandatory from the 15th February** midnight and **any vehicle not fitted with it will be charged double the toll at electronic toll plazas across the country.**

FASTag is an electronic toll collection system in India, operated by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). It employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it or directly toll owner. It is affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle and enables to drive through toll plazas without stopping for transactions. The tag can be purchased from official Tag issuers or participating Banks and if it is linked to a prepaid account, then recharging or top-up can be as per requirement. As per NHAI, FASTag has unlimited validity.

Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launches field assessment of Swachh Survekshan -2021

- Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry **launched the field assessment of Swachh Survekshan -2021** at a web event in New Delhi. This will be the **sixth edition of the annual cleanliness survey.**
- **Swachh Survekshan was introduced in 2016** as a competitive framework to **encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation** while encouraging large scale citizen participation.
- **The journey that started in 2016 with only 73 cities with million plus population** has grown manifold, with 434 cities in 2017, 4,203 cities in 2018, 4,237 cities in 2019 and 4,242 cities in 2020.
- Every year, the on-field assessment takes place between 4th January to 31st January. **However, this was delayed by two months due to the COVID pandemic** and will now be conducted between 1st to 28th of March. The Swachh Survekshan framework is redesigned innovatively every year, to ensure that the process becomes more robust.

Swachh Survekshan (Cleanliness survey) is an annual survey of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in villages, cities and towns across India. It was launched as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which aimed to make India clean and free of open defecation by 2 October 2019. The first survey was undertaken in 2016 and covered 73 cities (53 cities with a population of over a million, and all state capitals); by 2020 the survey had grown to cover 4242 cities and was said to be the largest cleanliness survey in the world. The surveys are carried out by Quality Council of India.

Uttarakhand CM launches “Gharoki Pechan, Chelik Naam” scheme from Nainital

- **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat** launched **“Gharoki Paachan, Chelik Naam” (daughter’s name is a home’s identity) programme** and development schemes worth Rs 42 crore in Nainital. Nainital MP Ajay Bhatt, along with various other officials, was present to welcome the chief minister in the town.
- This scheme has been launched in Nainital and will be extended to entire Uttarakhand in the coming weeks. Rawat said the government is **working towards women empowerment and 32,000 women groups of the state are being linked with self-employment to make them self-reliant.**

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 served as the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand till March 10, 2021. Tirath Singh Rawat is serving as the current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand since March 10, 2021. Baby Rani Maurya is serving as the current 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.

India's first digital university to focus on creating tech leaders

- In a first, India has become home to a digital university. The Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT) is established by upgrading the Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITMK), which was set up in 2000.
- It will focus on four key themes required for digital world leadership – Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability and Entrepreneurship.”

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated ‘Maritime India Summit 2021’

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated ‘Maritime India Summit 2021’ through video conferencing. The three-day Summit was held till 4th of March. The Maritime India Summit is being organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways on a virtual platform www.maritimeindiasummit.in
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will invest 82 billion dollars in port projects by 2035. Prime Minister has emphasized on creating world class maritime infrastructure through various reforms to achieve the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The Summit has visualized a roadmap for India's Maritime sector for next decade and will work to propel India to the forefront of the Global Maritime Sector. Denmark is the partner country for the three-day summit.
- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and his Andhra Pradesh counterpart YS Jaganmohan Reddy also joined the event via video conferencing. Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (MoS) Ports, Shipping and Waterways (Independent Charge) in his opening remark said that the summit is one of the biggest virtual summit in the world with the participation of 1.7 lakhs participants from more than 100 nations.

India is strategically located on the world's shipping routes with a coastline of approximately 7,517 km. Maritime transport handles around 70% of India's trading in value terms. The Government launched the ambitious Sagarmala Programme in March 2017, with the vision of port-led development and growth of logistics-intensive industries. Under Sagarmala Programme, \$123 bn would be invested across 415 projects across. India has become the fourth country in the world to have its independent Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) recognized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as part of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS). IRNSS will facilitate at least 2500 merchant vessels, including small fishing vessels in Indian waters, to use the system within an area of nearly 1500 km from the Indian boundary.

Madhya Pradesh Finance Minister Jagdish Devda presents state annual budget

- Madhya Pradesh finance minister Jagdish Devda presented a paperless state annual budget of around 2 lakh 41 thousand 375 crores. Special attention in the budget is given to infrastructure, education, employment, farmers and women.
- This time there will be no new tax nor will any existing tax rate to be increased. This is the first budget of the fourth term of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan. The focus of the budget is on making Madhya Pradesh self-reliant.

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

Bengaluru and Shimla among ‘Most liveable’ cities across country; Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri issues Ease of Living Index

- Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri announced the release of the final rankings of Ease of Living Index-2020 and the Municipal Performance Index-2020 in New Delhi in an online event.

- The rankings under Ease of Living Index-2020 were **announced for cities with a population of more than a million and cities with less than a million people. In all, 111 cities participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted last year.**
- **Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the Million Plus category, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore and Greater Mumbai. In the Less than Million category, Shimla was ranked the highest in ease of living, followed by Bhubaneshwar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere and Tiruchirappalli. Similar to the Ease of Living Index index, the assessment framework under Municipal Performance Index-2020 has classified municipalities based on their population, Million plus and less than Million Population.**
- **In the Million plus category, Indore has emerged as the highest-ranked municipality, followed by Surat and Bhopal. In the Less than Million category, New Delhi Municipal Council has emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.**
- **The Municipal Performance Index examined the sectoral performance of 111 municipalities with Delhi being assessed separately for NDMC, and the three Municipal Corporations across five verticals which comprise of 20 sectors and 100 indicators in all totality. The five verticals under Municipal Performance Index are Services, Finance, Policy, Technology and Governance.**

IAF joins multinational air exercise in UAE

- **The Indian Air Force is for the first time participated in the annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise, Desert Flag VI, hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.**
- **The air show at Galle Face in Colombo has seen the participation of an IAF contingent comprising Suryakiran aerobatic team, Sarang helicopter display teams and Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA). The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure to the participating forces while training them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment.**

Indian Air Force (IAF) is the **air arm of the Indian Armed Forces**. Its complement of personnel and aircraft assets ranks **fourth amongst the air forces of the world**. Its **primary mission is to secure Indian airspace and to conduct aerial warfare during armed conflict**. It was **officially established on 8 October 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire which honoured India's aviation service during World War II with the prefix Royal**. After India gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, the name **Royal Indian Air Force** was kept and served in the name of **Dominion of India**. With the government's transition to a Republic in 1950, the prefix **Royal** was removed. The **President of India holds the rank of Supreme Commander of the IAF**. Air Chief Marshal **Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria** is the current Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force.

Education Minister congratulates 12 Indian Institutions on securing position in top 100 in QS World University Rankings

- **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has congratulated 12 Indian Institutions on securing a position in top 100 in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021.** These institutions are IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IISc Bangalore, IIT Guwahati, IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi, and O P Jindal University.
- **IIT Madras has been ranked 30th in the world for Petroleum Engineering, IIT Bombay has been ranked 41st and IIT Kharagpur has been ranked 44th in the world for Minerals and Mining Engineering, and University of Delhi has been ranked 50th in the world for Development Studies.**

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

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first World Skill Centre in Bhubaneswar

- **Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first World Skill Centre at Mancheswar Industrial Area, Bhubaneswar.** With an aim to make Odisha the global capital of trained manpower, each floor of the 18 storey #WSC building will be dedicated to different skills and trades.
- **World Skill Center (WSC), a premier advance skill training institute, is being modelled around leading TVET Institute, ITE (Institute of Technical Education) Singapore** and seeks inspiration from World Skills, Russia and GIFTS (Global Institute for Transferring Skills), South Korea.
- **WSC is being established under the Odisha Skill Development Project assisted by the Asian Development Bank** with ITE Education Services (ITEES), Singapore as a knowledge partner.

Odisha government to set up new department to strengthen SHGs in state

- **Odisha government will set up a new department, namely the Department of Mission Shakti.** A proposal to this effect has received the nod of the state cabinet. The new department will **work towards strengthening the 'self-help group' initiatives** already taken by departments and agencies by bringing them all under one platform to ensure greater focus and synergy and to avoid duplication in activities.

The **modern state of Odisha** was established on **1 April 1936**, as a **province in British India**. The **ancient kingdom of Kalinga**, which was **invaded by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in 261 BCE** resulting in the **Kalinga War**, coincides with the borders of **modern-day Odisha**. **Konark Sun Temple** is a **13th-century CE** sun temple at **Konark** about **35 kilometres northeast from Puri** on the **coastline of Odisha, India**. The temple is attributed to **king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty** about **1250 CE**. **Ganeshi Lal** is current **Governor of Odisha**. **Naveen Patnaik** is the **current and 14th Chief Minister of Odisha**.

India, Norway to jointly work in marine spatial planning for next 5 yrs

- **India and Norway have agreed to jointly work in the area of marine spatial planning in the oceanic space for the next five years.** The two countries have decided to extend support for sustainable ocean resources utilisation to advance economic and social development in coastal areas.
- **The initiative known as Marine Spatial Planning will be implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences through National Centre for Coastal Research for India.**

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh** on **9th March 2021** via video conferencing. Prime Minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple infrastructure projects in Tripura during the event.
- **The bridge 'Maitri Setu' has been built over Feni River which flows between Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.** The name **'Maitri Setu'** symbolizes growing bilateral relations and friendly ties between India and Bangladesh.
- **The construction was taken up by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd** at a project cost of **Rs. 133 Crores**. **The 1.9 Km long bridge joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.** It is poised to herald a new chapter for trade and people to people movement between India and Bangladesh. With this inauguration, **Tripura is set to become the 'Gateway of North East' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 Kms from Sabroom.**

Meghalaya launches online registration portal for migrant workers

- **In Meghalaya, the State Government launched the online registration portal for migrant workers under the Meghalaya Identification Registration (Safety and Security) of Migrant Workers Act 2020,** in a function organized by the Labour Department in Shillong.
- **The portal enables the migrant workers and persons or contractors employing migrant labourers or workers to register them, failing which they will be liable to a fine of up to 5000 rupees.** Registration through the portal

can be made from any part of the country, or through the common service centres or a help desk at the registration office with a payment of 50 rupees.

Meghalaya is a state in Northeast India. Meghalaya was formed by carving out two districts from the state of Assam: the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills on 21 January 1972. Shillong is the capital of Meghalaya, which means “The Abode of Clouds”. Shillong remained the capital of undivided Assam until the creation of the new state of Meghalaya on 21 January 1972, when Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya, and Assam moved its capital to Dispur in Guwahati. Conrad Sangma is the current Chief Minister of the State of Meghalaya. Satya Pal Malik is the current Governor of Meghalaya.

Government of India constitutes National Committee headed by PM to commemorate 75 years of India’s Independence

- **Government of India has constituted a 259 members National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India’s Independence.** The committee includes dignitaries and eminent citizens from all walks of life. It will provide policy direction and guidelines for formulation of programs for the commemoration of 75th anniversary of Indian Independence, at the national and international levels.
- **The 75 years of India’s Independence falls on 15th August next year and celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th March this year. 12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.** The Committee will hold its first meeting to discuss modalities relating to preparatory activities under the commemoration with the members of the Committee.
- **The Prime Minister said that the celebration of 75 years is to be done with the participation of 130 crore Indians and this people’s participation is at the core of this celebration. He said, this participation involves the feelings, suggestions and dreams of 130 crore countrymen. Mr Modi informed that 5 pillars have been decided for the celebration of the 75 years. These are Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolve at 75.** All these should include the ideas and feelings of the 130 crore Indians.

The independence cum partition proposal offered by the British Cabinet Mission in 1946 was accepted by the Congress. Sardar Patel convinced Mahatma Gandhi that it was the only way to avoid civil war and the Mahatma reluctantly gave his consent. The British Parliament passed the famous Indian Independence Act 1947, and on August 14, Pakistan was declared a free nation. Few minutes later at 12:02 am, India became a democratic nation, much to the joy and relief of the entire Indian subcontinent. The Constituent Assembly was given the responsibility of creating the constitution. Headed by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949. On 26 January 1950, the Constitution of India came into effect. Vande Mataram (Mother, I bow to thee) is a Bengali poem written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1870s, which he included in his 1882 Bengali novel Anandamath. The poem was first sung by Rabindranath Tagore in 1896. The first two verses of the song were adopted as the National Song of India in October 1937 by the Congress Working Committee prior to the end of colonial rule in August 1947. “Sare Jahan se Accha” is an Urdu language patriotic song for children written by poet Muhammad Iqbal in the ghazal style of Urdu poetry. Jana Gana Mana is the national anthem of India. It was originally composed as Bharoto Bhagyo Bidhata in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore. It was first publicly sung on 27 December 1911 at the Calcutta (now Kolkata) Session of the Indian National Congress.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the foot march to re-enact the historic Mahatma Gandhi-led Salt March

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off the foot march to re-enact the historic Mahatma Gandhi-led Salt March, while launching the ‘Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav’, the government’s initiative to mark 75 years of India’s Independence.** The salt march from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi in Navsari district, a distance of 386 km, will take 25 days.
- **It marked the 91st anniversary of the historic march against the tax on salt imposed by the British in India. To be continued till August 15, 2023 under five themes of the celebrations as the guiding force for moving forward, keeping dreams and duties as the inspiration.**

- On March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi embarked a historic Salt March from Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat's Ahmedabad to the village of Dandi in the state's coastal area to protest against the steep tax the British levied on salt. The Salt March began on March 12, 1930 and continued till April 6, 1930.
- It was a 24-day Salt March, which was non-violent in nature, is historically significant as it led to the mass Civil Disobedience Movement. Upon reaching the seashore in Dandi, Mahatma Gandhi broke the law by producing illegal salt. The Satyagraha against the salt tax continued for almost a year, ending with Gandhi's release from jail and negotiations with Viceroy Lord Irwin at the Second Round Table Conference.

Narendra Damodardas Modi is 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. Modi is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist volunteer organisation. He is the first Prime Minister born after India's independence, the second non-Congress one to win two consecutive terms after Atal Bihari Vajpayee and first to win both terms with majority outside Congress as well.

BJP MP Tirath Singh Rawat becomes the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand

- BJP MP Tirath Singh Rawat has become new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, announces Trivendra Singh Rawat who stepped down. After the resignation of Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has named Tirath Singh Rawat, the Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal constituency, as the state's new Chief Minister.
- He was the first Education Minister of Uttarakhand after the state assumed its new, separate entity. The saffron party had fielded him from the Garhwal constituency during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and he won the election by a margin of more than 2.85 lakh votes.

In the Republic of India, a Chief Minister is the head of government of each of the twenty-eight states and three of the eight union territories. According to the Constitution of India, at the state-level, the governor is de jure head, but de facto executive authority rests with the Chief Minister. Following elections to the state legislative assembly, the governor usually invites the party (or coalition) with a majority of seats to form the state government. The governor appoints the Chief Minister, whose council of ministers are collectively responsible to the assembly. Given they have the assembly's confidence; the Chief Minister's term is usually for a maximum of five years; there are no limits to the number of terms they can serve. Anyone can become the Chief Minister of a state but he/she has to be elected to state legislative assembly or state legislative council within 6 months otherwise he/she has to resign from the post of Chief Minister.

India's first forest healing centre inaugurated in Uttarakhand's Ranikhet

- The first Forest Healing centre of the country was inaugurated at Ranikhet in Kalika Uttarakhand. The forest healing centre has been developed by the Research Wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department after research on healing properties of the forests and its revitalizing impact on overall health and well-being.
- This healing centre has been established in a pine-dominated forest as it has been found in various studies that coniferous like Pine trees emit certain oil compounds to safeguard themselves from various microbes and pathogens, which are called phytoncides. It has been found in various researches that these compounds help to multiply natural killer (NK) cells in our blood, which help in fighting infections and cancerous growth and enhance overall immunity.

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. Baby Rani Maurya is serving as the current governor of Uttarakhand. The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun. Gairsain is the summer capital of Uttarakhand. The High Court of the state is located in Nainital.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches “CSIR Floriculture Mission”

- **Dr Harsh Vardhan exhorted scientists of CSIR laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the “CSIR Floriculture Mission”.** Recently, **CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in 21 States and Union Territories of India wherein available knowledgebase in CSIR Institutes** will be utilized and leveraged to help Indian farmers and industry re-position itself to meet the import requirements.
- **This Mission is being implemented in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)- Directorate of Floriculture; Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC); Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce; Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED); Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC), Kannauj, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Universities.**
- **The CSIR Floriculture Mission is expected to create opportunity for entrepreneurship development in floriculture.** Infusion of latest technologies in the field of floriculture can be successfully led by CSIR. The mission will focus on commercial floral crops, seasonal/annual crops, wild ornaments and cultivation of flower crops for honey bee rearing. Some of the popular crops include Gladiolus, Canna, Carnation, Chrysanthemum, Gerbera, Lilium, Marigold, Rose, Tuberose etc.

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

PM Narendra Modi releases 11 volumes of Shrimad Bhagwat Gita manuscripts

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi released 11 Volumes of Manuscript with commentaries by 21 scholars on shlokas of Srimad Bhagavadgita at Lok Kalyan Marg, New Delhi.**
- **The Manuscript, published by Dharmarth Trust, is written with extraordinary variety and nuance of Indian calligraphy ranging from Shankar Bhashya to Bhasanuvada.** Dr Karan Singh who is the Chairman Trustee of Dharmarth Trust, Jammu and Kashmir also highlighted the importance of Gita and its message.

Indian Manuscripts are the **richest collection of written documents, texts and scripts.** These written documents provide information on the existence of different civilisations and emphasise the importance of their survival. **India possesses over five million manuscripts** and is considered to own probably the **largest collection in the world.** The manuscripts are vital sources of History of India. **Indian manuscripts were written in a mixture of languages and scripts** have survived till today. These are in the ‘Grantha’, ‘Devanagiri’, ‘Nandinagiri’, and Telugu scripts and multiple languages.

Union Minister Sanjay Dhotre inaugurates MEMP 2021 virtually

- Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, **Sanjay Dhotre inaugurated the International Conference on Multifunctional Electronic Materials and Processing (MEMP 2021) virtually** on the occasion of 30th foundation day of Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology.
- Mr Dhotre said that the **domestic production of electronic items has increased from over one lakh 90 thousand crore rupees in 2014-15 to over five lakh 33 thousand crore rupees in 2019-20** at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate of 23 per cent.
- **India’s share in global electronics manufacturing has grown from 1.3 per cent in 2012 to 3.6 per cent in 2019,** as per industry estimates.
- Mr Dhotre said that **Make in India’ and Atmanirbhar Bharat spirit has propelled electronics manufacturing and it is visible in over 200 manufacturing units of mobile phones and accessories creating almost 6.3 lakh direct and indirect jobs.**

- The production of mobile phones has gone up from about 6 crore mobile phones in 2014-15 to nearly 33 crore mobile phones in 2019-20. The Minister said that promoting electronics manufacturing in India will be a key element of Digital India in the coming years.

Sanjay Shamrao Dhotre is politician from the state of Maharashtra and currently Minister of State for Education and Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology in the Government of India and a member of the 17th Lok Sabha of India. He represents the Akola constituency of Maharashtra and is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) political party.

Prime Minister attended the first Quadrilateral Summit online

- Access to COVID-19 vaccines, cooperation on technology, and climate change are at the top of the agenda as Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined U.S. President Joseph Biden, Australian PM Scott Morrison and Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga for a virtual summit of the Quadrilateral Framework (Quad) the first time leaders of the Indo-Pacific grouping are meeting.
- The meeting is also one of Mr. Biden's first multilateral engagements, which the White House said denoted the importance of the U.S.'s cooperation with "allies and partners in the Indo Pacific".
- Quad is an opportunity for like-minded countries to share notes and collaborate on projects of mutual interest. Members share a vision of an open and free Indo-Pacific. Each is involved in development and economic projects as well as in promoting maritime domain awareness and maritime security. It is one of the many avenues for interaction among India, Australia, Japan and the US and should not be seen in an exclusive context.
- By joining the quad India has taken a significant turn in its policy for the subcontinent. It gives New Delhi a powerful platform to advance its interests in East Asia, coordinate strategies with powerful friends and add more strength to its Act East initiative.
- The geostrategic term "Indo-Pacific" as opposed to "Asia-Pacific" has been gaining currency. It will deepen India's ties with US, Australia and Japan with benefits in diplomatic leverage and sharing of burden in defence. Working with US and its allies in the Asia-Pacific will provide New Delhi significant leverage in shaping US policies in Afghanistan-Pakistan to the benefit of India.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad) is an informal strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India that is maintained by talks between member countries. The dialogue was initiated in 2007 by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, with the support of Vice President Dick Cheney of the US, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. The dialogue was paralleled by joint military exercises of an unprecedented scale, titled Exercise Malabar.

India's largest floating solar power plant to be commissioned by NTPC in May

- India's largest floating solar power plant of 100 MW capacity, belonging to the National Thermal Power Corporation, is expected to be commissioned at Ramagundam in May this year.
- Anand said the floating solar photo-voltaic project would be spread over 450 acres on the water surface of Sri Ram Sagar Project reservoir. This will be the largest floating solar plant in the country in a single location as of now.
- The NTPC has successfully completed pilot projects at Kayamkulam (100 KWH) capacity and Kawas (1 MW). "Now, we are implementing large floating solar plants," the executive director said.

NTPC Limited, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is an Indian Central 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 owned by the Ministry of Power, Government of India. The headquarters of the company is situated at New Delhi.

Rajya Sabha passes Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Parliament gave its nod to the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 with Rajya Sabha passing it. The Upper House cleared the bill amid protest by Opposition parties including Congress, DMK and NCP

over the issue of farm laws. **The legislation seeks to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.** The Act contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration and defines the law for conducting conciliation proceedings.

- The Bill replaces an Ordinance with the same provisions promulgated on 4th November, 2020. **It contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration. The bill comprises of the provision of “Automatic stay on awards”.** Earlier, the act of 1996 had allowed the party to file application in order to set aside the order given in the arbitration proceeding.
- **Schedule seven of the principal act (Act of 1996) specifies some qualifications, experience, and accreditation norms for the arbitrators. The arbitrator must be: An advocate under the Advocates Act, 1961 along with the 10 years of experience. The bill of 2021 removes the Schedule seven for arbitrators and mention that these qualifications, experience, and norms will only be specified under regulations by the regulators.**

IOCL, IDCO signs MoU to develop Paradip Plastic Park in Odisha

- **In Odisha, Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation will jointly set up a state-of-the-art plastic park in Paradeep in Odisha.**
- A shareholder agreement, signed in the virtual presence of the **Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik and Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan,** seeks to develop the project as the first fully operational plastic park in the country.

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.

Cabinet approves ‘PM Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi’ as single non-lapsable reserve fund

- The Union Cabinet approved the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a single non-lapsable reserve fund for share of Health** from the proceeds of **Health and Education Cess levied under Finance Act, 2007.**
- The major benefit of PMSSN will be **enhanced access to universal and affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources,** while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.
- **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) is a non-lapsable reserve fund** for Health in the Public Account and Proceeds of share of health in the Health and Education Cess will be credited into it.
- **The accruals into the PMSSN will be utilized for the flagship schemes** of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare namely- Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres, National Health Mission and Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana.
- Besides, it also includes, **emergency and disaster preparedness and responses during health emergencies and any future programme** and scheme that targets to achieve progress towards Sustainable Development Goals and the targets set out in the National Health Policy 2017.
- The administration and maintenance of the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi is entrusted to the Health Ministry and in any financial year,** the expenditure on such schemes would be initially incurred from the PMSSN and thereafter from Gross Budgetary Support.

India - Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK II begins in Uttarakhand

- **The India - Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK II commenced in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet in Uttarakhand.** This is the Second Edition of annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies. It was continued till 19th of this month.
- **The first edition of the exercise was held at Uzbekistan in November 2019.** 45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and Indian Army are participating in the exercise. Both contingents will be sharing **their expertise and skills in the field of counter terrorist operations in mountainous or rural or urban scenario under UN mandate.** This joint exercise will definitely provide impetus to the ever-growing military and diplomatic ties between the two nations.

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

Labour Minister launches convergence of ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY in 113 districts

- Union Minister for Labour and Employment **Santosh Kumar Gangwar** launched the convergence of ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, PM-JAY in 113 districts of Chhatisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- It was launched on the culmination day of Employees' State Insurance Corporation, ESIC at New Delhi. The convergence will ensure that **1.35 crore ESI beneficiaries** in such districts avail cashless medical services through empanelled hospitals of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY without any need of referral.
- To avail the medical care, the **Insured Worker or the beneficiary need to carry ESIC e-pehchan card or Health Passbook and Aadhar Card** with them.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana also referred to as **Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme** (abbr. NHPS) of the Government of India aims to provide free access to healthcare for **50 crore people in the country**. People using the program access their own primary care services from a family doctor. When anyone needs additional care, then **PM-JAY provides free secondary health care for those needing specialist treatments and tertiary health care for those requiring hospitalization**. The Indian government first announced the Ayushman Bharat Yojana as a universal health care plan in February 2018 in the 2018 Union budget of India. The Union Council of Ministers approved it in March. In his 2018 Independence Day speech Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India would have a major national health program later that year on 25 September, also commemorating the birthday of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.

India opens 'energy office' in Moscow

- India has opened an "energy office" in Moscow's well-known landmark Federation Tower that will have the presence of **five top Indian energy PSUs** even as Moscow and Delhi increase engagement in the sector. The **five main Indian energy PSUs** who will be present are – **ONGC Videsh Limited, Indian Oil Corp, GAIL (India), Oil India Limited, and Engineers India**.
- Energy will be the main area of cooperation between India and Russia during Russian President Putin's India visit later this year. Russian President will be visiting India later this year for the annual India Russia summit and for the BRICS summit as India is the chair of the grouping.

Russia or the Russian Federation is a transcontinental country spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is the **largest country in the world**; covering over 17,125,191 square kilometres (6,612,073 sq mi), consisting of more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area, extending to eleven time zones, and has bordering sixteen sovereign nations. **Vladimir Putin** is serving as the current President of Russia since 2012, previously being in the office from 1999 until 2008. He was also Prime Minister from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. **Russian ruble or rouble** is the currency of the Russian Federation. **Mikhail Mishustin** is serving as Prime Minister of Russia since 16 January 2020.

Government reconstitutes panel for studying Sarasvati River

- The Centre has reconstituted an advisory committee to chalk out a plan for studying the mythical Sarasvati River for the next two years, after the earlier panel's term ended in 2019. The Archaeological Survey of India issued a notification for "reconstitution of the Advisory Committee for the Multidisciplinary Study of the River Sarasvati". The ASI had first set up the committee on December 28, 2017 for a period of two years.
- The committee would continue to be chaired by the Culture Minister and include officials from the Culture, Tourism, Water Resources, Environment and Forest, Housing and Urban Affairs Ministries.

- **The Sarasvati River is an extinct river mentioned in the Rig Veda and later Vedic and post-Vedic texts.** As a physical river, it is described as a small river ending in “a terminal lake (Samudra). As the goddess Sarasvati, the main referent for the term “Sarasvati” which developed into an independent identity in post-Vedic times, she is described as a powerful river and mighty flood. The Sarasvati is also considered by Hindus to exist in a metaphysical form, in which it formed a confluence with the sacred rivers Ganges and Yamuna, at the Triveni Sangam.

Centre announces new scheme for tourist vehicle operators to boost tourism

- **The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new scheme for tourist vehicle operators.** Any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an All India tourist authorization and permit through online mode.
- It will be issued, after relevant documents are submitted and fees deposited, within 30 days of submission of such applications. **The new set of rules, to be known as, All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021, will be applicable from 1st April this year.**
- **Moreover, the scheme allows flexibility in the form of authorization/permit being granted, for three months or its multiples thereof, not exceeding three years at a time.** This provision has been incorporated keeping in mind those areas of our country where there is a limited season of tourism and also for those operators who have limited financial capacity.

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

A local court in Surat acquitted 122 persons arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

- **A local court in Surat acquitted 122 persons arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for participating in a meeting organised in December 2001** as members of Students’ Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), a banned outfit.
- After their acquittal, some of the accused, and also activists from the minority community, demanded that they be compensated for being “illegally framed by the police” without any evidence against them.

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act passed in 1967; the law aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India. The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so. It has **death penalty and life imprisonment as highest punishments.** Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged. It will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if crime is committed on a foreign land, outside India. **Under the UAPA, the investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 days after the arrests** and the duration can be extended further after intimating the court. **The amended Act 2019 empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in the state.** It also has the provision of designating an individual as a terrorist. Prior to this amendment, only organizations could be designated as terrorist organizations.

Foreign courts confirm \$1.4 billion arbitration award against India

- **Courts in five countries (the U.S., the U.K., the Netherlands, Canada and France) have given recognition to an arbitration award that asked India to return \$1.4 billion to Cairn Energy plc.** Cairn Energy had moved courts in nine countries to enforce its \$1.4 billion arbitral award against India, which the company won after a dispute with the country’s revenue authority over a retroactively applied capital gains tax.
- **Cairn had challenged the Indian government seeking taxes over an internal business reorganisation using the 2012 retrospective tax law, under the UK-India Bilateral Investment Treaty.** In 2011, Cairn Energy sold its majority stake in Cairn India to Vedanta Ltd, reducing its stake in the Indian company to about 10 per cent. In 2014, the Indian tax department had demanded Rs 10,247 crore (\$1.4 billion) in taxes.

A bilateral investment treaty (BIT) is an agreement establishing the terms and conditions for private investment by nationals and companies of one country in another country. Most BITs include fair and equitable treatment, protection from expropriation, free transfer of means and full protection and security. The distinctive feature of many BITs is that they allow for an alternative dispute resolution mechanism, whereby an investor whose rights under the BIT have been violated could have recourse to international arbitration. **The first BIT was signed by India on March 14, 1994.**

Punjab government is going to celebrate the 400th birth anniversary of Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur Ji

- Under the direct supervision of **Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh**, the state government has successfully organised yearlong celebrations on the pious occasion of 550th Parkash Purb of Guru Nanak Dev ji.
- **Punjab Government** is going to celebrate the 400th birth anniversary of Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur Ji and will make efforts to spread the message of national integration by **organising special programs from April 28 to May 1** on ‘Guru Teg Bahadur-Hind Di Chadar’.
- **The Punjab Tourism and Cultural Affairs Minister Charanjit Singh Channi** while addressing a press conference in the presence of ACS Sanjay Kumar and Director Kanwalpreet Kaur Brar said that **Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has already released the logo for these programs.**
- Mr. Channi said the **Theme park being constructed worth Rs. 49 crore at Sri Chamkaur Sahib will be dedicated to people on the occasion of Baisakhi.** An additional amount of Rs. 50 crore is also being spent on the beautification of Sri Chamkaur Sahib.
- In a major announcement the Minister said the state government has also **proposed to construct a museum at IKG PTU Kapurthala worth Rs. 100 crore to highlight the life and works of Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar.**
- The Minister said that the state government is also **going to spend Rs. 500 crore on the construction, renovation and upgradation of several memorials this year.** He said that **memorial dedicated to Bhai Jaita ji at Anandpur Sahib would be completed within this year worth Rs. 26.85 crore.**
- ‘By September this year, the government will also **complete the construction work of Shiri Guru Ravidas memorial worth Rs. 103 crore and development projects of Rs. 32.61 crore will also be done at Bhagwan Valmiki ji Tirath Amritsar’** added Channi.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was a ninth of ten Gurus who founded the Sikh religion and he was **head of the followers of Sikhism from 1665 until his beheading in 1675.** He was born in **Amritsar, Punjab, India in 1621** and was the youngest son of **Guru Hargobind Sahib**, the sixth Sikh guru. **In 1675 Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed in Delhi on 11 November** under the orders of the Mughal Emperor **Aurangzeb.** According to J.S. Grewal, a scholar of Sikh history, **Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to confront the religious persecution of Kashmiri Hindus by the Mughal officials.** Sikh holy premises **Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi** mark the places of execution and cremation of **Guru Tegh Bahadur.** His martyrdom is remembered as the **Shaheedi Divas of Guru Tegh Bahadur every year on 24 November.** **The fifth Sikh Guru Arjan** was arrested under the orders of the Mughal Emperor **Jahangir** and asked to convert to Islam. He refused, was tortured and executed in 1606 CE. **Guru Nanak** was the founder of Sikhism and is the first of the ten Sikh Gurus.

World’s highest bridge, connecting Kashmir to rest of India

- In a historic moment, the railways has connected the two ends of the main arch of the **world’s highest bridge on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir’s Reasi district** which will provide **direct connectivity to Kashmir Valley.** The iconic bridge will soar 359 metres above the bed of the river and will be **30 metres higher than the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris.** The Northern Railway will be completing the **most difficult 111-kilometre long section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link by December 2022** which would connect Kashmir to the rest of India through the railway network.

Jammu and Kashmir is a region administered by India as a union territory and consists of the southern portion of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and between India and China since 1962. The region of Jammu and Kashmir is separated by the Line of Control from the Pakistani-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the west and north, respectively. Provisions for the formation of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir were contained within the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019**, which was passed by both houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. The act re-constituted the former state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, 'Jammu and Kashmir' and 'Ladakh', with effect from 31 October 2019. **Manoj Sinha** is the current Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. **Girish Chandra Murmu** was the first Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir till August 2020.

First Meeting of BRICS CGETI held under India's Chairship

- The first Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held under India's Chair ship from 9th till 11th of this month. The theme of BRICS this year is – "BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus".
- India presented the calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, which included the priority areas for deliverables, schedule and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on Services Statistics, and the BRICS Trade Fair. Till September, inter sessional deliberations will be carried out to reach consensus amongst the BRICS countries. Russia hosted the most recent 12th BRICS summit on 17 November 2020 virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The deliverables proposed included the action plan based on the document "Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025" adopted during Russian Presidency in 2020 and BRICS Cooperation on Multilateral Trading system including cooperation for the TRIPS Waiver proposal at WTO.

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. The term "BRIC" is believed to be coined in 2001 by then-chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, **Jim O'Neill**, in his publication Building Better Global Economic BRICs. But, it was actually coined by **Roopa Purushothaman** who was a Research Assistant in the original report.

Government launches Mera Ration Mobile App

- Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on March 12, 2021 launched 'Mera Ration' Mobile App for those ration card holders who migrate to new places in search of livelihood.
- Currently, 32 States and Union Territories are covered under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) and the remaining four States and UTs are expected to be integrated into the scheme in the next few months.
- The One Nation One Ration Card system covers almost 69 crore National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries in the country. The scheme has proven to be of tremendous value-added service to each NFSA beneficiary during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially migrants, as it allowed them to avail the benefit of subsidised foodgrains.
- The beneficiaries will be able to use the 'Mera Ration' app to identify the nearest fair price shop and check details of their entitlement and recent transactions. The android-based mobile application has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

National Food Security Act 2013 (also 'Right to Food Act') is an Act of the Parliament which aims to provide subsidised food grains to approximately two thirds of India's 1.2 billion people. It was signed into law on 12 September 2013, retroactive to 5 July 2013. The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA 2013) converts into legal entitlements for existing food security programmes of the Government of India. It includes the Midday Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services scheme and the Public Distribution System. Further, the NFSA

2013 recognizes maternity entitlements. Maternity benefit of not less than Rs.6000 is also provided to pregnant women and lactating mothers. The Midday Meal Scheme and the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme are universal in nature whereas the PDS will reach about two-thirds of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas). Under the act, 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.

Twitter launches multi-lingual 'info prompt' ahead of Assembly elections

- With Assembly elections coming up in five States, **micro-blogging platform Twitter announced a dedicated 'information search prompt'** in six languages with the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions to tackle misinformation and provide reliable details related to elections.
- **The U.S.-headquartered firm has also rolled out a multilingual youth discussion series in India 'Democracy Adda'** aimed at driving voter literacy and civic participation among young Indians, along with a video series '**Her Political Journey**' that will focus on women political leaders.

Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Users access Twitter through its website interface or its mobile-device application software ("app"), though the service could also be accessed via SMS before April 2020. **Twitter, Inc. is based in San Francisco, California**, and has more than 25 offices around the world. **Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006** and launched in July of that year.

Tamil Nadu, Haryana institutes get status of national importance

- **The government of India has decided to confer the status of Institutes of National Importance (INI) to two national institutes of food technology located in Haryana and Tamil Nadu.** National Institutes of Food Technology (NIFTEM) at Kundali, Haryana and Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu will be **conferred with the special status**, said Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
- The Rajya Sabha passed the **National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019** that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.
- **A major amendment** in the bill notifies that the **chairperson at the institutes will be an expert from the field.** The recognition will **help the institutes to improve the standard of their education.** Such acknowledgement provides special recognition to the institutes and also grants them funding from the government. **The two food institutes in Haryana and Tamil Nadu will now get the opportunity to collaborate with overseas food institutes.**

Institute of National Importance (INI) is a status that may be conferred on a premier public higher education institution in India by an act of Parliament of India, an institution which "serves as a pivotal player in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region of the country/state". **Institutes of National Importance receive special recognition and funding from the Government of India.**

India commissions Nuclear Missiles Tracking 15,000-tonne Ship INS Dhruv

- **India commissioned the INS Dhruv (codenamed VC 1118) ship**, capable of tracking nuclear missiles and satellites from a distance, into the Navy. **INS Dhruv has been jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and Indian Navy.** The indigenously-developed surveillance ship has been **built at Hindustan Ship Yard Ltd in Vishakhapatnam under the Make in India initiative.** **This 15,000-tonne ship**, which is also one of the largest warships built at an Indian shipyard, has cost nearly Rs 725 crore.
- This ocean surveillance ship is also **equipped with game changer active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars** that can **help India collect accurate data not just about an enemy nation's missile range and capabilities**, but will also track our own strategic missiles that are in the trial stage.

