

# **IIFT & XAT GK COMPENDIUM 2021-22**

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**2021-22**

**Dear Future Business Leaders,**

We are delighted to present to you this IIFT & XAT (GK Compendium) 2021-22. The purpose of this compendium is to provide relevant General Knowledge data which is very much useful for your forthcoming IIFT Examinations.

**The compendium is divided in two parts:**

The **Part-I** covers important static general knowledge facts from History, Geography, Polity, Science and Miscellaneous GK and the **Part-II** covers important current and business general knowledge facts.

This GK compendium covers the following IMPORTANT areas.

## **Part – I: Static GK Facts**

1. Important Historical Facts
2. Important Geographical Facts
3. Important Demographic Facts of India – Census 2011
4. Important Facts of Indian Constitutions
5. Important Science Related Facts
6. Important Miscellaneous GK Facts

## **Part – II: Current and Business GK Facts**

1. News Points from December, 2020 to September, 2021
2. International and National Organizations their heads and headquarters
3. Countries and their heads of Governments
4. Banks their heads, headquarters and punch lines
5. Name of G-20 nations, Stock exchange and official currency
6. Brand and their tagline (World and Indian)
7. Important Books and Authors

We sincerely hope and believe that this compendium will add value to learning and serve the intended purpose.

**All the best!!**

**Team CL**

## PART – 1: Static GK Facts

In this section of compendium we have compiled some very important facts from static general knowledge segments which we feel are quite relevant from **IIFT Examinations 2021-2022** perspective. This section has important selected facts from History, Geography, Indian Polity, Science and Miscellaneous GK which are taken based on the analysis of past years papers of IIFT respectively. We believe that this compilation will serve the intended purpose effectively.

### 1. Important Historical Facts

#### (A) Significant events related to Indian Freedom Movement:

Year	Important events happenings in that year
1885	Formation of Congress by A. O. Hume
1905	Partition of Bengal, launching of Swadeshi movement
1906	Formation of Muslim League by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca
1907	Surat session of Congress, where congress got split into moderates and extremists
1909	Morley-Minto Reforms, in which separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims was introduced for the first time.
1911	Capital shifted from Calcutta to New Delhi (Designed by Edwin Lutyens)
1916	Lucknow session of Congress, where the famous Lucknow pact was signed between Congress and Muslim league. Formation of home rule league by Annie Besant.
1917	Champaran Satyagraha (champaran is a place in Bihar) by Mahatma Gandhi. His first satyagraha in India.
1919	The draconian Rowlatt Acts, Jallianwala Bagh massacre at Amritsar on the orders of General O'Dyer; Montague-Chelmsford reforms.
1920	Khilafat Movement against British by Shaukat and Muhammad Ali. Launching of Non Cooperation Movement by Mahatma Gandhi.
1922	Chauri chaura, incident in Uttar Pradesh and withdrawal of NCM by Gandhi, formation of Swaraj party by Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das and N. C. Kelkar.
1927	Simon Commission came to India, which was protested by Lala Lajpat Rai. He died during a lathi charge during the protest.
1929	Passing of Purna Swaraj resolution at Lahore session of Congress under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru.
1930	Dandi March (Salt Satyagraha) by Mahatma Gandhi from Sabarmati ashram (a place in Gujarat). First round table conference in London
1935	Government of India Act
1937	Formation of Congress Ministries in provinces
1939	Outbreak of World War II, resignation of Congress ministries
1942	Quit India Movement, Wavell plan and Shimla conference. <i>Maulana Abul Kalam Azad</i> attended the conference representing Congress.
1945	Cabinet Mission Plan which envisaged forming of the interim government and to determine means of transferring power.
1946	Formation of Constituent Assembly under Rajendra Prasad (Muslim league did not participate)
1947	Mountbatten Plan (June 3 plan) and partition of India

## **(B) Important Governor General and Viceroys associated with British rule and related events**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Events associated with</b>
Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856)	Mainly known for Doctrine of Lapse, responsible for annexing number of states on the basis of this philosophy. First train from Bombay to Thane started during his reign in 1853.
Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793)	Credited with a new revenue system under the permanent settlement of Bengal. Introduction of Civil services.
Lord Canning	The revolt of 1857. The first Viceroy of India
Lord Wellesley (1798-1805)	The subsidiary alliance system.
Lord Curzon (1899-1905)	Partition of Bengal
William Bentinck (1828-35)	Abolition of Sati and reducing the female infanticide.
Thomas B. Macaulay	His advice was instrumental in introducing English, under the leadership of William Bentinck.
Lord Hastings(1813-1823)	Associated with Ryotwari settlement.
Robert Clive	He was the first British Governor of Bengal.
Warren Hastings (1773-1785)	The first Governor-General of India; Regulating Act 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1784 were passed during his tenure.
Lord Mountbatten	The first Governor-General of Free India.
C. Rajagopalachari	First Indian and last Governor-General of Independent India.

## **(C) Firsts in India**

<b>Women</b>		
1.	First woman Prime Minister	Mrs. Indira Gandhi
2.	First woman Chief Minister of a State	Mrs. Sucheta Kriplani
3.	First woman Minister	Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit
4.	First woman Central Minister	Rajkumari Amrit Kaur
5.	First woman Speaker of Lok Sabha	Mrs. Meira Kumar
6.	First woman Governor of a State	Mrs. Sarojini Naidu
7.	First woman President of Indian National Congress	Annie Besant
8.	First Indian woman President of UN General Assembly	Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit
9.	First Muslim woman to sit on the throne of Delhi	Razia Sultana
10.	First woman to swim across the English Channel	Miss Arti Saha (now Mrs Arti Gupta)
11.	First Indian woman to climb Mount Everest	Bachhendri Pal
12.	First woman to circumnavigate (sail round the world)	Ujwala Rai
13.	First woman IAS Officer	Anna George Malhotra
14.	First woman IPS Officer	Kiran Bedi
15.	First woman Advocate	Corknelia Sorabji
16.	First woman Judge	Justice Anna Chandy
17.	First woman Judge of a High Court	Justice Anna Chandy
18.	First woman Judge of Supreme Court	M. Fathima Beevi
19.	First woman Chief Justice of a High Court	Leila Seth
20.	First woman Doctor	Kadambini Ganguly

21.	First woman to pass MA	Chandra Mukhi Bose
22.	First woman editor of English newspaper	Dina Vakil
23.	First woman Chief Engineer	P.K.Thresia
24.	First woman to receive a Sena Madel	Constable Bimla Devi (88 BN of CRPF)-1990
25.	Youngest woman to climb Mount Everest	Dicky Dolma (19) from Manali - 1993
26.	First woman to climb mount Everest two times	Santosh Yadav (ITBP Officer) - 1993
27.	First Lady Magistrate	Omana Kunjamma
28.	First Indian woman to win Nobel Prize	Mother Teresa
29.	First to be crowned Miss India	Pramila (Esther Victoria Abraham) - 1947
30.	First Indian to be crowned Miss Universe	Sushmita Sen
31.	First Indian to be crowned Miss World	Reita Faria (1966)
32.	First woman President	Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil
33.	The first woman Speaker of a State Assembly	Shano Devi (Punjab)
<b>Men</b>		
1.	First Indian to swim across the English Channel	Mihir Sen
2.	First to Climb Mount Everest	Tenzing Norgay
3.	First to Climb Mount Everest without Oxygen	Phu Dorjee
4.	First Indian to join I.C.S.(ICS now is IAS)	Satyendranath Tagore
5.	First Indian to get Nobel Prize	Rabindranath Tagore
6.	First Indian in Space (first Indian cosmonaut)	Rakesh Sharma
7.	First British Governor general	Warren Hastings
8.	First Governor General of Free India	Lord Mountbatten
9.	First Viceroy of India	Lord Canning
10.	Last Governor General of Free India	C. Rajagopalachari
11.	First President of India	Dr Rajendra Prasad
12.	First Vice-President of India	Dr S. Radhakrishnan
13.	First Muslim President of India	Dr Zakir Hussain
14.	First Sikh President of India	Giani Zail Singh
15.	First Prime Minister	Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
16.	First Speaker of Lok Sabha	Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar
17.	First Chief Justice of India	Justice H. L. Kania
18.	First President of Indian National Congress	Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee
19.	First Indian to become member of Viceroy's Executive Council	Satyendra Prasanno Sinha
20.	First Indian to become President of International Court of Justice	Dr Nagendra Singh
21.	First Emperor of Mughal Dynasty	Babur
22.	First Field Marshal	S. H. F. J. Manekshaw
23.	First Indian Commander-in-Chief of India (now Field Marshal)	Gen. K. M. Cariappa
24.	First Chief of the Army Staff (Indian)	General Maharaj Kumar Shri Rajendrasinhji
25.	First Chief of the Naval Staff (Indian)	Vice-Admiral R.D.Katari
26.	First Chief of the Air Force Staff (Indian)	Subroto Mukherjee

27.	First Indian in British Parliament	Dadabhai Naoroji
28.	First Indian recipient of Victoria Cross (highest gallantry award before independence)	Khudadad Khan
29.	First Indian to circumnavigate the globe	Lt Col K. S. Rao
30.	First Indian to reach the South Pole	Col J. K. Bajaj (1989)
31.	First Indian High Court Judge	Justice Sumboo Nath Pandit
32.	First Indian to make a solo air flight	J.R.D. Tata
33.	First Indian to visit England	Raja Rammohun Roy (1878)
34.	First Indian Member of House of Lords (British)	Lord S.P.Sinha
35.	First Bar-at-Law	J.M.Tagore
36.	First Chairman of Rajya Sabha	Dr S. Radhakrishnan (1952 - 62)
37.	First Air Marshal	Arjan Singh
38.	First Judge to face impeachment in the Lok Sabha	Justice V. Ramaswami (1993)

## 2. Important Geographical Facts

### (A) Important facts about Planets:

As per the International Astronomical Union (IAU), the planet is a celestial body which-

1. is in orbit around the sun.
2. has sufficient mass to assume hydrostatic equilibrium (a nearly round shape) and
3. has 'cleared the neighbourhood' around its orbits.

According to the definition, there are currently eight planets and five dwarf planet in the solar system.

- (1) Mercury (Closest to the Sun and is the fastest planet to revolve around the Sun)
- (2) Venus (The Brightest and hottest planet in all)
- (3) Earth (Only known planet to possess life)
- (4) Mars (Known as the Red planet. Explored for life by astronomers now, as it is having similarities with Earth)
- (5) Jupiter (The largest planet of the solar system)
- (6) Saturn (System of rings are the characteristic feature of this planet)
- (7) Uranus
- (8) Neptune

\* Please note that Pluto used to be a planet but recently has been discarded as a planet and is no longer counted as a planet.

### (B) Important facts about Earth

It is the fifth largest planet in the solar system. It is the third closest planet to the sun. Its shape is oblate spheroid, like a ball which is flattened at the poles.

#### Important facts about Earth:

- (i) Mean distance from the Sun: 1,49,407,000 km.
- (ii) Time taken by Earth to revolve around the Sun: 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45.51 seconds.
- (iii) Time taken by Earth for rotating on its own axis: 23 hours 56 minutes and 4.09 seconds.
- (iv) Earth is covered 70% by water and 30% by land.

#### Movements of Earth:

- (i) **Revolution:** The Earth revolves around the Sun in an elliptical orbit. One complete revolution is called a year and this revolution of Earth causes change of seasons.
- (ii) **Rotation:** Earth rotates on its own imaginary axis also, simultaneously revolving around the Sun. It moves from west to east. This causes day and night.

**Note:** Duration of days and nights is equal at the equator.

## **(C) Important Countries and their Parliaments**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Name of the Parliament</b>
Afghanistan	Shura
Argentina	National Congress
Australia	The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia
Bahamas	General Assembly
Bangladesh	Jatiyo Sangsad
Bhutan	Tshogdu
Brazil	National Congress
Bulgaria	Narodno Sabranieye (National Assembly)
Myanmar	Pyithu Hluttaw
Cambodia	National Assembly
Canada	Parliament of Canada
China (Mainland)	National People's Congress
China (National)	Li fa Yuan (Legislative Yuan)
Colombia	Congress of the Republic
Cuba	National Assembly of People's Power
Denmark	Folketinget
Ethiopia	Shergo
Egypt	Consultative Council and People's Assembly
Finland	Eduskusta/Riksdagen
France	Parlement
Germany (United)	Bundestag (Lower House)
	Bundestrat (Upper House)
Greenland	Landstinget
Hungary	National Assembly
Iceland	Althingi
India	Sansad [Lok Sabha (Lower House) and Rajya Sabha (Upper House)]
Indonesia	People's Consultative Assembly and House of Representatives
Iran	Majles
Iraq	National Assembly
Israel	The Knesset
Japan	The Diet
Laos	National Assembly
Libya	General People's Congress
Maldives	Majlis
Mongolia	Great Hural
Nepal	Sansad
Netherlands, The	Staten-Generaal
New Zealand	House of Representatives
Norway	Stortinget
Papua New Guinea	National Parliament
Poland	Sejm



Country	Name of the Parliament
South Africa	House of Assembly
Spain	Cortes Generales (General Courts)
Surinam	Staten
Sweden	Riksdagen
United Kingdom (UK)	Parliament (House of Commons and House of Lords)
United States	Congress (House of Representatives and Senate)

## **(D) Important Geographical facts about India**

### ➤ **India covers 2.4 per cent of the Earth's surface.**

Total land area of India is 32, 87,263 sq.km.

Distance from east to west is 2,933 km.

Distance from north to south is 3,214 km.

### ➤ **The total length of the coastline of the mainland, Lakshadweep Islands and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, is 7,516.6 km. The coastline of only mainland is about 6300 km.**

### ➤ **Major rivers of India:**

**The longest Indian River is Ganga; its length is 2,640 km.**

The other major rivers of India are Indus (has five major tributaries: Sutlej, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi and Beas), Brahmaputra, Godavari, Krishna, Narmada, Tapti, Cauvery, Damodar, Mahanadi and Periyar.

**Note:** The world's largest delta, (in West Bengal) Sundarban, is made by Brahmaputra and Ganga.

### ➤ **Mountains:** They are Himalayas (**highest mountains in the world and one of the youngest mountain ranges**), Vindhya, Satpura, Sahyadri, Aravallis (one of the oldest mountain ranges of the world), Patkai (Purvanchal or Eastern mountains) and the Eastern Ghats.

### ➤ **Agriculture in India:** More than 50 percent of the area of the country is under the cultivation and **about 64% of the Indian population is engaged in agriculture.**

There are two major crop seasons in India, viz.:

(i) **Rabi**

(ii) **Kharif**

**Rabi:** It is **sown in October or December** and **harvested in April or May**. Major crops are: **barely, wheat, peas, gram and mustard.**

**Kharif:** It is **sown in June or July** and **harvested in September or October**. Major crops are: **bajra, cotton, jowar, rice and jute.**

### ➤ **Forests:**

According to the Indian State of Forest Report (2019), the total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.73 million hectare which is 24.56 percent of the geographical area of the country.

**The target as per the national forest policy is to cover 33% of area by forests.**

## **(E) National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Biosphere Reserves of India:**

### **(i) Important National Park / Sanctuary**

Name	Location
Bandipur National Park	Border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu
Jim Corbett National Park	Nainital, Uttarakhand
Dachigam Sanctuary	Dachigam, Kashmir
Ghana Bird Sanctuary	Bharatpur, Rajasthan
Gir National Park	Junagadh, Gujarat
Kanha National Park	Madhya Pradesh



Name	Location
Kaziranga National Park	Jorhat, Assam
Periyar Sanctuary	Idukki, Kerala
Ranthambore Tiger Sanctuary	Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan
Sariska Sanctuary	Alwar, Rajasthan
Sharavathy Sanctuary	Shimoga, Karnataka
Similipal Tiger Sanctuary	Mayurbhanj, Odisha
Sonai Rupai Sanctuary	Tezpur, Assam
Sunderbans Tiger Reserve	South 24 Parganas, West Bengal
Tungabhadra Sanctuary	Bellary, Karnataka
Wild Ass Sanctuary	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat
Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary	Bharatpur, Rajasthan
Jaldapara Bird Sanctuary	Kuch Bihar District, West Bengal

## (ii) Important Biosphere Reserves of India

S. No.	Name of the Biosphere reserve	Location	State
1	Great Rann of Kutch	Part of Kutch, Rajkot and Surendranagar District	Gujarat
2	Gulf of Mannar	Indian part of Gulf of Mannar between India and Sri Lanka	Tamil Nadu
3	Sunderbans	Part of delta of Ganges and Barahmaputra River System	West Bengal
4	Nanda Devi	Parts of Chamoli District, Pithoragarh District & Almora District	Uttarakhand
5	Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve	Part of Wynad, Nagarhole, Bandipur and Mudumalai, Nilambur, Silent Valley and Siruvani Hills	Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka
6	Dehang Debang	Part of Siang and Debang valley	Arunachal Pradesh
7	Pachmarhi Biosphere Reserve	Parts of Betul District, Hoshangabad District and Chhindwara District	Madhya Pradesh
8	Simlipal	Part of Mayurbhanj district	Odisha
9	Achanakamar – Amarkantak	Part of Annupur, Dindori and Bilaspur districts	Madhya Pradesh Chhattisgarh
10	Manas	Part of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang District	Assam
11	Kanchanjunga	Parts of Kanchanjunga Hills	Sikkim
12	Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve	Neyyar, Peppara and Shenduruny Wildlife Sanctuary and their adjoining areas	Kerala
13	Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve	Southern most islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands	Andaman and Nicobar Islands
14	Nokrek	Part of Garo Hills	Meghalaya
15	Dibru-Saikhowa	Part of Dibrugarh District and Tinsukia District	Assam
16	Cold Desert	Pin Valley National park and surrounding; Chandratal Wildlife Sanctuary	Himachal Pradesh
17	Seshachalam Hills	Seshachalam Hill Ranger covering parts of Chittoor and Kadapa District	Andhra Pradesh

## **(F) Important Nuclear Power Stations**

<b>Tarapur</b>	Maharashtra
<b>Kalpakkam</b>	Tamil Nadu, called Indira Gandhi Nuclear Power Station
<b>Narora</b>	Uttar Pradesh
<b>Rawatbhata</b>	Kota, Rajasthan
<b>Kaiga</b>	Karnataka
<b>Kakrapara</b>	Gujarat
<b>Kudankulam (TN)</b>	Under construction with the assistance of Russia.

## **(G) Countries, their capitals and currencies**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Currency</b>
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani
Argentina	Buenos Aires	Peso
Australia	Canberra	Australian Dollar
Austria	Vienna	Schilling/Euro
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka
Belgium	Brussels	Belgian Franc
Bhutan	Thimphu	Ngultrum
Brazil	Brasilia	Cruzeiro Real
Bulgaria	Sofia	Lev
Canada	Ottawa	Canadian Dollar
Chile	Santiago	Chilean Peso
China	Beijing (Peking)	Renminbi Yuan
Colombia	Bogota	Colombian Peso
Democratic Republic of Congo,	Kinshasa	Zaire
Croatia	Zagreb	Kuna
Cuba	Havana	Cuban Peso
Cyprus	Nicosia	Cyprus Pound/Euro
Czech Republic	Prague	Koruna
Denmark	Copenhagen	Danish Krone
Egypt	Cairo	Egyptian Pound
Fiji	Suva	Fijian Dollar
Finland	Helsinki	Markka/Euro
France	Paris	French Franc/Euro
Germany	Berlin	Deutsche Mark/Euro
Greece	Athens (Athinai)	Drachma/Euro
Hungary	Budapest	Forint
India	New Delhi	Indian Rupee

Country	Capital	Currency
Indonesia	Jakarta	Indonesian Rupiah
Iran	Teheran	Iranian Rial
Iraq	Baghdad	Iraqi Dinar
Ireland	Dublin	Irish Pound/Punt/ Euro
Republic of Israel	Jerusalem	New Israeli Shekel
Italy	Rome	Italian Lira
Japan	Tokyo	Yen
Kenya	Nairobi	Kenyan Shilling
Korea, South	Seoul	Won
Libya	Tripoli	Libyan Dinar
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysian Dollar/ Ringgit
Maldives	Male	Rufiyaa
Mauritius	Port Louis	Mauritian Rupee
Myanmar (Burma)	Naypyidaw	Kyat
Nepal	Kathmandu	Nepalese Rupee
Netherlands	Amsterdam	Guilder
New Zealand	Wellington	New Zealand Dollar
Nigeria	Abuja	Naira
Norway	Oslo	Norwegian Krone
Pakistan	Islamabad	Pakistan Rupee
Peru	Lima	New Sol
Philippines	Manila	Philippine Peso
Poland	Warsaw	Zloty
Portugal	Lisbon	Escudo
Qatar	Doha	Qatar Riyal
Russia	Moscow	Rouble
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Soudi Arabian Riyal
South Africa	Cape Town (Legislative) Pretoria (Administrative) Bloemfontein (Judicial)	Rand
South Sudan	Juba	South Sudanese Pound
Spain	Madrid	Peseta
Sri Lanka	<b>Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte</b> (since 1983); former capital, Colombo	Rupee
Sweden	Stockholm	Swedish Krona
Switzerland	Berne	Swiss Franc

<b>Country</b>	<b>Capital</b>	<b>Currency</b>
Syria	Damascus	Syrian Pound
Thailand	Bangkok	Baht
Turkey	Ankara	Tunisian Lira
United Arab Emirates (UAE)	Abu Dhabi	United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom (UK)	London	Pound Sterling
United States of America	Washington, DC	US Dollar
Venezuela	Caracas	Bolivar
Vietnam	Hanoi	Dong
Yugoslavia	Belgrade (Serbia)	Yugoslav Dinar
Zimbabwe	Harare	Zimbabwe Dollar

### 3. Important Demographic Facts of India – Census 2011

Following are few selected, important demographic facts that you should always keep on your fingertips. You can expect at least one question from them.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Indian National census was conducted in two phases, house listing and population enumeration. House listing phase began on April 1, 2010 to collect of information on all buildings. Information for National Population Register was also collected in the first phase, which will be used to issue a 12-digit unique identification number (Adhaar) to all registered Indians by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIAI). The second phase of population enumeration was conducted between 9 to 28 February 2011. Census has been conducted in India since 1872. In Census - 2011 biometric information was collected for the first time.

**Shri C. Chandramouli was the Registrar General and commissioner of 2011 Indian census.**

1. Absolute population of India - 121.02 crores. It comprises 62.37 crores males and 58.65 crores females.
2. Population growth during the decade remained 17.64 percent.
  - Total absolute increase in population during the decade is 18.15 crores.
  - **Sex Ratio: 940 females** per 1000 males.
  - **Child Sex Ratio: 914.**
3. Highest sex ratio – Kerela (1,084) followed by Puducherry (1,038), Tamil Nadu (995), Andhra Pradesh (992) and Chhattisgarh (991).
4. Lowest sex ratio states – Haryana, followed, Sikkim (as per census 2011)
5. Most populous state – Uttar Pradesh (166 million), followed by Maharastra (97 million) and Bihar (83 million).
6. Least populous state – Sikkim, followed by Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa.
7. Most populous union territory – Delhi, followed by Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir
8. Least populous union territory – Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
9. Population density (people living in one square km) of India – 382
10. Highest population density – Bihar, followed by West Bengal, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh
11. Lowest population density – Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Mizoram
12. Literacy rate of India – 74.04% (males: 82.14%, female: 65.46%). Literacy rate of India has gone up to 74.04 percent from previous figure of 64.83 percent.
13. States with highest literacy – Kerala (93.9%), followed by Mizoram, Goa and Tripura
14. State with lowest literacy – Bihar (63.82%), followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand
15. Urbanization (% of population living in urban areas) – 27.8% (India)
16. Most urbanized state (1991 census) – Mizoram
17. Speakers of language (in descending order) – Hindi > Bengali > Telugu > Marathi > Tamil > Urdu
18. Census commissioner of India for the census 2011 is Dr. C. Chandramouli
19. The current Census commissioner of India is Vivek Joshi
20. The 2021 Census of India, also the 16<sup>th</sup> Indian Census, will be taken in 2021.

## 4. Important Facts of Indian Constitutions

### (A) The Sources of our Constitution

The framers of the Indian Constitution referred to various provisions of the existing Constitutions of the world, weighed their merits, and applied them according to their suitability to our country. The major sources of the Constitution of India are as under:

1. **The Government of India Act, 1935**, the Centre / State List System, Federal Set-up, centre-state autonomies (federal set-up)
2. **The British Constitution**: Parliamentary Privileges, Single Citizenship, and the Rule of Law
3. **The Australian Constitution**: Concurrent List, Freedom of trade and commerce
4. **The American Constitution**: Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Judicial Review, and Impeachment of the President
5. **The Japanese Constitution**: The Procedure established by the Law
6. **The South African Constitution**: The Amendment clauses
7. **The Irish Constitution**: The Directive Principles, Nominations to Rajya Sabha (The Council of States)
8. **The USSR Constitution**: The Fundamental Duties
9. **The Canadian Constitution**: The Federal structure
10. **The German Constitution**: The Emergency Provisions

### (B) A short note on the Right to Property:

There have been several amendments on this issue, viz, the 1<sup>st</sup> amendment (1951), the 4<sup>th</sup> amendment (1955), the 17<sup>th</sup> amendment (1964), the 25<sup>th</sup> amendment (1971), the 42<sup>nd</sup> amendment (1976) and the 44<sup>th</sup> amendment (1978). The effect of all these amendments on the Right to Property has been the reduction in status of this right from a FR to a **Constitutional Right**, covered under **Article 300(A)**; thus, **Article 19 (1)(f)** has accordingly been repealed. The basic objective behind the state acquiring personal properties shows its superiority over the individual's right, i.e. the **Doctrine of Eminence**. This was also necessary for the successful implementation of the Land Reforms. The **Ninth Schedule to the Constitution** has also been added for this purpose.

Remember that there is a distinction between a **Fundamental Right** and a **Constitutional Right**. Since the Right to Property is no longer a FR, the Supreme Court can no longer issue any writ on this regard; the High Courts can, however, look into these matters on the same footing as any other ordinary suit. Since this is a legal right, in the event that the Government acquires any private property, it will have to do so in accordance with the law, and it will then have to pay compensation for the same.

### (C) A short note on the Right to Privacy:

The **Supreme Court** (SC) ruled that privacy is a fundamental right because it is intrinsic to the right to life. "Right to Privacy is an integral part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty guaranteed in Article 21 of the Constitution", the SC's nine-judge bench ruled unanimously. It added that the right to privacy is intrinsic to the entire fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution.

### (D) The President

The President is the first citizen of India, and heads the Union. He is an integral part of the Parliament along with the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha (Parliament = President + LS + RS). In order to be **elected** as the President of India, a person must:

- (a) Be an Indian citizen;
- (b) Have completed 35 years of age;
- (c) Be qualified for election as a member of the Lok Sabha; and
- (d) Must not hold any office of profit under the Government of India / State Government/ Local Government (**Article 58**).

The President is indirectly elected by the people of India, in accordance with the system of proportional representation through the **single transferable voting system**, by an electoral college comprising of (a) elected members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and (b) the elected members of the Legislative Assemblies of the States and those from Delhi and Puducherry (UT). The **duration** of his office is for a period of 5 years. He may seek re-election.

The President **can be removed** from office if he (a) dies, (b) resigns, (c) is removed through the process of impeachment, or (d) on the expiry of his tenure. In case of the death of the President, the Vice-President will assume the position until a new President is elected. In the case of completion of his tenure, the President can continue in office until such time as the new President takes charge. In case of his inability to exercise his duties on grounds of illness, or during his visits abroad, etc., the Vice-President discharges the functions of his office.

The Constitution has vested **wide powers** in the President, such as:

1. **Administrative Powers:** He can appoint the Prime Minister, the other Union Ministers, the Attorney General, the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts, the Governors of the States, the members of the Finance Commission, the members of the Union Public Service Commission and joint commissions for two or more States, the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners, officers for official languages and linguistic minorities, and for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes / Schedules Tribes.
2. **Legislative Powers:** He exercises these powers on ministerial advice. He can summon, prorogue and dissolve the Lok Sabha and joint parliamentary sessions. He can nominate 2 Anglo-Indians to the Lok Sabha and 12 persons to the Rajya Sabha.
3. **Judicial Powers:** He has powers to grant pardons, reprieves, respite, suspensions, remissions or commutations in respect of sentences of courts martial, punishment for an offence against the law or in even in cases of death sentence. Pardoning powers of the President are set out in **Article 72 of the Constitution**.
4. **Military Powers:** He is the supreme commander of our Armed Forces, but these functions are to be carried out according to the law. He can declare war or peace, with the consultation of Council of Minister.
5. **Diplomatic Powers:** He represents India internationally as the Head of State. He can appoint Indian representatives in foreign countries and receives foreign diplomatic representatives.
6. **Other Powers:** He has a mixture of absolute, suspensive and pocket vetoes.

## (E) Vice President

The Vice President acts as the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. The following are a few basic facts about the Vice President that you should keep in mind:

1. He is elected by the elected members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha only.
2. He is elected through the same system as applies to the President.
3. Requisite qualifications for appointment as Vice President are the same as apply to the office of the President, except for his qualification for election to the Rajya Sabha.
4. The term of office of the Vice President is for 5 years or less. He is eligible for re-election.
5. The Vice President can be removed either by resignation addressed to the President or may be removed by resolution of the Rajya Sabha passed by a majority, and agreed to by the Lok Sabha.
6. If the post of President is vacant, the Vice President carries out all his functions and then receives the salary of the President. For that period he is not the ex officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
7. The Supreme Court is competent to deal with disputes over the election of the President and Vice President.

## (F) House of the People (Lok Sabha)

- Presided over by a Speaker  
He certifies a bill as a Money Bill (**Article 110**). He also presides over the joint Sessions.
- **Strength: 552** members of which-
  - (a) Not more than **530** are representatives from the States.
  - (b) Not more than **20** representatives of Union Territories.
  - (c) Not more than **2** nominated Anglo Indians
- **Term:** Normally for 5 years, but can be dissolved earlier also and can be extended during Emergency.
- **Election:** Directly elected by the people, through universal adult franchise (the voting age has been reduced from 21 to 18 years by the **61<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 1989**.)
- **Qualification:** For membership
  - (a) He / She must be a citizen of India.
  - (b) He / She must be not less than 25 years of age.



**Additional qualifications:**

- (a) He/ She should not hold any office of profit under the government.
- (b) He / She should not be of unsound mind.
- (c) He / She should not be declared insolvent.
- (d) He / She should not be disqualified under any law.

**(G) Council of the States (Rajya Sabha)**

- Presided over by a chairman (Vice President Acts as ex-officio chairman). RS cannot be dissolved.
- **Strength:** not more than 250 members of which-
  - (a) Not more than **238** States and Union Territories representatives.
  - (b) **12** nominated by the president.
- Term:** 6 years. It is not subject to dissolution. One-third of its members retire every second year.
- **Election:** By the elected Members of the State Legislatures.
- **Qualification:** for membership-
  - (a) He / She must be a citizen of India.
  - (b) He / She must be not less than 30 years of age.
- **Additional qualifications:** (Same as Lok Sabha)

**(H) Important Articles in Indian Constitution and their areas of concern**

	Articles	Area of concern
1	Article 5 –11	Citizenship
2	Article 21	Right to life
3	Article 32	Right to constitutional remedies
4	Article 44	Uniform civil code
5	Article 51A	Fundamental duties
6	Article 61	Impeachment of President
7	Article 110	Definition of money bill
8	Article 123	Ordinance making powers of President
9	Article 324	Establishment of Election Commission of India
10	Article 300A	Right to property
11	Article 280	Finance commission
12	Article 352	National emergency
13	Article 356	Emergency in states
14	Article 360	Financial emergency
15	Article 368	Amendment of Constitution
16	Article 370	Special status of Jammu and Kashmir scrapped in August 2019.

**(I) List of Schedules in the Constitution of India and their areas of function**

Schedule	Area of function
<b>First</b>	All the States and Union Territories of India
<b>Second</b>	Salaries and allowances of the President, Governor, Chief Justice, Judges of High Court and Supreme Court and CAG
<b>Third</b>	Prescriptions regarding forms of affirmations and oaths for the new entrants to the public offices
<b>Fourth</b>	Allocation of seats in Rajya Sabha to each Union Territory and State
<b>Fifth</b>	Provisions to the control of administration of scheduled areas
<b>Sixth</b>	Administrative provisions for tribal areas in Meghalaya, Mizoram and Assam

Schedule	Area of function
<b>Seventh</b>	Three lists of subjects and powers to be looked after by the State and the Union, <i>i.e.</i> : (1) Union list, containing the subjects of national importance, railway, defence, income tax, etc. (2) State list contains locally important subjects. (3) Concurrent list contains subjects under the authority of the Parliament and the State Legislature
<b>Eighth</b>	Deals with 18 (now 22) officially recognized regional languages by the Constitution.
<b>Ninth</b>	Contains acts and regulations dealing with abolition of zamindari system and land reforms of the State Legislatures. <b>The provisions of this schedule cannot be challenged in Supreme Court.</b>
<b>Tenth</b>	Contains provisions for the disqualification of members on the grounds of defection.
<b>Eleventh</b>	Deals with implementation of schemes needed for social justice and economic development at the rural levels.
<b>Twelfth</b>	Deals with municipal committees and their categorizations.

**Note:** Originally, there were eight schedules. Later, four more schedules were added to it, taking the total tally of schedules to twelve.

Here is a quick look at the most important Amendments to the Constitution so far. You should know this list well, since a few questions are often from this area!

## (J) Important Amendments

**1<sup>st</sup> Amendment (1951):** Schedule IX added, in order to save land reforms laws from judicial review. A nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court has now been asked to lay down the guidelines for the inclusion of any law in this Schedule. This has been caused due to the efforts on the parts of some States to include their reservation policy implementation laws in the Schedule.

**42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment (1976):** This amendment was also called the “Mini Constitution”, as it is the largest amendment ever. Some of the changes it introduced are:

- The Preamble was amended to include the words ‘Secular’, ‘Socialist’ and ‘integrity’.
- ‘Fundamental Duties’ added in Article 51A.
- The new Directive Principles in Articles 39A, 43A and 48A were added.

**44<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1978):** The Right to Property (Article 31) was abolished from the chapter of Fundamental Rights, and included under Article 300A, to remain a constitutional right.

**100<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act (2015):** Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) Treaty between **India** and **Bangladesh**.

**101 Amendment Act (2017):** This amendment act introduced a national **Goods and Services Tax in India** from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

**102 Amendment Act (2018):** This amendment act gives the Constitutional status to National Commission for Backward Classes 11<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

**103 Amendment Act (2019):** A maximum of 10% Reservation for Economically Weaker Sections of citizens of classes other than the classes mentioned in clauses (4) and (5) of Article 15, *i.e.* Classes other than socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Inserted Clause [6] under Article 15 as well as Inserted Clause [6] under Article 16.

**104 Amendment Act (2019):** The One Hundred and Fourth Amendment of the Constitution of India, officially known as the Constitution (One Hundred and Fourth Amendment) Act, 2019, **extends the deadline for the cessation for the reservation of seats for members from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies by a period of 10 years. The amendment does not, however, extend the period of reservation of the 2 Lok Sabha seats reserved for members of the Anglo-Indian Community** and thus the practice of nominating two members of the Anglo-Indian community by the President of India under the recommendation of the Prime Minister of India was effectively abolished.

## 5. Important Science Related Facts

### (A) Various Important Branches of Science

Name of science	Related to
Acoustics	Sound and sound waves
Aeronautics	Activities of flying
Agronomy	Production of crops and soil management
Anatomy	Dissectional learning of animal and human body
Anthropology	Origin, cultural and physical development of man
Archaeology	Study of material remains of past as proofs
Astronautics	Space vehicles and travelling in space
Astronomy	Planets (the heavenly bodies)
Biology	Science of living organisms
Botany	Plants
Cardiology	Heart and related diseases
Ceramics	Manufacturing of clay objects
Cetology	Aquatic mammals, especially the whales
Cosmology	Universe
Cryogenics	Studying effects of low temperature
Cytology	Structure and function of cells
Dactylogy	Study of fingerprints
Dermatology	Skin
Dietetics	Diet and nutrition
Ecology	Organisms and environment relationship
Entomology	Insects
Endocrinology	Endocrine glands
Etymology	Origin and history of words
Genetics	Heredity and its laws
Geology	Earth's (chemical and physical) structure
Gerontology	Ageing process, problems and diseases
Gynaecology	Female diseases of reproductive system
Haematology	Blood and related disorders
Histology	Tissues
Immunology	Body's immune system
Morphology	External structure of living organisms
Mycology	Fungi and fungal diseases
Nephrology	Kidney
Obstetrics	Pregnancy, child birth and their follow up
Ornithology	Birds
Orthopaedics	Human skeletal system
Osteology	Study of bones
Paediatrics	Child diseases
Palaeontology	Fossils and ancient life-forms

Name of science	Related to
Pathology	Mechanisms and manifestation of diseases
Pharmacology	Drugs and their effects on the body
Physiology	Life processes of various organs of living beings
Psychiatry	Mental disorders
Semiology	Sign language and signs
Seismology	Earthquakes
Theology	Religions
Toxicology	Toxic substances and poisons
Zoology	Animal life
Zymology	Fermentation process

## **(B) Important Information About the Human Body**

**Blood:** It is a red, viscous fluid which circulates in the human body. It is basically a connective tissue which is contained in the blood vessels. A healthy man possesses on an average, 5 litres of blood in the body.

**Composition:** It is made up of two chief constituents:

(a) **Plasma (fluid)**, constitutes the **major part** while (b) **Blood cells (solid)**, which constitutes the **minor** part.

The blood cell corpuscles are of two types: (1) **RBC** (2) **WBC**. The RBC is **red blood corpuscles** which contains a pigment called **haemoglobin** which is responsible for the red colour of the blood. **Iron is the element which is present in the haemoglobin**. The **WBC is white blood corpuscles** which are primarily responsible for **combating with the infection of the body or they fight with the foreign harmful organisms of the body**.

**Blood groups:** They are of four types, viz.

(i) **A-type**      (ii) **B-type**      (iii) **AB-type**      (iv) **O-type**

**AB - type** is called **universal recipient** as it can receive all the four types (mentioned above) of blood and **O-type** is called as **universal donor** as it can be given to any of the four types of blood groups (mentioned above).

**Bones:**

- (i) There are **206 bones** in the **skeletal system of an adult**.
- (ii) The **largest bone** is **femur** present in **the thigh**.
- (iii) The **shortest bone** is the **stirrup** which is **present in the middle ear**.

**Other important facts about the various organs of the human body:**

- The **largest organ** of the human body is **skin**.
- Heart is responsible for regulating the circulation of blood in the body. The heartbeat of adult males is **72 beats per minute**.
- Liver is the largest gland** of the human body. It is concerned with the digestion of the food intake.
- Two kidneys are responsible for the filtering of nitrogenous waste of the body and throw it all in the form of urine.
- Pituitary gland** is called **the master gland as it** influences the growth and metabolism by controlling the other ductless glands, viz. thymus, thyroid, adrenal, prostate, pancreas and gonads.

## **(C) Vitamins, their Sources and Diseases Caused due to their Deficiencies**

Name of the vitamin	Main source	Disease caused due to their deficiencies
<b>Vitamin A</b>	Milk, carrot, egg, animal fat, etc.	Night blindness
<b>Vitamin B1 (Thiamine)</b>	Cereals, pulses, carrots	Beriberi
<b>Vitamin B2 (Riboflavin)</b>	Liver, kidney, milk	Chilosis, dermatitis
<b>Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine)</b>	Yeast, cereals, liver	Anaemia
<b>Niacin (Nicotinic acid)</b>	Peas, tomato, eggs	Polynuritis
<b>Folic Acid</b>	Green leafy vegetables, meat, egg	Anaemia

Name of the vitamin	Main source	Disease caused due to their deficiencies
<b>Pantothenic Acid</b>	Kidney, meat, yeast	Dermatitis
<b>Vit. B12</b> (Cyanocobalamin)	Milk, liver, meat	Pernicious anaemia
<b>Vitamin C</b> (Ascorbic acid)	Lemons, milk, oranges, fresh fruits and vegetables	Scurvy, sore mouth and gums bleeding
<b>Vitamin D</b> (Calciferol)	Dairy products, sun rays, eggs, oily fish, milk	Many diseases of the bones, rickets in children, osteomalacia
<b>Vitamin E</b> (Tocopherol)	Milk, soyabeans, egg yolk	Interferes with reproduction and causes abortion and menstrual irregularities
<b>Vitamin K</b> (Menadione)	Fish, peas and green vegetables	Causes the delayed clotting of blood

### **(D) Other Diseases of the Human Body**

Name of the disease	Caused by	Affected part of the human body
Anaemia	Deficiency of haemoglobin	
AIDS (acquired immuno deficiency syndrome)	Virus	Weakness in the immune system of the body
Asthma	Allergens	Lungs
Diabetes	Less production of insulin hormone which causes an increase in the sugar level of the blood	Pancreas and blood
Diphtheria	Bacteria	Throat
Glaucoma	High pressure in the eyes	Eyes
Goitre	Deficiency of iodine	Throat
Hepatitis	Virus (mainly)	Jaundice
Malaria	Plasmodium	
Polio	Virus	Legs
Rheumatism	Streptococcus bacteria in children	Joints
Tonsillitis	Bacterial and viral infection	Glands in throat
Tuberculosis	Bacteria	Lungs

## 6. Important Miscellaneous GK Facts

### (A) United Nations

United Nations is world's largest organization which was **formed on October 24, 1945**. Since then **October 24 is celebrated as the United Nations Day**. The main objective of the United Nations is to make the world a better place to live in by maintaining peace and security all over the world. There are **193 members** at present in the UN and **South Sudan** is the last entrant. The organization is headquartered at New York and has got **five countries** as the **permanent members** in its security council. **They are China, UK, USA, Russia and France**; besides this they have 10 non-permanent members.

(1) **Structure of the Organization:** The following principle bodies of United Nations Organization.

- (i) **General Assembly:** It is **headquartered at New York**. Its members are all member states of the United Nations Organization (UNO).
- (ii) **Security Council:** **Headquartered at New York**, it has **five permanent members** (mentioned earlier) who enjoy veto power and 10 non-permanent elected members. The non-permanent elected members are elected by the General Assembly and retire on rotation, every two years. The main function is to look after the international peace and security.
- (iii) **The Economic and Social Council:** **Headquartered at New York**, it consists of **representatives of 54 member countries** elected by two-third majority in the General Assembly. It functions in international economic, social and culture-related matters.
- (iv) **Trusteeship Council:** **Headquartered at New York**, it looks after the interests of inhabitants of territories which are not yet fully self-governing and are governed by any administering country. The Trusteeship Council suspended its operations on 1 November 1994, a month after the independence of Palau, the last remaining United Nations trust territory.
- (v) **International Court of Justice:** **Headquartered at the Peace Palace The Hague, in Holland**, it consists of 15 judges elected by General Assembly and Security Council for a term of nine years. Its function is to give legal advice on legal matters to the bodies and special agencies of the UNO and considers the legal disputes which are brought before it. Peter Tamka is current President of International court of Justice.

**Note:** Four persons from India have been elected as Judges of International Court of Justice till date. They are:

- (1) Sir Benegal Rau (1950-8)
- (2) Dr. Negendra Singh (1970-80)
- (3) R. S. Pathak (1988-90)
- (4) Dalveer Bhandari (2012-2018)

(vi) **Secretariat:** It is headed by the Secretary-General who is the Chief Administrative Officer of the UNO and supervises the activities of UNO. **The Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council**. The term is of five years and can be re-elected after the expiry of the term.

➤ **Secretary - General of UNO:**

(i) **First Secretary - General was Trygve Lie, from Norway.**

(ii) **At present, Antonio Manuel de Oliveira Guterres of Portugal is the Secretary-General of UN.**

➤ **Official languages of the UNO:** They are **six** in number, viz.:

- (i) **English**      (ii) **Chinese**      (iii) **French**
- (iv) **Spanish**      (v) **Russian**      (vi) **Arabic**

### (B) Important Sobriquets

Distinctive Name	Country / Place
Bengal's Sorrow	Damodar river
Blue Mountains	Nilgiris
City of Arabian Nights	Baghdad
City of Palaces	Kolkata
City of Seven Hills/Eternal city	Rome



<b>Distinctive Name</b>	<b>Country / Place</b>
City of Skyscrapers /Empire city / Big Apple	New York
City of the Golden Gate	San Francisco
City of Joy	Kolkata
Commercial Capital of India	Mumbai
Dairy of Northern Europe	Denmark
Dark Continent	Africa
Forbidden City	Lhasa (Tibet)
Garden of England	Kent
Garden City of India	Bangalore
Gate of Tears	Bab-el-Mandab, Jerusalem
Gateway of India	Mumbai
Gift of the Nile	Egypt
Golden City	Johannesburg
Great White Way	Broadway (New York)
Hermit's Kingdom	Korea
Holy Land	Palestine
Island of Pearls	Bahrain
Key to the Mediterranean	Gibraltar
Land of Five Rivers	Punjab
Land of a Thousand Lakes	Finland
Land of Cakes	Scotland
Land of Kangaroos	Australia
Land of Lillies /Lady of Snow	Canada
Land of Morning Calm	Korea
Land of the Golden Fleece	Australia
Land of the Golden Pagoda	Myanmar
Land of the Midnight Sun	Norway
Land of the Rising Sun	Japan
Land of Thunderbolt	Bhutan
Land of White Elephants	Thailand
Manchester of South India	Coimbatore
Mother-in-Law of Europe	Denmark
Never, Never Land	Prairies (North America)
Pink City of India	Jaipur
Playground of Europe	Switzerland
Queen of the Arabian Sea	Cochin (India)
Roof of the World	Pamir (Tibet)
Sick Man of Europe	Turkey
Sorrow of China /Yellow river	River Hwang Ho
Spice Garden of India	Kerala
Sugar Bowl of the World	Cuba
Sugar Bowl of India	Uttar Pradesh



<b>Distinctive Name</b>	<b>Country / Place</b>
The Battlefield of Europe	Belgium
The Down Under	Australia
The Imperial City	Rome
The Promised Land	Canaan
The Saw Mill of Europe	Sweden
The Sea of Mountains	British Colombia
The Spice Island of the West	Grenada
Twin City	Budapest
Valley of Kings	Thebes
White City	Belgrade
White Man's Grave	Guinea Coast (West Africa)
Windy City	Chicago
Workshop of Europe	Belgium
World's Bread Basket	Prairies of North America

## **(C) Important Facts about World and India**

### **(a) World's Largest, Longest and Highest Man-made Structures**

<b>Structure</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>
Longest Rail Line	Trans-Siberian line from Moscow to Nakhodka, 9,438 kilometres long	Russia
Largest Temple (Hindu)	Angkor Vat	Cambodia
Longest Wall	The Great Wall of China	China
Longest Railway Platform	Gorakhpur (1,366.33 m)	Gorakhpur, UP
Largest Cathedral	Diocese of New York	New York
Longest Railway Bridge	Huey P. Long Bridge	Metairie, Louisiana, US
Busiest Airport	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport	Georgia, USA
Highest Road Bridge over Water	Royal Gorge	River Arkanas, Colorado
Largest Library	The Library of Congress	Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

### **(b) Important Natural Entities of the World**

<b>Natural Entity</b>	<b>Names</b>
Largest Ocean	Pacific
Largest Gulf	Gulf of Mexico
Largest Island	Greenland (renamed Kalaatlit Nunaat)
Largest Bay	Hudson Bay, Northern Canada
Tallest Animal	Giraffe
Largest Bird	North American Ostrich
Largest Animal	Blue Whale
Largest Egg	Ostrich Egg
Smallest Bird	Bee Hummingbird
Smallest River (shortest)	Roe River in Montana
Largest Sea	South China Sea

Natural Entity	Names
Largest Delta	Sunderbans
Driest Place	Atacama Desert, Chile
Highest Waterfall	Salto Angel, Venezuela
Largest Desert on the earth	Antarctic Polar Desert
Hottest Place	Aziza, Libya
Largest Glacier	Siachen, Indo-Pak border
Coldest Place	Vostok Station (Antarctica)

### (c) Important Facts of India

- **National Flag:** It was **adopted** by Constituent Assembly on July **22, 1947**. Ratio of width to length is 2 : 3 having three bands of equal width; lowest is green, middle one is white and saffron is the colour at the top. A wheel is at the centre of the flag of navy blue colour **having 24 spokes**. **Madam Bhikaji Cama was the first to unfurl the tri-colour at an international body.**
- **National Emblem:**
  - It was adopted by the Government of India on **January 26 1950**. Basically, it is **a replica of the capitol of Ashoka's pillar at Sarnath**.
  - In the state emblem, adopted by the Government of India, **only three lions are visible**, the fourth being hidden from view.
  - The wheel appears in relief in the centre of the abacus with a bull on right and a horse on left and the outlines of other wheels on extreme right and left.
  - The words **Satyameva Jayate from Mundaka Upanishad, meaning "Truth Alone Triumphs", are inscribed below the abacus in Devanagari script.**
- **National Anthem:** Composed by **Rabindranath Tagore**, have wordings: Jana Gana Mana..., in 1911. Adopted on January 24 1950, by the Constituent Assembly of India and takes about **52 seconds** to sing it completely. It was first sung on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1911 at Calcutta session of Congress.
- **National Song:** Composed by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee**, wordings: Vande Mataram..., **taken** from 'Anand Math', a novel by him and was adopted on **January 24 1950**.
- **National Flower** is **Lotus**.
- **National Animal** is **Tiger**.
- **National Bird** is **Peacock**.

### (d) Important Boundaries and Lines of the World

- **Durand Line:** It is the line which separates Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- **MacMahon Line:** It demarcates the boundaries of China and India.
- **Radcliffe Line:** It demarcates the boundary between India and Pakistan.
- **38<sup>th</sup> Parallel:** It is the parallel separating North Korea and South Korea.
- **49<sup>th</sup> Parallel:** It is the boundary between USA and Canada.
- **Siegfried Line:** It is the line between Germany and France, from German side.
- **Magnot Line:** It is the line between Germany and France from French side.
- **17<sup>th</sup> parallel:** It is the parallel (latitude) which separated North Vietnam from South Vietnam.

## (D) Important National and International Days

### (i) International Days

Date	Name of the Day
January 26	International Customs Day
March 8	International Women's Day
March 15	World Consumers' Day
March 21	World Forestry Day

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of the Day</b>
March 22	World Day for Water
March 23	World Meteorological Day
April 7	World Health Day
April 17	World Haemophilia Day
April 18	World Heritage Day
April 22	World Earth Day
May 1	International Labour Day
May 3	International Press Freedom Day
May 8	World Red Cross Day
May 24	Commonwealth Day
May 31	Anti-tobacco Day/World No Tobacco Day
June 5	World Environment Day (Theme of 2015: Seven Billion Dreams. One planet. Consume with care)
June 8	World Ocean Day (Theme of 2015: Healthy Oceans, Healthy Planet)
June 12	World Day against Child Labour
June 20	World Refugee Day (Theme of 2015: With courage let us all combine)
June 21	International Yoga Day
June 26	International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
July 11	World Population Day
July 15	International Youth Skill Day
September 8	World Literacy Day
September 16	World Ozone Day
September 27	World Tourism Day
October 1	International Day for Older Persons
October 3	World Habitat Day
October 5	World Teachers Day
October 9	World Post Day
October 11	International Day of the Girl Child
October 14	World Standards Day
October 16	World Food Day
October 17	International Day for Eradication of Poverty
October 24	United Nations Day
December 1	World AIDS Day
December 3	International Day for Disabled Persons
December 7	International Civil Aviation Day
December 10	World Human Rights Day

## (ii) National Days

Date	Name of the Day
January 12	National Youth Day (birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda)
January 15	Army Day
January 23	Netaji S.C. Bose's Birth Anniversary
January 24	National Day for Girl Child
January 25	National Voters Day
January 26	Republic Day
January 30	Martyr's Day (Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary)
February 24	Central Excise Day
February 28	National Science Day
May 21	Anti-terrorism Day (Rajiv Gandhi's death anniversary)
June 29	National Statistics Day
August 7	National Handloom Day
August 15	Independence Day
August 29	National Sports Day
September 5	Teachers' Day
October 2	Gandhi Jayanti/International Day for Non-Violence
October 8	Indian Air Force Day
November 14	Children's Day
November 26	National Legal Day
December 4	Navy Day
December 23	Kisan Divas (Farmers' Day-Chowdhary Charan Singh's Birthday)

## (E) Sports (Miscellaneous):

In this section generally questions are asked from cups and trophies and terms associated with various sports disciplines. Here is the compilation of important sports and related facts.

### (i) International Cups, trophies and associated sports disciplines

Name of the Cup/Trophy	Associated Sport
Davis Cup (Men)	Lawn tennis
Federation Cup (Women)	Lawn tennis
Weightman Cup	Lawn tennis
ATP Tournament	Lawn tennis
Wimbledon Trophy	Lawn tennis
Australian Open	Lawn tennis
US Open	Lawn tennis
French Open	Lawn tennis
Merdeka cup	Football
FIFA cup	Football

<b>Name of the Cup/Trophy</b>	<b>Associated Sport</b>
Copa America Cup	Football
Euro Cup	Football
Champions League	Football
Thomas Cup (Men)	Badminton
Uber Cup (Women)	Badminton
All England Badminton Championship	Badminton
Yonex Cup	Badminton
Walker Cup	Golf
PGA Tournament	Golf
Ryder Cup	Golf
Canada Cup	Golf
Champions Trophy	Hockey
Beighton Cup	Hockey
Sultan Azlan Shah Cup	Hockey
William Jones Cup	Basketball

**(ii) National cups/trophies and associated sports disciplines**

<b>Name of the Cup/Trophy</b>	<b>Associated Sports</b>
ICC Cricket World Cup	Cricket
Asia Cup	Cricket
Sharjah Cup	Cricket
Duleep Trophy	Cricket
Sheesh Mahal Trophy	Cricket
Ranji Trophy (National Title)	Cricket
Vijay Hazarey Trophy	Cricket
Irani Trophy	Cricket
Deodhar Trophy	Cricket
Vizzy Trophy	Cricket
Durand Cup	Football
Santosh Memorial Trophy	Football (School Championship)
Subroto Cup	Football
Rovers Cup	Football
Sanjay Gold Cup	Football
Durand Cup	Football
Lal Bahadur Shastri Trophy	Football
Nizam Gold Cup	Football
Dr. B.C. Roy Trophy (National Junior Championship)	Football
Rangaswami Cup (National Title)	Hockey

<b>Name of the Cup/Trophy</b>	<b>Associated Sports</b>
Lady Ratan Tata Trophy (Women's)	Hockey
Nehru Trophy	Hockey
Aga Khan Gold Cup	Hockey
Guru Nanak Championship (All - India Women)	Hockey
Dhyan Chand Trophy	Hockey
Murugappa Gold Cup	Hockey
Ezar Cup	Polo

**(iii) Terms associated with various sports disciplines**

<b>Sports</b>	<b>Terms associated with sports disciplines</b>
Badminton	Luv, deuce, drop, smash, double touch, let, fault
Basketball	Pivot, dribble, basket, block, held ball, free throw, holding, jump ball
Billiards	Spider, baulk, cue, scratch, cannon
Boxing	Hook, rounds, punch, jab, countdown, knock-outs, all the weights, (flyweight, middleweight, heavyweight, etc.)
Bridge	Tricks, trump, suite, little slam, rubber
Chess	Knight, king, Sicilian defence, move, gambit, checkmate, rook, stalemate, queen, bishop, pawn, castle
Cricket	Gully, hat-trick, pull, beamer, hook, googly, flick, follow-on, maiden, declare, Silly point, Leg Before Wicket (LBW), Ashes, Duck, Popping crease, Maiden over, Square leg, Amour chinaman
Golf	Tee, birdie, club, course, Iron, eagle, links, caddie, putt, hole, bogey, fore, niblic
Hockey	Centre, penalty-stroke, free-hit, foul, carry, stick, corner, dribble, trapping, short corner, tie-braker, scoop, penalty corner
Table tennis	Deuce, drop, spin, smash, let, serve
Lawn-Tennis	Grand slam, lob, ace, passing shot, top-spin, forehand, crosscourt, deuce, down the line, slice, half volley, smash
Volleyball	Heave, serve, blocking, point, doubling

## Part – 2: Current and Business GK Facts

In this section of compendium we have compiled some very important facts from Current and Business news which we feel are quite relevant from **IIFT Examinations 2021-2022** perspective. We believe that this compilation will serve the intended purpose effectively.

### **A. National**

#### **New farm Acts aim to transform agriculture sector in country & raise farmers' income**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi government has taken several measures with an **aim to transform agriculture sector in the country and raise farmers' income.**
- **Three Farm acts that are bone of contention: 1. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, 2. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, 3. Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.**
- The acts aim to **do away with government interference in agricultural trade by creating trading areas free of middlemen and government taxes outside the structure of Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs).** It will allow farmers an option to sell their produce directly to these new zones, without going through the middlemen and paying levies such as mandi fees. **It sought to remove stock holding limits as well as curbs on inter-State and intra-State trade, and create a framework for contract farming.**
- The farmers have the power to sell their fruits or vegetables **to anyone, and anywhere.** The **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, seeks to remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onion, and potato from the list of essential commodities** and will do away with the imposition of stock holding limits.

**In India, Agriculture is a state subject, i.e.** it forms a part of the state list of our Constitution, which essentially means that states are supposed to address all the issues related to agriculture. **The agriculture contribution in India's GDP in 2019 is 15.96 percent.** According to latest report, **agriculture is primary source of livelihood for 58% population in India. Two third of the livelihood of the Indian population is directly or indirectly dependent on Agriculture.** The **Primary sector of the economy** includes any industry involved in the extraction and production of raw materials, such as farming, logging, hunting, fishing, and mining. India is a global agricultural powerhouse. It is the **world's largest producer of milk, pulses, and spices, and has the world's largest cattle herd (buffaloes), as well as the largest area under wheat, rice and cotton.** It is the **second largest producer of rice, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, farmed fish, sheep & goat meat, fruit, vegetables and tea.**

#### **Bhubaneswar became the first Indian city to get an ISO 9001:2015 Certification**

- The capital city of Odisha, **Bhubaneswar became the first Indian city to get an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001:2015 Certification for 'Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) services'.** Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was the **first civic body to implement FSSM regulations in the State.**
- **Jhenaidah is the first city in the world to get ISO 9001:2015 certifications. Bhubaneswar is the second city in the world and first in India to get ISO 9001:2015 certification.**

**The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. Founded on 23 February 1947, the organization promotes worldwide proprietary, industrial, and commercial standards. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and works in 165 countries.**

#### **Nagaland hosts first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020**

- **Nagaland has hosted the first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020. Dubbed as the "Festival of Festivals", the Hornbill Festival is celebrated every year showcasing the rich cultural heritage and tradition of the Nagas in one platform at Naga Heritage Village Kisama under Kohima District.**



**Nagaland is a landlocked state in north-eastern India. Nagaland's capital city is Kohima and its largest city is Dimapur. Neiphiu Rio is the current Chief Minister of Nagaland. Ravindra Narayana Ravi is currently serving as the Governor of Nagaland. Retired IPS 1976 batch. Nagalim (Greater Nagaland) is consisting of all the Naga-inhabited areas of neighbouring Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and some portions Myanmar, which it considers to be the rightful homeland of the Nagas.**

### **Arjun Munda launched 10-day-long Aadi Mahotsav**

- **Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, launched the virtual edition of Aadi Mahotsav- Madhya Pradesh.** The 10-day long festival, commencing on December 1, 2020, is being hosted on the Tribes India website ([www.tribesindia.com](http://www.tribesindia.com)).
- **Keeping in view of restrictions due to Covid-19, the TRIFED has decided to organise its annual event Aadi Mahotsav-2020 in an online mode. India website [www.tribesindia.com](http://www.tribesindia.com) and the main focus of this year is on the tribal craft and culture of Madhya Pradesh.**
- **The Aadi Mahotsav is a unique celebration of the spirit of tribal culture, crafts, cuisine and commerce. It commenced in 2017.**

### **Contract Agreement will guarantee the Farmers to get the fixed price**

- **The Narendra Modi government has taken several steps to transform the agriculture sector and to raise farmers' income.** The government has also brought new farm acts in this direction.
- **Contract farming is an alternate market model in which farmers and sponsors like wholesalers, processors, exporter enter into an agreement at the time of sowing. They work together to produce the required variety and quality in return of a risk-free income for the farmer.**

**In October 2019, Tamil Nadu has become the first State in the country to enact a law on contract farming with President Ram Nath Kovind giving assent to the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act. Contract farming usually involves the following basic elements - pre-agreed price, quality, quantity or acreage (minimum/maximum) and time (Manage 2003). Contracts can range from oral deals to formal, registered written contracts, the university said on its Website.**

### **Economy firmly on the path of a V-shaped recovery, says Finance Ministry**

- **India's economy is firmly on the path of a V-shaped recovery after the collapse in the first quarter, and further improvement is expected in the third quarter, 'notwithstanding some moderation' in November's indicators attributing the recovery to the unlocking process along with 'astute' stimulus measures. "This V-shaped recovery, evident at the half-way stage of 2020-21, reflects the resilience and robustness of the Indian economy.**

**Economic recovery can take many forms, which is depicted using alphabetic notations. For example, a Z-shaped recovery, V-shaped recovery, U-shaped recovery, elongated U-shaped recovery, W-shaped recovery and L-shaped recovery. The fundamental difference between the different kinds of recovery is the time taken for economic activity to normalize. Z-shaped recovery is the most-optimistic scenario in which the economy quickly rises after an economic crash. V-shaped recovery is the next-best scenario after Z-shaped recovery in which the economy quickly recoups lost ground and gets back to the normal growth trend-line. U-shaped recovery is a scenario in which the economy, after falling, struggles around a low growth rate for some time, before rising gradually to usual levels. W-shaped recovery is a dangerous creature. In this, growth falls and rises, but falls again before recovering, thus forming a W-like chart. L-shaped recovery fails to regain the level of GDP even after years go by.**

### **India's first transgender children's homes will be in Bengaluru**

- **India's first homes for transgender children in need of care and protection will soon be established in Bengaluru. The Ministry of Women and Child Development gave its nod for the project.**

### **PASSEX conducted by Indian Navy and Russian Navy**

- **The Indian Navy (IN) is undertaking a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from 4 to 5 December 2020.**
- **The exercise involves participation of RuFN guided missile cruiser Varyag, large anti-submarine ship Admiral Panteleyev and medium ocean tanker Pechenga. IN is being represented by indigenously constructed guided missile frigate Shivalik and anti-submarine corvette Kadmattalong with integral helicopters.**

### Mizoram's first solar power plant commissioned

- **Mizoram's first solar power plant** has been **commissioned at Tlungvel**. The grid connected 2 megawatt solar photovoltaic (SPV) solar power plant was **opened by state Power minister R Lalzirliana**. The **Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) Power Plant commissioned** has a **peak generation capacity of 2 MW**.

Mizoram is a state in Northeast India, with Aizawl as its capital city. The name is derived from “Mizo”, the name of the native inhabitants, and “Ram”, which means land, and thus Mizoram means “land of the Mizos”. Like several other northeastern states of India, **Mizoram was previously part of Assam until 1972, when it was carved out as a Union Territory. It became the 23<sup>rd</sup> state of India, a step above Union Territory, on 20 February 1987, with Fifty-Third Amendment of Indian Constitution, 1986.** Lal Thanhawla has been the Chief Minister of Mizoram since 11 December 2008. Kummanam Rajasekharan is the current Governor of Mizoram.

### Bihar plans migratory bird festival to raise awareness about them

- **In a novel initiative, Bihar is holding a bird festival to create awareness about the importance of migratory birds** that arrive here in large numbers every year.
- **The first-of-its-kind bird festival is being organised at Bhagalpur, an eastern Bihar town** located on the southern bank of the Ganges. The three-day festival likely to start from December 11 is being **jointly organised by the Bhagalpur forest division, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Mandar Nature Club**.

### PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of new proposed Parliament Building in New Delhi

- **Although the laying of the foundation stone was allowed, Justice A.M. Khanwilkar of Supreme Court of India put a hold on Central Vista Redevelopment Project** at whole till resolution of pleas received against the project in the court. On 10 December 2020, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone** with a ceremony of sarva dharma prarthana (inter-faith prayer).
- **The new Parliament Building is being constructed at a cost of 971 crore rupees** which will house more Committee Rooms and Political Parties offices than the existing Parliament House.
- **“The new building is an intrinsic part of the vision of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ and will be a landmark opportunity to build peoples’ Parliament for the first time after independence, one which will match the needs and aspirations of ‘New India’ in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence in 2022.”**
- **The Central Vista project includes construction of a new Parliament building, with the existing building converted into a museum.** Five big office buildings each would come up on both sides of Rajpath, while the National Museum and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts buildings would be pulled down to make way for the new buildings.

### Cyclonic Storm ‘Burevi’ over southwest Bay of Bengal

- The Deep Depression over the southeast and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal has intensified into a cyclonic storm. **Seven days after Cyclone Nivar hit the Karaikal coast, another cyclone, Burevi, named by the Maldives**, crossed Tamil Nadu's southernmost district of Kanyakumari first week of December.
- This is the **third cyclone formed within the last 10 days in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal**, put together. **Due to upwelling caused by Nivar, Cyclone Burevi has limited intensity.**

**Tropical Cyclone is any large system of winds that circulates about a center of low atmospheric pressure in a counter-clockwise direction north of the Equator and in a clockwise direction to the south.**

### Gwalior & Orchha included in list of World Heritage City by UNESCO

- **Gwalior and Orchha of Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of World Heritage City by UNESCO.** Tourism experts are calling it a big achievement. **Orchha located in the Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh** is famous all over the world for its temples and palaces.
- **Orchha was the 16<sup>th</sup> century capital of the erstwhile Bundela dynasty. Gwalior was established in the 9<sup>th</sup> century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaho and Scindias.**

**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.**

## **Cyclone Nivar was the fourth cyclone to take shape in the North Indian Ocean region this year**

- **Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Nivar** was a tropical cyclone which brought severe impacts to portions of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in late November of 2020. The eighth depression and fourth named storm of the 2020 North Indian Ocean cyclone season, Nivar originated from a disturbance in the Intertropical Convergence Zone.
- **Cyclone Nivar** was the fourth cyclone to take shape in the North Indian Ocean region this year. The first three cyclones were **Cyclone Gati** (made landfall in Somalia on November 22), **Cyclone Amphan**, (eastern India witnessed it in May), and **Cyclone Nisarga** (in Maharashtra). The name Nisarga was given by Bangladesh, Gati was taken from India's suggested names. Nivara has been selected from the list of names given by Iran.

## **PM Modi addressed inaugural session of virtual India Mobile Congress 2020**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has given the inaugural address at the virtual India Mobile Congress 2020. IMC 2020 is being organised by the Department of Telecommunications, and the Cellular Operators Association of India. **IMC 2020 is organised by the Department of Telecommunications, and the Cellular Operators Association of India.**
- The theme for IMC 2020 is **"Inclusive Innovation - Smart, Secure, Sustainable"**. It aims to align to the Prime Minister's vision to promote 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', 'Digital Inclusivity', and 'Sustainable development, entrepreneurship and innovation'.

## **India-Uzbekistan virtual summit on December 11, a first with central Asian nation**

- **In a first-ever virtual summit with a Central Asian country**, PM Narendra Modi was held a virtual summit with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on December 11.
- PM Modi has already had virtual summits with his counterparts from—Australia, EU, Sri Lanka, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg. More such meets are on the anvil, with a virtual summit with Bangladesh expected to happen on the December 17. **Indian Prime Minister had visited the doubly landlocked central Asian country in 2015 and 2016**, followed by visits of Uzbek President Mirziyoyev to India in 2018 and 2019.

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

## **First visit by an Indian Army chief to Saudi Arabia and the UAE**

- Regular joint military exercises and training besides joint production of defence equipment are some of the goals that India, UAE and Saudi Arabia look to achieve on **Army chief General M.M. Naravane's week-long trip to the two key Middle East countries.**
- **This is the first visit by an Indian Army chief to Saudi Arabia and the UAE** and is seen as a sign of how India's ties with the Middle East has improved over the past few years.
- **Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's visit to Saudi Arabia** in August, to ease the diplomatic strain between the countries, ended with him **being denied a meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.**

## **PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention on January 9**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention to be held in virtual format on January 9.** Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention is the flagship event of the Government of India and provides an important platform to **engage and connect with the overseas diaspora.**
- The theme of PBD 2021 is **"Contributing to Atmanirbhar Bharat"**.

**Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebratory day observed on 9 January by the Republic of India to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January 1915.**

## **Global climate summit marked 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Paris Climate Pact**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Global Climate Summit on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Climate Agreement** which was adopted on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015.



The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was **adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and entered into force on 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2016.**

- **The Paris Climate Agreement completed five years on 12<sup>th</sup> of December** and the United Kingdom has called for a virtual Global Climate Summit and Prime Minister Narendra Modi also took part in the meeting.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India has not only achieved its target against climate change as per the Paris Agreement 2015 but has also gone beyond it.**

**The landmark Paris deal, struck in 2015, aims to limit global warming to “well below” 2°C above pre-industrial temperatures. The agreement came into force on November 4, 2016 and 189 countries have adopted it within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance. In November 2020, United States formally left the Paris Agreement. Under the Paris climate change agreement signed in 2015, India has committed to cut GHG (Green House Gas) emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35 per cent, increase non-fossil fuel power capacity to 40 per cent from 28 per cent in 2015, add carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonne CO<sub>2</sub> per annum by increasing the forest cover.**

### **Lakshadweep first UT to become 100% organic**

- **After Sikkim, Lakshadweep is the first Union Territory to become 100 per cent organic as all farming is carried out without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, providing access to safer food choices and making agriculture a more environment-friendly activity. The ministry of agriculture has declared the island as organic. Earlier in 2016, Sikkim became India’s first “100 percent organic” State.**

### **PM-WANI scheme will revolutionalise tech world & significantly improve WiFi availability across country**

- **In a bid to fuel broadband internet proliferation across the country, the Government of India launched PM WANI (Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface) Scheme. The scheme aims to bring large scale deployment of Wi-Fi hotspots through the country to drive up connectivity options and improve digital access.**
- **The scheme envisages setting up of public Wi-Fi networks and access points by local Kirana and neighbourhood shops through public data offices (PDO will be set up on the lines of Public Call Offices (PCOs)) that will not involve any licence, fee or registration.**
- **Apart from, Public Wi-Fi being a low-cost option to reach unserved citizens and grow the economy, it can revolutionise the tech world and significantly improve Wi-Fi availability across the length and breadth of India.**

### **GRSE Kolkata launches ‘Himgiri’, its first ship of Project 17A**

- **Himgiri, which is the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was launched. She made her first contact with the waters of Hoogly River at the launch ceremony where Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat was the Chief Guest.**
- **Under the Project 17A program, a total of seven ships, four at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and three ships at GRSE are being built with enhanced stealth features, advanced indigenous weapon and sensor fit along with several other improvements.**

### **PM Narendra Modi lights up ‘Swarnim Vijay Mashaal to begin 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Indo-Pak War**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi lights up ‘Swarnim Vijay Mashaal and begin 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Indo-Pak War. Various commemorative events are planned across the nation and the inaugural event was held at the National War Memorial in New Delhi.**
- **Four Victory Mashaals was lit from the Eternal Flame of National War Memorial. These Mashaals were carried to various parts of the country including to villages of Param Vir Chakra and MahaVir Chakra Awardees of 1971 War. Soil from the villages of these Awardees and from areas where major battles were fought in 1971 are being brought to the memorial in New Delhi.**

**In December 1971, the Indian Armed Forces secured a decisive and historic Victory over Pakistan Army, which led to creation of a Nation - Bangladesh and also resulted in the largest Military Surrender after the World War – II. From 16 December, the Nation will be celebrating 50 Years of Indo-Pak War, also called ‘Swarnim Vijay Varsh’. Various commemorative events are planned across the Nation.**

## World's tallest rail bridge on Chenab in J&K likely to be completed by 2021

- Touted as the next man-made wonder, **the world's tallest rail bridge on the Chenab in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory** is expected to be completed by next year.
- **The 1,315-metre-long bridge between Bakkal and Kauri villages of Reasi is coming up at a height of 359 metres.** The arched structure will connect Baramulla to Jammu via Udhampur, Katra and Qazigund with a travel time of six and a half hours.

## PM Modi & his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina held virtual summit

- **A day after celebrating Vijay Diwas, marking India's triumph over Pakistan in 1971 that led to the birth of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is held a virtual summit with his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina** to discuss ways and means on how to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation in the post-Covid era.
- According to sources, **India and Bangladesh have been putting significant efforts to enhance ties in transport and connectivity as the leadership in both countries has shown commitment to revive and operationalise six pre-1965 rail links between India and Bangladesh.**
- **India and Bangladesh have continued to maintain regular exchanges** at the highest level. Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a video message **on the historic occasion of Mujib Borsho in March 2020. Bangladesh is commemorating 2020-21 as "Mujib Borsho"** on the occasion of the centennial birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding leader of the country.

**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 16<sup>th</sup> and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.**

## India adds Tso Kar wetland complex to Ramsar Site

- In a significant development to conservation of biodiversity, **India has added Tso Kar wetland complex to the Ramsar Site. Tso Kar, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Wetland of International Importance, is at more than 4,500 metres above sea level in the Changthang region of Ladakh.**
- The complex **includes two connected lakes, the freshwater Startsapuk Tso and the larger hypersaline Tso Kar,** with presentation of a notable example of two such lakes existing in close proximity.

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

## Goa Liberation Day 2020

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant extended greetings on the **Goa Liberation Day 2020. December 19 is observed as Goa Liberation Day to commemorate the role of India's armed forces in liberating Goa from Portuguese rule.**
- **The Portuguese ruled several Indian territories including Goa for over four centuries. But the Indian state was finally liberated Goa from the Portuguese occupation after a brief military operation in 1961.**
- And since then **December 19 is observed as the Goa Liberation Day every year. The day marks the Independence of Goa from centuries of Portuguese colonisation.**

**The Annexation of Goa was the process in which the Republic of India annexed the former Portuguese Indian territories of Goa, Daman and Diu, starting with the armed action carried out by the Indian Armed Forces in December 1961. In India, this action is referred to as the "Liberation of Goa". In Portugal, it is referred to as the "Invasion of Goa". The "armed action" was code named Operation Vijay (meaning "Victory") by the Indian Armed Forces. It involved air, sea and land strikes for over 36 hours, and was a decisive victory for India, ending 451 years of rule by Portugal over its remaining exclaves in India. Following the end of Portuguese rule in 1961, Goa was placed under military administration headed by Kunhiraman Palat Candeth as Lieutenant Governor.**

## India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) conducted

- The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish, an indigenously built missile corvette along with P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) undertook coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Cut Nyak Dien, a Kapitan Pattimura (Parchim I) class corvette and a MPA of the Indonesian Navy.

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

## India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020 organized

- India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020 is organized on 22 December on virtual platforms. Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at the India International Science Festival, IISF 2020 through video conferencing.
- This was the largest science festival to be held on virtual platform. The central theme of this year's festival is "Science for Self-reliant India and Global Welfare".

## UN Women, Kerala government collaborate for India's first Gender Data Hub

- The Kerala government and UN Women have collaborated to establish India's first Gender Data Hub. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in this regard in the presence of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan
- The Gender Hub builds on the goals established through the International Conference on Gender Equality held in November 2015, to collect, analyse and use more nuanced data and inform policy formulation in a manner that centre-stages women's rights.

## Union Cabinet approves 100% FDI in DTH service

- The Union Cabinet approved 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in direct-to-home (DTH) service, extension of the license period from 10 years to 20 and a reduced licence fee.
- Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar said, "The Commerce Ministry had already spoken of 100% FDI in the DTH sector, but because of the guidelines issued by the Information and Broadcasting [I&B] Ministry, the FDI was limited to 49%.

'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.**

## Navies of India, Vietnam to hold PASSEX in South China Sea

- Indian Navy ship INS Kiltan, which arrived in Vietnam to deliver relief material under Mission Sagar-III, will hold a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Vietnamese Navy in the South China Sea (SCS).
- Mission Sagar was launched as a part of India's HADR assistance to friendly foreign countries during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The exercise has been conducted at a time when China has been expanding its military assertiveness in the South China Sea notwithstanding mounting global concerns and criticism.

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



## Nashik leads wine capital race with Geographical Indication tag

- **Nashik's ambitions of claiming the wine capital of India status received an impetus after the Centre accorded it the coveted Geographical Indication tag. The city has been branded Nashik Valley Wine to give wine production a push.**
- **"The particular taste of any fruit or crop is attributable to the soil in the region. The soil and the geographical condition of Nashik are unique. That was the reason why we could produce a particular variety of grape that aided in wine production".**

A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place. In addition, the qualities, characteristics or reputation of the product should be essentially due to the place of origin. Geographical Indications protection is granted through the TRIPS Agreement of WTO. India, as a member of the WTO, enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004-2005.

## Madhya Pradesh: India's 1<sup>st</sup> tiger reserve hot air balloon safari launched

- **Recognised as the 'Tiger State' of India, Madhya Pradesh has launched India's first hot air balloon safari in its famous Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve located in Umaria district. It is the first in any tiger reserve in the country. Now like Africa's forests, tourists in India will also enjoy hot air balloon wildlife safari.**
- **Madhya Pradesh has witnessed a consistent rise in its tiger population. According to the Tiger Census report 2019, the state topped the survey with total 526 tigers compared to 308 tigers in 2014. It took over Karnataka which enjoyed the title of Tiger State in previous years.**

**Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India during Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure. Kailash Sankhala was the first director of Project Tiger. As the Bengal Tiger is the national animal of India, this project aims to stem the dwindling population of the big cats and work to increase their numbers.**

## PM Modi flagged off 100<sup>th</sup> Kisan Rail from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the 100<sup>th</sup> Kisan Rail from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal through video conferencing.**
- **The multi-commodity train service will carry vegetables such as cauliflower, capsicum, cabbage, drumsticks, chillies, onion, as well as fruits like grapes, oranges, pomegranate, banana and custard apple. Kisan Rail has been a game changer in ensuring fast transportation of agriculture produce across the nation. It provides a seamless supply chain of perishable produce.**
- **The first Kisan Rail was introduced from Devlali to Danapur on 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2020, which was further extended upto Muzaffarpur. As a result of good response from the farmers, its frequency was also increased from weekly to three days in a week.**

## PM Narendra Modi dedicated Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to nation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Kochi - Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to the nation through video conferencing. The event marks an important milestone towards the creation of One Nation One Gas Grid. The 450 kilometre long pipeline has been built by GAIL (India) Limited. It has transportation capacity of 12 Million Metric Standard Cubic Metres per day.**
- **It will carry natural gas from the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Regasification Terminal at Kochi, Kerala to Mangaluru, Karnataka, while passing through Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts. The total cost of the project was about three thousand crore rupees and its construction created over 12 lakh man-days of employment.**



**National Grid is the high-voltage electric power transmission network in mainland India, connecting power stations and major substations and ensuring that electricity generated anywhere in mainland India can be used to satisfy demand elsewhere. All the willing rural households would be provided with cooking gas and electricity connection by 2022 that is by the 75<sup>th</sup> year of India's independence. India is the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after the US and China. The Grid would be helpful in meeting emission reduction targets that were signed at Paris Agreement which would be done by increasing the usage of natural gas and Green fuel.**

### **unfurls Blue Flags on its beaches**

- **India, which has become the first country in the world to receive the Blue Flag Certification for 8 beaches** in a single attempt, hosted the Blue flags in all its beaches. **India unfurled the 8 Blue Flags on its beaches** which once again showcases **a national level campaign to safeguard its coastal region.**
- National level campaign integrated with the **BEAMS (Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services) program for continuous awareness and education of people for Blue Flag certification journey.**
- **BEAMS is an Integrated Coastal Zone Management initiatives undertaken for sustainable development of 13 coastal regions of the country,** with a prime objective to conserve the pristine coastal and marine ecosystems.

**Blue Flag certification is given by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) the Foundation for Environmental Education, the Blue Flag is a well-recognised voluntary eco-label given to a beach, marina, or sustainable boating tourism operator which meets its standards. It is headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark. A beach has to meet 33 criteria including environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria fixed by the FEE to get the tag.**

### **PM Modi inaugurated New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **inaugurated the New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor in Uttar Pradesh** via video conferencing. **The 351-km section,** which has been **built at a cost of Rs 5,750 crore,** will open new avenues for local industries in Uttar Pradesh.
- **PM also inaugurated the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor's (EDFC) operation control centre at Prayagraj.** "We have planned to start two dedicated freight corridors. **The first one will connect Punjab's Ludhiana to Dankuni in West Bengal. The second one will connect JNPT (Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust), Maharashtra to Dadri in Uttar Pradesh,** which will be close to Jewar Airport," PM Modi said.
- **First 2 DFC, Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC), from Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC), Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal. Two DFC will decongest railway network by moving 70% of India's goods train to these two corridors,** are both on track for completion in December 2021. **The EDFC route covers Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The World Bank is funding a majority of the EDFC.**
- **The WDFC covers Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.** It is being funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

**The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL) is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) corporation run by the Government of India's Ministry of Railways to undertake planning, development, and mobilisation of financial resources and construction, maintenance and operation of the "Dedicated Freight Corridors" (DFC). The DFCCIL was registered as a company under the Companies Act 1956 in 2006.**

### **India's first pollinator park opens in Uttarakhand's Haldwani**

- **The Uttarakhand forest department dedicated the newly built Pollinator Park to the public,** claiming it to be the **country's first such park,** spread over 4 acres in Haldwani in Nainital district.
- **The park has more than 40 pollinator species with displays on the mechanism of pollination of plant species** by various species of butterflies, honeybees, birds, insects, moths, beetles, wasps, and small mammals. The park also has small water bodies for mud puddling of butterflies through which they take certain nutrients like salt and arrangement of ultraviolet light to attract night pollinators like moths.

**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 27<sup>th</sup> state of the Republic of India**, being created from the Himalayan and adjoining northwestern districts of Uttar Pradesh. **Trivendra Singh Rawat** is the **eighth and current Chief Minister** of Uttarakhand. **Baby Rani Maurya** is serving as the **seventh governor of Uttarakhand** since 26 August 2018. **The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun**, the largest city of the state, which is a rail head. **Gairsain, a town in Chamoli district is the summer capital of Uttarakhand. The High Court of the state is located in Nainital.**

### **first hospital train ‘Lifeline Express’ currently stationed in Assam**

- **The Indian Ministry of Railways** recently took to the social media and shared few of the pictures of **World’s first and India’s only hospital train ‘Lifeline Express’** which is currently stationed in **Badarpur, Assam.**

### **Indian Railways achieves a train speed of 130 kilometer per hour on Golden Quadrilateral - Golden Diagonal route**

- Indian Railways has started the New Year by **achieving a landmark to enhance the maximum speed to 130 kilometres per hour for 1,280 km length out of 1,612 Km in Golden Quadrilateral - Golden Diagonal route.** This covers the entire GQ-GD route over South Central Railway, except Vijayawada - Duvvada section, where signaling upgradation work is in progress.

**Golden Quadrilateral (GQ)** is a **national highway network connecting most of the major industrial, agricultural and cultural centres of India.** It forms a quadrilateral connecting the **four major metro cities of India, viz., Delhi (north), Kolkata (east), Mumbai (west) and Chennai (south).** **Diamond Quadrilateral** is a project of the Indian railways to establish a high speed rail network in India. **The Diamond Quadrilateral will connect the four mega cities in India, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, similar to the Golden Quadrilateral expressway system.**

### **India to chair three-key subsidiary bodies of UNSC**

- **India will be chairing three-key subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).** The panels are, **Counter-Terrorism Committee (for 2022), Taliban Sanctions Committee, and Libya Sanctions committee.**
- **India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of UNSC in 2022.** India will be assuming the chair of the **Libya Sanctions Committee** at a critical juncture when there is an international focus on Libya and on the peace process.

**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 ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations.** **Previously, he was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees between 2005 and 2015.**

### **Air India’s Zoya Aggarwal to command world’s longest route**

- **An all-women pilot team of Air India will fly over the North Pole on the world’s longest air route as the carrier’s first non-stop service between San Francisco and Bengaluru will start.**
- **Captain Zoya Aggarwal, Captain Papagari Thanmai, Captain Akansha Sonaware and Captain Shivani Manhas will be among the all-women pilot team to fly the longest commercial flight in the world.**
- **The flight will be commanded by Captain Aggarwal, who has a flying experience of more than 8,000 flying hours. She has command experience in a B-777 aircraft of more than 10 years and more than 2,500 flying hours. She was also the youngest woman pilot to fly a Boeing-777 in 2013.**

### **World’s largest repatriation exercise Vande Bharat Mission brings back over 44.7 lakh people**

- **The Phase-9 of Vande Bharat Mission has been made operational from 1<sup>st</sup> of this month and 1,495 international flights** have been scheduled which will be operated from 24 countries.

- **The World's largest repatriation exercise Vande Bharat Mission has been brought back more than 44.7 lakh people since May 2020.**

**Vande Bharat Mission is the biggest evacuation exercise to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the coronavirus-induced travel restrictions. The Indian Navy has also launched Operation "Samudra Setu" (Sea Bridge) to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas.**

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

- **As Pongal celebrations began in Tamil Nadu on 14 January 2021, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi witnessed an Jallikattu event near Madurai and spoke of the "Tamil spirit" and "emotions of the Tamil people".**
- **Jallikattu is a bull-taming sport that has traditionally been part of the festival of Pongal. The festival is a celebration of nature, and thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, of which cattle-worship is part.**

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

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

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

- **India's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, will be launched in Kerala's houseboat tourism hub, Alappuzha.**
- **The museum will feature a huge repository of documents and exhibits that shaped the labour movements across the continents and impacted Alappuzha, the cradle of the labour movement in the country, in particular and Kerala in general.**

### **Parakram Diwas celebrations mark 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**

- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's, 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary on 23 January 2021 is observed as Parakram Diwas. The day is celebrated to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation. The day is being celebrated as Parakram Diwas. The Government has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Netaji as 'Parakram Diwas' every year.**
- **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897, in Cuttack in Odisha. He graduated from Kolkata and proved his mettle by becoming an Indian Civil Services (ICS) officer. But he left the comfort and amenities that came with his job and decided to be part of the freedom struggle. With the slogan "Give me blood and I will give you freedom", he awakened the country towards fighting against the British.**
- **At the time of India's Independence, Clement Attlee the British Prime Minister said that the loyalty of the Indian army and navy to the British state was declining due to the increasing military activities of Bose's Azad Hind Fauj and this was one of the major reasons that nudged Britishers into leaving India.**
- **The All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) is a left-wing nationalist political party in India. It emerged as a faction within the Indian National Congress in 1939, led by Subhas Chandra Bose. The party re-established as an independent political party after the independence of India.**

### **NITI Aayog releases 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of India Innovation Index-2020**

- **NITI Aayog released the second edition of the India Innovation Index-2020. The index demonstrates the government's continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy. The index illustrates that India is on the right path and the states are endeavouring to improve their innovative ecosystem.**
- **In the India Innovation Index-2020, the States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and nine Union Territories and Small States for effectively comparing their performance.**
- **In the 2020 ranking, Karnataka retained its first position in the Major States category. Maharashtra moved one position higher and stood at 2<sup>nd</sup> spot while Tamil Nadu slid to 3<sup>rd</sup> position. Bihar stands last in the Major States category.**
- **In the North East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh stands at first position followed by Uttarakhand and Manipur while Meghalaya stands last in the same category. Delhi stands at the first position while Chandigarh retained its second spot in the Union Territories and small States category while Lakshadweep stands last in the same category.**



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

### **Kochi Airport, World's first to fully run on solar power**

- The **Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL)** which created history by becoming the first airport in the world to run fully on solar energy has commissioned one of the biggest floating solar power plants in the state with a capacity of **452-kilowatt hour (KWh)**.
- According to CIAL, with this, the total installed capacity of the airport has increased to **40 MWp**, helping it produce around **1.6 lakh units of power a day**, against its daily consumption of nearly **1.3 lakh units**. The **floating solar plants were installed in two artificial lakes located in the 130-acre CIAL golf course and use French technology** which mounted **1300 photovoltaic panels** for the best cost effective power generation.

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

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

### **India's rank slips to 86<sup>th</sup> in corruption perception index 2020**

- **India's rank has slipped six places to 86<sup>th</sup> among 180 countries in corruption perception index (CPI) in 2020**. For 2020, **Transparency International (TI)'s Corruption Perception Index (CPI)** was released. **India's rank is 86 out of 180 nations with a score of 40**.
- **India is still very low on the corruption Index**, the report said, noting that **experts feel the CPI does not reflect the actual corruption level in any country**. The integrity score determines the corruption situation of a country.
- This year, **New Zealand and Denmark** were ranked at **first position with scores of 88**. **Somalia and South Sudan** were ranked lowest at **179<sup>th</sup> position with scores of 12**.
- **The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption** according to experts and business people, **uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean**. A country with a higher score has a higher rank.

**Transparency International (TI)** is a **German non-governmental organization founded in 1993**. Based in **Berlin**, its **nonprofit purpose** is to take action to **combat global corruption** with civil societal anti-corruption measures and to prevent criminal activities arising from corruption. Its **most notable publications include the Global Corruption Barometer and the Corruption Perceptions Index**.

### **India's first ‘Gender Park’ In Kerala's Kozhikode**

- The **Kerala government launched Rs 300 crore three-tower ‘Gender Park’ in Kozhikode** that is functional from **February 2021**. This initiative is **first of its kind in the country** and also a step towards gender equality in the state.

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

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed WEF's Davos Dialogue

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue** through video conferencing. More than 400 top industry leaders from across the globe will attend the session, wherein the Prime Minister will be speaking on the Fourth Industrial Revolution - using technology for the good of humanity.
- **The Davos Dialogues agenda marks the launch of the World Economic Forum's Great Reset Initiative** in the post COVID world.

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

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations

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

## M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' in Delhi

- **Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Aadi Mahotsav, a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the National Capital.** It will continue till 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. The Tribal Affairs Ministry said, **the Aadi Mahotsav - A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce** is a successful **annual initiative that was commenced in 2017.** The festival was an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.
- **The festival at Dilli Haat in INA will comprise display and sale of tribal art and craft, medicine, cuisine and folk performances.** Around one thousand tribal artisans, artists and chefs from more than 20 States of the country will participate and provide a glimpse of their rich traditional culture.

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

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

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

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

### **India's first wetland conservation centre comes up in Chennai**

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

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

### **Vijay Varsh' victory flame received at Air Force Station Adampur**

- **As part of 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' celebration commemorating 50 years of the 1971 war triumph against Pakistan, one of the victory flames was received at Air Force Station Adampur. The flame was received in a grand reception by Air Commodore GKJ Reddy.**
- **Indian Armed Forces Veterans Day is being observed. This day is celebrated on 14<sup>th</sup> of January every year to honour services rendered by veterans of the Army. This year is being celebrated as Swarnim Vijay Varsh. It marks 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 1971 Indo-Pak War. The Army Chief said, this entire year will be celebrated as Swarnim Vijay Varsh to mark 1971 war victory.**

### **Uttar Pradesh Shrawasti tops Niti Aayog aspirational district ranking in December**

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

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



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

- A historic tripartite agreement for establishing India's first-ever geothermal field development project has been signed, with Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur terming it a step towards achieving the goal of carbon-neutral Ladakh.
- "The signing of the MoU with ONGC for the first geothermal project in India is a promising initiative towards innovative and sustainable development of Ladakh and also a step towards achieving the goal of carbon-neutral Ladakh."

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

## First ever Digital Budget 2021-22 presented

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament, which is the first budget of this new decade and also a digital one in the backdrop of unprecedented COVID-19 crisis. Laying a vision for AatmaNirbhar Bharat, she said this is an expression of 130 crore Indians who have full confidence in their capabilities and skills. She said that Budget proposals will further strengthen the **Sankalp of Nation First, Doubling Farmer's Income, Strong Infrastructure, Healthy India, Good Governance**, Opportunities for youth, Education for All, Women Empowerment, and Inclusive Development among others. Additionally, also on the path to fast-implementation are the 13 promises of Budget 2015-16-which were to materialize during the AmrutMahotsav of 2022, on the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our Independence.
- The key highlights of the Union Budget 2021-22 are as follows: **6 pillars of the Union Budget 2021-22:**
  1. Health and Wellbeing
  2. Physical & Financial Capital, and Infrastructure
  3. Inclusive Development for Aspirational India
  4. Reinvigorating Human Capital
  5. Innovation and R&D
  6. Minimum Government and Maximum Governance
- 1. Health and Wellbeing
- There is substantial increase in investment in Health Infrastructure and the **Budget outlay for Health and Wellbeing is Rs 2,23,846 crore in BE 2021-22 as against this year's BE of Rs 94,452 crore, an increase of 137 percentage.** The Finance Minister announced that a new centrally sponsored scheme, **PM AatmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana**, will be **launched with an outlay of about Rs 64, 180 crore over 6 years.** This will develop capacities of primary, secondary, and tertiary care Health Systems, strengthen existing national institutions, and create new institutions, to cater to detection and cure of new and emerging diseases.
- **Provision of Rs 35,000 crore made for Covid-19 vaccine in BE 2021-22. The Pneumococcal Vaccine, a Made in India product, presently limited to only 5 states, will be rolled out across the country aimed at averting 50,000 child deaths annually.**

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



## Prime Minister inaugurated 'World Sustainable Development Summit' 2021

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021** on 10<sup>th</sup> of February via video conferencing. **The theme of the summit is 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.**
- The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event- **the World Sustainable Development Summit** was held online from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> February. The summit brought together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth and the civil society in the fight against climate change. **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the summit.**

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

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

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

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

## Minority Affairs Ministry organising 26<sup>th</sup> Hunar Haat in New Delhi

- **Minority Affairs Ministry is organised 26<sup>th</sup> Hunar Haat of indigenous artisans and craftsmen** from across the country **at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.** More than 600 artisans and craftsmen, including a large number of women artisans, from more than 31 States and Union Territories were participated in the event.
- The Hunar Haat was **organised with the theme of Vocal for Local** from 20<sup>th</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March this year. **Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the minority communities.** These are **organised by the Ministry of Minority Affairs** under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme.

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

- **India hosted a health secretary-level meet virtually with other South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.** **Pakistan has also been invited to attend the workshop.**
- **It is a virtual workshop on management of Covid-19,** response to the pandemic and exchange of best practices amid the pandemic. On March 15, 2020, during a video conference of the SAARC Heads of State, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi had proposed a Coronavirus Emergency Fund for the region.**
- **This emergency fund was set up in response to the global coronavirus pandemic. The initiative seeks to mitigate the risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic in the South Asian region with India contributing USD10 million to it.** Other members of the SAARC expressed their support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his proposal for the coronavirus emergency fund.

- **India is also running an initiative called ‘Vaccine Maitri,’ (Vaccine Friendship), which was launched on 20 January 2021, wherein India is extending support to neighboring countries like Nepal, The Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Brazil, and even Seychelles.**

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

### **Shabnam is the first woman to be hanged in independent India**

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

### **Kiran Bedi removed as Puducherry Lieutenant-Governor**

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

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

### **India’s first centralised AC railway terminal to come up at Bengaluru**

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

### **25 cities selected for Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge**

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

**Neighbourhoods Challenge**, launched on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, invited participation from all Smart Cities, capitals of States and UTs, and other cities with population above 5 lakhs were eligible to participate.

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

### **Electric campaign launched to ensure energy security in the country**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## **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 89<sup>th</sup> 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.**

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

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh** on 9<sup>th</sup> 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.**

## **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 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Indian Independence, at the national and international levels.

- **The 75 years of India's Independence falls on 15<sup>th</sup> August next year** and celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12<sup>th</sup> March this year. **12<sup>th</sup> March is the 91<sup>st</sup> 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 91<sup>st</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **India's largest floating solar power plant to be commissioned by NTPC**

- **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**.

### 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 south-west. Along with Liechtenstein, it is **one of two doubly landlocked countries**. **Tashkent is the capital city**. **The so m is the currency of Uzbekistan**.

### Punjab government is going to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> 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 550<sup>th</sup> Parkash Purb of Guru Nanak Dev ji**.
- **Punjab Government is going to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> 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’**.

### 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.

### 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 9<sup>th</sup> till 11<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.



## 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 & 21<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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).

## 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.**

### **India takes part in second Sherpas meeting of G7, guest countries**

- **The second meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held. India's G7 Sherpa Suresh Prabhu attended the meeting. The priority issues under UK's G7 Presidency agenda were discussed, including preparations for the COP26 Summit and global health cooperation.**
- **India has been invited as a guest country of the G7 by the UK this year, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa. In January, the United Kingdom (UK) announced that it has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the G7 summit as a guest. The meet is scheduled to be held in Cornwall from June 11 to 14, 2021.**

**Group of Seven is an intergovernmental organisation consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit. The seven countries involved are also the largest IMF-advanced economies in the world. The concept of a forum for the world's major industrialized countries emerged before the 1973 oil crisis.**

### **BIMSTEC finalises Connectivity master plan for Bay of Bengal region**

- **The virtual meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping finalised a major Connectivity master plan for the Bay of Bengal region.**
- **The seven-member regional grouping namely India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar will take up the Master plan for transport connectivity for adoption in the next summit of the organisation to be hosted by Sri Lanka in a few months from now.**
- **The meeting also endorsed three MoUs/agreements relating to convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal matters, cooperation between diplomatic and training academies and establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo.**
- **The connectivity master plan is the outcome of more than a decade of consultations among the member states. The study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2007 and 2014, identified 166 connectivity projects at an estimated cost of USD 50 billion out of which 65 projects were identified as priority projects.**

**The BIMSTEC is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and South East Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan, and Nepal. The permanent secretariat is in Dhaka. The BIMSTEC member states are among the countries dependent on the Bay of Bengal. BIMSTEC was set up in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration and includes India, Bangladesh, Bhutan Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.**

### **Arch of world's highest railway bridge on Chenab River in J-K completed**

- **The Indian Railways achieved a major milestone by completing the arch closure of the world's highest railway bridge over river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir. The 5.6-metre last piece of metal was fitted at the highest point and joined the two arms of the arch that currently stretch towards each other from both the banks.**
- **It completed the shape of the arch that will then loom over the treacherous river Chenab in Jammu, flowing some 359 metres below. The bridge is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project. The 1.3-kilometre-long bridge aims to boost connectivity to the Kashmir Valley.**
- **It is 35-metre higher than the Eiffel Tower in France and the bridge is expected to be completed by next year. The overall weight of the arch is 10,619 MT, and the bridge is being constructed at the cost of ₹1,486 crore.**

## Justice N V Ramana appointed as 48<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of India

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** has appointed **Justice N V Ramana** as the **48<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of India**, accepting the recommendation made by the outgoing CJI SA Bobde. **Justice Ramana** will have a term till **August 26<sup>th</sup> next year**.
- **Justice NV Ramana** is the senior most judge in the Supreme Court after CJI Bobde. Born on August 27, 1957, **Justice Ramana** has tenure till **August 26, 2022**. **Justice NV Ramana** was appointed a permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in June 2000. He served as Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court before being elevated to the Supreme Court in February 2014.

The Supreme Court of India came into being on 28 January 1950. It replaced both the Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which were then at the apex of the Indian court system. The first Chief Justice of India was Sir H J Kania. Originally, the Constitution of India envisaged a supreme court with a chief justice and seven judges; leaving it to parliament to increase this number. At present, SC is consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges. The motto of the Supreme Court is 'Yato Dharmastato Jaya', means "whence law (dharma), thence victory". It is also referred to – as the wheel of righteousness, encompassing truth, goodness and equity. As per the Article 142 of the Constitution, it is the duty of the President of India to enforce the decrees of the Supreme Court and the court is conferred with the inherent jurisdiction to pass any order deemed necessary in the interest of justice. The Supreme Court has replaced the British Privy Council as the highest court of appeal.

## Government decides to simplify process for re-issue of OCI cards

- Union Home Ministry has clarified that the **Overseas Citizens of India (OCI)** will not be required to register for a fresh OCI card every time a new passport is issued in their name.
- At present, the OCI card is required to be reissued each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 "in view of biological changes in the face of the applicant".
- A person who has got registration as OCI cardholder prior to attaining the age of 20 years will have to get the OCI card reissued only once when a new passport is issued after his/her completing 20 years of age, so as to capture his/her facial features on attaining adulthood.
- If a person has obtained registration as OCI cardholder after attaining the age of 20 years, there will be no requirement of reissue of the OCI card. Government of India launched the 'Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) Scheme' by making amendments to Citizenship Act, 1955 in 2005. On 09 January 2015, the Government of India discontinued the PIO card and merged it with OCI card.

Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) is a form of permanent residency available to people of Indian origin and their spouses which allows them to live and work in India indefinitely. Despite the name, OCI status is not citizenship and does not grant the right to vote in Indian elections or hold public office. The Indian government can revoke OCI status in a wide variety of circumstances. As of 2020, there are 6 million holders of OCI cards among the Indian Overseas diaspora. OCI status is not available to anyone who has ever been a Pakistani or Bangladeshi citizen, or who is a child, grandchild, or great-grandchild of such a person.

## Maharashtra gets India's first floating LNG storage and regasification unit

- **India's first Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU)** has arrived at H-Energy's Jaigarh Terminal in Maharashtra. The FSRU Hoegh Giant, which sailed from Keppel Shipyard, Singapore, was berthed at Jaigarh terminal in Maharashtra.
- This was also the first year-round Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in Maharashtra. The LNG terminal is located at JSW Jaigarh Port in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, on the west coast of India. The port is the first deep water, 24x7 operational private port in Maharashtra.

## India sign MoU with France for cooperation on Gaganyaan Mission

- The Indian space agency, ISRO has signed an agreement with the space agency of France CNES for cooperation in its first human space mission, **Gaganyaan**. CNES will train Indian flight physicians and CAPCOM mission control teams at French facilities.
- The **Gaganyaan orbital spacecraft project** was kicked off in August 2018. It originally intended to send astronauts from Indian soil to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence in 2022.



- CNES will provide equipment developed by it, tested and **still operating aboard the International Space Station (ISS) to Indian crews**. It will also supply fireproof carry bags made in France to shield equipment from shocks and radiation.
- **The agreement provides for the CNES to support the implementation of a scientific experiment plan on validation missions**, exchange information on food packaging and the nutrition programme, and above all the use by Indian astronauts of French equipment, consumables and medical instruments.
- **The Gaganyaan system module, called the Orbital Module will have three Indian astronauts, including a woman**. It will **circle Earth at a low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from earth for 5-7 days**.
- **In June 2019, the Human Space Flight Centre of the ISRO and the Russian government-owned Glavkosmos signed a contract for the training**, which includes Russian support in the selection of candidates, their medical examination, and space training.

Gaganyaan (“Sky Craft”) is an Indian crewed orbital spacecraft intended to be the formative spacecraft of the Indian Human Spaceflight Programme. The spacecraft is being designed to carry three people, and a planned upgraded version will be equipped with rendezvous and docking capability. There will be two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight. GSLV Mk III, also called the LVM-3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3), the three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle, will be used to launch Gaganyaan as it has the necessary payload capability. This Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) manufactured crew module had its first un-crewed experimental flight on 18 December 2014.

### Vande Bharat becomes one of top civilian evacuations

- **The Vande Bharat Mission (VBM)**, which started repatriating Indians stranded abroad due to COVID-19 and the resultant lockdowns since May 7 last, has turned out to be one of the largest evacuations of civilians by a country.

Vande Bharat Mission is the biggest evacuation exercise to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the coronavirus-induced travel restrictions. It is also considered as the largest exercise to bring back Indian citizens since the evacuation of 177,000 from the Gulf region in the early 1990s at the start of hostilities between Iraq and Kuwait during the first Gulf War. The mission has given priority to Indian citizens with “compelling reasons to return” – like those whose employment have been terminated, those whose visas have expired and not expected to be renewed under the present circumstances and those who have lost family members in recent times.

### IAF Chief flagged off six Rafale jets from France

- **Indian Air Force Chief Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Bhadauria flagged off six Rafale fighter jets from Merignac-Bordeaux airbase in France** on April 21, setting the stage for activating the second Rafale squadron at Hasimara in West Bengal, people familiar with the matter said.
- **The IAF chief visited France** from April 20 and was in the country till April 23. It is understood that during his France visit, Air Chief Bhadauria visited a French Rafale squadron, met his counterpart Philippe Lavigne and visit the newly established Space Command in Paris.
- **The arrival of the six Rafale jets, flagged by IAF chief Rakesh Bhadauria**, will raise the number of the Omni-role fighters with the IAF to 20 of the 36 contracted Rafale jets to India. “The six fighters will fly to Ambala airbase, from where the fighters will be repurposed for the formation of a second squadron at Hasimara,” said a senior air force officer.
- **The formation of a second Rafale squadron at Hasimara will add teeth to India’s aerial capability with Hercules C-130 J airlift squadron based in Panagarh in the northern part of West Bengal**. Given the location of both the squadrons on the gates of Siliguri corridor, the IAF will have the power to counter any offensive from the north in the eastern sector, particularly in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

The Dassault Rafale literally meaning “gust of wind”, and “burst of fire” in a more military sense is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, multirole fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation. Equipped with a wide range of weapons, the Rafale is intended to perform air supremacy, interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, ground support, in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions. The Rafale is referred to as an “omnirole” aircraft by Dassault. India has inked a Rs 59,000-crore deal in 2016 to procure 36 Rafale jets from French aerospace major Dassault Aviation after a nearly seven-year exercise to procure 126 Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) for the Indian Air Force did not fructify.

## Indian expedition to Antarctica returns to Cape Town

- **The 40<sup>th</sup> Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (40-ISEA) hosted by the Ministry of Earth Sciences successfully returned to Cape Town** after completing a journey of about 12,000 nautical miles in 94 days, including stopovers.
- This achievement concludes four successful decades of India's scientific endeavour in the continent of peace and cooperation. **The team reached its destination Bharati station** on February 27 and **Maitri station** on March 8 in Antarctica. Bharati and Maitri are India's permanent research base stations in Antarctica.
- **On its way to Antarctica, the voyage team deployed four autonomous Ocean Observing DWS (Directional Wave Spectra) wave drifters** between 35-degree and 50-degree south latitudes in collaboration with Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) Hyderabad, the statement said.
- **The drifters would transmit real-time data of spectral characteristics of waves, sea surface temperatures, and sea-level atmospheric pressure to INCOIS, which will help validate weather predictions in a big way.**

Antarctica is Earth's southernmost continent. It contains the geographic South Pole and is situated in the Antarctic region of the Southern Hemisphere, almost entirely south of the Antarctic Circle, and is surrounded by the Southern Ocean. At 14,200,000 square kilometres (5,500,000 square miles), it is the fifth-largest continent and nearly twice the size of Australia. It is by far the least populated continent, with around 5,000 people in the summer and around 1,000 in the winter. About 98% of Antarctica is covered by ice that averages 1.9 km (1.2 mi; 6,200 ft) in thickness, which extends to all but the McMurdo Dry Valleys and the northernmost reaches of the Antarctic Peninsula.

## World Press Freedom index: India retains 142 of 180 spot

- **India has not slipped further on the World Press Freedom Index 2021 published by the international journalism not-for profit body, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), however, it continues to be counted among the countries classified "bad" for journalism and is termed as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists trying to do their jobs properly.**
- **The latest index released ranks 180 countries, topped, yet again, by Norway followed by Finland and Denmark, while Eritrea is at the bottom. China is ranked 177, and is only above North Korea at 179 and Turkmenistan at 178. India is ranked 142, same as last year, after it had consistently slid down from 133 in 2016.** In the South Asian neighbourhood, Nepal is at 106, Sri Lanka at 127, Myanmar (before the coup) at 140, Pakistan at 145 and Bangladesh at 152.

**Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is an international non-profit and non-governmental organization with the stated aim of safeguarding the right to freedom of information.** It describes its advocacy as founded on the belief that **everyone requires access to the news and information, in line with Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** that recognizes the right to receive and share information regardless of frontiers, along with other international rights charters. **RSF has consultative status at the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the International Organisation of the Francophonie. It is based in Paris.**

## PM Narendra Modi addressed Leaders' Summit on Climate

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated and made his remarks in the Leaders' Summit on Climate. Mr. Modi along with 40 global leaders participated** in this two day long Summit **at the invitation of US President Joe Biden.** The summit was held virtually and the theme on which the global leaders will be speaking is **"Our Collective Sprint to 2030".**
- **The Leaders' Summit on Climate is being considered as one of the key events on climate before the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, COP26, which is scheduled to be held in Glasgow later this year.**
- **US president Joe Biden proved his will towards the issue of climate change on the very first day he took office as the President. He brought back United States of America to the Paris Agreement, the most significant treaty on Climate Change.**
- **US President's call to organize leaders' summit is an effort to galvanize efforts by the major economies to tackle the climate crisis and to catalyze efforts that keep the goal of 1.5-degree change in global temperature intact.**

## PM Modi, Joe Biden launched India-US clean energy initiative

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden launched the India-US Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership** at the Leaders Summit on Climate hosted by the US.
- **Addressing a US-hosted virtual summit on climate, attended by 40 global leaders**, including US President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping, Modi asserted that India has taken "many bold steps" on clean energy, energy efficiency, and bio-diversity despite its development challenges and that **the country's per capita carbon footprint is 60 per cent lower than the global average**.
- "We in India are doing our part. **Our ambitious renewable energy target of 450 gigawatt by 2030 shows our commitment**. Despite our development challenges, we have taken many bold steps on clean energy, energy efficiency, deforestation, and biodiversity. That is why we are among the few countries whose NDCs are 2 degrees Celsius compatible."
- **Both the United States and India have set ambitious 2030 targets for climate action and clean energy**. In its new nationally determined contribution, the US has set an economy-wide target of reducing its net greenhouse gas emissions by 50-52 percent below 2005 levels in 2030.
- **Nationally Defined Contributions (NDCs) are each country's goals towards achieving the Paris Agreement target of limiting rising temperatures to less than 2 degrees Celsius**. The Prime Minister also emphasised India's encouragement of global initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure.

**India ranks third, behind the U.S. and China, although its per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are less than 60% of the global average**, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi pointed out. There is little confidence in a pandemic-stricken world, however, that future growth pathways will be aligned away from fossil fuels. There are many aspects to the bilateral pact that could **be transformative for energy-intensive sectors in India, starting with renewable power expansion to 450 GW**. With open source technologies, India could incorporate innovative materials and processes to decarbonise industry, transport and buildings, the biggest emitters, apart from power. For the India-U.S. agreement to yield results, Mr. Biden would have to persuade industry and research institutions at home to share knowledge and subsidise transfer of technologies. **British Prime Minister Boris Johnson**, who announced **enhanced ambition at the summit for Britain to cut carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 over 1990 levels**, advanced the agenda by calling for climate funding by rich nations to exceed the decade-old goal of \$100 billion.

## Sushil Chandra appointed as Chief Election Commissioner

- **Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra was appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner**. According to a statement issued by the Legislative Department of the ministry, Chandra assumed charge on April 13.
- **Chandra was appointed as an election commissioner on February 14, 2019, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections**. He would demit office on May 14, 2022. Under him, the Election Commission would hold assembly polls in Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

**Election Commission of India operates under the authority of Constitution per Article 324**. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. **Chief Election Commissioner of India is usually a member of the Indian Civil Service and mostly from the Indian Administrative Service**. It is very difficult to remove the authority of the Chief Election Commissioner once appointed by the president, as **two-thirds of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha need to vote against him** for disorderly conduct or improper actions. Sukumar Sen was the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, serving from 21 March 1950 to 19 December 1958. Sushil Chandra is a 1980 batch Indian Revenue Service officer. He is the current and 24<sup>th</sup> Chief Election Commissioner.

## PM Narendra Modi launched distribution of e-property cards under SVAMITVA scheme

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the distribution of e-property cards under the SVAMITVA scheme** through video conferencing. During the National Panchayati Raj Day address, **4.09 lakh property owners were given their e-property cards**, which marks the **rolling out of the SVAMITVA scheme** for implementation across the country. Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar also attended the event.
- Under the scheme **drone technology has been used for the first time to map actual property area of land owners**. The property cards given to over 4 lakh beneficiaries under the scheme will also **help them to avail financial benefits through loan from Banking Institutions**.



- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged rural India to follow all covid related protocols and defeat the second wave of Corona pandemic.** The Prime Minister said that the battle against the pandemic is more strong this year as the country has rolled out the largest vaccination drive in the world.

**SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas)** was launched by Prime Minister on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020 as a Central Sector Scheme to promote a socio-economically empowered and self-reliant rural India. The Scheme has the potential to transform rural India using modern technical tools of mapping and surveying. It paves the way for using the property as a financial asset by villagers for availing loans and other financial benefits. The Scheme will cover around 6.62 Lakh villages of the entire country during 2021-2025. Prime Minister also launched e-GramSwaraj programme, which aims at monitoring of rural infrastructure works and e-governance. The first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated in 2010. Since then, the National Panchayati Raj Day is celebrated on April 24 every year in India. After the Constitution came into force, Article 40 made a mention of panchayats and Article 246 empowered the state legislature to legislate with respect to any subject relating to local self-government. Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) was constitutionalized through the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 to build democracy at the grass roots level and was entrusted with the task of rural development in the country. Rajasthan was the first state to introduce the panchayat system in India after independence. In India, the Panchayati Raj now functions as a system of governance in which gram panchayats are the basic units of local administration. The system has three levels: Gram Panchayat (village level), Mandal Parishad or Block Samiti or Panchayat Samiti (block level), and Zila Parishad (district level).

### **Indian Navy Launches Op Samudra Setu-II for Shipment of Oxygen-filled Containers to India**

- **Indian Navy has launched Operation Samudra Setu-II to augment the ongoing national mission for meeting the Oxygen requirements.** Mission deployed Indian Naval warships will undertake shipment of liquid Oxygen filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment in support of nation's fight against COVID-19.
- Under the Samudra Setu-II, the Navy has deployed seven ships Kolkata, Kochi, Talwar, Tabar, Trikand, Jalashwa and Airavat for shipment of liquid medical oxygen-filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment from various countries.
- **The Defence Ministry informed that INS Kolkata and INS Talwar were the first batch of ships that were immediately diverted for the task and entered port of Manama, Bahrain on April 30.** While, INS Talwar, with 40 metri tonnes Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) embarked, is headed back to India.
- **Two ships INS Kolkata and INS Talwar have entered port of Manama, Bahrain for embarking and transporting 40MT of liquid oxygen to Mumbai.** INS Jalashwa is enroute to Bangkok and INS Airavat to Singapore for similar missions.
- Last year Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu as part of the Vande Bharat Mission and repatriated approx 4000 (3992) stranded and distressed Indian citizens from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran.

**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.**

### **19<sup>th</sup> edition of 'VARUNA-2021' scheduled to be conducted in Arabian Sea**

- **The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'VARUNA-2021' is conducted in the Arabian Sea from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021.**
- From the Indian Navy's side, guided missile stealth destroyer Kolkata, guided missile frigates Tarkash and Talwar, Fleet Support Ship Deepak, with Seaking 42B & Chetak integral helicopters, a Kalvari class submarine and P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft, were participated in the exercise.
- **The French Navy was represented by the Aircraft Carrier Charles-de-Gaulle with Rafale-M fighter, E2C Hawkeye aircrafts and helicopters Caïman M and Dauphin embarked, Horizon-class Air defense destroyer Chevalier Paul, Aquitaine-class multi-missions frigate Provence with a Caïman M helicopter embkared and Command and supply ship Var.**

**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.**

### **Over 14,400 ha area in Andaman & Nicobar becomes first large territory to get organic certification**

- **About 14,491 hectare (ha) area in Andaman and Nicobar has been certified as organic, the first large contiguous territory to be done under a government scheme. After Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) Islands, Lakshadweep and Ladakh are proactively taking steps for the transformation of their traditional organic areas to certified organic.**
- **There are traditional areas in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, north-eastern states and tribal belts of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and desert districts of Rajasthan which can be transformed to certified organic.**
- **The organic certification has been given under the Large Area Certification (LAC) Scheme of the PGS-India (Participatory Guarantee System) certification programme. Under LAC, each village in the area is considered as one cluster/group. All farmers with their farmland and livestock need to adhere to the standard requirements and on being verified get certified enmass without the need to go under conversion period. Certification is renewed on annual basis through verification by a process of peer appraisals as per the process of PGS-India.**
- **The organic certification will help farmers get direct access to the emerging organic food market of the country. India now has more than 30 lakh hectare area registered under organic certification and slowly more and more farmers are joining the movement. As per the international survey report (2021) India ranks at 5<sup>th</sup> place in terms of area and is at the top in terms of total number of producers (base year 2019).**

**Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a union territory of India consisting of 572 islands, of which 38 are inhabited, at the juncture of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. The territory is about 150 km (93 mi) north of Aceh in Indonesia and separated from Thailand and Myanmar by the Andaman Sea. It comprises two island groups, the Andaman Islands (partly) and the Nicobar Islands, separated by the 150 km wide Ten Degree Channel (on the 10°N parallel), with the Andaman islands to the north of this latitude, and the Nicobar islands to the south (or by 179 km). The Andaman Sea lies to the east and the Bay of Bengal to the west. The territory's capital is the city of Port Blair. Admiral Devendra Kumar Joshi is the Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Vice Chairman of Islands Development Agency (IDA).**

### **Mamata Banerji sworn-in as Chief Minister of West Bengal for 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive term**

- **TMC leader Mamata Banerjee was sworn in as the Chief Minister of West Bengal for the third time. Due to the corona situation, the list of guests invited to the ceremony at the Rajbhawan has been kept as short as possible. She must be elected to the state assembly within six months to continue as Chief Minister of West Bengal as she was defeated in the recent state assembly elections from Nandigram Assembly constituency.**
- **The Election Commission said that the returning officer is the final authority under law to decide on recounting of votes in Nandigram Assembly constituency, where West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost the election to her former aide and Bharatiya Janata Party rival Suwendu Adhikari.**

### **DMK Chief M.K. Stalin becomes Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu**

- **DMK Chief M.K. Stalin has become the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu after being elected as the Party's legislative leader at Chennai. The unanimous decision to this effect was taken at the newly elected legislative members meeting of the DMK at the Party's headquarters.**
- **The DMK chief was administered the oath by Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai. MK Stalin has assumed office for the first time as the Chief Minister. MK Stalin was sworn in as the Tamil Nadu CM along with 33 members of his cabinet.**
- **The DMK swept the 2021 assembly election, winning 133 seats. Along with allies, including Congress, the alliance has a total seat strength of 159 in the 234-member Assembly. The AIADMK won 66 seats and its allies the BJP and the PMK, four and five seats respectively. M.K. Stalin took over the reigns of his party after the demise of his father and DMK patriarch Karunanidhi in 2018 and steered the Party to victory in 2019 general elections and also in the 16<sup>th</sup> assembly elections.**

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

### **Five four states election results announced, TMC swept the West Bengal Assembly elections, DMK in Tamil Nadu, BJP in Assam and LDF in Kerala**

- Election results 2021 for West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry assemblies were declared on May 2. **The TMC managed a landslide victory in West Bengal, the same as DMK in Tamil Nadu and Left-led LDF in Kerala. The BJP managed to retain power in Assam and cruised to victory in Puducherry.**
- The TMC's winning candidates have an average margin of victory of 31,760 votes; BJP winners have an average margin of 14,010. **The mean margin of victory across all 292 seats for which elections were held, is 26,965.**
- In West Bengal, **The Trinamool Congress, which swept the West Bengal Assembly elections, has won its 213 seats by an average margin that is more than double the BJP's in its 77 seats,** Election Commission data show.
- The Election Commission said that the **BJP's vote share in West Bengal is down by a little over 2 per cent as compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.** In 2019, the BJP won 18 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats in Bengal, securing a vote share of 40.70 per cent.
- **The DMK swept the 2021 assembly election, winning 133 seats.** Along with allies, including Congress, the alliance has a **total seat strength of 159 in the 234-member Assembly.** The AIADMK won 66 seats and its allies the BJP and the PMK, four and five seats respectively.
- **Led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) rewrote history in Kerala** by winning a second term in a state that had not returned an incumbent government in four decades. **Vijayan, CPI(M) leader, became only the third chief minister in Kerala's history to be re-elected and the first to continue in office after completing a full term.** The LDF's win is just the second instance of a ruling front receiving consecutive terms.
- **The LDF won 97 of the state's 140 seats, besting its own 2016 tally of 91 seats.** The opposition United Democratic Front (UDF) won 47 seats, while challenger Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failed to open its account.
- **The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led NDA has retained power in Assam. The saffron party won 60 of the 126 seats, its allies Asom Gana Parishad nine and United Peoples Party (Liberal) six.** Congress bagged 29 seats, its partner All India United Democratic Front 16 and Bodo Democratic Front four. CPI-M won one seat, and another went to an independent. Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has won Jalukbari seat for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive term by a margin of 1,01,911 votes.
- In the recently-concluded Puducherry Legislative Assembly polls, **AINRC-BJP-AIADMK contested as part of the NDA alliance. In the polls, AINRC won 10 seats and BJP won six seats to form the government.** After several rounds of talks between the alliance parties, BJP MLAs pledged their support to nominate AINRC leader N Rangasamy as the Chief Minister. **He was sworn in as the Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Puducherry on May 7. Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered the oath of office** to Rangaswamy who will lead a coalition government of BJP members in his cabinet.

**Election Commission of India operates under the authority of Constitution per Article 324.** The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. **Chief Election Commissioner of India is usually a member of the Indian Civil Service and mostly from the Indian Administrative Service.** It is very difficult to remove the authority of the Chief Election Commissioner once appointed by the president, as **two-thirds of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha need to vote against him** for disorderly conduct or improper actions. Sukumar Sen was the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, serving from **21 March 1950 to 19 December 1958.** Sushil Chandra is a 1980 batch Indian Revenue Service officer. He is the current and 24<sup>th</sup> Chief Election Commissioner.

### **Indian Army inaugurates first solar energy harnessing plant of 56 KVA in North Sikkim**

- **Indian Army** in its quest for harnessing renewable energy for its troops inaugurated the **First Green Solar Energy harnessing plant of 56 KVA using Vanadium based battery technology in North Sikkim,** at an altitude of 16000 ft.



- A team of eminent faculty from the **Institute led by Prof Prakash Ghosh and troops of the Indian Army completed the project braving extreme climatic conditions.** The project will immensely benefit troops in the forward areas and will be environment friendly. **The Indian Army launched a solar plant at Jalandhar Cantonment as a part of the ‘Go Green’ initiative.** They have chosen World Earth Day to launch the plant.

### India will be hosting the 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit in 2021

- **India will be hosting the 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit in 2021. The 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit** is going to be held **under India’s Chairship.** It will be the third time that India will be hosting the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016. **India kicked off its BRICS Chairship** with the inaugural three-day-long Sherpas’ meeting from 24-26 February 2021.
- India presented its priorities for its Chairship in 2021 under the **theme – “BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus”.** The 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS summit will review the achievements and contributions of BRICS for the global agenda and **assess each BRICS nation’s growth stories to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021.** The theme reflects the approach to strengthen the founding principles of BRICS cooperation based on continuity, consolidation and consensus.

### Himanta Biswa Sarma sworn in as Assam’s New Chief Minister

- **Himanta Biswa Sarma succeeded Sarbananda Sonowal as the Chief Minister of Assam.** At the legislature party meeting held in Guwahati, Mr Sonowal had proposed the name of Mr Sarma after Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave his approval for Mr Sarma’s elevation, and it was seconded by the MLAs.
- **The party won 60 seats in the 126-member Assam assembly while its alliance partners AGP got nine seats and UPPL six seats.** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Himanta Biswa Sarma was **sworn in as the 15<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Assam replacing former Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.**

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

### India received \$83 billion in remittances in 2020: World Bank report

- **India received over USD83 billion in remittances in 2020,** a drop of just 0.2 per cent from the previous year, despite a pandemic that devastated the world economy, **according to a World Bank report.**
- **China, which received USD 59.5 billion in remittances in 2020 against USD 68.3 billion** the previous year, is a distant second in terms of global remittances for the year gone by, as per the latest World Bank data released.
- **India and China are followed by Mexico (USD42.8 billion), the Philippines (USD34.9 billion), Egypt (USD29.6 billion), Pakistan (USD26 billion), France (USD24.4 billion) and Bangladesh (USD21 billion).**
- **The World Bank, in its latest Migration and Development Brief, said despite COVID-19, remittance flows remained resilient in 2020, registering a smaller decline than previously projected.** Officially recorded remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached USD540 billion in 2020, just 1.6 per cent below the 2019 total of USD548 billion.

### Rajasthan declares black fungus an epidemic

- **Cases of Mucormycosis or black fungus and deaths caused by it are rising rapidly in several states.** Concerned over this, the **Rajasthan government has issued a notification declaring black fungus as an epidemic** in the state. The state had nearly 100 cases of black fungus.
- **The Rajasthan government declared black fungus as an epidemic and a notifiable disease in the state under the Rajasthan Epidemic Act, 2020.** The government said this notification was issued to ensure integrated and coordinated treatment of black fungus and Covid-19.
- **Experts say the black fungus infection is primarily affecting people who are recovering from Covid-19.** Apart from Rajasthan, black fungus cases have also been reported in states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, among others.

- **Mucormycosis or black fungus is caused by a group of moulds known as mucormycetes present naturally in the environment.** It spreads through the nose and affects other parts of the body such as the eyes. Diabetics are said to be more vulnerable to the infection.

**Amphotericin B is an antifungal medication used for serious fungal infections and leishmaniasis. The fungal infections it is used to treat include aspergillosis, blastomycosis, candidiasis, coccidioidomycosis, and cryptococcosis.** For certain infections it is given with flucytosine. It is typically given by injection into a vein. **The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is a government regulatory agency that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.** National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was constituted vide Government of India Resolution dated 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1997 as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers as an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.

### India approves opening of first consulate in the Maldives

- The Union Cabinet has **approved the opening of a new Consulate General of India in Addu City, Maldives in 2021. India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links steeped in antiquity.** Maldives occupies an important place in the Neighbourhood First Policy and the **SAGAR- Security and Growth for All in the Region- vision of the Government of India.**
- **The opening of a Consulate General in Addu City will help augment India's diplomatic presence in Maldives and make it commensurate with the existing and aspired level of engagement.**

**Maldives is a small archipelagic state in South Asia situated in the Indian Ocean. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is the current President of the Maldives. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives.**

### Justice (Retd) Arun Kumar Mishra takes charge as NHRC chairman

- **Justice (Retd) Arun Kumar Mishra took charge as the chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in New Delhi.**
- **President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Justice Mishra as the NHRC chairperson based on the recommendation of a selection panel comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh and Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge. Justice Arun Mishra retired as Supreme Court Judge in September last year.**
- **In 2019, the Parliament had amended the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to revise the eligibility criteria for the post of chairperson of NHRC and state human rights commissions. While only a retired Chief Justice of India could be appointed as NHRC chairperson earlier, the amended law allowed a judge of the Supreme Court to be considered for the position.**

**The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is a Statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993. It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA).** The NHRC is the National Human Rights Commission of India **responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as "Rights Relating To Life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India".**

### Kerala retains top rank, Bihar at bottom in Niti Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21

- **Kerala has retained the top rank in Niti Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21, while Bihar has been adjudged as the worst performer, as per a report released.**
- **The Index for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evaluates progress of states and union territories on social, economic and environmental parameters.** The third rendition of India's SDG Index was launched by Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar.
- **Kerala retained its rank as the top state with a score of 75. Both Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu took the second spot with a score of 74. Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam were the worst performing states in this year's India index.**

### Raimona becomes Assam's sixth national park

- **Raimona in Kokrajhar district has become Assam's sixth national park. Eastern Assam's Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, under stress for unregulated coal mining in the vicinity is in the process of becoming the seventh national park.**

- The five national parks that existed prior to the 422 sq. km Raimona are Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Orang and Dibru-Saikhowa.

### **PM Narendra Modi launched E-100 project in Pune to produce, distribute ethanol across India**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the E-100 pilot project in Pune to mark the World Environment Day. The ambitious project aims to set up a network for production and distribution of ethanol across the nation.
- The Prime Minister also released the 'Report of the Expert Committee on Road Map for ethanol blending in India 2020-2025', in line with the theme for World Environment Day this year - promotion of biofuels for a better environment.
- Last year, the government had set a target of reaching 10 per cent ethanol blending in petrol (10 per cent of ethanol mixed with 90 per cent of diesel) by 2022 and 20 per cent doping by 2030. "Government has resolved to meet the target of 20 per cent ethanol blending in petrol by 2025. Earlier the resolve was to achieve the target by 2030 which is now preponed by 5 years.

### **India's first International Maritime Cluster to come up at GIFT City**

- Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) will set up the country's first international maritime services cluster at GIFT City. The maritime cluster will be developed as a dedicated ecosystem comprising ports, shipping, logistics services providers and government regulators, all present in the same geographic vicinity — GIFT City. GIFT City is India's first operational smart city and international financial services.
- This will be a first-of-its-kind commercial maritime services cluster in India, which has been conceptualised to enhance the competitiveness and self-sufficiency of India in the maritime sector and provide a one-stop solution for the entire maritime fraternity.

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) is a business district near Ahmedabad in Gujarat, India. It is India's first operational greenfield smart city and international financial services centre, which the Government of Gujarat promoted as a greenfield project. The city is located on the banks of the Sabarmati River and is around 12 km (7.5 mi) from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. The city is designed so residents can walk to work, and includes commercial and residential complexes.

### **President appoints former IAS officer Anup Chandra Pandey as EC**

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has appointed former IAS officer Anup Chandra Pandey as an Election Commissioner. Mr Pandey is a retired IAS officer of the 1984 batch Uttar Pradesh Cadre.
- There was a vacancy in the poll body after Sunil Arora demitted office as the Chief Election Commissioner. Presently Sushil Chandra is the Chief Election Commissioner and Rajiv Kumar is the other Election Commissioner.

### **CESL, Ladakh ink pact to make the Union Territory carbon-neutral**

- Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL), has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh, to make it a clean and green UT. State-owned CESL has signed a pact with the Ladakh administration to make the Union Territory carbon-neutral.
- CESL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of EESL, will build the EV ecosystem for the UT, focusing on EV charging infrastructure which will utilise renewable sources of power, and electric vehicles (EVs) that are being tested for high altitudes. CESL is a new energy company that is focused on delivering clean, affordable and reliable energy.

Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory, and constitutes a part of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947. It was established on 31 October 2019, following the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district. The Leh district contains the Indus, Shyok and Nubra river valleys. The Kargil district contains the Suru, Dras and Zaskar river valleys. Radha Krishna Mathur is a retired Indian IAS officer who is serving as the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. He retired as the Chief Information Commissioner of India (CIC) in November 2018.



## Government releases Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India

- **Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Babul Supriyo** called for generating awareness towards preventing and restoring land degradation for healthier and sustainable ecosystems. Speaking at a virtual event **celebration of the Desertification and Drought Day**, Shri Supriyo said, this will help better economy and overall human wellbeing.
- The Minister of State **released the latest version of “Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas of India**. It has been **published by Space Application Centre, ISRO, Ahmedabad**. The Atlas provides state wise area of degraded lands for the time frame 2018-19.
- **India is striving towards achieving the national commitments of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and restoration of 26 Million ha of degraded land by 2030** which focus on sustainable and optimum utilisation of **land resources**.
- **India hosted the 14<sup>th</sup> session of Conference of Parties (COP 14) of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** in September 2019. India is striving towards achieving **the national commitments of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and restoration of 26 Million ha of degraded land by 2030** which focus on sustainable and optimum utilisation of land resources.

## India ranks 168<sup>th</sup> on Environmental Performance Index

- **India has ranked 168<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries in the 2020 Environmental Performance Index (EPI)**, according to researchers **at Yale and Columbia universities**, who say **India’s decarbonization agenda needs to accelerate**, and the country faces a number of serious environmental health risks, including **poor air quality**.
- In the 2020 EPI - a biennial scorecard of national results on a range of sustainability issues - **Denmark has ranked first in the world, followed by Luxembourg, Switzerland**, the United Kingdom, France, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Norway and Germany in the top 10 countries. **While Japan has ranked 12<sup>th</sup>, the United States of America ranks 24<sup>th</sup>, and China stands at 120<sup>th</sup>.**

## International Day of Yoga celebrated across globe; PM Modi launches ‘WHO M-Yoga’ App

- **The world observed the 7<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga**. The main theme for this year is – ‘Yoga for Wellness’, which is aligned to the current pre-occupations.
- **The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 21<sup>st</sup> June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY)** in their resolution adopted on **11<sup>th</sup> December 2014**. Since 2015, the IDY has evolved into a mass movement for health, around the world. **Mr. Narendra Modi launched ‘WHO M-Yoga’ App**. This app will provide many videos of Yoga training and practice based on common Yoga protocol in many languages.

## Goa is the first rabies-free state in the country

- **The Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant** said on June 23, 2021, that the **state has not reported a single rabies case in the last three years, making Goa the first rabies-free state in India**. The task of rabies control has been **carried out by the Mission Rabies Project**. It is **being run through a Central Government grant**.
- **Rabies is a viral disease that causes inflammation of the brain in humans** as well as in other mammals. Early symptoms of the disease can include tingling at the site of the exposure and fever. **Rabies is caused by Iyssaviruses, including the Australian bat Iyssavirus and rabies virus** and it is spread when an infected animal scratches or bites a human or any other animal.

**The Annexation of Goa was the process in which the Republic of India annexed the former Portuguese Indian territories of Goa, Daman and Diu, starting with the armed action carried out by the Indian Armed Forces in December 1961. In India, this action is referred to as the “Liberation of Goa”. In Portugal, it is referred to as the “Invasion of Goa”. The “armed action” was code named Operation Vijay (meaning “Victory”) by the Indian Armed Forces. It involved air, sea and land strikes for over 36 hours, and was a decisive victory for India, ending 451 years of rule by Portugal over its remaining exclaves in India. Following the end of Portuguese rule in 1961, Goa was placed under military administration headed by Kunhiraman Palat Candeth as Lieutenant Governor.**

## Denmark signs framework agreement on International Solar Alliance with India

- **Denmark signed the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement (ISA FA) and Instrument of Ratification with India.**

- Meanwhile, **Denmark becomes first country to ratify International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement (ISA FA) after amendments to it entered into force on January 8, 2021** opening its Membership to all Member States of the United Nations”.

### **Centre announces stimulus package of Rs. 6,28,993 crore to boost economy**

- **In a first set of measures to mitigate the economic impact of the devastating second Covid wave**, Finance Ministry announced a **series of steps aimed to push credit off-take in priority areas such as health infrastructure and the severely hit tourism sector** by providing interest-rate concessions.
- The Union Government announced **stimulus package of Rs. 6,28,993 crore to boost economy during the fight against COVID-19 pandemic**. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced **several economic relief measures amid COVID pandemic including eight economic relief measures**, of which four are absolutely new and one is specific to health infrastructure.

**Atmanirbhar Bharat** which translates to ‘self-reliant India’, is a Hindi phrase used and popularized by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and the Government of India in relation to economic development in the country during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, the term is used as an umbrella concept in relation to making India “a bigger and more important part of the global economy”, pursuing policies that are efficient, competitive and resilient, and being self-sustaining and self-generating. The phrase has been used by Modi since 2014 in relation to national security, poverty and digital India. The first popular mention of this came in the form of the ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ or ‘Self-Reliant India Mission’ during the announcement of India’s COVID-19 pandemic related economic package on 12 May 2020, 12 October and 12 November 2020. **A total of three Atmanirbhar Bharat packages worth Rs. 29.87 lakh crore (US\$420 billion)** were announced by the government on 12 May, 12 October and 12 November 2020. **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in an address to the National Development Council in 1976, used the phrase self-reliance a number of times** including in relation to “self-reliance in food and energy” and “economic self-reliance”. **The Fifth Five-Year Plan of India (1974–1978) used the phrase “achievement of self-reliance” as a goal in itself.**

### **West Bengal Assembly passes resolution to set up Legislative Council**

- **The Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) government in West Bengal was able to pass a resolution in the state assembly in favour of creating a legislative council in the state under Article 169 of the Constitution.**
- **The West Bengal Assembly passed a resolution to set up Legislative Council with a two-thirds majority.** The resolution was passed with 196 votes in favour and 69 against it. **The West Bengal Legislative Assembly has a strength of 294 members** but only 265 were present during the voting.
- **Creating a legislative council was one of the key poll promises made by Mamata Banerjee.** In the run-up to the assembly polls, she had said TMC leaders who have not been given tickets would be sent to the legislative council. Senior TMC leader and state minister Partha Chatterjee tabled the resolution in the Assembly.
- **As per law, West Bengal can have a maximum of 94 members in the legislative council (one-third of total assembly seats),** in case the resolution gets support of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.
- **West Bengal too had the Legislative Council (in fact, it was the first state to have the upper house in 1937).** However, in 1969, the then coalition government of Left parties abolished the legislative council as it was considered to be a “symbol of elitism”.
- **The Andhra Pradesh Assembly recently passed a resolution to abolish the state’s Legislative Council (LC).** The bill is yet to be introduced in Parliament. **Until 2019, Jammu and Kashmir too had a legislative council** but it was **dissolved once the erstwhile state was downgraded into a Union Territory.**

**The State Legislative Council, or Vidhan Parishad, or Saasana Mandali is the upper house in those 6 states of India that have a bicameral state legislature;** the lower house being the State Legislative Assembly. Its establishment is defined in Article 169 of the Constitution of India. **According to the Article 169 of the Constitution of India, the Parliament of India can create or abolish the State Legislative Council of a state if that state’s legislature passes a resolution for that with a special majority. The tenure of the MLCs are six years. One-third of the members of State Legislative Council retire after every two years.** This arrangement parallels that for the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament of India. **At present six states – Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka – have a Legislative Council.**

## Pushkar Singh Dhami sworn in as 11<sup>th</sup> CM of Uttarakhand

- **Mr Pushkar Singh Dhami sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.** He took oath as Chief Minister in Raj Bhavan at Dehradun. **Former CMs Tirath Singh Rawat and Trivendra Singh Rawat, and BJP general secretary in-charge Dushyant Kumar Gautam** were also present at the ceremony.
- Born on 16 September 1975 in Pithoragarh District, **Mr. Dhami is a two-time BJP MLA who represents the Khatima Constituency** in the hill state's Kumaon region. He worked with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP's ideological mentor Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

**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 27<sup>th</sup> 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. Mr Pushkar Singh Dhami 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.**

## Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unveils new state population policy 2021-2030

- **In Uttar Pradesh, the government has announced new Population Policy 2021-2030 on the occasion of World Population Day (July 11). The draft law list that has been put on public domain and the government has sought suggestions from people in policy draft.**
- **In the new population policy, a target has been set to bring the birth rate to 2.1 per thousand population by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030. The state's total fertility rate is 2.7 percent currently. The recommendations of policy will be effective after one year of gazette notification.** The government is to give incentives and disincentives for the promotion of the two-child norm in the state.
- **According to the policy draft people having more than two children will not be able to fight local body election.** Those who having up to two offsprings will be provided more government facilities and incentives.
- **The draft also says that government employees not following two children norm will be forbidden several benefits. People breaching policy will not able to take benefit of subsidy and government schemes.** Chief Minister on this occasion also started distribution of 'Shagun kits' to encourage the means of family planning among the newly wedded.

## Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurates India's First LNG Facility plant at Nagpur

- Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari has emphasized on importance of alternate biofuels for diversification of agriculture towards energy and power sector. **Inaugurating the country's first LNG Facility plant at Nagpur said we are spending 8 lakh crores for the import of petrol diesel and petroleum products which is a big challenge.**
- **The Country's first LNG facility plant has been set up by Baidyanath Ayurvedic Group on Kamptee Road near Nagpur Jabalpur Highway.** Mr. Gadkari also informed that the Central Government is promoting Ethanol, Electric, CNG, LNG gas as an alternative to conventional fuels.

**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 During the cabinet reshuffle on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021 the portfolio for Ministry of MSME which was under him was reassigned to Narayan Rane, another BJP MP from Maharashtra as a part of cabinet expansion. Gadkari represents Lok Sabha from Nagpur constituency, Maharashtra.**

## Ladakh signs MoU with Sikkim to turn the UT into organic entity

- **Ladakh administration has signed an MoU with Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SOCCA) to turn the Union Territory into an organic entity.**
- **A tripartite MoU has been signed between Ladakh and SSOCA regarding the implementation of Prampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Mission Organic Development Initiative (MODI) in the Ladakh region with the aim to convert Ladakh into organic entity by 2025.**
- **The main objective of this MoU is to get the organic certification after a tie-up with the Centre. Sikkim is the first state that is 100 percent organic with all of its farmland certified organic and Sikkim became world's first 100% organic state.** The use and sale of chemical fertilizers and pesticides are banned in Sikkim.



## India's first 'Grain ATM' set up in Gurugram

- The state government of Haryana has kicked off a first of its kind unique initiative in which a grain ATM has been set up in the state's Gurugram area. The machine, named 'Annapurthi' has been set up at Farrukhnagar in Gurugram and is aimed at easing up the process of dispensing grains at ration shops. It is called Automated, Multi Commodity, Grain Dispensing Machine. It can dispense up to 70 kg of grains within five to seven minutes at a time.
- The 'Annapurthi' ATMs are a part of United Nation's World Food Programme (WFP) that are working hand in hand with the Indian government to alleviate the problems of food scarcity in and around poorer sections of India. The World Food Programme, which was awarded the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize, also works closely with Ethiopian, Mali, Bangladesh, Kenya, Sudan among other countries to address problems of food shortage and hunger.

Haryana is a landlocked state in India located in the northern part of the country. It was carved out of the former state of East Punjab on 1 November 1966 on a linguistic basis. Chandigarh is the state capital, Faridabad in National Capital Region (NCR) is the most populous city of the state, and Gurgaon is a leading financial hub of the NCR, with major Fortune 500 companies located in it. Among the world's oldest and largest ancient civilisations, the Indus Valley Civilization sites at Rakhigarhi village in Hisar district and Bhirrana in Fatehabad district are 9,000 years old. At present, the lowest sex ratio in India is in Haryana, where sex ratio is only 879 whereas the highest sex ratio is in Kerala (1084). Bandaru Dattatreya is the current Governor of the State of Haryana since 2021. Manohar Lal Khattar is the current Chief Minister of Haryana.

## Centre directs immediate withdrawal of all cases under Section 66A of IT Act

- The Union home ministry asked state governments and police chiefs to immediately withdraw cases registered under the repealed Section 66A of the Information Technology (IT) Act and to stop registering such cases. The move came days after the Supreme Court expressed shock over the continued registration of cases under the repealed Section.
- Section 66A criminalised "grossly offensive" or "menacing character" messages sent in form of text, audio, video, images, or any other electronic record. It provided for the punishment of up to three years in prison.
- The court observed that the weakness of Section 66A lay in the fact that it had created an offence on the basis of undefined actions: such as causing "inconvenience, danger, obstruction and insult", which do not fall among the exceptions granted under Article 19 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of speech. Section 66A was contrary to both Articles 19 (free speech) and 21 (right to life) of the Constitution.

## Part of Constitution inserted by 97<sup>th</sup> amendment quashed

- The Supreme Court on July 20 in a 2:1 majority verdict upheld the validity of the 97<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment but struck down a part inserted by it which relates to the Constitution and working of cooperative societies.
- The 97<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment dealt with issues related to effective management of co-operative societies in the country. It was passed by Parliament in December 2011 and had come into effect from February 15, 2012. It amended Article 19(1)(c) to give protection to the cooperatives and inserted Article 43 B and Part IX B, relating to them.
- Upholding the Gujarat High Court's 2013 decision striking down certain provisions of the 97<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment, the Supreme Court held that the Parliament cannot enact laws with regard to cooperative societies as it is a State subject.
- But, the Supreme Court has now said that if the Centre wanted to achieve uniformity then the only way available was to take the recourse under Article 252 of the Constitution which deals with the power of Parliament to legislate for two or more states by consent.

The subject of cooperative societies fell in the state list and "belongs wholly and exclusively to the State legislatures to legislate upon" and any change would require the ratification by at least one-half of the state legislatures as per Article 368(2) of the Constitution. Now, Part IXB of the Constitution of India is operative only in so far as it concerns multi-State co-operative societies both within the various States and in the Union territories of India.

## **Maharashtra to be first state in country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology**

- **Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology.** Maharashtra's Skill Development Minister Nawab Malik said, **one million diploma certificates will be issued using this technology.**
- **Around 10 lakh digital certificates will be issued to diploma holders of eight educational years.** Singapore, Malta and Bahrain are the only countries using this technology. **Maharashtra will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian state and world's largest user of Blockchain for educational certificates.**

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

## **Karnataka becomes the first state in India to provide reservation for transgenders in all government services**

- **Karnataka has become the first state in the country to provide one per cent reservation for the 'transgender' community in all the government services.** The government submitted a report to the High Court in this regard informing that a notification had already been issued after **amending the Karnataka Civil Service (General Recruitment) Rule, 1977.**
- **The final notification issued on July 6, specifies one per cent reservation in all general as well as reserve categories for the third gender. Whenever a notification is published inviting applications for the government jobs, 'others' column must be added along with male and female columns. The notification also underlines that there should not be any discrimination to the transgenders in the process of selection.**

## **Amitabh Kant releases book on Indian start-up ecosystem**

- **NITI Aayog Chief Executive Officer Amitabh Kant at the book launch ceremony has said that iVEAIN is a consortium of some of India's finest institutes. This book, which is a comprehensive guide for start-ups, is authored by some of the most prominent voices in the Indian start-up ecosystem.**
- **The book titled, 'Shifting Orbits: Decoding the Trajectory of the Indian Start-up Ecosystem', co-edited by Professor Rohan Chinchwadkar, a finance professor at the Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management at IIT Bombay, was launched by Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog.**
- **The book launch was organized, in the virtual mode, by the Innovation Venturing and Entrepreneurship in India Network (iVEIN). The Directors of IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IIM Bangalore and IIM Kozhikode also attended the event in Mumbai.**

## **India gets its 40<sup>th</sup> World Heritage Site Dholavira, Harappan City in Gujarat inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List**

- **India's nomination of Dholavira, the Harappan City in the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list.** India submitted the nomination dossier for Dholavira: A Harappan City to the World Heritage Centre in January, 2020. **The site was on the UNESCO's tentative list since 2014. Dholavira: a Harappan city is one of the very few well preserved urban settlements in South Asia dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to mid-2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE.**
- **Dholavira, a Harappan-era metropolis situated in Gujarat, has been accorded the World Heritage tag by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).**
- **Gujarat so far has three world heritage sites - Champaner near Pavagadh, Rani ki Vav in Patan and the historic city of Ahmedabad. The current session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO is being held online in China's Fuzhou.**

## **Pegasus: West Bengal becomes first state to order probe**

- **West Bengal has ordered an inquiry into the Pegasus snooping row that has rocked the nation since July 18, becoming the first state to do so.**
- **"The Cabinet has approved the appointment of a commission of inquiry comprising former Supreme Court judge, Justice (retd) MB Lokur and retired chief justice of Calcutta high court, Justice**



(retd) Jyotirmay Bhattacharya in exercise of the power conferred by section 3 of the Commission of Enquiry Act, 1952 in the matter of widely reported illegal hacking, monitoring, putting under surveillance, tracking, recording etc of mobile phones of various persons in the state of West Bengal.”.

- Under The Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, a Commission set up by the government shall have the powers of a civil court, while trying a suit under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. This means that the Commission has powers to summon and enforce the attendance of any person from any part of India and examine her on oath, and receive evidence, and it can order requisition of any public record or copy from any court or office.

### Basavaraj Bommai sworn in as Chief Minister of Karnataka

- Three-time MLA and former Minister Basavaraj Bommai took oath as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Chief Minister of Karnataka on July 28.
- He was sworn in by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot in the presence of senior Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, including former chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and BJP Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh.

**Karnataka is a state in the south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. The capital and largest city is Bengaluru. Basavaraj Bommai is serving as the current Chief Minister of Karnataka. Thaawarchand Gehlot is currently serving as the Governor of Karnataka. Coffee production in India is dominated in the hill tracts of South Indian states, with Karnataka accounting for 71%, followed by Kerala with 21% and Tamil Nadu (5% of overall production with 8,200 tonnes).**

### Govt proposes to set up National Research Foundation to strengthen research ecosystem

- Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that the Government proposes to set up a National Research Foundation NRF to strengthen the research ecosystem in the country.
- NRF is being envisaged as an umbrella structure that will improve linkages between Research and Development, academia and industry. The total proposed outlay of NRF is 50 thousand crore rupees over a period of five years.

**The National Research Foundation (NRF) — which found a place in Prime Minister Modi’s national address on the Independence Day — is a soon-to-be-set-up autonomous body envisaged under the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Considered to be one of the biggest announcements under NEP, it will look after funding, mentoring, and building ‘quality of research’ in India. The NRF aims to fund researchers working across streams in India. In order to bring non-science disciplines of research in its ambit, NRF will fund research projects across four major disciplines –Sciences; Technology; Social Sciences; and Arts and Humanities.**

### India assumed Presidency of the UN Security Council

- India assumed the presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the month of August 2021. This will be the country’s first presidency during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council.
- India began its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the UNSC in January 2021. This is India’s eighth term on the UNSC.
- India will decide the UN body’s agenda for the month and coordinate important meetings on a range of issues. It is going to organise key events in three major areas of maritime security, peacekeeping and counter-terrorism. The Security Council will also have on its agenda several important meetings including Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and the Middle East. The Security Council will also be adopting important resolutions on Somalia, Mali, & United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.
- Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi was the first Indian PM to preside over a meeting of the UNSC. The last time an Indian PM was engaged in this effort was the then PM PV Narasimha Rao in 1992 when he attended a UNSC meeting.
- India’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Tirumurti highlighted the significance of the responsibility to India and what India will strive to bring to the Global High Table.

## 12<sup>th</sup> edition of exercise INDRA NAVY held between Indian Navy & Russian Navy

- **The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of exercise INDRA NAVY, a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy was held in the Baltic Sea. The Indian Navy was represented by the stealth Frigate INS Tabar whilst the Russian Federation Navy was represented by Corvettes RFS Zelyony Dol and RFS Odintsovo of the Baltic Fleet.**
- **Initiated in 2003, Ex INDRA NAVY epitomizes the long-term strategic relationship between the two navies. This exercise was undertaken as part of the visit of INS Tabar to St Petersburg, Russia. INDRA NAVY has matured over the years with increase in scope, complexity of operations and level of participation.**
- **Exercise INDRA NAVY-21, being conducted despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic, enables further strengthen mutual confidence, inter-operability and enable sharing of best practices between both Navies. The exercise is another milestone in strengthening cooperation between the two navies and reinforce the long-standing bond of friendship between the two countries. The primary aim of this year's edition is to further consolidate inter-operability built up by the two Navies over the years and also to enhance understanding and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations.**

## Assam-Mizoram Border Dispute

- **At least five Assam Police personnel were killed after the old boundary dispute between Assam and Mizoram exploded in violent clashes at a contested border point on Monday.**
- **The boundary issue between Assam and Mizoram has existed since the formation of Mizoram — first as a union territory in 1972, and then as a full-fledged state in 1987.**
- **In India, Inter-state disputes are multifaceted, besides disputes over boundaries, there are disputes over sharing of water (rivers) and migration also impacts the federal polity of India. Under Article 263 of the Constitution, the Inter-state council is expected to inquire and advise on disputes, discuss subjects common to all states and make recommendations for better policy coordination.**

Mizoram is a state in northeastern India, with Aizawl as its seat of government and capital city. The name of the state is derived from 'Mizo', the self-described name of the native inhabitants, and "Ram", which in the Mizo language means "land." Thus "Mizo-ram" means "land of the Mizos". Within India's northeast old-Assam region, it is the southernmost landlocked state, sharing borders with three of the Seven Sister States of old Assam, namely Tripura, Assam and Manipur. The state also shares a 722-kilometre (449 mi) border with the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar. Zoramthanga is the current Chief Minister of Mizoram. Kambhampati Hari Babu is the current Governor of Mizoram.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi is first Indian Prime Minister to preside over UNSC meeting

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a high-level United Nations Security Council open debate on enhancing maritime security and the need for international cooperation in this field. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to preside over a UN Security Council Open Debate, according to the Prime Minister's Office.**
- **The last time an Indian PM was engaged in this effort was the then PM PV Narasimha Rao in 1992 when he attended a UNSC meeting. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the first Indian PM to preside over a meeting during India's presidency of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), said Syed Akbaruddin, India's former envoy to UN.**
- **The prime minister chaired the open debate on "Enhancing Maritime Security - A Case for International Cooperation" via video conferencing. The Open Debate was focused on ways to effectively counter maritime crime and insecurity and strengthened coordination in the maritime domain.**
- **India's two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council began on January 1, 2021. The August presidency was India's first Presidency during its 2021-22 tenure as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. India will again preside over the Council in December next year, the last month of its two-year tenure. This is the Eighth time India became the non-permanent member of UNSC.**

PM Modi's 5-point agenda for enhancing maritime cooperation are: 1. Removal of barriers to legitimate maritime trade 2. Resolution of maritime disputes peacefully in accordance with international law 3. Fight threats from natural disasters, non-state actors 4. Conservation of marine resources 5. Promoting responsible maritime connectivity.

## All four quad countries to take part in next edition of Malabar Exercise

- **The Indian Navy is deploying a naval task group comprising four frontline warships to the South China Sea, Western Pacific and South East Asia for over two months** beginning early August, in a significant move aimed at enhancing its profile in the strategically key sea lanes.
- In the course of their deployment, the ships will **participate in the next edition of the Malabar exercise alongside the navies of Japan, Australia, the US in the Western Pacific**. It will be the **second consecutive year when navies of all four member countries of Quad or the Quadrilateral coalition will carry out the mega naval wargame**.
- “The Indian Navy undertakes regular deployments to friendly foreign countries and Indian and the Pacific Ocean regions in furtherance of the **prime minister’s initiative of “Security and Growth for All in the Region – SAGAR”**,” the Navy said in the statement. It said such engagements build **“bridges of friendship”** and strengthen international cooperation.

**The Malabar exercise started in 1992 as a bilateral drill between the Indian Navy and the US Navy in the Indian Ocean. Japan became a permanent member of the exercise in 2015. In a significant move, India last year invited Australia to be part of the Malabar exercise that effectively made it a drill by all four member nations of the Quad. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad) is a strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India that is maintained by talks between member countries. The dialogue was paralleled by joint military exercises of an unprecedented scale, titled Exercise Malabar.**

## Navies of India, Indonesia Undertake Coordinated Patrol in Indian Ocean

- **An Indian Naval Ship began a two-day coordinated patrol with an Indonesian Navy vessel in the Indian Ocean region**, in an exercise that highlights a high degree of mutual trust, confidence, synergy and cooperation between the two friendly navies.
- **The CORPAT between India and Indonesia also witnessed the participation of Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both nations**. “The exercise, being conducted as a “non-contact, at sea only” exercise in view of COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the high degree of mutual trust and confidence, synergy and cooperation between the two friendly navies”. According to the statement, **the Indian Naval Ship (INS) Saryu, an indigenously built Offshore Patrol Vessel is undertook coordinated patrol (CORPAT) with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Bung Tomo from July 30 to 31. The 36<sup>th</sup> edition of IND-INDO CORPAT seeks to bolster the maritime cooperation between the two navies and forge strong bonds of friendship across the Indo Pacific.**

## Karnataka becomes first state to issue order to implement New Education Policy 2020 from current academic session

- **Karnataka Government has issued an order to implement the National Education Policy from the current academic year 2021-22. Karnataka has become the first state in the country to issue an order to implement the new Education policy.**
- **The National Education Policy that aims at increasing the Gross Enrollment ratio in higher education from 26.8 percent in 2018 to 50 percent by 2035 will bring in sweeping reforms in the area of education. Once implemented the National Skills Qualification Framework will become part of the graduation programme.**
- **They can get a maximum of 40 percent credits through official online courses and 50 percent credits from any University.** They have the option to discontinue and integrate courses after a specific period. A single regulator will oversee higher education in the country.
- **The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India’s new education system. The NEP 2020 replaces the National Policy on Education of 1986. In January 2015, a committee under former Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian started the consultation process for the New Education Policy. Based on the committee report, in June 2017, the draft NEP was submitted in 2019 by a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan. The policy aims to transform India’s education system by 2040. Education in India is a Concurrent List subject.**
- **The NEP 2020 enacts numerous changes in India’s education policy. It aims to increase state expenditure on education from around 3% to 6% of the GDP as soon as possible. The National Education Policy 2020 has ‘emphasised’ on the use of mother tongue or local language as the medium of instruction till Class 5 while, recommending its continuance till Class 8 and beyond. The Policy recommends that all students will learn three languages in their school under the ‘formula’. At least two of the**



three languages should be native to India. It also states that no language will be imposed on the students. **The government clarified that the language policy in NEP is a broad guideline;** and that it was up to the states, institutions and schools to decide the implementation.

- **The “10 + 2” structure will be replaced with “5+3+3+4” model.** Coding will be introduced from class 6 and experiential learning will be adopted. **It proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor’s degree in an undergraduate programme with multiple exit options.** MPhil (Masters of Philosophy) courses are to be discontinued to align degree education with how it is in Western models. **A Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education.**

#### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Ujjwala 2.0 from Mahoba on August 10**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the second phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana - Ujjwala 2.0** by handing over LPG connections, **at Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh** through video conferencing. During the event, the Prime Minister interacted with beneficiaries of the Ujjwala and also addressed the nation.
- **During Ujjwala 1.0, launched in 2016, a target was set to provide LPG connections to 5 crore women members of BPL households.** Subsequently, the scheme was **expanded in April 2018 to include women beneficiaries from seven more categories including SC, ST, most backward classes, tea garden, forest dwellers and Islands.**
- **Later, the target was revised to 8 Crore LPG connections which was achieved in August 2019,** seven months ahead of the target date. **In the Union budget for Financial Year 2021-22, a provision for an additional one crore LPG connection under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** was announced.
- **These one crore additional connections under Ujjwala 2.0 aim to provide deposit-free LPG connections to those low-income families** who could not be covered under the earlier phase of this scheme. The scheme provides **a financial support of Rs 1600 for each LPG connection to the BPL households.** **Along with a deposit free LPG connection, Ujjwala 2.0 will provide first refill and hotplate free of cost to the beneficiaries.**
- **Also, the enrollment procedure will require minimum paperwork. In Ujjwala 2.0, migrants will not be required to submit ration cards or address proof. A self-declaration for both ‘family declaration’ and as a ‘proof of address’ will be sufficient. Ujjwala 2.0 will help achieve the Prime Minister’s vision of universal access to LPG.**

#### **Government launched ‘PM-DAKSH’ portal, app to make skill development schemes accessible**

- **The government launched ‘PM-DAKSH’ portal and app to make the skill development schemes accessible to the target groups of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis.**
- **The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, in a statement issued said the Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalta Sampann Hitgrahi (PM-DAKSH) Yojana is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment from the year 2020-21.**

#### **World’s highest motorable road built in Ladakh at 19,300 feet by BRO**

- **World’s highest motorable road has been built in Ladakh at 19,300 feet by Border Roads Organization (BRO).** The organisation has **constructed the 52 kilometre long tarmac road in Eastern Ladakh.** It **passes through Umlingla pass,** much above the altitude of Siachen Glacier.
- **Umling La Pass will be more challenging for drivers than the famous Khardung La Pass.** According to the Defence Ministry, **the temperature at this pass can drop to as much as -40 degrees Celsius during peak winter season.** Also, **the oxygen level at this altitude is about 50 per cent less than at normal places,** making it very difficult for anyone to stay here for too long. **Umling La Pass has now eclipsed the previous record of 18,953 feet, located in Bolivia. The road connects to a volcano called Uturuncu.**

The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** is a **road construction executive force in India** that provides support to and is a part of the **Indian Armed Forces.** **BRO develops and maintains road networks in India’s border areas and friendly neighboring countries.** This includes infrastructure operations in 19 states and three union territories (including Andaman and Nicobar Islands) and neighboring countries such as **Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka.** **Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry is the current Director General of Border Roads (DGBR).**

#### **Census 2021 will be country’s first digital census**

- **The Union Home Ministry informed that India’s upcoming 2021 Census will be the first-ever digital Census in the country** and there is a provision for self-enumeration as well. So, India is going all digital where technology is playing an important role in shaping the new India.

- **The country's 16<sup>th</sup> Census (Census 2021) will be done digitally.** Till now, the process involved visiting every household and filling up forms. This year, workers going door-to-door will have tablets or smartphones that will let them enter information digitally. For this, there is a provision for self-enumeration, a mobile app for the collection of data and a census portal for management and monitoring of various Census related activities.
- **On February 1 2021, Nirmala Sitharaman, who presented the first paperless Union Budget 2021-22,** said the forthcoming census – an exercise to determine the population of the country – would be the first digital census in the history of India.
- **A mobile app will be launched for the collection of the data.** The Government is also planning to launch a census portal for the management and monitoring of census related activities.
- **The new census portal will need the mobile phone numbers and other details of individuals for logging in.** The citizens will be allowed to self-register themselves and in case of self-enrollment, the individual will have to fill in the required details with the help of relevant codes for each field. After enrollment, an identification number will be sent on the registered number provided by the individual. The same number can be shared with the enumerator to help officials sync the data automatically.