- The sophisticated surveillance systems need 14 MW of power to fire up and that will be generated by INS Dhruv itself. **So far, only four other countries — China, France, Russia and the US — have the capabilities that INS Dhruv carries.**

The Indian Navy is the naval branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Indian Navy traces its origins back to the East India Company's Marine which was founded in 1612 to protect British merchant shipping in the region. In 1793, the British East India Company established its rule over eastern part of the Indian subcontinent i.e. Bengal, but it was not until 1830 that the colonial navy was titled as His Majesty's Indian Navy. When India became a republic in 1950, the Royal Indian Navy as it had been named since 1934 was renamed to Indian Navy. Admiral Karambir Singh is the current Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy.

'Agriculture budget' exercise begins in Rajasthan

- The exercise for presenting a separate "agriculture budget", with the emphasis on welfare measures for farmers, has started in Rajasthan in accordance with the **announcement made by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the 2021-22 State Budget.** The new document will provide for innovations for the benefit of cultivators.
- The Rajasthan legislative assembly passed the state budget with **Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announcing to implement 'CM Chiranjeevi Yojna'** from May 1 in the state under which **every family in the state will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs 5 lakh.** Gehlot announced renaming of **Universal Health Coverage Scheme worth Rs 3,500 crore as CM Chiranjeevi Yojna** and said registrations will start from April 1.

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.

Mission Gramodaya launched in Madhya Pradesh

- In Madhya Pradesh, **Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan have launched the Mission Gramodaya in the state.** Under the Gramodaya mission, besides providing housing facilities in rural areas, basic and fundamental infrastructure will also be expanded.

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

Bihar now first state in country to implement ethanol promotion policy

- Bihar has become the first state in the country to implement an ethanol promotion policy that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains. The Central government has already given permission for direct production of ethanol last December in consonance with National Policy of Biofuels, 2018.
- An investor would get a 15 per cent government subsidy — a maximum of Rs 5 crore — besides exemption from stamp duty, registration and land conversion fees, electricity duty reimbursement and employment and skill development subsidy as already being given under the state government's industrial promotion policy. SC/ST, EBC, women, differently-abled or acid attack survivor investors will be given 15.75 per cent subsidy up to a maximum of Rs 5.25 crore.

National Policy on Biofuels 2018 aims at increasing the utilization of biofuels in the energy and transportation sectors by promoting the production of biofuels from domestic feedstock in the coming decade. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has set an indicative target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol and 5% blending of biodiesel in diesel to be achieved by 2030.

UNDP launches ‘Sahi Disha’ campaign to celebrate women’s livelihoods in rural India

- The UNDP has launched ‘Sahi Disha’ campaign to celebrate women’s livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India. The campaign highlights issues and hurdles that impact the opportunities for women in rural India to access jobs and livelihoods and establish enterprises that can help them become more self-reliant.
- The Disha initiative, a five-year collaboration between UNDP and the IKEA Foundation, enabled one million women through skilling and counselling services to access job and livelihood opportunities across five states – Delhi NCR, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations’ global development network. It promotes technical and investment cooperation among nations and advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life for themselves. The UNDP provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries. The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states. It is based in New York.

8.76 gigawatt renewable energy capacity added in the country during year 2019-20

- India added 9.7 GW of power generation capacity during April, 2020 to February, 2021 which includes 3.8 GW of conventional energy and 5.9 GW from renewable sources, Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha. In 2019-20, India had added 15.8 GW of power generation capacity including 7.1 GW of conventional sources and 8.8 GW of renewable sources.
- India has committed to generate 40 per cent of its total installed electricity generation capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by the year 2030. From April, 2015 till February, 2021, India has added 117.9 GW of power generation capacity which includes 64.5 GW of conventional source and 53.4 GW from renewable sources.

The Government of India has set a target of installing of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power.

Manipur emerges as the model state for Van Dhan Vikas Yojana

- The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of Minor Forest Produces by establishing Van Dhan Kendras to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-based tribes.
- One major scheme that has contributed to increasing employment and income generation among the tribal population is the Van Dhan tribal start-ups programme, a component of the The ‘Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP’ Scheme.
- Since its inception as the nodal agency working in the area of tribal upliftment, TRIFED has been implementing several programmes and initiatives. TRIFED is helping tribals generate their livelihood in these distressed times. The focus of these initiatives is to make India self-reliant under the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan, with the motto, Go Vocal for Local Go Tribal – Mera Van Mera Dhan Mera Udyam.

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

Indian Navy inducts landing craft utility ship

- Enhancing its amphibious warfare capabilities, the Indian Navy inducted a landing craft utility ship which will be used for a variety of activities like transporting battle tanks and other heavy weapons systems. The eighth and last of the landing craft utility (LCU) mark-IV class ship was commissioned at an event in Port Blair.
- The ship was indigenously designed and built by state-run Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE), Kolkata. The LCU Mk-IV ships are amphibious vessels with a designated primary role of transporting main battle tanks, armoured vehicles, troops and equipment from ship to shore. The ship is manned by a team of five officers and 50 sailors, and is capable of carrying 160 troops in addition.
- “The induction of these ships will contribute to the nation’s maritime security needs and is in consonance with the Prime Minister’s vision of ‘Make in India’ and ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’”.

A Landing Craft Utility (LCU) is a type of boat used by amphibious forces to transport equipment and troops to the shore. They are capable of transporting tracked or wheeled vehicles and troops from amphibious assault ships to beachheads or piers.

New Nagar Van Scheme will help in creation of Urban forests in the cities

- In a message on the occasion of International Day of Forests, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said, the scheme will also fill the gap between the cities and villages in terms of having their own forest cover. India’s age-old tradition of developing and caring for village forests in vicinity of almost every rural patch. Under the Nagar Van Scheme, Urban forests will be developed in 200 cities in its first phase.
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21st March as the International Day of Forests in 2012. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

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

- The Indian Railways announced that the trial of the first prototype of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) AC three-tier economy class coach has been completed successfully. The coach has been rolled out by the Railways’ coach factory in Kapurthala.
- The Railways also said that the economy coaches will be introduced in all express and mail trains which are currently running LHB coaches except the Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto and Jan Shatabdi trains. The Railways also informed that it has taken numerous steps to add more comfort for the travel of train passengers which include the introduction of vistadome coaches, modernization of existing coaches, changing the lighting and electrical system in the trains and improving the security system of the trains as well.

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

UNESCO teams up with Toonz Media, USO India for water conservation programme

- UNESCO has teamed up with USO India and Toonz Media Group for a creative water conservation awareness programme for students.
- The animation videos created by students will be unveiled on March 22, the World Water Day as part of the H₂O ooh! – Waterwise Program for school students conducted in partnership with National Mission for Clean Ganga, United Schools Organization India (USO India), Water Digest magazine and Toonz Media Group.
- The nation-wide water conservation awareness programme was aimed at school students between the age of 6-14 years, who submitted story ideas for animation short films to create awareness about water crisis in India.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris. Audrey Azoulay appointed as the Director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), becoming the second female leader of the organization.

Parliament passed Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill

- Parliament has passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021. The Bill seeks to amend the Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957 and provide for removal of distinction between captive and merchant mines.
- The Bill empowers the Central Government to issue directions regarding composition and utilization of funds maintained by the District Mineral Foundation. The Bill provides that captive mines other than atomic minerals may sell up to 50 per cent of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
- According to Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi, the bill has been brought to reform the mining sector in the country. He pointed out that the country has large reserves of several minerals but only 45 percent has been tapped so far, which results in more dependence on imports.

Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh HC Justice inaugurates 1st virtual court of state

- Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Justice P.R. Ramachandra Menon online inaugurated the first virtual court of the state. The Chief Justice said that by conducting online proceedings through virtual courts, judges will save time for other court proceedings and it is also convenient for the various parties.

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

AIM, NITI Aayog, AWS announce new initiatives to boost innovation, entrepreneurship in India

- Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and Amazon Web Services announced new initiatives to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India. This will be done by empowering school students with cloud computing skills, and enabling entrepreneurs to build innovative education technology solutions on the cloud.
- A Statement of Intent was signed between NITI Aayog and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited, which undertakes the resale and marketing of Amazon Web Services Cloud services in India. Atal Innovation Mission will leverage Amazon Web Services Educate, which is Amazon's global program that provides resources for students and educators to accelerate cloud-related learning.
- This program will introduce the fundamentals of cloud computing such as cloud storage, virtual compute power, web hosting, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and virtual reality, to students at more than 7000 Atal Tinkering Labs. It will equip the talented youth of the country with digital and web-based tools that can enhance their creative and innovative capabilities.

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) was set up by NITI Aayog with an objective to create and encourage an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship across schools, educational organisations, research institutes and industries including MSMEs. With a vision to 'Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators', Atal Innovation Mission is establishing Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India. ATLs are created as learning spaces for students between Class 6 to 12 for them to develop skills and become adept at new technologies such as artificial design (AI), design and computational thinking, adaptive learning, etc. The labs provide education way beyond existing educational pedagogy. In late-February 2020, ATL announced a collaboration with NITI Aayog and the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) to launch an introductory course module on AI.

President of India gave assent to National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2021

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, which enhances the powers of the Lieutenant Governor and limits the elected government's power in Delhi.
- According to the legislation, the “government” in Delhi means the “Lieutenant Governor” and the city government will now have to seek the opinion of the L-G before taking any executive action.
- **Rajya Sabha had witnessed massive uproar** when the opposition, led by the Congress and the AAP, alleged that the Modi government was **trying to bypass the elected Delhi Assembly by bringing an ‘unconstitutional’ bill to empower the Lt Governor and was practising ‘coercive federalism’**.
- **Union Minister G Kishan Reddy had said the amendments would lead to transparency and clarity in governance in NCT of Delhi and enhance public accountability.** While explaining the rationale behind the bill, he said the amendments have been brought to remove ambiguities in the existing Act.
- G Kishan Reddy further said that **changes in the law have been sought in the spirit of what has been said in a Supreme Court judgment**, adding that there was no political angle and the amendments are on “technical” grounds.

Delhi bordered by Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east. According to the 2011 census, **Delhi city proper's population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai.** Anil Baijal is the current & 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7th Chief Minister of Delhi. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be formally known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Delhi is a Union Territory with a legislature, and it came into being in 1991 under Article 239AA of the Constitution inserted by the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991.

PM Narendra Modi arrived in Dhaka as Bangladesh marks 50th year of liberation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Dhaka on a two-day visit to Bangladesh during which he attended the celebrations of the golden jubilee of the country's independence.** This is **Modi's first foreign visit post COVID-19 outbreak in India** last year in March. The Prime Minister is set to **visit the birth centenary of ‘Bangabandhu’ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and hold talks with his counterpart Sheikh Hasina.**
- **The memo, dated April 28, 1971, came a month after Pakistani troops had launched ‘Operation Searchlight’ that targeted Bangladeshi freedom fighters, the minority Hindu population, teachers, students, and activists brutally, with millions of casualties.**
- **As Bangladesh commemorates 50 years of its Liberation movement, that began with the declaration of Independence by the Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters) led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 26, 1971,** the spotlight also turns to events at the time in India and the United States, that were **recounted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka, and through a special remembrance in the U.S. Congress.**
- **A few days after the Mujib declaration, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi moved a resolution in Parliament condemning the Pakistani crackdown as “genocide”.** On April 3, she met with the Tajuddin Ahmed, Mujib's nominee for PM of the provisional government, and promised support, including an office in Calcutta that belonged to the R&AW intelligence agency. Mrs. Gandhi insisted on secrecy, however, until she was able to garner international support for the cause. While the US was dead set against India's stand, **Mrs. Gandhi found some support in Moscow, and the Indo-Soviet treaty of Peace and Cooperation was signed in August 1971.**

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

Mahbubnagar to house India's first lithium-ion cell unit

- In a first, an energy park is coming up in Mahbubnagar, Telangana for manufacturing lithium-ion cells, which may potentially provide direct and indirect employment to 10,000 people of the district.
- As part of the project, battery manufacturer ChargeXO and renewable energy firm Greenko have come forward to invest Rs 2,000 crore in about 100 acres for the first lithium-ion cell manufacturing unit in India.

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

PM Narendra Modi launched Catch the Rain campaign on World Water Day

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign on the occasion of World Water Day (March 22). The 'Catch the Rain' campaign will be undertaken across the country, in both rural and urban areas. It is being implemented from March 22 to November 30 - the pre-monsoon and monsoon period in the country.
- In the presence of the Prime Minister, the signing of the historic Memorandum of Agreement between the Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the Ken Betwa Link Project also took place.
- This is the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers. This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers. It will provide annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectare, drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people and also generate 103 MegaWatt of hydropower.
- The Project will be of immense benefit to the water starved region of Bundelkhand, especially to the districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh. It will pave the way for more interlinking of river projects to ensure that scarcity of water does not become an inhibitor for development in the country.
- It will be launched as a Jan Andolan to take water conservation at grass-root level through people's participation. It is intended to nudge all stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata, to ensure proper storage of rainwater.

Ministry of Jal Shakti is a ministry under Government of India which was formed in May 2019 under the second Modi ministry. This was formed by merging of two ministries; Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is currently serving as Union Cabinet Minister in Ministry of Jal Shakti. He is a member of parliament from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) representing Jodhpur in the Lok Sabha.

UP, MP seal Ken-Betwa linking project deal; environmentalists flag concerns

- Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for starting work on country's first major interlinking of two monsoon rivers, Ken and Betwa, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, even as environment activists said the project would spell doom for the Panna tiger reserve which is known for critically endangered white-rumped vultures besides successful restoration of tiger population.
- The MoA was signed 18 years after the project was first conceived as a part of country's ambitious programme to inter-link rivers to provide water to areas facing scarcity. Officials said the delay was because of no agreement between the two states on sharing of water during the lean supply months, November to April.
- The Uttar Pradesh government, which was initially demanding 930 million cubic meter (MCM) water during the Rabi season, settled for 750 MCM while MP will get 1,834 MCM water, said an officer of MP water resource department.

- According to the project report, 2,800 MCM of water will be **diverted from Ken basin to water deficit Betwar basin through a 73.8 meter high dam proposed on Ken at Daudhan in MP's Chhattarpur district**. The report also said 6,017 hectares forest land of Panna Tiger Reserve and Ken Ghariyal Sanctuary would be submerged in the dam reservoir.

Indian Rivers Inter-link is a proposed large-scale civil engineering project that aims to effectively manage water resources in India by linking Indian rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals to enhance irrigation and groundwater recharge, reduce persistent floods in some parts and water shortages in other parts of India. **India accounts for 18% of the world population and about 4% of the world's water resources. On 16 September 2015, first linking was completed of rivers Krishna and Godavari. It is still under review. But it isn't considered as a true river interlinking as it is just a small lift irrigation with few lines of pipes.**

Uttar Pradesh develops India's first FPO portal

- **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the UP FPO Shakti Portal** as part of the Kisan Kalyan Mission at an event in Gorakhpur.
- **The portal, the first of its kind in the country, has been developed by the department of agriculture with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and is aimed at benefitting the farmers at the grassroots level.**
- **It will bring farmers, producer groups, traders and the department of agriculture and other allied departments of the state government on one platform.**

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.

Niti Aayog sets up task forces for achieving policy certainty in contract enforcement

- **Government think tank Niti Aayog has constituted two task forces** that will recommend a policy framework for the enforcement of contracts as well as effective conciliation mechanism.
- **One task force, which will suggest facilitation of speedy resolution of contractual disputes between private entities and the government, will be headed by Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.** The terms of reference of the task force headed by Kant will include **developing and formulating guidelines for an effective conciliation mechanism, for speedy settlement/resolution of disputes arising out of contracts between the government (ministries, CPSEs) and private contractor/concessionaire.**
- **The second task force, which will recommend a policy framework for the enforcement of contracts, will be led by Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and will have members from key ministries and departments.**

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

Andhra Pradesh launched India's first run ambulance network for animals

- **In what has been described as a first in the history of India, the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government in Andhra Pradesh has announced the launch of a sarkari ambulance network for animals.** The novel initiative is aimed at promoting animal husbandry, which is a part and parcel of agriculture.

- To further boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in Andhra Pradesh, the state government has now decided to set up “**India’s first government-run ambulance network**” for animals. A total of 175 mobile ambulances (veterinary) clinics will be placed at Assembly Constituency Level on the lines of 108 Services for providing Veterinary services at the doorstep.
- These mobile ambulances shall provide veterinary first aid services along with spot diagnosis and attending to emergency cases. One of the major facilities these ambulances will provide is the ‘**Hydraulic Lift**’ facility to lift animals and shift them to the nearest Government Veterinary Facility in case of emergency.

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.

India and Pakistan will hold the first meeting in three years of a commission that deals with water rights on the Indus River

- India and Pakistan was held the first meeting in three years of a commission that deals with water rights on the Indus River illustrating a broader resumption of diplomatic ties.
- The Permanent Indus Commission set up under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 met in New Delhi on March 23 to 24. At the forthcoming talks, Pakistan raised its objections on the technical designs of India’s Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai hydroelectric plants.
- The talks represent a thawing in bilateral ties, which have been frozen since a 2019 suicide bombing in Indian Kashmir blamed on Pakistan-based guerrillas and India’s decision later that year to strip Kashmir’s constitutional autonomy in order to bind it closer to India.

The Indus Waters Treaty is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank, to use the water available in the Indus River and its tributaries. The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed in Karachi on 19 September 1960 by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistani President Ayub Khan. The Treaty gives control over the waters of the three “eastern rivers” — the Beas, Ravi and Sutlej with a mean annual flow of 33 million acre-feet (MAF) to India, while control over the waters of the three “western rivers” — the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum with a mean annual flow of 80 MAF to Pakistan. India was allocated about 20% of the total water carried by the Indus system while Pakistan was allocated the remainder.

Maithri Aquatech sets up ‘World’s First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk’ at Vizag Smart City

- Maithri Aquatech, a company formed under the ‘Make in India’ initiative has set up the ‘World’s First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre’ in the smart city of Visakhapatnam. Smart City Visakhapatnam gets the ‘World’s First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre’. This initiative is supported by GVMC (Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health) - an alliance between USAID and SWN (Safe Water Network).

Union Cabinet approved the signing of MoU between UPSC, Afghanistan’s IARCSC

- Union Cabinet has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), India and Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission (IARCSC), Afghanistan. The MoU will strengthen the relationship between IARCSC and UPSC. It will facilitate sharing of experience and expertise of both the institutions in the area of recruitment.
- The MoU includes exchange of information and expertise including books, manuals and other documents which are not of a confidential nature and sharing of expertise in the use of Information Technology (IT) for the preparation of written examinations and holding of Computer Based Recruitment Tests and Online Examinations.

UPSC is a constitutional body and the central recruiting agency of the country. Articles 315 to 323 in Part XIV of the constitution talk about UPSC. Accordingly, as per Article 315, at Union level, Union Public Service Commission is envisaged by it. UPSC is amongst the few institutions which function with both autonomy and freedom, along with the country's higher judiciary and lately the Election Commission. Under Article 320 of the Constitution of India, the Commission is, inter-alia, required to be consulted on all matters relating to recruitment to civil services and posts.

IMD launches new climate data portal

- A steep rise in mean temperatures have been recorded across all seasons since 1996 onwards over India with the sharpest rising trend recorded in the pre-monsoon season, shows India Meteorological Department's latest offering—Climate Data Service Portal. The data highlights the impact of climate change on India's mean temperature trends.
- The portal launched on the occasion of World Meteorological Day has real time visualisation of meteorological data from across the country; climatological tables; visualisation of historical meteorological data including of monsoon rainfall pattern; mean temperature rise; frequency of cyclones etc.
- According to IMD, the CDSP will help researchers and the government in climate change studies; planning and mitigation strategies; early warning to people etc. Statistical analysis of meteorological data in the portal is still under development.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology. IMD is headquartered in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica. Regional offices are at Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur, Guwahati and New Delhi.

Nirmala Sitharaman launches Central Scrutiny Centre and IEPFA mobile App

- Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Central Scrutiny Centre and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority, IEPFA mobile App to leverage digital solutions to achieve Prime Minister's vision of 'Digitally empowered India'.
- These two initiatives will create a new corporate and investor friendly ecosystem. The Mobile App aims at achieving the goal of financial literacy, spreading investors' awareness, education, and protection among investors. The Mobile App has been developed for citizen engagement and information dissemination to promote awareness among investors.
- The Finance Minister said that the Central Scrutiny Centre will scrutinize certain Straight Through Process, STP Forms filed by the corporates on the MCA21 registry and flag the companies for more in-depth scrutiny.

Nirmala Sitharaman is the current Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of India. She is currently a member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka. Sitharaman formerly served as the Defence Minister of India, thereby becoming India's second female defence minister and also the second female finance minister after Indira Gandhi, and first full-time female Finance Minister. Sitharaman featured in the Forbes 2020 list of 100 most powerful women and ranked the 41st in the world.

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank holds virtual meeting with Director General of UNESCO

- Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank held a virtual meeting with Director General UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay in New Delhi. They discussed key issues of mutual importance including National Education Policy, India's response to COVID Pandemic especially in the education sector.
- He also spoke about Manodarpan, the government's initiative to provide online psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for their mental health and emotional wellbeing. The Minister also mentioned that competitive entrance exams for almost 23 lakh students, the largest entrance examinations in the world were conducted successfully and safely during the covid pandemic.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris. Audrey Azoulay appointed as the **Director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, becoming the **second female leader of the organization**.

Ladakh LG inaugurates first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of KREDA at Latoo Village

- **Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur** has inaugurated the first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) at Latoo Village.
- This is the last Village on the LOC. The project is inspired by the Vision of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for solarising Ladakh as a model region by making it fully solarised and Carbon Neutral.
- The agency has successfully installed and Commissioned a 41 Hp Submersible Pump backed with 50 Kw Solar Photovoltaic Plant making the first prototype of the Solar Lift Irrigation System in Ladakh in coloration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Kargil.

Until October 31, 2019, Ladakh was a region of the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir. In August 2019, the Parliament of India passed an act by which Ladakh became a union territory on 31 October 2019. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district. Radha Krishna Mathur is a retired 1977 batch IAS officer of Tripura cadre is the first Lieutenant Governor of the union territory of Ladakh.

NHAI to develop world class ‘Wayside Amenities’ at more than 600 locations

- In a major move to improve commuters’ experience on National Highways for both passengers and truckers, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will develop world class ‘Wayside Amenities’ at more than 600 locations across 22 states in the next five years.
- Out of these, 130 are targeted for development in 2021-22. NHAI has already invited bids to develop 120 such wayside amenities. As per plan, wayside amenities will be developed every 30 to 50 kilometer along the current and upcoming Highways and Expressways.
- The amenities will include numerous facilities for passengers such as Fuel Station, Electric Charging Facilities, Food Court, Retail Shops, ATM, Toilets with shower facility, Children Playing Area, Clinic, Village Haat for local handicrafts etc.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is an autonomous agency of the Government of India, set up in 1988 and is responsible for management of a network of over 50,000 km of National Highways out of 1,15,000 km in India. It is a nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. NHAI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Space Research Organisation for satellite mapping of highways. Sukhbir Singh Sandhu (IAS) is the present Chairman of NHAI since 28 October 2019.

UP approves scheme offering affordable rental housing for urban poor

- The Uttar Pradesh government will start a scheme offering affordable rental housing for poor people living in cities and a proposal to this effect was approved by the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- Under the Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes (ARHC) scheme, urban migrants/poor labourers, those belonging to economically weaker sections, low income groups including factory workers, educational institutions, people associated with hospitality and students will be the beneficiaries.
- Preference will be given to people belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, widows, working women, divyang and minorities, which will be subject to the provisions made by the state government.
- The ARHC scheme has been launched by the government of India through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under ‘self-reliant India’ campaign.

Central government has launched Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHC) Scheme 2021 under the flagship Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. The scheme aims to cover nearly 3 lakh beneficiaries initially, with an estimated expenditure of around Rs 600 crore. The ARHC scheme will have a two-pronged approach; first, existing vacant government funded housing complexes will be converted into ARHCs through a concession agreement for 25 years.

India and the US started two-day naval exercise PASSEX in Bay of Bengal

- **India and the US kicked off a two-day naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal**, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership. **Indian Navy deployed its warship Shivalik and long-range maritime patrol aircraft P8I in the ‘PASSEX’ exercise** while the US Navy was represented by the **USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group**.
- A carrier battle group or carrier strike group is a mega naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by a large number of destroyers, frigates and other ships. In a first, enhancing jointmanship, **Indian Air Force fighters have also been included in the exercise affording the IAF an opportunity to practice air interception and air defence with the US Navy**.

India, Bangladesh ink five MoUs in trade, IT, sports fields

- **India and Bangladesh signed 5 MoUs in the fields of trade, IT and setting up of sports facilities** on the concluding day of the 2-day long official visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Both leaders agreed that a **direct passenger train named ‘Mitali Express’ will run between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri**. India gifted 109 ambulances to Bangladesh and also **1.2 million doses of the Covishield vaccine**. **India released a silver coin to commemorate 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries**.
- **Bangladesh also released a gold coin to commemorate the Mujib Borsho**. Both countries agreed to start a new area of cooperation in the field of Civil nuclear and space sectors. Both the leaders also **laid the foundation stone for the construction of a memorial at Ashuganj for the martyrs of Indian armed forces in the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh**.

Government sets target to reduce air pollution by 20 to 30 per cent by 2024 under National Clean Air Programme

- Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that the **government has set a target to reduce air pollution by 20 to 30 per cent by 2024 under National Clean Air Programme**.
- **The signing of the MoU for 132 identified cities for implementation of city specific action plans to reduce air pollution**, under the programme, there is a **target to improve air quality in 100 cities**. The centre has sanctioned electric buses for 62 cities but it is operational in only 20 cities.

The National Clean Air Programme or NCAP is a government programme launched by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change in 2019. The programme is a pollution control initiative with a major goal of reducing the concentration of coarse and fine particulate matter in the atmosphere by at least 20% by the year 2024.

International



Georgia gets new PM and opposition leader gets arrested

- **Protesters set up tents outside Georgia's parliament building and blocked the capital's main avenue to oppose the arrest of the leader of the country's main opposition party.** The demonstration came hours after police stormed the headquarters of the United National Movement and **arrested its chairman, lawmaker Nika Melia**
- Before the police raid, **parliament members named a new Prime Minister, replacing one who opposed arresting Mr. Melia** because of concern it would escalate the country's political crisis. Mr. Melia faces charges of inciting violence during protests in 2019. He had been free on bail. **The new Prime Minister, Irakli Garibashvili, said the politician's arrest was justified.**
- During the October election, the Georgian Dream party, which has **governed Georgia for the last eight years, tallied the largest share of votes at 48%.** But opposition parties refused to recognize the results, claiming the count was manipulated. **Georgian Dream was created by a tycoon who made his fortune in Russia, Bidzina Ivanishvili,** but its popularity has dwindled steadily amid the country's economic problems.

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

Australia passes law making Facebook, Google Pay for News

- **Australia's parliament passed a world-first law to force digital giants such as Facebook Inc. and Google pay local publishers for news content** – a move that may unleash more global regulatory action to limit their power.
- Regulators globally have been closely watching the legislation as they **grapple with the advertising dominance of Facebook and Google, who now face the prospect of similar measures cascading around the world.**
- The Parliament passed the **final amendments to the so-called News Media Bargaining Code** agreed between Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg.

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

Sri Lanka offers to develop new port terminal with India, Japan amid differences

- **Sri Lanka offered to develop a container terminal of Colombo port with investors from India and Japan, almost a month after it cancelled a tripartite agreement signed in 2019 on developing another facility with the two other countries.**
- Caving in to pressure from labour unions, **Sri Lanka decided on February 1 to scrap the agreement signed with India and Japan on developing the East Container Terminal (ECT) of Colombo port.**

- The unions had **opposed a joint venture with Indian and Japanese investors holding a 49% stake**. A meeting of the **cabinet decided to develop the West Container Terminal (WCT) of Colombo port** as a public-private limited company with parties nominated by the Indian and Japanese governments.

SLINEX (Sri Lanka India Naval Exercise) are a series of naval exercises between the Indian Navy and the Sri Lanka Navy. The first ever SLINEX exercise took place in 2005. Sri Lanka is an island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka is separated from the India by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte is the official, administrative capital of Sri Lanka. Colombo is the commercial capital and largest city of Sri Lanka. Gotabaya Rajapaksa is the current President of Sri Lanka. Mahinda Rajapaksa is the Prime Minister. The rupee is the currency of Sri Lanka.

Australia building world's first platypus sanctuary

- **Australian conservationists unveiled plans to build the world's first refuge for the platypus**, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the **duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change**.
- The Taronga Conservation Society Australia and the New South Wales State government said they would **build the specialist facility, mostly ponds and burrows for the semi-aquatic creatures**, at a zoo 391 km (243 miles) from Sydney, by 2022, which could house up to 65 platypuses.
- **Unlike other famous Australian animals such as the koala or kangaroo, the beaver-like platypus is rarely seen in the wild** due to its reclusive nature and highly specific habitat needs. The furry, web-footed animal, along with the echidna, is one of just two egg-laying mammals, and generally lives around small streams and slow-moving rivers in cooler temperatures.

Multiple sclerosis patient sues Austria over health impact of climate change

- **A man in Austria with a temperature-dependent form of multiple sclerosis** is taking his government to court in an effort to force it to do more against climate change.
- The case being filed next month before the **European Court of Human Rights is supported by the environmental group Fridays for Future**, which is helping to crowdfund the legal costs.
- It comes weeks after the Strasbourg-based court said it would continue to **fast-track a case by brought six young Portuguese activists** who argue European governments **aren't cutting greenhouse emissions in line with the requirements of the 2015 Paris climate accord**.
- **The court, whose jurisdiction covers all countries that have ratified the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**, is also hearing a separate case brought by a group of elderly Swiss women.

Austria is a landlocked East Alpine country in the southern part of Central Europe. Vienna is the national capital, largest city, of Austria. Sebastian Kurz has served as **Chancellor of Austria** since January 2020. **Alexander Van der Bellen** is the current President of Austria. **Euro** is the official currency of it.

World's first ice hotel that doesn't melt even in summer

- **Ice Hotel 365 is built in the small village of Jukkasjärvi, in Northern Sweden, 200 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle.**
- **The skeleton of the hotel is made of steel and concrete and is covered with 2,000 square metres of insulation.** The roof has 20-centimetre insulation to protect the ice from melting in summers.

Bangladesh launches national app portal

- **The Government of Bangladesh has launched its national app portal bdapps.com.** The agreement between the ICT division of the government of Bangladesh and the telecom company Robi was signed in Dhaka. Through this agreement, **BDApps will be established as the hub of the ICT division for application developers.**

- Under the agreement, the ICT division will collaborate with bdapps to organise exclusive boot camps and software development events in the country. BDApps is the largest mobile application platform in Bangladesh hosting more than 23,000 apps developed by 12,000 developers.

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

Dubai offers first cultural visa in the world

- **Dubai is a global hub of culture, art and creativity.** The Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum embraced a new system to permit the first cultural visa in the world, a golden visa.
- This initiative will provide a great opportunity to writers, artists, creators and talents across the world. **Dubai cultural visa can act as a bridge between the global cultural talents and an extravagant platform towards recognition and success. This initiative will contribute to elate the cultural economy as well as attract and empower talent from across the world.**

Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the west and south and by Oman to the east and northeast. The land border with Qatar in the Khawr al Udayd area is a source of ongoing dispute.

China to push for building 'Polar Silk Road' in Arctic Ocean

- As the ice-covered parts of the Arctic Ocean melt due to climate change, **China has flagged its interest to take part in building "Polar Silk Road"**, raising prospects for the emergence of a new sea route.
- **China will participate in the pragmatic cooperation on the Arctic and the building of a "Polar Silk Road". Connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Transpolar Sea Route (TSR) will cut across the centre of the Arctic Ocean, passing close to the North Pole. While it could significantly reduce distances for global trade, it remains frozen over for most of the year, making it much harder to traverse than the two Arctic shipping routes currently available – the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage.**

UN General Assembly adopts India's resolution to declare 2023 as International Year of Millets

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed gratitude to all the nations who initiated and co-sponsored the resolution on 'International Year of Millets' at the United Nations.** In a tweet, Mr Modi said, India is honoured to be at the forefront of popularising Millets, whose consumption furthers nutrition, food security and welfare of farmers. **India sponsored UN resolution on International Year of Millets 2023 was adopted by consensus in the United Nations General Assembly.**
- **The 193-member UN General Assembly has unanimously adopted the resolution sponsored by India, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets, aimed at raising awareness about the health benefits of the grain.**

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

Sikh fighter pilot memorial in UK to honour Indians who fought in World Wars

- The design for a sculpture of an early 20th century Sikh fighter pilot, cricketer and golfer from Oxford University has been approved for a new memorial to be erected in the England port city of Southampton in memory of all Indians who fought in the World Wars.
- **Hardit Singh Malik** first arrived in the UK in 1908 as a 14-year-old to Balliol College at the University of Oxford and went on to become a member of the Royal Flying Corps during World War I. As the first Indian and turbaned pilot with a specialised helmet, he became famous as the “Flying Sikh”.
- “As such the statue to the **legendary World War I hero, Hardit Singh Malik, the world’s first Royal Flying Corps (now the Royal Air Force) Sikh, turbaned fighter pilot** will be emblematic for the broader Sikh contributions in the British armed forces of World War I and II, with Malik’s extraordinary accomplishments as a “touchstone” for the whole Sikh community and other of its lesser-known heroes,” notes the One Community Hampshire & Dorset (OCHD) organisation behind the campaign for the memorial, which was approved by the Southampton City Council last year.
- **Sardar Hardit Singh Malik** was an Indian civil servant and diplomat. He was the first Indian High Commissioner to Canada, and then Indian Ambassador to France. He was the first Indian to fly as a pilot with the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War. He also played first-class cricket between 1914 and 1930.

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

Venezuela becomes the first country in the world to issue notes of one million bolivars

- The South American country Venezuela has issued new currency notes of one million bolivars to deal with inflation and the financial crisis. At present, Venezuela’s inflation rate is half the US dollar, or \$ 34, in Indian currency.
- It is also impossible to buy half a liter of petrol in India. Venezuela, once rich and prosperous due to oil wealth, is now suffering from extreme poverty. People are taking bags of money and buying food in polythene packets. So the government has issued large numbers of notes.
- The central bank said the bank would issue Rs 2 lakh and Rs 5 lakh in bolivars. Venezuela currently has 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 Bolivars to control market conditions. The Indian rupee is now valued at 25,569.7 bolivars in Venezuelan currency.

Venezuela is a country on the northern coast of South America. The capital city is the city of Caracas. **Juan Guaido** was acting President of Venezuela, starting the Venezuelan presidential crisis by challenging Nicolás Maduro’s presidency. The bolívar soberano has been the official currency of Venezuela.

United States offers temporary legal residency to Venezuelans

- The United States has announced to offer temporary legal residency to several hundred thousand Venezuelans who fled their country due to economic collapse.
- The White House announced that the US will also review US sanctions intended to isolate the South American nation. Both measures mark a shift from U.S. policy toward Venezuela under President Donald Trump.
- **President Joe Biden’s administration** announced it would grant temporary protected status to Venezuelans already in the United States, allowing an estimated three lakhs 20 thousand people to legally live and work in the country for 18 months.

- **Citizens of 10 countries, totaling about 400,000 people, are in the United States now with temporary protected status. The largest number comes from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti, many with U.S. citizen children and spouses.**

United States of America (USA) is a federal republic composed of 50 states and capital is Washington, D.C., Donald John Trump served as 45th President of the United States. He became the oldest and wealthiest person ever to assume the presidency, the first without prior military or government service, and the fifth to have won the election while losing the popular vote. Joseph Robinette Biden served as the 47th vice president of the United States from 2009 to 2017. In January 2017, Barak Obama awarded Biden the Presidential Medal of Freedom with distinction. He is current and 46th the President of the United States and he is the oldest President of America.

Pakistan PM Imran Khan wins trust vote in National Assembly

- **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan won a trust vote in the National Assembly** amid a boycott call by the Opposition parties, strengthening his government's legitimacy after an embarrassing defeat of the finance minister in the hotly-contested Senate elections.
- **Prime Minister Khan secured 178 votes in the 342-member lower house of Parliament** during a special session convened on the directives of President Arif Alvi. **A total of 172 votes was needed for a simple majority.** The floor test took place without the Opposition as the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) an alliance of 11 parties boycotted the voting.

Pakistan is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Pakistani rupee is the currency of Pakistan. Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi is the 22nd and current Prime Minister of Pakistan and the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Before entering politics, Khan was an international cricketer and captain of the Pakistan national cricket team, which he led to victory in the 1992 Cricket World Cup. Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi is 13th and current President of Pakistan

European Union's 2030 Digital Compass plan

- **The European Union has released its plan called "2030 Digital Compass Plan".** This plan was put forward **after the Covid-19 pandemic exposed the 27-countries** reliance on the key technologies owned by the Chinese and the U.S. companies. The plan will be presented to the Parliament for the final approval.
- The Commission presents a vision, targets and avenues for a **successful digital transformation of Europe by 2030.** This is also critical to achieve the transition towards a climate neutral, circular and resilient economy.
- **The EU's ambition is to be digitally sovereign in an open and interconnected world,** and to pursue digital policies that empower people and businesses to seize a human centred, sustainable and more prosperous digital future. This includes addressing vulnerabilities and dependencies as well as accelerating investment.