The decennial Census of India has been conducted 15 times, as of 2011. While it has been undertaken every 10 years, beginning in 1872 under British Viceroy Lord Mayo, the first complete census was taken in 1881. Post 1949, it has been conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. All the censuses since 1951 were conducted under the 1948 Census of India Act. The last census was held in 2011, whilst the next will be held in 2021. But it is postponed due to the covid-19 pandemic. Vivek Joshi is the current Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.

### Cleanest city of country Indore now declared as first Water Plus city of country

- **Cleanest city of the country Indore** has now been declared as the first 'Water Plus' city of the country under the Swachh Survekshan 2021, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said. The results were released by the Central Government.
- **Indore is the number one city in the country for four times** in the cleanliness category. 84 cities of the country had applied in the selection process of Water Plus, out of which only 33 cities were found suitable for ground verification.
- The hard work of the residents of Indore has once again created history in ground verification. **Under the Swachh Bharat Mission Urban, the cities of the country are tested on the basis of various parameters of cleanliness in various categories which includes ODF Plus, ODF Double Plus and Water Plus.**
- **The Water Plus certificate is awarded to cities that have met all the standards of ODF Double Plus.** Also, the residual sewage from residential and commercial establishments is released into the environment only after treatment. Re-use of treated waste water is also ensured for this award.

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. According to the 2020 survey, Swachh Survekshan Results 2020: Indore in Madhya Pradesh retained its position as the cleanest city in India for the fourth consecutive year, according to the Swachh Survekshan 2020 survey results.

### India, Saudi Arabia begin first naval exercise

- In a sign of growing defence ties between the two nations, **the naval army of India and Saudi Arabia started their first-ever joint exercise, called the Al-Mohed Al-Hindi Exercise.**
- The Navy said in a statement that its "visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was set rolling with the Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet (FOCWF), Rear Adm Ajay Kochhar visiting the Fleet Cdr of Royal Saudi Navy's Eastern Fleet, Rear Adm Majid Al Qahtani" on August 10, which was held at the King Abdul Aziz Naval Base, "the Headquarters for Saudi Eastern Fleet".
- **A frontline Indian warship is currently participating in the first naval exercise with Saudi Arabia,** reflecting the growing defence ties between the two sides in the wake of the Indian Army chief's first visit to the West Asian country. The Navy mentioned that "on the operational front, gearing up for the maiden bilateral exercise 'AL-Mohed AL-Hindi', the team of Indian Navy met with counterparts of the Royal Saudi Navy for a co-ordinating conference at King Abdulaziz Naval base in Al Jubail, Saudi Arabia".



- **INS Kochi, the flagship destroyer of the Indian Western Naval Fleet, arrived at Port Al-Jubail for the “Al-Mohed Al-Hindi 2021” exercise. The warship sailed to Saudi Arabia after conducting the “Zayed Talwar” drill with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) off the coast of Abu Dhabi.**

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

### **India added four more sites recognised as wetlands of international importance under Ramsar**

- **India added another feather in its cap when four more sites - two each from Haryana and Gujarat - were recognised as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. After the latest addition, India now has 46 such sites, the Union environment ministry said.**
- **Haryana’s Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary is a human-made freshwater wetland. It is also the largest in Haryana. The Sultanpur National Park supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.**
- **The Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat lies on the Central Asian Flyway and more than 320 bird species can be found here. Meanwhile, the Wadhvana Wetland in Gujarat is internationally important for its birdlife as it provides wintering ground to migratory waterbirds, including over 80 species that migrate on the Central Asian Flyway.**
- **According to environment ministry, the aim of the Ramsar list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.**
- **The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted on February 2, 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. It came into force for India on February 1, 1982. Those wetlands which are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites. Last year, Ramsar declared 10 more wetland sites from India as sites of international importance. The World’s largest Mangrove forest is located in Sundarbans Reserve Forest.**

### **PM Narendra Modi announces national infrastructure plan worth Rs 100 lakh crore**

- **Gati Shakti will be a National Infrastructure Master Plan for our country which will lay the foundation of holistic Infrastructure announced by PM Modi on the eve of Independence day. This scheme of more than 100 lakh crores rupees will result in new employment opportunities for lakhs of youth.**
- **The plan will help raise the global profile of local manufacturers and help them compete with their counterparts worldwide. It also raises possibilities of new future economic zones. He said, 100 lakh crore rupees Gatisakti initiative will bring employment opportunities for youth and help in holistic infrastructure growth.**

**A similar plan, called the National Infrastructure Pipeline was previously announced. In the budget speech of 2019-2020, Finance Minister announced an outlay of Rs 100 lakh Crore for infrastructure projects over the next 5 years. NIP is a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens. It will improve project preparation, attract investments (both domestic & foreign) into infrastructure, and will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a \$5 trillion economy by FY 2025. It covers both economic and social infrastructure projects. The task force headed by Atanu Chakraborty on National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), in May 2020, submitted its final report to the Finance Minister. The centre (39 percent) and state (40 percent) are expected to have an almost equal share in implementing the projects, while the private sector has 21 percent share.**

### **Justice BV Nagarathna in line to be first woman Chief Justice of India**

- **The Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana has recommended to the government nine names for appointment as apex court judges, and in the process scripted history by naming Karnataka High Court judge Justice BV Nagarathna, who may become India’s first woman CJI.**

- **The Collegium, also comprising Justices U.U. Lalit, A.M. Khanwilkar, D.Y. Chandrachud and L. Nageswara Rao, met until the late hours of August 17 to zero in on the names. It, however, formalised and published its resolution. The names include eight judges and one lawyer from the Supreme Court Bar.**
- **The Collegium has for the first time, in one single resolution, recommended three women judges. It has thus sent a strong signal in favour of representation of women in the highest judiciary. It has also continued the recent trend to recommend direct appointments from the Supreme Court Bar to the Bench of the court.**

### **President Ramnath Kovind gives assent to Constitution (105<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act 2021**

- **President Ramnath Kovind has given his assent to the Constitution (105<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act 2021, which restores the power of State Governments to identify and specify Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBCs). The Constitution (105<sup>th</sup>) Bill 2021 was passed by the Parliament on August 11, 2021.**
- **The Gazette of India, issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Act would amend article 338B of the Constitution, in clause (9), and would insert a provision of: “Provided that nothing in this clause shall apply for the purposes of clause (3) of article 342A.”**
- **In article 342A of the Constitution, for the words “the socially and educationally backward classes which shall for the purposes of this Constitution”, the words “the socially and educationally backward classes in the Central List which shall for the purposes of the Central Government” will be substituted, and the expression “Central List” meaning the list of socially and educationally backward classes prepared and maintained by and for the Central Government should be inserted.**
- **As per the Act, every State or Union territory may, by law, prepare and maintain, for its own purposes, a list of socially and educationally backward classes, entries in which may be different from the Central List.**
- **“In article 366 of the Constitution, for clause (26C), the following clause shall be substituted, namely:-- ‘(26C) “socially and educationally backward classes” means such backward classes as are so deemed under Article 342A for the purposes of the Central Government or the State or Union territory, as the case may be,” the Gazette read.**
- **Earlier, the Supreme Court in the Maratha quota case struck down the reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the Maratha community brought in by the Maharashtra government in 2018, saying it exceeded the 50 per cent cap imposed earlier.**
- **Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Dr Virendra Kumar had informed that the bill should be considered as the 105<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment bill after being renumbered.**

**National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was initially constituted by the Central Govt by The National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. The Central Govt has repealed The National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993 w.e.f 15.8.2018. The present Commission (8<sup>th</sup>) has been accorded Constitutional Status and constituted through “The Constitution (One Hundred and Second Amendment) Act, 2018” Act dated 11.8.2018, whereby Article 338B has been inserted, forming a Commission for the socially and educationally backward classes to be known as NCBC. The Commission consists of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three other Members in the rank & pay of Secretary to the Govt of India and their condition of service and tenure of office has been notified vide MSJE Notification dated 23.08.2018. The current Chairman is Dr. Bhagwan Lal Sahni. Article 340 of the Constitution provides for the appointment of a Commission by the President of India to investigate the conditions of and the difficulties faced by the socially and educationally backward classes and to make appropriate recommendations.**

### **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates world’s 2<sup>nd</sup>-largest refurbished National Gene Bank**

- **Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the world’s second-largest refurbished National Gene Bank at the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Pusa in New Delhi. The Gene Bank was established in 1996 to preserve the seeds of Plant Genetic Resources for future generations.**
- **It has the capacity to preserve about ten lakh germplasm in the form of seeds. Presently, it is protecting four lakh 52 thousand accessions, of which over two lakh are Indian germplasm. The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources is meeting the need of in-situ and ex-situ germplasm conservation through the Delhi Headquarters and ten other regional stations in the country.**

**The agriculture contribution in India's GDP in 2019 is 15.96 percent.** According to latest report, **agriculture is primary source of livelihood for 58% population in India.** The **Primary sector of the economy** includes any industry involved in the **extraction and production of raw materials, such as farming, logging, hunting, fishing, and mining.** India is a global agricultural powerhouse. It is the **world's largest producer of milk, pulses, and spices, and has the world's largest cattle herd (buffaloes),** as well as the **largest area under wheat, rice and cotton.** It is the **second largest producer of rice, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, farmed fish, sheep & goat meat, fruit, vegetables and tea.** **Narendra Singh Tomar is the Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.** He is a member of the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha from Morena, Madhya Pradesh.

### **SC passes interim order allowing women to sit for NDA examination**

- **The Supreme Court passed an interim order to allow women to take the admission exam to National Defence Academy (NDA).** A division bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy passed the interim order in a writ petition seeking permission for women candidates to appear for the NDA exam. While issuing the order, the court said women should be permitted take part in the NDA exam.
- **On February 17 last year, a bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Ajay Rastogi directed the government to ensure that women Short Service Commission officers are given permanent commission in the Army, including command postings.** NDA is one of the two modes for direct entry to the armed forces and the exam is held by the Union Public Services Commission (UPSC).

### **PM Modi inaugurated virtually at Somnath Temple in Gujarat**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of various projects worth 83 crore rupees at the historic Somnath Temple in Gujarat** through video conference.
- **Prime Minister Modi is the chairman of the Shri Somnath Trust** which manages the affairs of the world-famous temple located in Prabhas Patan town in Gir-Somnath district. Mr Modi inaugurated three projects and also perform a virtual ground-breaking ceremony for the Parvati Temple coming up near the main temple at a cost of 30 crore rupees.

**The Somnath temple (also known as the Deo Patan) located in Veraval in Saurashtra on the western coast of Gujarat, India is believed to be the first among the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva.**

### **Delhi-Chandigarh highway becomes India's first EV-friendly highway**

- **The Union Heavy Industries Minister Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey inaugurated the country's very first Solar Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station at the Karnal Lake Resort.**
- **With a network of solar-based electric vehicle charging stations, the Delhi-Chandigarh Highway has become the country's first EV-friendly highway in the country.** The network of stations was set up by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) under the FAME-1 (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicles) scheme of the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- **With the inauguration of the first solar electric vehicle charging station at the Karnal lake resort, the Delhi-Chandigarh Highway has become the first e-vehicle friendly highway in India.** The EV charging station at the Karnal lake resort is strategically located at the midpoint of the Delhi-Chandigarh highway and is equipped to cater to all types of E-cars plying currently in the country.

**FAME India is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan.** Main thrust of FAME is to **encourage electric vehicles by providing subsidies.** The FAME India Scheme is **aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments.** Two phases of the scheme: **Phase I: started in 2015 and was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019** **Phase II: started from April, 2019, will be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2022.** The scheme covers Hybrid & Electric technologies like Mild Hybrid, Strong Hybrid, Plug in Hybrid & Battery Electric Vehicles. **Monitoring Authority is Department of Heavy Industries, the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.**

### **Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated India's first smog tower**

- **Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated the country's first smog tower at Baba Kharak Singh Marg, Connaught Place.** The smog tower will clean 1,000 cubic metres of air every second and reduce PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels in Delhi.
- **The smog tower will work with full force after the monsoon season.** The scientists of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee will accordingly assess the performance of the tower and present a monthly report."



## **NTPC commissions largest Floating Solar PV Project in Andhra Pradesh**

- **The National Thermal Power Corporation, NTPC Limited has commissioned the largest floating solar PV project of 25 MegaWatt on the reservoir of its Simhadri thermal station in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.** This is also the **first solar project to be set up under the Flexibilisation Scheme**, notified by the Government of India in 2018.
- **The floating solar installation has a unique anchoring design** which is spread over 75 acres. **This floating solar project has the potential to generate electricity from more than one lakh solar PV modules.** This will not only help to light around seven thousand households but also ensure at least 46 thousand tons of carbon dioxide is not emitted every year during the lifespan of this project.

**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.**

## **The Union Government approved the ratification of the Kigali Amendment**

- **The Union Government approved the ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on phasing down climate-damaging refrigerant Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).** China, which is the **largest producer of HFCs in the world**, will **reduce HFC use by 80 per cent by 2045 over the 2020-22 baseline.** It comes close on the heels of similar decisions by the United States and China, the world's largest producers and consumers of HFCs. 122 countries had ratified the Kigali Amendment by the end of July 2021.
- Following similar decisions by the United States and China in the past few months, **India decided to ratify a key amendment to the 1989 ozone-saving Montreal Protocol negotiated five years ago. The Kigali Amendment, named after the Rwanda capital where it was negotiated, enables the phase-out of hydrofluorocarbons**, a set of chemicals notorious for their capacity to warm the planet.
- **The 2016 amendment was seen as one of the most important breakthroughs in the global efforts to fight climate change, because the HFCs, a set of 19 gases used extensively in the air-conditioning and refrigerant industry, are known to be hundreds, even thousands, of times more potent than carbon dioxide in their ability to cause global warming. It is estimated that a complete phase-out of HFCs by 2050 would prevent about 0.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures by the end of this century.**
- This important instrument, therefore, is **crucial to achieving the target of restraining the increase in global temperatures to 2 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times.** As pointed out by a recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the average temperatures of the planet has already risen by about 1.1 degree Celsius.

**The Kigali Amendment aims for the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by cutting their production and consumption. The goal is to achieve over 80% reduction in HFC consumption by 2047. Given their zero impact on the depletion of the ozone layer, HFCs are currently used as replacements of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in air conditioning, refrigeration and foam insulation, however they are powerful greenhouse gases. India has to reduce its HFC use by 80% by the year 2047, while China and the United States have to achieve the same target by the year 2045 and 2034 respectively. India will complete its phasedown of HFCs in four steps from 2032 onwards with a cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 80% in 2047. In October 2016, with the United States' leadership, 197 countries adopted an amendment to phase down HFCs under the Montreal Protocol in Kigali, Rwanda.**

## **Malabar Rebellion leaders to be removed from India's dictionary of martyrs: Report**

- **Variyamkunnath Kunjahammed Haji and Ali Musailiar, popular leaders of the Malabar Rebellion, along with 387 other leaders of the pre-independence agitation, are set to be removed from the 'Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle', jointly published by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).** The decision came after review of a three member panel, which reportedly stated that **the Malabar Rebellion was not an independence struggle but focused on 'religious conversion'.**

- **The Malabar Rebellion, also known as Moplah Rebellion or Mappila Rebellion, which took place in 1921 has been acknowledged as a freedom struggle against the British by the Kerala government, while a section including right wing parties, consider the agitation communal in nature. Last year, the state witnessed a heated debate over the 1921 agitation after Malayalam filmmaker Aashiq Abu and actor Prithviraj said that they were coming up with a new film on Variyamkunnath Kunjahammed Haji.**

**August 20, 2021, marks the centenary of the Malabar rebellion, which is also known as the Moplah (Muslim) riots. It had been an uprising of Muslim tenants against British rulers and local Hindu landlords. The uprising, which began on August 20, 1921, went on for several months marked by many bouts of bloodstained events. Some historical accounts state the uprising led to the loss of around 10,000 lives, including 2,339 rebels. The Khilafat movement launched in 1919 provided a fresh stimulus to the grievances of Mappilas. Now their sense of local injustice was sought to be linked with the pan-Islamic sentiments created in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire that rendered the Ottoman caliphate irrelevant. Haji was among those in the Malabar region inspired by the zeal of the agitation. The Lord Reading was Viceroy of India during the time Malabar Rebellion occurred in 1921**

### **Hyderabad to get India's second international arbitration centre**

- **Hyderabad is set to soon become the first city in India to establish an International Arbitration and Mediation Centre. The centre would resolve domestic disputes between local investors, and not just international arbitrations. Hyderabad to get India's second international arbitration centre.**
- **International Arbitration and Mediation Centre would help investors, both foreign and domestic, settle disputes through arbitration in the shortest possible time. India already has more than 30 arbitral institutions including the Delhi International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration (MCIA) and the Gujarat Mediation and Arbitration Centre (GMAC).**

**In June 2021 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Gujarat Maritime University and International Financial Services Centres Authority in GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) City. The objective of the MoU is to jointly support the establishment of the Gujarat International Maritime Arbitration Centre (GIMAC). This will be the first centre of its kind in the country that will manage arbitration and mediation proceedings with disputes related to the maritime and shipping sector. The former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on 8 October 2016 inaugurated India's first centre for international arbitration in Mumbai. It is the result of a joint effort between the domestic and international arbitration community, the business community and the Government of Maharashtra.**

**Hyderabad is the capital and largest city of the Indian state of Telangana and the de jure capital of Andhra Pradesh. It is on the Deccan Plateau along the banks of the Musi River, in the northern part of South India. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hyderabad was known for the pearl industry and was nicknamed the "City of Pearls", and was the only Golconda Diamonds trading centre in the world. Operation Polo was the code name of the Hyderabad "police action" in September 1948, by the then newly independent Dominion of India against Hyderabad State. It was a military operation in which the Indian Armed Forces invaded the Nizam-ruled princely state, annexing it into the Indian Union.**

### **Wanchuwa festival**

- **The Wanchuwa festival is one of the most important celebrations in the life of the Tiwa tribe of Assam — a community that centers itself around a traditional form of agriculture.**
- **The Tiwas practice Jhum or shifting cultivation, where the land is first cleared of any vegetation that is later set on fire (slash-and-burn). The result is a more fertile soil that is freshly enriched with potash, all the more useful for a bountiful crop. As with most tribal cultures, with every harvest comes song and dance, and a handful of rituals, as these two girls clad in their native attire would show you.**

**Some of the major North East tribal festivals in India are: Hornbill Festival, Nagaland, Bihu Festival, Assam, Ambubachi Mela, Assam, Wangala Festival, Meghalaya, Nongkrem Dance Festival, Meghalaya, Losar Festival, Arunachal Pradesh, Myoko Festival, Arunachal Pradesh, Torgya Festival, Arunachal Pradesh, Saga Dawa, Sikkim, Kharchi Puja, Tripura, Cheiraoba, Manipur and Chapchar Kut, Mizoram.**

### **'Operation Devi Shakti': India evacuates more than 800 people from Afghanistan**

- **India gave a name to its operation to evacuate its citizens from war-torn Afghanistan. External affairs minister S Jaishankar called it 'Operation Devi Shakti' and saluted the efforts of Indian Air Force and Air India.**



- **The Taliban seized control of Kabul on August 15. Within two days of the Taliban's capture of Kabul, India evacuated 200 people**, including the Indian envoy and other staffers of its embassy in the Afghan capital. India has so far evacuated more than 800 people since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan. Nearly 200 more Afghan Sikhs and Hindus are still stranded in Afghanistan.

**Operation Raahat (2015) - Operation by the Indian Armed Forces to evacuate Indian citizens and other foreign nationals from Yemen during the 2015 military intervention by Saudi Arabia and its allies in that country during the Yemeni Crisis. Operation Nistar(India) (2018) - Operation by the Indian Navy using INS Sunayna to evacuate Indian citizens from Yemen Island of Socotra who were stranded by Cyclone Mekenu. Operation Madad (2018) - Indian Navy had launched Operation Madad, major rescue, and relief operation in flood-hit Kerala. The operation was launched to assist state administration and undertake disaster relief operations due to flooding in many parts of Kerala.**

#### **Four-day Naval Exercise Malabar-2021 begins**

- **Indian Navy is participating in the sea phase of Exercise Malabar-2021 along with the US Navy (USN), Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN).** The four-day exercise beginning includes **participation of INS Shivalik and INS Kadmat and P8I patrol aircraft.**
- **MALABAR-21 would witness complex exercises including anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare drill and other manoeuvres and tactical exercises.** The exercise will provide an opportunity for participating navies to derive benefit from each other's expertise and experiences.
- The conduct of the exercise while observing health protocols during the COVID-19 global pandemic is a testimony to the synergy between the **participating navies and shared vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.**

**Exercise Malabar is a trilateral naval exercise involving the United States, Japan and India as permanent partners.** The annual Malabar exercises includes diverse activities, ranging from fighter combat operations from aircraft carriers through maritime interdiction operations, anti-submarine warfare, diving salvage operations, amphibious operations, counter-piracy operations, cross-deck helicopter landings and anti-air warfare operations. **Originally begun in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the United States, the exercise was expanded in 2007 with the participation of Japan, Singapore and Australia. Japan became a permanent partner in 2015. Australia participated in the exercise again in 2020, marking the second time that the Quad will be jointly participating in a military exercise.**

#### **PM Modi dedicates renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh Smarak to nation**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated to the nation the renovated complex of Jallianwala Bagh Smarak in Punjab's Amritsar, to mark 102 years of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.** The historic garden is a memorial of national importance, preserved in the memory of countless revolutionaries, sacrificers, fighters, who **were killed in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, which occurred on the festival of Baisakhi on 13 April 1919.**
- **Apart from this, PM Modi also inaugurated four museum galleries developed at the Smarak, to showcase the historical value of events that unfolded in Punjab in 1919.** PM also announced multiple development initiatives taken by the government to upgrade the complex.
- **The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, in which several hundreds of people were killed on this day in 1919 as a result of indiscriminate firing by the colonial forces, completed 102 years on 13 April 2021.** The Britishers had banned gatherings at the time and to punish civilians for their 'disobedience', **Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered the army to fire into a crowd of thousands of unarmed Indians who had come together to celebrate the festival of Baisakhi, unaware of the order.**

#### **Ladakh gets its first highest mobile theatre in world at altitude of 11,562 ft**

- **Ladakh had its first mobile digital movie theatre at an altitude of 11,562 feet** which makes it the **highest theatre in the world.** To bring cinema watching experience to most remote areas, **a mobile theatre situated at an altitude of 11,562 feet was introduced in the Paldan area of Leh in Ladakh.**

**Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory, and constitutes a part of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947. It was established on 31 October 2019, following the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district. The Leh district contains the Indus, Shyok and Nubra river valleys. The Kargil district contains the Suru, Dras and Zaskar river valleys. Radha Krishna Mathur is a retired Indian IAS officer who is serving as the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. He retired as the Chief Information Commissioner of India (CIC) in November 2018.**

### **25<sup>th</sup> edition of the Malabar Exercise held in the Pacific Ocean**

- **Navies of the four member nations of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the Quad — India, the United States, Japan, and Australia — were participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the Malabar Exercise, which began off the coast of Guam in the Pacific Ocean.**
- **Malabar, which began as a bilateral exercise, is now one of the cornerstones of military interoperability of the Quad forces, and Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat said that the Quad's charter is to ensure freedom of navigation for all nations.**
- **Malabar is a multilateral war-gaming naval exercise that was started in 1992. It began as a bilateral exercise between the navies of India and the United States. Two more editions of the exercise were carried out in 1995 and 1996, after which there was a break until 2002 in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests. From 2002 onward, the exercise has been conducted every year. Japan and Australia first participated in 2007, and since 2014, India, the US and Japan have participated in the exercise every year.**
- **Japan joined the naval exercise in 2015 as a permanent member, and Malabar became a trilateral exercise. But last year was an important milestone. For the first time in over a decade, the exercise saw the participation of all four Quad members. It was the second time that Australia participated in the Malabar series of Naval exercises.**
- **The Malabar exercise is aimed to support free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and remain committed to a rules based international order. Malabar 2021 is the first joint maritime exercise within the framework of Quad in the Western Pacific and apparently aims to frighten China. It is being hosted by the US.**

**The 12<sup>th</sup> Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA was held at Volgograd, Russia in August 2021. The exercise was entailed conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups. The INDRA series of exercises began in 2003 and was conducted as a bilateral naval exercise alternately between the two countries. However, the first joint Tri-Services Exercise was conducted in 2017. The last joint, tri-services exercise between India and Russia was conducted in India in December 2019. It was held simultaneously at Babina (near Jhansi), Pune, and Goa. Other Exercises with Quad Countries: India- Japan: JIMEX (naval exercise), SHINYUU Maitri (air force exercise), and Dharma Guardian (military exercise). India-US: Yudha Abhyas (Army), Vajra Prahar (Military), Spitting Cobra, SANGAM, RED FLAG, COPE INDIA. India-Australia: AUSINDEX (Maritime), AUSTRALIA HIND, Pitch Black, Passage Exercises (PASSEX).**

### **BrahMos Aerospace proposes facility in Lucknow for next-gen missile project**

- **India's premier defense establishment, 'Defence Research and Development Organization, (DRDO)' will produce the BrahMos next generation missile in Lucknow under the Uttar Pradesh Defense Industrial Corridor in the near future. Welcoming the initiative of DRDO, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has assured to provide all the facilities including land required for this project.**
- **The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile is being designed, developed and produced by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture between DRDO, Government of India and NPOM, Russia. Presently it is being used by the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.**
- **The facility comes under the aerospace firm's expansion for the BrahMos Next Generation (BrahMos-NG) Missile project. The establishment of the facility will make UP an aerospace and defence hub of India as it will bring in niche technologies. It will also put Lucknow prominently on the world map as a manufacturing hub for top-notch technologies, the statement said.**

- The Defence Corridor has six nodes, including Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Kanpur and Lucknow. On February 21, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the Rs. 20,000 crore Defence Industrial Corridor in Bundelkhand region, which was considered as one of the most backward regions of UP.

The BrahMos (designated PJ-10) is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, ships, aircraft, or land. It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world. It is a joint venture between the Russian Federation's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), who together have formed BrahMos Aerospace. It is based on the Russian P-800 Oniks cruise missile and other similar sea-skimming Russian cruise missile technology. The name BrahMos is a portmanteau formed from the names of two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia. It is the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation.

### Govt to launch special incentive scheme to support 75 start-ups

- Government will soon launch a Special Incentives scheme to support 75 Start-Ups in areas of Telemedicine, Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence to coincide with the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The scheme will be launched by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, BIRAC, a Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Biotechnology.
- BIRAC has been promoting and supporting new ventures under the Startup India and Make in India programmes in the areas of Biotechnology ecosystem growth. The BIRAC has lent funding support of over two thousand 128 crore rupees to more than one thousand 500 Startups, and Small and Medium-sized enterprises.

Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav is a series of events to be organised by the Government of India to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of India's Independence. The Mahotsav will be celebrated as a Jan-Utsav in the spirit of Jan-Bhagidari throughout the length and breadth of the country. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi flagged off the 'Padyatra' (Freedom March) from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad and inaugurated the curtain raiser activities of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' (India@75). Addressing the gathering at Sabarmati Ashram, the Prime Minister stated that the launch of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' 75 weeks before 15 August 2022 will continue till 15 August, 2023. The Prime Minister reiterated five pillars i.e. Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolves at 75 as guiding force for moving forward keeping dreams and duties as inspiration. The Prime Minister asserted that Azadi Amrit Mahotsav means elixir of energy of independence. It means elixir of inspirations of the warriors of freedom struggle; elixir of new ideas and pledges and nectar of Aatmnirbharta.

### India hosted International Climate Summit 2020-21 on Sep 3, 2021

- India hosted a key conference as part of the International Climate Summit (ICS) 2020-21. The aim is to build a dialogue for India's transition to clean energy. ICS 2021 is an initiative by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Environment Committee, that has partnered with Invest India. It is one of the world's most awarded investment promotion agencies and a co-organiser for the hybrid event held.
- Prime Minister Modi, while announcing the hydrogen policy, said that India aims to become a global hub for green hydrogen production and exports. The conference intends to discuss strategies to power India's budding hydrogen ecosystem, among other agendas. The summit allows worldwide collaboration in establishing sustainable routes for production, storage, transportation, distribution, and ambitious deployment of hydrogen technologies by 2040, with the goal of moving towards a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future.
- Deepak Bagla, Managing Director and CEO, Invest India, said, "Our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has set the objective to reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 33% - 35% below the 2005 levels and increase the share of non-fossil fuel to 40% by 2030 during COP 21.
- The International Climate Summit 2021 is supported by the Government of Norway as the Partner Country. In addition, 40 leading organisations, including Reliance Industries Limited, Hindustan Zinc Ltd, ONGC Ltd, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, GAIL (India) Ltd, Nayara Energy Limited, Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd, OIL India Ltd etc, have confirmed their support as sponsors of the summit.



**Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has no carbon footprint. During the budget speech in February 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the launch of the Hydrogen Energy Mission to produce hydrogen from renewable sources. Recently, India and the US have set up a task force under the aegis of the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) to mobilise finance and speed up green energy development. Green hydrogen energy is vital for India to meet its Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) Targets and ensure regional and national energy security, access and availability. Grey Hydrogen is hydrogen produced using fossil fuels such as natural gas. Unfortunately this accounts from roughly 95% of the hydrogen produced in the world today.**

### **India virtually hosts 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of agriculture experts of BIMSTEC countries**

- **India hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Agriculture Experts of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Countries** virtually. Experts of Agricultural Ministries from **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand** participated in the meeting.
- **The BIMSTEC Member States appreciated the greater engagement of India offering six slots of scholarships each for Master and PhD programmes in agriculture** and its other initiatives for capacity development and training including the development of seed sectors.
- **The cooperation in the areas of high impact transboundary diseases of livestock and poultry; aquatic animal diseases and bio-security in aquaculture and digitalization to promote precision farming** was also discussed in the meeting.

**The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations, housing 1.73 billion people and having a combined gross domestic product of \$3.8 trillion (2021). The BIMSTEC member states – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand– are among the countries dependent on the Bay of Bengal. Fourteen priority sectors of cooperation have been identified and several BIMSTEC centres have been established to focus on those sectors. A BIMSTEC free trade agreement is under negotiation (c. 2018), also referred to as the mini SAARC. Leadership is rotated in alphabetical order of country names. The permanent secretariat is in Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

### **Indian Army to participate in Multilateral Exercise ZAPAD, 2021 in Russia**

- **A 200 personnel contingent of Indian Army will participate in Exercise ZAPAD, 2021, a Multi Nation exercise being held at Nizhniy, Russia.** Ministry of Defence said that **Exercise ZAPAD is one of the theatre level exercises of Russian Armed Forces** and will **focus primarily on operations against terrorists.**
- **Over a dozen countries from Eurasian and South Asian Region will participate in this signature event.** The exercise **aims to enhance military and strategic ties** amongst the participating nations while they plan and execute this exercise. **The Ministry said that the NAGA Battalion group participating in the exercise** will feature an all Arms combined task force.
- **The Indian Contingent has been put through a strenuous training schedule which encompasses all facets of conventional operations including mechanised, airborne and heliborne, counter-terrorism, combat conditioning and firing.**

**The Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Army, and its professional head is the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), who is a four-star general. Two officers have been conferred with the rank of field marshal, a five-star rank, which is a ceremonial position of great honour. The Indian Army originated from the armies of the East India Company, which eventually became the British Indian Army, and the armies of the princely states, which were merged into the national army after independence. General Bipin Rawat is the first and current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of India. General Manoj Mukund Naravane is the current and 28<sup>th</sup> Chief of the Army Staff (COAS).**

### **India, Kazakhstan joint military exercise 'KAZIND-21' begins**

- **The India – Kazakhstan joint military exercise KAZIND-21 commenced at Training Node Aisha Bibi, Kazakhstan. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of Annual bilateral joint exercise of both Armies** and will continue till 10<sup>th</sup> of September. **The fourth edition of the exercise was held at Pithoragarh, India in September 2019.**



- Defence Ministry said, **the contingent comprises 120 troops from Kazakhstan and 90 soldiers from the Indian Army.** Both the contingents will **share their expertise and skills in the field of counter-terror operations.**
- This exercise will **provide impetus to the ever growing military and diplomatic ties between the two nations.** The joint exercise also reflects the **strong resolve of both nations to counter terrorism and will to stand shoulder to shoulder to combat the same.**

**Kazakhstan is a country in Central Asia, it has borders with Russia in the north, China in the east, and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan in the south. The capital is Nur-Sultan, formerly known as Astana. Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country, and the ninth-largest in the world. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has been serving as the President of Kazakhstan since 20 March 2019. The tenge is the currency of Kazakhstan.**

### **Ladakh adopts State animal and bird**

- **Ladakh adopted two endangered species, snow leopard and black-necked crane, as State animal and State bird,** two years after it was carved out as a separate Union Territory (UT) from the erstwhile State of J&K.
- **Snow leopards (Panthera uncia) act as an indicator of the health of the mountain ecosystem** in which they live, **due to their position as the top predator in the food web.** Hemis National Park is the **biggest national park in India and also has a good presence of Snow Leopard.**
- **The black-necked crane (Grus nigricollis), also known as Tibetan crane, is a large bird and medium-sized crane.** Both the sexes are almost of the same size but male is slightly bigger than female. A conspicuous red crown adorns the head.
- **The high altitude wetlands of the Tibetan plateau, Sichuan (China), and eastern Ladakh (India) are the main breeding ground of the species;** the birds spend winter at lower altitudes. **In Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, it only comes during the winters.**

**Ladakh was established as a Union Territory (UT) of India on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, following the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act. Before that, it was part of the Jammu and Kashmir state. It is the largest and the second least populous union territory of India. It extends from the Siachen Glacier in the Karakoram Range to the north to the main Great Himalayas to the south. The eastern end, consisting of the uninhabited Aksai Chin Plains, is claimed by the Indian Government as part of Ladakh, and has been under Chinese control since 1962. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district. Earlier, in 2020 Indian and Chinese troops were engaged in a temporary and short duration face-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at Naku La (Sikkim) and near Pangong Tso Lake (Eastern Ladakh). However, recently India and China have agreed in principle to disengage at a key patrol point in eastern Ladakh. Radha Krishna Mathur is serving as the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. He retired as the Chief Information Commissioner of India (CIC) in November 2018.**

### **11-member delegation led by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to press the demand for a caste-based census**

- **Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar along with a 10-member all-party delegation from the state met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to press the demand for a caste-based census.** The Centre had informed the Lok Sabha in July that it would **not enumerate caste-wise population, except those for the SCs and STs.**
- The issue of a caste-based census has been **a longstanding demand of the political parties in Bihar.** The Bihar legislature had **twice unanimously passed resolutions for the caste-based census in 2019 and 2020.** On both the occasions, **all BJP MLAs had also voted in support of a caste based census.**
- **Every Census in independent India from 1951 to 2011 has published data on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but not on other castes.** Before that, **every Census until 1931 had data on caste.** However, in 1941, caste-based data was collected but not published. Caste Census is under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs: Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.

**The Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) was conducted for the 2011 Census of India. SECC 2011 is also the first paperless census in India conducted on hand-held electronic devices by the government in 640 districts. With an approved cost of Rs 4,893.60 crore, the SECC was conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in rural areas and the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation in urban areas. The SECC data excluding caste data was finalised and published by the two ministries in 2016. SECC 2011 was the first caste-based census since 1931 Census of India, and it was launched on 29 June 2011 from the Sankhola village of Hazemara block in West Tripura district. The difference between Census and SECC: The Census provides a portrait of the Indian population, while the SECC is a tool to identify beneficiaries of state support. Since the Census falls under the Census Act of 1948, all data are considered confidential, whereas according to the SECC website, “all the personal information given in the SECC is open for use by Government departments to grant and/or restrict benefits to households.” Caste Census 2011 – Major Findings: 1. The number of households in India – 24.49 Crore, 17.97 crores live in villages. 2. 10.74 crore households are considered deprived. 3. Approximately 30% of households in rural areas are landless and they majorly get their income from manual labour. 5. 48% of the rural population is female.**

### **Bilateral exercise – AUSINDEX between Indian Navy & Royal Australian Navy begins**

- **The bilateral exercise – AUSINDEX between Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy commenced in Australia.** This edition of exercise includes complex surface, sub-surface and air operations between ships, submarines, helicopters and Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft.
- **The participating Indian Naval Ships Shivalik and Kadmatt are the latest indigenously designed and built Guided Missile Stealth Frigate and Anti-Submarine Corvette.** The exercise will provide an opportunity for both Navies to further bolster inter-operability, gain from best practices and develop a common understanding of procedures for Maritime Security Operations. AUSINDEX started in 2015 as a bilateral maritime exercise between India and Australia.

**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. 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. Scott Morrison is the current Prime Minister of Australia. The Australian dollar is the currency of Australia.**

### **28<sup>th</sup> edition of Singapore-India Maritime bilateral exercise ‘SIMBEX’ concludes**

- **The three-day long 28<sup>th</sup> edition of Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise SIMBEX concluded.** The Indian Navy was represented by Guided Missile Destroyer INS Ranvijay with a ship borne helicopter, ASW Corvette INS Kiltan and Guided Missile Corvette INS Kora and one P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft.
- **Participants from the Republic of Singapore Navy included one Formidable Class Frigate, RSS Steadfast, embarked with an S-70B naval helicopter, one Victory Class Missile Corvette, RSS Vigour, one Archer Class Submarine and one Fokker-50 Maritime Patrol Aircraft.**
- **Four F-16 fighter aircraft of the Republic of Singapore Air Force also participated in the exercise during the Air Defence Drills. Initiated in 1994, SIMBEX is the Indian Navy’s longest uninterrupted bilateral maritime exercise with any foreign navy.**
- **This year’s edition of SIMBEX was also a special occasion as it takes place during the ongoing celebrations of the 75<sup>th</sup> year of India’s independence.** The success of SIMBEX-2021 is yet another demonstration of the mutual resolve on both sides to strengthen the bilateral partnership further in the years ahead.

**Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Singapore dollar is the official currency of Singapore. Lee Hsien Loong is the current Prime Minister of Singapore. Halimah binti Yacob is the current President of Singapore. She is the first female president in the country’s history.**

### **India to be the first Asian Country to launch a plastics pact**

- **World-Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF India) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have joined hands to develop a platform to promote a circular system for plastics. The new platform called, the ‘India Plastic Pact,’ was launched by British High Commissioner to India.**

- **India generates 9.46 million tonnes of plastic waste annually, of which 40 per cent is not collected; about half of all plastics produced in the country are used in packaging, most of it is single use in nature.** Commitments made under the pact aim to keep plastic packaging in the economy and out of the natural environment. The statement mentioned 17 businesses including major FMCG brands, manufacturers, retailers and recyclers have committed to the pact as founding members, and nine have joined as supporting organisations.

**Single-use plastics, or disposable plastics, are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled.** These items are **things like plastic bags, straws, coffee stirrers, soda and water bottles and most food packaging.** Plastic is so cheap and convenient that it has replaced all other materials from the packaging industry but it takes hundreds of years to disintegrate. **In 2019, the Union government in a bid to free India of single-use plastics by 2022, had laid out a multi-ministerial plan to discourage the use of single-use plastics across the country. Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 which extended the responsibility to collect waste generated from the products to their producers and brand owners.**

### **Bharat Stage VI emission standards**

- **A year ago, on April 1, 2020, the Supreme Court of India rolled out the Bharat Stage VI emission standards across the country, after India leapfrogged directly from BS-IV emissions standards to BS-VI.** The announcement aims to cut emissions by 80-90% from the new vehicles.
- **According to the Society of Indian Car Manufacturers or SIAM, during this period, the automotive industry suffered a loss of about Rs 2,300 crore per day due to the lockdown.**
- **With an aim to combat the rising levels of air pollution in Delhi-NCR region, petrol pumps in the capital from Sunday started supplying ultra-clean Bharat Stage VI grade fuel (both petrol and diesel).** This move makes New Delhi the first city in the country to switch from BS-IV grade fuels to BS-VI (equivalent to fuel meeting Euro-VI emission norms). Other cities like Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram and Faridabad along with 13 major cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune, will also switch over to cleaner BS-VI grade fuel from January 2020. **However, BS- VI fuel was rolled out in rest of the country in 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.**
- **India's biggest oil firm, Indian Oil Corporation Limited has started supplying BS-VI fuel across India. With this, Indian Oil Corporation Limited has become 1<sup>st</sup> company to begin supply of BS-VI fuel across its 28,000 petrol pumps.** The Government of India has set 01<sup>st</sup> April 2020 as the deadline to start the supply of BS-VI emission compliant fuels. **In Delhi, this deadline was imposed by April 2019 by the Government of India.**

**The Bharat Stage (BS) are standards instituted by the government to regulate the emission of air pollutants from motor vehicles.** With appropriate fuel and technology, they limit the release of air pollutants such as nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, Particulate Matter (PM) and sulfur oxides from vehicles using internal combustion engines. As the stage goes up, the control of emissions becomes stricter. The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The standards are based on European Union regulations that were first introduced in 2000. The major difference in standards between the existing BS-IV and the new BS-VI auto fuel norms is the presence of sulphur. The newly introduced fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulphur released by 80 per cent, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm. As per the analysts, the emission of NOx (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70 per cent and 25 per cent from cars with petrol engines.

### **PM Narendra Modi chaired 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit**

- **As part of India's ongoing Chairship of BRICS in 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the 13<sup>th</sup> BRICS Summit in virtual format.** The meeting was attended by the President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of China Xi Jinping and President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa.
- **The theme for the Summit is BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS cooperation for continuity, consolidation and consensus.** India had outlined four priority areas for its Chairship. These are Reform of the Multilateral System, Counter Terrorism, Using Digital and Technological Tools for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and Enhancing People to People exchanges.
- **This is the second time Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the BRICS Summit.** Earlier, he had chaired the Goa Summit in 2016. **The Indian Chairship of BRICS this year coincides with the fifteenth anniversary of BRICS, as reflected in the theme for the summit.**



**BRICS is the acronym coined to associate five major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Since 2009, the governments of the BRICS states have met annually at formal summits. Originally the first four were grouped as “BRIC” (or “the BRICs”) before the induction of South Africa in 2010. 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. The BRIC grouping’s 1<sup>st</sup> formal summit, also held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, commenced on 16 June 2009.**

### **First India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue**

- **India hosted the first-ever 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue with Australia** on September 11. Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Defence Minister Peter Dutton from the Australian side met with External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- **India have 2+2 Ministerial format meetings with very few countries, including the USA and Japan.** A similar decision was taken for Russia but no dates have been announced yet.
- **The inaugural 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue is being held pursuant to the elevation of India-Australia bilateral relations to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** during the India-Australia Leaders’ Virtual Summit on 04 June 2020. **The agenda for the Dialogue will cover a range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.**
- **Focus on Supply Chain Resilience Initiative:** To work together through multilateral, regional and plurilateral mechanisms to diversify supply chains between trusted and reliable trading partners for critical health, technology and other goods and services. In this context, they welcomed the **launch of the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative by the Trade Ministers of India, Australia and Japan.**

**2+2 Ministerial is the highest-level institutional mechanism between the two countries. It is a format of dialogue where the defence/foreign ministers or secretaries meet with their counterparts from another country. India holds such talks with Australia, Japan and the USA.**

### **Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani resigns**

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani tendered his resignation to governor Acharya Devvratas** and said he is ready to take new responsibilities assigned to him by the party.
- **The resignation is in accordance with the party’s principle of providing all party workers an equal opportunity.** Gujarat is slated to go to the polls in 2022.

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

### **Govt appoints Abhay Kumar Singh as joint secy in newly created Ministry of Cooperation**

- **Abhay Kumar Singh has been appointed as joint secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation** which was recently formed with an aim to strengthen the cooperative movement in the country, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued.
- **Singh, a 2004-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Bihar cadre,** has been appointed as joint secretary in the ministry for a combined tenure of seven years against the newly created post. **The appointment has been cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,** according to the order by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).



**The Ministry of Co-operation is a ministry under the Government of India which was formed in July 2021.** The ministry provides a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country. The ministry's creation was with its vision statement of "Sahkar se samridhhi" (Prosperity from cooperation). **Before the creation of this ministry, the objectives of this ministry were looked after by the Ministry of Agriculture. Amit Shah is currently serving as the Minister of Home Affairs and the first Minister of Co-operation of India.** Cooperative societies is a subject of State List under the Seventh schedule of the Constitution, many experts raised concerns that, creating such a ministry at the central level would increase the power in the hands of union government. **A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court quashed part of the 97<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act and Part IX B of the Constitution which governs the "Cooperative Societies" in the country.** The "Ministry of Cooperation" will continue to have the power to look into the work of "multi state" co-operative societies though the Supreme Court has struck down the constitutional provisions that prescribed the contours of the rules that state governments could create in their own states.

### **Haryana becomes the first state in the country to install solar pump under PM-KUSUM scheme**

- **The farmers of the country are getting the benefit of PM-KUSUM scheme.** Under the scheme, **Haryana has stood first in the country in the installation of off-grid solar pumps under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PMKUSUM)** by installing 14,418 pumps against the sanctioned 15,000 pumps for the year 2020-21.
- This announcement was made at the concluding session of the week-long nationwide 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' organized by the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

**Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM KUSUM) Scheme for farmers for installation of solar pumps and grid connected solar and other renewable power plants in the country.** The scheme aims to add solar and other renewable capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022 with total central financial support of Rs. 34,422 Crore including service charges to the implementing agencies. **Under this scheme, farmers have to bear 40 per cent of the pump's cost, while the central and state governments subsidize the remaining 60 per cent for solar pumps that have a capacity of up to 10 HP.** Raj Kumar Singh is a former Indian bureaucrat and a current Union Cabinet Minister of New and Renewable Energy. He is a Member of the Indian Parliament for Arrah, Bihar, since May 2014.

### **Tamil Nadu increases reservation for women in govt jobs from 30 to 40 per cent**

- **Tamil Nadu Government has increased reservation for women in Government jobs from 30 per cent to 40 per cent.** The State Government will bring necessary amendments. **The Government is providing horizontal reservation while filling vacancies through the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission and the Teachers' Recruitment Board.**
- The Minister said, the government will **give preference to Orphans who have lost their parents in COVID-19 pandemic, first generation graduates and Tamil medium students in government schools while filling vacancies in government posts.**
- The DMK had promised welfare and security schemes for women in its 2021 election manifesto. **Besides promising 75% reservation in state government jobs for Tamil Nadu residents,** DMK had also mentioned that laws and schemes will be implemented benefitting women.
- Earlier in August, **the Tamil Nadu government had announced an increase in the period of maternity leave for women government employees to 12 months from nine months.** PTR had in his Budget speech on August 13 said 12 months of paid leave is applicable to women employees with less than two surviving children and will come into effect from July 1, 2021.

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

### **Assam becomes the first state to adopt the Model Tenancy Act**

- **Assam has become the first state to adopt the Model Tenancy Act.** With this Assam Urban Areas Rent Control Act, 1972 gets repealed. **New Act will spur growth & development of transparent & accountable**

**rental market & balance the interests of tenants & landlords.** It will provide ecosystem for rapid dispute resolution.

- **The Union Cabinet, in June 2021, approved the Model Tenancy Act (MTA). States and Union territories can now adopt the Model Tenancy Act** by enacting fresh legislation or they can amend their existing rental laws suitably.

### **Hathei chilli and Tamenglong orange of Manipur get GI tag**

- **Hathei chilli, which is found in Manipur's Ukhrul district and is known for its unique flavour, and Tamenglong mandarin orange** have been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- **Hathei chilly, commonly known as the Sirarakhong chilly, thrives well only in climatic condition of the Sirarakhong village, which is situated about 66 km from Imphal.**
- **It has over 200 households and farming is the main occupation of the villagers. The major chunk of their income comes from the unique chilly.** The chillies are grown organically across 300 hectares of the hills surrounding Sirarakhong village.
- **The Tamenglong mandarin orange is bigger in size, weighing 232.76 grams on average. It is a unique sweet and sour flavour.** It has high juice content (around 45 per cent) and is rich in ascorbic acid (48.12 mg/100 ml).

A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country). India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement as: "Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin." The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005. The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for further period of 10 years each.

### **UN appoints Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi Sustainable Development Goals advocate to push child rights issues**

- In a significant step aimed at bolstering the outreach on critical child rights issues like combatting child labour, **UN Secretary General António Guterres has appointed Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi as one of its 17 Sustainable Development Goals advocates, a role that is integral to advancing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.**
- Other new advocates appointed by the UN include **STEM activist Valentina Muñoz Rabanal, at 19 years-old, who has helped write the first Artificial Intelligence policy in her home country, Chile. Brad Smith, Microsoft's president as an advocate** will focus on bridging the digital skills gap and highlight the importance of setting bold goals focused on environmental sustainability.
- **Pop super stars BLACKPINK is also a new SDG advocate.** As the most subscribed pop artist on YouTube with more than 65 million subscribers globally, phenomenon, **BLACKPINK has engaged with COP26 to encourage young people to take climate action to protect the planet.**

### **Home Minister Amit Shah launched Ujjwala 2.0 scheme**

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Ujjwala 2.0 scheme** during his day-long visit to Madhya Pradesh. Mr. Shah also addressed the tribal community of the state and participate in various other programs.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the second phase of the Ujjwala cooking gas scheme** on 10 August this year. **Ujjwala 2.0 scheme aims to cover 10 million more beneficiaries in the second phase of the scheme.**
- Under Ujjwala 2.0, **migrant workers can avail a free cooking gas connection on the basis of a self-declaration without any need for documents like address proof.** Ujjwala 2.0 aims to provide deposit-free LPG connections to low-income families who could not be covered under the first phase of PMUY.
- In Ujjwala 2.0, **the beneficiaries are also being provided with a stove free of cost.** Under the scheme, **the first gas cylinder is free worth over Rs 800.** More than 8.16 crore gas connections have been provided under Ujjwala yojana, while around 16.66 lakh connections have been issued till date under Ujjwala 2.0. In Madhya Pradesh too, around 71 lakh gas connections are provided under Ujjwala scheme.

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

### **Education Ministry forms National Steering Committee for development of National Curriculum Frameworks**

- **The Ministry of Education has formed the National Steering Committee for the development of National Curriculum Frameworks.** The committee will be chaired by former ISRO Chairman Dr K Kasturirangan.
- **Chancellor of National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration Mahesh Chandra Pant**, Chairman of National Book Trust Govind Prasad Sharma, Vice-Chancellor of the Jamia Millia Islamia University Najma Akhtar, First Vice-Chancellor of Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh T V Kattimani, guest professor at IIT Gandhinagar and Indian author of French origin Michel Danino and American mathematician of Indian origin Manjul Bhargava **are part of the 12 member committee.**
- As per the perspectives of the NEP 2020, the Committee **will develop four National Curriculum Frameworks - the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education, National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education and National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education.**

### **PM Narendra Modi addresses 76<sup>th</sup> session of UN General Assembly in New York**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 76<sup>th</sup> session of UN General Assembly in New York.** It was a message of hope, caution and earnestly. **He warned the global community to be aware of the challenges of terrorism.**
- The prime minister spent the **first two days of the three-day visit in Washington DC where he participated in the Quad Leaders' Summit and held separate bilateral meetings as well.** PM Modi met US vice president Kamala Harris followed by meetings with Australian and Japanese counterparts.
- The Prime Minister said that those who use it as a political tool must understand that terrorism is a double edged sword and can be a threat for them as well. **Mr. Modi announced that India is developing the world's largest Green Hydrogen hub.**
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the **theme for the event is 'Building Resilience through hope to recover from COVID-19, rebuild sustainably, respond to the needs of the planet, respect the rights of people, and revitalize the United Nations.'**

## **B. International**

### **UAE: First Arab Country to generate electricity from coal**

- **The United Arab Emirates is set to become the first Arab Gulf country to generate electricity from coal.** As governments increasingly turn to cleaner fuels and the price of renewable energy falls, it may also be the last.
- **Dubai is starting up the \$3.4 billion Hassyan coal plant**, with capacity being increased from an **initial 600 mega watts to 2,400 by 2023.** Japan's Jera Co. will supply coal under a long-term agreement with Acwa Power of Saudi Arabia, which is developing the plant.

**Abu Dhab 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.**



### Scottish homes to be first in world to use 100% green hydrogen

- **Hundreds of homes in Scotland** will soon **become the first in the world to use 100% green hydrogen to heat their properties and cook their meals as part of a new trial** that could help households across the country replace fossil fuel gas.

### Azerbaijan fully reclaims lands around Nagorno-Karabakh

- **Azerbaijan completed reclaiming territory ceded by Armenia under a Russia-brokered peace deal** that ended six weeks of fierce **fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh**. **Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev** hailed the restoration of control over the areas as a “historic victory” and a demonstration of his nation’s “unbending spirit.”
- **Turkey, which has strongly backed its ally Azerbaijan**, has extended its clout in the region. **Russian and Turkish military officials signed documents to set up a joint monitoring center to ensure the fulfillment of the peace deal.**

**Azerbaijan is a country in the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Baku is the capital and largest city of Azerbaijan, as well as the largest city on the Caspian Sea and of the Caucasus region. The city is renowned for its harsh winds, which is reflected in its nickname, the “City of Winds”. The manat is the currency of Azerbaijan. Ilham Aliyev is the fourth president of Azerbaijan, in office since 2003. Ali Hidayat o lu Asadov is currently serving as the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan following his appointment to the post on 8 October 2019 by President Ilham Aliyev.**

**Armenia is a country in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia. The dram is the monetary unit of Armenia. Yerevan is the capital and largest city of Armenia as well as one of the world’s oldest continuously inhabited cities. Nikol Pashinyan is currently serving as Prime Minister of Armenia.**

### In world first, U.K. approves Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use

- **Britain approved Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine jumping ahead of the United States and Europe to become the West’s first country to formally endorse a jab.**
- **Prime Minister Boris Johnson touted the medicine authority’s approval as a global win and a ray of hope amid the gloom of the novel coronavirus which has killed nearly 1.5 million people globally, hammered the world economy and upended normal life.**

### UN, Ethiopia sign deal for humanitarian access to Tigray

- **The United Nations says it and Ethiopia’s government have signed a deal to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to the embattled Tigray region, at least the parts under federal government control.**

**Ethiopia is a country in the Horn of Africa and its capital and largest city is Addis Ababa. The birr is the unit of currency in Ethiopia. Abiy Ahmed Ali is serving as the 15<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of Ethiopia since 2 April 2018.**

### Xi declares end to extreme poverty in China, meeting party goal

- **Chinese President Xi Jinping declared victory in an eight-year drive to eradicate extreme poverty in the world’s most populous nation, a key goal of the ruling Communist Party. After assuming leadership of the Communist Party eight years ago, Xi made the drive to eliminate extreme poverty by 2020 one of his top goals.**

### Chinese scientists make world’s first light-based quantum computer

- **Chinese scientists claim to have created the world’s first light-based quantum computer** which can solve problems far faster than a **classical supercomputer**, an advance hailed by experts as a “**major achievement**” that **provides a fundamentally different approach to designing such powerful machines.**
- **Jiuzhang, the quantum computer, can reliably demonstrate “quantum computational advantage”, a milestone in computing. Quantum computers excel at running simulations that are impossible for conventional computers, leading to breakthroughs in materials science, artificial intelligence and medicine. Jiuzhang takes its name from an ancient Chinese mathematical text.**
- **Jiuzhang takes its name from an ancient Chinese mathematical text. It can perform an extremely esoteric calculation, called Gaussian boson sampling, in 200 seconds. The same task would take the world’s fastest classical supercomputer Fugaku around 600 million years, the report said. It is the second such milestone after Google declared its 53-qubit quantum computer had achieved such a breakthrough last year.**



**Quantum computing** is the use of quantum phenomena such as superposition and entanglement to perform computation. Computers that perform quantum computations are known as quantum computers. Quantum computing began in the early 1980s, when physicist Paul Benioff proposed a quantum mechanical model of the Turing machine. Richard Feynman and Yuri Manin later suggested that a quantum computer had the potential to simulate things that a classical computer could not. On 23 October 2019, Google AI, in partnership with the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), claimed to have performed a quantum computation that is infeasible on any classical computer. The most widely used model is the quantum circuit. Quantum circuits are based on the quantum bit, or “qubit”, which is somewhat analogous to the bit in classical computation.

### **Morocco latest country to normalise relations with Israel in US-brokered deal**

- **Morocco has become the latest Arab country to agree to normalise relations with Israel in a deal brokered with US help.**
- Under the agreement, Morocco will establish full diplomatic relations and resume official contacts with Israel, grant overflights and also direct flights to and from Israel for all Israelis. **Morocco is the fourth Arab country since August to strike a deal aimed at normalising relations with Israel after the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan.**

**Morocco** is a country located in the Maghreb region of North Africa. Rabat is the capital city. Saadeddine Othmani has been Prime Minister of Morocco. Moroccan dirham is the official monetary currency of Morocco.

### **Cuba's president to drop its dual currency system**

- **Cuba will unify its monetary system on New Year's Day, President Miguel Diaz-Canel closing the door on more than 25 years with two national currencies in circulation.**
- **Diaz-Canel said that the country will revert to using its peso, which has an official exchange rate of 24 for a U.S. dollar. It will drop the convertible peso, which is worth about \$1.**

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

### **Indian-origin Anil Soni appointed as CEO for WHO Foundation**

- **World Health Organisation has appointed Indian-origin Anil Soni as the Chief Executive Officer for the WHO Foundation.** Global health expert Soni will assume his role as its inaugural CEO on January 1 next year.
- **WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described Soni as a proven innovator** in global health who has spent two decades in service of communities affected by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

**World Health Organization (WHO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. It was established on 7 April 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The current Director-General of WHO is Tedros Adhanom, who started his five-year term on 1 July 2017.

### **New Height for Mount Everest**

- **Nepal and China have announced the revised height of Mount Everest as 8,848.86 metres. The new height is 86 cm more than the previous measurement. The new height of 8,848.86 meters replaced the long-associated 8,848 metre-height, which was, as per a measurement carried out by the Survey of India in 1954.**
- **The common declaration meant that the two countries have shed their long-standing difference in opinion about the mountain's height — 8,844 m claimed by China and 8,847 m by Nepal.**
- **Everest is also known as Sagarmatha in Nepal and Mount Qomolangma in China.** The mountain lies on the border between Nepal and Tibet and the summit can be accessed from both sides.

**Mount Everest gets its English name from Sir George Everest, a colonial-era geographer who served as the Surveyor General of India in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It was first scaled in 1953 by the Indian-Nepalese Tenzing Norgay and New Zealander Edmund Hillary. Mount K2, at 8,611 metres above sea level, is the second highest mountain in the world. Avtar Singh Cheema was the first Indian man and sixteenth person in world to climb Mount Everest.**

### **Couscous joins UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list**

- **The United Nations added the Berber dish of couscous to its Intangible Cultural Heritage list** after four countries submitted the entry to UNESCO.
- **Despite major differences, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania got together to highlight their shared love for the dish**, which joined Zambia's Budima dance, Spain's wine horses, Singapore's hawkers culture and other new entrants on UNESCO's list of intangible heritage.

### **Indian submarine INS Sindhuvir officially inducted into Myanmar Navy**

- **Myanmar officially inducted a submarine handed over by India in the month of October. INS Sindhuvir was commissioned as UMS Minye Theinkhathu** and inducted on the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Myanmar Navy.
- **This is the first time India has given a submarine to any country** and shows growing defence cooperation between the 2 neighbouring countries. The Indian side has been training Myanmar Naval personnel. Last year, **Indian and Myanmar naval undertook joint exercises IMNEX 2019 in Bay of Bengal.**

### **Japan adopts green growth plan to go carbon free by 2050**

- **Japan aims to eliminate gasoline-powered vehicles in about 15 years**, the government said in a plan to achieve Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's ambitious pledge to go carbon free by 2050 and generate nearly \$2 trillion growth in green business and investment.
- **The "green growth strategy" urges utilities to bolster renewables and hydrogen while calling for auto industries to go carbon free by the mid-2030s.**

### **Spain announced a deal with the UK to maintain free movement to and from Gibraltar**

- Hours before the Brexit transition period ended on New Year's Eve, **Spain announced it had struck a deal with the UK to maintain free movement to and from Gibraltar – a small portion of land on the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula that Britain controls but Spain claims as its own.** Officially remaining a British Overseas Territory, **Gibraltar will now be part of the Schengen zone and follow EU rules**, thus ensuring that a hard border does not separate it from the rest of Europe.
- **Gibraltar, with an area of just 6.8 sq km and a population of around 34,000 people**, has been the subject of intense dispute between Spain and Britain for centuries. This is mainly because of its strategic location. **The territory, which is connected to Spain by a small strip of land and surrounded by sea on three sides, serves as the only opening from the Atlantic Ocean into the Mediterranean Sea, making it a key location on the shortest sea route between Europe and Asia via the Suez Canal.**

**The Schengen Area is an area that has officially abolished all passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders. The area mostly functions as a single jurisdiction for international travel purposes, with a common visa policy. The area is named after the 1985 Schengen Agreement signed in Schengen, Luxembourg. Of the 27 EU member states, 22 participate in the Schengen Area. Of the five EU members that are not part of the Schengen Area, four – Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, and Romania – are legally obliged to join the area in the future; Ireland maintains an opt-out. At present, Schengen passport-free zone comprised of 26 countries which includes 22 countries from the EU, and four others – Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The UK has never been a part of this zone.**

### **World's largest radio telescope in China**

- **The world's largest radio telescope, the Five-hundred-metre Aperture Spherical Telescope or FAST** has been installed in Pingtang in China's Guizhou province.
- **FAST started full operations in January 2020** and is about to open its doors for foreign astronomers. Work on FAST began in 2011. It cost 1.1 billion yuan to build. **FAST boasts of a 500-metre giant satellite dish, the size of which can cover the area of 30 football pitches.** This is also the **world's largest.**
- **FAST is surrounded by a five-kilometre "radio silence" zone** where mobile phones and computers are not allowed. Thousands of villagers were displaced to make room for this telescope.

## Ethiopia crisis

- **Ethnic strife is once again threatening to tear apart Ethiopia**, an African nation with a vast and multi-ethnic population, **after fresh war erupted between the federal government and the powerful regional government of Tigray**.
- Ethiopia has multiple regional federations. **Minority Tigray, governed by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), had a disproportionate say in the workings of the federal government based in the Addis Ababa capital.** The Tigray government, which also has multiple militia forces and a powerful army, was often condemned as "repressive and regressive".
- Ethiopia's federal government and the Tigray regional forces regard each other as illegal **after a falling-out when Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali came to power in 2018, sidelining the once-dominant Tigray leaders amid sweeping political reforms.**

**Ethiopia is a landlocked country in the Horn of Africa.** It shares **borders with Eritrea** to the north, **Djibouti and Somaliland** to the northeast, **Somalia** to the east, **Kenya** to the south, **South Sudan** to the west and **Sudan** to the northwest. **The Horn of Africa (HoA) is a peninsula and the easternmost projection of the African continent.** It lies along the southern side of the Red Sea and extends hundreds of kilometers into the Gulf of Aden, Somali Sea and Guardafui Channel. **The Horn of Africa consists of the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.** The **birr** is the unit of currency in Ethiopia.

## Argentina becomes first big country in Latin America to legalize abortion

- **Argentina's Senate voted to legalize abortion, a first for a big country in Latin America and a triumph for women's rights campaigners** achieved over the visceral objection of the Catholic Church.
- Abortion is extremely rare in a region where the Church has held cultural and political sway for centuries. Previously, it was **allowed on-demand only in Communist Cuba, tiny Uruguay and parts of Mexico.** **Until now, Argentine law has only allowed abortion when there is a serious risk to the health of the mother or in cases of rape.**

**Argentina is a country located mostly in the southern half of South America.** Buenos Aires is the **capital** and largest city of Argentina. **Alberto Fernandez is serving as the current president of Argentina** since 2019. **The peso (established as the peso convertible) is the currency of Argentina.**

## India begins its two-year tenure as a Non-Permanent Member of the UNSC

- **India, which has been at the forefront of the years-long efforts to reform the UN Security Council, on 1 January 2021, began its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the powerful organ of the world body.**
- **India will sit in the 15-nation United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2021-22 term as a non-permanent member - the eighth time that the country has had a seat on the powerful horseshoe table.**
- **In 2021, India, Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico join non-permanent members Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam and the five permanent members China, France, Russia, UK and the US in the Council.** India will be UNSC President in August 2021 and will preside over the Council again for a month in 2022. **The presidency of the Council is held by each of the members in turn for one month, following the English alphabetical order of the Member States names.**

**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 ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. Previously, he was the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** between 2005 and 2015.

## Australia changes word in anthem to honour indigenous people

- **Australia has changed one word in its national anthem to reflect what the Prime Minister called "the spirit of unity" and the country's indigenous population.**
- **Prime Minister Scott Morrison on New Year's Eve announced that the second line of the anthem, Advance Australia Fair, has been changed from "For we are young and free" to "For we are one and free."** The change took effect January 1.



**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.**

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

- Donald Trump has become the first US president to be impeached twice. **The House of Representatives voted to charge him with inciting last week's mob attack on US Congress.** Trump was impeached by 232 - 197 vote by the US House on a single charge of incitement of insurrection that left five dead and **the Capitol ransacked.**
- **Impeachment refers only to the House, the lower chamber of Congress, bringing charges, or Articles of Impeachment.** The next major step is for the Senate, the upper chamber, to have a trial to determine Trump's guilt. **A two- third majority is needed to convict Trump.** If all 100 senators are present for the vote, at least 17 Republicans need to join the Democrats to convict Trump.

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

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

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

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

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

- **India has the largest diaspora population in the world with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020, according to a report by the United Nations, which says the UAE, the US and Saudi Arabia host the largest number of migrants from India.**
- **The report 'International Migration 2020 Highlights', by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) released, said the spatial distribution of transnational populations varies greatly and India's diaspora, the largest in the world, is distributed across a number of major countries of destination.**

### **Adani Group to invest in Colombo Port terminal**

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



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

### **Joe Biden takes the oath of office as the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States.**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons**

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

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

### **Saudi Arabia has unveiled plans for THE LINE, a 170 kilometer (106 mile) belt of communities connected without the need for cars or roads**

- **Saudi Arabia has unveiled plans for THE LINE, a 170 kilometer (106 mile) belt of communities connected without the need for cars or roads. Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman unveiled his newest vision to diversify the country's economy beyond oil: 'A city with no cars, roads or carbon emissions' under mega-city project NEOM.**
- **The vision of 170 km long city with no cars, roads or carbon emissions called 'The Line' will be part of the \$500 billion projects called 'NEOM'. THE LINE will be completely free of cars and streets, with residents given access to nature and all of their daily needs within a walking distance of five minutes.**

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

### **Singapore becomes first country to use facial recognition to pay taxes**

- **In Singapore, online government services can now be accessed by facial recognition — a world first.** This technology is being rolled out to the city-state's SingPass digital identity scheme, offering access to no less than 400 online services, including tax declarations and public housing applications. **Facial recognition is also increasingly being used to access other online services, such as banking.**
- **This new function, dubbed SingPass Face Verification,** lets users connect securely to government websites, as well as online services on private websites. The function is designed to work via home computers, tablets and cell phones, as well as at public kiosks.

**Singapore is a sovereign city-state and island country in Southeast Asia. Singapore dollar is the official currency of Singapore. Lee Hsien Loong is the current Prime Minister of Singapore. Halimah binti Yacob is the current President of Singapore. She is the first female president in the country's history.**

### **World's first hydrogen-powered double decker buses go into service in Aberdeen**

- **The world's first fleet of double-decker hydrogen buses has officially been launched into service in Aberdeen, Scotland.** Built by UK firm Wrightbus, the new 60-seat double-deckers save one kilogram of CO<sub>2</sub> with each kilometer they drive as the zero-emission fleet emits nothing more than water. The buses will also tackle more than just air pollution, as they are virtually silent when they run.
- **While prototype hydrogen buses have been designed and used previously, these double-deckers are the first of their kind to go into operation** and welcome customers on board. Run by First Bus – one of Scotland's largest bus operators – in a project led by Aberdeen City Council, the hydrogen buses represent a major step forward in reducing climate change in cities across the world.

### **Kawasaki Heavy completes world's first liquefied hydrogen receiving terminal**

- **Japan's Kawasaki Heavy Industries has announced the completion of the Kobe LH2 Terminal, the world's first liquefied hydrogen receiving terminal.** The terminal is built for Hydrogen Energy Supply-chain Technology Research Association (HySTRA) for a demonstration project of transporting liquefied hydrogen from Australia to Japan.

### **Pakistan gets Geographical Indicator tag for its Basmati rice**

- **Pakistan has received the Geographical Indicator (GI) tag for its Basmati,** paving the way for creating a local registry for the particular strain of rice and making a case in the international market, as the country fights a case in the EU against India's move to get Basmati rice registered as its product.
- **A GI is a tag on products** that have a specific geographical origin and possess certain qualities due to that origin and are safeguarded by legalities such as by the World Intellectual Property Organisation.
- **India's Basmati zone includes Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and (western) Uttar Pradesh.** Punjab and Haryana accounted for 40 per cent each of India's Basmati exports while the remaining 20 per cent came from other states.

**Basmati is a variety of long, slender-grained aromatic rice which is traditionally grown in India and Pakistan. According to the Indian Government agency APEDA, a rice variety is eligible to be called Basmati if it has a minimum average precooked milled rice length of 6.61 mm and average precooked milled rice breadth of up to 2 mm, among other parameters.**

### **State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, other leaders of Myanmar ruling party arrested**

- **State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and other senior leaders from the ruling party of Myanmar National League for Democracy (NLD) have been detained.** Aung San Suu Kyi took over as the head of the civilian government in 2015 after a long period of military rule in Myanmar.
- **The National Elections held on Nov.8 2020 saw a massive victory for NLD with the military supported Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) performing poorly.** However, USDP challenged the outcome alleging mismanagement and lack of transparency. It called for re-election.

- **The military ouster of Aung San Suu Kyi's government in Myanmar was "inevitable", army Chief General Min Aung Hlaing said, as Washington formally designated the takeover as a coup. In Washington, the State Department said it had assessed that "Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of (Myanmar's) ruling party, and Win Myint, the duly elected head of government, were deposed in a military coup." The designation means the US cannot assist the Myanmar government, though any impact will be mainly symbolic as almost all assistance goes to non-governmental entities. The military was already under US sanctions over its brutal campaign against the Rohingya minority.**

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

### **China's first Hualong One nuclear reactor starts commercial operation**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Myanmar military announces new State Administrative Council**

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

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

- **Denmark approved a plan to build the world's first energy island in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to cover the electricity needs of 3 million European households.**



- **The artificial island**, which in its initial phase will be the **size of 18 football fields**, will **be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines** and will supply both power to households and green hydrogen for use in shipping, aviation, industry and heavy transport.
- The move came as the European Union unveiled plans to transform its electricity system to rely mostly on renewable energy within **a decade and increase its offshore wind energy capacity 25-fold by 2050**.

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

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

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

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

### **India, Afghanistan sign MoU to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul**

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

### **US and Russia to extend New START Treaty by 5 years**

- **US and Russia to extend the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty) by five years. The United States and Russia have extended a crucial nuclear arms control treaty until 2026, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said.**
- **The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or New START is the last nuclear treaty between the two countries and was set to expire Feb. 5, 2021.** Renewing the agreement was one of the first national security challenges facing President Joe Biden's administration.
- **Signed in 2010 by Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev of Russia, the agreement placed the lowest limits in decades on American and Russian deployed nuclear warheads, and the land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers that deliver them.**
- **The five-year extension comes less than 24 hours after the U.S. criticized the nearly three-year prison sentence handed to Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, along with other members of the Group of Seven, or G-7 — the informal group of seven large industrialized countries including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.**

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

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

- **Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the first female and first African head of the beleaguered World Trade Organization (WTO), saying a stronger WTO would be vital for the global coronavirus recovery.**



- The WTO called a virtual special general council meeting at which member states **officially selected the former Nigerian finance minister and World Bank veteran as the global trade body's new director-general. She will take up her post on March 1 and her term, which is renewable, will run until August 31, 2025.**

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

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

### **UK is building the world's first airport for flying cars**

- **The Air-One facility** will be **open for just one month**, and is **collaboration between government agencies, private-sector businesses and the aviation industry**.
- It has been **developed by Urban Air Port, with the involvement of the Urban Air Mobility Division of Hyundai Motor Group and Coventry City Council**.
- **The pop-up airport is being built as a proof of concept of a zero-emissions hub for future modes of travel**. Electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) vehicles are being suggested as a low-carbon way to ease congestion as people travel between urban centres.
- **"Cars need roads. Trains need rails. Planes need airports. eVTOLs will need Urban Air Ports," said Ricky Sandhu, founder and executive chairman of Urban Air Port. "Flying cars used to be a futuristic flight of fancy. Air-One will bring clean urban air transport to the masses and unleash a new airborne world of zero emission mobility."**

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

### **Pakistan to remain on FATF 'greylist'**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### **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.**

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

### **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. This year, Afghanistan was named the unhappiest place in the world, followed by South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

### 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.

### UAE selects first Arab woman for astronaut training

- The United Arab Emirates has selected the first Arab woman to train as an astronaut, as the Gulf country rapidly expands into the space sector to diversify its economy.
- Emirati national Nora al-Matrooshi, a 27-year-old mechanical engineering graduate currently working at Abu Dhabi’s National Petroleum Construction Company, will join Nasa’s 2021 Astronaut Candidate Class in the United States.

### Indian Army participated in Multinational Military Exercise ‘Shantir Ogroshena-2021’ in Bangladesh

- Indian Army has participated in Multinational Military Exercise namely SHANTIR OGROSHENA -2021 in Bangladesh. The nine days exercise is being started on the 4<sup>th</sup> of this month to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangladesh Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and mark glorious 50 years of liberation.
- Indian Army contingent comprising 30 personnel from the Dogra Regiment is being participated in the exercise along with contingents of Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh Armies.
- The theme of the exercise is Robust Peace Keeping Operations. Military observers from the USA, UK, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore will also be in attendance throughout the exercise.

### Dubai unveils world’s first electric fire engine

- The General Directorate of the Dubai Civil Defence (DCD) inaugurated the first electric firefighting vehicle of its kind in the Middle East and the second in the world.
- The vehicle was introduced during the Custom Show Emirates, which will run at the Dubai World Trade Centre until April 10. The first-of-its-kind electric truck was manufactured by Rosenbauer, an Austrian company. The announcement of the new firefighting truck took place at the Custom Show Emirates.

### Vietnamese Thieu lychee granted certificate of geographical indication in Japan

- For the first time, Thieu lychee grown in Luc Ngan District in the Northern Province of Bac Giang has been granted a certificate of geographical indication from Japanese authority offering opportunity for export and consumption of the fruit in the world markets.
- Lychee is the fourth fruit from Vietnam that has successfully made an inroad into the Japanese market, following dragon fruit, mango and banana.
- Thieu lychee has been already granted geographical protection in six countries - China, Laos, Cambodia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Australia. The product has been exported to many countries worldwide.

## New Zealand introduces climate change law for financial firms in world first

- **New Zealand** has become the first country to introduce a law that will require banks, insurers and investment managers to report the impacts of climate change on their business, minister for climate change James Shaw said.
- **All banks with total assets of more than NZ\$1 billion (\$703 million)**, insurers with more than NZ\$1 billion in total assets under management, and all equity and debt issuers listed on the country's stock exchange will have to make disclosures.
- **Around 200 of the country's biggest companies and several foreign firms that meet the NZ\$1 billion threshold** will come under the legislation. Disclosures will be required for financial years beginning next year once the law is passed, **meaning that the first reports will be made by companies in 2023.**

New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Wellington is the capital city. Jacinda Ardern is the current New Zealand Prime Minister. The New Zealand dollar is the official currency and legal tender of New Zealand

## Cuba gets new leader as last Castro officially retires

- **Cuba marked the end of an era with the official transfer of power from the Castro clan, in charge for six decades, to the communist country's first civilian leader, Miguel Diaz-Canel.** The transition, while hugely symbolic, is unlikely to result in dramatic policy shifts in the one-party system that **Diaz-Canel has vowed to safeguard.**
- **"The most revolutionary thing within the Revolution is to always defend the party,** in the same way that the party should be the greatest defender of the Revolution," he said.
- From retirement, Castro would give "direction and alert to any error or deficiency, ready to confront imperialism as he first did with his rifle," said the new leader. **Already Cuba's president since 2018, Diaz-Canel has now also taken the most senior position of first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC).**
- The pre-determined power change at a four-day PCC congress in Havana, **marks a watershed for the country of 11.2 million people, many of whom have not known a leader who was not a Castro.**
- **Fidel Castro, still revered as the country's father and savior, led the country from 1959 to 2006,** when he fell ill and his brother took over.

Cuba is located in the northern Caribbean where the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean meet. Havana is the largest city and capital. In Cuba, until 1 January 2021, there were two currencies, both called peso. One is the "Cuban peso" (CUP) and the other is the Cuban convertible peso. On 10 December 2020, it was announced that CUCs will start to be withdrawn from circulation from 1 January 2021, leaving the CUP as the only currency in circulation, pegged at US\$1 = 24 CUP.

## Saudi Arabia to join 'Net Zero Producers Forum' on climate change

- **Saudi Arabia will join the United States, Canada, Norway, and Qatar in forming 'Net Zero Producers Forum' for oil and gas producers to discuss how they can support the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change.**
- Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest crude exporter, will be part of the new platform, which will discuss ways to achieve net zero carbon emission targets to limit global warming. In the past, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said the **kingdom aims to reduce its carbon emissions by generating 50% of the country's energy from renewables by 2030.**
- **US President Joe Biden unveiled plans to cut emissions by 50%-52% from 2005 levels** at the start of a two-day climate summit kicked off on Earth Day and attended virtually by leaders of 40 countries.

## Italy launches first ever mega food park in India

- **Italy has launched its first-ever mega food park project in India, at Fanidhar in the Mehsana district of Gujarat.** The project aims to create synergy between agriculture and industry of the two countries and **focuses on the research and development of new and more efficient technologies in the sector.**
- With this **Italy also aims to explore the great opportunities offered by the Indian market. This is the first Italian-Indian food park project,** an initiative in the food-processing field, which serves as a pillar of the partnership between India and Italy.

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

### **Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan resigns to enable snap election**

- **Armenia's Prime Minister has resigned a step necessary to hold snap parliamentary elections in June.** Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced the June 20 elections last month **to try to resolve political tensions that arose after last year's defeat in a war with Azerbaijan.**
- **Under a cease-fire signed by Pashinyan, Armenia ceded large swaths of territory in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan** that had been **under the control of ethnic Armenian forces since the end of a separatist war in 1994.**

**The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is an ethnic and territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, inhabited mostly by ethnic Armenians, and seven surrounding districts, inhabited mostly by Azerbaijanis until their expulsion during the First Nagorno-Karabakh War, which are de facto controlled by the self-declared Republic of Artsakh, but are internationally recognized as de jure part of Azerbaijan.** A four-day escalation in April 2016 became the **deadliest ceasefire violation until the 2020 conflict.** The fighting stopped with a ceasefire agreement on November 10, 2020, by which **most of the territories lost by Azerbaijan during the First Nagorno-Karabakh war were returned to Azerbaijan.** 44 days of fighting ended on November 10, with a peace deal brokered by Russia.

### **European Parliament ratifies post-Brexit European Union-United Kingdom trade deal**

- **The European Parliament has ratified the post-Brexit European Union-United Kingdom trade deal** - a key move to ensure that tariff-and quota-free trade continues. **The Trade and Co-operation Agreement, TCA, has been operating provisionally since January.** Members of European Parliament voted in favour by 660 votes to 5, while 32 abstained.
- **Despite the TCA, Brexit tensions remain, including a French threat of “reprisals” against the UK over new fishing restrictions.** Additionally, under a separate protocol, Northern Ireland remains de facto part of the EU's single market. **It means that the goods arriving in Northern Ireland from Britain will have to undergo EU checks.**
- **Additionally, TCA only covers EU-UK trade in goods, but not services. The UK economy is dominated by services - sectors such as banking, insurance, advertising and legal advice.** Among the areas not covered by the deal are foreign policy, financial services and student exchanges.

**Brexit (“British exit”) was the withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) at 23:00 31 January 2020 GMT (00:00 CET).** **The UK is the first and so far only country to formally leave the EU,** after 47 years of having been a member state of the EU and its predecessor, the European Communities (EC), since 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. **Under Boris Johnson's government, the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020;** trade deal negotiations continued to within days of the scheduled end of the transition period on 31 December 2020.

### **Cuba's Communist Party chooses Miguel Díaz-Canel as leader**

- **Miguel Diaz-Canel was never a guerrilla fighter and was for only a few years, like all Cubans of his generation, a soldier. He rose peacefully and diligently through the approved channels. And he isn't named Castro.**
- **Cuba's Communist Party congress — as expected — chose Mr. Díaz-Canel to be its leader, adding that crucial post to the title of president he assumed in 2018.** In 2009, a year after Raul Castro formally replaced Fidel as Cuba's President, Mr. Díaz-Canel became minister of higher education. In 2012 he rose to one of Cuba's vice presidencies and soon thereafter was named first Vice President.

**Cuba is located in the northern Caribbean where the Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean meet.** Havana is the largest city and capital. **In Cuba, until 1 January 2021, there were two currencies, both called peso.** One is the “Cuban peso” (CUP) and the other is the Cuban convertible peso. **On 10 December 2020, it was announced that CUCs will start to be withdrawn from circulation from 1 January 2021, leaving the CUP as the only currency in circulation, pegged at US\$1 = 24 CUP.**

## UK PM announces new £1 billion trade deal with India

- **UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson** announced **new UK-India trade and investment worth £1 billion**, including an **investment of £240 million by the Serum Institute of India (SII) for its vaccine business in Britain**, ahead of a virtual summit with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.
- **The virtual summit witnessed the roll-out of a new “Enhanced Trade Partnership”** that is expected to pave the way for a future free trade agreement. More than 6,500 new jobs are expected to be created in the UK by the new bilateral trade and investment announced by Johnson.

## Sadiq Khan wins second term as London Mayor

- **Sadiq Khan** has been **re-elected as Mayor of London for a second term** after **beating his closest rival with a vote share of 55.2 per cent versus 44.8 per cent** in an election that was closer than expected.
- **Labour Party candidate Sadiq Khan, defeated his Conservative Party rival, Shaun Bailey**, after winning a total of 1,206,034 votes as against 977,601 when both first and second preference vote. **As the incumbent Labour Party candidate, Khan was the runaway favorite to win the contest and keep his job but Shaun Bailey ran a closer-than-expected second**, narrowing the gap in the polls in the final days of the contest.

## New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Tops Fortune’s List of Greatest Leaders, SII CEO Adar Poonawalla in Top 10

- **New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern topped Fortune’s list of the world’s 50 greatest leaders and CEO of Serum Institute of India, Adar Poonawalla also made it to the list.** Ardern has been lauded for her efficiency in tackling and controlling the spread of Coronavirus in New Zealand.
- **While Poonawalla, the only Indian on the list was praised for his exemplary role in manufacturing and supplying almost 90 % of Covid-19 vaccines across India.**
- **Other celebrated leaders who made to the list included- Paypal CEO Daniel H Schulman, NBA Rescuers, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention’s John Nkengasong and Ping An’s Jessica Tan among others.**

**Fortune** is an **American multinational business magazine headquartered in New York City.** It is **published by Fortune Media Group Holdings, owned by Thai businessman Chatchaval Jiaravanon.** The publication was **founded by Henry Luce in 1929.** The magazine competes with Forbes and Bloomberg Businessweek in the national business magazine category and distinguishes itself with long, in-depth feature articles. **The magazine regularly publishes ranked lists, including the Fortune 500, a ranking of companies by revenue that it has published annually since 1955.** The magazine is also known for its annual Fortune Investor’s Guide.

## Israel- Hamas ceasefire comes into force in Gaza Strip

- **A Ceasefire came into force in Gaza Strip, bringing halt to fiercest fighting between Israel and Hamas.** The **Egypt brokered ceasefire** began early this morning, ending the 11-day fighting.
- **The Security Cabinet of Israel had approved a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip,** bringing a potentially tenuous halt to the most aggressive fight in decades. The Cabinet said it had **voted unanimously in favour of a mutual and unconditional truce proposed by mediator Egypt.**
- **Both Israel and Hamas have claimed victory in the conflict.** US President Joe Biden later hailed the cease-fire saying he sees a genuine opportunity toward the larger goal of building a lasting peace.

**Gaza Strip is a self-governing Palestinian territory on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Egypt on the southwest for 11 kilometers (6.8 mi) and Israel on the east and north along a 51 km (32 mi) border. Gaza and the West Bank are claimed by the de jure sovereign State of Palestine. The territories of Gaza and the West Bank are separated from each other by Israeli territory.**

## Italy hosts a virtual G20 summit on the global health crisis

- **The 2021 G20 Rome summit is the upcoming sixteenth meeting of Group of Twenty (G20), scheduled to take place in Rome, the capital city of Italy, on 30–31 October 2021.**
- **Leaders of the world’s largest economies will adopt a declaration recommending voluntary actions to boost COVID-19 vaccine production,** snubbing a push from the United States and other nations on patent waivers, the final text shows.



### **In a first, Pakistan to host World Environment Day 2021**

- **World Environment Day is hosted by different countries around the globe.** It has a participation of over 143 countries annually. Pakistan, on June 5, will host World Environment Day 2021 in partnership with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Prime Minister Imran Khan will virtually preside over the World Environment Conference in Islamabad on the night of June 4.
- **This will be the first time in history that the country will be officially hosting the day.** Only four global personalities, including Prime Minister Imran Khan, have been selected to participate in the World Environment Conference this year.
- **Pakistan will make some important announcements related to initiatives that it has taken to mitigate the effects of climate change, including the 10 Billion Trees Tsunami Programmed, Clean Green Pakistan, the Electric Vehicle Policy, National Parks, and Green jobs.**
- **This year's theme for WED is 'Ecosystem Restoration'.** Ecosystem restoration means preventing, halting, and reversing the damage caused by human activities and finally healing our nature. This WED will see the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

### **India third-largest military spender after the US and China**

- **India remains the third biggest military spender in the world, though far behind the US that spends more than 10 times and China almost four times its defence budget.** The five biggest spenders in 2020, which together accounted for 62 per cent of global military expenditure, were the United States, China, India, Russia and the United Kingdom.” stated the SIPRI annual report, which was released. The US spent \$778 billion, more than thrice the next biggest spender China, which spent \$252 billion. India's expenditure of \$72.9 billion.
- **The total global military expenditure rose to \$1,981 billion in 2020, an increase of 2.6% in real terms from 2019 despite the global gross domestic product contracting by 4.4% mainly due to the Covid pandemic's economic impact,** says the latest data released by global think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

### **India ranked 49<sup>th</sup> Russia introduces world's first animal specific COVID-19 vaccine, begins inoculating animals**

- **Russia has registered the world's first animal-specific vaccine.** Vaccinations at veterinary clinics have now begun in some locations, according to Rosselkhoz nadzor, Russia's veterinary regulator.
- **The vaccine, known as Carnivak-Cov, is also being sought by the EU, Argentina, South Korea, and Japan.** Dogs, cats, apes, and mink are among the species found to be contaminated with the deadly infectious viral disease. Russia already has three Covid-19 vaccines for humans, the most well-known of which is Sputnik V. Moscow has also given emergency approval to two others, EpiVacCorona and CoviVac.

**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.**

### **NATO conducts massive war games**

- **As tensions with Russia simmer, thousands of NATO troops, several warships and dozens of aircraft are taking part in military exercises stretching across the Atlantic, through Europe and into the Black Sea region.**
- **The war games, dubbed Steadfast Defender 21, are aimed at simulating the 30-nation military organization's response to an attack on any one of its members.** It will test NATO's ability to deploy troops from America and keep supply lines open.
- **Russia's decision last month to send thousands of troops to the border area with Ukraine has raised concern at the military alliance, which launched one of its biggest ever defense spending initiatives after Russian troops annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014.**

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance between 30 European and North American countries. NATO constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its independent member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party. NATO's Headquarters are located in Haren, Brussels, Belgium, while the headquarters of Allied Command Operations is near Mons, Belgium. Jens Stoltenberg is a Norwegian politician who has served as the 13<sup>th</sup> Secretary General of NATO since 2014.**

### **Global terror funding watchdog FATF retains Pakistan on “enhanced follow-up” list**

- **Asia Pacific Group (APG) of global terror funding watchdog - FATF has retained Pakistan on “enhanced follow-up” list. Islamabad will continue to report back to Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering on the country’s progress to strengthen its implementation of anti-money laundering and combating financing terror measures.**
- **Pakistan was put on the grey list by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in June 2018 and the country has been struggling to come out of it. The Asia Pacific Group (APG) is a regional affiliate of the FATF.**
- **The second Follow-Up Report on Mutual Evaluation of Pakistan released by the APG also downgraded the country on one criterion. Pakistan is now compliant or largely compliant with 31 out of 40 FATF recommendations.**

### **Maldives Abdulla Shahid elected as President for 76<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly**

- **Foreign minister of the Maldives Abdulla Shahid was elected as the President of the 76<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly with an overwhelming three-fourth majority, with 143 in favour, 48 against and no abstentions and no invalid votes.**
- **The post of the UN General Assembly President rotated annually among regional groupings. The 76<sup>th</sup> session (2021-22) is the turn of the Asia-Pacific group and this is the first time Maldives will be occupying the office of the PGA, said one of the two people mentioned above.**
- **Both Maldives and Afghanistan have friendly ties with India. India’s vote however went to the Maldives since New Delhi had committed support to Shahid prior to Rassoul entering the fray, the first person cited above said. The PGA’s office is the highest office in the UN System, and reflects the collective goodwill of the 193 Member States of the UN.**
- **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit was an Indian diplomat and politician who was elected as the first female President of the United Nations General Assembly.**

**United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), serving as the main deliberative, policy-making, and representative organ of the UN. Its powers, composition, functions, and procedures are set out in Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter. The UNGA is responsible for the UN budget, appointing the non-permanent members to the Security Council, appointing the Secretary-General of the United Nations, receiving reports from other parts of the UN system, and making recommendations through resolutions. It also establishes numerous subsidiary organs to advance or assist in its broad mandate. The UNGA is the only UN organ wherein all member states have equal representation. It’s headquartered in New York City.**

**Maldives is a small archipelagic state in South Asia situated in the Indian Ocean. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is the current President of the Maldives. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives.**

### **UNSC grants Antonio Guterres second term as chief**

- **The United Nations Security Council voted to give Secretary General Antonio Guterres a second term, with conflict resolution set to top his agenda at the world body’s helm. The 72-year-old former Prime Minister of Portugal has held the office since 2017.**
- **Around 10 other people also sought the position, but they were not formal candidates because none of the 193 UN member states endorsed them. During a brief closed door session the Security Council voted unanimously to recommend that the General Assembly give Guterres another term, said the council’s current president, Estonian ambassador Sven Jurgenson.**

### **Russia formally exits from Open Skies pact with US after Putin’s approval**

- **In a landmark move, President Vladimir Putin signed a legislation which signalled the formal exit of Russia from the 1992 Open Skies arms control treaty.**

- The Open Skies treaty which had come into effect on January 1, 2002, allowed both countries to conduct unarmed surveillance flights over military installations in a bid to ensure friendly terms between the two world powers.
- There were 34 other countries who had signed the deal and were put forward by George H. W. Bush's administration in 1992 and was signed in Helsinki by former US secretary of state James Baker along with 23 countries.

### El Salvador becomes first country in world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender

- El Salvador has become the first country in the world to adopt bitcoin as legal tender. President Nayib Bukele proposed the bill to embrace cryptocurrency.
- Mr Bukele has touted the use of Bitcoin for its potential to help Salvadorans living abroad send remittances back home. The cryptocurrency has been adopted in the Central American country despite concern about the potential impact on its programme with the International Monetary Fund.

El Salvador is a country in Central America. El Salvador's capital and largest city is San Salvador. Nayib Armando Bukele Ortiz is the current President of El Salvador. US Dollar is the currency of it.

### Nigerian Government creates its account on Indian microblogging platform 'Koo'

- The Nigerian Government created its account on Indian microblogging platform Koo, days after the African country banned Twitter. Nigeria on June 5 banned Twitter after the social media company the President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet threatening to punish secessionists. He referred to the 1967-70 Nigerian Civil War and to treating "those misbehaving today" in "the language they will understand".
- The Indian alternative to Twitter, Koo, took up the opportunity and announced its plans to expand into the African country. Kooindia is available in Nigeria. Koo was among the first social media firms to announce compliance with the new rules. Koo co-founder Aprameya Radhakrishna welcomed the government onboard the platform.

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. Nigeria borders Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west; its southern coast is on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria is a federal republic comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, where the capital, Abuja, is located. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. The Naira is the currency of Nigeria.

### Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett vows to unite nation

- Israel's new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has vowed to unite the nation frayed by four elections in two years of political stalemate.
- Mr Benjamin Netanyahu – Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister - will remain head of the right-wing Likud Party and become Leader of the Opposition. The new coalition was approved in a razor-thin vote of 60-59, with one abstention.
- He succeeds Benjamin Netanyahu, who was forced out of office after 12 years. Mr Bennett, the leader of Yamina party, will be Prime Minister until September 2023 as part of a power-sharing deal. He will then hand power over to Yair Lapid, head of the centrist Yesh Atid party, for a further two years. Mr Netanyahu – Israel's longest-serving Prime Minister - will remain head of the right-wing Likud party and become leader of the opposition.

Israel is a country in Western Asia. It is situated on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and the northern shore of the Red Sea, and shares borders with Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan on the east, the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to the east and west, respectively, and Egypt to the southwest. Tel Aviv is the economic and technological center of the country, while its seat of government and proclaimed capital is Jerusalem, although international recognition of the state's sovereignty over the city is limited. Naftali Bennett is an Israeli politician serving as the 13<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of Israel since 13 June 2021.

### Global Peace Index 2021: the world's most and least peaceful countries ranked

- Iceland has been top of the Global Peace Index for 13 years while Afghanistan has languished at the bottom for the last four. Afghanistan is the world's least peaceful country for the fourth consecutive year, but it was Burkina Faso which recorded the largest deterioration in the Global Peace Index 2021.
- Yemen is now the least peaceful country in the MENA region, a position that had been held by Syria since 2014. Yemen has recorded declines in peacefulness every year since 2008.



## INSTC connects Europe with India for first time

- **The western wing of the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, which offers a shorter **multimodal transportation route between Europe and India** compared with the Suez Canal way, **became operational with a Finnish logistics company dispatching a consignment from Finland to India.**
- Despatched, the consignment will move through Russia, Azerbaijan and Iran and reach Mumbai in about 22 days compared with 40 days taken via the Suez Canal and western European ports, ET has learnt.

**The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a 7,200-km-long [multi-mode network of ship, rail, and road route for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. The route primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail and road. The objective of the corridor is to increase trade connectivity between major cities such as Mumbai, Moscow, Tehran, Baku, Bandar Abbas, Astrakhan, Bandar Anzali, etc.**

## South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma sentenced to 15 months in jail

- **South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma has been sentenced to 15 months in jail by the country's highest court.** He has been given five days to hand himself in to police. **Failing that, the Police Minister must order his arrest.**
- **The sentence comes after the Constitutional Court found him guilty of contempt for defying its order to appear at an inquiry into corruption** while he was president. Mr Zuma's time in power, which ended in 2018, was dogged by graft allegations. Businessmen were accused of conspiring with politicians to influence the decision-making process. The former President made one appearance at the inquiry into what has become known as state capture but then refused to appear subsequently.

**South Africa is a country in Southern Africa. With over 59 million people, it is the world's 23<sup>rd</sup>-most populous nation and South Africa has three capital cities: executive Pretoria, judicial Bloemfontein and legislative Cape Town. The rand is the official currency of South Africa. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa is a South African politician serving as President of South Africa since 2018.**

## China to celebrate 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of founding of its ruling Communist Party

- **On, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) marked its centenary** amid much fanfare and glitzy shows even as the rest of the world will continue fighting the pandemic that is claiming lives and livelihoods.
- **India, additionally, has been engaged in a bitter border standoff with China** in the eastern Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since April 2020. So far, both sides have been **able to disengage only in the Pangong Tso region.**

## Grenada named world's first 'culinary capital'

- **The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) has named Grenada and its sister islands of Carriacou and Petite Martinique as the world's first Culinary Capital.**
- According to the WFTA, **the Culinary Capitals program aims to focus on culinary cultures around the world as the tourism sector starts to recover after the long pandemic-induced hiatus.**
- **The WFTA, which is regarded as the world's leading authority on food and beverage tourism,** said the integration of spices into the nation's cuisine has resulted in an overall robust and flavourful Grenada food profile.

**Grenada is an island country in the West Indies in the Caribbean Sea at the southern end of the Grenadines island chain. Its capital is St. George's. Grenada is also known as the "Island of Spice" due to its production of nutmeg and mace crops. The Eastern Caribbean dollar is the currency of it. Keith Claudius Issac Mitchell is the current Prime Minister of Grenada. Dame Cecile La Grenade has been serving as the governor-general of Grenada.**

## Nepal's Supreme Court reinstates Parliament; Orders Sher Bahadur Deuba to be appointed as new Prime Minister

- **Nepal's Supreme Court reinstated the Parliament** and also **ordered that Sher Bahadur Deuba be appointed as the Prime Minister.** The parliament was **dissolved by caretaker Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli** in May.



- **Nepal was thrown into a constitutional crisis after Mr. Oli lost a confidence vote on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May. Nepal's President Bidya Devi Bhandari on the advice of Mr. Oli dissolved the parliament for a second time this year before opposition leader Mr. Deuba could stake their claim.**
- **A five-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana issued the verdict stating that President Bidya Devi Bhandari's decision to dissolve the lower house upon a recommendation of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli was an unconstitutional act, delivering a major blow to the veteran Communist leader who was preparing for snap polls.**
- **President Bidya Devi Bhandari had dissolved the 275-member lower house for the second time in five months on May 22 at the recommendation of Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19.**

**The political crisis in Nepal started in May 2018 when KP Sharma Oli-led CPN-UML & National Communist Party got merged and decided to serve as joint chairmen of ruling party. CPN-UML was the largest party in House of Representatives but increasing disputes within the ruling part resulted in split again. Following the split, in December 2020, Prachanda-led party expelled Prime Minister Oli as co-Chair and Prachanda was made the first Chairman. After that, house of representatives was dissolved in 2020 which was reinstated again following the order of supreme court in 2021. But, recently on May 10, Prime Minister Oli has lost the vote of confidence and the house stands dissolved.**

### **Africa becomes first continent to complete collection of digital land use data**

- **Africa has become the first continent in the world to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data under the Africa Open DEAL initiative. DEAL stands for Data for the Environment, Agriculture and Land Initiative.**
- **The data collection and analysis initiative is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the African Union Commission (AUC). "Africa Open DEAL initiative has made Africa the first continent to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data". There are around seven billion trees outside forests in Africa, the continent-wide survey revealed. It also disclosed more arable lands in Africa than before.**

**Africa is the world's second-largest and second-most populous continent, after Asia in both cases. It contains 54 fully recognised sovereign states (countries), eight territories and two de facto independent states with limited or no recognition. Algeria is Africa's largest country by area, and Nigeria is its largest by population. African nations cooperate through the establishment of the African Union, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa. According to paleoanthropologists (One who studies the human fossils scientifically), Africa is the oldest territory of the Earth where the human species evolved. It is the only continent to extend from the northern temperate zone to the southern temperate zone. The Dark Continent was named so because it was unexplored by the Europeans and because of the savagery that was expected to be found on the continent. The term Dark Continent was used to refer to Africa by a British explorer Henry M. Stanley in his book.**

### **Liverpool stripped of World Heritage status**

- **Liverpool has been stripped of its World Heritage status after a UN committee found developments threatened the value of the city's waterfront. The decision was made following a secret ballot by the UNESCO Committee at a meeting in China.**
- **UNESCO had previously warned that the developments, including the new Everton FC stadium, had resulted in a "serious deterioration" of the historic site. The city was awarded the much-coveted title in 2004 in recognition of its historical and architectural impact, joining places including the Taj Mahal, Egypt's Pyramids and Canterbury Cathedral.**

### **Germany to become first major economy to phase out coal, nuclear power**

- **German lawmakers have finalized the country's long-awaited phase-out of coal as an energy source, backing a plan that environmental groups say isn't ambitious enough and free marketeers criticise as a waste of taxpayers' money.**
- **Bills approved by both houses of parliament envision shutting down the last coal-fired power plant by 2038 and spending some 40 billion euros (\$45 billion) to help affected regions cope with the transition.**
- **The plan is part of Germany's 'energy transition' - an effort to wean Europe's biggest economy off planet-warming fossil fuels and generate all of the country's considerable energy needs from renewable sources. Achieving that goal is made harder than in comparable countries such as France and Britain because of Germany's existing commitment to also phase out nuclear power by the end of 2022.**

- The days of coal are numbered in Germany, Environment Minister Svenja Schulze said. **Germany is the first industrialized country that leaves behind both nuclear energy and coal. Greenpeace and other environmental groups have staged vocal protests against the plan**, including by dropping a banner down the front of the Reichstag building Friday.
- They argue that the **government's road map won't reduce Germany's greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to meet the targets set out in the Paris climate accord.**

**Germany is a country in Central Europe. It is the second-most populous country in Europe after Russia, and the most populous member state of the European Union. The nation's capital and largest city is Berlin, and its financial centre is Frankfurt; the largest urban area is the Ruhr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier is serving as the President of Germany since 19 March 2017. Euro is the official currency of it.**

### **'Great Spas Of Europe' Added To World Heritage List**

- A group of major European spa towns was added to the highly prized World Heritage list for their **"exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon" from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s**, UNESCO said.
- This includes Baden bei Wien in Austria, Spa in Belgium, Karlovy Vary, Frantiskovy Lazne and Mariánské Lázně in the Czech Republic, Vichy in France, Bad Ems, Baden-Baden and Bad Kissingen in Germany, Montecatini Terme in Italy, and Bath in the United Kingdom.

### **Greece's first underwater museum opens ancient world to dive tourists**

- The museum beneath the waves at Peristera, a rocky outcrop off the island of Alonissos, **opened in 2020, though the site has been largely mothballed until now due to COVID-19 restrictions. As Greece opens up its vital tourism industry**, the site offers an example of a new and more sustainable source of revenue.
- **Emerging from the crystal-clear turquoise waters of the Aegean Sea, Hans-Juergen Fercher has just returned from his fourth dive to where mounds of 2,500-year-old wine pots mark the site of an ancient shipwreck – and Greece's first underwater museum.**

**Greece is a country located in Southeast Europe. Athens is its largest and capital city, followed by Thessaloniki. Situated on the southern tip of the Balkans, Greece is located at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Kyriakos Mitsotakis is current Prime Minister of Greece since 8 July 2019. Katerina Sakellaropoulou is the current President of Greece since 13 March 2020. Euro is its official currency.**

### **Rock Art Hima Added As Saudi Arabia's Sixth UNESCO World Heritage Site**

- A sixth site in Saudi Arabia has been added to UNESCO's world heritage list, the UN organisation announced. **Hima, in the Gulf state's southwest, is home to one of the largest rock art complexes in the world.**
- **"New site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List: cultural area of Hima, Saudi Arabia. Hima features more than 34 separate sites including rock inscriptions and wells along the route of the ancient Arabian caravans.**

### **Mary Simon sworn in as Canada's 30<sup>th</sup> Governor-General**

- Social activist, journalist and former diplomat **Mary Simon was sworn in as Canada's 30<sup>th</sup> Governor-General making her the first person of indigenous heritage to hold the post. Mary Simon served as Canada's ambassador to Denmark from 1999 to 2001 while also serving as ambassador for circumpolar affairs from 1994 to 2003, during which she negotiated the creation of the Arctic Council.**
- **She was sworn in by the chief justice of the Canadian Supreme Court at a ceremony in the chamber of Senate of Canada in the country's capital, Ottawa, in the first-ever socially distanced event, with limited attendance due to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

**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 23<sup>rd</sup> and current Prime Minister of Canada since 2015.**

## Madrid's iconic Paseo del Prado, Buen Retiro Park win World Heritage status

- The historic Paseo del Prado boulevard and Retiro Park of Madrid, in Spain, has been granted the status of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The wide tree-lined Paseo del Prado, in the centre of the Spanish capital, is home to prominent buildings such as the Prado Museum. The iconic Retiro Park, just adjoining with Paseo del Prado, is a 125-hectare green space, and one of the most visited attractions in Madrid's history.
- With this announcement the total number of World Heritage Sites in Spain goes up to 49 which is the third-highest globally only after Italy and China. Before the addition of these two sites none of the countries heritage sites were located Madrid, the capital of Spain. Buen Retiro Park is a green refuge with a total area 118 hectares located just at the centre of the capital city. The Paseo del Prado Boulevard features six museums, the famous Plaza de Cibeles square and the famous Fuente de Cibeles fountain.

## China gets new World Heritage Site with links to Hinduism, Tamil Nadu

- As many as 22 sites in the southeastern Chinese city of Quanzhou including a temple with links to Hinduism were included to the Unesco World Heritage List. China has been promoting the coastal province Fujian and the city of Quanzhou as an important ancient sea trade zone where multicultural communities including from Tamil Nadu mingled millennia ago.
- Key sites in the listing include Kaiyuan Temple with Hindu and Buddhist links, Luoyang Bridge, Qingjing Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in China and an archaeological site of an old maritime trade office, said to have been first established in 1087.

## Myanmar army chief appoints himself Prime Minister, promises election by 2023

- The State Administration Council of Myanmar has been reformed as 'Caretaker government of Myanmar' headed by the Chief of the Myanmar military Senior General Min Aung Hlaing as the Prime Minister. Gen. Hlaing also pledged to hold elections by 2023.
- Min Aung Hlaing's announcement came six months to the day after the Tatmadaw's February 1 seizure of power from a civilian government that won a resounding victory of elections in November. The military claims the elections were marred by fraud, and officially annulled the results last week.

Myanmar's capital city is Naypyidaw and kyat is the currency of Myanmar. Sittwe Port is a deep-water port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal. Situated at the mouth of the Kaladan River, the USD 120 Million port is being financed by India as a part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, collaboration between India and Myanmar. Min Aung Hlaing is a Burmese army general who has been serving as Chairman of the State Administration Council of Myanmar since February 2021, a position which makes him the country's de facto leader.

## UN's Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change releases its 6<sup>th</sup> assessment report

- The United Nation's Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, of which India is one of the 195 members, has released its sixth assessment report. IPCC released its Sixth Assessment Report "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science".
- The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the sixth in a series of reports intended to assess scientific, technical, and socio-economic information concerning climate change. This report evaluates the physical science of climate change – looking at the past, present, and future climate. It reveals how human-caused emissions are altering our planet and what that means for our collective future.
- United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres called the IPCC's assessment, the most detailed review of climate science ever conducted and code red for humanity. Countries should also end all new fossil fuel exploration and production and shift fossil fuel subsidies into renewable energy.
- In its first major scientific assessment since 2014, the IPCC said that Earth's average surface temperature is projected to hit 1.5 or 1.6 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels at around 2030, no matter what trajectory greenhouse gas emissions take in the meantime.
- Carbon dioxide has been and will continue to be the dominant cause of global warming under all greenhouse gas emissions scenarios. It says, if greenhouse gas emissions are halved by 2030 and net zero by 2050, global warming can be stopped.