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. **The EU has developed an internal single market through a standardised system of laws** that apply in all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one. **A monetary union was established in 1999, coming into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 EU member states** which use the euro currency. **Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician and physician who has been the President of the European Commission since 1 December 2019. Charles Michel is a Belgian politician serving as President of the European Council since 2019.**

France's Space Forces Command conducts first military exercise in space - AsterX2021

- **The French Space Forces Command has begun its first military exercises in space** in a bid to test its ability to defend its satellites. The US Space Force and German space agencies are also taking part in the French exercises.
- **The military drill is part of the French government's strategy to make the country the world's third-largest space power.** Apart from the military exercises in space, France also plans to develop anti-satellite laser weapons. Further, the country also plans to strengthen surveillance capabilities in an area that it believes could become a major theatre of confrontation between powers on Earth.

France is a country primarily located in Western Europe; Paris is the capital and most populous city of France. Emmanuel Macron has been serving as the President of France and ex officio co-prince of Andorra since 14 May 2017. Euro is the currency of it and CFP franc is the currency used in the French overseas collectivities of French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna.

Prime Minister of Ivory Coast Hamed Bakayoko passes away

- **Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Hamed Bakayoko, passed away** in a hospital in Germany. Bakayoko, who was receiving treatment for cancer, breathed his last, just days after his 56th birthday. He was **appointed Prime Minister in July, following the sudden death of his predecessor Amadou Gon Coulibaly.**

Ivory Coast is a country located on the south coast of West Africa. Ivory Coast's political capital is Yamoussoukro in the centre of the country. Patrick Achi has served as Acting Prime Minister of Ivory Coast since 8 March 2021. The West African CFA franc is the currency of eight independent states in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

World's first hydrogen-powered ferry in Norway to run on green gas from Germany

- **Industrial gases firm Linde will supply liquid green hydrogen and related infrastructure to the world's first hydrogen-powered ferry**, a vessel by operator Norled that will transport both cars and passengers in Norway.
- **The liquid hydrogen for the MF Hydra ferry will come from a new 24 MW proton exchange membrane (PEM) electrolyser** Linde is building at the Leuna chemical complex in Germany that will use renewable power from the country to produce the green hydrogen.
- **Bergen-based system integrator Norwegian Electrical Systems (NES) last year announced plans to plant a 3.2MW hydrogen fuel cell onto a large vessel** currently being designed by Havyard Design for the ship owner Havila to cruise Norway's fjords. Cruise ships are among the largest emitters of greenhouse gases on Norway's coasts.

Canada appoints first woman to number two military posts

- **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau saluted the first appointment of a woman to Canada's second-highest military post**, which came amid a shakeup of the top ranks over allegations of sexual misconduct. **Lieutenant-General Frances Allen has been named vice chief of the defense staff.**
- Her nomination follows accusations reported in the **Canadian media and now being probed by military police of inappropriate behaviour and relations with subordinates against former top soldier General Jonathan Vance** -- which he has denied. Vance retired in January before these were made public.

Canada is a country located in the northern part of North America. Canada is the world's second-largest country by total area. Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon. Its capital is Ottawa, and its three largest metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Canadian dollar is the currency of Canada. Justin Pierre James Trudeau is serving as the 23rd and current Prime Minister of Canada since 2015.

China becomes the first country in the world to introduce vaccine passports

- **China has become the first country in the world to roll out vaccine passports or an international vaccine health certificate.** The certificate will be recognised by other countries soon to ease global travelling.
- **The new passport will show a complete detail of a traveller's Coronavirus history.** The passport will also have nucleic acid and antibody test results. **China launched a WeChat programme wherein citizens can register for the certificate.**
- **Besides China, countries such as Denmark and Sweden are also developing their own health passports.** In Britain, around 200000 people have signed a petition to introduce a vaccine certificate

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line.

Israel, Greece, Cyprus hold naval drill as they deepen ties

- The Israeli military has conducted a joint naval exercise with Greece and Cyprus, in the latest sign of increased cooperation among three countries that increasingly view Turkey as a rival in the Mediterranean Sea. It said the "Noble Dina" exercise, which was led by Israel and also included France, covered "anti-submarine procedures, search and rescue scenarios, and a scenario simulating battle between ships."
- Israel, Greece and Cyprus have taken a number of steps in recent months to cement ties, including advancing plans to build a 2,000 megawatt undersea electricity cable and a 1,900-kilometer (1,300-mile) undersea gas pipeline. The three countries' defense ministers met in November and agreed to increase military cooperation.
- Greece and Cyprus are embroiled in a dispute with Turkey, which has sent gas prospecting vessels into waters claimed by Greece and drilling ships into an area where Cyprus claims exclusive rights. The tension brought NATO allies Greece and Turkey close to open conflict last year, but tensions have eased since then.
- Israel and Turkey were once close allies but had a major falling-out in 2010, when 10 Turkish citizens were killed by Israeli forces as a Turkish-led flotilla tried to break Israel's blockade on the Gaza Strip. The two countries agreed to a US-brokered reconciliation agreement in 2016, but ties broke down two years later over a US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

UK charity launches world's first LGBT+ climate fund

- A British charity launched the world's first fund to support LGBT+ people whose vulnerability to climate change is worsened by poverty and discrimination.
- The LGBTQI Climate Fund will give up to 5,000 pounds (\$6,987) to campaigners advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in climate-related emergencies.

Libyan parliament votes to approve interim unity government

- In Libya, the parliament has voted to approve an interim unity government to lead the war-ravaged nation to December elections.
- According to media reports, after two days of intense debate, the parliament approved the cabinet of interim Prime Minister Abdelhamid Dbeibah, with 121 of the 132 lawmakers present voting in support.
- The transitional government is to lead the country through elections, scheduled for December 24. Oil-rich Libya was plunged into chaos after a 2011 uprising toppled and killed longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi.

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

Japan's Prime Minister Suga to become first foreign leader to visit Biden

- Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will be travelling to the United States to meet US President Joe Biden. Suga will become the first foreign leader to meet the newly-elected US President face-to-face.
- Suga will go to the U.S. in the first half of April and will become the first foreign leader to meet face-to-face with President Biden, Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato told. The leaders' meeting is intended to show their strong commitment to a free and fair Indo-Pacific region, Kato said.

Naruhito is the Emperor of Japan. He acceded to the Chrysanthemum Throne on 1 May 2019, beginning the Reiwa era, following the abdication of his father, Emperor Akihito, on 30 April 2019. He is the 126th monarch according to Japan's traditional order of succession. Tokyo is the capital city of Japan and yen is the official currency of Japan and it is the third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the United States dollar and the euro.

India, Kuwait to establish Joint Commission to enhance ties

- India and Kuwait have decided to establish a Joint Commission to enhance and deepen the ties of fraternity and friendship and support ways of cooperation in all fields.
- The Joint Commission will be charged with formulating the required basis to strengthen the relations between the two countries, particularly in the fields of energy, trade, economy, investment, and human resources. It will be co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar and his Kuwait counterpart.

Kuwait is a country in Western Asia. Situated in the northern edge of Eastern Arabia at the tip of the Persian Gulf, it borders Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south. As of 2016, Kuwait has a population of 4.5 million people: 1.3 million are Kuwaitis and 3.2 million are expatriates. Expatriates account for approximately 70% of the population. Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is the Crown Prince of Kuwait. Aged 80 years, he is the oldest Crown Prince in the world. The Kuwaiti dinar is the currency of Kuwait.

Britain's cabinet office to set up a "second flagship Head Quarter" in Glasgow

- Britain's cabinet office will set up a "second flagship Head Quarter" in Glasgow as the government plans to move some of its operations to Scotland. The decision comes in wake of growing support for Scottish independence in recent times. Ties between Scotland and the rest of Britain have been badly strained by a much-criticised COVID-19 pandemic response and Brexit, which a majority in Scotland opposed.
- Scottish nationalists are pushing for an independence referendum to be held after Scottish parliament election in May, but British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said such votes should happen only once in a generation. In a referendum in 2014, Scots had voted 55%-45% to remain in the United Kingdom.
- Brexit was the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) at the end of 31 January 2020 CET. To date, the UK is the first and only country formally to leave the EU, after 47 years of being a member state within the bloc, after having first joined its predecessor, the European Communities (EC), on 1 January 1973. It continued to participate in the European Union Customs Union and European Single Market during a transition period that ended on 31 December 2020.

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

Abu Dhabi's Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities launches World's First Bachelor Of Tolerance And Coexistence

- The Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu Dhabi, UAE, has launched the world's first Bachelor of Tolerance and Coexistence, to spread a culture of human fraternity and contribute to sustainable social development.
- The degree aims to create graduates with a high level of academic knowledge and practical skills that enable them to spread a culture of tolerance and coexistence. It includes courses that promote these values, as well as covering the role of media in encouraging a cohesive society, comparative religion and Islam.

- The new bachelor's degree was adopted at the first meeting of the MBZUH Board of Trustees in January and aims to achieve the university's vision of excellence and leadership, and to establish Abu Dhabi as the capital of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and civilized dialogue.
- It follows the United Nations' declaration of 4th February to be International Day of Human Fraternity, in recognition of the historic meeting between Pope Francis and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed el-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi on this date in 2019. During the meeting, the two religious leaders signed the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.
- MBZUH, launched in November 2020, is a first-of-its-kind higher education institution, offering programmes in social studies, humanities and philosophy for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.

Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the west and south and by Oman to the east and northeast. The land border with Qatar in the Khawr al Udayd area is a source of ongoing dispute.

Bolivia's former President Jeanine Anez sent to four month jail term

- Bolivia's former President Jeanine Anez was sent to four month jail term. Investigators are probing allegations that she helped in a coup that led to the removal of longtime leader Evo Morales from power in 2019.
- The arrest of the conservative interim leader, who was in power for less than a year after the ouster of leftist Morales, has sparked sharp criticism from human rights groups and the Organization of American States (OAS), who say judicial channels are being abused for political ends.

Bolivia is a landlocked country located in western-central South America. The constitutional capital is Sucre, while the seat of government and executive capital is La Paz. The sovereign state of Bolivia is a constitutionally unitary state, divided into nine departments. The boliviano is the currency of Bolivia. Luis Arce Catacora is serving as the current President of Bolivia since 2020.

Chinese capital faces largest sandstorm in a decade

- China's capital Beijing is facing a heavy sandstorm as the city was covered with a thick brown dust cover due to heavy winds blowing in from northern parts of China, reducing visibility to less than 1,000 meters.
- The China Meteorological Administration announced a yellow, saying that the sandstorms had spread from Inner Mongolia into the provinces of Gansu, Shanxi and Hebei, which surrounds Beijing. The meteorological agency called it the "the strongest sandstorm in the past decade" which has reached the level of a strong storm which has smothered the capital and other northern Chinese regions.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line.

Italy signs International Solar Alliance under amended ISA Framework Agreement

- Italy signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement. The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.

- The External Affairs Ministry said, **the Framework Agreement was signed by Italy’s Ambassador, Vincenzo De Luca. The signed copies of the Agreement were received by Additional Secretary (ER), as the representative of External Affairs Ministry, which is the depositary of ISA Framework Agreement.**

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

EU adopts ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ to counter China’s growing influence in Europe

- As China’s increasing aggressiveness to undermine European unity through a ‘divide and rule’ policy continues, the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries have responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing’s influence, known as the ‘Sinatra Doctrine’.
- The doctrine would be based on two pillars: continuing cooperation with China in regards to address global challenges such as climate change, combating COVID-19 and regional conflicts, while also strengthening the European Union’s (EU) strategic sovereignty by protecting technological sectors of its economy, according to EU Reporter. This ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ is being seen by scholars as a threat and a blowback to China’s growing influence in the CEE.

The **European Union (EU)** is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. The EU has developed an internal single market through a standardised system of laws that apply in all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one. A **monetary union** was established in 1999, coming into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 EU member states which use the euro currency. Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician and physician who has been the **President of the European Commission** since 1 December 2019. Charles Michel is a Belgian politician serving as **President of the European Council** since 2019.

Tanzania’s ‘Bulldozer’ president and Covid-19 sceptic dies at 61

- **Tanzania’s President John Magufuli, admired by followers for his hostility to corruption and waste but regarded by foes as an irascible authoritarian intolerant of dissent and sceptical about COVID-19, has died.**
- He was nicknamed “The Bulldozer” for his fondness for massive public works and a reputation for pushing through policies despite opposition – a hard-charging leadership style that won support from many Tanzanians.

Tanzania is a country in East Africa within the African Great Lakes region. Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa’s highest mountain, is in northeastern Tanzania. Dodoma is the national capital of Tanzania. The shilingi is the currency of Tanzania. Samia Suluhu Hassan is serving as the current President of Tanzania.

India ranks 139 out of 149 countries in World Happiness Report

- **India has been ranked 139, out of 149 countries evaluated, in the World Happiness Report 2021, which has been collated slightly differently due to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.**
- The annual report, released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, measures subjective well-being by relying on three main indicators: life evaluations, positive emotions, and negative emotions.
- To measure life evaluations, the Gallup World Poll, which remains the principal source of data for the report, asks people to evaluate their current life using the image of a ladder, with the best possible life for them as a 10 and worst possible as a 0.
- According to the report, life evaluations provide the most informative measure for international comparisons because they capture the quality of life “in a more complete and stable way than emotional reports based on daily experiences.”

- For the third year in a row, Finland has placed at the top of the list as the happiest country in the world, with Denmark coming in second, followed by Switzerland, which pushed Norway out of the top three this year.
- Finland was able to defend its title of the world's happiest country as the overall rankings, according to the report, "remained very similar to last year." The other countries that scored high on the rankings include Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, and the Netherlands. The United States has been ranked 19, five spots behind Canada, while people in Afghanistan remained the least happy. In the World Happiness Report 2020, India was ranked 144 out of 156 countries surveyed.
- Besides the happiest countries, the World Happiness Report also looked at the places where people are the unhappiest. This year, Afghanistan was named the unhappiest place in the world, followed by South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

The World Happiness Report is an annual survey by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations. It looks at the state of global happiness in 156 countries, ranking countries using the Gallup World Poll and six factors: levels of GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom and corruption income. The World Happiness Report was originally launched in 2012.

In world's first, thieves in UK to wear GPS tags to control crimes

- In a first such experiment across the world, burglars, thieves and robbers in the UK will be made to wear GPS tags in a bid to stop them from recommitting any offence.
- According to the new rules, convicts who have been jailed for a year or more will be tied up with a GPS tag on release, allowing authorities to track their movements 24/7.
- As over half of those convicted of theft and burglary recommit a crime within a year and about 80 per cent of cases resulting in no suspect being identified, the Ministry of Justice said the new rules will add to police's arsenal extra intelligence to nab such people.

Tanzania's Samia Suluhu Hassan sworn in as first female President

- Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as Tanzania's first female President after the sudden death of John Magufuli from an illness shrouded in mystery.
- Under the constitution, Hassan will serve the remainder of Magufuli's second five-year term, which does not expire until 2025. She is the only other current serving female head of state in Africa alongside Ethiopia's President Sahle-Work Zewde, whose role is mainly ceremonial.
- A stalwart in the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), she was named Magufuli's running mate in the 2015 presidential campaign.

South Africa has world's most dangerous roads; India in fourth place: Study

- South Africa has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in while India came in at fourth place, according to a research study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi.
- Among the list of 56 countries in the study, Thailand came in second position and the US took up third spot. The safest roads in the world can be found in Norway, with its Scandinavian neighbour Sweden having the third safest roads while Japan took second place, according to the study.
- These factors included estimates on the number of road traffic deaths per 100,000 population; the percentage of car occupants who use a seat-belt when travelling in the front of a vehicle; and the proportion of road traffic deaths which have been attributed to alcohol consumption over the national legal limit. These estimates were based on the World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory data repository.

Zutobi is an international driver's education company with driving courses in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, and Germany and France. The courses are tailored to the specific traffic laws and regulations in each country or state.

EU joins India's disaster resilient infrastructure initiative

- The 27-member European Union has joined India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative, following its endorsement of the charter of the CDRI earlier.
- Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019 at the UN Climate Change Summit, the CDRI is an international platform involving public and private sector, aiming to promote resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks while supporting sustainable development.

The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is an international coalition of countries, United Nations (UN) agencies, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and academic institutions, that aims to promote disaster-resilient infrastructure. It was launched by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019. CDRI was first proposed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 2016 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. Modi's "experience in dealing with the aftermath of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake" as the Chief Minister led him to the idea.

Operation Sankalp: Indian Navy undertakes Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force

- Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.
- "Enhancing interoperability & strengthening bilateral Maritime cooperation, Reassuring Diaspora & merchant shipping INS Talwar Mission Deployed for Op Sankalp, undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf on 17 Mar 2021."
- PASSEXs are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other's ports or during a rendezvous at sea. Maritime Security Operations, code-named Op Sankalp was initiated in the Gulf region on June 19, 2019, in the aftermath of the attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman.

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

Joe Biden invites PM Modi and top world leaders to US-hosted virtual summit on climate

- President Joe Biden has invited 40 world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to a US-hosted virtual summit on climate to underscore the urgency and the economic benefits of stronger climate action.
- Biden will host a two-day climate summit of world leaders starting on Earth Day, April 22, in which he will outline the US goal for reductions of carbon emissions by 2030 – known as the nationally determined contribution under the historic Paris accord.
- The White House said a key objective of both the Leaders' Summit and the COP26 will be to catalyse efforts to keep limiting warming 1.5 degree Celsius' goal within reach.
- The White House said a total of 40 world leaders, including Prime Minister Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin, were invited to the conference, which will be live streamed to the public. The summit will reconvene the US-led Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, which brings together 17 countries responsible for approximately 80 per cent of global emissions and global GDP.

Australian authorities declare natural disaster in flood affected areas of New South Wales

- In Australia, the government has declared a natural disaster in large swaths of New South Wales as heavy rains continue to batter the state. The Australian authorities have also ordered the people in parts of Sydney's northwest to flee their houses in the middle as heavy rains continued to batter the east coast, triggering floods throughout the region.

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

US, Belgium, France and Japan hold Mideast naval exercise

- The US Navy will hold a major naval exercise alongside Belgium, France and Japan in the Mideast amid tensions over Iran's nuclear programme in the region.
- The Group Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise will see ships from the four countries conduct drills in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. Ships involved include the French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, as well as the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island. The Belgian frigate HNLMS Leopold I and the Japanese destroyer JS Ariake also will take part, as well as aircraft from the four nations.
- The drill comes as Iran has abandoned all limits of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers in the wake of then-President Donald Trump's 2018 decision to unilaterally withdraw from the accord.
- President Joe Biden has expressed a desire to return to the deal if Iran honours the deal's limits on its nuclear programme. However, tensions remain high after militias in Iraq — likely backed by Iran — continue to target American interests. Biden launched an airstrike just over the border into Syria in retaliation, joining every American President from Ronald Reagan onward who has ordered a bombardment of countries in the Middle East.

World's first ship tunnel to be built under Norwegian mountains

- Norway has got the go-ahead to construct what's being billed as the world's first ship tunnel, designed to help vessels navigate the treacherous Stadhavet Sea.
- First announced a few years ago by the Norwegian Coastal Administration, this mile-long, 118-foot-wide tunnel will burrow through the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway.
- Building this engineering marvel will cost somewhere in the region of 2.8 billion Norwegian kroner (\$330 million) and take between three to four years, with construction due to commence in 2022.

Norway is a Nordic country in Northern Europe whose mainland territory comprises the western and northernmost portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Oslo is the capital and most populous city of Norway. Harald V of the House of Glucksburg is the current King of Norway. Erna Solberg has been Prime Minister since 2013. The krone is the currency of Norway and its dependent territories.

Dubai International (DXB) Partners with Magzter to become World's First "Smart Reading Airport"

- Customers flying through Dubai International (DXB) now have free access to Magzter's collection of more than 7,000 leading magazines, newspapers, journals and comics, making DXB the world's first 'smart reading airport'.
- A fully contactless and paperless digital experience - using geo-fencing satellite technology - the Magzter partnership enables customers travelling through DXB to download the latest issues of world-renowned publications on their own devices, to read in the airport and onboard their flights. DXB's 'Smart Reading Zone' can also be accessed by logging onto the airport's super-fast, free wifi network, which acts as a gateway to Magzter's extensive collection of publications.
- Eugene Barry, Dubai Airports' Executive Vice President - Commercial, commented, "We're delighted to partner with Magzter to offer another world-class digital experience at DXB, at a time when travellers are seeking minimum contact, customised choices and ultra-convenience."

Indo-Pacific outreach: India conducts maiden joint naval patrolling with Madagascar

- In a first, the navies of India and Madagascar undertook joint patrolling of Madagascar's EEZ as New Delhi sought to expand its defence footprints in the Western Indian Ocean where it has been a traditional net security provider.
- Indian Navy's INS Shardul and Malagasy Naval Ship Trozona undertook Joint Patrol of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone and participated in PASSEX. This outreach is part of India's efforts to establish stability in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The first ever Joint Patrol between the navies of India and Madagascar reflect the growing defence ties between the two Indian Ocean neighbours aimed at the common objective of ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region.

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

In a first, Indian Navy to participate in French naval exercise La Perouse, Quad allies to join

- The Indian Navy will be part of a French naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal next month. The participating nations also include the other Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) member countries – Australia, Japan and the United States of America (USA).
- This is the first time that the Indian Navy will be part of the France-led war game 'La Perouse'. Until now, India was not invited for the French naval exercise.
- After the Malabar Exercise in November last year, during which the navies of India, the US and Japan got together with Australia as the new addition, India's inclusion in the France-led joint naval drill is a significant step.
- This will be followed by another important naval exercise 'Varuna', which takes place annually between India and France. This time it will also include the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- India's maritime diplomacy involves naval exercises with several friendly countries, keeping in mind China's increasing influence in the Indian Ocean region. The inclusion of more navies in such exercises is also a response to Chinese aggression in international waters and its increasing foray into the region.
- As part of maritime cooperation, the Indian and Vietnamese navies carried out a passage exercise in the South China Sea in December 2020.
- The Indian Navy also carried out war games with the navies of Singapore and Thailand in the Andaman Sea, soon after the Malabar Exercise.
- As part of the Indian government's 'Neighbourhood First' vision, the Indian Navy undertook joint exclusive economic zone surveillance with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius, as well as coordinated patrols (CORPATs) with Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia. The Indian Navy has participated in 13 bilateral and multilateral exercises so far this year.

India improves US Chamber's IP to 40th place

- India slipped to 40th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which analyses the IP climate in 53 global economies, this year, according to a report of US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center.
- Last year India was ranked at 36th position out of 50 countries. The US, the UK, Sweden, France and Germany remained the top five economies on the intellectual property index in 2019 retaining their spots from the last year.

- “Since the release of the 2016 National IPR Policy, the Government of India has made a focused effort to support investments in innovation and creativity through increasingly robust IP protection and enforcement,” said Patrick Kilbride, Senior Vice President for the Global Innovation Policy Center.
- “The overall global IP environment improved in 2020, with positive score increases in 32 of the 53 economies measured by the IP Index. India ranked 40th in 2020, scoring 38.4 out of 100 on a set of 50 intellectual property-related indicators,” said a statement.

Taiwan to ration water for 1 million households, tech hub unaffected

- Taiwan will from next month ration water for more than one million households in the centre of the island because of a drought but the technology hub of Hsinchu will not be affected.
- Sub-tropical Taiwan is experiencing its worst drought in half a century, after rain-soaking typhoons failed to make landfall last year, with shortages most severe across a swathe of western Taiwan, where most people live.
- From April 4, water supplies in parts of Taichung and Miaoli would be cut for two days every week, with water tankers being sent out to supply residents as needed.
- Hsinchu, home to companies like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co Ltd (TSMC), the world’s largest contract chip manufacturer with clients including Apple Inc and Qualcomm Inc, would not be affected.

Taiwan, officially the Republic of China (ROC) is a country in East Asia. Neighbouring countries include the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to the northwest, Japan to the northeast, and the Philippines to the south. Taipei is the capital city. Tsai Ing-wen is serving as the seventh President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), since 2016. New Taiwan dollar is the official currency used in Taiwan.

Republic of Congo President Sassou N’Guesso declared winner

- Election officials in Republic of Congo declared President Denis Sassou N’Guesso the winner of an election, further extending his presidency of more than 36 years in office. The election was marked by the death of his main opponent from Covid-19.
- Sassou N’Guesso received 88.5% of ballots cast, according to official results. The top opposition candidate whose death was announced the day after the election, Guy Brice Parfait Kolelas, won 7.8% of the vote. The remaining ballots were split among the five other contenders.
- One of those candidates, Mathias Dzon, has said he plans to appeal to the Constitutional Court to cancel the official results, citing an article of the constitution “which provides for the cancellation of the ballot when a candidate dies or is unable to vote.”

Republic of the Congo is a country located in the western coast of Central Africa. Brazzaville is the capital and largest city of the Republic of the Congo. Clement Mouamba has been Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo since 2016. Central African CFA franc is the currency of six independent states in Central Africa: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

IRDAI sets up panel to relook guidelines on information, cybersecurity

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a working group committee to relook its information and security guidelines amid the exponential increase in cyberattacks across the globe in the wake of covid-19. “The economic situation owing to Covid-19 pandemic has seen an exponential increase in cyber-attacks across the globe and in particular, the financial sector.
- The 14-member committee will be headed by Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) chairman Janakiram. AR Nithiyantham, CGM-IT, Irdai will be member convenor of the Working Group. The committee has to submit its report in two months.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is an autonomous, statutory body tasked with regulating and promoting the insurance and re-insurance industries in India. It was constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999, an Act of Parliament passed by the Government of India. The agency’s headquarters are in Hyderabad, Telangana, where it moved from Delhi in 2001. IRDAI is a 10-member body including the chairman, five full-time and four part-time members appointed by the government of India. Dr. Subhash C. Khuntia assumed office of Chairman, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India in May 2018.

India’s first machine tool park ready for investors in Karnataka

- Karnataka, which is home to India’s first Aerospace SEZ, electronics city and several IT parks, is now ready with India’s first integrated machine tool park.
- The park, spread over 530 acres at Vasanthnarasapura, about 90 kms from Bengaluru, is developed under the scheme of Enhancement of Competitiveness in Indian Capital Goods Sector (ECICGS), jointly by the state government and the Department of Heavy Industries, Government of India.
- The Indian Machine Tools Manufacturers Association (IMTMA) has provided the technical assistance to the country’s biggest machine tool park which is ready for occupation. Both the state and central governments have set up a special purpose vehicle named Tumakuru Machine Tool Park (TMTP) to develop the new industrial cluster.

With 209 billionaires, India ranks third in 10th Hurun Global Rich List 2021

- India climbed up to third spot in the Hurun Global Rich List 2021 with 209 billionaires – 40 more than last year – with Mukesh Ambani seeing his wealth up 24 per cent to 83 billion dollars (about Rs. six lakh crore) on the back of a surge in value of energy and telecom giant Reliance.
- Gautam Adani and family saw his wealth almost double to 32 billion on the back of Adani Green Energy growing to a 20 billion valuation. Shiv Nadar & family saw his wealth rise to 27 billion dollars, up 10 billion dollars, backed by a 66 per cent increase in the share price of the software and services giant HCL.
- N R Narayana Murthy was up 35 per cent to 3.1 billion dollars. His son-in-law Rishi Sunak is the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, the most powerful person in British government after the Prime Minister.

Pankaj Munjal and family of cycle manufacturer Hero Cycles made to the list for the first time with 1.2 billion dollars on the back of surging e-bike demand in India.

India urges WTO members to reach consensus on TRIPS waiver proposal

- **India has urged WTO members to reach consensus on a proposal on waiver of certain provisions in a multilateral agreement on intellectual property to deal with COVID-19 crisis**, stating that one cannot continue to engage in endless discussions when millions of lives are lost to the pandemic.
- In October 2020, **India and South Africa submitted a proposal suggesting a waiver for all WTO members on the implementation, application and enforcement of certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement in relation to the prevention, containment or treatment of COVID-19.**
- The agreement on **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPS** came into effect in **January 1995**. It is a **multilateral agreement on intellectual property (IP) rights** such as **copyright, industrial designs, patents and protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets.**

World Trade Organization (WTO) is an **intergovernmental organization that regulates and facilitates international trade between nations**. It **officially commenced operations on 1 January 1995, pursuant to the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement**, thus replacing the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)** that had been established in 1948. The **WTO is the world's largest international economic organization, with 164 member states representing over 96% of global trade and global GDP**. The **WTO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**. **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is a Nigerian-American economist and international development expert who has served since March 1, 2021 as Director-General of the World Trade Organization**. She is the **first woman and the first African to hold the office**.

MCX signs MoUs with NSE, India INX, NSDL and CDSL

- **Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with National Stock Exchange of India (NSE), India INX International Exchange (IFSC) (India INX), National Securities Depository (NSDL) and Central Depository Services (India) (CDSL) for setting up Market Infrastructure Institutions comprising of International Bullion Exchange, Clearing Corporation and Depository at Gujarat International Financial Trade (GIFT) City in lines with the Government of India objective to make India a price setter in bullion through GIFT International Finance Service Centre (IFSC) and in accordance with the International Financial Services Centres Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations, 2020 and other applicable laws.**

The Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX), India's first listed exchange, is a state-of-the-art, commodity derivatives exchange that facilitates online trading of commodity derivatives transactions, thereby providing a platform for price discovery and risk management. The Exchange, which started operations in November 2003, operates under the regulatory framework of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). It was established in 2003 and is based in Mumbai. It is India's largest commodity derivatives exchange.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announces Project Development Cell for Biotechnology

- **Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced Project Development Cell for Biotechnology**. Mr. Goyal made this announcement in **Global Bio-India 2021 conclave**, a three-day event **focusing on different aspects of biotechnology which has been organized by DBT-BIRAC**.
- The Minister added that we should extend our support to the start-ups to implement their ideas at the ground level to become commercially viable. **Mr. Goyal also released Indian Bio-economy Report by ABLE, and Biotech Investment Potential for Indian States Report by IFC.**

Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently taking charge as Minister of Railways, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016.

Singapore top source of FDI in Apr-Dec into India

- Singapore was the top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India in the first nine months of FY21 at \$15.7 billion, followed by the US at \$12.82 billion with Mauritius at the third position at \$3.47 billion.
- Gujarat garnered the highest share of FDI in the period at \$21.23 billion followed by Maharashtra at \$13.63 billion. India's high foreign inflows come at a time when the global FDI collapsed in 2020, falling 42% to an estimated \$859 billion from \$1.5 trillion in 2019, according to UNCTAD. Such a low level was last seen in the 1990s and is more than 30% below the investment trough that followed the 2008-2009 global financial crisis, the intergovernmental body said earlier this year.
- Computer software and hardware was the biggest gainer and garnered FDI worth \$24.38 billion in the April-December period of FY21. Construction witnessed the second largest FDI inflows at \$7.14 billion. Services sector that includes banking, financial and insurance, drew \$3.85 billion of FDI during the period. FDI equity inflows were \$21.46 billion in the quarter ended December 31, 2020 with October receiving the lowest inflows at \$5.33 billion in the quarter.

'FDI' or 'Foreign Direct Investment' means investment through capital instruments by a person resident outside India –in an unlisted Indian company or in ten per cent or more of the post-issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company. In India, foreign investment can be made mainly under two routes: **Automatic Route:** Under the Automatic Route, the non-resident investor or the Indian company does not require any approval from Government of India for the investment. **Reserve Bank of India is in charge of Automatic Route. Government Approval Route:** Under the Government Approval Route, prior to investment, approval from the Government of India is required. A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country.

India, 17 countries face U.S. anti-dumping tax

- The U.S. Department of Commerce is preparing to tax aluminium sheet exporters from 18 countries after determining that they had benefited from subsidies and dumping. The US International Trade Commission (ITC), an independent body, must approve the final decision by April 15 to impose anti-dumping or countervailing duties, a department statement said.
- The investigation, launched under the Donald Trump administration, had been requested by nearly a dozen U.S. aluminium alloy manufacturers, including Arconic and Aleris Rolled products, which felt they were being harmed by competing imports at lower prices.
- President Joe Biden's administration determined that imports from Germany in particular (\$287 million in 2019) benefited from dumping ranging from 40% to 242%.
- The same is true for aluminium alloy sheets from Bahrain (\$241 million), which the administration said benefited from pricing below the cost of production or the local market of 83%. Imports from India (\$123 million in 2019) have benefited from subsidies for 35% to 89%, according to the U.S. investigation.

An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value. Dumping is a process wherein a company exports a product at a price that is significantly lower than the price it normally charges in its home (or its domestic) market.

UAE's first independent digital banking platform launched

- The first independent digital banking platform in the United Arab Emirates launched a neobank hoping to become a leader in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.
- Dubai-based YAP does not have a banking licence itself but has partnered with RAK Bank which provides international bank account numbers for YAP users and secures their funds under its own banking licence.
- YAP, like other neobanks which do not have physical branches, does not offer traditional banking services like loans and mortgages, but offers spending and budgeting analytics, peer-to-peer payments and remittances services and bill payments.

Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the west and south and by Oman to the east and northeast. The land border with Qatar in the Khawr al Udayd area is a source of ongoing dispute.

Government directs vehicle manufacturers to fit airbag for person occupying front seat other than the driver

- Government has made it mandatory for vehicle manufacturers to fit airbag for the person occupying the front seat other than the driver. Road Transport and Highways Ministry said that it is applicable on vehicles manufactured on and after 1st April this year in case of new models and 31st August, 2021 in case of existing models.
- Absence of airbags for the front passenger's seat puts the occupant at high risk in case of a severe accident. The Ministry has issued Gazette notification in this regard. This has been mandated as an important safety feature and is also based on suggestions of Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety.

WCD Ministry signs agreement with Invest India in New Delhi to enhance cooperation

- Union Ministry of Women and Child Development signed an agreement with Invest India in New Delhi to enhance cooperation. The aim of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to enhance co-operation in the thematic areas of Nutrition, Child Protection and Development, Women Empowerment and convergent capacity building in mission mode.
- To formulate, design and conduct strategic research for the Ministry, DRISHTI under Invest India will conduct input and output analysis research, and other research as per requirement including coordinating with research agencies for primary, secondary and tertiary research.
- Invest India is the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India and acts as the single first point of reference for investors in the country.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development, a branch of the Government of India, is an apex body for formulation and administration of the rules and regulations and laws relating to women and child development in India. The current minister for the Ministry of Women and Child Development is Smriti Irani having held the portfolio since 31 May 2019. She is a Member of Parliament in the Lok Sabha, representing Amethi.

UN report shows close to 931 million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019

- An estimated 931 million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019, enough to circle the Earth seven times, according to a UN report which said that household food waste in India is about 68.7 million tonnes a year.
- The Food Waste Index Report 2021, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP, said that around 931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019, sixty-one per cent of which came from households, 26 per cent from food service and 13 per cent from retail.
- In India, the household food waste estimate is 50 kg per capita per year, or 68,760,163 tonnes a year. The household food waste estimate in the US is 59 kg per capita per year, or 19,359,951 tonnes a year, while for China these estimates are 64 kg per capita per year or 91,646,213 tonnes a year.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is responsible for coordinating responses to environmental issues within the United Nations system. It was established by Maurice Strong, its first director, after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972. As a member of the United Nations Development Group, UNEP aims to help the world meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Headquarters were established in Nairobi, Kenya.

APEDA launches its first virtual trade fair to boost export of agricultural, processed food products

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority launched its first virtual trade fair to boost export of agricultural and processed food products.
- The fair with a theme ‘India Rice and Agro Commodity’, will focus on showcasing the exports potential of various agricultural commodities. Importers as well as exporters will be key participants of the VTF. The potential buyers or importers and visitors will get to explore a wide range of food products presented by the exporters through this virtual fair.
- In the fair, basmati rice, non-basmati rice, millets, wheat, maize, groundnut and coarse grains have been displayed. **266 Indian and international buyers from various countries have registered for the virtual fair.**

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is an Apex-Export Trade Promotion Active government body set up by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India under the Agriculture and Processed Food products Export Development Authority. The Act was passed by Parliament in December 1985. It was formed and came into effect from 13 February 1986.

Economic Freedom Index: Singapore ranks First, India 26th in Asia-Pacific

- Singapore topped the global ranking for the second year in a row in the latest Economic Freedom Index published last week by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation.
- Singapore increased its overall score by 0.3 points to 89.7 primarily due to an improvement in the score for government spending. Singapore’s score is well-above the regional and world averages.
- Rounding up the global top five are New Zealand in second place with 83.9 points, Australia, third (82.4 points), Switzerland in fourth with 81.9 points and Ireland (81.4 points).
- As for the major economies, the United Kingdom is 7th (78.4 points) United States is ranked 20th with a score of 74.8 points, Japan 23rd (74.1 points), Germany is 29th (72.5 points) and China is number 107 scoring 58.4 points.
- This is the first time the index has been published since the COVID-19 pandemic overturned lives as well as global economies and the scoring reflects to a small extent how governments have responded to the health crisis. 184 countries were covered in the study this time and the period of study is July 2019 to June 2020.
- In the 2021 Index, India came in around the middle of the pack among Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26th out of 40 countries, scoring 56.5 points. Globally, the Foundation rates India’s economy as the 121st freest.