## Malaysia's PM Muhyiddin Yassin resigns as political crisis escalates

- **Malaysia's Muhyiddin Yassin has stepped down as Prime Minister after months of political turmoil culminated in the loss of his majority.** Mr. Muhyiddin's departure comes less than 18 months after taking office and will plunge the country into a fresh crisis amid a worsening pandemic.
- Political leaders have already begun to jostle for the top post, with **his deputy Ismail Sabri rallying support to succeed Mr. Muhyiddin and keep the government intact.**
- **The Southeast Asian nation's king appointed Muhyiddin as the caretaker prime minister** until a new one is found, but did not set a timeline. **King Al-Sultan Abdullah ruled out elections because of the pandemic**, saying he would invoke his constitutional power to appoint a prime minister he believes is likely to command a majority.

Malaysia is a country in Southeast Asia. The federal constitutional monarchy consists of thirteen states and three federal territories, separated by the South China Sea into two regions, Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo's East Malaysia. Peninsular Malaysia shares a land and maritime border with Thailand and maritime borders with Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia. East Malaysia shares land and maritime borders with Brunei and Indonesia and a maritime border with the Philippines and Vietnam. Kuala Lumpur is the national capital. The Malaysian ringgit is the currency of Malaysia.

## Afghan President Ashraf Ghani resigns & leaves country

- **Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has left the country.** On 15 August 2021, as the Taliban took control of the country in the fall of Kabul, **he fled the country by air landing in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. He then went to the United Arab Emirates which granted him political asylum.** During his escape, the Afghanistan embassy in Tajikistan asked Interpol to apprehend him for embezzling public funds. **He was legally succeeded by the vice president, Amrullah Saleh.**

Ashraf Ghani is an Afghan politician, academic, and economist who served as President of Afghanistan between September 2014 and 15 August 2021. Ghani came in fourth in the 2009 presidential election. Ghani ran in the 2014 presidential election securing less votes than rival Abdullah Abdullah in the first round, but winning a majority in the second round. Following political chaos, the United States intervened to form a unity government. Ghani was re-elected when the final results of the 2019 presidential elections were announced after a long delay on 18 February 2020. He was sworn in as president for a second five-year term on 9 March 2020.

## Vietnam opens its first consul office in India in Bengaluru

- **The Ambassador of Vietnam to India Phan Sanh Chau announced opening its first-ever consul office in India in Bengaluru and the appointment of N S Srinivasa Murthy as the Honorary Consul of Vietnam for Bengaluru. The consul was opened to improve the investment ties between Vietnam and India, which are friends historically as the country has a Buddhist population of about 80 per cent.**

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

## Hunger spreading in Afghanistan: UN food agency

- **The UN food agency says it has been able to negotiate access with the Taliban to distribute aid in one provincial capital in Afghanistan** but hasn't been able to resume food deliveries to three other provincial capitals it supplies. **The World Food Program, headquartered in Rome, has said that some 14 million people are facing severe hunger in the nation of some 39 million.**
- This is the second drought in three years that country is facing. This year, drought is combined with fighting. Draught had afflicted Afghanistan much before the Taliban takeover of the country on August 15. **As per WFP estimates, around 2 million children are malnourished in Afghanistan.**

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization. It largely focuses on hunger and food security. WFP is also the largest provider of school meals. It was founded in 1961 with its headquarter in Rome. It also has offices across 80 countries. The World Food Programme was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for its efforts to provide food assistance in areas of conflict, and to prevent the use of food as a weapon of war and conflict.



## China amended the country's family planning rules to allow couples to have three children

- **China's legislature formally amended the country's family planning rules to allow couples to have three children**, also announcing a number of policy measures aimed at boosting declining birth rates.
- **The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, or Parliament, passed an amendment to the Population and Family Planning Law**, state media said, adding that the amended law calls on the authorities to "take supportive measures, including those in finances, taxes, insurance, education, housing and employment, to reduce families' burdens as well as the cost of raising and educating children."
- **The ruling Communist Party announced in May that couples in China would for the first time be allowed to have a third child** in a relaxation of family planning rules. **In 2016, a "two-child policy" was introduced that largely failed to boost birth rates.**
- The changes come in the **wake of China's once-in-ten year population census that recorded rapidly declining birth rates over the past decade.** The National Bureau of Statistics said on May 11 that **12 million babies were born last year, the lowest number since 1961.** The census said China's population was **1.41 billion in 2020, an increase of 72 million since the last census in 2010.**

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. China and India are the two neighbouring countries in Asia. India shares 3488 km of border with China that runs along the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh. The Belt and Road Initiative, known in Chinese and formerly in English as One Belt One Road or OBOR for short, is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.

## Afghanistan name changed to "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan"

- **Taliban Leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Declared Afghanistan's New President and Afghanistan name changed to "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan."** That was the name of the country under the Taliban government ousted by US-led forces after the September 11, 2001, attacks.
- **The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is an Islamic state governed by the Taliban that is the de facto current government of Afghanistan since 2021, has also ruled the country from 1996 to 2001.** Between 1996 and 2001, it controlled approximately 90% of the country as an insurgency, whereas remaining regions in the northeast were held by the Northern Alliance, which maintained broad international recognition as a continuation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.
- **The Islamic Emirate was overthrown by the Northern Alliance on 17 December 2001, which had been bolstered by the ISAF coalition established after a U.S.-led invasion of the country two months prior.** The Taliban has continued to refer to itself as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in official communications from 2001 until 2021.

Durand Line, **boundary established in the Hindu Kush in 1893 running through the tribal lands between Afghanistan and British India**, marking their respective spheres of influence; in modern times it has marked the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. **India shares land borders with seven sovereign nations. The state's Ministry of Home Affairs also recognizes a 106 kilometres (66 mi) land border with Afghanistan, as part of its claim of the Kashmir region (Durand Line).**

## Malaysia's Ismail Sabri Yaakob sworn in as new PM

- **Malaysia's Ismail Sabri Yaakob was sworn in as the country's ninth prime minister capping a week of political turmoil that forced his predecessor to resign** amid a continuing health emergency because of the raging COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ismail Sabri is a veteran politician from the country's longest-ruling party United Malays National Organisation (UMNO),** but analysts say he is a stop-gap leader with little chance of ending long-running turbulence.

## India, Maldives to sign pact on Greater Male Connectivity Project

- **India and Maldives will sign a contract on the mega Greater Male Connectivity project (GMCP), the largest infrastructure project in the country.** The project, funded by an Indian grant of \$100 m and a Line of Credit of \$400 m is also the biggest new development project by India in its neighbourhood in recent years.
- **The project, the largest in the Indian Ocean atoll nation, will begin with the signing of the contract between the Maldives government and Indian infrastructure company AFCONS in Male.** Called the Greater Male Connectivity Project, it will involve the construction of a 6.74 km long bridge and causeway link connecting the capital Male with the adjoining islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

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

## Dushanbe Declaration: Afghanistan, Terrorism Top Agenda in SCO Summit

- **The annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held in Tajikistan’s capital city of Dushanbe in a hybrid format and was attended by the leaders of the SCO member states, observer states, secretary general of the SCO, executive director of the SCO regional anti-terrorist structure, Turkmenistan president and some invited guests.**
- **The meeting was chaired by H.E. Emomali Rahmon, the President of Tajikistan. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed the Summit via video-link. At Dushanbe, India was represented by External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar.**
- **The Member States reaffirm the special role of the SCO Regional Anti- Terrorist Structure in the joint fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism** in order to ensure regional security and will build the capacity of competent authorities in these areas of cooperation. Priority will be given to the implementation of the 2022- 2024 Programme of Cooperation of SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism.
- **The SCO member states expressed their support for Afghanistan as an independent, neutral, united, democratic and peaceful state, free of terrorism, war and drugs.** Member States believe that it is critical to have an inclusive government in Afghanistan, with representatives from all ethnic, religious and political groups of Afghan society.

The SCO was formed on the basis of the agreements on confidence-building in the military sphere and on mutual reduction of armed forces in the border area signed by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People’s Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan in Shanghai and Moscow in 1996 and 1997 respectively. The need to make efforts to transform the Shanghai Five into a regional structure of multilateral cooperation in various spheres was noted in the Dushanbe Declaration of 4 July 2000 by the heads of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People’s Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan. The original five members, with the exclusion of Uzbekistan, were previously members of the Shanghai Five group, founded on 26 April 1996. Since then, the organization has expanded its membership to eight states when India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan. SCO is headquartered in Shanghai.

## PM Narendra Modi attended first in-person Quad summit to be hosted by Biden

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the first-ever in-person summit of Quad leaders in US on September 24 along with President Joe Biden, Australia PM Scott Morrison and Japan PM Yoshihide Suga.** The meeting comes amid mounting global concerns over China’s growing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **This was PM’s first in-person with President Biden after he took over the office as President of the United States. Prime Ministers Narendra Modi further joined Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japan’s PM Yoshihide Suga for the first in-person Quad meeting along with President Biden.**
- **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.**

**The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad) is a strategic dialogue between the United States, India, Japan and Australia that is maintained by talks between member countries. The dialogue was initiated in 2007 by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, with the support of U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, Australian Prime Minister John Howard, and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The dialogue was paralleled by joint military exercises of an unprecedented scale, titled Exercise Malabar. The diplomatic and military arrangement was widely viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power, and the Chinese government responded to the Quadrilateral dialogue by issuing formal diplomatic protests to its members**

### **US, UK and Australia announce formation of AUKUS- a new trilateral defence & security partnership for Indo-Pacific**

- **US, UK and Australia have announced the formation of AUKUS - a new trilateral security partnership for Indo-Pacific region. It was announced in a joint address by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison and US President Joe Biden with a vision for a safer and more secure Indo-Pacific.**
- **The first project of AUKUS will be able to help Australia acquire a nuclear-powered conventionally-armed submarine fleet. The three heads of state reaffirmed their intention to continue to work with their allies and groupings in tandem with AUKUS, with the Quad being mentioned by Morrison and Biden.**
- **The Quad leaders - Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Japanese PM Yoshihide Suga, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and US President Joe Biden will meet at the White House on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month. Both Quad and now AUKUS are more than likely to be seen as counterweights to China's growing muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.**

### **India beats Germany, UK and Turkey to bag IAEA external auditor job**

- **India has been elected as the external auditor to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a prestigious institution that promotes peaceful use of nuclear energy, for a period of six years from 2022 to 2027 after beating Germany and the United Kingdom among other countries. India's comptroller and auditor General GC Murmu was selected as the external auditor of IAEA and the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said his candidature received majority support of the IAEA general conference.**

### **Taliban Unveils New Cabinet, Includes US-Designated Terrorist**

- **Mullah Mohammad Hassan, the little-known head of the Taliban's leadership council, was named as acting prime minister. Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the main public face of the group who signed a peace deal with the Trump administration last year, will serve as his deputy.**
- **Sirajuddin Haqqani, leader of the Haqqani Network who is on the FBI's most wanted list for terrorism, will serve as acting interior minister. That may complicate any moves by the U.S. to cooperate with the Taliban, particularly as President Joe Biden urges the Taliban to cut all ties with terrorist groups.**
- **At least 14 members of the Taliban's hardline interim government in Kabul are on the UN Security Council's terrorism blacklist, including acting Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund and his both deputies, raising concern of the international community over the composition of the new Cabinet in Afghanistan.**
- **Specially designated global terrorist Sirajuddin Haqqani, who carries a reward of \$10-million US bounty on his head, is the acting interior minister. Acting Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob, acting Foreign Minister Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi and his deputy Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai are all listed under the UNSC 1988 Sanctions Committee.**
- **The 33-member interim Cabinet includes four of the five leaders known as the "Taliban Five" who were once held at the Guantanamo Bay prison. They include Mullah Mohammad Fazil (deputy defence minister), Khairullah Khairkhwa (information and culture minister), Mullah Noorullah Noori (Borders and Tribal Affairs minister) and Mullah Abdul Haq Wasiq (Director of Intelligence). The fifth member of the group, Mohammad Nabi Omari, has been appointed as governor of eastern Khost Province recently. Acting Prime Minister Mullah Hasan has been described as "a close associate" of Taliban founder Mullah Omar in a UN sanctions report. Both Deputy Prime Ministers — Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi, who is involved in drug trafficking, are also on the UN blacklist.**



**Afghanistan is a landlocked country at the crossroads of Central and South Asia. It is bordered by Pakistan and India to the east and south, Iran to the west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north, and China to the northeast. It is inhabited by 31.4 million people as of 2020, with 4.6 million living in the capital and largest city, Kabul. Hibatullah Akhundzada is the third Supreme Commander of the Taliban and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Abdul Ghani Baradar is the First Vice Emir of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The afghani is the currency of it. The twenty-year-long war between the government and the Taliban reached a climax with the 2021 Taliban offensive and the resulting fall of Kabul which returned the Taliban to power.**

## **C. Business & Economy**

### **HCL's Roshni tops list of India's richest women**

- **HCL Technologies chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, with a net worth of Rs. 54,850 crore, tops the Kotak Wealth Hurun list of India's wealthiest women.**
- **Trailing her is Biocon's Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw with a net worth of Rs. 36,600 crore. In the third spot is Leena Gandhi Tewari of the Mumbai-headquartered pharmaceuticals firm USV, with a net worth of Rs. 21,340 crore.**
- **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is the wealthiest self-made woman on the list, which features eight dollar billionaires and 38 women with wealth of Rs 1,000 crore and above. The listing is based on the net worth of women as on September 30, 2020 and focuses exclusively on women who play an active role in their family business, entrepreneurs and professionals.**

### **2021 World Economic Forum to be held in Singapore instead of Davos**

- **The World Economic Forum announced that it will convene its annual meeting this summer in Singapore instead of the iconic Swiss ski town of Davos "in light of the current situation with regards to COVID-19 cases."**
- **The high-profile gathering, which attracts leaders across government, finance and economics, will be held in the Asian financial hub May 13-16 and return to Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, in 2022, the World Economic Forum said. The meeting will also include a virtual component to allow greater participation, according to Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry.**

### **Invest India wins United Nations Investment Promotion Award for 2020**

- **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has declared 'Invest India' as winner of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award.**
- **The award ceremony took place at UNCTAD Headquarters in Geneva. The Award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements of the World's best-practice investment promotion agencies.**
- **The evaluation was based on UNCTAD's assessment of work undertaken by 180 national Investment Promotion Agencies across the world.**

### **Roshni Nadar Malhotra, first woman to head a listed Indian IT firm, among Forbes most powerful women list 2020**

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and HCL Enterprise CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes 2020.**
- **US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and HCL Enterprise CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra have also been named in the list which has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel for the 10<sup>th</sup> year in a row.**
- **The women on the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Forbes Power List hail from 30 countries and were born across four generations that includes 10 heads of state, 38 CEOs and five entertainers.**
- **Sitharaman is ranked 41<sup>st</sup> on the list, Nadar Malhotra comes in at the 55<sup>th</sup> spot, Mazumdar-Shaw – described as India's richest self-made woman – is ranked 68<sup>th</sup> and chairwoman of Landmark Group Renuka Jagtiani is ranked 98<sup>th</sup>. Roshni Nadar Malhotra is also the youngest woman to achieve this feat in Forbes Technology category.**



**Forbes is an American business magazine owned by Integrated Whale Media Investments and the Forbes family.** Published eight times a year, it features original articles on finance, industry, investing, and marketing topics. Forbes also reports on related subjects such as technology, communications, science, politics, and law. Its **headquarters is located in Jersey City, New Jersey. B. C. Forbes, a financial columnist for the Hearst papers, and his partner Walter Drey, the general manager of the Magazine of Wall Street, founded Forbes magazine on September 15, 1917.**

### **Ola to set up world's largest factory in Tamil Nadu**

- **Ola has signed an agreement with the Tamil Nadu government to set up its first electric scooter factory worth Rs 2,400 crore in the state.** "In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Ola's factory is an important step in making an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

**Ola Cabs is an Indian ridesharing company offering services** that include vehicle for hire and food delivery. The company is **based in Bangalore, Karnataka, India** and was **developed by ANI Technologies Pvt. Ltd.** As of October 2019, Ola was valued at about \$6.5 billion. A variety of venture capitalists including Softbank have large stakes in the company. **Bhavish Aggarwal is an Indian entrepreneur and co-founder of Ola Cabs.**

### **India drops two ranks in Human Development Index**

- **India dropped two spots to 131 out of 189 nations on the Human Development Index (HDI) this year,** according to the Human Development Report (HDR) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). **The country ranked 129 (out of 189) countries on the 2019 HDI.** India's HDI value for 2019 stood at 0.645 which put it in the medium human development category.
- However, if the Index were adjusted to assess the planetary pressures caused by each nation's development, **India would move up eight places in the ranking.**
- **Norway topped the index, followed by Ireland, Switzerland, Hong Kong, and Iceland, the report showed.** Pakistan (154), Nepal (142), Bangladesh (133), Indian, and Bhutan (129) stand among countries with medium human development, the report stated.
- It further stated that under the Paris Agreement, **India pledged to reduce the emission intensity of its GDP from the 2005 level by 33-35 per cent by 2030 and to obtain 40 per cent of electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.**
- According to the report published by UNDP, **India's gross national income per capita fell to \$6,681 in 2019 from \$6,829 in 2018 on purchasing power parity (PPP) basis.**

**Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistic composite index of life expectancy, education (Literacy Rate, Gross Enrollment Ratio at different levels and Net Attendance Ratio), and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development. A country scores a higher HDI when the lifespan is higher, the education level is higher, and the gross national income GNI (PPP) per capita is higher. It was developed by Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq and was further used to measure a country's development by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report Office.**

### **India's first maritime arbitration centre to be set up in GIFT City**

- On the lines of maritime hubs like Singapore, Hong Kong and China, **India's first arbitration and mediation centre focusing on disputes related to the shipping sector will come up in the Gujarat International Finance-Tech (GIFT) City in Gandhinagar.**
- **The Gujarat Mediation and Arbitration Centre (GMAC) being built under the aegis of Gujarat Maritime University and is a key part of the Gujarat Maritime Cluster** that will be housed in GIFT City. The centre is expected to start early next year and a space of nearly 8,000 sq ft space has been taken at the GIFT City.

### **World's biggest, hybrid renewable energy park in Gujarat**

- On December 15, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi traveled to Kutch to lay the foundation stone for a 30,000 MW (megawatt) hybrid renewable energy park** close to the Indo-Pak border in Kutch district. The project is **billed as the largest of its kind in the world. The first of its kind energy project is spread over 72,600 hectares of waste land.**

## Ease of doing business: China's rank drops as World Bank corrects 'irregularities', India unaffected

- **The World Bank has corrected two recent reports ranking countries on ease of doing business, based on an internal audit following officials' allegations of "undue pressure" by management to alter ratings, Bloomberg reported.**
- **The bank's changes to its ease of doing business reports for 2018 and 2020 has resulted in change of scores for four countries, including China, which also saw its ranking slip in one of the reports due to the correction.**
- **India's ranking, however, has remained unaffected. India has ascended 17 notches, ranking at 63<sup>rd</sup> position in the report published by The World Bank.** The 'Make in India' campaign started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi focused on attracting foreign investment, boosted the private sector (especially manufacturing) and enhanced India's overall competitiveness.
- In a review of its report published on December 16, World Bank said that in the 2018 report released in October 2017, **China should have been shown dropping seven places to 85<sup>th</sup> rather than remaining 78<sup>th</sup>, as in the 2017 report.**

## Indian entrepreneur named among 'Young Champions of the Earth' winners by UN environment agency

- A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur, **Vidyut Mohan is among the seven winners of the prestigious "Young Champions of the Earth" 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency** to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help **solve some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.**
- Vidyut Mohan, an engineer, is the co-founder of "Takachar", **a social enterprise enabling farmers to prevent open burning of their waste farm residues and earn extra income by converting them into value-added chemicals like activated carbon on-site,** UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a statement

## Ratan Tata honoured with 'Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace' award

- **Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata was honoured by the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce for promoting innovation that supports sustainability and peace in the region, including with the Palestinians.** The chairman emeritus of the Tata group was **honoured with 'Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace' award** during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce's international chapter in Dubai on December 21.
- The virtual ceremony was attended by senior officials from Israel, India and UAE. The 82-year-old industrialist and philanthropist **Ratan Tata is the recipient of two of India's highest civilian awards - Padma Vibhushan and Padma Bhushan.**

## DigiBoxx: India's first indigenous digital asset management platform launched

- **CEO of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant virtually launched India's first digital asset management platform DigiBoxx. DigiBoxx has free 2 GB storage space and the file shared stays for 45 days, the company said in a statement.**
- **Kant also signed up for an account, making him the first user of an Indian digital file storage, sharing and management SaaS product** that provides storage options for business as well as individual users.

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.**

## Gujarat: State to host India's first Lithium refinery

- **India's first Lithium refinery which will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material will be set up in Gujarat.**
- **Manikaran Power Limited, one of the country's largest power trading and renewable energy company will be investing over Rs 1,000 crore to set up this refinery.**

**Reserves of lithium, a rare metal critical to build batteries for electric vehicles, have been discovered in Mandya, 100 km from Bengaluru - a find that should boost local manufacturing of EV batteries. Researchers at the Atomic Minerals Directorate, a unit of India's Atomic Energy Commission, have estimated lithium reserves of 14,100 tonnes in a small patch of land surveyed in the Southern Karnataka district, according to a paper to be published in the forthcoming issue of journal Current Science.**

### **Lloyds Bank is first in the world to connect to Swift GPI Instant**

- **Lloyds Bank in the UK has become the first bank to switch on Swift GPI Instant, a new service from the Brussels-based interbank co-operative that enables consumers and businesses to send tracked payments in seconds across borders.**
- **The GPI Instant service works by connecting Swift GPI, the high-speed cross-border rails with real-time domestic infrastructure, in this case the UK's Faster Payments.**

**Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), legally S.W.I.F.T. SCRL, provides a network that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in a secure, standardized and reliable environment. In 2019, SWIFT announces the results of a global trial to integrate SWIFT GPI Instant, the co-operative's cross-border instant payments service, into Singapore's domestic instant payment service, Fast And Secure Transfers (FAST).**

### **RTGS is available 24x7 and became operational from December 14, says RBI**

- **The Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) money transfer facility has become operational 24/7 from December 14, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said.**
- **The minimum amount to be remitted through RTGS is Rs 2,00,000 with no upper or maximum ceiling.** "This comes within a year of operationalising NEFT 24x7 by the Reserve Bank," the RBI earlier said in a statement. **The settlement system began its operations on March 26, 2004 with a soft launch involving four banks,** presently handles 6.35 lakh transactions daily for a value of Rs 4.17 lakh crore across 237 participant banks.
- **India has become one of the few countries in the world to operate its RTGS system round the clock throughout the year.** The move is aimed at giving a push to digital payments in the country.
- **Earlier, RTGS transaction facility was available for customers from 7 am to 6 pm on all working days of a week, except the second and fourth Saturdays.** The RTGS system is meant for high-value transactions, on a real-time basis. **The minimum amount that can be remitted through RTGS is 2 lakh rupees and there is no maximum limit.**
- **The beneficiary bank receives instructions to transfer the funds immediately after the transaction is carried out, and the transfer is instantaneous. On the other hand, NEFT handles fund transfers up to 2 lakh rupees and such transactions are usually executed in a couple of hours.**
- **RBI has also decided to increase the limit for contactless card transactions to 5,000 rupees from 2,000 at Point of Sale (PoS) terminals from January 1 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and feedback from stakeholders.**

**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.**

### **India Post Payments Bank launches digital payment services 'DakPay'**

- **The Department of Posts and the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) unveiled a new digital payment application "DakPay" as part of its ongoing efforts to provide digital financial inclusion at the last mile across the country.**

### **Indian Oil Corporation launches India's first 100 Octane petrol**

- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) launched India's first 100 Octane petrol, helping India join a select league of nations globally that have such superior quality fuel.**

- **Launching the fuel**, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel **Dharmendra Pradhan** said **XP100 premium petrol** will **initially be available at select outlet of IOC in 10 cities** – Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Agra, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad.
- **The fuel is manufactured at IOC's Mathura refinery in Uttar Pradesh** and supplied at select petrol pumps. Octane ratings are measures of fuel stability. **It is a measure of a fuel's ability to avoid knock.**
- **Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL)** had recently **launched Octane 99** and now **IOC has come to the market with XP100**. Previously, the **nation leapfrogged from BS-IV (Euro-IV) emission compliant fuel to BS-VI from April 1 this year.**

An octane rating, or octane number, is a standard measure of the performance of an engine or aviation gasoline. The higher the octane number, the more compression the fuel can withstand before detonating. In broad terms, fuels with a higher octane rating are used in high-performance gasoline engines that require higher compression ratios. **In contrast, fuels with lower octane numbers (but higher cetane numbers) are ideal for diesel engines, because diesel engines (also referred to as compression-ignition engines) do not compress the fuel, but rather compress only air and then inject fuel into the air which was heated by compression.**

**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.**

### **Shantanu Narayen, Ajay Banga named among Fortune Businessperson of the Year 2020**

- **Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen and Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga** have been named by **Fortune** among the **Businessperson of the Year 2020**, a list topped by **Tesla CEO Elon Musk**.
- **The Fortune 2020 Businessperson of the Year is Musk for a second time.** The publication said in a year dominated by crisis and uncertainty, other leaders also stood out and “achieved the remarkable”.
- **On Narayen, ranked 8<sup>th</sup> on the list, Fortune** said under his leadership, the 38-year-old provider of design and publishing tools has continued to evolve into a massive subscription-based business.

**Fortune** is an **American multinational business magazine headquartered in New York City.** It is **published by Fortune Media Group Holdings, owned by Thai businessman Chatchaval Jiaravanon.** The publication was **founded by Henry Luce in 1929.**

### **Sonalika becomes first player to launch electric tractor in India**

- **International Tractors Ltd-owned Sonalika Tractors** has become the **first manufacturer to commercially launch a field-ready electric tractor for the domestic market** with an introductory price of Rs. 5.99 lakh (ex-showroom).
- **Calling its new product Tiger Electric, Sonalika's electric tractor** is **equipped with a 11 kW induction motor and a 25.5 kWh lithium ion battery**, which can be fully charged in 10 hours using a regular home charging socket and in just 4 hours using a fast charging system. Positioned for agricultural applications usually made by an under-35 hp tractor, **the company said Tiger Electric could run for 8 hours while running a 2-ton trolley on a single charge.**

### **Uday Shankar takes over as FICCI President**

- **Media executive Uday Shankar** has taken over as **Ficci President for 2020-2021.** Currently, Shankar is President, The Walt Disney Company APAC & Chairman, Star & Disney India.
- He has **taken over from Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group.**

**Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** is the **largest and oldest apex business organisation in India.** FICCI is established in 1927, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi by **GD Birla and Purushottam Das Thakurdas.** It is **headquartered in the national capital New Delhi.**

### **Sandeep Kataria is Bata's global head; first Indian to hold top post**

- International footwear company **Bata Brands** has **elevated Sandeep Kataria to the post of global CEO.** **Kataria is the first Indian to hold this prestigious role and will be taking over Alexis Nasard,** who has been leading the 126-year old company for almost five years now.



### Reliance, BP start gas production from Asia's deepest project

- Reliance Industries and its partner BP plc of the U.K. announced the commencement of natural gas production from Asia's deepest project, putting the second wave of discoveries in the KG-D6 block onstream.
- The production from ultra-deepwater R-Cluster, the first of the three deepsea projects Reliance-BP are developing in the eastern offshore block, started production. Located at a water depth of greater than 2,000 metres, it is the deepest offshore gas field in Asia.
- Reliance and BP are developing three deepwater gas projects in block KG D6 – R Cluster, Satellites Cluster and MJ – which together are expected to meet about 15 per cent of India's gas demand by 2023".

### UNDP and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond

- Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) recently signed an MoU with UNDP India to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond (SIB).
- "As part of this unique investment tool, the PCMC administration will only have to bear the costs of a public welfare project associated with the bond if the pre-defined project targets are fulfilled".
- This type of bond lays down outcome-based targets to be achieved at the start of the contract. This feature allows for tracking the progress of the outcomes, thus ensuring transparency for investors. This mechanism also ensures that funds are used effectively and efficiently towards the project. This SIB will support the PCMC in improving healthcare services for its citizens, especially with respect to the pandemic while incurring minimum investment risks".

### World's First Physical Cryptocurrency Bank Opens in India

- The cryptocurrency market is flourishing in India despite the regulatory uncertainty. Unicas, a joint venture between the financial services companies Cahsaa and United Multistate Credit Cooperative Society, announced the launch of the world's first physical branch of a cryptocurrency bank in the Indian city of Jaipur.
- Cashaa mentioned that Unicas is the first crypto bank in the world to open a physical branch. Unicas users will be able to execute transactions in cryptocurrencies and local currency (INR) through the same account.
- The newly launched crypto bank provides the same services as a traditional bank, including buying and selling of cryptocurrency assets and issuance of loans against digital assets.

A blockchain originally block chain, is a growing list of records, called blocks that are linked using cryptography. Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data (generally represented as a Merkle tree). The blockchain was invented by a person (or group of people) using the name Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008 to serve as the public transaction ledger of the cryptocurrency bitcoin.

### IFSCA becomes member of International Organization of Securities Commissions

- International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has become an associate member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions. The International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) works closely with the G20 and the Financial Stability Board in setting up the standards for strengthening the securities markets.
- The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in the country has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in Gandhinagar. To regulate such institutions, the government established IFSCA on April 27 last year with its head office in Gandhinagar.

### Adani Green bags 600 mw wind-solar hybrid power unit project

- Adani Green Energy's subsidiary has received the contract to build a 600 megawatts (mw) wind-solar hybrid power project, taking the company's total project portfolio to 14,795 mw. "The LOA of 600 mw wind-solar hybrid power project is in line with our ambition to achieve renewable power capacity of 25 gigawatts by 2025 and becoming the world's largest renewable power company by 2030.
- With the new award, Adani Green has built a renewable energy portfolio of 14,795 MW, of which 2,950 MW of operational capacity and 11,845 MW of projects under implementation. The Indian firm has set a goal of having 25 GW of renewables capacity in operation by 2025.

### **IDBI Bank sells 23% stake in its life insurance arm to Ageas for Rs 507 cr**

- **Private lender IDBI Bank has concluded the sale of 23 per cent stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company Ltd (IFLI) to Ageas Insurance International NV for a consideration of Rs 507 crore. With this, Ageas will hold 49 per cent stake in insurance venture, which is now being rebranded as Ageas Federal Life Insurance Company.**

### **United Nations' FAO names 4 Asian tea cultivation sites as Globally Important Agri Heritage Systems**

- **The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has recognised four tea producing sites spanning across three countries as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).**
- **All the four sites chosen by the FAO are in the Asian continent and include two tea production sites from China- the world's largest producer- and one each from Korea and Japan, according to the information provided on the FAO website.**
- **However, India which is the second largest producer of the beverage and one of the biggest exporters of tea to several countries could not find a place in the chosen GIAHS sites.**

### **Tesla opens world's largest Supercharger station in China's Shanghai**

- **Tesla is adding more and more electric vehicles to the roads and to support its ecosystem, the EV maker has also been quickly expanding its Supercharger network. The company has now opened the world's largest Supercharger station in China's Shanghai with 72 charging stalls.**

### **Goods and Services Tax collections for December 2020 rose to Rs 1.15 lakh crore, the highest ever since the implementation of the nationwide tax**

- **Goods and Services Tax collections for December rose to Rs 1.15 lakh crore, the highest ever since the implementation of the nationwide tax from 1 July 2017, the Finance Ministry said in a statement on January 1, 2021. The GST Compensation Act, 2017 guaranteed states that they would be compensated for any loss of revenue in the first five years of GST implementation, until 2022, using a cess levied on sin and luxury goods.**
- **The GST revenues during December 2020 have been the highest since the introduction of GST and it is the first time that it has crossed Rs. 1.15 lakh crore. The highest GST collection till now was Rs. 1,13,866 crore in the month of April 2019. The December 2020 revenues are significantly higher than last month's revenues of Rs. 1,04,963 crore. This is the highest growth in monthly revenues since last 21 months. This has been due to combined effect of the rapid economic recovery post pandemic and the nation-wide drive against GST evaders and fake bills along with many systemic changes introduced recently, which have led to improved compliance.**

**Goods and Services Tax (GST) is an indirect tax (or consumption tax) used in India on the supply of goods and services. It is a comprehensive, multistage, destination-based tax: comprehensive because it has subsumed almost all the indirect taxes except a few state taxes. Goods and services are divided into five different tax slabs for collection of tax - 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%. However, petroleum products, alcoholic drinks, and electricity are not taxed under GST and instead are taxed separately by the individual state governments, as per the previous tax system. The tax came into effect from 1 July 2017 through the implementation of the One Hundred and First Amendment of the Constitution of India by the Indian government. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is governed by the GST Council. Article 279 (1) of the amended Indian Constitution states that the GST Council has to be constituted by the President within 60 days of the commencement of the Article 279A. The Chairman of the GST council is Union Finance Minister.**

### **Jeff Bezos's \$10 bn donation to fight climate change tops list of richest charitable gifts in 2020**

- **The world's richest person made the single-largest charitable contribution in 2020, according to The Chronicle of Philanthropy's annual list of top donations, a \$10 billion gift that is intended to help fight climate change.**
- **Amazon's founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos, whose "real-time" worth Forbes magazine estimates at roughly \$188 billion, used the contribution to launch his Bezos Earth Fund. The fund, which supports non-profits involved in the climate crisis, has paid out \$790 million to 16 groups so far.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- **India's largest multi-model logistic park will come up at Virochan Nagar near Sanand in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat.** A Memorandum of Understanding-MoU was signed between the Gujarat Government and Adani Port and SEZ Ltd. in the presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar.
- According to the details shared by the State Government, the proposed 1,450-acre park will also have a **dedicated air cargo complex with 4.6-kilometre long runway to handle even large sized cargo aircraft.**
- It will **provide direct air, rail and road connectivity.** The park will have provision of **direct rail connectivity with a dedicated freight corridor which is part of the Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor.** The multi-model logistic park will be set up with an estimated investment of Rs 50,000 crore. It

## Mukesh Ambani earned Rs 90 crore per hour during pandemic: Oxfam report

- A recently released Oxfam report on income inequality indicated that it would take an **unskilled worker at least three years to earn what RIL chief Mukesh Ambani earned in a second during the coronavirus pandemic.**
- It would have taken 10,000 years for an **unskilled worker to make what Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) chairman Mukesh Ambani made in an hour during the coronavirus pandemic,** according to a recent Oxfam report.
- The report, titled ‘**Inequality Virus**’, added that it would **take an unskilled worker at least three years to earn what the RIL boss earned in a second during the pandemic.** According to the Oxfam report, Ambani earned Rs 90 crore per hour during the coronavirus pandemic.



- **In comparison, around 24 per cent of people in the country were earning Rs 3,000 per month during the pandemic. It also suggested that the wealth of Ambani alone would be enough to keep 40 crore informal workers out of poverty for at least five months.**

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

### **Mukesh Ambani is world's 11<sup>th</sup> richest billionaire**

- **Reliance Industries Ltd chairman Mukesh Ambani has moved up two spots to become the 11<sup>th</sup> richest person in the world, according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index.**
- **With a total net worth of \$79.2 billion (nearly Rs 5.78 lakh crore), Ambani is the only Indian to feature in the top 36 richest billionaires in the world.**

Here are the **top 10 billionaires of the world, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index:**

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Elon R Musk \$202 billion     | 6. Zhong Shanshan \$88.9 billion |
| 2. Jeff Bezos \$192 billion      | 7. Warren Buffett \$88.4 billion |
| 3. Bill Gates \$133 billion      | 8. Larry Page \$88.4 billion     |
| 4. Bernard Arnault \$112 billion | 9. Sergey Brin \$85.5 billion    |
| 5. Mark Zuckerberg \$104 billion | 10. Steve Ballmer \$81.6 billion |

### **World's First Physical Cryptocurrency Bank Opens in India**

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- **Cashaa mentioned that Unicas is the first crypto bank in the world to open a physical branch. Unicas users will be able to execute transactions in cryptocurrencies and local currency (INR) through the same account.**
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### **Soma Mondal takes over the reins of SAIL as its first woman chairperson**

- **Soma Mondal takes over the reins of state-run Steel Authority of India (SAIL) as its first woman chairperson, will have multiple tasks at hand.**
- **Paring the company's debt from the current level of around Rs 50,000 crore, improving operating margin & employee productivity and setting the journey right for targeted doubling capacity to 50 million tonne per annum (mtpa) in 10 years are likely to be among her priorities.**



**Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** is an **Indian state-owned steel making company based in New Delhi, India. It is a public sector undertaking, owned and operated by the Government of India with an annual turnover of INR 66,267 Crore for fiscal year 2018-19. Incorporated on 24 January 1974, SAIL has 68,742 employees (as of 01-Jun-2020). With an annual production of 16.30 million metric tons, SAIL is the 20<sup>th</sup> largest steel producer in the world and the largest in India. Smt Soma Mondal is the current Chairman of SAIL.**

### **Tesla CEO Elon Musk now world's wealthiest person**

- **Elon Musk**, the outspoken and envelope-pushing chief executive of Tesla, **overtook Amazon boss Jeff Bezos to become the world's wealthiest person with a net worth of more than \$185 billion.**
- **Mr. Musk is a major shareholder of the electric car company** and has benefited from Tesla's surging share price over the last year. **Increase in Tesla's share price pushed Musk past Jeff Bezos, who had been the richest person since 2017 and is currently worth about \$184 billion.**

**Tesla, Inc. (formerly Tesla Motors, Inc.) is an American electric vehicle and clean energy company based in Palo Alto, California.** Tesla's current products include electric cars, battery energy storage from home to grid scale, solar panels and solar roof tiles, as well as other related products and services. **Founded in July 2003 as Tesla Motors, the company's name is a tribute to inventor and electrical engineer Nikola Tesla. Elon Musk, who contributed most of the funding in the early days, has served as CEO since 2008.**

### **Tata Sons increases stake in AirAsia India to 83.67%**

- **AirAsia Group Berhad had executed a share purchase agreement with Tata Sons Private Ltd to sell 32.67% equity stake held by AirAsia Investment Ltd (AAIL) in AirAsia (India) Ltd (AAI) for \$37,660,000. With this the holding of Tatas in AirAsia India has increased from 51% to 83.67%.**
- **AirAsia Berhad is a Malaysian low-cost airline headquartered near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.** It is the largest airline in Malaysia by fleet size and destinations. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced **a collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to develop a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country.**
- **The lab is meant to provide access to quantum computing development environment for the developer, scientific and academic communities. Amazon will provide hosting with technical and programmatic support for the lab.** As an emerging field in technology, quantum computing has drawn interest from huge companies worldwide.

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

### **L&T completes India's first 3D printed building in Chennai**

- **L&T Construction, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Larsen & Toubro conglomerate, announced the completion of India's first 3D printed two-storey building, as claimed by the company.**
- The news is an achievement for the company, **for it validates the use of 3D printing in a multi-floor building. The announcement is also proof that the 3D printing technology can be used for construction purposes as well. The 3D printing technology in terms of construction can potentially meet the Indian standards of construction code, and regulatory requirements as well as provide operational benefits to the companies.**

**Larsen & Toubro Limited, commonly known as L&T, is an Indian technology, engineering, construction, manufacturing and financial services conglomerate, with global operations, headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. It was founded by two Danish engineers taking refuge in India. The company has business interests in basic and heavy engineering, construction, realty, manufacturing of capital goods, information technology, and financial services. Anil Manibhai Naik is the Group Chairman of Larsen & Toubro Limited.**

### **Airtel Announces 5G ready network; successfully demonstrates LIVE 5G service**

- In a major landmark, Telecom major **Bharti Airtel announced that it has become the India's first telecom operator to successfully demonstrate and orchestrate LIVE 5G service over a commercial network in Hyderabad city.**

- Using a first of its kind, dynamic spectrum sharing, Airtel seamlessly operated 5G and 4G concurrently within the same spectrum block. This demonstration has emphatically validated the 5G readiness of Airtel's network across all domains - Radio, Core and Transport.
- 5G or fifth generation is the latest upgrade in the long-term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks. 5G mainly works in 3 bands, namely low, mid and high frequency spectrum — all of which have their own uses as well as limitations. While the low band spectrum has shown great promise in terms of coverage and speed of internet and data exchange, the maximum speed is limited to 100 Mbps (Megabits per second). This means that while telcos can use and install it for commercial cellphone users who may not have specific demands for very high speed internet, the low band spectrum may not be optimal for specialised needs of the industry.

**Bharti Airtel Limited, also known as Airtel, is an Indian multinational telecommunications services company based in New Delhi, Delhi NCT. Airtel is a global telecommunications company with operations in 18 countries across South Asia and Africa. The company ranks amongst the top three mobile operators globally and its mobile network covers a population of over two billion people. Airtel is India's largest integrated telecom provider and the second largest mobile operator in Africa. Sunil Bharti Mittal is an Indian billionaire entrepreneur, philanthropist and the founder and chairperson of Bharti Enterprises.**

### **India's stock market now 7<sup>th</sup> biggest in the world as BSE m-cap surges to \$2.7 trillion**

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

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

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

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

**According to the data provided by the World Steel Association, the biggest steel producing country is currently China, which accounted for 53.3% of world steel production in 2019. India's crude steel production for 2020 was 99.6 Mt, down by 10.6% on 2019. Japan produced 83.2 Mt in 2020, down 16.2% on 2019. South Korea produced 67.1 Mt, down 6.0% on 2019.**

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

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

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

### **Jeff Bezos to step down as Amazon CEO**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

**Tesla, Inc. (formerly Tesla Motors, Inc.) is an American electric vehicle and clean energy company based in Palo Alto, California.** Tesla's current products include electric cars, battery energy storage from home to grid scale, solar panels and solar roof tiles, as well as other related products and services. **Founded in July 2003 as Tesla Motors, the company's name is a tribute to inventor and electrical engineer Nikola Tesla. Elon Musk, who contributed most of the funding in the early days, has served as CEO since 2008.**

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

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

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

## 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.**

## 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.

**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.**



## 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.

## WEF's gender gap index: India slips 28 places, ranks 140 among 156 countries

- India has slipped 28 places to rank 140<sup>th</sup> among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia.
- According to the report, India has closed 62.5 per cent of its gender gap till date. The country had ranked 112<sup>th</sup> among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.
- Noting that the decline also took place on the economic participation and opportunity subindex, albeit to a lesser extent, the report said India's gender gap on this dimension widened by 3 per cent this year, leading to a 32.6 per cent gap closed till date.

## IMF upgrades India's growth forecast to 12.5 percent in 2021 backed by recovery and vaccination drive

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has upgraded its growth projection for India to 12.5 per cent for Financial Year 2021-22. In its latest World Economic Outlook report, the IMF has pegged India's GDP to grow 1 per cent higher than its previous report published in January this year.
- The Washington-based International Financial Institution has projected a contraction of 8 percent in the growth in the last fiscal while it has forecasted a growth of 6.9 per cent in the next financial year beginning in 2022.
- IMF has also said that inflation will taper down to 4.9 per cent in the current financial year. The rollout of COVID-19 vaccines and vast sums of government aid will accelerate global economic growth to a record high this year in a powerful rebound from the pandemic recession, the International Monetary Fund said in its latest forecast.

## Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) pact

- India had "a crucial role" to play in helping the region build an inclusive architecture at a time of increasing global instability, Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said at the Raisina Dialogue, held virtually this year and hosted by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with India's Ministry of External Affairs. The theme for the 2021 Edition is "#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers and Out of Control".
- India withdrew from the RCEP largely because of concerns it would open it up to Chinese goods amid an already wide trade imbalance with China, and the failure of the agreement to adequately open up to services.
- India believes its concerns weren't adequately addressed. India has been raising the issue of market access along with a protected list of goods and services to shield the domestic economy. With China as a major economy in RCEP, cheap imports may come into India if it removes duties on goods, since we have a sizeable trade deficit with China. The experience of opening up of 74% of Indian market to ASEAN while richer countries like Indonesia opening only 50% of their economy to India also makes it sceptical about such pacts.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is essentially a China-led initiative for a regional trading bloc that will comprise of one third of the world's population and 29% of the world's GDP. A regional trading bloc is essentially a co-operative union where a group of countries agree to protect its member nations from imports of other non-members. The purpose of this trading partnership is to give preferential treatment for trade between the member countries either through lower tariffs, preferential market access, customs union or free trade in specific sectors. The RCEP came into force in November 2020 without India. The signatories of the agreement include 10 ASEAN countries – Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar and the Philippines and 5 key partners (China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand).

## Piyush Goyal chairs first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council

- **Trade minister Piyush Goyal chaired the first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council (NSAC) set up to advise the government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country.**
- In his inaugural address, Goyal said that this council shall **act as the guiding light for many budding startup entrepreneurs in India.** He said that this is the **first time in our nation's history where such a high-powered team of people from the private sector and the government have come together**, so that they take their own policy decisions.

## India's first cardless ATM facility launched

- **NCR Corporation, the maker of automated teller machines (ATMs), launched the first interoperable cardless cash-withdrawal (ICCW) solution in collaboration with City Union Bank.**
- **The system is based on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform.** The bank has upgraded its 1,500 ATMs with the facility which will be QR code-based.

**NCR Corporation**, previously known as **National Cash Register**, is an **American software, managed and professional services, consulting and technology company** that also **makes self-service kiosks, point-of-sale terminals, automated teller machines, check processing systems, and barcode scanners.** The company is **headquartered in Georgia, USA.**

## World Bank predicts India's real GDP growth for fiscal year 2021-22 to range from 7.5 to 12.5 per cent

- **The World Bank has raised Indian GDP growth prediction for 2021-22 fiscal to 10.1 per cent from 5.4 per cent projected in January 2021.**
- The international bank said, given the significant uncertainty amid Covid-19 effects on the economy, **the real India GDP growth could be in the range from 7.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent.**
- **The World Bank in its South Asia Economic Focus Spring update report said that it has revised the projection amid a strong rebound in private consumption and investment growth.**
- The international bank noted that **government consumption is expected to rise by about 16.7 per cent during the reported fiscal.** The World Bank, however, sounded a warning as economic activity is well below pre-COVID-19 estimate.
- It said that businesses **need to make up for lost revenue and millions of workers, most of them in the informal sector**, still reel from job losses and falling incomes should be taken care of.

## Payments bank deposit limit doubled by RBI

- **In a bid to promote digital payments banks in the country, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that it has increased the maximum end of day balance for payment banks to Rs. 2 lakh. Earlier, the limit was Rs.1 lakh.** Payments banks have been asking a hike in deposit limit for a long time.

**Payments banks** is an **Indian new model of banks conceptualised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).** These **banks can accept a restricted deposit, which is currently limited to Rs. 200,000 per customer** and may be increased further. **These banks cannot issue loans and credit cards.** Both current account and savings accounts can be **operated by such banks.** **Payments banks can issue ATM cards or debit cards** and provide online or mobile banking. **Bharti Airtel set up India's first payments bank.**

## Crypto exchange WazirX launches an NFT marketplace for Indian artists

- **WazirX has launched one of India's first marketplaces for Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT).** The development has paved the way for seamless exchange of digital assets and intellectual properties including art pieces, audio files, videos, programs, and even tweets apart from other digital goods and services. Following the launch, **Indian creators can now place their digital assets for auction over the blockchain-based NFT marketplace and earn royalty thereafter.**

**A blockchain originally block chain**, is a **growing list of records, called blocks** that are **linked using cryptography.** Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data (generally represented as a Merkle tree). **The blockchain was invented by a person (or group of people) using the name Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008** to serve as the public transaction ledger of the cryptocurrency bitcoin.

## India's first Rs 150 crore Ghaziabad Green Bond lists on the BSE bond platform

- **Lucknow Municipal Corporation bonds became the first municipal bonds from North India to be listed on Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended the listing ceremony in Mumbai. The next cities to raise municipal bonds will be Benaras, Agra and Kanpur.
- **Under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme, cities have been encouraged to mobilise resources by issuing municipal bonds.** These are issued when a government body wants to raise funds for infra-related projects like roads, water among others.

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

## Mukesh Ambani first, Gautam Adani second on Forbes 10 richest Indian billionaires 2021 list

- **Mukesh Ambani, the chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd secured the first spot on the Forbes 10 richest Indian billionaires 2021 list while Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani is at second place.**
- **With a net worth of \$84.5 billion,** the chairman and managing director of the oil-to-telecom conglomerate topped the Forbes list of India's richest billionaires while Adani was ranked second with a fortune of \$50.5 billion.
- **Adani toppled Avenue Supermarts' founder Radhakishan Damani from second place on the list** who saw his fortune divided. His brother Gopikishan Damani listed separately for the first time, according to Forbes.
- **HCL founder Shiv Nadar is perched on the third spot on the Forbes 10 richest billionaire's 2021 list** with a net worth of \$23.5 billion. He stepped down from the position of group chairman and handed over the ropes of HCL Technologies to daughter Roshni Nadar Malhotra. **Damani at \$16.5 billion and Kotak Mahindra Bank MD Uday Kotak with a fortune of \$15.9 billion took the fourth and the fifth spot in the list.**

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## Adani Green Energy's arm commissions 50 MW solar plant in Chitrakoot

- **Adani Green Energy said its subsidiary, Adani Solar Energy Chitrakoot One Ltd (ASECOL), has commissioned a 50 megawatt (MW) solar power plant in Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh.**
- **In a regulatory filing Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) said the plant has a 25 years power purchase agreement with the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd (UPPCL) at Rs 3.07/kwh. This commissioning takes AGEL's total operational renewable capacity to 3,520 MW, a step closer to its vision of 25 GW capacity by 2025.**

**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.**

## Amazon launches \$250-million Venture Fund for Digitizing SMEs in India

- **The e-commerce giant Amazon has launched a \$250 million (Rs 1,873 crore) venture fund called "Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund", to invest in Indian startups and entrepreneurs, with a focus on digitizing SMEs. The launch of the Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund aims to attract the best ideas and empower entrepreneurs in the country to partner in this vision.**
- **As a part of its first investment through the 'Smbhav' fund, Amazon invested in Gurugram-based M1xchange which connects SMEs with banks and financiers.**

## UK grants approval for extradition of fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi

- **UK Home Secretary Priti Patel has signed off on the order to extradite Nirav Modi, wanted in India on fraud and money laundering charges related to the estimated \$2-billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) scam case, senior Indian diplomatic sources in the UK said. Modi remains behind bars at Wandsworth**



**Prison in south-west London, has 14 days to apply for permission to appeal against the Home Secretary's order in the High Court in London.**

- Back on February 25, the **Westminster Magistrates' Court** had concluded that the diamond merchant has a case to answer before the Indian courts, leaving the sign off on the order with the Cabinet minister.
- He had **allegedly perpetrated the fraud in the Punjab National Bank in collusion with his uncle Mehul Choksi**. After a two year long legal battle, District Judge Samuel Goozee had ruled that Modi only has a case to answer in the Indian courts but that there is no evidence to suggest he would not receive a fair trial in India.

**The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 empowers any special court (set up under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002) to confiscate all properties and assets of economic offenders who are charged in offences measuring over INR 100 crores and are evading prosecution by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts. In 2019, Special PMLA Court declares Vijay Mallya Fugitive Economic Offender. Vijay Mallya became the first businessman to be charged under the new fugitive law.**

#### **For the first time in its history, WTO names women to half of deputy leader roles**

- **World Trade Organization** head **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** named two women to the WTO's four deputy leader jobs for the first time in its history. The new director-general — herself the first woman and the first African to lead the WTO — appointed **Angela Ellard** of the United States and Costa Rica's **Anabel Gonzalez**, along with **Jean-Marie Paugam** of France and China's **Zhang Xiangchen**.
- The WTO has counted one woman deputy director general previously, but **Okonjo-Iweala** stressed that this was **"the first time in the history of our organisation that half of the DDGs are women"**. The new DDGs replace **Yonov Frederick Agah** of Nigeria, **Karl Brauner** of Germany, **Alan Wolff** of the United States and **Yi Xiaozhun** of China.

#### **US pips Mauritius as second largest source of FDI in India in 2020-21: DPIIT data**

- **The US replaced Mauritius as the second largest source of foreign direct investment into India** during 2020-21 with **inflows of USD 13.82 billion**, according to government data. **Singapore remained the top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country for the third consecutive fiscal at USD 17.41 billion.**
- During the last financial year, **India attracted USD 5.64 billion in FDI from Mauritius**, according to the data by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- The island country was **followed by UAE (USD 4.2 billion), Cayman Island (USD 2.79 billion), Netherlands (USD 2.78 billion), UK (USD 2.04 billion), Japan (USD 1.95 billion), Germany (USD 667 million), and Cyprus (USD 386 million).**
- **Overall foreign direct investments into the country grew 19 per cent to USD 59.64 billion during 2020-21** amid measures taken by the government for policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business.

**'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.**

#### **Axis Bank board approves re-appointment of Amitabh Chaudhry as MD & CEO**

- **Private sector lender Axis Bank board has approved the re-appointment of Amitabh Chaudhry as its Managing Director and CEO for three years** with effect from January 1, 2022.

#### **Airtel Payments Bank doubles day-end balance limit**

- In-line with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) recent guidelines, **Airtel Payments Bank has become the first payments bank in the country to enable Rs 2 lakh day-end account balance limit.**
- Now, customers having an account with Airtel Payments Bank will be able to save more in their account with this increased limit.



- Note that **RBI recently doubled the limit of maximum balance that an individual customer can hold with payments banks to Rs 2 lakh from Rs 1 lakh earlier to expand the ability of such lenders to cater to the needs of MSMEs and other businesses.**
- The payments banks that are operating in this space are **Paytm Payments Bank, India Post Payments Bank, Airtel Payments Bank, Fino Payments Bank, Jio Payments Bank and NSDL Payments Bank.**

**Airtel Payments Bank is an Indian payments bank with its headquarters in New Delhi. The company is a subsidiary of Bharti Airtel. On 11 April 2016, it became the first company to receive the payments bank license from the Reserve Bank of India under Section 22 (1) of Banking Regulation Act, 1949. Airtel Payments Bank is a 80:20 partnership between Bharti Airtel and Kotak Mahindra Bank.**

### **Reserve Bank of India appoints Jose J Kattoor as new Executive Director**

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed its Bangalore regional head, Jose Kattoor as executive director (ED). As ED Kattoor will look after human resource management, corporate strategy, budget and rajbhasha departments at the central bank.** Kattoor spent three decades in the central bank in various departments, namely communication, human resource management, financial inclusion, supervision, currency management among other.