Bengaluru airport launches India’s first dedicated express cargo terminal

- The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru now has India’s first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers. The two lakh square feet built to suit facility will be operated by Express Industry Council of India.
- The new facility will enable Bengaluru Airport to process 150,000 Metric Tonnes annually, taking the Airport’s overall annual cargo capacity to 720,000 MT, from the existing 570,000 MT.

India 5th most attractive growth destination after UK: PwC survey

- India has emerged as the fifth most attractive growth destination, slipping one position after being surpassed by the United Kingdom, according to a global survey of CEOs.
- The United States is the number one market that CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) are looking to in terms of growth over the next 12 months and China is at the second spot. The findings are part of leading consultancy PwC’s 24th Annual Global CEO Survey that covered 5,050 CEOs in 100 countries and territories, including India.
- “At 17 %, Germany holds on to its number three spot on the list of growth destinations, while the UK, post-Brexit, moves up to number four (11%), surpassing India (8%). Japan also rises up the ranking to become the sixth most attractive growth destination, overtaking Australia which held that position last year,” as per the survey.

Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 introduced in Rajya Sabha

- The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeking increase in the FDI limit to 74 per cent in the domestic Insurance Companies was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the bill which aims at amending the Insurance Act, 1938. The FDI limit in the Indian Insurance companies at the moment stands at 49 per cent.
- The Union Finance Minister had already made the proposal to enhance the FDI limit in the sector in her General Budget for Financial year 2021-22. The legislation seeks to achieve the objective of Government's Foreign Direct Investment Policy of supplementing domestic long-term capital, technology and skills for the growth of the economy and the insurance sector, thereby enhancing insurance penetration and social protection.

Insurance in India refers to the market for insurance in India which covers both the public and private sector organisations. It is listed in the Constitution of India in the Seventh Schedule as a Union List subject, meaning it can only be legislated by the Central Government only. The insurance sector has gone through a number of phases by allowing private companies to solicit insurance and also allowing foreign direct investment. India allowed private companies in insurance sector in 2000, setting a limit on FDI to 26%, which was increased to 49% in 2014. Since the privatisation in 2001, the largest life-insurance company in India, Life Insurance Corporation of India has seen its market share slowly slipping to private giants like HDFC Life, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance and SBI Life Insurance Company.

Nazara to become first gaming firm to list on Indian exchanges

- Mumbai-headquartered Nazara Technologies became the first gaming company to list its shares on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), in the world's second-most populous country. Founded by Nitish Mittersain in 1999, the diversified gaming and sports media platform counts marquee Indian investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, IIFL Special Opportunities Fund, Turtle Entertainment Gmbh, Seedfund2 International, and Good Game Investment Trust as its key backers. Nazara was incorporated over two decades ago in 1999.

Government of India to launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors

- Government of India will soon launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
- In order to further strengthen efforts to promote domestic investments, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is in the process of finalising the 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' digital portal. The portal is in testing phase and the final version will be ready for launch by 15th May this year. The webpage will also be available in regional languages and mobile App in due course.

In world-first trial, Japan-Australia venture starts producing hydrogen from dirty coal

- A Japanese-Australian venture has begun producing hydrogen from brown coal in a A\$500 million (\$390 million) pilot project that aims to show liquefied hydrogen can be produced commercially and exported safely overseas. The plan is to create the first international supply chain for liquefied hydrogen and the next big step will be to ship a cargo on the world's first liquefied hydrogen carrier.
- Australia, already dominant in global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade, is hoping liquefied hydrogen will give it a greener market for its coal and gas. Run by Kawasaki Heavy Industries and located in the state of Victoria, home to a quarter of the world's known brown coal reserves, the project is key to helping Japan meet its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- The world's fifth-largest energy consumer aims to boost its annual hydrogen demand tenfold to 20 million tonnes by 2050, equivalent to about 40% of its current power generation. Brown coal is considered the lowest rank of coal due to its relatively low energy content and has fuelled some of Australia's dirtiest power stations, some of which have already shut or are slated for closure.

Cabinet approves setting up Development Finance Institution

- **Union Cabinet** has approved a bill to set up **Development Finance Institution (DFI)** with an **initial capital infusion of 20 thousand crore rupees**. DFI is expected to raise long-term funds for infrastructure development projects in the country.
- **The initial grant to the DFI will be 5 thousand crore rupees** and additional increments of grants will be made **within the limit of 5 thousand crore rupees**. The Government is also planning to issue some securities to this Institution by which the cost of funding will come down and all this will help DFI leverage initial capital which draws funds from various sources.

633,000 ‘New Middle Class’ households In India: Hurun India report

- **Hurun India Wealth Report 2020** released has identified a novel household category in India – the ‘**New Middle Class**’ – with an **average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum**.
- These households, the report says, have major allocation towards physical assets such as primary residential property and automobiles. **Hurun India pegs the total number of such cumulative households in India at 633,000**.
- According to Hurun, **there are 412,000 dollar-millionaire households / affluent households in India with a networth of at least Rs 7 crore**. **Hurun Rich Listers have a wealth of Rs 1,000 crore**, the report says, and **pegs the number of such cumulative households in India at 3,000**.
- At the other end of the spectrum is the ‘**Indian middle class**’ that has **earnings of over Rs 2.5-lakh per annum and a net worth of less than Rs 7 crore**. “It is estimated that **around 56400,000 families in India** fall under this category,” findings of the Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 suggest.
- Region-wise, **the top 10 states are home to 70.3 per cent of millionaire households** in the country. **Maharashtra, the report said, has the highest number of millionaires (56,000), followed by Uttar Pradesh (36,000), Tamil Nadu (35,000), Karnataka (33,000) and Gujarat (29,000)**. City-wise, Mumbai is home to most millionaires (16,933), followed by Delhi (16,000), Kolkata (10,000), Bengaluru (7,582) and Chennai (4,685).

India’s IT firms to collaborate with Finland

- **Information technology majors Wipro and Tech Mahindra** are collaborating with **Finnish companies to develop 5G and 6G technologies for use in India**, besides other markets.
- **The tech company, Nokia has already started working in the rural areas of India so as to expand the 5G applications**. This was announced after the Indian Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Finland hold a virtual summit on March 16, 2021.
- **Finland has been a pioneer in technologies such as 2G, 3G and 4G**. So, the **Indian tech companies namely Wipro and Tech Mahindra are working with the companies and institutes in Finland** to further the collaboration and expansion of 5G technology and evolution of the 6G technologies.

India leads m-cap gains in top markets

- **Indian stocks gained the most among the world’s top 10 nations by market value this fiscal**, underscoring the strength of the rally that remained unshaken by covid-induced turmoil and economic uncertainties.
- **India’s aggregate market capitalization soared 88% in dollar terms this fiscal year**, showed data from Bloomberg. Despite the sharp rise, **India remained at the eighth position among countries with a market capitalization of \$2.8 trillion**.
- **The US, with a market capitalization of \$45.83 trillion, and China at \$10.57 trillion** saw an aggregate market capitalization expansion of 67% and 52%, respectively, from April 2020 so far. Canada (\$2.89 trillion) saw a growth of 78%, while Saudi Arabia (\$2.53 trillion) made the lowest gain of 28% among the top 10 markets.

India slips to 56th in house price index: Report

- **India’s ranking stood at 56th globally in terms of home price appreciation, down 13 notches from 43rd in the same quarter last year**, according to the report, which said as much as 89 per cent of the countries and territories saw prices going up in 2020.

- **The Knight Frank global house price index tracks the movement in mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide using official statistics.**

Mobile Seva Appstore

- **India's first indigenously developed Appstore, 'Mobile Seva Appstore' hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services. "The government also noted that there has to be a proper Indian App Store for hosting apps free of cost in the initial stages".**

20 states implement ease of doing business reforms

- **Five more States namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Meghalaya and Tripura have completed the "Ease of Doing Business" reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure.**
- **States completing Ease of Doing Business reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25 percent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Accordingly, on receipt of recommendations from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the Department of Expenditure has granted permission to these 20 States to raise additional financial resources of Rs.39,521 crore through Open Market Borrowings. State wise amount of the additional borrowing permitted to these 20 States is annexed.**
- **The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy.**
- **The reforms stipulated in this category are:**
 - **(i) Completion of first assessment of 'District Level Business Reform Action Plan'**
 - **(ii) Elimination of the requirements of renewal of registration certificates/approvals/licences obtained by businesses under various Acts.**
 - **(iii) Implementation of computerized central random inspection system under the Acts wherein allocation of inspectors is done centrally, the same inspector is not assigned to the same unit in subsequent years, prior inspection notice is provided to the business owner, and inspection report is uploaded within 48 hours of inspection.**

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

Sweden Ranks first among 99 world countries for Global Sustainable Tourism

- **Sweden has been ranked at the top of Euromonitor International's Sustainable Travel Index, which has classified 99 countries worldwide through the lens of sustainable tourism. The Scandinavian country was followed by Finland, Austria, Estonia as well as Norway, based on the recent report released by the independent provider of strategic market research, Euromonitor International, SchengenVisaInfo.com reports.**
- **The report shows that European countries have been ranked in the top 20 places in the 2020s, Sustainable Travel Index', which among other things, takes into account environmental conditions and social impacts on many countries.**
- **Euromonitor International stressed that the ranking of countries was made based on seven key factors of sustainable tourism: 1. Environmental sustainability 2. Social sustainability 3. Economic sustainability 4. Risk 5. Sustainable demand 6. Sustainable transport 7. Sustainable lodging.**

India is the worlds fourth strongest military, China comes first: Study

- **China has the strongest military force in the world while India stands at number four, according to a study released by the defence website Military Direct. "The USA, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in 2nd place with 74 points, followed by Russia with 69, India at 61 and then France with 58. The UK just about makes the Top 10, coming in 9th place with a score of 43," said the study.**

- The study said the “ultimate military strength index” was calculated after taking into consideration various factors including budgets, number of inactive and active military personnel, total air, sea, land and nuclear resources, average salaries, and weight of equipment. China has the strongest military in the world, scoring 82 out of 100 points in the index, it noted.
- “Based on these scores, which account for budgets, men, and things like air and navy capacity, it does suggest that China would come out as top dog in a hypothetical super conflict,” it mentioned.
- The world’s biggest military spender with a budget of \$ 732 billion per year is the USA, it noted, adding that China comes second with \$ 261 billion, followed by India at \$ 71 billion. “China would win by sea, USA by air and Russia by land” in this hypothetical conflict, it said.
- “USA wins in an aerial war with 14,141 total airships vs Russia with 4,682 and China with 3,587. The Russian Federation wins in a land war with 54,866 vehicles vs USA with 50,326 and China with 41,641,” it mentioned. China wins in a sea war with 406 ships vs Russia with 278 and the USA or India with 202.

LT Foods becomes first company to be certified by UN-backed Sustainable Rice Platform

- LT Foods has become the first company globally to be certified with the highest level of verification – L3, by UN-backed Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) ecolabel.
- This will enable the Company to use Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) verified logo on the packs of Rice produced by verified 1,000+ farmers growing sustainable rice. LT Foods works with farmers to grow sustainable & residue free basmati rice as per the SRP standards under its agri programme.
- “Preferred by Nature”, the first verification body accredited by SRP, audited 1000+ paddy farmers associated with LT Foods in the states of Haryana and Punjab covering 4700 hectares of land. LT Foods works with farmers to grow sustainable & residue free basmati rice as per the SRP standards under its agri programme. “Preferred by Nature”, the first verification body accredited by SRP, audited 1000+ paddy farmers associated with LT Foods in the states of Haryana and Punjab covering 4700 hectares of land.

Government introduces NaBFID Bill in Lok Sabha

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Bill 2021 in the Lok Sabha to pave the way for setting up of a government-owned development finance institution to help fund about 7,000 infra projects under the National Infrastructure Pipeline.
- The proposed legislation will give effect to the Budget announcement made by the finance minister on February 1. The government has proposed Rs 20,000 crore to capitalise the institution. The Union Cabinet had last week approved the Budget proposal of setting up a development finance institution (DFI), which will have tax benefits to enable fund raising from investors.
- The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development will be set up with a corpus of Rs 20,000 crore and the government will give an initial grant of Rs 5,000 crore. The government expects the DFI to leverage this fund to raise up to Rs 3 lakh crore in the next few years.

SC rules out extension of moratorium, waives interest on interest

- The Supreme Court told lenders that they cannot charge interest on interest on the loan amount for all borrowers that was granted moratorium between March and August 2020 and said lenders have to refund the amount or the amount should be adjusted with the borrowers.
- The refund or the adjusted amount is likely to be in the range of Rs 7000 crore to Rs 8000 crore, rating agencies and analysts said. Earlier, following a Supreme Court order, the government has already refunded the interest on interest to all borrowers of loans below Rs 2 crore.
- The overall hit to the financial sector for the waiver was estimated at around Rs 14,500 crore of which relief Rs 6,500 crore was already paid by the government for loans less than Rs 2 crore.
- The Centre had earlier submitted before the top court that if it were to consider waiving interest on all loans and advances to all categories of borrowers for the six-month moratorium period announced by the RBI in view of the pandemic, then the amount foregone would be more than Rs 6 trillion.

Alt Indices launches India's first market concentration indices

- **Alt Indices announced the launch of the Herfindahl Hirschman Indices tracking market competition.** Herfindahl Hirschman Index (HHI), hailed as a convenient and ideal measure of market power, has been **widely accepted by various competition regulators, including the Competition Commission of India**, to measure market concentration.
- Such an evaluation aims to ascertain if sanctioning the proposed merger would result in an Appreciable Adverse Effect on Competition (AAEC) or not. **HHI finds a mention in Form II (the Form) of the Competition Commission of India Regulations, 2011 (Combination Regulations).**
- **The index ranges between (close to) zero, indicating the presence of a large number of firms** with each having approximately 0% market share denoting perfect competition, and **10,000 signalling the existence of a sole firm capturing complete 100% of the market i.e., a monopoly.**
- **Alt Indices currently tracks financial and non-financial parameters to assess market competition** across three sectors - **Banking, Telecommunications, and Insurance sectors.**

Finish firms create 'world's first' bioplastics from soy

- **Four Finnish companies have collaborated to produce the 'world's first' compostable bioplastics from food and feed production side-streams.**
- After four years of research, **Finnfoam, Brightplus, VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, and Nordic Soya** say they are the **first in the world to produce an ecological lactic acid polymer from the side-streams of soy production.**

Only 11% low-income countries make their data open: World Bank report

- **Most countries have shied away from an open-data policy more so countries with developing economies,** according to a recent **World Bank report. Only 11 per cent low-income countries consistently made available with a license classifiable as 'open', the report flagged.**
- The comparable rate for **lower-middle-income countries was 19 per cent, for upper-middle-income countries 22 per cent and high-income countries 44 per cent.** Public intent data, a foundation of public policies, can bring value to development by: Improving service delivery, Prioritising scarce resources and holding governments accountable and empowering individuals
- The exercise can also lead to a better emergency response during disasters — **environmental, financial, health or conflict-related. For example, weather data, especially weather forecasts, can help people anticipate and prepare for extreme events, the report said.**

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

Banks in News

Axis Bank launches India's first wearable contactless payment devices at Rs. 750

- **Axis Bank became the first bank in India to launch its own range of wearable contactless payment devices. Dubbed as 'Wear N Pay', these wearable devices are directly linked to the customers' bank account and function like a regular debit card.**
- **India's third largest private lender joined hands with with Thales and Tappy Technologies to design these affordable wearable products, exclusively available on the Mastercard platform. Customers can use these devices at any merchant who accepts contactless transactions. Users need to wave the device at a POS machine for transactions up to Rs.5,000. For transactions of more than Rs. 5,000, a PIN is required.** Axis Bank account holders can purchase the wearable devices at a price of Rs. 750 from their nearest branches.

Axis Bank Limited is an **Indian private sector bank headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.** It sells financial services to **large and mid-size companies, SMEs and retail businesses.** It is the **third largest private sector bank in India** The bank was **founded in December 1993 as UTI Bank,** opening its registered office in Ahmedabad and a corporate office in Mumbai. **Shikha Sharma** was the managing director and CEO of Axis Bank from 2009 to 2018. **Amitabh Chaudhry** is the current managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of it.

RTGS facility could be extended beyond Indian shores: RBI Governor

- **Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) has multi-currency capabilities and there is scope to explore if its footprint can be expanded beyond India.” Since RTGS, which along with NEFT has been made round the clock now, has multi-currency capabilities, there is scope taking it beyond our shores,”.**
- **Underlining the huge role that technology and innovation played in serving the consumers better and faster, Das said the RBI processed 274 crore digital transactions to provide direct benefit transfer to people, most of which happened during the pandemic.**
- **In a bid to give a push to digital payments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed the transfer of funds through Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) round-the-clock from December 14. RTGS System is used for high-value transactions.** It happens on a real-time basis. Every transaction is settled individually in the case of RTGS. RBI stopped levying charges on transactions through RTGS from July 2019.

RTGS (real time gross settlement) and NEFT (national electronic funds transfer) are electronic payment systems that allow individuals to transfer funds between banks. Both these systems are **maintained by the Reserve Bank of India.** It is **applicable only for money transfer within the country.** **Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) is another payment system in which the money is credited in the beneficiary's account in real-time and on a gross basis.** The RTGS system is **primarily meant for large value transactions that require and receive immediate clearing.**

50 FPOs supported by NABARD and Karnataka link to Unified Market Platform of Rashtriya e-Market Services in Bengaluru

- **In Karnataka, 50 Farmer Producer Organisations, FPOs supported by NABARD and state Government were linked to Unified Market Platform of Rashtriya e-Market Services in Bengaluru.**
- **The online e-market platform has helped trading 81 million metric tonnes of agricultural commodities worth Rs 2,14,287 crore benefitting 21.2 million farmers.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 10,000 Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs) all over the country, on 29 February, 2020 in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh.**
- **FPOs is a Producer Organisation (PO) where the members are farmers. Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is providing support for the promotion of FPOs.** FPOs help in the collectivization of such small, marginal and landless farmers in order to give them the collective strength to deal with such issues.

- **Members of the FPO will manage their activities together in the organization to get better access to technology, input, finance and market for faster enhancement of their income.**

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is an apex development finance institution fully owned by Government of India. The bank has been entrusted with “matters concerning policy, planning, and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India”. NABARD is active in developing & implementing Financial Inclusion. NABARD was established on the recommendations of **B.Sivaramman Committee (by Act 61, 1981 of Parliament) on 12 July 1982** to implement the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981. **Shri G R Chintala is the Chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).** It is headquartered in Mumbai.

World Bank’s Deepak Mishra appointed as ICRIER director, chief executive

- **Deepak Mishra, practice manager in the World Bank’s macroeconomics, trade, and investment global practice has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).**
- **He will take over from Rajat Kathuria who has been the director & chief executive of ICRIER since September 1, 2012, Mishra has held various positions at the World Bank, including co-director of the World Development Report 2016 (Digital Dividends), Country Economist for Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sudan and Vietnam.**

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

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in association with ICICI Bank and ValetEZ has enabled Brookfield Mall as India’s first Contactless Mall in Bangalore

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in association with ICICI Bank and ValetEZ has enabled Brookfield Mall as India’s first Contactless Mall in Bangalore making parking seamless and ready. Brookfield Mall is one of the earliest malls in Bengaluru, located in the Brookfield neighbourhood in the city.**
- **Popular among the Brookfield community and beyond, the mall has a fine mix of essential and lifestyle retail stores and entertainment options. ICICI Bank is the acquiring bank for this project as per the partnership with NPCI.**
- **With this, the Bank will debit parking charges from the FASTag account of the commuters and then credit them to the partner’s bank account. ICICI Bank was the first to launch the innovative service of FASTag nationally, on the Mumbai – Vadodara corridor, way back in 2013.**

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

ICICI Bank targeting to serve 20 lakh customers of rival banks through app

- **Private sector lender ICICI Bank said 10 lakh customers of rival banks are using its mobile application for transactions. The lender expects the number of such customers, who are using the app for instant UPI-based payments and recharges, to double in the next three months, the company said in a statement.**
- **The bank is using NPCI’s interoperable in infrastructure to serve customers of other banks as well through its app called “imobile pay”. Users like the ‘Pay to Contacts’ feature the most. The functionality enables users to send money either to a mobile number or a UPI ID of their friends/contacts, to any payment app or a digital wallet.**

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.

SBI Card customers can now make transactions on Jio Pay platform

- **SBI Cards and Payment Services (SBI Card) is available on the Jio Pay service**, allowing customers to do their transactions on the platform through credit. The SBI Card portfolio has been enabled on the Jio Pay service from March 2, 2021, SBI Card said in a regulatory filing.
- **Currently, only cards issued in Indian territory are enabled on the Jio Pay service**, it said. However, customers can transact using their SBI Card through the Jio Pay service in international locations as well.

On April 1, 2017, the State Bank of India, which was India's largest bank, merged with five of its associate banks (State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore), and with the Bharatiya Mahila Bank. Dinesh Kumar Khara is the current chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). Imperial Bank of India was the oldest and the largest commercial bank of the Indian subcontinent, and was subsequently transformed into State Bank of India in 1955.

NPCI partners with SBI Payments to launch 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution

- **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) partnered with SBI Payments to announce the launch of 'RuPay SoftPoS' for millions of Indian merchants.**
- This innovative solution has the capability **to transform NFC enabled smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for the retailers.** Merchants will now be able to accept contactless payments of up to Rs.5000 through a simple tap and pay mechanism on their smartphones.
- **RuPay SoftPoS will provide cost effective acceptance infrastructure to retailers at nominal cost.** This unique phenomenon would be able to proliferate digital payment acceptance among millions of underserved Indian MSMEs.

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State Bank of India leads in MeitY Digital Payment Scorecard

- **India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has topped the list of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology's (MeitY) Digital Payment Scorecard for 3 consecutive months.**
- The scorecard tracks Commercial Banks' performance on various digital parameters. **SBI remained the top remitter bank by recording the highest UPI transaction volume of nearly 64 crores having a user base of 13.5 crores.**
- **SBI processed 636 crore transactions through its digital platforms which are 67% of the bank's total transaction volume.** The bank commands almost 25% market share by transaction volume of mobile banking.
- According to SimilarWeb, **SBI's internet banking service is ranked first in terms of online traffic in the banking credit and lending category and is used by over 8.5 crore customers.**

On April 1, 2017, the State Bank of India, which was India's largest bank, merged with five of its associate banks (State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore), and with the Bharatiya Mahila Bank. Dinesh Kumar Khara is the current chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). Imperial Bank of India was the oldest and the largest commercial bank of the Indian subcontinent, and was subsequently transformed into State Bank of India in 1955.

RBI asks banks to implement image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches by Sep 30

- Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30 this year. The move is aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service. Last month, the RBI had announced pan-India coverage of CTS by bringing all bank branches under the image-based clearing mechanism.
- The Apex bank said that to leverage the availability of CTS and provide uniform customer experience irrespective of location of her/his bank branch, it has been decided to extend CTS across all bank branches in the country. To facilitate this, banks will have to ensure that all their branches participate in image-based CTS under respective grids by September 30.

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

Deutsche Bank executes world’s first green hedge with Continuum

- Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd, a subsidiary of Continuum Green Energy (Continuum), have executed the world’s first green hedging transaction, with a second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework.
- The green hedge, he explained, manages the currency exposure, ensuring the underlying green projects are financially sustainable, while ensuring investors receive their returns on the green bond.
- Sustainability is a core pillar in Deutsche Bank’s transformation strategy and the bank is committed to supporting clients as they transition for the zero carbon economy. Last year in Asia Pacific Deutsche Bank structured Asia’s first currency hedge linked to sustainability key performance indicators. This hedge structure was assessed and approved against Deutsche Bank’s Sustainable Finance Framework.

Deutsche Bank AG is a German multinational investment bank and financial services company headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany, and dual-listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange.

SBI and IOCL ink \$100 million first SOFR linked deal in the ECB market

- The country’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) had inked the first deal in the external commercial borrowing (ECB) market using the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR). SBI and Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) have inked a \$100 million deal for five years.
- SOFR is the new alternative benchmark rate which will replace LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate), which is the existing benchmark rate. SOFR will replace LIBOR by end of 2021. The sunset has been triggered by the decision of Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in the UK not to compel contributing banks for LIBOR calculation after December 2021.

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RBI sets up external advisory team to screen on tap bank licenses

- The Reserve Bank of India announced the setting up of a standing external advisory committee (SEAC) to evaluate applications for universal banks and small finance banks. The five member committee will be headed by former deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath.
- The SEAC which will have a tenure of three years, and will screen applications for universal and small finance banks after the regulator first vets the proposal. “The applications for Universal Banks and Small Finance Banks will be initially screened by the Reserve Bank to ensure prima facie eligibility of the applicants,” the regulator said.
- It was also stated that a Standing External Advisory Committee (SEAC) comprising eminent persons with experience in banking, financial sector and other relevant areas, will evaluate the applications thereafter and that the constitution of the SEAC will be announced by Reserve Bank.

ICICI Bank launches instant EMI facility on its internet banking platform

- ICICI Bank announced the launch of an instant EMI (Equated Monthly Instalments) facility on its internet banking platform.
- Called ‘EMI @ Internet Banking’, the facility aims to offer increased affordability to millions of pre-approved customers, as it enables them to convert their high-value transactions up to Rs. 5 lakh into easy monthly instalments.
- It also brings in enhanced customer experience as customers get the benefit of EMIs instantly and in a fully digital manner. ICICI Bank is the first in the industry to introduce an instant EMI facility on its internet banking platform.
- The Bank has tied up with BillDesk and Razorpay, leading online payment gateway companies to offer this facility. Presently, the ‘EMI @ Internet Banking’ has been enabled for over 1000 merchants in categories like online shopping portals, insurance, travel, education- school fees and electronic chains.

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.

HDFC Bank named India’s best SME bank

- HDFC Bank was adjudged the India’s best bank for SMEs at the Asiamoney Best Bank Awards 2021.
- In its evaluation the magazine said on its website HDFC Bank’s transformation of its micro, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) business over the past few years makes it a worthy winner of this award.
- The Annual Best Banks survey of the financial magazine based in Hong Kong, aims to identify which banks in each market have excelled across a range of core banking activities over the past 12 months.

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

Firms in News

Gautam Adani world's biggest wealth gainer so far in 2021: Bloomberg Billionaires Index

- **Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani has achieved a remarkable milestone amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as he added the highest wealth to his fortune in the world, as per the latest Bloomberg Billionaires Index.**
- The Bloomberg Billionaires Index showed that so far in 2021, **Adani has added \$16.2 billion, taking his total net worth to \$50 billion.** With this surge in his wealth, Adani is now the 26th richest person in the world.
- He even beat two of world's richest individuals, Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk, in terms of wealth generation this year. **While Musk has added \$10.3 billion to his net worth so far, Bezos has seen a downturn of 7.59 billion.**

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

Nasscom launches program to accelerate AI-led innovation in India

- **Nasscom launched an 'AI Gamechangers' program to promote artificial intelligence (AI)-led innovation in the country, the apex body of the IT industry. Microsoft is the innovation partner for the program, As part of the 'AI for India' mission, the program seeks to recognize impactful and scalable AI-based innovation in the country. Nasscom and Microsoft will work closely to develop and promote the AI Gamechangers program, built on a shared commitment towards accelerating the adoption of AI across key sectors.**

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

SBI Mutual Fund launched SBI International Access - US Equity FoF

- **SBI Mutual Fund has announced the launch of SBI International Access - US Equity FoF, an open-ended Fund of Fund scheme that would invest in mutual fund scheme/ETFs that further invests in the US markets.**
- **The underlying scheme of investment would be Amundi Funds - US Pioneer Fund, with an investment process that fully integrates ESG (Environment, Social Governance) ethos. The fund will be managed by Mohit Jain. The NFO will be open for subscription till March 15.**

HDFC ERGO's new Business Kisht Suraksha to protect MFIs from natural calamities

- **HDFC ERGO General Insurance has introduced Business Kisht Suraksha — a unique cover aimed at protecting the balance sheet of MFIs, financial institutions and banks in the event of a catastrophe or natural disaster. It aims to limit the impacts on the balance sheet of financial institutions, due to non-payment of EMIs by borrowers, resulting out of listed calamities such as floods, earthquakes, cyclones, etc.**
- **Business Kisht as a product can be customised as per the needs of an individual MFI or financial institution. The product can also be tailor-made depending on the geographical presence of the borrower, MFI or any financial institution basis the perils/climatic conditions that the location is prone to.**
- **Additionally, MFIs or financial institutions also have the option of selecting the number of EMIs that might need insurance coverage concerning the lenders' exposure.**

HDFC ERGO is a 51:49 joint venture firm between HDFC and ERGO International AG, one of the insurance entities of the Munich Re Group in Germany operating in the insurance field under the BFSI sector. Corporate products include liability, marine, and property insurance. Rural sector caters the farmers with crop insurance and cattle insurance. It is based in Mumbai.

Uber Grants UK Drivers Worker Status in World First

- **Uber is granting its UK drivers worker status**, with benefits including a minimum wage - **a world first for the US ride-hailing giant**. Uber said its drivers would also get holiday pay and a pension. Weeks after a top court ruling that could shake up Britain's wider "gig economy" of 5.5 million people, Uber said its drivers would also get holiday pay and a pension.

Uber Technologies, Inc., commonly known as Uber, is an **American technology company**. Its services include ride-hailing, food delivery (Uber Eats), package delivery, couriers, freight transportation, and, through a partnership with Lime, electric bicycle and **motorized scooter rental**. **The company is based in San Francisco and has operations in over 900 metropolitan areas worldwide. It is one of the largest firms in the gig economy. In 2009, Uber was founded as Ubercab by Garrett Camp, a computer programmer and the co-founder of StumbleUpon, and Travis Kalanick, who sold his Red Swoosh startup for \$19 million in 2007.**

ReNew Power becomes world's first clean energy firm to enter WEF's Global Lighthouse Network

- **Renewable energy firm, ReNew Power has entered the World Economic Forum's (WEF) list of companies recognised for using new technologies to achieve sustainable growth**. It added that it is the **world's first clean energy company** and one of the **only two Indian firms to be recognised by the WEF's Global Lighthouse Network this year**.
- **The Lighthouse Network is a cross-sector international network of 69 companies** – from technology, heavy industry, consumer products, healthcare, and energy sectors – recognised for use of technology to grow their bottom line, without increasing their environmental footprint.

Rating agency Moody's projects India's GDP to grow by 12 % this year

- American business and financial services company **Moody's Analytics has projected India's GDP to grow by 12% in 2021**.
- Battered by the coronavirus pandemic, **Indian economy is officially projected to contract 8% in FY21, in its worst show in more than four decades**. However, most professional forecasters have projected **double-digit growth for India in FY22, considered mostly a statistical rebound than a V-shaped recovery**.

Moody's Investors Service, often referred to as Moody's, is the **bond credit rating business of Moody's Corporation**, representing the company's traditional line of business and its historical name. Moody's Investors Service provides international financial research on bonds issued by commercial and government entities. **Moody's, along with Standard & Poor's and Fitch Group, is considered one of the Big Three credit rating agencies. Moody's was founded by John Moody in 1909 to produce manuals of statistics related to stocks and bonds and bond ratings. It is headquartered in New York.**

Central PSU Power Grid Corporation of India Limited established e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT

- **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, a central PSU, has established an e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT**. This will lead to less paperwork, ease of operation and make the tendering process more transparent.
- Power Ministry has said that with this, **POWERGRID is now the only organization in India to have an eProcurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management**, complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency.

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) is an Indian government electricity board and a Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking owned by Ministry of Power, Government of India which is headquartered in Gurugram, India and engaged mainly in Transmission of Power. POWERGRID transmits about 50% of the total power generated in India on its transmission network.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Andhra Pradesh Governor congratulates ISRO scientists for accomplishing the mission

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the primary satellite Amazonia-1 of Brazil along with 18 co-passenger satellites.** The satellites were launched atop the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C51) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Sriharikota Range (SHAR). Notably, this is ISRO's first mission of 2021 and the first time a Brazilian satellite was launched into space by an Indian rocket.
- **The Amazonia-1, which weighs 637 kilograms, is the first Earth observation satellite entirely developed by Brazil.** It is optimized to peer at the cloud-covered region of its namesake, the Amazon forest since it has infrared capabilities that allow it to look at the forest cover regardless of the weather.
- **Brazil plans to use the satellite to “alert deforestation” in the region,** Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) said in an Amazonia 1 mission description.
- **This confirms the infinite potential of the India-Brazil partnership to overcome our development challenges through high technology.** The launch also marked the first dedicated mission of ISRO's commercial arm NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL).
- **The 18 co-passenger satellites include four from ISRO's Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (three UNITYsats from the consortium of three Indian academic institutes and SKI's SD SAT). The 14 others are from ISRO's commercial arm, NewSpace India (NSIL).**
- **Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan has congratulated scientists of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for accomplishing the mission with successful launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C51 (PSLV-C51) and placing 19 satellites including Amazonia-1 of Brazil in sun synchronous orbit.**
- **Governor Harichandan hailed the scientists for the 53rd flight of PSLV C-51, the first commercial mission in 2021 and said the mission has added another feather in the cap of ISRO.**

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

First project to map genomes in Indian Ocean

- **A 30-member team of scientists and researchers from the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in Panaji and another 30 crew members onboard its research vessel Sindhu Sadhana will spend the next three months traversing the course of over 10,000 nautical miles in the Indian Ocean on a research project to reveal the internal working of the body of the ocean at a cellular level.**
- **The first-of-its-kind research project in the country is aimed at understanding the biochemistry and the response of the ocean to climate change,** nutrient stress and increasing pollution. Conceptualised over the last two to three years, the research project has been undertaken at a cost of Rs 25 crore and will take three years to complete, NIO Director Sunil Kumar Singh said.

- The research project that was flagged off at Visakhapatnam on 10 March 2021 will see the team of 30 scientists and researchers — including six women — course the Indian Ocean from India’s east coast, all the way to Australia, then onward towards Port Louis in Mauritius and up to the border of Pakistan, off India’s west coast, gathering samples for genome mapping of microorganisms in the Indian Ocean. The researchers will collect samples from various stretches of the ocean at an average depth of about 5 km.
- Just like gene mapping is carried out on blood samples collected from humans, the scientists will map these in the bacteria, microbes found in the ocean. The mapping of the Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and Ribonucleic acid (RNA) will show the nutrients present in them, and also those lacking in different parts of the ocean.

Russia launches satellite to monitor climate in Arctic

- Russia launched its space satellite Arktika-M on a mission to monitor the climate and environment in the Arctic amid a push by the Kremlin to expand the country’s activities in the region.
- The Arctic has warmed more than twice as fast as the global average over the last three decades and Moscow is seeking to develop the energy-rich region, investing in the Northern Sea Route for shipping across its long northern flank as ice melts.

Scientists from Raman Research Institute (RRI) develop high-resolution platform to detect the effect of prolonged alcohol exposure on Red Blood Cells

- Scientists have custom-made a platform to detect the effect of prolonged alcohol exposure on Red Blood Cells (RBC) through high-resolution measurements of their size. The high-resolution platform that shows the reduction in size of RBCs on alcohol exposure can be tuned for a point-of-care screening of multiple conditions that alter the size and count of RBCs in blood.
- Although it is known that alcohol affects RBCs, the exact physiological changes are very subtle and difficult to measure.
- In order to overcome this challenge, scientists from Raman Research Institute (RRI), an autonomous institution funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India led by Professor Gautam Soni, have developed custom-made electro-fluidic platform that can detect the change by measuring the cell size in enhanced resolution.
- The device made in RRI relies on the resistive pulse sensing principle. The team first developed techniques for making tiny micron (1/1000th of a millimetre) sized holes or micro-pores at the tip of a glass capillary with careful fabrication, flame polishing, and image verification.
- Cells passing through the pore created very tiny electrical pulses, which give direct and most sensitive information of cell count and volume. These results may also be used to explain the lack of oxygen-carrying capability of RBC under alcohol exposure leading to blurred vision, muscular in coordination, and altered mental states from alcohol abuse.

Red blood cells (RBCs), also referred to as red cells red blood corpuscles (in humans or other animals not having nucleus in red blood cells), haematids, erythroid cells or erythrocytes are the most common type of blood cell and the vertebrate’s principal means of delivering oxygen (O₂) to the body tissues—via blood flow through the circulatory system. Human red blood cells are produced through a process named erythropoiesis, developing from committed stem cells to mature red blood cells in about 7 days. When matured, in a healthy individual these cells live in blood circulation for about 100 to 120 days (and 80 to 90 days in a full term infant). At the end of their lifespan, they are removed from circulation.

France conducts first military drills in space

- France has begun its first military exercises in space to test its ability to defend its satellites, in a sign of the growing competition between world powers in Earth’s orbit. Michel Friedling, the head of France’s newly created Space Command, called the exercises a “stress test of our systems” and said they “were a first for the French army and even a first in Europe.”

- Codenamed “AsterX” in a nod to the first French satellite Asterix from 1965, the drills will simulate the monitoring of a potentially dangerous space object, as well as a threat to a satellite. **The new US Space Force and German space agencies are taking part in the French exercises.**

DRDO develops AIP technology, Indian subs to be more silent and lethal

- **A day before INS Karanj attack submarine is inducted into Indian Navy**, the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) conducted the final development test of Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) in Mumbai, a major step that will make Indian submarines more lethal. AIP allows a submarine to be submerged for longer periods under water and makes the sub-surface platform more deadly by making it quieter than a nuclear submarine.
- **The Indian Navy now plans to retrofit all its Kalvari class non-nuclear attack with AIP during their first upgrade, expected around 2023.** The 1615 tonne Kalvari class submarine is being built by Mazagon Dockyards Limited in collaboration with French Naval Group and is based on Scorpene design. INS Karanj, third of the class, is expected to be commissioned.

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.**

Apple to build Europe’s largest R&D facility in Germany

- **Apple has planned to invest more than €1 billion to build its new R&D facility in Munich, Germany.** Called **Silicon Design Center**, the new facility will focus on 5G, connectivity and future wireless technologies. The new plant will be **home to Apple’s growing cellular unit, and Europe’s largest R&D site for mobile wireless semiconductors and software.**

ISRO launches sounding rocket RH-560

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a sounding rocket to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics from Sriharikota spaceport.**
- **ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560,** number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm, according to the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.

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

Russia deploys giant space telescope in Lake Baikal

- **Russian scientists launched one of the world’s biggest underwater space telescopes to peer deep into the universe from the pristine waters of Lake Baikal.** The deep underwater telescope, which has been under construction since 2015, is designed to observe neutrinos, the smallest particles currently known.
- **Dubbed Baikal-GVD, the telescope was submerged to a depth of 750-1,300 meters (2,500-4,300 feet), around four kilometres from the lake’s shore.** Neutrinos are very hard to detect and water is an effective medium for doing so. The floating observatory consists of strings with spherical glass and stainless steel modules attached to them.

IIT Kharagpur & University of Manchester launch dual award PhD programme

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur and The University of Manchester have launched a dual award PhD programme.** While IIT Kharagpur has already established similar programmes with universities in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, **this is the first time such a joint programme has been set up with a British university.**

- The PhD programme, which will represent the next phase of the strategic partnership of the two leading institutes in India and the UK, will also serve to consolidate and build on existing research collaborations across a number of thematic areas including environmental geochemistry, biomaterials and Industry 4.0.

India first Asian country to join International Pulsar Timing Array with uGMRT

- India has formally joined the elite league of international radio telescopes that are involved in tracking very low-frequency gravitational waves, especially those emerging from two orbiting very large supermassive blackholes.
- Observations made by Pune-based upgraded Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (uGMRT), operated by TIFR – National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), will be used along with the data gathered by some large radio telescopes located in Europe, America and Australia.
- The International Pulsar Timing Array (IPTA) approved India's full membership as the Indian Pulsar Timing Array (InPTA).
- With uGMRT, India has become the first Asian country to be a full member of IPTA consortium comprising European Pulsar Timing Array (EPTA), North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav) and Parkes Pulsar Timing Array (PPTA) from Australia.
- With 30 dish antennas each measuring 45m diameter and positioned over 25 km around Khodad village in Junnar, the uGMRT is one of the world's largest and highly sensitive instruments offering a frequency range between 300 to 800 MHz.
- "Presently, the uGMRT is the only radio telescope in the world offering this wide a frequency range and sensitivity. As a result, we will now be able to obtain improved observations by an order of 5, making the overall data more robust.

The International Pulsar Timing Array (IPTA) is a multi-institutional, multi-telescope collaboration, comprising the European Pulsar Timing Array (EPTA), the North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav), and the Parkes Pulsar Timing Array (PPTA). The goal of the IPTA is to detect and characterize the low-frequency gravitational wave universe through timing a global array of approximately 100 millisecond pulsars using the largest radio telescopes in the world. This goal is shared by each of the participating institutions, but they have all recognized that their goal will be achieved more quickly in collaboration, and by combining their respective resources.

Russia puts 38 foreign satellites into orbit

- Russia put 38 foreign satellites into orbit after a successful launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan following delays due to technical issues. The rocket had successfully placed into orbit the 38 satellites from more than a dozen countries, including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil.
- Four Indian cosmonauts complete training in Russia for Gaganyaan mission. The four cosmonauts shortlisted for Gaganyaan, India's first manned space mission, have completed their training in Russia.
- The Rs 10,000-crore ambitious project is expected to be launched in 2022, the year of the 75th anniversary of India's Independence. The four Indian Air Force fighter pilots are likely to be potential candidates for the Gaganyaan project.

ISRO Demonstrates India's first free-Space Quantum Communication Over 300 Metres

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metres, for the first time in the country.
- A number of key technologies were developed indigenously to accomplish this major feat, which included the use of indigenously developed "NAVIC" receiver for time synchronisation between the transmitter and receiver modules, and gimbal mechanism systems instead of bulky large-aperture telescopes for optical alignment. "The demonstration has included live video conferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals. This is a major

milestone achievement for unconditionally secured satellite data communication using quantum technologies”.

- The Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) technology underpins Quantum Communication technology that ensures unconditional data security by virtue of the principles of quantum mechanics, which is not possible with the conventional encryption systems.
- The conventional cryptosystems used for data-encryption rely on the complexity of mathematical algorithms, whereas the security offered by quantum communication is based on the laws of Physics.

Quantum key distribution (QKD) is a secure communication method which implements a cryptographic protocol involving components of quantum mechanics. It enables two parties to produce a shared random secret key known only to them, which can then be used to encrypt and decrypt messages. It is often incorrectly called quantum cryptography, as it is the best-known example of a quantum cryptographic task.

DRDO successfully carries out flight demonstration based on SFDR technology

- Defence Research and Development Organisation has successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- During the test, many new technologies were proven, including Solid Fuel based Ducted Ramjet technology. Successful demonstration of Solid Fuel based Ducted Ramjet technology has provided DRDO with a technological advantage which will enable it to develop long range air-to-air missiles. At present, such technology is available only with a handful of countries in the world.

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.

Inventions/Discoveries

Artificial photosynthesis to provide solutions for carbon capture and conversion

- **Scientists have found a method to mimic nature's own process of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, namely photosynthesis, to capture excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.**
- **This artificial photosynthesis (AP) harnesses solar energy and converts the captured carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide (CO), which can be used as a fuel for internal combustion engines.**
- **In artificial photosynthesis (AP), scientists are essentially conducting the same fundamental process in natural photosynthesis but with simpler nanostructures.** However, there are plenty of hurdles to overcome as a successful catalyst to carry out AP.
- **A team of Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, designed and fabricated an integrated catalytic system based on a metal-organic framework (MOF-808) comprising of a photosensitizer (molecules which absorb light and transfer the electron from the incident light into another nearby molecule) that can harness solar power and a catalytic centre that can eventually reduce CO₂.**
- **The scientists have immobilized a photosensitizer, which is a chemical called ruthenium bipyridyl complex ([Ru(bpy)₂Cl₂]) and a catalytic part which is another chemical called rhenium carbonyl complex ([Re(CO)₅Cl]), inside the nanospace of metal-organic framework for artificial photosynthesis.**
- **Both these molecular entities stay in close proximity in the confined nano-space of a porous metal-organic framework system resulting in excellent CO₂ uptake capability at room temperature.** This synthetic strategy empowers efficient solar light-driven photocatalysis.
- **The developed catalyst exhibited excellent visible-light-driven CO₂ reduction to CO with more than 99% selectivity.** The catalyst also oxidizes water to produce oxygen (O₂). The photocatalytic assembly, when assessed for CO₂ reduction under direct sunlight in a water medium without any additives, showed superior performance of CO production. Being heterogeneous, the integrated catalytic assembly can be reused for several catalytic cycles without losing its activity.

IIT-Guwahati researchers use modern drug development methods to understand therapeutic action of ayurvedic formulations

- **Prof. Vibin Ramakrishnan, Professor, Department of Biosciences and Bioengineering, IIT Guwahati and Prof. C.C. Kartha of Academy of Cardiovascular Sciences have used modern drug development methods to analyse the mode of action of an Ayurvedic rejuvenating medicine - Amalaki Rasayana.**
- **The present study that used the emerging scientific approaches of Network Pharmacology and Chemoinformatics shows how the formulation is likely to work in the human body.**

A 'starter kit' for supermassive black holes

- **Scientists have reported the discovery of a rare, medium-sized black hole that may help answer one of the more tantalising questions in astronomy: how do their supermassive counterparts come into being?. There are two well-known sizes of black hole – at one end, so-called stellar-class ones which are typically three to ten times the mass of our Sun – and at the other, supermassive ones, found at the centre of most galaxies, including the Milky Way, which are millions to billions times heavier.**
- **The newly detected 'goldilocks' black hole – about 55,000 solar masses – could be a missing link between these two extremes.** Up to now, only a handful of intermediate-mass black holes – between 100 and 100,000 solar masses – have been detected, and none have been squarely in the middle of that range.

World's most powerful supercomputer is ready for use

- **The world's most powerful supercomputer Fugaku is now fully developed in Japan, and the machine is available for research use. Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN and Fujitsu began development six**

years ago with an aim to make the device core of Japan's computing infrastructure. Then, in April 2020, it was tested particularly in projects to combat COVID-19 pandemic.

- Now, as Fugaku is fully open and available for shared use, Japan's Research Organization for Information Science and Technology (RIST) has selected 74 projects that will use the supercomputer in FY2021, which begins in April. RIST has also called for proposals for new projects in several categories, and invited researchers who are interested to apply.

Indian Scientists design & develop low-cost optical spectrograph

- Indian Scientists have designed and developed a low-cost optical spectrograph. The spectrograph can locate sources of faint light from distant quasars and galaxies.
- It is one of the largest astronomical spectrographs in the country and has been successfully commissioned on the 3.6-Metre Devasthal Optical Telescope near Nainital Uttarakhand. Dr Amitosh Omar, scientist at the research institute ARIES, who led the project team spoke to All India Radio on this development.

Mars on Earth: Turkish lake may hold clues to ancient life on planet

- As NASA's rover Perseverance explores the surface of Mars, scientists hunting for signs of ancient life on the distant planet are using data gathered on a mission much closer to home at a lake in southwest Turkey.
- NASA says the minerals and rock deposits at Salda are the nearest match on earth to those around the Jezero Crater where the spacecraft landed and which is believed to have once been flooded with water.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. Steve Jurczyk is an American engineer who is currently serving as the Acting Administrator of NASA.

Health/Disease

Genomic analysis

- To better understand how the virus is mutating and its protein biology (proteins are made using genetic information), an IISc. team led by Utpal Tatu, Professor in the Department of Biochemistry, carried out a comprehensive “proteo-genomic” investigation – a series of analyses of SARS-CoV-2 isolates.
- The isolates or viral samples were recovered from nasal secretions of three consenting COVID-19 RT-PCR positive individuals in Bengaluru. The genomic analysis was done using next generation sequencing (NGS), a technology that allows for rapid sequencing of the entire genome.
- A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) has identified multiple mutations and unique proteins in isolates of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic. WHO first learned of this new virus on 31 December 2019, following a report of a cluster of cases of ‘viral pneumonia’ in Wuhan, People’s Republic of China. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are, Fever, Dry cough and Fatigue. The standard diagnosis method is by real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) from a nasopharyngeal swab. In India, the first case was reported in Kerala.

Gibraltar ‘first nation in world’ to vaccinate entire adult population

- The tiny British overseas territory — famed for its Rock of Gibraltar — has become the “first nation in the world” to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19.
- Located on the Iberian Peninsula on Spain’s south coast, with an area of just 2.6 square miles and 33,701 residents, Gibraltar reached the milestone as First Minister Fabian Picardo thanked the UK for its contribution to the vaccine rollout.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT



‘Space hurricane’ spotted above Earth for the first time

- Scientists have revealed in a new study that they spotted a “space hurricane” spinning over 125 miles above the North Pole for the first time ever in 2014. These observations were uncovered during retrospective analysis by scientists at the University of Reading, as part of a team led by Shandong University in China, that confirmed the hurricane.
- Large, swirling storms called hurricanes hit frequently in the Earth’s low atmosphere, but they were not known to occur in the upper atmosphere. Scientists have for the first time observed a space hurricane in Earth’s upper atmosphere. An international team of scientists led by Shandong University in China confirmed their existence that shed new light on the relationship between planets and space.
- Researchers analysed observations made by satellites in 2014 to reveal a long-lasting hurricane, resembling those in the lower atmosphere, in the polar ionosphere and magnetosphere with surprisingly large energy and momentum deposition despite otherwise extremely quiet geomagnetic conditions. The analysis allowed a 3D image to be created of the 1,000 km-wide swirling mass of plasma several hundred kilometres above the North Pole, raining electrons instead of water.

A space hurricane is a huge, funnel-like, spiral geomagnetic storm that occurs above the polar Ionosphere of Earth, during extremely quiet conditions. They are related to the aurora borealis phenomenon, as the electron precipitation from the storm’s funnel produces gigantic, cyclone-shaped auroras. Scientists believe that they occur in the polar regions of planets with magnetic fields.

Kaveri Seeds becomes world’s first seed producer to have over a lakh acres in production

- Kaveri Seeds Company said it has become the first seed producer in the world with more than one lakh acres under seed production in a country.
- The bulk of the newly acquired seed production area is dedicated to the non-cotton sector and mostly towards high-margin hybrid rice, maize and vegetable seeds, and nearly half of the land is located in and around the Telugu states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, India’s largest listed producer of hybrid seeds said.

Exotic earthworm found in Karnataka for the first time

- An exotic and highly invasive earthworm — *Amyntas alexandri* of the Megascolecidae family — has been collected and reported for the first time from Karnataka. Its original home is believed to be Southeast Asia.
- It has been found to be distributed at four sites in the State — Hosabale and Hosanagara in Shivamogga district, Kaimara in Chikkamagaluru district, and Konaje in Dakshina Kannada.
- Earlier, the same earthworm was recorded in 15 States/Union Territories in India, according to a study published in the January issue of the Canadian journal Megadrilogica, an international scientific journal devoted to publishing earthworm studies from across the world.

Delhi among top three states with most contaminated sites, says Pollution Control Board

- The national capital stands third on the list of states and Union territories with most contaminated sites, according to the Central Pollution Control Board data.
- There are 112 sites in India contaminated by toxic and hazardous substances. Besides, there are 168 sites that may be contaminated but require investigation and confirmation, as per the CPCB. Odisha tops the list with 23 contaminated sites, followed by Uttar Pradesh (21) and Delhi (11).

Hemiandrus jacinda: insect named after New Zealand Prime Minister

- New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, has received what may be her greatest accolade yet: a large insect named in her honour.
- A new species of weta – a giant flightless cricket that is endemic to New Zealand – has been named *Hemiandrus jacinda* for being Labour-party red in colour and “long-limbed”.

Pakistan is world's second most polluted nation: Report

- Bangladesh ranks first in the list released by World Air Quality Report 2020. India ranks better than Pakistan in the third position. The list includes names of 106 nations across the globe.
- The report said South Asia is the most polluted region of the world with Bangladesh, India and Pakistan sharing 42 of the 50 most polluted cities worldwide. The 2020 World Air Quality Report is based on PM2.5 data from 106 countries that has been measured by ground-based monitoring stations.

In a first, India set to explore uranium reserves in Arunachal

- Indian authorities are looking for uranium reserves just three kilometres from the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh in a first-ever such exercise.
- The exploration was taken up in Aalo of West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, about 619 meters from ground level. Uranium is used for producing nuclear energy which is considered clean energy.

22 of world's 30 most polluted cities are in India

- Twenty-two of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally.
- The report is prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, in the form of the ‘World Air Quality Report, 2020’, which has released globally. The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15 per cent from 2019 to 2020. It said that despite the improvement, Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.
- Besides Delhi, the 21 other Indian cities among the 30 most polluted cities in the world are Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar, Bissakh Jalalpur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow, Meerut, Agra and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, Bhiwari in Rajasthan, Faridabad, Jind, Hisar, Fatehabad, Bandhwari, Gurugram, Yamuna Nagar, Rohtak and Dharuhera in Haryana, and Muzaffarpur in Bihar. As per the report, the top most polluted city is Xinjiang in China followed by nine Indian cities.

New plant species found in Chittoor

- A team of botanists has recently stumbled upon a new rattlepod species in the Sadasivakona grove area of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh, which is part of the southern Eastern ghats. The discovery has been published in the latest edition of the noted international journal Phytotaxa.
- During their field study, botanists P. Sivaramakrishna and P. Yugandhar from Sri Venkateswara University and Lalji Singh, Scientist-E from the Botanical Survey of India, Andaman and Nicobar regional centre, came across the species growing in the pasture lands in Sadasivakona.
- Named as *Crotalaria lamelliformis*, the ascending herb is unique for its distinct features such as adpressed white hairs beneath the lower surface of leaves, inflorescence short-terminal racemes, 6-8 bright yellow flowers, unequal calyx lobes, anterior two sepals fused and standard petal sub-orbicular with short claw surrounded by white cottony hairs.

World's first wildlife bond to track Rhino populations in Africa

- A bond designed to raise funds to grow the population of endangered black rhinoceros in South Africa will be sold by the World Bank this year. The five-year, 670 million rand (\$45 million) security will be the world's first wildlife conservation bond and the aim is to sell it in the middle of the year. Returns for investors will be determined by the rate of growth of the populations of the animal.
- If successful, the program could be expanded to protect black rhino populations in Kenya as well as other wildlife species such as lions, tigers, gorillas and orangutans, Rhino Impact said in a document detailing the proposal.

Two new seaweed species discovered along India's coastline

- Two new red algal seaweed species, which can be a potential raw material for those involved in jelly and ice cream production, have been discovered along India's coastline. A group of marine botanists, led by Felix Bast from the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB), have traced these native seaweed species along the coasts of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and in Gujarat and Daman Diu.
- Both varieties—Hypnea indica and Hypnea Bullata—were discovered in Kanyakumari. The fine and hairy algae Hypnea indica was discovered in Shivrajpur and Somnath Pathan in Gujarat, whereas Hypnea Bullata grew along the coastline of Daman and Diu. It is for the first time we have discovered these red algal species of sea weeds along Indian coasts.

Singapore builds floating solar farms in climate fight

- Thousands of panels glinting in the sun stretch into the sea off Singapore, part of the land-scarce city-state's push to build floating solar farms to cut greenhouse gas emissions. It may be one of the world's smallest countries, but the prosperous financial hub is among the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in Asia.
- One newly built solar farm spreads out from the coast into the Johor Strait, which separates Singapore from Malaysia. The 13,000 panels are anchored to the seabed and can produce five megawatts of electricity, enough to power 1,400 flats for an entire year.
- Under development at Tengeh Reservoir is a far bigger project – once completed later this year, the 122,000-panel solar farm will be one of the biggest in Southeast Asia covering an area the size of 45 football pitches.

India to conduct airborne radar surveys of Himalayan glaciers

- India plans to conduct airborne radar surveys to estimate the thickness of Himalayan glaciers, with a pilot study to be conducted in Lahaul-Spiti basin of Himachal Pradesh. Once the pilot project is done, similar studies will be conducted in Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra sub-basins.
- The development assumes significance given the importance of glaciers in India's river systems and the 500 million lives they sustain downstream in the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- They are also important from the energy security standpoint and have a strategic imperative. This also comes in the backdrop of India being one of the most vulnerable country for extreme weather events, ranking 20th on Climate Risk Index (CRI).
- Also, the country was recently witness to a human tragedy when several people lost their lives, after a glacier near Raini village above Rishiganga river in Uttarakhand burst in February.

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur, Malvika Bansod win Uganda International titles

- Indian shuttlers **Varun Kapur** and **Malvika Bansod** registered hard-fought wins to clinch the men's and women's singles titles respectively at the 2021 Uganda International in Kampala.

Vinesh Phogat bags Gold in Ukraine wrestling event

- Indian wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** has won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.
- Since the coronavirus halted all competitions last year, it was the **first competition** for Vinesh, who is the only Indian woman wrestler to have qualified for the Tokyo Games.

Mary Kom appointed as Chairperson of AIBA's champions & veterans committee

- **Six-time world champion pugilist Mary Kom** has been appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) champions and veterans committee.
- AIBA President **Umar Kremlev** said this in a letter to the 2012 Olympic bronze-medallist. **Mary Kom** was elected by the Board of Directors of AIBA. The Committee consists of most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.

Pollard hits six sixes off hat-trick man Dananjaya

- **West Indies captain Kieron Pollard** became only the third man to hit six sixes in an international over during the four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka.
- The feat came in the sixth over of a bizarre West Indies innings, bowled by off-spinner **Akila Dananjaya** who moments earlier in his previous over had been celebrating taking a hat-trick.
- Pollard followed in the footsteps of **South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs** against the Netherlands in the 2007 World Cup and **India's Yuvraj Singh**, who also achieved the feat in the 2007 Twenty20 World Cup against England.

P V Sindhu suffers demoralising defeat in Swiss Open final

- **World Champion P V Sindhu** finished a distant second best in the Swiss Open final after being completely routed by Olympic gold medallist **Carolina Marin** of Spain in a lop-sided women's singles title clash.

Manish Kaushik clinches gold at Boxam International Tournament

- In Boxing, continuing his splendid run, **Manish Kaushik** clinched gold as Indian boxers concluded their impressive campaign at the **Boxam International Tournament** with 10 medals in Castellon, Spain.
- The 2018 Commonwealth Games silver medallist **Kaushik** beat Denmark's **Nikolai Terteryan** with a split 3-2 decision in the men's 63 kg summit bout. However, the **World Championship bronze medallist Vikas Krishan** went down fighting 4-1 against local favourite **Ndiaye Sissokho** to settle for silver medal in the men's 69 kg.

Vinesh Phogat wins her 2nd gold in Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event

- **Star Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat won her second gold medal in the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event and reclaimed the top rank in her category in Rome.**

Chess player Koneru Humpy from Andhra Pradesh wins BBC ISWOTY for 2020

- **Chess player Koneru Humpy from Andhra Pradesh has won the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY) for 2020, following a public vote.**
- **The 33-year-old beat sprinter Dutee Chand, airgun shooter Manu Bhaker, wrestler Vinesh Phogat and India hockey captain Rani Rampal to the award. Humpy is the World Rapid Chess champion having won the title in December 2019 after a two-year maternity break. In 2020, she won the Cairns Cup, an elite-level tournament for the top female players.**
- **Born in the southern State of Andhra Pradesh, Humpy was identified as a chess prodigy at an early age by her father. She lived up to the reputation by becoming the youngest grandmaster, aged 15, in 2002. She received the Arjuna Award, one of India's top sporting honours, in 2003, and India's fourth-highest civilian award, Padma Shri, in 2007.**

Smriti Mandhana creates world record, becomes first cricketer to hit 10 consecutive fifty-plus scores in ODIs while chasing

- **Smriti Mandhana continued her rich vein of form as she smashed 80 off 64 balls to help India beat South Africa in the second ODI and level the five-match series. Her breathtaking innings were laced with 10 fours and three sixes. During her knock, she also created a new world record. She became the first-ever cricketer to hit 10 consecutive fifty-plus scores in ODI cricket while chasing. She has scored 50+ runs in every ODI chase starting from 2018.**

Mithali becomes 1st Indian woman cricketer to score 10,000 international runs

- **Veteran batter Mithali Raj became the first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats. The 38-year-old Mithali, who leads the Indian ODI team, joins England's Charlotte Edwards in the elite club.**

Virat Kohli becomes first cricketer to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International

- **India skipper Virat Kohli has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International.**
- **He now has 3,001 runs from 87 T20I matches. New Zealand's Martin Guptill is second on the list of leading run-getters in T20I cricket, having scored 2,839 runs in 99 matches. India's Rohit Sharma comes third in the list with 2,773 runs in 108 matches.**

Tokyo Olympics 2021: Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer to qualify for the Games

- **Tamil Nadu's Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi scripted history as she became the first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games. Bhavani secured a spot for the Tokyo Olympics at the World Cup in Hungary.**

Abu Dhabi-owned Mumbai City wins first Indian Super League title

- **Mumbai City has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title just over a year after being taken over by the owners of English Premier League giants Manchester City.**
- **India midfielder Bipin Singh scored a 90th-minute winner to edge out three-time winners ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final played behind closed doors in Goa.**

Kapil Dev inducted as Professional Golf Tour of India board member

- **Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI). Kapil Dev, who captained India to World Cup glory in 1983, said he would work for the development of golf in the country.**

Government to set up Winter Sports Institute in Gulmarg

- Youth Affairs & Sports Minister Kiren Rijju has said that the government is working to set up a Winter Sports Institute in Gulmarg, Kashmir.

Yashaswini Deswal wins 1st gold medal for India in Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final

- Yashaswini Deswal bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range. Deswal accumulated 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal with 236.7 points.

India's Singhraj clinches gold in 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup

- India's Singhraj displayed his skills to win a gold medal at the Al Ain 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup. He bagged the top honours in P1 men's 10m air pistol SH1 finals. Singhraj, the Sydney 2019 World Championships medallist, piped Rio 2016 bronze medallist Server Ibragimov by 2.8 points. Singhraj's gold also pushed India (one gold, one bronze) to the third place in the medals table behind Ukraine (three gold, three silver and a bronze) and the hosts United Arab Emirates (two gold).

Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia wins All England Badminton Championships Men's title; Nozomi Okuhara clinches Women's title

- Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia has won the All England Badminton Championships men's title as he defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the summit clash. With this win, Malaysia's title drought came to an end and it is after four years, that someone from the country has managed to win the All England Open.
- Lee Chong Wei had last won the All England Open for Malaysia in 2017. Japan's Nozomi Okuhara won the women's title as she defeated Pornpawee Chochuwong in the finals.

ISSF World Cup: India's Divyansh Singh Panwar & Elavenil Valarivan win gold medal

- India's Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan won the gold medal in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup being held in Delhi. The Indian duo put on a brilliant display of shooting to beat the Hungarian team of Istvan Peni and Eszter Denes 16-10 to take home the top prize.

Thisara Perera becomes first Sri Lankan to hit six sixes an over

- All-rounder Thisara Perera became the first Sri Lankan to hit six sixes in an over in any form of professional cricket during a domestic tournament. The 31-year-old achieved the feat during his unbeaten 13-ball 52 while captaining Sri Lanka Army in a group match against Bloomfield Cricket and Athletic Club in the Major Clubs Limited Over List A tournament.

Sport Events

PM Modi delivered inaugural address virtually at 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the **inaugural address at the 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games through video conferencing**. The Games continued till 2nd March.
- The event has been **organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council** and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The sports activities included **alpine skiing, nordic ski, snowboarding, ski mountaineering, ice hockey, ice skating, ice stock etc.** Twenty Seven States, Union Territories and Boards are participated in the games.

Odisha will host the 2020-2021 Hero Indian Women's League

- **Odisha will host the 2020-2021 Hero Indian Women's League the All India Football Federation**. The dates for the tournament are yet to be finalised and will be announced soon, the football body added.
- **AIFF president Praful Patel thanked the Odisha government for agreeing to play host to the event**. "The government of Odisha has been a great supporter of Indian football.

J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Winter National Games in Gulmarg

- **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally in the second edition of Khelo India Winter National Games**. J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.
- The five-day mega sports event which began on 26th of February concluded in the famous ski resort of Gulmarg in the north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

India beats England in final Cricket Test match, Qualifies for World Test Championship Final

- **India defeated England in the final Cricket test match at Ahmedabad to enter the final of the inaugural edition of the World Test Championship**. Cricket fans enjoyed India's win against formidable England by an **innings and 25 runs in the fourth and final test match at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad**. With this win, **India clinched the four-match series 3-1 and sealed a place in the final of the inaugural edition of the World Test Championship**.
- **India will play their inaugural World Test Championship final against New Zealand at Southampton's Ageas Bowl Stadium from June 18-22**, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly confirmed on Monday. Initially, the final was supposed to be held at the Lord's but Southampton, with a five-star facility inside the stadium, will make it easier for both the ICC and the England and Wales Cricket Board to create a bio-bubble for the two teams.

First-ever White Water Rafting Festival organised in J&K's Doda

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the first-ever adventure sports event, Chenab White Water Rafting Festival organised by the Doda District Administration** in coordination with Baderwah Development Authority (BDA) and J&K Adventure group culminated at Premnagar Shibnote in Doda amid overwhelming response from the people.

Odisha Gears Up To Host First Hockey India Junior Women Academy National Championship

- **The Sports and Youth Services Department of Odisha Government and Naval Tata Hockey Academy are getting ready to host the 1st Hockey India Junior and Sub Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021**. The sports championship is slated to begin from March 17 at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- As per the schedule, **the 1st Hockey India Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021** is being held between March 17 and March 26 while **the 1st Hockey India Sub Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021** is organized from March 17 to March 25.

ICC announces expansion of women's cricket events post 2023 cycle

- On the occasion of International Women's Day, **the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the expansion of women's cricket events post 2023 cycle**.

- The ICC said, more teams will compete in **both the Women’s World Cup and Women’s T20 World Cup from 2026 onwards as part of the ICC’s long-term commitment** to grow the game globally and in a sustainable fashion.
- The ICC said, **two 50-over World Cups will be played in 2025 and 2029 while four T20 World Cups** have been **scheduled for 2024, 2026, 2028, and 2030**. The sport’s governing body has also announced the advent of a new tournament, **called Women’s T20 Champions Cup and it will be played in 2027 and 2031**.

Doha to host first FINA Marathon Swim World Series 2021

- A total of 99 swimmers from 27 countries and regions are ready to compete in the **first leg of the FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series 2021 which will be staged in Doha, Qatar**.

India to play their inaugural WTC final against New Zealand in Southampton from June 18-22

- **India will play their inaugural World Test Championship final against New Zealand at Southampton’s Ageas Bowl Stadium from June 18-22**.

Ramamangalam to spearhead village sports tourism

- Sandwiched between Kolenchery, Muvattupuzha and Piravom in Ernakulam lie a quaint little village called **Ramamangalam, which has been selected to be India’s first sports tourism village**. Sports and Management Research Institute (SMRI) is working with Ave Stella Maris College and the people of Ramamangalam to make the project become a reality.

India Legends win 1st Road Safety World Series cricket title

- All-rounder **Yusuf Pathan starred with an unbeaten 62 and two wickets as the Sachin Tendulkar-captained India Legends beat Sri Lanka Legends by 14 runs** in the final to win the **first Road Safety World Series T20 title**.

India’s first pro league for kho kho

- **India’s first professional kho kho league — Ultimate Kho Kho League —** is set to begin later this year. Teams will comprise under-18 men from all states across India registered under the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI).
- Player drafts are scheduled for the middle of this year and franchise owners will be **offered a bank of over 150 Indian players, based on their performance and scores in Nationals** and the recently concluded high performance training camp in February.
- **Kho Kho is a popular tag game invented in Maharashtra, India. It is played by teams of 12 nominated players out of fifteen**, of which nine enter the field who sit on their knees (Chasing Team), and 3 extra (Defending Team) who try to avoid being touched by members of the opposing team.

AWARDS



PM Narendra Modi receives global energy and environment leadership award

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award** during an annual international energy conference. The Prime Minister also delivered the keynote address at the CERAWeek Conference-2021, which was held virtually from March 1 to 5, its organiser, IHS Markit.
- **The CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award was instituted in 2016. CERAWeek was founded in 1983 by Daniel Yergin and is held in Houston annually.**

Governor selected for global women of excellence award

- **Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has been selected for “Top 20 global women of excellence – 2021” award of the multi-ethnic advisory task force headed by US Congressman Danny K. Davis.** The award was presented to her at the ninth annual Congressional International Women’s Day Gala at Illinois in USA on March 7.
- **She was chosen by the jury for advocating women’s rights, gender parity and women’s equality. US Vice-President Kamala Harris was among the 19 other awardees, all of whom were selected from a host of nominations all over the world.**

Amitabh Bachchan becomes first Indian film personality to be felicitated with FIAF Award; Scorsese and Nolan to present

- **Megastar Amitabh Bachchan was honoured with an award by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).** The veteran actor was the **first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world’s film heritage.**
- **Hollywood film-makers and previous recipients of the FIAF Award - Martin Scorsese and Christopher Nolan - will present the award to Bachchan** during a virtual showcase scheduled to take place on March 19.
- **“This year FIAF celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its annual Award. To mark this momentous occasion, there could be no better recipient than one of the world’s greatest movie stars, and one who has understood, embraced, and publicised the cause of film preservation for years,”** Frederic Maire, President of FIAF, said in a statement.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020

- **Politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhathi Subramaniam is among 20 writers who will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.**
- **The national academy of letters announced the names on 12 March** during the opening day of its annual Festival of Letters event.
- **While Subramaniam won the award for her poetry collection When God is a Traveller in English, Moily was named for his epic poetry titled Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam in Kannada.**

- The list includes seven books of poetry, four novels, five short stories, two plays, and one each of memoirs and epic poetry in 20 Indian languages. The awards for Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani languages will be announced at a later date, the Akademi said in a statement.
- **Apart from Subramaniam, the others who won the award in poetry include Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), Anamika (Hindi), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Irungbam Deven (Manipuri), Rupchand Hansda (Santali), and Nihileswar (Telugu).**
- **The award, which will include a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and an amount of Rs 1,00,000, will be presented at the award presentation function, which will be held at a later date.**

Pritzker Prize 2021 awarded to Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal

- **Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have been announced as the winners of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize for 2021. The French architecture duo have championed considerate, sustainable architecture since they set up their practice in Paris in 1987.** It followed joint work in Niamey, Niger, where Vassal relocated for a period of time to practise urban planning.
- **It was in Niger that they created their first built project together** – a straw hut, constructed with locally sourced bush branches. Returning to Paris, they have since completed a slew of critically acclaimed work, such as Latapie House in Floirac (1993) and House in Cap Ferret (1998), both in France; and a wealth of multi-family housing schemes, in their home country and abroad, including two apartment buildings in Mulhouse (2005 and 2015).
- **The Pritzker Architecture Prize is awarded annually “to honor a living architect or architects whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture”. Founded in 1979 by Jay A. Pritzker and his wife Cindy, the award is funded by the Pritzker family and sponsored by the Hyatt Foundation. It is considered to be one of the world’s premier architecture prizes, and is often referred to as the Nobel Prize of architecture.**

Ambassador of India to Thailand receives King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award for ICAR

- **Ambassador of India to Thailand Suchitra Durai received the prestigious King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.** Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand **Dr. Chalermchai Srion** conferred the award in a Ceremony held at Bangkok.
- The international recognition was announced by the Food and Agriculture Organization, **Rome on the eve of World Soil Day - 2020 in view of the ICAR’s excellent contributions in Soil Health Awareness on the theme Stop soil erosion, save our future during the last year.**
- **The ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh organized** a wide array of several programmes with great fervour and enthusiasm for the school students, farming community and general public.
- The Institute organized a massive awareness campaign **for preserving SOIL - Our Mother Earth to commemorate the World Soil Day including March-Past and distribution of promotional materials on soil health to the participants.**

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- The award, which will include a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and an amount of Rs 1,00,000, will be presented at the award presentation function, which will be held at a later date.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman conferred Gandhi Peace Prize 2020

- The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 is being conferred on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The jury for the prize chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising the Chief Justice of India and the leader of the single largest opposition party in Lok Sabha unanimously selected the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for the award.
- Speaker of the Lok Sabha Om Birla and founder of the social service organisation Sulabh, Bindeshwar Pathak were the other eminent members of the jury. The Committee selected the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in recognition of his outstanding contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods.
- Prime Minister Modi has said that Bangabandhu was a champion of human rights and freedom, and is a hero to Indians as well.
- The Gandhi Peace Prize recognizes the immense and unparalleled contribution of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in inspiring the liberation of Bangladesh, bringing stability to a nation born out of strife, laying the foundation for the close and fraternal relations between India and Bangladesh, and promoting peace and non-violence in the Indian subcontinent, said the official press release given out on this occasion.
- Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by the Government of India since 1995, the 125th Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/ handloom item. It is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, creed or gender.
- Julius Kambarage Nyerere from Tanzania is the first person to win the Gandhi Peace Prize. A.T. Ariyaratne from Sri Lanka is second person to win the Gandhi Peace Prize from the government of India in 1996.

Gandhi Peace Prize for year 2019 being conferred on late Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman

- The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019 is being conferred on late Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman. The award carries an amount of one crore rupees, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft item.
- Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by Government since 1995, the 125th Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex.
- The Jury for Gandhi Peace Prize is chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprises of two ex-officio members, namely the Chief Justice of India and Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in Lok Sabha.
- Culture Ministry unanimously decided to select Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said as the recipient of the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019, in recognition of his outstanding contributions for social, economic and political transformation through non-violent and other Gandhian methods. Sultan Qaboos was a visionary leader whose twin policy of moderation and mediation in addressing international issues won him praise and respect across the globe.

Uttarakhand: Ranger receives international ranger award

- Mahinder Giri, a range officer who has been deployed at Motichur range of Rajaji Tiger Reserve (RTR) for the past few years, has become the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award.
- The award has been announced for 10 professionals across the globe by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), “based on their

contribution towards conservation”. The award was created in 2020 by IUCN and WCPA in collaboration with International Ranger Federation, Global Wildlife Conservation, and Conservation Allies.

63rd Grammy Awards: Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish bag top honours

- The 63rd Annual Grammy Awards were held on March 14, 2021, in and around the Los Angeles Convention Center. At the 63rd Grammy Awards, Taylor Swift and Billie Eilish won the top prizes while Beyonce became the most awarded female artist in Grammy history with her 28th win.
- Taylor Swift was awarded album of the year for her lockdown album ‘Folklore’, while Billie Eilish’s “Everything I Wanted” won record of the year.
- Swift is the first female artist ever to win album of the year three times. She has won the award previously for her album ‘Fearless’ in 2010 and the pop opus ‘1989’ in 2016. Only three other artists - Frank Sinatra, Paul Simon and Stevie Wonder - have ever won the album of the year prize three times.