### **ADB commits record \$3.92 billion loan to India for 13 projects in 2020**

- **The Asian Development Bank has committed a record USD 3.92 billion in sovereign loans for 13 projects to India in 2020, including USD 1.8 billion in COVID-19 related projects to support the government's pandemic response.**
- **As part of the pandemic support to India, the Manila-headquartered multilateral agency said it has provided emergency assistance to contain the disease and establish social protection measures for relief to the poor and other vulnerable groups.**
- **ADB also approved financing to help the government improve equitable access to comprehensive primary health care in urban areas.** This is ADB's highest-ever annual lending commitment to India since the start of its lending operations in 1986, it said, adding it has also **committed USD 356.1 million through its non-sovereign operations to India, including three COVID-19 support projects.**

**Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. Masatsugu Asakawa, by career a Japanese civil servant, is the president of the Asian Development Bank. Asakawa, who took office on 17 January 2020, is the 10<sup>th</sup> president of ADB.**

### **RBI to transfer Rs 99,122 cr as surplus to Central govt**

- **Reserve Bank of India will transfer 99,122 crore rupees as surplus to the Central Government.** The meeting of Central Board of Directors of RBI was held under the Chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das.
- **The Board approved the transfer of 99,122 crore rupees as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting period of nine months ended March 31, 2021 and decided to maintain the Contingency Risk Buffer at 5.50 per cent.**
- The Board in its meeting reviewed **the current economic situation, global and domestic challenges and recent policy measures taken by the Reserve Bank to mitigate the adverse impact of the second wave of COVID-19 on the economy.**

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

### **RBI Innovation Hub appoints Rajesh Bansal as CEO**

- **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) has appointed Rajesh Bansal as its chief executive officer.** Bansal was a member of the founding team of Aadhaar and previously served at the RBI in various capacities in the areas of technology, financial inclusion and payments systems.

## Azim Premji donated ten times more than even Shiv Nadar and Mukesh Ambani in 2020

- **Philanthropic efforts by some of the richest people in India, including the likes of Mukesh Ambani, Azim Premji, and Shiv Nadar, are at an all-time high. 90 of the biggest philanthropists in India have cumulatively donated Rs. 9,324 crore.**
- **The number of people who have donated more than Rs.10 crore has increased by 100% over the last two years from 37 to 80, according to the Edelgive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2020.**
- **The average age of the individuals on the list is 66, which is two years older than last year's average. The average age is three years older than the entrepreneurs that made the cut for Hurun India's Rich List. "Binny Bansal is the first philanthropist under the age of 40 to enter the philanthropy list.**

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

## GoAir rebrands as Go First

- **GoAir has rebranded itself as Go First as the Wadia group-owned airline prepares for an IPO and ambitious expansion after a rocky period when the pandemic derailed the aviation sector. GoAir started with having a different-coloured tail for each aircraft and different uniforms for the crew.**
- **As of 13 May 2021, the airline has been rebranded as Go First - with the motto "You Come First". As of March 2020, the airline operates over 330 daily flights to 36 destinations, including 27 domestic and 9 international destinations, from its hubs at Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Kannur.**

**GO FIRST, founded as GoAir, is an Indian ultra-low-cost airline based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is owned by the Indian business conglomerate Wadia Group.**

## World's First Google Store to open in New York

- **Technology giant Google has announced its first ever physical retail store will open this summer in the Chelsea area of New York City.**
- **The new Google Store in Chelsea will, said Google, be a "space where customers can experience our hardware and services in a helpful way."**

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

## Gautam Adani is world's 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing billionaire in 2021

- **India's industrial tycoon Gautam Adani, the world's second fastest-growing billionaire in 2021, rose to the 14<sup>th</sup> spot on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, replacing China's Zhong Shanshan to become the second richest Asian in the world.**
- **With a net worth of \$66.5 billion, Adani, who began his career as a commodity trader, is getting closer to Asia's richest, compatriot Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, whose net worth is \$76.5 billion while Shanshan is worth \$63.6 billion.**
- **Currently, Ambani and Adani are placed on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> position, respectively, in the global billionaires' list of Bloomberg. While Adani's net worth has climbed by \$32.7 billion in the past year, Ambani's wealth has marginally decreased by \$175.5 million, as per the index. The net worth of Ambani stood at \$76.5 billion.**

## LIC has now become tenth-most-valuable insurance brand globally

- **State-owned insurance behemoth — Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) — has emerged as the third strongest and the tenth most valuable insurance brand globally, according to a report by Brand Finance Insurance 100 2021, a London-based brand valuation consultancy firm Brand Finance.**
- **According to the report, the total value of the world's top 100 most valuable insurance brands declined by 6 per cent from \$462.4 billion in 2020 to \$433.0 billion in 2021. However, LIC's brand value increased**

by almost 7 per cent to \$8.65 billion. There are five Chinese insurance companies in the top 10 most valuable insurance brands globally, with Ping an Insurance emerging the world's most valuable insurance brand, despite recording a 26 per cent drop in brand value.

**Life Insurance Corporation of India (abbreviated as LIC)** is an **Indian government owned insurance and investment corporation under the ownership of Ministry of Finance**, Government of India. The Life insurance Corporation of India was **established on September 1, 1956**, when the Parliament of India passed the Life Insurance of India Act that nationalized the insurance industry in India. **Over 245 insurance companies and provident societies were merged to create the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India. It is based in Mumbai.**

### **G7 countries reach landmark deal to back global minimum tax of 15 % on multinational companies**

- **Group of Seven (G7), a group of the world's richest nations, have reached a landmark deal to back a global minimum tax of at least 15 percent on multinational companies.**
- **G7 finance ministers meeting in London also agreed that the biggest companies should pay tax where they generate sales, and not just where they have a physical presence. The G7 ministers said they will commit to a global minimum tax of at least 15 percent on a country by country basis.**
- **We commit to reaching an equitable solution on the allocation of taxing rights, with market countries awarded taxing rights on at least 20% of profit exceeding a 10% margin for the largest and most profitable multinational enterprises, the agreement added.**
- **The ministers also agreed to move towards making companies declare their environmental impact in a more standard way so investors can decide more easily whether to fund them.**
- **The decision of imposing minimum global tax rate 15 per cent would be placed before the G-20 countries, a group of developing and developed nations, in a meeting scheduled for July, 2021 in Venice.**
- **Ireland, which has a tax rate of 12.5 percent, has come out against the global minimum tax, arguing that it would be disruptive to its economic model.** Some major countries such as China have been quietly tracking the proceedings but are considered unlikely to buy in.

**India was the one of the first countries to introduce a 6 per cent equalisation levy in 2016, but the levy was restricted to online advertisement services. India has expanded the scope of the equalisation levy over the last few years, to tax non-resident digital entities.** While the levy applied only to digital advertising services till 2019-20 at the rate of 6 percent, **the government in April last year widened the scope to impose a 2 per cent tax on non-resident e-commerce players with a turnover of Rs 2 crore. The scope was further widened in the Finance Act 2021-22 to cover e-commerce supply or service when any activity takes place online.** Since May 2021, this also includes any entity that systematically and continuously does business with more than 3 lakh users in India. **Associated Concerns regarding India's Digital services tax are: 1. Eventually the tax may become a burden for Digital Consumers. 2. It could invite retaliatory tariffs (such as the latest one), as similar tariffs were imposed by the US on France. 3. It would also result in double taxation.**

### **Gujarat: KASEZ becomes 'first green industrial city' in India**

- **Kandla Special Economic Zone (KASEZ), the oldest export zone in the country, has become the "first green industrial city" in India to receive a platinum rating under IGBC Green Cities Rating for existing cities in the industrial cities category.**
- **Compared to the 25,000 trees in KASEZ in 2019, the 1000-odd acres have 3.5 lakh trees. Most of these trees have been planted post 2019, using the Miyawaki forestation method. Apart from this, KASEZ also used plastic waste to line the artificial water bodies created inside the area to prevent water seepage and mix with the saline water.** The SEZ initiatives with solar energy and LED lighting was also among the factors that contributed to the IGBC rating, officials said.

### **Forex reserves cross \$600 billion for first time on foreign flows**

- **India's foreign exchange reserves crossed the USD 600 billion mark for the first time after increasing by USD 6.842 billion in the week ended June 4, RBI data showed.**
- **The reserves surged to a record USD 605.008 billion in the reporting week, helped by a rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, as per weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).**



- The main reasons for High Forex Reserves in India are 1. Rise in investment by foreign portfolio investors and increased foreign direct investments (FDIs). The sharp jump in reserves started with the Finance Ministry's announcement in 2019, cutting corporate tax rates. 2. Fall in crude oil prices has brought down the oil import bill, saving precious foreign exchange. 3. Dollar outflow from overseas remittances and foreign travels have fallen steeply.

**In India, Foreign Exchange Reserves are the foreign assets held or controlled by the Reserve Bank of India. The reserves are made of gold or a specific currency. They can also be special drawing rights and marketable securities denominated in foreign currencies like treasury bills, government bonds, corporate bonds and equities and foreign currency loans. Purpose of keeping foreign exchange reserves are 1. To keep the value of their currencies at a fixed rate. 2. Countries with a floating exchange rate system use forex reserves to keep the value of their currency lower than the US Dollar. 3. To maintain liquidity in case of an economic crisis. 4. The central bank (RBI) supplies foreign currency to keep markets steady. 5. To ensure that a country meets its foreign obligations and liabilities. As of June 2021, India has USD \$608.081 billion forex reserves. India ranks fourth in the world in forex reserves. China is in first position, followed by Japan and Switzerland.**

### **Ranjitsinh Disale appointed as Advisor to World Bank**

- Ranjitsinh Disale, the first Indian teacher to receive the Global Teacher Award has been appointed by the World Bank as an Advisor to the World Bank. The World Bank has appointed 12 advisors from world over and Mr. Disale is one of them representing India.
- World Bank has recently launched the Global Coach Program, a new initiative focused on accelerating learning by helping countries improve in-service teacher professional development (TPD) programs and systems. This program forms part of the World Bank's broader agenda to tackle the global learning crisis (WDR, 2018). Coach focuses on supporting countries improve in-service TPD through a two-pronged approach.

### **RBI to grant in-principle approval to Centrum Financial Services Ltd to set up Small Finance Bank**

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to grant in-principle approval to Centrum Financial Services Limited to set up a Small Finance Bank.
- This in-principle approval has been accorded in specific pursuance to the expression of centrum financial services limited's offer dated February 1, 2021.

**Small finance banks are a type of niche banks in India. Banks with a small finance bank license can provide basic banking service of acceptance of deposits and lending. The aim behind these to provide financial inclusion to sections of the economy not being served by other banks, such as small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities. On 17 September 2015, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that it had given provisional licenses to ten entities who would have to convert into small finance banks within one year. Eight out of these ten entities were microfinance NBFCs, reiterating RBIs agenda of financial inclusion. Capital Small Finance Bank was the first small finance bank to begin operations, opening with 47 branches on 24 April 2016.**

### **FREO – India's first credit-led neobank**

- FREO is a first-of-its-kind; credit-led neobank in India that is designed to serve the banking needs of millennial in India and Southeast Asia. For many of its offerings, the company has partnered with banks to bring new solutions to its customers.
- FREO's vision is to bring consumers freedom from non-digital financial services and provide simple, intuitive, and smart ways to access credit and manage money with ease on their phones.
- Through this credit-led Neobank, consumers will have access to financial products such as a credit line, credit cards, EMI cards, deposits & savings, buy-now-pay-later, and other financial utilities, in order to help build their credit profiles, borrow flexibly, save easily, and spend smartly.

### **Microsoft names CEO Satya Nadella as Chairman**

- Microsoft Corp named Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella as its new chairman, in place of John Thompson. Nadella, who took over as CEO in 2014 from Steve Ballmer, has been instrumental in scaling up its business including billion-dollar acquisitions like LinkedIn, Nuance Communications and ZeniMax.
- The company said Thompson, who took over as chairman from the software giant's co-founder Bill Gates in 2014, will serve as lead independent director.



**Microsoft Corporation** is an **American multinational technology company** with **headquarters in Redmond, Washington**. Microsoft was **founded by Paul Allen and Bill Gates on April 4, 1975**, to **develop and sell BASIC interpreters for the Altair 8800**. It was the world's largest software maker by revenue as of 2016. It is **considered one of the Big Five companies in the U.S. information technology industry**, along with **Google, Apple, Amazon, and Facebook**.

### **Walmart, Amazon and Apple top the 2021 Fortune 500 list**

- **Fortune Magazine released its annual list of the 500 top companies in the United States, and retail giant Walmart ranked first for the ninth consecutive year, followed by Amazon and Apple.** The FORTUNE 500 ranks companies by total revenue in 2020 fiscal year, and this year marks the 67<sup>th</sup> edition of it.
- **The US-based IT company with large offshore presence in India, debuted on the list in 2011 at 484.** It moved into the top 200 in 2018, and advanced nine places on this year's list. Companies in the Fortune 500 are ranked by total revenues for their respective fiscal years.

### **India's largest crypto exchange launches country's first NFT marketplace**

- **India's largest crypto exchange, WazirX, announced the country's first NFT marketplace.** The platform, which will be used to trade Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), is run on the Binance Smart Chain, a blockchain platform created by Binance, one of the largest crypto exchanges in the world, which acquired WazirX back in 2019.
- According to the company, **the marketplace currently has 15 creators, and WazirX has received over 15000 applications from creators and collectors already.** It will have no listing price and "minimal gas fees" of \$1 for transactions.

### **Jamsetji Tata named top among global list of philanthropists of last century**

- **With total donations of \$102.4 billion, India's Jamsetji Tata has topped the 2021 Edelgive Hurun philanthropists of the century.** The report pegs the **current valuation of India's pioneer industrialist Jamsetji Tata's donations at \$102.4 billion over the past century.** He is followed by **Bill and Melinda Gates (\$74.6 billion)**, **Warren Buffett (\$37.4 billion)**, **George Soros (\$34.8 billion)** and **J D Rockefeller (\$26.8 billion)**.
- **The first-ever list of Edelgive Hurun India Philanthropist of the Century puts Jamsetji Tata ahead of the likes of Bill and Melinda Gates, Warren Buffet, Henry Hughes and George Soros.** The list was released to rank the world's most generous individuals from the last century. The list is a ranking of the **world's most generous individuals from the past century and this is the first year of the ranking.** Tata started his endowment journey in the year 1892.

**Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata** was an **Indian pioneer industrialist, who founded the Tata Group, India's biggest conglomerate company.** He established the city of Jamshedpur. He founded what would later become the **Tata Group of companies.** **Jamsetji Tata is regarded as the legendary "Father of Indian Industry".** He was so influential in the world of industry that Jawaharlal Nehru referred to Tata as a **One-Man Planning Commission.**

### **Mahanagar Gas Ltd introduces India's first mobile CNG refueling unit**

- **Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL), one of the India's leading Natural Gas Distribution Companies, has for the first time in India introduced Mobile CNG Refuelling Unit at Ajivali near Panvel on old Mumbai-Pune Highway.**

### **Aramco chief to be first foreigner on RIL board**

- **Reliance Industries (RIL) will appoint Yasir Al-Rumayyan, chairman of Saudi Aramco and governor of the Kingdom's wealth fund, to its board as an independent director.** He will be the **first foreigner on the company's board, which, according to Chairman Mukesh Ambani, will be the "beginning of internationalisation of Reliance".**
- **Al-Rumayyan's appointment is a precursor to Aramco finalising its investment in RIL's oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business.** Two years ago, **Ambani announced to RIL shareholders that Aramco will acquire a 20% stake in RIL's O2C unit for \$15 billion.** As part of the deal, **Aramco will get one seat on the board of RIL and will have the right to appoint its executives in key managerial positions in the O2C unit.**

**Saudi Aramco** is a Saudi Arabian public petroleum and natural gas company based in Dhahran. As of 2020, it is one of the largest companies in the world by revenue. Saudi Aramco has both the world's second-largest proven crude oil reserves, at more than 270 billion barrels (43 billion cubic metres), and largest daily oil production of all oil producing companies.

### **China is now second largest export partner of India**

- **China replaced the UAE as the second largest export destination for India in fiscal 2021**, with outbound shipments to the **neighbouring country rising 27.53% to \$21.18 billion** in the pandemic year.
- **The US remained the country's top export partner**, according to government data, **but shipments declined 2.78% to \$51.63 billion in a year when India's merchandise trade** — both exports and imports — fell amid global lockdowns and disruption to logistics due to the pandemic.

### **Bhutan becomes first neighbor to use BHIM UPI**

- **Bhutan becomes the first country, in India's immediate neighbourhood**, to use the BHIM app for mobile-based payments and “to adopt UPI standards for its QR deployment”.
- **Bhutan has become the first country to adopt India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) standards for its quick response (QR) code. It is also the second country after Singapore to have BHIM-UPI acceptance at merchant locations, NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL).**

**BHIM is an Indian mobile payment App developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), based on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Named after B. R. Ambedkar and launched on 30 December 2016 it is intended to facilitate e-payments directly through banks and encourage cashless transactions. The application supports all Indian banks which use UPI, which is built over the Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) infrastructure and allows the user to instantly transfer money between bank accounts of any two parties. It can be used on all mobile devices. Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an instant real-time payment system developed by NPCI facilitating inter-bank transactions. The interface is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India and works by instantly transferring funds between two bank accounts on a mobile platform.**

### **FDI limit in NPS fund managers hiked to 74%**

- **The government notified a hike in the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in pension fund management to 74% from 49%** under the national pension system (NPS), **opening doors for experienced foreign partners in this space and facilitating more competition in the fledgling segment.**
- **The higher foreign investment limit in pension fund managers (PFMs) follows a Parliament nod in March to hike FDI limit in insurance business to 74% from 49%. The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act links the FDI ceiling in the sector to the same in the insurance sector.**

### **India emerges as 5<sup>th</sup> largest foreign exchange reserves holder in world after China, Japan, Switzerland, and Russia**

- **India has emerged as the fifth-largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world after China, Japan, Switzerland and Russia. In 2020-21, India's balance of payments recorded surplus in both current account and capital account which contributed to the increase in foreign exchange reserves during the year.**
- **The Minister stated that India's foreign exchange reserves position is comfortable in terms of import cover of more than 18 months and provides cushion against unforeseen external shocks. Government and RBI are closely monitoring the emerging external position calibrating policies or regulations to support robust macroeconomic growth.**

### **Bangladesh to launch 'Jogajog' as alternative to Facebook**

- **Bangladesh is going to create its own social media platform styled 'Jogajog', as an alternative to social media site Facebook, and 'Alapon', a platform to provide an alternative to WhatsApp.**
- **According to the digital e-commerce policy of 2018, e-commerce, hardware, software and BPO sectors will be able to meet the target of creating more than 2 million jobs by 2021.**

### **Deposit Insurance & Credit Guarantee Corporation Bill 2021 gets Cabinet nod**

- **Union Cabinet cleared the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Bill 2021, which insures each depositor's deposits in the banks upto maximum of five lakh rupees in each bank.**

- The bill insures all bank deposits such as savings, fixed deposits, current or recurring deposits. It also covers all commercial, public, private sector banks and branches of foreign bank in India. Each depositor's deposits in the banks are insured up to maximum of five lakh rupees in each bank.
- The Rs 5-lakh deposit insurance cover was raised from Rs 1 lakh in 2020. The Damodaran Committee on 'Customer Services in Banks' (2011) had recommended a five-time increase in the cap to Rs. 5 lakh due to rising income levels and increasing size of individual bank deposits.
- Within the first 45 days of the bank being put under moratorium, the DICGC would collect all information relating to deposit accounts. In the next 45 days, it will review the information and repay depositors within a maximum of 90 days.

**Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)** came into existence in 1978 after the merger of Deposit Insurance Corporation (DIC) and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd. (CGCI) after passing of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 by the Parliament. It serves as a deposit insurance and credit guarantee for banks in India. It is a fully owned subsidiary of and is governed by the RBI. Deposit Insurance is a protection cover against losses accruing to bank deposits if a bank fails financially and has no money to pay its depositors and has to go in for liquidation. Credit Guarantee is the guarantee that often provides for a specific remedy to the creditor if his debtor does not return his debt.

### **Federal Bank gets RBI nod to re-appoint Shyam Srinivasan as MD & CEO for 3 years**

- Private sector Federal Bank has received approval from the RBI to re-appoint Shyam Srinivasan as its MD and CEO for three years. Srinivasan took charge as MD and CEO of the lender on September 23, 2010.
- Federal Bank Limited is a major Indian commercial bank in the Private Sector, headquartered in Aluva, Kochi. The bank has more than 1,200 branches spread across different states in India. It also has its Representative Offices abroad at Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Dubai.

### **Surat gets Amazon's first Digital Kendra in India**

- Chief Minister Vijay Rupani virtually inaugurated the first Digital Kendra of e-commerce giant Amazon in Surat city that aims to be a physical resource centre for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) providing third party services in e-commerce.
- The move is part of Amazon India's commitment to digitise 10 million Indian micro, small and medium enterprises by 2025. The 1,400 sq ft centre has been set up at Krushi Bazar (APMC Market) and is located in an important MSME cluster. The centre was inaugurated by state Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who has expressed confidence that the initiative would prove beneficial for around 41,000 MSMEs operating in Surat city.

### **Twitter names Vinay Prakash as resident grievance officer for India**

- Twitter has named Vinay Prakash as its Resident Grievance Officer for India. The microblogging platform also released the India Transparency report which is required to be published under India's new IT rules.
- Twitter is required to publish a monthly report regarding handling of complaints from users in India, including action taken on them, as well as the number of URLs that Twitter has taken.
- The US-based company has coming under increasing criticism from the Centre over its alleged failure to comply with the new IT rules in India, which mandates, among other requirements, the appointment of three key personnel — chief compliance officer, nodal officer and grievance officer by social media platforms with over 50 lakh users. All three personnel have to be residents in India.
- The Delhi High Court said the Central Government can initiate action against Twitter in accordance with the new IT rules in case of non-compliance even as the micro-blogging site submitted a timeline on the appointment process of officers as mandated while maintaining that it reserves the right to challenge the rules.

**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. Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July of that year.

## IOC to build India's first green hydrogen plant at Mathura refinery

- **India's largest oil firm (IOC) will build the nation's first 'green hydrogen' plant at its Mathura refinery**, as it aims to prepare for a future catering to the growing demand for both oil and cleaner forms of energy.
- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has drawn a strategic growth path that aims to maintain focus on its core refining and fuel marketing businesses** while making bigger inroads into petrochemicals, hydrogen and electric mobility over the next 10 years. This will be **the nation's first green hydrogen unit**. Previously, projects have been announced to produce 'grey hydrogen' using fossil fuels such as natural gas.

**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.**

## Kandla becomes first Green SEZ

- **Kandla SEZ (KASEZ) was awarded IGBC Platinum Rating. KASEZ is the First Green SEZ to achieve the IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities.**
- **The efforts of KASEZ team were applauded especially noting the fact that this was accomplished in Bhuj region** where water conservation and afforestation are critical interventions.
- This was major achievement and is part of activities envisaged under the **commitment of the Government to the Green SEZs Mission as part of celebrations marking India@75 - Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav**. IGBC Platinum rating has been awarded for 'Green master planning, policy initiatives and implementation of green infrastructure' by CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).

## NTPC to set up India's first green hydrogen fuelling station in Ladakh

- **National Thermal Power Corporation Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC REL), NTPC's wholly owned subsidiary has invited a domestic tender to set up India's first green hydrogen fuelling station in Leh, Ladakh.**
- **The tender follows the recent tender floated by NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVN) for procurement of fuel cell buses for Ladakh. NTPC REL and NVVN would jointly be executing the green mobility project in the union territory of Ladakh.** A dedicated 1.25 MW solar plant is also being set up in Leh by NTPC REL to make the hydrogen fuelling station completely green.
- **Green hydrogen is defined as Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has no carbon footprint. The hydrogen that is in use today is produced using fossil fuels, which is the primary source.** Organic materials such as fossil fuels and biomass are used for releasing hydrogen through chemical processes.

## Prime Minister launched e-RUPI, a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched e-RUPI, a cashless and contactless instrument for digital payment** through video conferencing. Mr Modi has always championed digital initiatives. **e-Rupi, a person and purpose specific digital payment solution, is a QR code or SMS string-based e-Voucher, which is delivered to the mobile of the beneficiaries.**
- **eRupi has been developed by National Payments Corporation of India on its UPI platform, in collaboration with the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and National Health Authority.** The users of this seamless one-time payment mechanism will be able to redeem the voucher without a card, digital payments app or internet banking access, at the service provider.
- **Over the years, several programmes have been launched to ensure that the benefits reach its intended beneficiaries in a targeted and leak-proof manner, with limited touch points between the government and the beneficiary. The concept of electronic voucher takes forward this vision of Good Governance.** It is a revolutionary initiative in the direction of ensuring a leak-proof delivery of welfare services.
- **It can also be used for delivering services under schemes meant for providing drugs and nutritional support under Mother and Child welfare schemes, TB eradication programmes, drugs and diagnostics under schemes like Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and fertilizer subsidies. The private sector can also leverage these digital vouchers as part of their employee welfare and corporate social responsibility programmes.**



**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**.

### **In a world first, South Africa grants patent to an artificial intelligence system**

- **At first glance, a recently granted South African patent relating to a “food container based on fractal geometry” seems fairly mundane.** The innovation in question involves interlocking food containers that are easy for robots to grasp and stack.
- On closer inspection, the patent is anything but mundane. That’s because the inventor is not a human being – **it is an artificial intelligence (AI) system called DABUS. DABUS (which stands for “device for the autonomous bootstrapping of unified sentience”) is an AI system created by Stephen Thaler, a pioneer in the field of AI and programming.**
- The system simulates human brainstorming and creates new inventions. **DABUS is a particular type of AI, often referred to as “creativity machines” because they are capable of independent and complex functioning.**
- The patent application listing DABUS as the inventor was filed in patent offices around the world, including the US, Europe, Australia, and South Africa. **But only South Africa granted the patent (Australia followed suit a few days later after a court judgment gave the go-ahead).**

**Artificial Intelligence System (AIS)** was a **distributed computing project undertaken by Intelligence Realm, Inc.** with the **long-term goal of simulating the human brain in real time, complete with artificial consciousness and artificial general intelligence.** They claimed to have found, in research, the “mechanisms of knowledge representation in the brain which is equivalent to finding artificial intelligence”, before moving into the developmental phase. **In the year 1956, American computer scientist John McCarthy organised the Dartmouth Conference, at which the term ‘Artificial Intelligence’ was first adopted.** From then on, the world discovered the ideas of the ability of machines to look at social problems using knowledge data and competition.

### **Indian Railways to get first aluminium coaches by early 2022**

- **Indian Railways is likely to get its first batch of aluminium bodied coaches by February 2022.** In a technological shift for railways, **the Modern Coach Factory (MCF) in Raebareli is looking to manufacture aluminium coaches.**
- The first sets of 3 coaches for Kolkata Metro are expected to be ready by early next year. **These Rajdhani style sleeper coaches will have speed potential of 160 kmph.** Of these 8 coaches, 4 will come fully assembled and the rest will be received in knocked-down condition and assembled.

**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 18<sup>th</sup> railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.** **Ashwini Vaishnaw 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.

### **The General Insurance Business (Nationalization) Amendment Act, 2021 also got the assent of the President.**

- **President Ramnath Kovind gave his assent to General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Act, 2021** which had introduced new provisions as well as amended **General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Act, 1972.** The act will **allow the public sector insurance businesses regulated by the 1972 Act to be privatized.** Apart from privatization, the act’s stated goals include increasing insurance sector coverage, providing social safety through better protecting policyholder rights, and promoting faster economic growth.
- **It aims to do away with the need that the central government owns at least 51% of the stock capital in a specific insurer.** It classifies general insurance as fire, marine, or other types of insurance.

## Finance minister Sitharaman launched National Monetisation Pipeline

- The government unveiled a four-year National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) worth Rs 6 lakh crore to unlock value in brownfield projects by engaging the private sector, transferring to them the rights but not the ownership in projects; and using the funds for infrastructure creation across the country.
- Roads, railways and power sector assets will comprise over 66 per cent of the total estimated value of the assets to be monetised, with the balance coming from sectors including telecom, mining, aviation, ports, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, warehouses and stadiums. “The ownership of the assets remain with the Government (and) there should be mandatory handback,” the Finance Minister highlighted.
- Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the National Monetisation pipeline (NMP), which will list out the government’s infrastructure assets to be sold over the next four-years.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said monetisation will create further value for infrastructure creation in the country and explore innovative ways of private participation without transfer of government ownership. “There is no land here, this entire (NMP) is talking about brownfield projects where investments have already been made, where there is a completed asset which is either languishing or it is not fully monetised or is under-utilised. So by bringing in private participation in this, you will be able to monetise it better and ensure further investment in infrastructure building,” she said.
- The NMP will run co-terminus with the National Infrastructure Pipeline of Rs 100 lakh crore announced in December 2019. The estimated amount to be raised through monetisation is around 14 per cent of the proposed outlay for Centre of Rs 43 lakh crore under NIP.
- NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said infrastructure growth in India will be private sector-led and “this is the next step in mobilising private capital” without transferring ownership to private corporations or resorting to fire sale of assets.

## India pips US to rank second in list of most attractive manufacturing hub globally; China first

- India has overtaken the United States (US) to become the second-most sought-after manufacturing destination globally, driven mainly by cost competitiveness, according to real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield. China remains at number one position, the consultant said in its 2021 Global Manufacturing Risk Index, which assessed the most advantageous locations for global manufacturing among 47 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific (APAC).

## India, World Bank sign 250 million dollar project to make existing dams safe and resilient

- India and World Bank have signed 250 million dollar project to make existing dams safe and resilient. The Government of India, the Central Water Commission, government representatives from 10 participating states and the World Bank signed the project for long-term dam safety program.
- The project will be implemented in approximately 120 dams across the states of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, and at the national level through the Central Water Commission.

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. The International Development Association (IDA) is a multinational financial institution providing aid to poor countries in the form of loans. It is also referred to as soft loan window of the World Bank.

## In a first, India’s NSE IFSC to introduce trading in US stocks

- NSE International Exchange, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange of India, has announced that trading in select US Stocks will soon be facilitated through the NSE IFSC platform. The offering will be in the form of unsponsored depository receipts.
- IFSCA has facilitated the same under the Regulatory Sandbox. The entire trading, clearing, settlement and holding of US Stocks will be under the regulatory structure of IFSC Authority.
- This initiative is a first of its kind at IFSC where Indian retail investors will be able to transact on the NSE IFSC platform under the Liberalized Remittance Scheme limits prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India.

**National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE)** is the leading stock exchange of India, located in the Mumbai (Bombay) city of Maharashtra state. It is under the ownership of some leading financial institutions, Banks, and Insurance companies. NSE was established in 1992 as the first dematerialized electronic exchange in the country. NSE was the first exchange in the country to provide a modern, fully automated screen-based electronic trading system that offered easy trading facilities to investors spread across the length and breadth of the country. **Vikram Limaye is Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of NSE.**

### **Bernard Arnault pips Jeff Bezos become world's richest person**

- **Bernard Arnault, the chairperson and chief executive of the French luxury conglomerate LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, is now the world's richest person. Bernard Arnault pipped Jeff Bezos after the Amazon founder's net worth fell \$13.9 billion in a day.**
- **Before this, Bernard Arnault led the list of the world's wealthiest people in December 2019, January 2020, May 2021 and July 2021. Arnault holds a net worth of \$198.9 billion compared to Jeff Bezos' \$194.9 billion and Tesla owner Elon Musk's \$185.5 billion, according to Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List.**
- **Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List showed Elon Musk is followed by Microsoft founder Bill Gates at \$132.0 billion, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg at \$130.6 billion, Google co-founders Larry Page at \$116.5 billion and Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison at \$116.4 billion and Sergey Brin at \$112.8 billion. Warren Buffet's net worth has now come down to \$101.6 billion, according to the Forbes list.**
- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) chairperson Mukesh Ambani is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> on this list with a net worth of \$79.8 billion. On the other hand, Gautam Adani fell seven places to the 23<sup>rd</sup> spot and currently has a net worth of \$55.6 billion and HCL Technologies' founder Shiv Nadar's net worth rose to \$25.8 billion, Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List also showed.**

### **Reliance slips 59 places on Fortune Global 500 list, SBI jumps 16 spots**

- **Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries Ltd slipped 59 places to rank 155<sup>th</sup> on the 2021 Fortune Global 500 list. Reliance took a beating on the rankings as revenues dropped owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is its lowest ranking since 2017.**
- **Reliance's revenue fell 25.3 per cent to USD 63 billion, mostly because oil prices plunged in the second quarter of 2020 when the global spread of the pandemic wiped away demand.**
- **Walmart continues to top the Fortune list with revenue of \$524 billion, followed by China's State Grid at \$384 billion. State Bank of India (SBI) moved up 16 places to rank 205 but Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) dropped 61 places to 212<sup>th</sup> rank.**
- **"Fortune Global 500 companies generated revenues totaling more than one-third of the world's GDP. They generated USD 31.7 trillion in revenues (down 5%), USD 1.6 trillion in profits (down 20%) and employ 69.7 million people worldwide," it said.**

### **TikTok replaces Facebook as most downloaded app of 2020**

- **TikTok was the world's most downloaded app last year, overtaking Facebook and its messaging platforms, market tracker App Annie.**
- **The Chinese-owned video app surged in popularity despite efforts by former president Donald Trump to ban it or force a sale to US-based investors, according to the research firm.**
- **TikTok, owned by China-based ByteDance, is believed to have one billion users worldwide including more than 100 million in the United States, and its short-form videos are especially popular with young smartphone users.**

**TikTok, known in China as Douyin is a video-sharing focused social networking service owned by Chinese company ByteDance. ByteDance was founded by Zhang Yiming in 2012. The social media platform is used to make a variety of short-form videos, from genres like dance, comedy, and education, that have a duration from fifteen seconds to three minutes. TikTok is an international version of Douyin, which was originally released in the Chinese market in September 2016. Later, TikTok was launched in 2017 for iOS and Android in most markets outside of mainland China; however, it only became available worldwide after merging with another Chinese social media service, Musically, on 2 August 2018. The app has been banned by the government of India since June 2020 along with 223 other Chinese apps in response to a border clash with China.**



### **HCL Foundation launches 'My e-Haat' portal to empower artisans**

- **HCL Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of HCL Technologies launched an online portal, 'My e-Haat', to empower artisans and strengthen the value chain of the handicraft sector in the country.** Currently, more than 30 partners from eight states with over 600 products are listed on the portal, it said adding that more will be joining from across the country by the end of the year.
- **"My E-Haat' initiative will be a unique model (A2C) where artisans will connect with the customer directly in the coming years".** The portal will assist in showcasing the ingenuity of skilled artisans from all over the country in front of the globe, resulting in increased recognition, appreciation, and remuneration.

**HCL Technologies is an Indian multinational information technology (IT) services and consulting company, headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. It is a subsidiary of HCL Enterprise. Originally a research and development division of HCL, it emerged as an independent company in 1991 when HCL entered into the software services business. In 1976, a group of six engineers, all former employees of Delhi Cloth & General Mills, led by Shiv Nadar, started a company that would make personal computers. Roshni Nadar Malhotra is the current chairperson of HCL Technologies and the first woman to lead a listed IT company in India.**

### **Infosys becomes 4<sup>th</sup> most valued company in India to join \$100 billion market cap club**

- **Infosys Ltd became the fourth Indian company to touch a market valuation of \$100 billion.** The IT services major has joined the league of TCS, Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank for crossing the \$100 billion-mark in terms of market capitalisation (m-cap).
- According to the latest m-cap data, RIL is the most-valued firm at Rs 13.7 trillion, followed by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) at Rs 13.4 trillion and HDFC Bank at Rs 8.42 trillion.

### **HDFC Bank becomes India's first lender to exclusively list \$1 billion AT1 bonds in IFSC**

- **HDFC Bank became India's first lender to exclusively list its 3.7 percent \$1 billion foreign currency additional tier-I (AT1) bonds in International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT).**
- **"The primary listing of HDFC AT 1 Bonds demonstrates the competitiveness of both the IFSC Exchanges; India INX and NSE IFSC internationally. Global rating agency Moody's Investors Service has given a Ba3 rating to the bond issue, three notches above baseline for the largest private sector lender by assets.**

**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.**

### **ReNew Power becomes first Indian renewable company to list on Nasdaq**

- **ReNew Power Pvt Ltd (ReNew Power) has completed "business combination" with US-based RMG Acquisition Corporation II (RMG II).** "As a result of the business combination, RMG II has become a wholly-owned subsidiary of ReNew Energy Global plc (the post-combination entity referred...as ReNew," ReNew Power said in a statement.
- **ReNew Power in February had announced merger with blank-check company RMG II, giving India's biggest renewable power producer an enterprise value of \$8 billion and listing on NASDAQ.**

**The Nasdaq Stock Market is an American stock exchange based in New York City. It is ranked second on the list of stock exchanges by market capitalization of shares traded, behind the New York Stock Exchange. The exchange platform is owned by Nasdaq, Inc., which also owns the Nasdaq Nordic stock market network and several U.S. stock and options exchanges.**

### **Central govt's flagship financial inclusion programme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana completes seven years**

- **Central government's flagship financial inclusion programme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana completes seven years.** The scheme was launched on this day in 2014 with an aim to provide universal access to banking facilities to the people across the country.
- **While launching the programme on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014, the Prime Minister had described the occasion as a festival to celebrate the liberation of the poor from a vicious cycle of poverty.** Under this scheme, bank accounts are being opened with minimal paperwork and zero balance.



- **Indigenous Debit cards** are being issued for cash withdrawal and payment at merchant locations with free accident insurance coverage of two lakh rupees. Besides, other financial facilities including micro-insurance, overdraft for consumption and micro-pension are also being offered.
- **One of the biggest financial inclusion schemes in the world**, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna has made remarkable progress in providing banking and other financial services to the marginalized and poor sections of the society.
- **In the last seven years**, it has not only helped the poor in bringing their savings into the formal financial system but also provided an avenue to remit money to their families in villages besides taking them out of the clutches of the usurious money lenders.
- **Basic savings bank accounts with overdraft facility of Rs. 10,000/- to every household. Insurance – Accident cover up to Rs. 1,00,000 and life cover of Rs. 30,000 on account opened between 15 Aug 2014 to 31 January 2015.**

**Extension of PMJDY with New features:** 1. Focus shift from Every Household to Every Unbanked Adult. 2. RuPay Card Insurance – Free accidental insurance cover on RuPay cards increased from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 lakhs for PMJDY accounts opened after 28.8.2018. 3. Enhancement in overdraft facilities – OD limit doubled from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000; OD upto Rs 2,000 (without conditions). 4. Increase in upper age limit for OD from 60 to 65 years.

### **GIFT City becomes India's first IGBC Platinum rated city, gets highest certification as Greenfield smart city**

- **India's only operational smart city and International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)**, GIFT City has received the Green Cities Platinum certification for 'Green Master planning & design and Implementation of GIFT City's phase I development' by CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).
- With this, **GIFT City has become India's first Greenfield Smart City to achieve the IGBC Green Cities Platinum rating.** The platinum-rated city under the IGBC green city rating system is a testimony to the cutting-edge infrastructure, design, and project implementation of the city, which will attract global companies to establish their base in GIFT city. IGBC provides a wide range of services. **The IGBC is a portion of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).**

**On 26<sup>th</sup> July 26, 2021 Kandla SEZ (KASEZ) became the first green SEZ to achieve the IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities after it was awarded the IGBC Platinum Rating. CII's Indian Green Building Council awards the IGBC Platinum rating for policy initiatives, green master planning and implementation of green infrastructures. This recognition will inspire all the other SEZs in the country to emulate the efforts and green initiative that has been achieved by Kandla SEZ.**

### **South Korea becomes world's first market to force Apple, Google to allow third-party app store payments**

- **South Korea has become the world's first market to challenge the duopoly of Apple and Google over app store payments** by approving a bill that forces them to allow third-party payments in the country.
- **Waiting to be rubber-stamped by President Moon Jae-in, the legislation forces both Apple and Google to change their policies for app marketplaces** that currently reject payments systems from third parties.

### **The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission tied grants of Rs. 1,42,084 crore to ensure more funds to gram panchayats**

- **The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission has tied grants of Rs. 1,42,084 crore to ensure more funds to gram panchayats to make their water supply and sanitation-related plans**, the Ministry of Jal Shakti said.
- The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has **issued the guidelines for release and utilisation of grants recommended by the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission (FC) for RLBs/PRIIs during the period 2021-22 to 2025-26**, it said.
- DDWS has recommended for the release of the first installment of **the tied grant to 25 states for water and sanitation activities. In all, the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission had recommended Rs. 2,36,805 crore to RLBs/PRIIs for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26**, it added.
- **The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission has recommended that states, along with Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, be given 42 percent share in the divisible tax pool of the centre during the period 2021-22 to 2025-26.** The panel's report also provides a range for fiscal deficit and debt path of both the union and states. It further recommended additional borrowing room to states based on performance in power sector reforms.

**The Finance Commission (FC) is a constitutional body that determines the method and formula for distributing the tax proceeds between the Centre and states, and among the states as per the constitutional arrangement and present requirements. Under Article 280 of the Constitution, the President of India is required to constitute a Finance Commission at an interval of five years or earlier. Parliament may by law determine the requisite qualifications for appointment as members of the commission and the procedure of selection. KC Neogy was the chairman of the first Finance Commission of India. The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission was constituted by the President of India in November 2017, under the chairmanship of NK Singh. Its recommendations will cover a period of five years from the year 2021-22 to 2025-26. The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, for horizontal devolution, it has suggested 12.5% weightage to demographic performance, 45% to income distance, 15% each to population and area, 10% to forest and ecology and 2.5% to tax and fiscal efforts.**

### **Big Telecom Reforms, 100% FDI without Government Approval**

- **The Union Cabinet allowed 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country's telecom sector via the automatic route, adding all safeguards will apply. Till now, only 49% of FDI was allowed through the automatic route and anything beyond this had to necessarily go through the government route.**
- **The new FDI rule will apply to all areas of telecom, including the manufacture of infrastructure. Earlier, while 100 per cent FDI was allowed in telecom equipment manufacturing and provision of IT enabled services, only 49 per cent was under the automatic route. The Centre has allowed FDI through automatic routes in a majority of the sectors. However, in sectors such as defence, media, pharmaceuticals and insurance, government approval is needed for foreign investors.**
- **The above reform comes a year after the Union finance ministry notified changes in the FDI rules in April 2020, which made prior approval of the government mandates for foreign investments from countries that share a border with India, including Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and Nepal among others.**
- **Firms from neighbouring countries including Pakistan and China, however, will not be allowed to invest under the automatic route. In April last year, the government changed the policy and under the new system companies in any country that shares border with India will have to approach the government for investment. The rules were changed to ensure that no neighbouring country, especially China, takes undue advantage amid the Covid pandemic.**
- **FDI in India is allowed under two modes - either through the automatic route, for which companies don't need government approval, or through the government route, for which companies need a go-ahead from the Centre. Under the government route, the foreign investors have to take prior approval of the respective ministry or department. However, under the automatic route, they (foreign investors) have to only notify the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) after the investment is made.**

### **India jumps 2 places to rank 46 on Global Innovation Index**

- **India has climbed two spots to 46 in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2021 prepared by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The country's rank has been consistently rising in the last few years. From 81 in 2015, it has moved to 46 in 2021.**
- **"India (at 46) moves further ahead, by two spots (48 in GII 2020), after making it into the top 50 last year. It takes second place in the lower middle-income group. India held the third position in its income group in 2019 and 2020, having entered the top three in 2019," the GII report said.**
- **India improved its ranking by two places and stood at 46 on the Global Innovation Index 2021 on the back of a vibrant start-up ecosystem and research by public and private organisations, NITI Aayog said.**
- **It added that India has been portrayed as successful in developing sophisticated services that are technologically dynamic and can be traded internationally. It continues to lead the world in the information and communication technology services exports indicator (1) and holds top ranks in other indicators, such as domestic industry diversification (12) and graduates in science and engineering (12).**

**The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is one of the 15 specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN). Pursuant to the 1967 Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO was created to promote and protect intellectual property (IP) across the world by cooperating with countries as well as international organizations. It began operations on 26 April 1970 when the convention entered into force. The current Director General is Singaporean Daren Tang, former head of the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore, who began his term on 1 October 2020. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and WIPO currently has 193 member states.**

## New Development Bank approves Bangladesh as a new member

- The New Development Bank (NDB) established by the BRICS ((Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries in 2015 has approved Bangladesh as its new member. The NDB Board of Governors initiated the negotiation to expand its membership in 2020. It has now approved the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Bangladesh as its first new member countries.
- Minister of Finance of Bangladesh A H M Mustafa Kamal said that **Membership of Bangladesh to NDB has paved way for a new partnership at a momentous time of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its independence.**
- Since the beginning of its operations, NDB has approved about 80 projects totaling a portfolio of **USD 30 billion**. Projects in areas such as transport, water and sanitation, clean energy, digital infrastructure, social infrastructure and urban development are within the scope of the Bank.

The New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). According to the Agreement on the NDB, “the Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.” Moreover, the NDB “shall cooperate with international organizations and other financial entities, and provide technical assistance for projects to be supported by the Bank.” **The initial authorized capital of the bank is \$100 billion divided into 1 million shares having a par value of \$100,000 each.** The initial subscribed capital of the NDB is \$50 billion divided into paid-in shares (\$10 billion) and callable shares (\$40 billion). **The initial subscribed capital of the bank was equally distributed among the founding members. The Agreement on the NDB specifies that every member will have one vote no one would have any veto powers. The bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China. Marcos Troyjo is President of the New Development Bank (NDB).**

## RBI conducted open market purchase of Government Securities under G-SAP 2.0

- Reserve Bank of India conducted open market purchase of Government Securities under the G-Sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP 2.0) for an aggregate amount of 15,000 crore rupees.
- On a review of current liquidity conditions, the central bank also decided to conduct a simultaneous sale of government securities under open market operations (OMO) for an aggregate amount of Rs 15,000 crore.
- In a statement, the RBI said it purchased three government securities of different maturity dates amounting to Rs 15,000 crore. It will also sell three government securities amounting to Rs 15,000 on September 23.
- The e-Kuber is the Core Banking Solution of the RBI which enables each bank to connect their single current account across the country. Utility of e-kuber is that it is used to conduct exercises like auctioning of government securities. The e-kuber is used by the RBI to execute various transactions with banks.

## TCS first Indian tech company to cross \$200 billion market cap

- Tata Consultancy Services, India's largest software exporter crossed \$200 billion in market capitalisation as investors backed technology service providers who are growing their business helping the digital transformation of global businesses.
- Reliance Industries is the most valuable Indian company with a market cap of over \$205 billion. TCS, which completes 50 years, listed on the stock exchanges in 2004. It took 13.5 years to get to \$100 billion market cap, while the next \$ 100 billion took 3.5 years, or a third of the time.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is an Indian multinational information technology (IT) services and consulting company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, with its largest campus located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. TCS is the largest IT services company in the world by market capitalisation (\$200 billion). Tata Consultancy Services Limited, initially started as “Tata Computer Systems” was founded in 1968 by division of Tata Sons Limited. Natarajan Chandrasekaran is an Indian businessman and chairman of Tata Sons.

## LIC launches mobile app “PRAGATI” for use by Development Officers

- Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) launched a new mobile app “PRAGATI” (Performance Review Application, Growth And Trend Indicator) for use by its Development Officers.



- **Pragati app** will give various information which are updated in near real-time about the performance of their agency force in critical areas of business performance like premium collection, and agency activation, etc apart from monitoring team.

### Facebook India appoints former IAS officer Rajiv Aggarwal as Head of Public Policy

- **Facebook India** has appointed ex-**IAS officer** and former **Uber executive Rajiv Aggarwal** as the **Director of Public Policy**. He succeeds Ankhil Das, who quit in October last year. She was embroiled in a controversy for opposing enforcement of hate-speech rules against right-wing leaders in the country. Aggarwal, in this role, will define and lead important policy development initiatives for Facebook in India on an agenda that covers user safety, data protection and privacy, inclusion and internet governance.

## D. Science & Technology

### BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode successfully test fired

- **BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode** was successfully test fired against a **decommissioned ship**. The test firing was carried out by Indian Navy.
- The missile performed highly complex manoeuvres and hit Bull's eye of the target. Ministry of Defence in a statement said that **BrahMos is the supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by DRDO and NPOM of Russia** as a **Brahmos Aerospace joint venture**, which became Brahmos Aerospace Private Limited.
- It has been deployed in all the three wings of the Indian Armed Forces. **The first launch of Brahmos took place in 2001** and till date numerous launches have taken place from various ships, Mobile Autonomous Launchers and Su-30 MKI aircraft, making it a versatile weapon.

The **BrahMos missile** is named after two rivers, the **Brahmaputra** and the **Moskva**. India is a member of the **MTCR**, India and Russia are now planning to jointly develop a new generation of Brahmos missiles with **600 km-plus range**.

### Indian-American among 18 astronauts selected for NASA's manned Moon mission

- An **Indian-American** is among the 18 astronauts selected by NASA for its manned mission to the Moon and beyond. NASA named the 18 astronauts – half of them women – who will train for its Artemis moon-landing programme.
- **Raja Jon Vurputoor Chari**, a graduate of the **US Air Force Academy**, **MIT**, and **US Naval Test Pilot School**, is the **only Indian-American** in the list.

**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. **James Frederick Bridenstine** is an American politician and the current administrator of the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration**. He became the **first member of Congress** to lead NASA.

### Rajnath Singh inaugurates the advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel test facility in Hyderabad

- Defence minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the advanced **Hypersonic Wind Tunnel test facility in Hyderabad**. The state-of-the-art facility is pressure vacuum driven enclosed free jet facility with nozzle exit of one-meter diameter. According to a defence release, this will simulate Mach 5 to 12. Mach represents the multiplication factor to the speed of sound, **making India the third country after the US and Russia to have such a facility**.
- **With this India has become the third country to have such a huge facility in size and capability after America and Russia**. The project is an indigenous development and an outcome of synergistic partnership with Indian industries.

### Jupiter-Saturn great conjunction

- The **December 21, 2020 great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn** is highly conspicuous in the west after sunset each evening now. On December 21, the pair was only **0.1 degree apart**.
- **Astronomers use the word conjunction to describe meetings of planets and other objects on our sky's dome**. They use the term **great conjunction to describe meetings of Jupiter and Saturn**, which are the **two biggest worlds in our solar system**. Though the two planets will appear spectacularly close together on the sky's dome now, **Jupiter and Saturn are actually 456 million miles (734,000 km) apart**. Saturn is nearly twice as far away as Jupiter.



- **Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions happen every 20 years**; the last one was in the year 2000. But these conjunctions aren't all created equal. **The 2020 great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn** was the **closest since 1623 and the closest observable** since 1226! **2020's extra-close Jupiter-Saturn conjunction** won't be matched again until the **Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of March 15, 2080.**

**Saturn is the sixth planet from the Sun and the second-largest in the Solar System, after Jupiter.** Saturn is named **after the Roman god of wealth and agriculture**; its astronomical symbol (♄) represents the god's sickle. At least **82 moons** are known to orbit Saturn. **Jupiter is the fifth planet from the Sun and the largest in the Solar System.** It is named after the Roman god Jupiter. Jupiter has **79 known moons.**

### **India's first artificial intelligence community center launched in Hyderabad**

- **Hexagon Capability Center India (HCCI)**, the largest product development unit of the technology major Hexagon AB has **launched the nation's first Artificial Intelligence Community Centre, HexArt**, was launched in Hyderabad.
- **The purpose of HexArt is to democratize AI knowledge cum skill to the masses and provide free education on AI to the community.** The fundamental and advanced-level courses are designed for students from Class 8 to Class 12 and senior engineering graduates respectively.

### **Maharashtra becomes first state in India to get dedicated action plan to protect pangolins**

- **The Maharashtra forest department** is set to be the **first state in India to have a dedicated action plan for conservation of pangolins – the world's most trafficked animal.**
- **Pangolins** are listed in Schedule I of India's Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, implying the highest degree of protection.

### **Mahindra World City, Chennai becomes India's first integrated city to be certified 'Zero Waste to Landfill'**

- **Mahindra World City, Chennai**, a first-of-its-kind integrated city built on environment-friendly principles, has achieved yet another milestone by becoming the first integrated city in India to receive third-party Zero Waste to Landfill (ZWL) certification.
- As part of its ZWL commitments, **MWC Chennai is diverting 99 percent of waste (amounting to nearly 135 tons of waste) generated within its industrial zone away from landfills**, thereby avoiding ~115 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every month.

### **Skyroot Aerospace becomes first Indian company to test-fire solid-fueled rocket engine**

- **Indian Space startup, Skyroot Aerospace**, has proven the crucial propulsion technology of their maiden rocket **Vikram-1**, with the latest test-firing of an engine. **Vikram-1 rocket is powered by four engines - three solid-fuel stages and one Liquid-fuel stage** that the firm has designed and developed.

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

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** will adopt one hundred (100) Atal Tinkering Labs across the country to promote education in the field of Space Education and Space Technology related innovations for school students.
- The Department of Space (DOS) and Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, announced that out of 100 ATLs, **Isro adopted 45 in phase 1 on January 11 and the remaining 55 will be adopted soon**, to promote education in STEM, space education and space technology related innovation for school students.