The Grammy Award (stylized as GRAMMY, originally called Gramophone Award), or just Grammy, is an award presented by the Recording Academy to recognize achievement in the music industry. The trophy depicts a gilded gramophone. The annual presentation ceremony features performances by prominent artists, and the presentation of awards that have more popular interest. The Grammys are the first awards of the Big Three networks’ major music awards held annually (between the American Music Awards in fall, and Billboard Music Awards in summer). It is considered one of the four major annual American entertainment awards, along with the Academy Awards (film), the Emmy Awards (television), and the Tony Awards (theater and Broadway). The first Grammy Awards ceremony was held on May 4, 1959, to honor and respect the musical accomplishments by performers for the year 1958. Following the 2011 ceremony, the Academy overhauled many Grammy Award categories for 2012.

Dehradun Smart City awarded Smart City India award 2021

- For its work under the e-Health project, Dehradun Smart City Limited (DSCL) was awarded the Smart City India award 2021 by the central ministry of urban development. All the 100 smart cities had participated in the competition.
- IIT Guwahati and Gifu University have collaborated to offer a Joint International Master’s Programme since April 2019 to nurture highly-skilled professionals in the food and related industries.

Legendary Playback Singer Asha Bhosle Conferred with Maharashtra Bhushan Award

- Asha Bhosle has been conferred the Maharashtra Bhushan Award, the highest honour by the state government presented annually. The Ministry of Culture announced that the legendary playback singer will be bestowed with the honour for the year 2020.
- Bhosle is the second member of her family to win this honour, after Lata Mangeshkar was awarded the Maharashtra Bhushan in 1997. She was also the second awardee after writer P. L. Deshpande.

Hindi Writer Prof. Sharad Pagare to be conferred with Vyas Samman - 2020

- Well known Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman - 2020 for his novel ‘Patliputru Ki Samragi.’
- The Vyas Samman, started in 1991, is given by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.

Filmfare Awards 2021: Irrfan Khan Wins Posthumous Award - Best Actor

- The 66th edition of the Filmfare Awards was held in Mumbai and Irrfan Khan won a posthumous award: Best Actor - for his work in Angrezi Medium.
- Taapsee Pannu won the Best Actress Award for Thappad, which also bagged the Best Film, Best Story and Best Editing trophies. Amitabh Bachchan won the Best Actor (Critics) award for his performance in Gulabo Sitabo.

- Saif Ali Khan picked the Best Actor In A Supporting Role award for his work in Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior while Kajol's Devi won the Best Short Film (Popular Choice) award.

Mohankrishna Bohara wins Bihari Puraskar

- Mohankrishna Bohara was awarded the 30th Bihari Puraskar Award for his critical work 'Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya'.
- The award is given every year for an outstanding work published in the last 10 years by a Rajasthani author in Hindi or Rajasthani. The recipient is chosen by a selection committee, whose present chairman is Om Thanvi.

67th National Film Awards - 2019 were announced; Marakkar Arabikadalinte Simham wins best feature film awards

- The 67th National Film Awards were announced at a press meet on 22 March 2021 to honour the best Indian films censored in India between Jan 1 and Dec 31, 2019. The awards ceremony, at which the Directorate of Film Festivals presents its annual National Film Awards to honour the best in Indian cinema, was originally slated to be held on 3 May 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It would now be held on May 3, 2021.
- Malayalam movie Marakkar Arabikkadilinte Simham directed by Priyadarshan will be awarded the Best Feature Film Award.
- Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan will be given best Direction Award for Hindi film Bahattar Hoorain.
- Actor Manoj Bajpayee will be awarded best Actor award for Hindi movie Bhonsle and Dhanush will get the award for Tamil Movie Asuran.
- Mr Chandra said, Kangana Ranaut will get Best Actress award for her movies Manikarnika -The Queen of Jhansi and Panga.
- Vijaya Sethupati will be awarded the best supporting actor award for Tamil film Super Deluxe and Pallavi Joshi will get the best supporting actress award for Hindi film The Tashkent Files. B Praak will get the Best Male playback Singer award for song Teri Mitti in Hindi Film Kesari.
- Savani Ravindra will be awarded Best Female playback Singer award for song Rann Petala in Marathi Movie Bardo.
- D Imman will get best Music Direction Award for his songs in Tamil Fim Vishwasam. Prabuddha Banerjee will get the award for background music in Bengali movie Jeyesthaputro.
- Prabha Varma will get the Best Lyrics award for Malayalam movie Kolaambi. Raju Sundaram bagged the Best Choreography award for Telugu Movie Maharshi.
- The award for the most film friendly state goes to Sikkim. Best Non Feature Film will be awarded to Hemant Gaba's An Engineered Dream. The award for the best film critic goes to 'Sohini Chattopadhyay.
- In Non Feature Film category, Best Animation Film to be awarded to Radha. Best Art and Culture film award will be given to Shrikhetra ru Sahijata (Odia).
- The Award for the best Narration for Non-Feature Films goes to Wild Karnataka (English) by Sir David Attenborough. The award for the Best Music Direction in Non-Feature Films goes to Kranti Darshi Guruji-Ahead of Times (Hindi) by Bishakhjyoti.
- The best book on cinema goes to A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema written by Sanjay Suri.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Virat Kohli Becomes First Indian to Breach 100-Million Followers Mark on Instagram

- **Virat Kohli becomes the first Indian person to breach the 100-million followers' mark on Instagram.** Kohli, who is the most followed Indian on Instagram, has almost 40 million more followers than the second person on the list who is Priyanka Chopra with 60.8 million.
- **Kohli is also the most followed cricketer on Instagram** while he is the fourth on the list of athletes across all sports. The top on the list Cristiano Ronaldo who is also the most followed on Instagram with 265 million Instagram.
- **Barcelona captain Lionel Messi is second on the list with 186 million followers**, while Brazil star forward Neymar is on third with 147 million followers.

Indian American Naureen Hassan named first VP, COO of Federal Reserve Bank of New York

- **Indian American Naureen Hassan has been named as the first vice president and chief operating officer (COO) of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.**
- Hassan, a 25-year veteran of the financial services industry, has served in various capacities with expertise in strategy, digital transformation, and cybersecurity. **The appointment, effective March 15, was approved by the board of governors of the Federal Reserve System.**

CAG Girish Murmu appointed Chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors

- **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has been re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the year 2021.**
- **The CAG of India was initially elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2020.** Presently, the panel consists of 13 countries – India, Germany, Chile, China, United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

Ranveer Singh Bittu to work as Congress leader in Lok Sabha

- **Lok Sabha member Ranveer Singh Bittu from Punjab will be functioning as the Congress' leader in the Lower House for the remaining period of the current session as Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will be busy in West Bengal because of the Assembly election.**
- **His deputy Gaurav Gogoi and Chief Whip K. Suresh are also busy with the Assembly polls in Assam and Kerala respectively.**

Government appoints GP Samanta as new Chief Statistician

- The government has **appointed G P Samanta as the new Chief Statistician of India for a period of two years.** Samanta was **till now an adviser in the RBI's Department Of Statistics and Information Management.**
- **"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Dr GP Samanta as Chief Statistician of India (CSI)-cum-Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation initially for a period of two years. Samanta is India's fourth CSI.**

Union Minister Anurag Thakur promoted as Captain in Territorial Army

- **Union Minister Anurag Thakur became the first serving MP to be appointed as Captain in the Territorial Army.** The four-time BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur was **commissioned into the Territorial Army as a Lieutenant by then Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Dalbir S Suhag TA in July 2016.** Thakur was **promoted as Captain in the 124 Sikh regiment.**

Principal Advisor in PMO P.K. Sinha resigns

- **Former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) P.K. Sinha has relinquished his high-profile position on personal grounds.**

Gurdeep Singh of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party takes oath as Senator

- Gurdeep Singh from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party took the oath as a Senator, becoming the first turban-clad Sikh representative in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament.
- Mr. Singh, from the party of Prime Minister Imran Khan became the first turban-clad Sikh representative from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan's Senate on March 3. He defeated rival candidates on a minority seat by a huge margin in the election to the upper chamber of Parliament.

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of international body Stop TB Partnership Board

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board. He was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by 2025.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year. The Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB.
- The participation of a wide range of constituencies gives this global body the credibility and the broad range of medical, social and financial expertise needed to defeat TB. The Partnership's vision is a TB-free world.
- The appointment of Dr Harsh Vardhan as the Chair of this prestigious global body is a proud recognition of India's political commitment to the eradication of TB. Established in the year 2000, the 'Stop TB Partnership' is mandated to eliminate Tuberculosis as a public health problem.

Indra Nooyi's memoir, 'My Life in Full', will be released

- Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi has a memoir coming out this fall that her publisher is calling an "unvarnished take" on her rise to becoming one of the world's most powerful women.
- "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future" will be published Sept. 28.

US Senate votes to confirm Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy to be Prez Biden's Surgeon General

- US Senate has voted to confirm Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy to be President Biden's Surgeon General, handing the administration one of its top public health officials amid the coronavirus pandemic. The Senators voted 57-43 to confirm the Indian American as Biden's surgeon general.
- Dr Murthy said he is deeply grateful to be confirmed by the Senate to serve once again as the Surgeon General. 1977 born Dr Murthy served as the Surgeon General under the Obama administration from 2014 to 2017. He is a distinguished Physician and former Vice Admiral in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps.

Chinki Yadav shoots to World #1 rank, first athlete from Madhya Pradesh in any sport

- Shooter Chinki Yadav has become Madhya Pradesh's first athlete to secure a World No. 1 rank in any sport. With two back-to-back gold medals in the ongoing world championship in Delhi, she has become the world's top ranked pistol shooter in the women's 25m category, with 1,110 rating points.

Saurabh Garg appointed UIDAI CEO, Sanjeev Kumar to be AAI chief

- Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) as part of a bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre.
- Garg is at present serving in his cadre state Odisha. He is a 1991 batch IAS officer. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Garg as the CEO, UIDAI in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.
- Sanjeev Kumar, a 1991 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre, has been appointed as the Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI).

MISCELLANEOUS

India's first Grade-Separated Urban Expressway

- Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said he is hopeful that the **construction work on the country's first grade-separated urban expressway, Dwarka Expressway, worth Rs 8,662 crore** will be completed before 15 August 2022.
- The minister was reviewing the **progress work on the 29 km long expressway, which links Dwarka in the national capital, Delhi to Gurugram**. According to the minister, the Dwarka Expressway will immensely help reducing air pollution in Delhi-NCR. Also, it is the first instance of a project where the plantation of around 12,000 trees has been undertaken.

UP airport has bagged ACI's first prize for best services

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Babatpur in Varanasi**, the Parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, **bagged first prize in the category of Airport Service Quality (ASQ) by the Airport Council International (ACI)**.
- **Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Ahmedabad** was adjudged the second and **Chowdhary Charan Singh International Airport, Lucknow** bagged the third prize for providing the best airport services in the country. About 22 airports across the country were chosen by the ACI during its survey between January 2020 and December 2020.

NIM and Pune-based team up to offer India's first mountaineering diploma course

- The **Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) and Pune-based Guardian Giripremi Institute of Mountaineering (GGIM)** has **teamed up to offer the country's first mountaineering diploma course**. The one-year-long course would commence from June this year. The institutes signed an MoU regarding this last month.

India's first 'Transgender Community Desk' opens in Telangana's Gachibowli

- In what is claimed to be the **first-of-its-kind gender inclusive community policing initiative in the country**, **Cyberabad police inaugurated a 'Transgender Community Desk'** at Gachibowli police station. Commissioner of Police V.C. Sajjanar said the desk will be managed by a police liaison officer and a transgender person who is designated as community coordinator.

Anantapur, Nellore receive PM Kisan Award

- **Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar presented the prestigious Prime Minister's Kisan National Award to Nellore Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu**. The district was ranked first in resolving grievances received under PM Kisan portal, an official release said. The award was presented during the second anniversary of the PM-Kisan Yojana in New Delhi.

Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV merges, now to be known as Sansad TV

- **Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV** have been merged and now it will be known as Sansad TV. Retired IAS officer Ravi Capoor has been appointed as its Chief Executive Officer.
- **Sansad TV will telecast live proceedings of both the Upper and Lower Houses** on two different channels during simultaneous sitting of the Houses. The decision has been taken jointly by the **Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, M. Venkaiah Naidu, and Speaker of Lok Sabha, Om Birla**, based on the report of a committee set up to look into the integration of the two channels.

Principal Scientific Adviser to GOI launches Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship

- The **Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its Waste to Wealth Mission has launched the Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship to recognize students, community workers or Self-Help Groups, SHGs and municipal or sanitary workers** who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management, scientifically and sustainably. The **Waste to Wealth Mission** is one of the **nine national missions of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council, PM-STIAC**.

- Targeted to encourage community participation, the Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships invites applications from students and community workers who have done previous work or are currently engaged in waste management activities, including awareness campaigns, surveys and studies.

Mumbai local train: Indian Railways install MTRC system, commuters to get real-time updates

- Indian Railways' Western Railway zone has introduced the Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system which will play an important role in preventing train accidents through effective communication.
- The Mobile Train Radio Communication system is an effective and technologically advanced communication system which facilitates an instant and constant interaction of train crew with the Control Centre and the Station Master.

2-day national seminar on NEP and its Implementation concludes in Bhopal

- A two-day national seminar on National Education Policy and its Implementation, organised by Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication, Bhopal, NITI Aayog and Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal concluded.

Union Education Minister inaugurates the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 – Virtual Edition

- Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 – Virtual Edition.
- The Minister appreciated that 'National Education Policy-2020' is the theme of New Delhi World Book Fair 2021. Speaking on NEP, the Minister said, it has emerged as world's biggest reform, which will develop India not only as the Knowledge hub but will also help in making learners ideal and global citizens.

All-women crew of MT Swarna Krishna makes history

- In an attempt to acknowledge the efforts of women in breaking down the stereotypes in erstwhile male-dominated maritime sector, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has flagged off an all-women crew onboard Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) vessel MT Swarna Krishna, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. This is the first time in the world maritime history that a ship is being sailed by all women officers.

Government to form Centre of Excellence in gaming & other related areas in collaboration with IIT Bombay

- Government has decided to form Centre of Excellence in gaming and other related areas in collaboration with IIT Bombay. Addressing the opening ceremony of virtual exhibition and prize announcement of Khel Khel Mein through video conference, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, IIT will start the courses from this year itself.

Maritime India Summit-2021 celebrates 'Chabahar Day' on March 4

- India commemorated 'Chabahar Day' on March 04, 2021 on the margins of the Maritime India Summit-2021 which is being held from March 2-4, 2021, the MEA said in a statement. Chabahar Day was commemorated on the sidelines of the Second edition of International Maritime Summit-2021 in the virtual format.
- In 2018, Iran and India had signed an agreement worth USD 85 million to develop the Chabahar Port in south-eastern Iran. The port is located in the Gulf of Oman, and provides an alternative route for trade between India and Afghanistan. The Chabahar port is a key connectivity project to boost trade ties among India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

India's first AC railway terminal to function soon

- "Named after one of the foremost civil engineers, Bharat Ratna Sir M. Visvesvaraya, the nation's first centralised AC railway terminal in Bengaluru is set to become operational soon". The new coach terminal was planned at Baiyappanahalli in the city to meet the demand to introduce more express trains connecting Bengaluru.

After Strawberry and Jaggery Festival, Kalanamak Rice Festival held in UP

- After the grand success of the **Strawberry Festival in Jhansi and the Jaggery Festival in Lucknow**, the **Uttar Pradesh state government** is organised a **three-day ‘Kalanamak Rice Festival’** in Siddharthnagar district from March 13.
- **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath**, in his sustained efforts of creating new income opportunities for the farmers, has stressed on promoting the localised production and providing them with a market. The chief minister will inaugurate the festival virtually. **Kala Namak Rice, grown in this region, is One District One Product (ODOP) of some Eastern UP districts.**

Two-day Gur Mahotsav underway in Lucknow

- **In Uttar Pradesh, a Gur Mahotsav or jaggery festival is held in Lucknow.** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the two-day event. Mr Yogi said that the state government **aims to provide maximum benefit of their products to the farmers and for the purpose, the Mahotsav is being organised.**
- In Ayurveda, **jaggery is considered nutrient-rich with innumerable medicinal properties.** The Covid pandemic has increased the belief of people in indigenous stamina buster produce like Gur. There are several varieties of Gur exhibited in Mahotsav like jaggery mixed with dry ginger, saffron, fennel, cardamom, sesame, groundnut, cashew, and almond. Gur ki Kheer, Amrita tea, jaggery laddu, jaggery kulfi, jaggery Jalebi, and jaggery pudding, are attracting people a lot.

PM Narendra Modi greets people on Kashmiri Pandits’ festival ‘Herath’

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the occasion of Herath, **one of the biggest festivals of Kashmiri Pandits.** Herath Mubarak and prayed that the auspicious occasion furthers happiness and well-being all across. He hoped that everyone’s aspirations will be fulfilled in the times to come.

Delhi government decides to set up Delhi Board of School Education in national capital

- **Delhi government has decided to set up Delhi Board of School Education in the national capital.** Constitution of Delhi Board of School Education will take the education system of Delhi to new heights. Delhi government has taken several steps in the last six years which proves to be revolutionary.

AP CM Jagan Mohan Reddy launches Fact Check website to counter fake news against govt

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched an official “Factcheck” portal aimed at curbing misinformation by vested interests against the state government.**
- Launching the website: <http://factcheck.ap.gov.in> at his camp office, the chief minister said the **objective of this initiative is to stop the spread of malicious propaganda on social media.** He also launched an exclusive Twitter handle for the same.

Uttar Pradesh launched campaign to make golden cards of Ayushman Bharat scheme

- **Uttar Pradesh government launched a campaign to make golden cards of Ayushman Bharat scheme across the state.** The campaign aims to drive awareness about Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) across state and enable beneficiaries, especially those residing in the rural and remote areas, to avail cashless healthcare worth Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.
- Under the campaign free Ayushman golden card will be **given to those families who have still not taken the benefit of the scheme golden cards will be made at Panchayat offices Anganwadi centres primary schools health and wellness centres community Health centres** and even they will be available at the PDS shops also.

All Helpline numbers of Railways merged into single number 139 for queries, complaints and assistance

- Indian Railway has **integrated all railway helplines into single number 139 which is Rail Madad Helpline** for quick grievance redressal and enquiry during the journey.

- **As the new helpline number 139** will take over all the existing helpline numbers, it will be easy for the passengers to remember this number and connect with Railways for all their needs during the travel.
- **The Ministry of Railways** in a statement said that various Railway grievances helplines were discontinued last year and now, **Helpline number 182 would also be discontinued from 1st of April, 2021** and will be **merged into 139**.
- **The Helpline 139** will be **available in twelve languages and passengers can opt for Interactive Voice Response System- IVRS or directly connect to call-centre executives** by pressing the asterisk button. There is no need for a smart phone to call on 139.

India's first online entrepreneurship programme for kids comes to Jaipur

- **Motion Education**, under the astute leadership of edupreneur Nitin Vijay, has developed a futuristic entrepreneurship e-programme for kids aged between 8-16 years. Considering the safety and convenience for young students, the programme will be delivered **digitally in Jaipur effective first quarter of the financial year**.
- This innovative course is strategically designed to align with the objectives of PM Modi's three flagship programmes viz., Startup India, Skill India, and Digital India. **The planned e-Programme in Jaipur aims to bring out the city's talents**, which will help the pink city emerge as the reservoir of entrepreneurs.

Bangladesh renames Ministry of Information as Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

- **The government of Bangladesh** has decided to rename the **Ministry of Information to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**. The gazette notification for the change in name has been issued after getting the approval from the President.

PM Modi expresses grief over demise of Kathakali maestro Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has expressed **grief over demise of Kathakali maestro Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair**. Saddened by the demise of Kathakali maestro, Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair. His passion towards Indian culture and spirituality was legendary. He made exceptional efforts to groom upcoming talent in our classical dances. My thoughts are with his family and admirers.

Sanjaya Baru's book to tell inside story of India's power elite

- **Sanjaya Baru**, former advisor to Manmohan Singh, will take readers from the corridors of Parliament to **Delhi's hidden durbars** as he tells the "untold story" of Indian society in his new book.
- In "**India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution**", to be released in April by **Penguin Random House India** under its **Viking imprint**, Baru will unveil the emerging dynamics of the power elites in contemporary India.

World's first polar bear hotel opens in China's Heilongjiang drawing guests, criticism

- Hotel that bills itself as the **world's first "polar bear hotel"** has opened in **China's far northeastern Heilongjiang province**, drawing both guests and criticism for its central feature: live polar bears. **The Polar Bear Hotel**, part of the **Harbin Polarland theme park in Heilongjiang's capital and largest city, Harbin**.

Indian Railways launches massive drive against smoking and carriage of inflammable

- **Indian Railways** have **launched massive drive against smoking and carriage of inflammable material through Railways** in the view of incidents of fire resulting in loss of property and danger to life in various Zonal Railways. It may be continued till 30th April.
- The drive is aimed to educate all the stakeholders about precautions to be **taken against fire incidents like enforcing "No Smoking"**, and preventing carriage of inflammable material through rail.
- The message is being imparted through direct interaction, distribution of leaflets, pamphlets, pasting of stickers, **conducting Nukkad Nataks, announcement through PA System at stations**, and advertisement in print, electronic and social media.

Chhatrasal Convention Centre developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism inaugurated at Khajuraho

- **Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the ‘Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho.**
- The Chatrapal convention center has been developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism and will help in establishing Khajuraho as an iconic destination.

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launches ‘Tribal TB Initiative’ in pursuit of TB Mukta Bharat

- **Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched ‘Tribal TB Initiative’ in pursuit of TB Mukta Bharat.** Government accords top priority to ensuring Universal Access to free treatment and care for TB across the country.
- The the government has already increased the Budget allocation for TB in India a four-fold in the last five years. Dr Harsh Vardhan said, **the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir have been declared TB Free on World TB Day this year.**

Sikkim is India’s ‘most film friendly state’, now nationally acknowledged and awarded

- In the recently-concluded 67th National Film Awards, Sikkim was adjudged the ‘Most Film Friendly State’ in the country. **The small Himalayan state was recognised for its emergence as a new film shooting landscape in India.**

Actor Samir Soni’s debut book ‘My Experiments with Silence’ to share his darkest, most intense and introspective thoughts

- **Actor Samir Soni will come out with his debut book later this year** in which he will document in prose and poetry some of his “darkest, most intense and introspective thoughts” on anxiety and self-discovery.
- **‘My Experiments with Silence’ is slated to be published by OM Books International.** The publishers said this will be a “deeply personal account of Samir Soni’s dialogues with himself during his growing up years in Delhi, his stint at Wall Street and his time in Bollywood”.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wildlife Day 3 March

- On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** decided to proclaim **3 March, the international day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)** on the planet raise awareness and benefits fauna and flora in 1973, as **World Wildlife Day, which was proposed by Thailand**, to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora.
- **World Wildlife Day was celebrated in 2021 under the theme “Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet”**, as a way to highlight the central role of forests, forest species and ecosystems services in sustaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people globally, and particularly of Indigenous and local communities with historic ties to forested and forest-adjacent areas.

National Safety Day 2021

- **National Safety Day is observed on March 4 every year to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council**, which aims to raise awareness about safety measures that need to be undertaken to prevent accidents and mishaps.
- **The theme of National Safety Day of 2021 is “Learn from disaster and prepare for a safe future”.**

International Women’s Day to be celebrated

- **International Women’s Day was celebrated on 8th March.** The day is celebrated on the 8th of March every year to help forge a gender-equal world, celebrate women’s achievements and their increasing visibility in every sphere of life.
- **This day celebrates the cultural, political, economic and social achievements of women.** The day also highlights the extraordinary roles played by women in almost every walk of life and celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women. **The theme this year is - Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world.**

World Kidney Day

- **World Kidney Day is observed annually on the 2nd Thursday in March.** World Kidney Day is a global health awareness campaign focusing on the importance of the kidneys and reducing the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems worldwide.
- **The World Kidney Day Steering Committee has declared 2021 the year of “Living Well with Kidney Disease”.**

International Day of Action for Rivers on 14 March 2021

- **The International Day of Action for Rivers is a day dedicated to solidarity** – when diverse communities around the world come together with one voice to say that rivers matter. That communities having access to clean and flowing water matters.
- The International Day of Action Against Dams and For Rivers, Water and Life was adopted by the participants of the first International Meeting of People Affected by Dams, March 1997 in Curitiba Brazil. Representatives from 20 countries decided that the **International Day of Action takes place on March 14 – Brazil’s Day of Action Against Large Dams.** This year the theme of International Day of Action for Rivers is ‘Rights of Rivers’.

World Consumer Rights Day

- **The consumer movement marks 15th March with World Consumer Rights Day every year**, as a means of raising global awareness about consumer rights and needs. **Celebrating the day is a chance to demand that the rights of all consumers** are respected and protected, and to protest against market abuses and social injustices which undermine those rights.

- **World Consumer Rights Day** was inspired by President John F Kennedy, who sent a special message to the US Congress on 15th March 1962, in which he formally addressed the issue of consumer rights. He was the first world leader to do so. The consumer movement first marked that date in 1983 and now uses the day every year to mobilise action on important issues and campaigns.
- This year, Consumers International has announced that the **theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is ‘Tackling Plastic Pollution.’**

International Day of Happiness 20 March

- **The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution of 12 July 2012 proclaimed 20 March the International Day of Happiness**, recognizing the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.
- It also recognized the need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and the well-being of all peoples.
- **The resolution was initiated by Bhutan, a country which recognized the value of national happiness over national income since the early 1970s and famously adopted the goal of Gross National Happiness over Gross National Product.**
- **Theme of International Day of Happiness** for the current year 2021 is, ‘Keep Calm, Stay Wise, Be Kind’. This theme of Happiness Day 2021 focuses upon three basic factors of attaining happiness.

World Sparrow Day

- **World Sparrow Day** is a day designated to raise awareness of the house sparrow and then other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations, observed on 20 March.
- It is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.
- **Theme** The theme for this year’s ‘World Sparrow Day’ is ‘I Love Sparrows’ and is inspired with the hope that more people will celebrate the relationship between people and sparrows by making them remember the bond they share as people have lived in harmony with these little birds for 10,000 years.

International Day of Forests is celebrated

- Every year, March 21 is celebrated as the International Day of Forests. The day was founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization and United Nations in 2012. It is aimed at raising public awareness among diverse communities about the values, significance and contributions of the forests to balance the life cycle. International Day of Forests 2021 theme has been declared as is “Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being”.

World Poetry Day 21 March

- In celebrating World Poetry Day, March 21, UNESCO recognizes the unique ability of poetry to capture the creative spirit of the human mind. One of the main objectives of the Day is to support linguistic diversity through poetic expression and to offer endangered languages the opportunity to be heard within their communities.

World Tuberculosis Day being observed on 24th March

- **The day is observed on 24th March every year to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of Tuberculosis, TB, and to step up efforts to end the global epidemic.** The day is observed to commemorate the anniversary of Dr. Robert Koch’s discovery of the TB bacteria in 1882.
- **Each day, nearly 4000 lose their lives to TB and close to 28,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease. Global efforts to combat TB have saved an estimated 63 million lives since the year 2000.**
- **The theme of World TB Day 2021 – ‘The Clock is Ticking’** – conveys the sense that the world is running out of time to act on the commitments to end TB made by global leaders.

World Water Day

- **World Water Day** is an annual United Nations (UN) observance day held on 22 March that highlights the importance of fresh water. The objective of the day is to raise awareness of the global water crisis, and a core focus of the observance is to **support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) which is to ensure water and sanitation for all by 2030.**
- **The theme of this year is ‘valuing water’** specifically recognizes the crucial role of healthy ecosystems in maintaining water supplies around the world.

World Meteorological Day 2021

- **World Meteorological Day** is observed every year on **March 23** to highlight the importance of the role that people and their behaviour play in protecting Earth’s atmosphere. The day also commemorates the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which is an **intergovernmental body, on March 23, 1950.**
- **The World Meteorological Day theme - The Ocean, our climate and weather** – celebrates WMO’s focus in connecting the ocean, climate and weather within the Earth System. It also marks the starting year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).



Career
Launcher

QUESTIONS

- Which of the following Indian International Airports bagged first prize in the category of Airport Service Quality (ASQ) by the Airport Council International (ACI)?
(a) Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport
(b) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport
(c) Indira Gandhi International Airport
(d) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport
- Which of the following states launched 'e-Parivahan Vyavstha' of the State Transport Department to provide faceless services to the people of the State regarding Driving Licence/Registration Certificates/Permits etc.?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Uttar Pradesh
- Who among the following assumed the charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)?
(a) Shri Vijay Sampla (b) Shri Hansraj Hans (c) Shri Anand Prasad (d) Shri Subrat Narayanan
- Which of the following Indian districts was ranked first in resolving grievances received under PM Kisan portal?
(a) Patna (b) Surat (c) Nellore (d) Mysuru
- The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) will connect cities to innovators across the _____ to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges.
(a) National ecosystem (b) National unity (c) National planning (d) National adaptation
- Recently, Irakli Garibashvili was appointed as the new Prime Minister of:
(a) Georgia (b) Finland (c) Sweden (d) Mongolia
- Which of the following countries parliament passed a world-first law to force digital giants such as Facebook Inc. and Google pay local publishers for news content – a move that may unleash more global regulatory action to limit their power?
(a) New Zealand (b) Australia (c) Canada (d) USA
- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a working group committee to relook its information and security guidelines amid the exponential increase in cyberattacks across the globe in the wake of covid-19. The 14-member committee will be headed by:
(a) Amit Mohan (b) Deepak Chandra (c) Janakiram (d) Abhishek Ranjan
- Which of the following companies has become the first seed producer in the world with more than one lakh acres under seed production in a country?
(a) Suhas Seeds Company
(b) Godavari Seeds Company
(c) Kaveri Seeds Company
(d) Ganga Seeds Company
- Who among the following received the CERAWEEK global energy and environment leadership award during an annual international energy conference?
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(b) President Ramnath Kovind
(c) Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar
(d) Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar

11. Recently, The Bar Council of India (BCI) took the initiative to set up India's first law teacher training institute - Indian Institute of Law (IIL) - in collaboration with Kalinga Institute of Industrial Training (KIIT) at _____.
- (a) New Delhi (b) Pune (c) Bhubaneswar (d) Hisar
12. Recently, Minister for Social justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually launched _____ and a handbook entitled "Access- The Photo Digest".
- (a) "Saubhagya Bharat App" (b) "Suramya India App"
(c) "Sugamya Bharat App" (d) "India Swagya App"
13. Who among the following launched the Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas at a function in New Delhi?
- (a) Union Minister for Environment Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar
(b) Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah
(c) Union Minister for Finance Nirmala Sitharaman
(d) Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari
14. Recently Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the field assessment of Swachh Survekshan -2021 at a web event in New Delhi. Every year, the on-field assessment takes place between _____ January.
- (a) 1st to 31st (b) 1st to 15th (c) 4th to 31st (d) 15th to 31st
15. Recently, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in association with ICICI Bank and ValetEZ has enabled Brookfield Mall as India's first Contactless Mall in _____ making parking seamless and ready.
- (a) Bengaluru (b) New Delhi (c) Chennai (d) Hyderabad
16. India's first machine tool park is ready for investors in _____.
- (a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Maharashtra (d) Tamil Nadu
17. Recently, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has accomplished the mission with successful launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C51 (PSLV-C51) and placing 19 satellites including _____ of Brazil in sun synchronous orbit.
- (a) Amazonia-1 (b) Amazonia-6 (c) Brazilia-15 (d) Braziliaca-333
18. Which of the following countries launched its space satellite Arktika-M on a mission to monitor the climate and environment in the Arctic to expand the country's activities in the region?
- (a) Germany (b) Russia (c) Sweden (d) China
19. Who won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine?
- (a) Smita Das (b) Geeta Phogat (c) Vinesh Phogat (d) Babita Phogat
20. Who has become the first Indian person to breach the 100-million followers' mark on Instagram?
- (a) Priyanka Chopra (b) Deepika Padukone
(c) Mahendra Singh Dhoni (d) Virat Kohli
21. Which of the following states launched "Gharoki Paachan, Chelik Naam" (daughter's name is a home's identity) programme recently?
- (a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Uttarakhand
22. Recently, Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV have been merged and now it will be known as _____.
- (a) Sansad TV (b) Parliament TV (c) Bhartiya Sansad TV (d) Sansad 2021 TV

23. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Maritime India Summit 2021' through video conferencing. Which is the partner country for the three-day summit?
(a) Sweden (b) Norway (c) Finland (d) Denmark
24. Recently, Sri Lanka offered to develop a container terminal of _____ with investors from India and Japan.
(a) Hambantota Port (b) Galle Port (c) Colombo Port (d) Trincomalee Port
25. The exercise 'Desert Flag' is an annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the _____ Air Force.
(a) United Arab Emirates (b) Saudi Arabia
(c) Israel (d) Jordan
26. Recently, India climbed up to _____ spot in the Hurun Global Rich List 2021 with 209 billionaires – 40 more than last year.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
27. The agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPS came into effect in _____.
(a) 1975 (b) 1982 (c) 1995 (d) 1998
28. Recently, An exotic and highly invasive earthworm *Amyntas alexandri* of the Megascolecidae family has been collected and reported for the first time from _____.
(a) Maharashtra (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Chhattisgarh
29. Which of the following states will host the 2020-2021 Hero Indian Women's League the All India Football Federation?
(a) Jharkhand (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Odisha
30. World Wildlife Day was celebrated in year 2021 on:
(a) 1st March (b) 3rd March (c) 5th March (d) 7th March
31. Which of the following countries conservationists unveiled plans to build the world's first refuge for the platypus, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change?
(a) New Zealand (b) Australia (c) Spain (d) Italy
32. To set up International Bullion Exchange at GIFT City, _____ has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) recently.
(a) India INX International Exchange (b) Multi Commodity Exchange of India
(c) National Securities Depository (d) Central Depository Services
33. Which of the following states recently announced scheme for 1 lakh 75 thousand fishermen of the state and have been linked with accident insurance scheme?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Haryana
34. Recently, Indian Railways _____ has introduced the Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system which will play an important role in preventing train accidents through effective communication.
(a) Western Railway zone (b) Eastern Railway zone
(c) Northern Railway zone (d) Southern Railway zone
35. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India will invest 82 billion dollars in port projects by _____.
(a) 2024 (b) 2027 (c) 2035 (d) 2040

36. Which of the following launched an ‘AI Gamechangers’ program to promote artificial intelligence (AI)-led innovation in the country, the apex body of the IT industry?
(a) Nasscom (b) SEBI
(c) SIDBI (d) NASDAQ
37. Recently, Indian Scientists have designed and developed a low-cost optical spectrograph. One of the largest astronomical spectrographs in the country has been successfully commissioned near _____.
(a) Nainital Uttarakhand (b) Manali Himachal Pradesh
(c) Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh (d) Leh, Ladakh
38. Who has been appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association’s (AIBA) champions and veterans committee recently?
(a) Mary Kom (b) Vijender Singh (c) Yogeshwar Dutt (d) Sushil Kumar
39. Which of the following Union Territories / States topped the medals tally in the second edition of Khelo India Winter National Games?
(a) Ladakh (b) Sikkim (c) Goa (d) Jammu and Kashmir
40. National Safety Day is observed on _____ every year to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council.
(a) March 2 (b) March 4 (c) March 6 (d) March 8
41. How many Indian Institutions have secured a position in top 100 in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021?
(a) 5 (b) 8 (c) 12 (d) 24
42. The Indian Air Force is for the first time participated in the annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise _____ hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.
(a) Desert Flag VI (b) Desert Eagle IV (c) Desert King VIII (d) Triumph Tiger III
43. Name the Indian state governor who has been selected for “Top 20 global women of excellence - 2021” award of the multi-ethnic advisory task force headed by US Congressman Danny K. Davis.
(a) Anandiben Patel (b) Baby Rani Maurya (c) Anusuiya Uikey (d) Tamilisai Soundararajan
44. Recently, Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri announced the release of the final rankings of Ease of Living Index-2020 and the Municipal Performance Index-2020. Which of the following cities emerged as the top performer in the Million Plus category?
(a) Ahmedabad (b) Bengaluru (c) Surat (d) Indore
45. Recently, The Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) and Pune-based Guardian Giripremi Institute of Mountaineering (GGIM) has teamed up to offer the country’s first mountaineering diploma course. Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) is located in:
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Uttarakhand (d) Jammu & Kashmir
46. Which of the following had started a new system to permit the first cultural visa in the world, a golden visa?
(a) Dubai (b) Melbourne (c) Abu Dhabi (d) Napier
47. Name the mutual fund which has announced the launch of an International Access - US Equity FoF, an open-ended Fund of Fund scheme that would invest in mutual fund scheme/ETFs that further invests in the US markets.
(a) ICICI Mutual Funds (b) HDFC Mutual Funds
(c) SBI Mutual Funds (d) Punjab National Bank Mutual Funds

48. Recently, A team of researchers from the _____ has identified multiple mutations and unique proteins in isolates of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- (a) AIIMS New Delhi (b) IIT Kanpur
(c) Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) Bengaluru (d) IIT Delhi
49. Recently, Chabahar Day was commemorated on the sidelines of the Second edition of International Maritime Summit-2021 in the virtual format on:
- (a) 1st March (b) 3rd March (c) 4th March (d) 7th March
50. Recently, UN General Assembly adopts India’s resolution to declare 2023 as _____.
- (a) International Year of Wheat (b) International Year of Millets
(c) International Year of Linseed (d) International Year of Bajra
51. India’s first World Skill Centre was inaugurated in:
- (a) Shillong (b) Lucknow (c) Ranchi (d) Bhubaneswar
52. India’s first grade-separated urban expressway is:
- (a) Yamuna Expressway (b) Ganga Expressway
(c) Purvanchal Expressway (d) Dwarka Expressway
53. Who recently inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 – Virtual Edition?
- (a) Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ (b) Shri Narendra Modi
(c) Shri Ramnath Kovind (d) Shri Prakash Javadekar
54. Name the Indian American who has been named as the first vice president and chief operating officer (COO) of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York recently.
- (a) Naureen Hassan (b) Niharika Duli (c) Anamika Lal (d) Nahida Ahmed
55. The World’s first ice hotel that doesn’t melt even in summer is built in:
- (a) Iceland (b) Sweden (c) Denmark (d) Norway
56. Which of the following countries has recently launched its national app portal bdapps.com?
- (a) Bhutan (b) Bangladesh (c) Bermuda (d) Barbados
57. Which of the following banks is using NPCI’s interoperable in infrastructure to serve customers of other banks as well through its app called “imobile pay”?
- (a) HDFC Bank (b) Axis Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) RBL Bank
58. Which of the following countries was the top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India in the first nine months of FY21 at \$15.7 billion?
- (a) USA (b) Mauritius (c) Canada (d) Singapore
59. Who has become only the third man to hit six sixes in an international over of cricket?
- (a) Kieron Pollard (b) Martin Guptill (c) Aaron Finch (d) Rishabh Pant
60. Recently, Defence Research and Development Organisation has successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on _____ Ducted Ramjet technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- (a) Solid Fuel (b) Liquid Fuel (c) Gas Fuel (d) Aerosol Fuel

61. Which of the following states will set up a new department, namely the Department of Mission Shakti?
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha
(c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
62. Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' between _____ on 9th March 2021 via video conferencing.
(a) India and Bangladesh (b) India and Nepal
(c) India and Sri Lanka (d) India and Bhutan
63. In what is claimed to be the first-of-its-kind gender inclusive community policing initiative in the country, Cyberabad police inaugurated a 'Transgender Community Desk' at Gachibowli police station in _____.
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Karnataka
(c) Telangana (d) Maharashtra
64. Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has flagged off an all-women crew onboard Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) vessel _____ the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
(a) MT Swarna Kamal (b) MT Swarna Krishna
(c) MT Swarna Nauka (d) MT Swarna Kalash
65. Recently, As the ice-covered parts of the Arctic Ocean melt due to climate change _____ has flagged its interest to take part in building "Polar Silk Road", raising prospects for the emergence of a new sea route.
(a) Russia (b) Japan (c) China (d) USA
66. Recently, HDFC ERGO General Insurance has introduced _____ a unique cover aimed at protecting the balance sheet of MFIs, financial institutions and banks in the event of a catastrophe or natural disaster.
(a) Business Kisht Suraksha (b) Business Montly Surakshit
(c) Vyapar Kisht Suraksha (d) Business Kisht Prabhaw
67. Recently, Scientists have for the first time observed a space hurricane in Earth's _____ atmosphere.
(a) Upper (b) Middle (c) Lower (d) Both in middle and lower
68. The U.S. Department of Commerce is preparing to tax aluminium sheet exporters from _____ countries after determining that they had benefited from subsidies and dumping.
(a) 10 (b) 12 (c) 15 (d) 18
69. According to the Central Pollution Control Board data, which of the following states topped the list of most contaminated sites?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh
(c) Jharkhand (d) Odisha
70. Name the two cricket teams which entered the final of the inaugural edition of the World Test Championship.
(a) India and New Zealand (b) England and Australia
(c) India and Australia (d) New Zealand & Australia
71. In Uttar Pradesh, a Gur Mahotsav or jaggery festival is held in _____.
(a) Kanpur (b) Lucknow
(c) Gorakhpur (d) Meerut

72. Recently, Government of India has constituted a 259 members National Committee headed by _____ to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence.
- (a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(b) Home Minister Amit Shah
(c) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh
(d) Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
73. The Sikh fighter pilot memorial in UK to honour Indians who fought in World Wars is to come up in:
- (a) London (b) Liverpool (c) Cardiff (d) Southampton
74. Name the country which has issued new currency notes of one million bolivars to deal with inflation and the financial crisis.
- (a) Chile (b) Peru (c) Venezuela (d) Bolivia
75. Name the first independent digital banking platform in the United Arab Emirates that launched a neobank hoping to become a leader in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.
- (a) YAP (b) MKP (c) YPL (d) HGR
76. Recently, Scientists have custom-made a platform to detect the effect of prolonged alcohol exposure on _____ through high-resolution measurements of their size.
- (a) White Blood Cells (WBC) (b) Red Blood Cells (RBC)
(c) Blood Plasma (d) Skin Tissues
77. Recently, Government of India has made it mandatory for vehicle manufacturers to fit airbag for the person occupying _____ other than the driver.
- (a) Front seat (b) Back seat behind the driver
(c) Back seat diagonally opposite to driver (d) Two seats of choice
78. Which of the following states will host the first Hockey India Junior and Sub Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021?
- (a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Gujarat (d) Uttar Pradesh
79. Who won the Swiss Open Badminton final 2021?
- (a) P V Sindhu (b) Saina Nehwal (c) Carolina Marin (d) Pornpawee Chochuwong
80. International Women's Day is celebrated every year on:
- (a) 3rd March (b) 5th March (c) 8th March (d) 11th March
81. The first 'Forest Healing centre' of the country was inaugurated at _____ Uttarakhand.
- (a) Ranikhet (b) Almora (c) Dehradun (d) Haridwar
82. Recently, Dr Harsh Vardhan exhorted scientists of CSIR laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the _____.
- (a) "CSIR Pushpa Mission" (b) "CSIR Floriculture Yojana"
(c) "CSIR Floriculture Mission" (d) "CSIR Pushpa Yojana"
83. Which of the following Indian states launched an official "Factcheck" portal aimed at curbing misinformation by vested interests against the state government?
- (a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana (c) Karnataka (d) Maharashtra

84. Recently, which of the following countries Prime minister won a trust vote in the National Assembly amid a boycott call by the Opposition parties?
(a) Bangladesh (b) Pakistan (c) Sri Lanka (d) Myanmar
85. Recently, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) partnered with _____ to announce the launch of 'RuPay SoftPoS' for millions of Indian merchants.
(a) ICICI Payments (b) SBI Payments
(c) Visa Payments (d) HDFC Payments
86. The Food Waste Index Report 2021, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP, said that around _____ tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019.
(a) 431 million (b) 567 million (c) 689 million (d) 931 million
87. Recently, The cricket sport's governing body ICC has announced the advent of a new tournament, called _____ and it will be played in 2027 and 2031.
(a) Women's T20 Champions Trophy
(b) Women's T20 Champions of Champions
(c) Women's T20 Champions Cup
(d) Women's T20 Winners Cup
88. Boxam International Tournament is associated with:
(a) Table Tennis (b) Hockey (c) Football (d) Boxing
89. Name the woman wrestler who won her second gold medal in the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event and reclaimed the top rank in 53 kg category in Rome.
(a) Babita Phogat (b) Vinesh Phogat (c) Geeta Phogat (d) Amita Singh
90. World Kidney Day is observed annually on _____ in March.
(a) 2nd Thursday (b) 2nd Tuesday (c) 2nd Wednesday (d) 2nd Saturday
91. Who has become the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand?
(a) Satpal Maharaj (b) Harak Singh Rawat
(c) Ramesh Pokhariyal Nishank (d) Tirath Singh Rawat
92. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released _____ Volumes of Manuscript with commentaries by 21 scholars on shlokas of Srimad Bhagavadgita.
(a) 6 (b) 9 (c) 11 (d) 16
93. Recently, Indian Railway has integrated all railway helplines into single number _____ which is Rail Madad Helpline for quick grievance redressal and enquiry during the journey.
(a) 101 (b) 112 (c) 139 (d) 157
94. Recently, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, _____ inaugurated the International Conference on Multifunctional Electronic Materials and Processing (MEMP 2021) virtually.
(a) Sanjay Dhotre (b) Prakash Javadekar
(c) Mansukhlal Mandaviya (d) Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi
95. Name the first European country which has begun its first military exercises in space to test its ability to defend its satellites?
(a) Italy (b) Ireland (c) France (d) Germany

96. The Indian Navy plans to retrofit all its _____ class non-nuclear attack with AIP during their first upgrade, expected around 2023.
(a) Kalvari (b) Kaislasha (c) Vinashak (d) Virat
97. The European Commission presents a vision, targets and avenues for a successful digital transformation of Europe by _____.
(a) 2022 (b) 2024 (c) 2027 (d) 2030
98. Who won the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY) for 2020, following a public vote?
(a) Virat Kohli (b) Vishvanathan Anand
(c) P.V.Sindhu (d) Koneru Humpy
99. India will play their inaugural World Test Championship final against New Zealand at _____ from June 18-22.
(a) Southampton (b) London (c) Cardiff (d) Napier
100. Who among the following has become the first Indian film personality to be felicitated with FIAF Award?
(a) Shahrukh Khaan (b) Amitabh Bachchan
(c) Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (d) Akshay Kumar
101. Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined for a virtual summit of the Quadrilateral Framework (Quad). Which of the following countries is not part of the Indo-Pacific Quad?
(a) USA (b) Australia (c) Japan (d) China
102. India's largest floating solar power plant of 100 MW capacity, belonging to the National Thermal Power Corporation, is expected to be commissioned at _____ in May.
(a) Ramagundam (b) Vellore (c) Guwahati (d) Dimapur
103. Who has been recently re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the year 2021?
(a) Girish Chandra Murmu (b) Ajay Vikram Ratra
(c) Duleep Fadnavis (d) Hemant Contractor
104. Recently, which of the following European countries has begun its first military exercises in space in a bid to test its ability to defend its satellites?
(a) France (b) Germany (c) Portugal (d) Ireland
105. Recently, Hamed Bakayoko, passed away in a hospital in Germany. He was the Prime Minister of:
(a) Ghana (b) Mauritius (c) Maldives (d) Ivory Coast
106. The _____ launched its first virtual trade fair to boost export of agricultural and processed food products.
(a) ICRISAT
(b) Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority
(c) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
(d) Ministry of Finance
107. Recently, which of the following countries topped the global ranking for the second year in a row in the latest Economic Freedom Index published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation?
(a) Singapore (b) Maldives
(c) Mauritius (d) Sri Lanka

108. Apple to build Europe's largest R&D facility in _____.
(a) Portugal (b) France (c) Italy (d) Germany
109. The FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series 2021 which will be staged in _____.
(a) Germany (b) Iceland (c) Qatar (d) France
110. World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) 11 March (b) 12 March (c) 13 March (d) 15 March
111. Who has been appointed as the new Chief Statistician of India for a period of two years recently?
(a) Atul Bedade (b) G P Samanta
(c) Manish Mahajan (d) Anniruddh Mukherjee
112. Name the Union Minister who became the first serving MP to be appointed as Captain in the Territorial Army.
(a) Subrahmanyam Jaishankar (b) Jitendra Singh
(c) Anurag Thakur (d) Kiren Rijiju
113. Recently, IOCL, IDCO signs MoU to develop _____ as the first fully operational plastic park in the country.
(a) Hisar Plastic Park in Haryana
(b) Meerut Plastic Park in Uttar Pradesh
(c) Paradip Plastic Park in Odisha
(d) Guntur Plastic Park in Andhra Pradesh
114. Recently, The _____ joint military exercise DUSTLIK II commenced in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet in Uttarakhand.
(a) India – Kazakhstan (b) India – Uzbekistan
(c) India – Turkmenistan (d) India – Afghanistan
115. The Industrial gases firm Linde will supply liquid green hydrogen and related infrastructure to the world's first hydrogen-powered ferry in _____.
(a) Finland (b) Norway (c) Ireland (d) Sweden
116. Recently, Lieutenant-General Frances Allen has been named vice chief of the defense staff of _____.
(a) Canada (b) USA (c) Mexico (d) Chile
117. Recently, which of the following banks has topped the list of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology's (MeitY) Digital Payment Scorecard for 3 consecutive months?
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) State Bank of India
(c) Union Bank of India (d) ICICI Bank
118. The world's most powerful supercomputer _____ is now fully developed in Japan, and the machine is available for research use.
(a) Fugaku (b) Sikaku (c) Migagu (d) Jikaku
119. Name the woman cricketer who becomes first cricketer to hit 10 consecutive fifty-plus scores in ODIs while chasing.
(a) Mitali Raj (b) Harmanpreet Kaur (c) Smriti Mandhana (d) Elysse Perry
120. The International Day of Action for Rivers is observed every year on:
(a) 7th March (b) 9th March (c) 12th March (d) 14th March

121. Which of the following countries has become the first country in the world to roll out vaccine passports or an international vaccine health certificate?
(a) Japan (b) China (c) India (d) South Korea
122. Who has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) in March 2021?
(a) Atul Mandhata (b) Madan Malviya (c) Deepak Mishra (d) Akshat Mishra
123. Which of the following has become the first bank in India to launch its own range of wearable contactless payment devices dubbed as 'Wear N Pay'?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) Axis Bank (c) HDFC Bank (d) Yes Bank
124. The _____ now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.
(a) Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru
(b) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad
(c) Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi
(d) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata
125. Recently, India has opened an "energy office" in _____ well-known landmark Federation Tower that will have the presence of five top Indian energy PSUs.
(a) Moscow's (b) New York's (c) Venice's (d) London's
126. Abdelhamid Dbeibah is the present interim Prime Minister of:
(a) Libya (b) Turkey (c) Egypt (d) Iran
127. Recently, the Uttar Pradesh state government is organised a three-day 'Kalanamak Rice Festival' in _____ district from March 13.
(a) Kushinagar (b) Siddharthnagar (c) Lakhimpur (d) Pilibhit
128. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the occasion of Herath, one of the biggest festivals of _____.
(a) Kashmiri Pandits (b) Rajasthani Sindhi (c) Malyali Christians (d) Tamil Pandits
129. Who has become the first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats?
(a) Harmanpreet Kaur (b) Smriti Mandhana (c) Mithali Raj (d) Punam Raut
130. World Kidney Day is observed annually on the 2nd _____ in March.
(a) Monday (b) Tuesday (c) Thursday (d) Saturday
131. Who will be awarded the 30th Bihari Puraskar Award for his critical work 'Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya'?
(a) Mohankrishna Bohara (b) Anaditya Moharta
(c) Anniruddh Pandit (d) Vimal Jalotpal
132. Who has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International?
(a) Virat Kohli (b) Kieron Pollard (c) Martin Guptill (d) Eon Morgan
133. Recently, The Centre has reconstituted an advisory committee to chalk out a plan for studying the mythical Sarasvati River for the next two years. Who will be the head of this committee?
(a) Prime Minister (b) Union Jalshakti Minister
(c) Union Culture Minister (d) Union Home Minister

134. As per the latest Bloomberg Billionaires Index, who among the following businessman persons has achieved a remarkable milestone amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as he added the highest wealth to his fortune in the world?
(a) Gautam Adani (b) Warren Buffett (c) Elon Musk (d) Mukesh Ambani
135. According to leading consultancy PwC's 24th Annual Global CEO Survey, which of the following countries is the number one market that CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) are looking to in terms of growth over the next 12 months?
(a) China (b) Japan (c) India (d) USA
136. The "Noble Dina" naval exercise does not include which of the following countries?
(a) Cyprus (b) Italy (c) Israel (d) Greece
137. Which of the following countries charity launched the world's first fund to support LGBT+ people whose vulnerability to climate change is worsened by poverty and discrimination?
(a) Italian (b) British (c) American (d) Canadian
138. India's first centralised AC railway terminal in _____ is set to become operational soon.
(a) Bengaluru (b) Jaipur (c) Mumbai (d) Kochi
139. Who will be functioning as the Congress' leader in the Lower House for the remaining period of the current session?
(a) Ranveer Singh Bittu (b) Rahul Gandhi (c) Sonia Gandhi (d) Manish Tewari
140. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new scheme for tourist vehicle operators. The new set of rules, to be known as, All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021, will be applicable from _____ this year.
(a) 1st April (b) 1st May (c) 1st June (d) 1st July
141. The first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games is
(a) Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi
(b) Anamika Singh Durgapal
(c) Chanda Devraja Durga Devi
(d) Neelima Mishra
142. Name the Politician-writer who is among 20 writers who will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.
(a) Naveen Jindal (b) Yashwant Sinha (c) Shashi Tharoor (d) M Veerappa Moily
143. Indian Government will soon launch _____ portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
(a) 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mondal Mitra'
(b) 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra'
(c) 'Atmanirbhar Industry Friend'
(d) 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mandal'
144. Recently, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched _____ for the benefit of those ration card holders who move to new places in search of livelihood.
(a) My Ration My App (b) Mera Ration Mobile App
(c) Mera Ration Mera Adhikaar App (d) Hamara Ration Hamara Adhikaar
145. Who has become the first turban-clad Sikh representative in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament?
(a) Gurdayal Singh Dhillon (b) Amrik Singh
(c) Gurdeep Singh (d) Jasmeet Singh

146. Who is to be first foreign leader to visit US President Joe Biden?
(a) Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b) Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
(c) Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (d) Russian President Vladimir Putin
147. The first Indian gaming company to go public is
(a) Nazara Technologies Ltd (b) Muskan Technologies Ltd
(c) Tikana Technologies Ltd (d) Hazara Technologies Ltd
148. Recently, Ambassador of India to Thailand Suchitra Durai received the prestigious King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization on the behalf of the _____.
(a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research
(b) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
(c) BARC
(d) ICRISAT
149. The theme of BRICS 2021 is:
(a) "BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus"
(b) "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for development, integration and industrialization"
(c) "BRICS partnership - a driving force of global development"
(d) "BRICS partnership for global stability, security and prosperity"
150. Recently, ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called _____ series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560.
(a) Rucnit (b) Ruchi (c) Rohini (d) Roshani
151. Recently, which of the following teams has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title?
(a) Mumbai City (b) East Bengal
(c) Chennaiyin (d) ATK Mohun Bagan
152. Recently, The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeking increase in the FDI limit to _____ per cent in the domestic Insurance Companies was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.
(a) 51 (b) 60 (c) 74 (d) 100
153. Britain's cabinet office will set up a "second flagship Head Quarter" in _____.
(a) Southampton (b) Cardiff (c) London (d) Glasgow
154. Recently, The Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in _____ has launched the world's first Bachelor of Tolerance and Coexistence.
(a) Jakarta, Indonesia (b) Manila, Philippines (c) Abu Dhabi, UAE (d) Karachi, Pakistan
155. Recently, A Japanese-Australian venture has begun producing hydrogen from _____.
(a) Blue Coal (b) Brown Coal (c) White Coal (d) Red Coal
156. The Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by _____ this year.
(a) June 1 (b) July 31 (c) September 30 (d) October 31
157. In a major development Indian authorities are looking for uranium reserves in _____ in a first-ever such exercise.
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Sikkim (c) West Bengal (d) Odisha

158. Recently, India's first online entrepreneurship programme for kids comes to _____.
(a) Mumbai (b) Jaipur (c) Kochi (d) Ahmadabad
159. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over demise of Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair. He was a renowned:
(a) Kathakali maestro (b) Kuchipudi maestro (c) Bharatnatyam maestro (d) Lavani maestro
160. Recently, Legendary cricketer _____ was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
(a) Sunil Gavaskar (b) K Srikanth (c) Rahul Dravid (d) Kapil Dev
161. "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future" is a memoir of:
(a) Shikha Sharma (b) Indra Nooyi (c) Nita Ambani (d) Rekha
162. The world's highest rail bridge on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir's _____ district will provide direct connectivity to Kashmir Valley.
(a) Srinagar (b) Jammu (c) Reasi (d) Anantnag
163. Recently, the exercise for presenting a separate "agriculture budget", with the emphasis on welfare measures for farmers, has started in _____.
(a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Kerala
164. Recently, The Rajya Sabha passed the National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes in:
(a) Punjab and Uttar Pradesh (b) West Bengal & Bihar
(c) Haryana & Tamil Nadu (d) Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh
165. Recently, Jeanine Anez was sent to four month jail term. She was the former President of:
(a) Slovenia (b) Lithuania (c) Bolivia (d) Latvia
166. Deutsche Bank and _____, have executed the world's first green hedging transaction?
(a) China Banking Corporation (b) Softbank
(c) Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd (d) Royal Bank of Scotland
167. Recently, Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up Development Finance Institution (DFI) with an initial capital infusion of _____ thousand crore rupees.
(a) 6 (b) 9 (c) 12 (d) 20
168. According to a report prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, in the form of the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', which has released globally. Which is the most polluted city globally?
(a) Jaipur (b) Gwalior (c) Delhi (d) Karachi
169. India's first professional kho kho league — Ultimate Kho Kho League — is set to begin later this year. How many players play in Kho Kho?
(a) 6 (b) 9 (c) 12 (d) 18
170. With Assembly elections coming up in five States, micro-blogging platform Twitter announced a dedicated 'information search prompt' in _____ languages with the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions.
(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 6 (d) 9

171. India is all set to commission the _____ ship, capable of tracking nuclear missiles and satellites from a distance, into the Navy.
(a) INS Dhruv (b) INS Diwakar (c) INS Teer (d) INS Samsheer
172. Recently, John Magufuli nicknamed “The Bulldozer” died. He was the President of:
(a) Niger (b) Tanzania
(c) Dominic Republic of Congo (d) The Gambia
173. Recently, The government of Bangladesh has decided to rename the Ministry of Information to the _____.
(a) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
(b) Ministry of Broadcasting
(c) Ministry of Technology and Broadcasting
(d) Ministry of Foreign Information and Broadcasting
174. Which of the following European countries recently signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement?
(a) Italy (b) Germany (c) Poland (d) Finland
175. Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 released has identified a novel household category in India – the ‘New Middle Class’ – with an average savings of _____ per annum.
(a) Rs 10-lakh (b) Rs 15-lakh (c) Rs 20-lakh (d) Rs 30-lakh
176. According to data from Bloomberg, India remained at the _____ position among countries with a market capitalization of \$2.8 trillion.
(a) Third (b) Fifth (c) Eighth (d) Tenth
177. Which of the following banks had inked the first deal in the external commercial borrowing (ECB) market using the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)?
(a) Canara Bank (b) Union Bank of India (c) State Bank of India (d) Punjab National Bank
178. Recently, A team of botanists has stumbled upon a new rattlesnake species in the Sadasivakona grove area of _____.
(a) Eastern Ghats (b) Western Ghats (c) Malwa Plateau (d) Godavari River basin
179. In “India’s Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution”, book to be released in April 2021 is authored by:
(a) Manmohan Singh (b) Shashi Tharoor (c) A K Antony (d) Sanjaya Baru
180. Who among the following have been recently announced as the winners of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize for 2021?
(a) Shivendra Singh and Sushma Singh (b) Thomas Edward and Michelle Ann
(c) Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal (d) Tim Claudters and Ann Maria
181. The Rajasthan legislative assembly announced to implement _____ from May 1 in the state under which every family in the state will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs 5 lakh.
(a) ‘CM Chiranjeevi Yojna’ (b) ‘CM Ayushman Yojna’
(c) ‘CM Rogmukt Yojna’ (d) ‘CM Kaaldeva Yojna’
182. Which of the following states launched the Mission Gramodaya recently?
(a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan
(c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh

183. Which of the following states has become the first state in the country to implement an ethanol promotion policy that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains?
(a) West Bengal (b) Bihar (c) Haryana (d) Uttar Pradesh
184. Recently, The UNDP has launched _____ campaign to celebrate women’s livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.
(a) ‘San Marg’ (b) ‘Sahi Rasta’ (c) ‘Suvidha’ (d) ‘Sahi Disha’
185. Who has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board?
(a) Dr Harsh Vardhan (b) Shri Narendra Modi (c) Prakash Javadekar (d) Ramnath Kovind
186. Which of the following has responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing’s influence, known as the ‘Sinatra Doctrine’?
(a) ASEAN (b) SAARC (c) European Union (d) BASIC
187. Which of the following companies is granting its UK drivers worker status, with benefits including a minimum wage - a world first for the US ride-hailing giant?
(a) MERU (b) OLA (c) Cincinati (d) Uber
188. In a first unique experiment across the world, burglars, thieves and robbers in the _____ will be made to wear GPS tags in a bid to stop them from recommitting any offence.
(a) UK (b) USA (c) Argentina (d) France
189. The International Day of Happiness is celebrated across the world every year on:
(a) 17th March (b) 19th March (c) 20th March (d) 23rd March
190. Recently, Scientists have found a method to mimic nature’s own process of reducing _____ in the atmosphere, namely photosynthesis.
(a) Carbon dioxide (b) Oxygen (c) Methane (d) Carbon monoxide
191. Recently, a total of _____ renewable energy capacity has been added in the country during the year 2019-20.
(a) 8.76 gigawatt (b) 9.86 gigawatt (c) 10.28 gigawatt (d) 12.98 gigawatt
192. Since its inception as the nodal agency working in the area of tribal upliftment, _____ has been implementing several programmes and initiatives.
(a) TRIFED (b) Union Tribal Ministry (c) Uthan (d) TRIJAL
193. Recently, Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as first female President of:
(a) Uganda (b) Liberia (c) Tanzania (d) The Gambia
194. In the latest World Happiness Report 2021, India is ranked at:
(a) 122 (b) 126 (c) 131 (d) 139
195. Recently, The _____ European Union has joined India’s Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative, following its endorsement of the charter of the CDRI earlier.
(a) 14-member (b) 18-member (c) 24-member (d) 27-member
196. Which of the following countries ranks first in the list released by World Air Quality Report 2020 for world’s most polluted nation?
(a) Pakistan (b) India (c) Bangladesh (d) Myanmar

197. Recently, American business and financial services company Moody's Analytics has projected India's GDP to grow by _____ in 2021.
(a) 6% (b) 8% (c) 10% (d) 12%
198. Which of the following has become the "first nation in the world" to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19?
(a) Finland (b) Malta (c) Gibraltar (d) Mozambique
199. Which of the following IIT's along with The University of Manchester have launched a dual award PhD programme recently?
(a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi
(b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras
(c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur
(d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur
200. India's first indigenously developed Appstore _____ hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services.
(a) 'Mobile Seva Appstore' (b) 'Mobile Vistar Appstore'
(c) 'Mobile Sarthakta Appstore' (d) 'Mobile Suidha Appstore'
201. Recently, Lok Sabha has passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021. The Bill provides that captive mines other than atomic minerals may sell up to _____ of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
(a) 30 per cent (b) 40 per cent (c) 50 per cent (d) 60 per cent
202. Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court _____ online inaugurated the first virtual court of the state.
(a) Justice M.N Parmaweshwara
(b) Justice Deepak Mahajan
(c) Justice P.R. Ramachandra Menon
(d) Justice L.N. Lakshmikanth
203. Recently, India and _____ have decided to establish a Joint Commission to enhance and deepen the ties of fraternity and friendship and support ways of cooperation in all fields.
(a) Turkey (b) Afghanistan (c) Kuwait (d) Iran
204. Which among the following has teamed up with USO India and Toonz Media Group for a creative water conservation awareness programme for students?
(a) UNESCO (b) UNGA (c) UNICEF (d) Amnesty International
205. Recently, The Indian Railways announced that the trial of the first prototype of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) AC _____ class coach has been completed successfully.
(a) one-tier economy (b) two-tier economy
(c) three-tier economy (d) four-tier economy
206. Recently, Atal Innovation Mission, _____ and Amazon Web Services announced new initiatives to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India.
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
(c) NITI Aayog (d) Flipkart
207. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed _____ as the International Day of Forests in 2012.
(a) 15th March (b) 18th March (c) 20th March (d) 21st March

208. According to a research study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi, which of the following countries has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in?
(a) Oman (b) South Africa (c) Jordan (d) Mexico
209. Recently, Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with _____ Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.
(a) Royal Oman Naval Force (b) Royal Jordan Naval Force
(c) Royal Bahrain Naval Force (d) Royal Brunei Naval Force
210. Recently, _____ bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range.
(a) Yashaswini Deswal (b) Shantipriya Mahajan (c) Supriya Janak (d) Anandita Karnapal
211. In a first, an energy park is coming up in _____ for manufacturing lithium-ion cells.
(a) Mahabunagar (b) Chittoor (c) Warangal (d) Bhopal
212. Which of the following countries has been ranked at the top of Euromonitor International's Sustainable Travel Index?
(a) Norway (b) Finland (c) Sweden (d) Mauritius
213. The US Navy will hold a major naval exercise alongside Belgium, France and Japan in the Mideast. The Group _____ will see ships from the four countries conduct drills in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.
(a) Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise (b) Black Sea Warfare Exercise
(c) Baltic Sea Warfare Exercise (d) Caspian Sea Warfare Exercise
214. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign on the occasion of _____.
(a) World Water Day (b) World Earth Day
(c) World Environment Day (d) World Sky Day
215. Indian States completing Ease of Doing Business reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of _____ percent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
(a) 0.25 (b) 0.50 (c) 0.75 (d) 1.20
216. According to a study released by the Defence website Military Direct, which of the following countries has the strongest military force in the world?
(a) Japan (b) USA (c) China (d) Canada
217. According to a report by Reuters, a Hotel that bills itself as the world's first "polar bear hotel" has been opened in:
(a) Canada (b) Iceland (c) Denmark (d) China
218. Which is the first Asian country to join International Pulsar Timing Array with uGMRT?
(a) India (b) China (c) Bangladesh (d) Sri Lanka
219. Name the Indian who won a gold medal at the Al Ain 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup recently.
(a) Amrit Bangapalli (b) Singhraj
(c) Deepak Luthra (d) Madhav Sen
220. Recently, who became the most awarded female artist in Grammy history with her 28th win?
(a) Taylor Swift (b) Beyonce
(c) Shakira (d) Priyanka Chopra Jonas

221. Who among the following is awarded best Actor for Hindi movie Bhonsle at 67th National Film Award 2019?
(a) Akshay Kumar (b) Nawazuddin Siddhique
(c) Manoj Bajpayee (d) Amitabh Bachchan
222. Recently, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for starting work on country's first major interlinking of two monsoon rivers _____.
(a) Narmada and Betwa (b) Ken and Betwa
(c) Yamuna and Chambal (d) Ganga and Ken
223. Which of the following state governments recently developed India's first FPO portal?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh
(c) Haryana (d) Rajasthan
224. Recently, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has announced _____ per cent fitment for State government Employees and Teachers under Pay Revision and increased the retirement age to 61 years from 58.
(a) 20 (b) 30 (c) 40 (d) 50
225. Which of the following countries has got the go-ahead to construct what's being billed as the world's first ship tunnel, designed to help vessels navigate the treacherous Stadthavet Sea recently?
(a) Sweden (b) Norway (c) Denmark (d) Ireland
226. The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 is being conferred on _____.
(a) Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (b) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
(c) Girija Prasad Koirala (d) Anerood Jugnauth
227. Recently, Finance Minister introduced the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) Bill 2021. The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development will be set up with a corpus of _____.
(a) Rs 7,000 crore (b) Rs 10,000 crore (c) Rs 15,000 crore (d) Rs 20,000 crore
228. The Reserve Bank of India announced the setting up of a standing external advisory committee (SEAC) to evaluate applications for universal banks and small finance banks. The five member committee will be headed by _____.
(a) Former Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath
(b) Former Deputy Governor H.R.Khan
(c) Former Deputy Governor Usha Thorat
(d) Former Deputy Governor Viral V Acharya
229. Who won the All England Badminton Championships men's title recently?
(a) Lakshya Sen (b) Lee Zii Jia (c) Viktor Axelsen (d) Lee Chong Wei
230. World Poetry Day is celebrated across the world on:
(a) 17th March (b) 19th March (c) 21st March (d) 23rd March
231. Which of the following airport partners with Magzter to become World's First "Smart Reading Airport"?
(a) Madrid International (b) New York International
(c) Dubai International (d) Sydney International
232. Recently, India and Pakistan will hold the first meeting in three years of a commission that deals with water rights on the _____ illustrating a broader resumption of diplomatic ties.
(a) Indus River (b) Chenab River (c) Sutlej River (d) Beas River

233. The Lok Sabha has taken up the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2021 for consideration and passage. The Bill amends the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, _____.
- (a) 1982 (b) 1985 (c) 1987 (d) 1991
234. To boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in _____ the state government has now decided to set up “India’s first government-run ambulance network” for animals.
- (a) Telangana (b) Odisha (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Karnataka
235. Recently, Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, a central PSU, has established an e-Tendering Portal _____.
- (a) PRANIT (b) SUPRIT (c) MAHATYA (d) SUPRITI
236. Recently, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of _____ for the first time in the country.
- (a) 150 metres (b) 300 metres (c) 500 metres (d) 750 metres
237. Recently, _____ has become the first company globally to be certified with the highest level of verification – L3, by UN-backed Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) ecolabel.
- (a) LT Foods (b) GT Foods (c) LK Foods (d) MN Foods
238. Which of the following teams won the first Road Safety World Series T20 title recently?
- (a) Sri Lanka Legends (b) West Indies Legends
(c) South Africa Legends (d) India Legends
239. World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance day held on _____.
- (a) 20 March (b) 22 March (c) 24 March (d) 26 March
240. Recently, The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019 is being conferred on late Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of _____.
- (a) Saudi Arabia (b) Jordan (c) Oman (d) Kuwait
241. Recently, Union Cabinet has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), India and Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission (IARC) of _____.
- (a) Kazakhstan (b) Afghanistan (c) Bangladesh (d) Indonesia
242. Recently, Maithri Aquatech, a company formed under the ‘Make in India’ initiative has set up the ‘World’s First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre’ in the smart city of _____.
- (a) Visakhapatnam (b) Jaipur (c) Pune (d) Kochi
243. Recently, US Senate has voted to confirm Indian-American _____ to be President Biden’s Surgeon General.
- (a) Dr Vivek Murthy (b) Dr Amit Mohan
(c) Dr Aniket Jankiraman (d) Dr Vimal Khaitan
244. Which of the following banks recently announced the launch of an instant EMI (Equated Monthly Installments) facility on its internet banking platform called ‘EMI @ Internet Banking’?
- (a) ICICI Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) RBL Bank
245. According to a report of US Chamber of Commerce’s Global Innovation Policy Center, this year India slipped to _____ position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which analyses the IP climate in 53 global economies.
- (a) 40th (b) 43rd (c) 46th (d) 49th

246. Recently, A bond designed to raise funds to grow the population of endangered black rhinoceros in _____ will be sold by the World Bank this year.
(a) South Sudan (b) South Africa (c) Uganda (d) Nigeria
247. Recently, which of the following countries put 38 foreign satellites into orbit after a successful launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan?
(a) Russia (b) China (c) Japan (d) Spain
248. Recently, Sandwiched between Kolenchery, Muvattupuzha and Piravom in _____ selected to be India's first sports tourism village.
(a) Kochi (b) Ernakulam (c) Indore (d) Gulbarga
249. Who among the following actors debut book is 'My Experiments with Silence' in which he share his darkest, most intense and introspective thoughts?
(a) Amitabh Bachchan (b) Ajay Devgan
(c) Samir Soni (d) Akshay Kumar
250. In the recently-concluded 67th National Film Awards, which of the following states was adjudged the 'Most Film Friendly State' in the country?
(a) West Bengal (b) Nagaland (c) Sikkim (d) Manipur
251. Who has been recently appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)?
(a) Saurabh Garg (b) Ankit Chatterjee (c) Amitabh Acharya (d) Deepak Luthra
252. Recently, the first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) has been inaugurated at _____.
(a) Bikloi Village (b) Latoo Village (c) Nikoo Village (d) Makhn Village
253. Who will be conferred the prestigious Vyas Samman - 2020 for his novel 'Patliputru Ki Samragi'?
(a) Prof. Sharad Pagare (b) Prof. Arjun Deshpande
(c) Prof. Shivraj Dandekar (d) Prof. Vipul Kothare
254. Who has been recently conferred the Maharashtra Bhushan Award, the highest honour by the state government presented annually?
(a) Lata Mangeshkar (b) Manoj Joshi (c) Asha Bhosle (d) Shreya Ghosal
255. Recently, for the first time, Indian Navy will be part of the France-led war game _____.
(a) 'La Nerouse' (b) 'La Parisdia' (c) 'La Perouse' (d) 'La Terrance'
256. Recently, In a first, the navies of India and _____ undertook joint patrolling to expand its defence footprints in the Western Indian Ocean where it has been a traditional net security provider.
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Madagascar (d) Seychelles
257. Recently, Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Central Scrutiny Centre and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority, _____ mobile App to leverage digital solutions to achieve Prime Minister's vision of 'Digitally empowered India'.
(a) CREVA (b) IEPFA (c) GHJYA (d) MRKLA

258. In a major move to improve commuters' experience on National Highways for both passengers and truckers, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' at more than 600 locations across _____ states in the next five years.
(a) 8 (b) 14 (c) 19 (d) 22
259. What is the name of the government's initiative to provide online psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for their mental health and emotional wellbeing?
(a) Manodasha (b) Manoyoga (c) Manodhyan (d) Manodarpan
260. Which of the following banks was adjudged the India's best bank for SMEs at the Asia money Best Bank Awards 2021?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) Kotak Mahindra Bank
261. Which of the following state governments is going to start Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes (ARHC) scheme for urban migrants/poor labourers, those belonging to economically weaker sections?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Maharashtra (d) Odisha
262. Recently, Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre at _____.
(a) Satna (b) Gwalior (c) Jabalpur (d) Khajuraho
263. Recently, Dr Harsh Vardhan said, the Union Territories of _____ and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir have been declared TB Free on World TB Day this year.
(a) Lakshadweep (b) Ladakh
(c) Andaman & Nicobar Islands (d) Puducherry
264. Recently, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that the government has set a target to reduce air pollution by 20 to 30 per cent by _____ under National Clean Air Programme.
(a) 2022 (b) 2024 (c) 2026 (d) 2028
265. Recently, USA President Joe Biden has invited _____ world leaders, to a US-hosted virtual summit on climate next month to underscore the urgency and the economic benefits of stronger climate action.
(a) 20 (b) 30 (c) 40 (d) 50
266. Recently, _____ announced the launch of the Herfindahl Hirschman Indices tracking market competition.
(a) Alt Indices (b) Enter Indices (c) Tab Indices (d) Home Indices
267. Which of the following countries will from next month ration water for more than one million households in the centre of the island?
(a) Taiwan (b) Sri Lanka (c) Malaysia (d) Indonesia
268. Recently, A group of marine botanists, led by Felix Bast from the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB), have traced two native seaweed species along the coasts of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and in _____.
(a) Gujarat and Daman Diu (b) Goa and Puducherry
(c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu and Andaman & Nicobar Islands
269. Who recently became the first Sri Lankan to hit six sixes in an over in any form of professional cricket during a domestic tournament?
(a) Thisara Perera (b) Angelo Matthews (c) Niroshan Dickwella (d) Dinesh Chandimal

270. World Tuberculosis Day is observed on:
(a) 11th March (b) 15th March (c) 18th March (d) 24th March
271. Which of the following two countries kicked off a two-day naval exercise “PASSEX” in the Bay of Bengal, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership?
(a) India and USA (b) India and France (c) India and Japan (d) India and Indonesia
272. Recently, India and Bangladesh agreed that a direct passenger train named _____ will run between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri.
(a) ‘Mitra Express’ (b) ‘Mitali Express’ (c) ‘Megha Express’ (d) ‘Mridul Express’
273. Who became the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award?
(a) Deepak Luthra (b) Aditya Shekhawat (c) Mridul Mangeshkar (d) Mahinder Giri
274. Which city was awarded the Smart City India award 2021 by the central ministry of urban development?
(a) Gautam Buddha Nagar Smart City Limited (b) Dehradun Smart City Limited
(c) Jaipur Smart City Limited (d) Nagpur Smart City Limited
275. Recently, Denis Sassou N’Gusso was declared the new president of:
(a) The Gambia (b) Nigeria (c) Liberia (d) Republic of Congo
276. According to a recent World Bank report, Only _____ low-income countries consistently made available with a license classifiable as ‘open’.
(a) 5 per cent (b) 11 per cent (c) 16 per cent (d) 20 per cent
277. Recently, Four _____ companies have collaborated to produce the ‘world’s first’ compostable bioplastics from food and feed production side-streams.
(a) Finnish (b) Dutch (c) German (d) Italian
278. Who became the Madhya Pradesh’s first athlete to secure a World No. 1 rank in any sport?
(a) Chinki Yadav (b) Aditi Sarkaria (c) Meenal Jain (d) Deepika Kulshrestha
279. Recently World Meteorological Day 2021 was observed on:
(a) 21st March (b) 23rd March (c) 25th March (d) 27th March
280. Who won a posthumous award: Best Actor - for his work in Angrezi Medium at 66th edition of the Filmfare Awards?
(a) Rishi Kapoor (b) Rajeev Kapoor (c) Irrfan Khan (d) Sushant Singh Rajpoot

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Babatpur in Varanasi, the Parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, bagged first prize in the category of Airport Service Quality (ASQ) by the Airport Council International (ACI).
2. b Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched ‘e-Parivahan Vyavstha’ of the State Transport Department to provide faceless services to the people of the State regarding Driving Licence/Registration Certificates/Permits etc.
3. a Shri Vijay Sampla assumed the charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) in New Delhi.
4. c Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar presented the prestigious Prime Minister’s Kisan National Award to Nellore Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu.
5. a The City Innovation Exchange (CiX) will connect cities to innovators across the national ecosystem to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges.
6. a Irakli Garibashvili is a Georgian politician and the current Prime Minister of Georgia.
7. b Australia’s parliament passed a world-first law to force digital giants such as Facebook Inc. and Google pay local publishers for news content – a move that may unleash more global regulatory action to limit their power.
8. c The 14-member committee will be headed by Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT) chairman Janakiram.
9. c Kaveri Seeds Company said it has become the first seed producer in the world with more than one lakh acres under seed production in a country.
10. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the CERAWEEK global energy and environment leadership award during an annual international energy conference.
11. c The Bar Council of India (BCI) took the initiative to set up India’s first law teacher training institute - Indian Institute of Law (IIL) - in collaboration with Kalinga Institute of Industrial Training (KIIT) at Bhubaneswar, a move that drew praises from three Supreme Court Judges - Justices U U Lalit, B R Gavai and V Ramasubramanian.
12. c Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually launched “Sugamya Bharat App” and a handbook entitled “Access- The Photo Digest”.
13. d Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari launched the Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas at a function in New Delhi.
14. c Every year, the on-field assessment takes place between 4th January to 31st January.
15. a National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in association with ICICI Bank and ValetEZ has enabled Brookfield Mall as India’s first Contactless Mall in Bengaluru making parking seamless and ready.
16. b India’s first machine tool park is ready for investors in Karnataka.

- 17. a** Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan has congratulated scientists of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for accomplishing the mission with successful launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C51 (PSLV-C51) and placing 19 satellites including Amazonia-1 of Brazil in sun synchronous orbit.
- 18. b** Russia launched its space satellite Arktika-M on a mission to monitor the climate and environment in the Arctic amid a push by the Kremlin to expand the country's activities in the region.
- 19. c** Indian wrestler, Vinesh Phogat has won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.
- 20. d** Virat Kohli becomes the first Indian person to breach the 100-million followers' mark on Instagram. Kohli, who is the most followed Indian on Instagram, has almost 40 million more followers than the second person on the list who is Priyanka Chopra with 60.8 million.
- 21. d** Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched "Gharoki Paachan, Chelik Naam" (daughter's name is a home's identity) programme and development schemes worth Rs 42 crore in Nainital.
- 22. a** Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV have been merged and now it will be known as Sansad TV.
- 23. d** Denmark is the partner country for the three-day summit.
- 24. c** Sri Lanka offered to develop a container terminal of Colombo port with investors from India and Japan, almost a month after it cancelled a tripartite agreement signed in 2019 on developing another facility with the two other countries.
- 25. a** Exercise Desert Flag is an annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- 26. b** India climbed up to third spot in the Hurun Global Rich List 2021 with 209 billionaires – 40 more than last year.
- 27. c** The agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights or TRIPS came into effect in January 1995. It is a multilateral agreement on intellectual property (IP) rights such as copyright, industrial designs, patents and protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets.
- 28. c** An exotic and highly invasive earthworm — *Amyntas alexandri* of the Megascotocidae family — has been collected and reported for the first time from Karnataka. Its original home is believed to be Southeast Asia.
- 29. d** Odisha will host the 2020-2021 Hero Indian Women's League the All India Football Federation.
- 30. b** On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) decided to proclaim 3 March, the international day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on the planet raise awareness and benefits fauna and flora in 1973, as World Wildlife Day, which was proposed by Thailand, to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora.
- 31. b** Australian conservationists unveiled plans to build the world's first refuge for the platypus, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change.
- 32. b** To set up International Bullion Exchange at GIFT City. Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with National Stock Exchange of India (NSE).

- 33. a** Finance Minister said that 1 lakh 75 thousand fishermen of the state have been linked with accident insurance scheme. Budget proposes to double the income of fishermen.
- 34. a** Indian Railways' Western Railway zone has introduced the Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system which will play an important role in preventing train accidents through effective communication.
- 35. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will invest 82 billion dollars in port projects by 2035.
- 36. a** Nasscom launched an 'AI Gamechangers' program to promote artificial intelligence (AI)-led innovation in the country, the apex body of the IT industry. Microsoft is the innovation partner for the program, As part of the 'AI for India' mission, the program seeks to recognize impactful and scalable AI-based innovation in the country.
- 37. a** One of the largest astronomical spectrographs in the country and has been successfully commissioned on the 3.6-Metre Devasthal Optical Telescope near Nainital Uttarakhand.
- 38. a** Six-time world champion pugilist Mary Kom has been appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) champions and veterans committee.
- 39. d** Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally in the second edition of Khelo India Winter National Games. J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.
- 40. b** National Safety Day is observed on March 4 every year to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council, which aims to raise awareness about safety measures that need to be undertaken to prevent accidents and mishaps.
- 41. c** Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has congratulated 12 Indian Institutions on securing a position in top 100 in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021.
- 42. a** The Indian Air Force is for the first time participated in the annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise, Desert Flag VI, hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- 43. d** Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has been selected for "Top 20 global women of excellence – 2021" award of the multi-ethnic advisory task force headed by US Congressman Danny K. Davis.
- 44. b** Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the Million Plus category, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore and Greater Mumbai.
- 45. c** The proposal to have a mountaineering Institute at Uttarkashi was mooted by the Ministry of Defence, Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh in 1964. Uttarkashi was specially selected as the home of NIM, primarily because of its close proximity to the Gangotri region in western garhwal, which undoubtedly has the best climbing and training potential in India and perhaps in the world. The Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM) and Pune-based Guardian Giripremi Institute of Mountaineering (GGIM) has teamed up to offer the country's first mountaineering diploma course.
- 46. a** Dubai is a global hub of culture, art and creativity. The Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum embraced a new system to permit the first cultural visa in the world, a golden visa.
- 47. c** SBI Mutual Fund has announced the launch of SBI International Access - US Equity FoF, an open-ended Fund of Fund scheme that would invest in mutual fund scheme/ETFs that further invests in the US markets.
- 48. c** A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) has identified multiple mutations and unique proteins in isolates of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

- 49. c** Maritime India Summit-2021 celebrates ‘Chabahar Day’ on March 4.
- 50. b** UN General Assembly adopts India’s resolution to declare 2023 as International Year of Millets.
- 51. d** Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India’s first World Skill Centre at Mancheswar in Bhubaneswar
- 52. d** The 29-km expressway, which connects Dwarka in Delhi to Gurugram, has been constructed under the Bharatmala Project. Nitin Gadkari made an inspectional visit to Dwarka Expressway. “He reviewed the progress of India’s First Grade Separated Urban Expressway, Dwarka Expressway”.
- 53. a** Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 – Virtual Edition.
- 54. a** Indian American Naureen Hassan has been named as the first vice president and chief operating officer (COO) of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.
- 55. b** Ice Hotel 365 is built in the small village of Jukkasjärvi, in Northern Sweden, 200 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle.
- 56. b** The Government of Bangladesh has launched its national app portal bdapps.com.
- 57. c** ICICI bank is using NPCI’s interoperable in infrastructure to serve customers of other banks as well through its app called “imobile pay”.
- 58. d** Singapore was the top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India in the first nine months of FY21 at \$15.7 billion, followed by the US at \$12.82 billion with Mauritius at the third position at \$3.47 billion.
- 59. a** West Indies captain Kieron Pollard became only the third man to hit six sixes in an international over during the four-wicket victory over Sri Lanka.
- 60. a** Defence Research and Development Organisation has successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- 61. b** Odisha government will set up a new department, namely the Department of Mission Shakti.
- 62. a** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated ‘Maitri Setu’ between India and Bangladesh on 9th March 2021 via video conferencing.
- 63. c** In what is claimed to be the first-of-its-kind gender inclusive community policing initiative in the country, Cyberabad police inaugurated a ‘Transgender Community Desk’ at Gachibowli police station in Telangana.
- 64. b** In an attempt to acknowledge the efforts of women in breaking down the stereotypes in erstwhile male-dominated maritime sector, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has flagged off an all-women crew onboard Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) vessel MT Swarna Krishna, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- 65. c** As the ice-covered parts of the Arctic Ocean melt due to climate change, China has flagged its interest to take part in building “Polar Silk Road”, raising prospects for the emergence of a new sea route.
- 66. a** HDFC ERGO General Insurance has introduced Business Kisht Suraksha — a unique cover aimed at protecting the balance sheet of MFIs, financial institutions and banks in the event of a catastrophe or natural disaster.

- 67. a** Scientists have for the first time observed a space hurricane in Earth's upper atmosphere.
- 68. d** The U.S. Department of Commerce is preparing to tax aluminium sheet exporters from 18 countries after determining that they had benefited from subsidies and dumping.
- 69. d** Odisha tops the list with 23 contaminated sites, followed by Uttar Pradesh (21) and Delhi (11).
- 70. a** India defeated England in the final Cricket test match at Ahmedabad to enter the final of the inaugural edition of the World Test Championship.
- 71. b** In Uttar Pradesh, a Gur Mahotsav or jaggery festival is held in Lucknow. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the two-day event.
- 72. a** Government has constituted a 259 members National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence.
- 73. d** The design for a sculpture of an early 20th century Sikh fighter pilot, cricketer and golfer from Oxford University has been approved for a new memorial to be erected in the England port city of Southampton in memory of all Indians who fought in the World Wars.
- 74. c** The South American country Venezuela has issued new currency notes of one million bolivars to deal with inflation and the financial crisis.
- 75. a** Dubai-based YAP does not have a banking licence itself but has partnered with RAK Bank which provides international bank account numbers for YAP users and secures their funds under its own banking licence.
- 76. b** Scientists have custom-made a platform to detect the effect of prolonged alcohol exposure on Red Blood Cells (RBC) through high-resolution measurements of their size.
- 77. a** Government has made it mandatory for vehicle manufacturers to fit airbag for the person occupying the front seat other than the driver.
- 78. b** The Sports and Youth Services Department of Odisha Government and Naval Tata Hockey Academy are getting ready to host the 1st Hockey India Junior and Sub Junior Women Academy National Championship 2021.
- 79. c** World Champion P V Sindhu finished a distant second best in the Swiss Open final after being completely routed by Olympic gold medallist Carolina Marin of Spain in a lop-sided women's singles title clash.
- 80. c** International Women's Day was celebrated on 8th March.
- 81. a** First Forest Healing centre of the country was inaugurated at Ranikhet in Kalika Uttarakhand.
- 82. c** Dr Harsh Vardhan exhorted scientists of CSIR laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the "CSIR Floriculture Mission".
- 83. a** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched an official "Factcheck" portal aimed at curbing misinformation by vested interests against the state government.

- 84. b** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan won a trust vote in the National Assembly amid a boycott call by the Opposition parties, strengthening his government's legitimacy after an embarrassing defeat of the finance minister in the hotly-contested Senate elections.
- 85. b** National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) partnered with SBI Payments to announce the launch of 'RuPay SoftPoS' for millions of Indian merchants.
- 86. d** The Food Waste Index Report 2021, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP, said that around 931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019.
- 87. c** The cricket sport's governing body has announced the advent of a new tournament, called Women's T20 Champions Cup and it will be played in 2027 and 2031.
- 88. d** In Boxing, continuing his splendid run, Manish Kaushik clinched gold as Indian boxers concluded their impressive campaign at the Boxam International Tournament with 10 medals in Castellon, Spain.
- 89. b** Star Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat won her second gold medal in the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event and reclaimed the top rank in her category in Rome.
- 90. a** World Kidney Day is observed annually on the 2nd Thursday in March.
- 91. d** BJP MP Tirath Singh Rawat has become the new chief minister of Uttarakhand, announces Trivendra Singh Rawat who stepped down.
- 92. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi released 11 Volumes of Manuscript with commentaries by 21 scholars on shlokas of Srimad Bhagavadgita at Lok Kalyan Marg, New Delhi.
- 93. c** Indian Railway has integrated all railway helplines into single number 139 which is Rail Madad Helpline for quick grievance redressal and enquiry during the journey.
- 94. a** Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, Sanjay Dhotre inaugurated the International Conference on Multifunctional Electronic Materials and Processing (MEMP 2021) virtually.
- 95. c** France has begun its first military exercises in space to test its ability to defend its satellites, in a sign of the growing competition between world powers in Earth's orbit.
- 96. a** The Indian Navy now plans to retrofit all its Kalvari class non-nuclear attack with AIP during their first upgrade, expected around 2023.
- 97. d** The Commission presents a vision, targets and avenues for a successful digital transformation of Europe by 2030.
- 98. d** Chess player Koneru Humpy from Andhra Pradesh has won the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY) for 2020, following a public vote.
- 99. a** India will play their inaugural World Test Championship final against New Zealand at Southampton's Ageas Bowl Stadium from June 18-22.
- 100. b** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan will be honoured with an award by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).

- 101. d** Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined U.S. President Joseph Biden, Australian PM Scott Morrison and Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga for a virtual summit of the Quadrilateral Framework (Quad) the first time leaders of the Indo-Pacific grouping are meeting.
- 102. a** India's largest floating solar power plant of 100 MW capacity, belonging to the National Thermal Power Corporation, is expected to be commissioned at Ramagundam in May. The floating solar photo-voltaic project would be spread over 450 acres on the water surface of Sri Ram Sagar Project reservoir.
- 103. a** Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu has been re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the year 2021.
- 104. a** The French Space Forces Command has begun its first military exercises in space in a bid to test its ability to defend its satellites.
- 105. d** Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Hamed Bakayoko, passed away in a hospital in Germany.
- 106. b** The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority launched its first virtual trade fair to boost export of agricultural and processed food products.
- 107. a** Singapore topped the global ranking for the second year in a row in the latest Economic Freedom Index published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation.
- 108. d** Apple to build Europe's largest R&D facility in Germany.
- 109. c** A total of 99 swimmers from 27 countries and regions are ready to compete in the first leg of the FINA/CNSG Marathon Swim World Series 2021 which will be staged in Doha, Qatar.
- 110. d** The consumer movement marks 15th March with World Consumer Rights Day every year, as a means of raising global awareness about consumer rights and needs.
- 111. b** The government has appointed G P Samanta as the new Chief Statistician of India for a period of two years. Samanta was till now an adviser in the RBI's Department Of Statistics and Information Management.
- 112. c** Union Minister Anurag Thakur became the first serving MP to be appointed as Captain in the Territorial Army.
- 113. c** In Odisha, Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation will jointly set up a state-of-the-art plastic park in Paradeep in Odisha.
- 114. b** The India - Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK II commenced in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet in Uttarakhand.
- 115. b** Industrial gases firm Linde will supply liquid green hydrogen and related infrastructure to the world's first hydrogen-powered ferry, a vessel by operator Norled that will transport both cars and passengers in Norway.
- 116. a** Lieutenant-General Frances Allen has been named vice chief of the defense staff of Canada.
- 117. b** Country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has topped the list of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology's (MeitY) Digital Payment Scorecard for 3 consecutive months.

- 118. a** The world's most powerful supercomputer Fugaku is now fully developed in Japan, and the machine is available for research use.
- 119. c** Smriti Mandhana continued her rich vein of form as she smashed 80 off 64 balls to help India beat South Africa in the second ODI and level the five-match series.
- 120. d** The International Day of Action for Rivers is on 14 March a day dedicated to solidarity – when diverse communities around the world come together with one voice to say that rivers matter. That communities having access to clean and flowing water matters.
- 121. b** China has become the first country in the world to roll out vaccine passports or an international vaccine health certificate.
- 122. c** Deepak Mishra, practice manager in the World Bank's macroeconomics, trade, and investment global practice has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).
- 123. b** Axis Bank became the first bank in India to launch its own range of wearable contactless payment devices. Dubbed as 'Wear N Pay', these wearable devices are directly linked to the customers' bank account and function like a regular debit card.
- 124. a** The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.
- 125. a** India has opened an "energy office" in Moscow's well-known landmark Federation Tower that will have the presence of five top Indian energy PSUs even as Moscow and Delhi increase engagement in the sector.
- 126. a** In Libya, the parliament has voted to approve an interim unity government to lead the war-ravaged nation to December elections.
- 127. b** After the grand success of the Strawberry Festival in Jhansi and the Jaggery Festival in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state government is organised a three-day 'Kalanamak Rice Festival' in Siddharthnagar district from March 13.
- 128. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people on the occasion of Herath, one of the biggest festivals of Kashmiri Pandits.
- 129. c** Veteran batter Mithali Raj became the first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats.
- 130. c** World Kidney Day is observed annually on the 2nd Thursday in March.
- 131. a** Mohankrishna Bohara will be awarded the 30th Bihari Puraskar Award for his critical work 'Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya'.
- 132. a** India skipper Virat Kohli has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International.
- 133. c** The committee would continue to be chaired by the Culture Minister and include officials from the Culture, Tourism, Water Resources, Environment and Forest, Housing and Urban Affairs Ministries; representatives of the Indian Space Research Organisation; officials from the governments of Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan; and an ASI official.
- 134. a** Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani has achieved a remarkable milestone amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as he added the highest wealth to his fortune in the world, as per the latest Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

- 135. d** The United States is the number one market that CEOs (Chief Executive Officers) are looking to in terms of growth over the next 12 months and China is at the second spot.
- 136. b** The Israeli military has conducted a joint naval exercise with Greece and Cyprus, in the latest sign of increased cooperation among three countries that increasingly view Turkey as a rival in the Mediterranean Sea.
- 137. b** A British charity launched the world's first fund to support LGBT+ people whose vulnerability to climate change is worsened by poverty and discrimination.
- 138. a** The nation's first centralised AC railway terminal in Bengaluru is set to become operational soon.”.
- 139. a** Lok Sabha member Ranveer Singh Bittu from Punjab will be functioning as the Congress' leader in the Lower House for the remaining period of the current session as Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will be busy in West Bengal because of the Assembly election.
- 140. a** The new set of rules, to be known as, All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021, will be applicable from 1st April this year.
- 141. a** Tamil Nadu's Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi scripted history as she became the first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games.
- 142. d** Politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhathi Subramaniam are among 20 writers who will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.
- 143. b** Government will soon launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
- 144. b** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched Mera Ration Mobile App for the benefit of those ration card holders who move to new places in search of livelihood.
- 145. c** Gurdeep Singh from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party took the oath as a Senator, becoming the first turban-clad Sikh representative in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament.
- 146. c** Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will be travelling to the United States to meet US President Joe Biden.
- 147. a** Billionaire investor Rakesh Jhunjunwala-backed Nazara Technologies Ltd will become the first Indian gaming company to go public.
- 148. a** Ambassador of India to Thailand Suchitra Durai received the prestigious King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- 149. a** The theme of BRICS this year is –“BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.
- 150. c** ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560.
- 151. a** Mumbai City has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title just over a year after being taken over by the owners of English Premier League giants Manchester City.

- 152. c** The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeking increase in the FDI limit to 74 per cent in the domestic Insurance Companies was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.
- 153. d** Britain’s cabinet office will set up a “second flagship Head Quarter” in Glasgow as the government plans to move some of its operations to Scotland.
- 154. c** The Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu Dhabi, UAE, has launched the world’s first Bachelor of Tolerance and Coexistence.
- 155. b** A Japanese-Australian venture has begun producing hydrogen from brown coal in a A\$500 million (\$390 million) pilot project that aims to show liquefied hydrogen can be produced commercially and exported safely overseas.
- 156. c** Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30 this year.
- 157. a** Indian authorities are looking for uranium reserves just three kilometres from the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh in a first-ever such exercise.
- 158. b** India’s First Online Entrepreneurship Programme for kids comes to Jaipur.
- 159. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over demise of Kathakali maestro Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair. Saddened by the demise of Kathakali maestro, Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair.
- 160. d** Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
- 161. b** Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi has a memoir coming out this fall that her publisher is calling an “unvarnished take” on her rise to becoming one of the world’s most powerful women. “My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future” will be published Sept. 28.
- 162. c** The world’s highest rail bridge on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir’s Reasi district, which will provide direct connectivity to Kashmir Valley is in the last stages of construction.
- 163. b** The exercise for presenting a separate “agriculture budget”, with the emphasis on welfare measures for farmers, has started in Rajasthan in accordance with the announcement made by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the 2021-22 State Budget.
- 164. c** The Rajya Sabha passed the National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.
- 165. c** Bolivia’s former President Jeanine Anez was sent to four month jail term.
- 166. c** Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd, a subsidiary of Continuum Green Energy (Continuum), have executed the world’s first green hedging transaction, with a second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework.
- 167. d** Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up Development Finance Institution (DFI) with an initial capital infusion of 20 thousand crore rupees.
- 168. c** Twenty-two of the world’s 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally.

- 169. c** It is played by teams of 12 nominated players out of fifteen, of which nine enter the field who sit on their knees (Chasing Team), and 3 extra (Defending Team) who try to avoid being touched by members of the opposing team.
- 170. c** With Assembly elections coming up in five States, micro-blogging platform Twitter announced a dedicated ‘information search prompt’ in six languages with the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions.
- 171. a** India is all set to commission the INS Dhruv (codenamed VC 1118) ship, capable of tracking nuclear missiles and satellites from a distance, into the Navy.
- 172. b** Tanzania’s President John Magufuli, admired by followers for his hostility to corruption and waste but regarded by foes as an irascible authoritarian intolerant of dissent and sceptical about COVID-19, has died aged 61.
- 173. a** The government of Bangladesh has decided to rename the Ministry of Information to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- 174. a** The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN. Italy signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement.
- 175. c** Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 released has identified a novel household category in India – the ‘New Middle Class’ – with an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum.
- 176. c** India remained at the eighth position among countries with a market capitalization of \$2.8 trillion.
- 177. c** The country’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) had inked the first deal in the external commercial borrowing (ECB) market using the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR).
- 178. a** A team of botanists has recently stumbled upon a new rattlesnake species in the Sadasivakona grove area of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh, which is part of the southern Eastern ghats.
- 179. d** Sanjaya Baru, former advisor to Manmohan Singh, will take readers from the corridors of Parliament to Delhi’s hidden durbars as he tells the “untold story” of Indian society in his new book.
- 180. c** Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have been announced as the winners of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize for 2021.
- 181. a** The Rajasthan legislative assembly passed the state budget by a voice vote with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announcing to implement ‘CM Chiranjeevi Yojna’ from May 1 in the state under which every family in the state will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs 5 lakh.
- 182. c** In Madhya Pradesh, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan have launched the Mission Gramodaya in the state.
- 183. b** Bihar has become the first state in the country to implement an ethanol promotion policy that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains.
- 184. d** The UNDP has launched ‘Sahi Disha’ campaign to celebrate women’s livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.
- 185. a** Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board.

- 186. c** As China's increasing aggressiveness to undermine European unity through a 'divide and rule' policy continues, the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries have responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing's influence, known as the 'Sinatra Doctrine'.
- 187. d** Uber is granting its UK drivers worker status, with benefits including a minimum wage - a world first for the US ride-hailing giant.
- 188. a** In a first such experiment across the world, burglars, thieves and robbers in the UK will be made to wear GPS tags in a bid to stop them from recommitting any offence.
- 189. c** The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution of 12 July 2012 proclaimed 20 March the International Day of Happiness, recognizing the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.
- 190. a** Scientists have found a method to mimic nature's own process of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, namely photosynthesis, to capture excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- 191. a** A total of 8.76 gigawatt renewable energy capacity has been added in the country during the year 2019-20.
- 192. a** Since its inception as the nodal agency working in the area of tribal upliftment, TRIFED has been implementing several programmes and initiatives.
- 193. c** Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as Tanzania's first female President after the sudden death of John Magufuli from an illness shrouded in mystery.
- 194. d** India has been ranked 139, out of 149 countries evaluated, in the World Happiness Report 2021, which has been collated slightly differently due to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.
- 195. d** The 27-member European Union has joined India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative, following its endorsement of the charter of the CDRI earlier.
- 196. c** Bangladesh ranks first in the list released by World Air Quality Report 2020.
- 197. d** American business and financial services company Moody's Analytics has projected India's GDP to grow by 12% in 2021.
- 198. c** The tiny British overseas territory — famed for its Rock of Gibraltar — has become the "first nation in the world" to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19.
- 199. d** Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur and The University of Manchester have launched a dual award PhD programme.
- 200. a** India's first indigenously developed Appstore, 'Mobile Seva Appstore' hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services.
- 201. c** The Bill provides that captive mines other than atomic minerals may sell up to 50 per cent of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
- 202. c** Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Justice P.R. Ramachandra Menon online inaugurated the first virtual court of the state.

- 203. c** India and Kuwait have decided to establish a Joint Commission to enhance and deepen the ties of fraternity and friendship and support ways of cooperation in all fields.
- 204. a** UNESCO has teamed up with USO India and Toonz Media Group for a creative water conservation awareness programme for students.
- 205. c** The Indian Railways announced that the trial of the first prototype of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) AC three-tier economy class coach has been completed successfully.
- 206. c** Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and Amazon Web Services announced new initiatives to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India.
- 207. d** The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21st March as the International Day of Forests in 2012.
- 208. b** South Africa has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in while India came in at fourth place, according to a research study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi.
- 209. c** Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.
- 210. a** Yashaswini Deswal bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range.
- 211. a** In a first, an energy park is coming up in Mahbubnagar for manufacturing lithium-ion cells.
- 212. c** Sweden has been ranked at the top of Euromonitor International's Sustainable Travel Index, which has classified 99 countries worldwide through the lens of sustainable tourism.
- 213. a** The Group Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise will see ships from the four countries conduct drills in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. Ships involved include the French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, as well as the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island.
- 214. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch the Rain campaign on the occasion of World Water Day.
- 215. a** States completing Ease of Doing Business reforms are eligible for additional borrowing of 0.25 percent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
- 216. c** China has the strongest military force in the world while India stands at number four, according to a study released by the defence website Military Direct.
- 217. d** The Polar Bear Hotel, part of the Harbin Polarland theme park in Heilongjiang's capital and largest city, Harbin.
- 218. a** With uGMRT, India has become the first Asian country to be a full member of IPTA consortium comprising European Pulsar Timing Array (EPTA), North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav) and Parkes Pulsar Timing Array (PPTA) from Australia.
- 219. b** India's Singhraj displayed his skills to win a gold medal at the Al Ain 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup.

- 220. b** At the 63rd Grammy Awards, Taylor Swift and Billie Eilish won the top prizes while Beyonce became the most awarded female artist in Grammy history with her 28th win.
- 221. c** Actor Manoj Bajpayee will be awarded best Actor award for Hindi movie Bhonsle and Dhanush will get the award for Tamil Movie Asuran.
- 222. b** Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for starting work on country's first major interlinking of two monsoon rivers, Ken and Betwa, in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- 223. b** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the UP FPO Shakti Portal as part of the Kisan Kalyan Mission at an event in Gorakhpur.
- 224. b** Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has announced 30 per cent fitment for State government Employees and Teachers under Pay Revision and increased the retirement age to 61 years from 58.
- 225. b** Norway has got the go-ahead to construct what's being billed as the world's first ship tunnel, designed to help vessels navigate the treacherous Stadhavet Sea.
- 226. b** The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 is being conferred on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- 227. d** The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development will be set up with a corpus of Rs 20,000 crore and the government will give an initial grant of Rs 5,000 crore.
- 228. a** The Reserve Bank of India announced the setting up of a standing external advisory committee (SEAC) to evaluate applications for universal banks and small finance banks. The five member committee will be headed by former deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath.
- 229. b** Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia has won the All England Badminton Championships men's title as he defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the summit clash.
- 230. c** A decision to proclaim 21 March as World Poetry Day was adopted during UNESCO's 30th session held in Paris in 1999.
- 231. c** Customers flying through Dubai International (DXB) now have free access to Magzter's collection of more than 7,000 leading magazines, newspapers, journals and comics, making DXB the world's first 'smart reading airport'.
- 232. a** India and Pakistan will hold the first meeting in three years of a commission that deals with water rights on the Indus River illustrating a broader resumption of diplomatic ties.
- 233. d** The Bill amends the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 which provides a framework for the functioning of the Legislative Assembly and the government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- 234. c** To further boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in Andhra Pradesh, the state government has now decided to set up "India's first government-run ambulance network" for animals.
- 235. a** Power Grid Corporation of India Limited, a central PSU, has established an e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT.
- 236. b** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metres, for the first time in the country.

- 237. a** LT Foods has become the first company globally to be certified with the highest level of verification – L3, by UN-backed Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) ecolabel.
- 238. d** All-rounder Yusuf Pathan starred with an unbeaten 62 and two wickets as the Sachin Tendulkar-captained India Legends beat Sri Lanka Legends by 14 runs in the final to win the first Road Safety World Series T20 title.
- 239. b** World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance day held on 22 March that highlights the importance of fresh water.
- 240. c** The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019 is being conferred on late Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman.
- 241. b** Union Cabinet has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), India and Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission (IARCSC), Afghanistan.
- 242. a** Maithri Aquatech, a company formed under the ‘Make in India’ initiative has set up the ‘World’s First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre’ in the smart city of Visakhapatnam.
- 243. a** US Senate has voted to confirm Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy to be President Biden’s Surgeon General, handing the administration one of its top public health officials amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- 244. a** ICICI Bank announced the launch of an instant EMI (Equated Monthly Instalments) facility on its internet banking platform.
- 245. a** India slipped to 40th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which analyses the IP climate in 53 global economies, this year, according to a report of US Chamber of Commerce’s Global Innovation Policy Center.
- 246. b** A bond designed to raise funds to grow the population of endangered black rhinoceros in South Africa will be sold by the World Bank this year.
- 247. a** Russia put 38 foreign satellites into orbit after a successful launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan following delays due to technical issues.
- 248. b** Sandwiched between Kolenchery, Muvattupuzha and Piravom in Ernakulam lie a quaint little village called Ramamangalam, which has been selected to be India’s first sports tourism village.
- 249. c** Actor Samir Soni will come out with his debut book later this year in which he will document in prose and poetry some of his “darkest, most intense and introspective thoughts” on anxiety and self-discovery.
- 250. c** In the recently-concluded 67th National Film Awards, Sikkim was adjudged the ‘Most Film Friendly State’ in the country.
- 251. a** Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) as part of a bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre.
- 252. b** Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur has inaugurated the first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) at Latoo Village.
- 253. a** Well known Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman - 2020 for his novel ‘Patliputru Ki Samragi.’
- 254. c** Asha Bhosle has been conferred the Maharashtra Bhushan Award, the highest honour by the state government presented annually.

- 255. c** This is the first time that the Indian Navy will be part of the France-led war game 'La Perouse'. Until now, India was not invited for the French naval exercise.
- 256. c** In a first, the navies of India and Madagascar undertook joint patrolling of Madagascar's EEZ as New Delhi sought to expand its defence footprints in the Western Indian Ocean where it has been a traditional net security provider.
- 257. b** Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Central Scrutiny Centre and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority, IEPFA mobile App to leverage digital solutions to achieve Prime Minister's vision of 'Digitally empowered India'.
- 258. d** In a major move to improve commuters' experience on National Highways for both passengers and truckers, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' at more than 600 locations across 22 states in the next five years.
- 259. d** Manodarpan, the government's initiative to provide online psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- 260. b** HDFC Bank was adjudged the India's best bank for SMEs at the Asiamoney Best Bank Awards 2021.
- 261. b** The Uttar Pradesh government will start a scheme offering affordable rental housing for poor people living in cities and a proposal to this effect was approved by the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- 262. d** Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel and Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho'.
- 263. a** Dr Harsh Vardhan said, the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir have been declared TB Free on World TB Day this year.
- 264. b** Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that the government has set a target to reduce air pollution by 20 to 30 per cent by 2024 under National Clean Air Programme.
- 265. c** President Joe Biden has invited 40 world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to a US-hosted virtual summit on climate next month to underscore the urgency and the economic benefits of stronger climate action.
- 266. a** Alt Indices announced the launch of the Herfindahl Hirschman Indices tracking market competition.
- 267. a** Taiwan will from next month ration water for more than one million households in the centre of the island because of a drought but the technology hub of Hsinchu will not be affected.
- 268. a** A group of marine botanists, led by Felix Bast from the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB), have traced these native seaweed species along the coasts of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and in Gujarat and Daman Diu.
- 269. a** All-rounder Thisara Perera became the first Sri Lankan to hit six sixes in an over in any form of professional cricket during a domestic tournament.
- 270. d** World Tuberculosis Day is observed on 24th March.
- 271. a** India and the US kicked off a two-day naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership.

- 272. b** Both leaders Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina agreed that a direct passenger train named 'Mitali Express' will run between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri.
- 273. d** Mahinder Giri, a range officer who has been deployed at Motichur range of Rajaji Tiger Reserve (RTR) for the past few years, has become the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award.
- 274. b** For its work under the e-Health project, Dehradun Smart City Limited (DSCL) was awarded the Smart City India award 2021 by the central ministry of urban development.
- 275. d** Election officials in Republic of Congo declared President Denis Sassou N'Guesso the winner of an election, further extending his presidency of more than 36 years in office.
- 276. b** Only 11 per cent low-income countries consistently made available with a license classifiable as 'open'.
- 277. a** Four Finnish companies have collaborated to produce the 'world's first' compostable bioplastics from food and feed production side-streams.
- 278. a** Shooter Chinki Yadav has become Madhya Pradesh's first athlete to secure a World No. 1 rank in any sport.
- 279. b** The World Meteorological Day theme - The Ocean, our climate and weather – celebrates WMO's focus in connecting the ocean, climate and weather within the Earth System. World Meteorological Day was established in 1961 to commemorate the World Meteorological Organization creation on 23 March, 1950.
- 280. c** The 66th edition of the Filmfare Awards were held in Mumbai and Irrfan Khan won a posthumous award: Best Actor - for his work in Angrezi Medium.