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

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

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

- In a significant development, a major-rank Indian Army officer, Anoop Mishra has indigenously developed the world's first universal bulletproof jacket 'Shakti' which can be used by both male and female combatants. The jacket is also the world's first flexible body armour.
- This is not his first such innovation by Major Anoop as the officer of the Indian Army's College of Military Engineering had developed a ballistic helmet in February 2020, which has the ability to stop an AK-47 bullet round fired from a distance of 10 meters. He had also developed a full-body protection bulletproof jacket which can withstand even sniper rifles. Major Anoop got into the development of bulletproof jackets after he had received gunshots on his vintage bulletproof jacket.
- The Indian Army's College of Military Engineering jointly with a private firm had earlier developed India's first and world's cheapest gunshot locator. It can locate the exact location of the bullet from a distance of 400 meters which will help to locate and neutralise terrorists faster.

## DRDO hands over Motor Bike Ambulance Rakshita to CRPF

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

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

## Elon Musk's SpaceX created a new world record by launching 143 satellites on a single rocket

- Elon Musk's SpaceX created a new world record by launching 143 satellites on a single rocket. SpaceX has beaten the Indian space agency ISRO's record of deploying 104 satellites in a single launch in February 2017. The launch vehicle for the SpaceX record-breaking flight was the Falcon 9 rocket.
- The 143 satellites launched last night include commercial and government CubeSats, microsats and 10 Starlink satellites. Onboard was also a spacecraft belonging to Nasa. With these satellites, SpaceX aims to provide near-global broadband internet coverage all over the world by 2021. According to sources, SpaceX offered a very low price of 15,000 dollars per kilogram for each satellite to be delivered to a polar sun-synchronous orbit.

## DRDO, Army develop India's first indigenous machine pistol ASMI

- The Pune-based facility of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Army's Mhow-based Infantry School have jointly developed India's first indigenous 9 mm machine pistol named 'Asmi'. The pistol is likely to have a production cost lower than Rs 50,000 each and has export potential as well.

## Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

- Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, PCV. The vaccine named Pneumosil has been developed by the Serum Institute of India Private Limited (SIPL) in collaboration with partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Recognizing SIPL as the world's largest manufacturer of vaccines by number of doses and its contribution to India's economy, Dr. Harsh Vardhan remarked that Serum Institute's Vaccines are used in 170 countries and every third child in the world is immunized with the manufacturer's vaccine.
- He reminded the audience that SIPL developed and got license of first indigenous Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) from Government of India during COVID-19 pandemic lock-down in line with Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi ji's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "Serum Institute's first Indigenous Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine will be available in the market under brand name "Pneumosil" at an affordable price in single dose (vial and pre-filled syringe) and Multidose (vial) presentations.

## Kerala declares Bird flu as State disaster

- **Kerala declares Bird flu as a State disaster as thousands of domestic birds were found to be infected by H5N8 virus.** The virus was reported from Alappuzha and Kottayam district.
- Authorities had issued high and **ordered culling of ducks, hens, and other domestic poultry found within one km radius of the affected zones**

**Bird flu, also called avian influenza, is a viral infection that can infect not only birds, but also humans and other animals. Most forms of the virus are restricted to birds. H5N1 is the most common form of bird flu. It's deadly to birds and can easily affect humans and other animals that come in contact with a carrier. According to the World Health Organization, H5N1 was first discovered in humans in 1997 and has killed nearly 60 percent of those infected. Currently, the virus isn't known to spread via human-to-human contact. Still, some experts worry that H5N1 may pose a risk of becoming a pandemic threat to humans. The first infection occurred in Hong Kong in 1997. The outbreak was linked to handling infected poultry.**

## Uttarakhand: First tiger translocation

- **The Rajaji Tiger Reserve is welcomed the first big cat from Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve** in the **first such relocation in Uttarakhand** aimed at tiger population management.
- **A total of five big cats from the Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve** — nearly eight years since conceptualisation of the project and four years after clearance from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) — are **scheduled to be translocated from Jim Corbett to Rajaji.**

## Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates country's highest Meteorological Centre at Leh

- Union Minister of Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan, virtually **inaugurated India's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh. After Itanagar Centre in Arunachal Pradesh, Leh Met centre at 3500 meters highest from mean sea level is the highest in the Himalayan region.**
- **With four Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) a Meteorological Department centre for Ladakh region** started working. Despite Covid pandemic, within Nine months of time the new centre is established to cater the arid cold desert and geo politically all-important Ladakh weather requirements.

## The world's first coral conservation facility in Australia

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

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

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

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

- **A spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates swung into orbit around Mars in a triumph for the Arab world's first interplanetary mission.**



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

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

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

- As the world witnessed the **historic landing of NASA's Perseverance rover on the Martian surface**, it was **Indian-American scientist, Swati Mohan**, who led the guidance, navigation, and control operations of the Mars 2020 mission.
- **Ms. Mohan also confirmed that the rover had survived a particularly tricky plunge** through the Martian atmosphere.

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and the second-smallest planet in the Solar System, being larger than only Mercury. In English, Mars carries the name of the Roman god of war and is often referred to as the "Red Planet". The latter refers to the effect of the iron oxide prevalent on Mars's surface, which gives it a reddish appearance distinctive among the astronomical bodies visible to the naked eye.

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

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

### Teeth from Siberian mammoths yield oldest DNA ever recovered

- **Scientists have recovered the oldest DNA on record**, extracting it from the molars of mammoths that **roamed northeastern Siberia up to 1.2 million years ago** in research that broadens the horizons for understanding extinct species.
- **The researchers had recovered and sequenced DNA from the remains of three individual mammoths** — elephant cousins that were among the large mammals that dominated Ice Age landscapes



### **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 launched to expand immunization coverage across country**

- Health and Family Welfare Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** launched **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0, (IMI 3.0)** to expand immunization coverage across the country.
- **IMI 3.0 is aimed at reaching the unreached population with all the available vaccines under Universal Immunisation Programme** and thereby accelerates the full immunization and **complete immunization coverage of children and pregnant women.**
- **The focus of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 will be the children and pregnant women who have missed their vaccine doses during the COVID-19 pandemic.** They will be identified and vaccinated during the two rounds. **Beneficiaries from migration areas and hard to reach areas will be targeted as they may have missed their vaccine doses during COVID19**

### **Fossils of 'Dickinsonia' found at Bhimbetka**

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

### **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.**

### **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.**

### **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 10<sup>th</sup> 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, Bisrakh 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.**

### India's first solar mission to use new technique for tracking eruptions from sun

- **Scientists have developed a new technique to track the huge bubbles of gas, threaded with magnetic field lines, which are ejected from the sun disrupting space weather and causing geomagnetic storms, satellite failures, and power outages.** The new technique will be used in India's first solar mission Aditya-L1.
- **As the ejections from the sun, technically called Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), cause various disturbances of the space environment,** forecasting their arrival time is very important. However, forecasting accuracy is **hindered by limited CME observations in interplanetary space.**
- **A software named Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACTus) based on a computer vision algorithm** was so far used to detect and characterise such eruptions automatically in the outer corona where these eruptions cease to show accelerations and propagate with a nearly constant speed.

### UNESCO Director-General and President of Slovenia Inaugurate First Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence

- **Borut Pahor, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, inaugurated the International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence (IRCAI), as a Category 2 centre under the auspices of UNESCO in Ljubljana, Slovenia.**
- The Director-General of UNESCO called for countries, organizations and individuals to combine their energy and propose solutions so that artificial intelligence (AI) be used for the common good of humanity. **The first of its kind, IRCAI will advance research on the use of AI for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

### NASA to land first person of colour on Moon

- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) will land the first person of colour on the moon as part of an international spaceflight program called Artemis.**
- Taking a giant step for diversity, the Biden-Harris Administration seeks to **land the first woman and the next man on the lunar South Pole by 2024.**
- **While the first cadre of astronauts for the Artemis program** was announced in December, **the first two crew members for Artemis III in 2024** have yet to be announced. **The initial group of 18** represents a diverse team of astronauts, including those new to NASA and veterans of spaceflight.

### Astronomers discover 12 rare quadruple quasars that can better tell rate of universe expansion

- **A group of international astronomers has discovered 12 rare quasars, each offering four distinct quadruple images, commonly called Einstein's cross.** This discovery could **help refine the existing understanding about our universe's rate of expansion and unravel mysteries surrounding dark matter.**
- **Scientists from the Gaia Gravitational Lenses Working Group (GraL), which included PhD student Priyanka Jalan from India,** combined multiple telescope observations to confirm this discovery.
- **The first quadruple quasar image was captured in 1985 and since then, only 50 such quasars have been identified.** The latest finding has now **increased the total confirmed Einstein's crosses by 25 per cent.**
- **Quasars are distant galaxies with extremely luminous nuclei. They consist of black holes,** measuring many million times larger than our Sun, surrounded by thick gaseous matter.
- **Quasar observations are mainly used to study dark matter in determining the evolution of galaxies and to understand the rate of expansion of our universe, which is measured using the Hubble-Lemaître constant.** "There are two ways of calculating the **Hubble-Lemaître constant**, but both values do not match, thus creating a discord.
- **More discoveries of such quasar quadruples can help resolve this,** thereby helping accurately calculate the rate at which our universe is expanding," who is a final year PhD student at Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital.

**The Big Bang theory is the prevailing cosmological model of the observable universe from the earliest known periods through its subsequent large-scale evolution. The model describes how the universe expanded from an initial state of high density and temperature, and offers a comprehensive explanation for a broad range of observed phenomena, including the abundance of light elements, the cosmic microwave background (CMB) radiation, and large-scale structure. Georges Lemaitre first noted in 1927 that an expanding universe could be traced back in time to an originating single point, which he called the “primeval atom”. Edwin Hubble confirmed through analysis of galactic redshifts in 1929 that galaxies are indeed drifting apart; this is important observational evidence for an expanding universe. In 1964, the CMB was discovered, which convinced many cosmologists that the steady-state theory was falsified, since, unlike the steady-state theory, the hot Big Bang predicted a uniform background radiation throughout the universe caused by the high temperatures and densities in the distant past. A wide range of empirical evidence strongly favors the Big Bang, which is now essentially universally accepted.**

### **NASA’s Mars helicopter takes flight, 1<sup>st</sup> for another planet**

- **NASA’s experimental helicopter Ingenuity rose into the thin air above the dusty red surface of Mars, achieving the first powered flight by an aircraft on another planet.**
- **The triumph was hailed as a Wright brothers moment. The mini 4-pound (1.8-kilogram) copter even carried a bit of wing fabric from the Wright Flyer that made similar history at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, in 1903. It was a brief hop — just 39 seconds and 10 feet (3 meters) — but accomplished all the major milestones.**
- **Flight controllers at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California declared success after receiving the data and images via the Perseverance rover. Ingenuity hitched a ride to Mars on Perseverance, clinging to the rover’s belly when it touched down in an ancient river delta in February.**

### **Indigenous vaccine COVAXIN demonstrates 100 per cent efficacy against severe COVID-19 disease in Phase-3 interim analysis**

- **Bharat Biotech and ICMR announced interim results from Phase - 3 trials of COVAXIN. It has reported overall interim clinical efficacy of 78 per cent of Covaxin. It said that the efficacy of the vaccine against severe COVID-19 disease was 100 per cent.**
- **In a statement, the company said, the second interim results showed India’s First COVID-19 Vaccine had demonstrated strong primary efficacy against severe COVID-19 disease. It said, due to the recent surge in cases, 127 symptomatic cases were recorded, resulting in a point estimate of vaccine efficacy of 78 per cent against mild, moderate, and severe COVID-19 disease.**

**COVAXIN, India’s indigenous COVID-19 vaccine by Bharat Biotech is developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Virology (NIV). The indigenous, inactivated vaccine is developed and manufactured in Bharat Biotech’s BSL-3 (Bio-Safety Level 3) high containment facility. The vaccine is developed using Whole-Virion Inactivated Vero Cell derived platform technology. Inactivated vaccines do not replicate and are therefore unlikely to revert and cause pathological effects. They contain dead virus, incapable of infecting people but still able to instruct the immune system to mount a defensive reaction against an infection.**

### **Earth Hour Day 2021**

- **Earth Hour Day was observed all over the world on March 27 at 8:30 p.m.** The day holds great significance as it calls for actions on various roles and ways that people can act on to raise awareness about the importance of nature.
- **Every year Earth Hour is celebrated with the theme and the theme for 2021 is “Climate Change to Save Earth”.** Climate change is one of the biggest concern of people and it is affecting everyone across the globe.
- **As the lights dim in homes and cities, Earth Hour will bring people together to put a virtual spotlight on our planet and the role people can play in global efforts for nature.**
- **Started as a symbolic lights-out event in Sydney in 2007 by WWF and partners, Earth Hour is now one of the world’s biggest environmental grassroots movements. Earth Hour, held annually on the last Saturday of March, involves millions of people in over 180 countries and territories turning off their lights to express respect for our world. Every year since 2007, millions of people take part in a global event to raise awareness about climate change.**



### India's first 3D printed house inaugurated at IIT-Madras

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman **inaugurated India's first 3D printed house at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras campus.**
- **The house has been constructed by Tvasta Manufacturing Solutions, a startup founded by IIT Madras alumni, which is a part of the new incubator of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) established at IIT Madras.**
- **The 600 square feet single-story house has been constructed using indigenous concrete 3D printing technology and in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity's Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter, the institute said. Using this technology, a house can be built in five days.**

### China's first Mars rover, Zhu Rong successfully landed on Mars

- **China just successfully landed its first rover on Mars, becoming only the second nation to do so.**
- **The Tianwen-1 mission, China's first interplanetary endeavor, reached the surface of the Red Planet, though Chinese space officials have not yet confirmed the exact time and location of touchdown. Tianwen-1 (which translates to "Heavenly Questions") arrived in Mars' orbit in February after launching to the Red Planet on a Long March 5 rocket in July 2020.**
- **After circling the Red Planet for more than three months, the Tianwen-1 lander, with the rover attached, separated from the orbiter to begin its plunge toward the planet's surface. Once the lander and rover entered Mars' atmosphere, the spacecraft endured a similar procedure to the "seven minutes of terror" that NASA's Mars rovers have experienced when attempting soft landings on Mars.**
- **The lander carrying China's first Mars rover - Zhu Rong successfully landed on Mars. Tianwen-1, consisting of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, was launched from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of southern China's island province of Hainan and entered the Mars orbit.**
- **China's first Mars rover will be named Zhurong after a traditional fire god, the government announced. The rover is aboard the Tianwen-1 probe that arrived in Mars orbit due to land in May to look for evidence of life.**

### NASA spacecraft starts trip back to Earth after collecting samples from Asteroid Benu

- **A NASA spacecraft, which scientists believe has collected samples from an asteroid, began its two-year journey back to Earth. NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft is attempting to complete a mission to visit Benu, a skyscraper-sized asteroid some 200 million miles (320 million km) from Earth, survey the surface, collect samples and deliver them back to Earth.**
- **The spacecraft found traces of hydrogen and oxygen molecules – part of the recipe for water and thus the potential for life – embedded in the asteroid's rocky surface, said Dante Lauretta, the OSIRIS-REx mission's principal investigator, in 2018.**
- **The trip back to Earth will take about two years. The spacecraft will then eject a capsule containing the asteroid samples, which NASA says will land in a remote area of Utah. NASA says samples will be distributed to research laboratories worldwide, but 75% of the samples will be preserved at the Johnson Space Center in Houston for future generations to study with technologies not yet created.**
- **The roughly \$800 million, minivan-sized OSIRIS-REx spacecraft, built by Lockheed Martin, launched in 2016 to grab and return the first US sample of pristine asteroid materials. Japan is the only other country to have accomplished such a feat.**

### A rare but serious fungal infection "black fungus" detected among Covid-19 patients

- **A rare but serious fungal infection, known as mucormycosis and colloquially as "black fungus", is being detected relatively frequently among Covid-19 patients in some states. The disease often manifests in the skin and also affects the lungs and the brain. With a number of mucormycosis cases detected in Delhi, Maharashtra and Gujarat, experts in the national Covid-19 task force issued an evidence-based advisory on the disease.**
- **'Black Fungus' is caused by a fungus named mucor, which is found on wet surfaces. Mucormycosis, to a large extent, is happening to people who have diabetes. It is very uncommon in those who are not diabetic. The cases of mucormycosis is causing blindness or other serious issues, health officials in Maharashtra and Gujarat said. This disease is not new but is on the rise among Covid patients because the use of steroids elevates sugar level and some medicines suppress the patients' immunity, said Dr Tatyrao Lahane, who heads the state government's Directorate of Medical Education and Research.**



- **This fungal infection came to light during the first ‘wave’ of the pandemic, typically a couple of weeks after the patient was discharged**, said Dr Hetal Marfatia, professor and head of the ENT department at the government-run KEM hospital in Mumbai. **The conditions like HIV/AIDS, uncontrolled diabetes, mellitus cancers, organ transplant, long-term corticosteroid and immunosuppressive therapy increase the risk of this disease and the predisposing factor for most of the cases prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **To prevent from mucormycosis, there is no vaccine. Therefore, it is difficult to avoid breathing in fungal spores because the fungi are common in the environment.** Some ways may be there to lower the chances of developing mucormycosis for those people who have weakened immune systems. These can be avoided by going in areas with a lot of dust including construction or excavation sites, avoiding direct contact with water-damaged buildings and flood water after hurricanes and natural disasters and avoiding activities that involve close contact to soil. If early detected then loss of eyesight, nose or jaw through clinical intervention can be prevented.

**Amphotericin B is an antifungal medication used for serious fungal infections and leishmaniasis. The fungal infections it is used to treat include aspergillosis, blastomycosis, candidiasis, coccidioidomycosis, and cryptococcosis.** For certain infections it is given with flucytosine. It is typically given by injection into a vein. **The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is a government regulatory agency that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was constituted vide Government of India Resolution dated 29<sup>th</sup> August, 1997 as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers as an independent Regulator for pricing of drugs and to ensure availability and accessibility of medicines at affordable prices.**

### **A first case of the Covid-19 variant contributing to the exploding outbreak in India has been detected in Switzerland.**

- **“The first case of the Indian variant of Covid-19 has been discovered in Switzerland “The person changed flights in a European country before flying on to Switzerland,”** adding that the positive sample was collected in March in the northern canton of Solothurn.
- The news comes after Belgian authorities said **a group of 20 Indian nursing students who arrived from Paris had tested positive for the variant in the country.** The health care system in India is buckling under a new wave of infections blamed in part on the new “double mutant” variant, known as B.1.617.

**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 (RT-PCR) from a nasopharyngeal swab. In India, the first case was reported in Kerala.**

### **73-Million-Year-Old “Talkative” Dinosaur Species found in Mexico**

- **Paleontologists identified a new species of dinosaur after a specimen from about 73 million years ago was found in northern Mexico, the country’s National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH).** The scientists said the conditions in which the dino was found explain its preservation.
- **“About 72 or 73 million years ago, a huge herbivore dinosaur died in what must have been a body of water full of sediment, so that its body was quickly covered by the earth and could be preserved through the ages,”.**
- **The animal is called Tlatolophus galorum. Its tail was discovered first, in the General Cepeda area of the northern state of Coahuila in 2013.**

### **Scientists Launch World’s First Satellite System to Watch over Reefs**

- **While coral reefs throughout the Indo-Pacific region have been bleaching in response to rising sea temperatures, the reefs around Marovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands have mostly kept their color.** But in March 2021, that all changed: **the lagoon’s once-healthy reefs turned ghostly white as the water temperature rose to new highs,** much to the distress of conservationists.
- **Coral bleaching – when rising temperatures push corals to expel their life-sustaining algae – has become a problem in just about every part of the world. Some models predict that 70% to 90% of the world’s coral reefs will be lost in a mere 30 years** if action isn’t taken to mitigate the effects of climate change and other anthropogenic pressures on the ocean, such as coastal development and unsustainable fishing practices.

### Cheetah to be re-introduced in India from Africa in November: MP govt

- **Cheetah, the world's fastest land animal which was declared extinct in India in 1952, is expected to be re-introduced into the country in November this year at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.**
- **The country's last spotted cheetah died in Chhattisgarh in 1947 and it was declared extinct in the country in 1952. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) some years back prepared a cheetah re-introduction project.**

**The cheetah, *Acinonyx jubatus*, is one of the oldest of the big cat species, with ancestors that can be traced back more than five million years to the Miocene era. The cheetah is also the world's fastest land mammal. It is listed as vulnerable in IUCN red listed species. The country's last spotted feline died in Chhattisgarh in 1947. Later, the cheetah — which is the fastest land animal — was declared extinct in India in 1952. The Asiatic cheetah is classified as a “critically endangered” species by the IUCN Red List, and is believed to survive only in Iran.**

### IFFCO introduces world's first Nano Urea for farmers

- **Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) introduced the world's first Nano Urea for the farmers. It is easy on the pocket of farmer and will be effective in increasing farmer's income.**
- **A 500 ml bottle of Nano Urea Liquid will replace at least one bag of conventional Urea. IFFCO has priced Nano Urea at 240 rupees per 500 ml bottle for the farmers which is 10 percent cheaper than the cost of a bag of conventional Urea.**
- **Nano Urea Liquid increases the production with improved nutritional quality and also give a huge positive impact on the quality of underground water, very significant reduction in the global warming with an impact on climate change and sustainable development.**

### World's first genetically modified rubber planted in Guwahati

- **The world's first genetically modified (GM) rubber plant was planted on the outskirts of Guwahati, Assam. Developed at the Kerala-based Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII), the sapling was planted by Rubber Board chairman and executive director KN Raghavan at the board's farm in Sarutari near Guwahati.**
- **The GM rubber plant, the first of its kind developed exclusively for the northeast, is expected to thrive in the climatic conditions of the region. The plant, which has additional copies of gene MnSOD (manganese containing superoxide dismutase) in it, is expected to revolutionise natural rubber production in India.**

### Rajasthan is first state to have genome lab

- **The facility for genome sequencing to identify new variants of SARS-CoV-2 has been started at Sawai Man Singh Government Medical College, making Rajasthan the first State in the country to have such a provision for complete sequencing at the State level.**
- **Rajasthan has become the first state in the country to start a genome sequencing facility. Meanwhile, following the detection of Delta+ variant of Covid in three states, the health department had enhanced surveillance across the state.**

### New type of ancient human discovered in Israel

- **Researchers working in Israel have identified a previously unknown type of ancient human that lived alongside our species more than 100,000 years ago. They believe the remains uncovered near the city of Ramla represent one of the “last survivors” of a very ancient human group.**
- **The finds consist of a partial skull and jaw from an individual who lived between 140,000 and 120,000 years ago. The team members think the individual descended from an earlier species that may have spread out of the region hundreds of thousands of years ago and given rise to Neanderthals in Europe and their equivalents in Asia.**
- **Dr Hila May of Tel Aviv University said the discovery reshaped the story of human evolution, particularly our picture of how the Neanderthals emerged. The general picture of Neanderthal evolution had in the past been linked closely with Europe.**

## NASA Selects 2 Missions to Study 'Lost Habitable' World of Venus

- **NASA has selected two new missions to Venus, Earth's nearest planetary neighbor. Part of NASA's Discovery Program, the missions aim to understand how Venus became an inferno-like world when it has so many other characteristics similar to ours – and may have been the first habitable world in the solar system, complete with an ocean and Earth-like climate.**
- **These investigations are the final selections from four mission concepts NASA picked in February 2020 as part of the agency's Discovery 2019 competition. Following a competitive, peer-review process, the two missions were chosen based on their potential scientific value and the feasibility of their development plans. The project teams will now work to finalize their requirements, designs, and development plans. NASA is awarding approximately \$500 million per mission for development. Each is expected to launch in the 2028-2030 timeframe.**

**Venus is the second planet from the Sun. It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty. As the brightest natural object in Earth's night sky after the Moon, Venus can cast shadows and can be, on rare occasions, visible to the naked eye in broad daylight. Venus lies within Earth's orbit, and so never appears to venture far from the Sun, either setting in the west just after dusk or rising in the east a little while before dawn. Venus orbits the Sun every 224.7 Earth days.**

## China reports world's first case of a human infected with H10N3 avian influenza

- **China has reported the world's first case of a human infected with H10N3 avian influenza in its eastern province of Jiangsu. The case, detected in a male aged 41 and living in Zhenjiang, a city in the eastern part of the province, was an occasional poultry-to-human transmission.**
- **The risk of spreading on a large scale was very low, adding that there hasn't been any case of human infection of H10N3 reported in the world before.**
- **Many different strains of bird flu are present in China and some sporadically infect people, usually those working with poultry. There is no indication that H10N3 can spread easily in humans. H10N3 is low pathogenic, which means it causes relatively less severe disease in poultry and is unlikely to cause a large-scale outbreak**

## Over 20 countries show interest in adopting India's CoWIN Platform to run their own Covid Vaccination Drives

- **Over 20 countries from across the world have shown interest in adopting India's CoWIN platform to run their own Covid-19 vaccination drives. Online registration began on 1 March via the Aarogya Setu app and Co-WIN ("Winning over COVID-19") website. RS Sharma, who is the chairperson of an empowered committee for India's Covid19 vaccine delivery tech platform CoWin, said the platform is built to handle up to 2 crore jabs a day, with the data uploaded real-time even if people walk in to get inoculated without registration or an appointment.**

## India's first medical drone delivery trials from June 18

- **India's first official beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) medical drone delivery experiment is scheduled to begin this week in Gauribidanur, some 80 km from Bengaluru.**
- **While the consortium of firms led by Bengaluru's Throttle Aerospace Systems (TAS) had got Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) approval for object delivery experiments the pandemic had led to delays in some other permissions from agencies.**

## Assam notifies Dihing Patkai as its 7<sup>th</sup> National Park

- **Government of Assam has added has notified Dihing Patkai as a National Park. "Raimona and Dihing Patkai National Parks have been formally notified, adding to Assam's total tally of National Park (NP) to 7. Assam has become the second state in the country to have the highest number of NPs.**

## India successfully test-fires Agni P, a new missile in Agni series

- **India successfully carried out the test-firing of a new missile in the Agni series known as Agni P off the coast of Odisha. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight tested the new generation nuclear-capable ballistic missile from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha. The missile has followed textbook trajectory, meeting all mission objectives with a high level of accuracy".**
- **Agni P is the first of the new class of Agni missile to be launched by DRDO. The ballistic missile weighs 50% less than Agni 3 and has new guidance and a new generation of propulsion. Since the missile is**



canisterised, it can be launched from rail and road and stored for a longer period and transported all across the country as per operational requirements. **Agni P is an advanced variant of the Agni class of missiles and is a canisterised missile with a range capability between 1000 km and 2000 km.**

### **Indian-American Sirisha Bandla became the third Indian to into space**

- **Aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla became the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space** when she **joined British billionaire Richard Branson on Virgin Galactic's first fully crewed suborbital test flight from New Mexico.**
- **Virgin Galactic's VSS Unity, as the spaceplane is called, took off for the 1.5-hour mission above New Mexico** following a 90-minute delay due to bad weather. **Ms Bandla joined Branson and five others on board Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo Unity to make a journey to the edge of space from New Mexico.** The **primary objective for Unity 22 was to serve as a test flight for future commercial passenger flights by Virgin Galactic.**
- **Ms Bandla, who was born in Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh and brought up in Houston, was astronaut No 004** and her flight role was Researcher Experience. The other crew members were two pilots and three other crewmates, including billionaire Branson, who turns 71 in a week.
- **She became the third Indian-origin woman to fly into space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams. Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma is the only Indian citizen to travel in space.** The former Indian Air Force pilot flew aboard Soyuz T-11 on April 3, 1984, part of the Soviet Interkosmos programme.

### **India's first cryptogamic garden opens in Dehradun**

- **India's first cryptogamic garden housing nearly 50 species of lichens, ferns and fungi was inaugurated in Uttarakhand's Dehradun district.** Located in the district's Chakrata town, the garden was inaugurated by social activist Anoop Nautiyal. Around 50 species have been grown in the garden at Deoban in Chakrata at a commanding height of 9,000 ft.
- **Cryptogamae means "hidden reproduction" referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are produced.** Thus, cryptogams represent the non-seed bearing plants.

### **Indian Government plans to revive 'Vaccine Maitri' in July-August, but only in neighbourhood**

- **Indian envoys are regularly assuring countries in the neighbourhood that New Delhi is keen to resume vaccine supplies that had been suspended** in April, but that prospect could be months away as domestic inoculation is the priority right now.
- Depending on the scale of production of vaccines within the country, New Delhi is **aiming at July-end or August to at least release those vaccines that have been bought by Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal and are now in pending status.** The supplies to Bhutan, which received vaccines from India as grants, will be prioritised too.
- **India, the largest vaccine producer in the world, started sending Covid shots abroad, both as grants as well as commercial shipments, from 20 January onwards under an initiative labelled 'Vaccine Maitri'.** However, as India started facing a vaccine shortage domestically, Vaccine Maitri came to a halt in April. India had shipped over 66 million doses abroad by then.

**Vaccine Maitri (Vaccine Friendship) is a humanitarian and commercial initiative undertaken by the Indian government to provide COVID-19 vaccines to countries around the world. The government started providing vaccines from 20 January 2021. As of 9 May 2021, India had delivered around 66.3 million doses of vaccines to 95 countries. Of these, 10.7 million doses were gifted to 47 countries by the Government of India. The remaining 54 million were supplied by the Serum Institute of India under its commercial and COVAX obligations. In late March 2021, the Government of India temporarily froze exports of the Covishield, citing India's own COVID crisis and the domestic need for these vaccines. India kicked off international shipment of the vaccines on 20 January 2021, only four days after starting its own vaccination program. Bhutan and Maldives were the first countries to receive vaccines as a grant by India.**

### **ELSA-d the world's first commercial mission to demonstrate a space debris removal system launched**

- **ELSA-d the world's first commercial mission to demonstrate a space debris removal system was launched recently from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.**
- **End-of-Life Services by Astroscale demonstration Mission (Elsa-d).** It was developed by Astroscale, a Japanese-UK company. The mission will be **operated from the UK's in-orbit servicing control centre (IOCC) at Satellite Applications Catapult in Harwell, near Oxford.**



- **ELSA-d is a small satellite designed to find, rendezvous and clamp on to an unwanted satellite.** It will then push it into the Earth's atmosphere, where it will burn up. The removal of space debris is the key to space sustainability, which will ensure that new satellites can be operated without the risk of colliding with old ones.
- **The European Space Agency estimates 3,600 working satellites are in orbit, and more than 28,000 pieces of debris are being tracked by the US Space Surveillance Network.**

### **Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos back on earth after 10-min flight to space on Blue Origin's New Shepard spacecraft**

- **Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos back on earth after 10-min flight to space on Blue Origin's New Shepard spacecraft.** He was accompanied by brother Mark Bezos, Wally Funk, and 18-year-old passenger Oliver Daemen. The astronauts experienced three to four minutes of zero-g and travelled above the Kármán Line, the internationally-recognised boundary of space.
- **It is a rocket system meant to take tourists to space successfully.** The system is built by Blue Origin. New Shepard has been named after astronaut Alan Shepard, the first American to go to space. It offers flights to space over 100 km above the Earth and accommodation for payloads. The system is a fully reusable, vertical takeoff and vertical landing space vehicle.
- **It is a rocket system that has been designed to take astronauts and research payloads past the Karman line – the internationally recognised boundary of space.** The idea is to provide easier and more cost-effective access to space meant for purposes such as academic research, corporate technology development and entrepreneurial ventures among others.

### **Philippines becomes first country to approve genetically modified 'golden rice' for commercial production**

- **The Philippines has become the world's first country to approve the commercial production of genetically modified "golden rice".** Health experts believe that 'golden rice' developed by the Philippines will help to fight childhood blindness and save lives in the developing world.
- **Golden rice is the first genetically modified rice approved for commercial propagation in South and Southeast Asia.** Food safety regulators in the US, Canada, and Australia had analyzed the golden rice and approved it as a crop but not for commercial production. Bangladesh is currently reviewing it.

**Golden Rice is a new type of rice that contains beta-carotene (provitamin A), which is converted into vitamin A as needed by the body and gives the grain its golden color. It is developed through genetic engineering and produces two new enzymes that complete the beta-carotene expression in the rice grain. Research has indicated that one cup of Golden Rice can provide up to 50% of the daily requirement of an adult for vitamin A.**

### **NASA selects SpaceX for Jupiter moon mission**

- **Europa Clipper will conduct a detailed survey of Jupiter's moon and use a "sophisticated suite" of science instruments to probe whether Jupiter's moon has conditions suitable for life.** NASA selected Elon Musk's SpaceX to launch its probe of Jupiter's moon Europa, which has liquid oceans that could harbour life.
- **The National Aeronautics and Space Administration said in a statement that the contract for the Europa Clipper mission, scheduled to launch in October 2024 on a Falcon Heavy rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, is worth \$178 million.**

**Europa Clipper (previously known as Europa Multiple Flyby Mission) is an interplanetary mission in development by NASA comprising an orbiter. Planned for launch in October 2024, the spacecraft is being developed to study the Galilean moon Europa through a series of flybys while in orbit around Jupiter. The goals of Europa Clipper are to explore Europa, investigate its habitability and aid in the selection of a landing site for the future Europa Lander.**

### **ISRO-NASA joint satellite project NISAR proposed to be launched early 2023**

- **The ISRO-NASA joint mission NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite, aimed at making global measurement of land surface changes using advanced radar imaging, is proposed to be launched in early 2023.**
- **"NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) has not been launched yet. NISAR is proposed to be launched in early 2023". It is a dual-band (L-band and S-band) radar imaging mission with the capability of full polarimetric and interferometric modes of operation to observe minor changes in land, vegetation and cryosphere.**

- **NISAR will scan the globe every 12 days over the course of its three-year mission of imaging the Earth's land, ice sheets and sea ice to give an “unprecedented” view of the planet. NISAR will detect movements of the planet's surface as small as 0.4 inches over areas about half the size of a tennis court.**

### **Scientists Confirm Black Hole and Neutron Star Collisions in World-First Discovery**

- **Weeks after scientists confirmed that it was impossible for a black hole to decrease in size over time, signals from the collision of two neutron stars crashing into black holes have been detected for the first time.** The signals have been detected in the US and Europe from a collision that happened hundreds of millions of light-years ago.
- **For the first time, scientists have unambiguously confirmed the collision of a black hole and a neutron star:** The fateful moment two extreme objects come together in an event so immensely powerful, its ripples across the cosmos can still be discerned a billion years later. Amazingly enough, this astronomical discovery has now been made not once, but twice, as an international collaboration of thousands of scientist's reports.
- **“In January 2020, a pair of events, named GW200105 and GW200115 was detected by gravitational-wave observatories.** This will be the first detection of a hybrid pair seen in gravitational waves,” LIGO India said.
- **Indian scientist Dr Shasvath Kapadia from the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) in Bengaluru helped with the estimation of the neutron star-black hole merger rate of the collision.** India has been contributing to the research around gravitation waves by its LIGO-India Scientific Collaboration (LISC).

### **Hyderabad-based Grene Robotics develops India's 1<sup>st</sup> indigenous drone defence dome – ‘Indrajaal’**

- **Hyderabad-based technology R&D firm Grene Robotics has designed and developed India's first indigenous drone defence dome called “Indrajaal”.**
- **The drone defence dome has the capability to autonomously protect an area of 1000-2000 sq km against the aerial threats by assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), loitering munitions, and Low- Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.**
- **“For the first time in India and many times, globally rogue forces have adopted cutting-edge technologies such as UAVs, Smart Swarms, etc. The ANTI-UAV systems will not only provide protection to defence bases but it will be beneficial for linear infrastructures like international borders against advanced weaponry.**

### **China declared malaria-free by WHO**

- **China was officially certified ‘malaria-free’ by the World Health Organization (WHO) becoming the second country in the Asia Pacific region to get the tag, after Sri Lanka in 2016.**
- **The Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance (APLMA), Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN) and their partner The RBM Partnership welcomed China's achievement and noted the country's contributions in the fight against malaria.**

**Malaria is a mosquito-borne infectious disease that affects humans and other animals. Malaria causes symptoms that typically include fever, tiredness, vomiting, and headaches. Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. It is preventable and curable.**

### **Rajasthan to develop corridor connecting 3 tiger reserves**

- **After the declaration of Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary as the fourth Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, the state government has been planning on developing a tiger corridor connecting three Tiger Reserves passing through districts including Sawai Madhopur, Kota, and Bundi.**
- **Rajasthan Government had earlier in April 2021 had sent the proposal to develop Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary for Tigers which will connect Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the Northeast to the Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve on the Southern side of Rajasthan.**

### **‘Earth Overshoot Day’ has shifted back to July 29, says WWF**

- **Humanity has again used up all biological resources that our planet regenerates during the entire year by July 29, 2021, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).**

- **This is worryingly the same date that the world reached two years ago in 2019.** This means that the modest gains accrued from the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as far as humanity's ecological footprint is concerned have been lost.
- **Humanity currently uses 74 per cent more than what the planet's ecosystems can regenerate — or 1.7 Earths. From Earth Overshoot Day until the end of the year, humanity operates on ecological deficit spending.**

**Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. In 2021, Earth Overshoot Day lands on July 29. We maintain this deficit by liquidating stocks of ecological resources and accumulating waste, primarily carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Earth Overshoot Day is hosted and calculated by Global Footprint Network, an international research organization that provides decision-makers with a menu of tools to help the human economy operate within Earth's ecological limits.**

### **World's first commercial fully re-programmable satellite lifts off**

- **Eutelsat Quantum, the world's first commercial fully re-programmable satellite lifted off from French Guiana on board an Ariane 5 rocket, with the hope of a new era of more flexible communications.**
- **The European Space Agency (ESA) posted from its official handle a photo of the Eutelsat Quantum satellite lifting off and said that it is the "first commercial fully flexible software-defined satellite in the world".**
- **"Eutelsat Quantum, developed under an ESA partnership project with satellite operator Eutelsat and prime manufacturer Airbus, is the first commercial fully flexible software-defined satellite in the world".**
- **"Because it can be reprogrammed in orbit, it can respond to changing demands for data transmission and secure communications during its 15-year lifetime. Its beams can be redirected to move in almost real-time to provide information to passengers onboard moving ships or planes."**

**The European Space Agency (ESA) is an intergovernmental organisation of 22 member states dedicated to the exploration of space. Established in 1975 and headquartered in Paris, ESA has a worldwide staff of about 2,200 in 2018 and an annual budget of about 6.5 billion in 2021. The main European launch vehicle Ariane 5 is operated through Arianespace with ESA sharing in the costs of launching and further developing this launch vehicle. Josef Aschbacher is the Director General of the European Space Agency (ESA) since 1 March 2021**

### **Blue Origin launched New Shepard spacecraft**

- **Jeff Bezos' space flight company Blue Origin has launched its New Shepard (NS) spacecraft from West Texas. The spacecraft will fly a NASA lunar landing technology demonstration on the exterior of the booster, and commercial and NASA-supported payloads inside the crew capsule. Both elements of the vehicle had come back down to Earth for soft, parachute-aided touchdowns by about 11 minutes after liftoff. This mission was the 17<sup>th</sup> overall for New Shepard and therefore carried the designation NS-17.**
- **The company's reusable New Shepard rocket-capsule combo aced its latest mission on Aug. 26, an uncrewed jaunt that carried a variety of scientific experiments, as well as some pioneering artwork, to and from suborbital space.**
- **It was the first flight for Blue Origin since July 20, when company founder Jeff Bezos and three other people launched on the first-ever crewed New Shepard mission. Blue Origin also operates a second New Shepard, known as RSS First Step; that vehicle carried Bezos, his brother Mark, 18-year-old Dutch student Oliver Daemen and 82-year-old aviation pioneer Wally Funk on July 20.**

### **India's first cattle genomic chip launched in Telangana**

- **To conserve indigenous breeds of cattle like Gir, Kankrej, Sahiwal and Ongole, the National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB) has developed India's first cattle genomic chip, IndiGau.**
- **This chip technology will help in the selection of high yielding cattle and improvement of characteristics. With 11,496 markers, IndiGau is touted as the largest cattle chip in the world.**
- **"IndiGau is purely indigenous and the largest cattle chip of the world. It has 11,496 markers (SNPs) more than that placed on 777K Illumina chips of US & UK breeds. This chip of our own indigenous cows is a great example of a self-reliant India".**

## India approves first Covid vaccine for children above 12

- **Zyklus Cadila received an approval for the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for ZyCoV-D, the world's first and India's indigenously developed DNA based vaccine against Covid-19.**
- **The company said it plans to manufacture 100 million to 120 million doses of ZyCoV-D annually and has started to stockpile the vaccine. ZyCoV-D will be administered in children above 12 years and adults.**
- **The vaccine has efficacy of 66.6 percent and it is to be stored at 2 degree Celsius to 8 degree Celsius. The vaccine is needle free to be administered intradermally in three doses at day 0, 28 and 56. It was approved after evaluation of interim Phase III clinical trial results in consultation with Subject Expert Committee of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).**
- **The vaccine has been developed in partnership with the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India under the 'Mission COVID Suraksha' and implemented by BIRAC, ZyCoV-D has been supported under COVID-19 Research Consortia through National Biopharma Mission for Preclinical studies, Phase I and Phase II Clinical Trials and under the Mission COVID Suraksha for Phase III Clinical Trial," an official release stated.**

The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)** is India's national regulatory body for pharmaceuticals and medical devices. It serves a similar function to the **European Medicines Agency of the European Union, the PMDA of Japan, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the United States, and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency of the United Kingdom, and the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) of China.** **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** is the **head of department of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization of the Government of India responsible for approval of licences of specified categories of drugs such as blood and blood products, IV fluids, vaccines, and sera in India.** DCGI also sets standards for manufacturing, sales, import, and distribution of drugs in India.

## Scientists develop world's first high-resolution 3D image of a monkey brain

- **Scientists in China have developed the world's first high-resolution, 3D image of a monkey brain, which can one day lead to treatments for diseases such as Parkinson's.** A team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing created a detailed map of a complete macaque monkey brain using fluorescent imaging techniques.
- **The team created a new technique, known as Volumetric Imaging with Synchronous on-the-fly-scan and Readout (VISoR).** Using VISoR, they tested the brains of three 10-year-old macaque monkeys.

## Delhi gets its first animal DNA lab set up in Rohini

- **In a first, the Capital got an "Animal DNA Laboratory" set up at the Forensic Science Laboratory in Rohini.**
- **Before this, samples used to be sent to other States that have animal DNA testing facilities for the test results.** Sometimes, the process delayed investigations. Now, the laboratory can examine and identify the animal species of meat products, frozen meat packing, slaughter cases and more.

**Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)** is a molecule composed of two polynucleotide chains that coil around each other to form a double helix carrying genetic instructions for the development, functioning, growth and reproduction of all known organisms and many viruses. DNA and ribonucleic acid (RNA) are **nucleic acids.** Alongside proteins, lipids and complex carbohydrates (polysaccharides), **nucleic acids** are one of the **four major types of macromolecules that are essential for all known forms of life.**

## India's highest herbal park inaugurated near Indo-China border in Uttarakhand

- **India's highest altitude herbal park has been inaugurated at Mana village in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. The highest altitude herbal park is situated at a height of 11,000 feet and is close to the Indo-China border. Mana is the last Indian village in Chamoli bordering China and is adjacent to Badrinath temple.** The herbal park has around 40 species found in high altitude alpine areas in the Himalayan region.
- **The main aim of this high altitude herbal park is to conserve various medicinally and culturally important alpine species and to do research on their propagation and habitat ecology. It has been developed in three years under the central government's Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) scheme.**



### **Kaziranga becomes India's first national park to be equipped with satellite phones**

- **Assam's Kaziranga National Park (KNP) became the first national park in India to be equipped with satellite phones.** An official of the Kaziranga National Park said that the step to equip the forest personnel with satellite phones would boost anti-poaching measures in the park.
- **The Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) procured the ten satellite phones for the National Park at an estimated cost of Rs 16 lakh.** BSNL will be the service provider and the park authorities will bear the monthly expenses.

### **India conducted first user trial of 5,000-km range Agni V Missile**

- **India conducted flight-test of the 5,000-km range Agni V missile with the 1<sup>st</sup> user trial of Intercontinental-Range Ballistic Missile (ICBM) indicating its early induction in the Armed Forces.**
- **Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) have developed the Agni-V Intercontinental Ballistic Missile.** The Agni V missile can carry a nuclear payload of 1,500 kg.
- **The country had planned to induct Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Agni-V in 2020 after the hat-trick pre-induction trials in 2018,** however, the COVID-19 pandemic forced India to postpone the induction.
- **Besides India, only seven countries, including the US, UK, Russia, China, France, Israel and North Korea possess Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles in their defence arsenal.**
- **Meanwhile, China questioned India's plan to conduct the trial of an intercontinental-range ballistic missile, citing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1172.**
- **India has a series of Agni missiles in its armoury. Agni-1 has a range of 700 km, Agni-2 with a range of 2,000 km, Agni-3 and Agni-4 can strike targets between 2,500 km and 3,500 km.**

**Agni-V ("Fire") is an Indian nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL). The missile is believed to have a range of around 5,000 km. It is a three-stage, road-mobile and solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missile which is transported by a truck and launched via a canister.**

### **Findings on Sun's atmosphere to aid India's first solar mission**

- **A study by Indian scientists has shown how conditions and events in the solar atmosphere like coronal mass ejections influence the accuracy of space weather prediction, which is crucial for the health of our satellites.** This understanding will aid the interpretation of data from the upcoming Aditya-L1, India's first solar mission.
- **Space weather refers to the conditions in the solar wind and near-Earth space, which can adversely affect the performance of space-borne and ground-based technological systems. The space weather near the Earth is mainly due to Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), which are frequent explosive expulsions of huge magnetized plasma from the Sun into its surroundings that can blow past the Earth.**

### **India's first dugong conservation reserve**

- **India's first Dugong conservation reserve will be built in Tamil Nadu for the conservation of Dugong,** a marine animal that has been enlisted vulnerable to extinction on a global scale by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). **In India, dugongs are seen in the Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Palk Bay, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- **The dugong (Dugong dugon), also called the sea cow, is a herbivorous mammal.** They can grow upto three meters long, weigh about 300 kilograms, and live for about 25 years, grazing on seagrass and coming to the surface to breathe. They are found in over 30 countries and in **India are seen in the Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Palk Bay, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**

**Dugong or the sea cow is the State animal of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This endangered marine species survive on seagrass and other aquatic vegetation found in the area. It is the only herbivorous mammal that is strictly marine and is the only extant species in the family Dugongidae.**

### **Researchers complete first-ever detailed map of world's coral reefs**

- **Researchers have completed a comprehensive online map of the world's coral reefs by using more than 2 million satellite images from across the globe.**

- **The Allen Coral Atlas, named after late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, will act as a reference for reef conservation, marine planning and coral science as researchers try to save these fragile ecosystems that are being lost to climate change.**
- **The maps, which include areas up to 50 feet (15 meters) deep, are being used to inform policy decisions about marine protected areas, spatial planning for infrastructure such as docks and seawalls and upcoming coral restoration projects.**

**Coral reefs in India are one of the most ancient and dynamic ecosystems of India. The coral reefs not only provide a sanctuary to a myriad of marine life but also play a key role in protecting the coastline from erosion. India has about 7517 km of coastline including islands but mainland coast is 6100 km. The Coral reefs in India are mainly restricted to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Palk Strait and the Lakshadweep islands. All of these reefs are Fringing reefs, except Lakshadweep which are Atolls.**

### **Tata Steel commissions India's first plant for CO<sub>2</sub> capture from Blast Furnace gas**

- **Tata Steel commissioned a 5 tonnes per day (TPD) carbon capture plant at its Jamshedpur Works, making it the country's first steel company to adopt such a carbon capture technology that extracts CO<sub>2</sub> directly from the Blast Furnace gas.**
- **Tata Steel will reuse the captured CO<sub>2</sub> on-site to promote the circular carbon economy. This Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU) facility uses amine-based technology and makes the captured carbon available for onsite reuse. The depleted CO<sub>2</sub> gas is sent back to the gas network with increased calorific value. This project has been executed with technological support from Carbon Clean, a global leader in low-cost CO<sub>2</sub> capture technology.**

### **Sikkim declares 'Katley' as state fish**

- **The Sikkim government has declared 'Cooper Mahseer' locally named 'Katley' as the state fish. State government has declared *Neolissochilus hexagonolepis* commonly known as Copper Mahseer and locally named as 'Katley' as a state fish to highlight the importance of the fish and to give emphasis to its conservation measures.**
- **"In Sikkim, Katley is found in varied altitudes covering entire state predominantly confined in Teesta and Rangit rivers and their tributaries. In the year 1992, ICAR-National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBFGR), Lucknow had categorized Katley fish as endangered species. Later on, in the year 2014 the fish was also categorized as endangered by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)".**

### **India now has 10 International Blue Flag beaches**

- **Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced that India now has 10 International Blue Flag beaches with the addition of Kovalam and Eden beaches this year and recertification for 8 beaches which got the tag last year.**
- **The Foundation for Environment Education in Denmark (FEE), which accords the globally recognised eco-label - the Blue Flag certification has also given re-certification for eight nominated beaches—Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden (Odisha), and Radhanagar (Andaman and Nicobar Islands), which were awarded the Blue Flag certificate last year.**
- **FEE Denmark conducts regular monitoring and audits for strict compliance with the 33 criteria at all times. A waving "Blue Flag" is an indication of 100 per cent compliance to these 33 stringent criteria and sound health of the beach, the release said.**

### **Razan Al Mubarak becomes first woman from the Arab world to head IUCN**

- **Razan Al Mubarak, the Managing Director of both the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, was elected President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), one of the world's largest and best-known conservation institutions.**
- **Ms. Al Mubarak is the first woman from the Arab world to head IUCN and only the second woman to run lead the 73-year-old conservation organization. She will succeed Zhang Zinsheng.**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It is involved in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy, and education. IUCN's mission is to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable". The organization is best known to the wider public for compiling and publishing the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which assesses the conservation status of species worldwide. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland.

### **Gaganyaan Mission likely to be launched by 2022 end or early 2023**

- **India's 'Gaganyaan' mission** is likely to be launched by the end of 2022 or early 2023, Union minister Jitendra Singh said. The mission, originally scheduled for a launch by 2022, was delayed due to coronavirus pandemic. It aims to launch a manned mission in the Lower Earth Orbit.
- "We could have actually done this (launched Gaganyaan by 2022). We had planned to time it along the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's Independence, but it could not happen that way because of the inevitable delay caused due to Covid-19.
- "The Oceania countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific Island countries can also collaborate (with India) and work on joint space technology solutions and innovative products,". 'Mangalyaan', India's Mars Orbiter Mission, was tracked from Fiji. India, Australia hold bilateral meet to discuss defence cooperation, deepening military engagements and cooperation in emerging defence technologies.
- The Gaganyaan crew module is being developed by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, the Gaganyaan crew module will be the first indigenous spacecraft to take Indian astronauts into space and return them safely to Earth.
- The Gaganyaan mission is an Rs 10,000-crore mission aims to send a three-member Indian crew to space for a period of five to seven days and safely return them to Earth. GSLV Mk III, also called the LVM-3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3,) the three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle, will be used to launch Gaganyaan as it has the necessary payload capability.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is an Indian state-owned aerospace and defence company, headquartered in Bangalore (Bengaluru), India. Established on 23 December 1940, HAL is one of the oldest and largest aerospace and defence manufacturers in the world today. HAL began aircraft manufacturing as early as 1942 with licensed production of Harlow PC-5, Curtiss P-36 Hawk and Vultee A-31 Vengeance for the Indian Air Force.

The Gaganyaan system module, called the Orbital Module will have three Indian astronauts, including a woman. It will circle Earth at a low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from earth for 5-7 days. The Gaganyaan Programme envisages undertaking the demonstration of human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in the short-term and will lay the foundation for a sustained Indian human space exploration programme in the long run. The objective of Gaganyaan programme is to demonstrate indigenous capability to undertake human space flight mission to LEO. As part of this programme, two unmanned missions and one manned mission are approved by Government of India (GoI). On August 28, 2021, ISRO successfully conducted the first hot test of the System Demonstration Model (SDM) of the Gaganyaan Service Module Propulsion System for a duration of 450 seconds at the test facility of ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. In June 2019, the Human Space Flight Centre of the ISRO has signed a contract with a Russian Glavkosmos company for selection support, medical examination and space training of Indian astronauts for the country's proposed maiden manned space mission 'Gaganyaan'.

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 Kailasavadvivoo 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.

## E. Sports

### Jehan Daruvala creates history, becomes first Indian to win F2 race

- **Jehan Daruvala created history** when he **became the first Indian to win a Formula 2 race during the Sakhir Grand Prix**. A thrilling battle against F2 champion Mick Schumacher and Daniel Ticktum saw the 22-year-old Indian emerge on top in the support race of the season-ending Formula 1 Grand Prix.

### Manipur's Bala Devi becomes the first Indian Woman Footballer to score in Europe

- **Manipur's Ngangom Bala Devi created history by becoming the first Indian woman to score in a professional European football league**. She scored against Motherwell for Rangers FC and won the match 9-0.
- **Bala Devi plays forward in the game**. She joined the Scottish club in January 2020 and **became the first Indian woman to sign a professional football contract overseas**.

### Cristiano Ronaldo Wins Prestigious Golden Foot 2020 Award

- **Cristiano Ronaldo has won the prestigious Golden Foot 2020 award on in Monaco** for his outstanding performance over the previous season. He netted the ball on 44 occasions in 44 games and **helped Juventus top Group G in the ongoing UEFA Champions League**.
- **Despite missing out on the coveted FIFA The Best Award to Bayern Munich icon Robert Lewandowski, Ronaldo picked up the Golden Foot 2020 award** – something that is missing from arch-rival Lionel Messi's trophy cabinet.

### Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurates 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence across India

- **Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence across India** in the presence of State Sports Ministers. The 8 States include Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Kerala, Telangana, Nagaland, Karnataka and Odisha.
- **With a vision to make India one of the top 10 countries in 2028 Olympics, the Khelo India State Centres of Excellence** will ensure that **athletes proficient in a certain sport** can be given the world-class specialised training and these centers become the best facilities in the country to train athletes in the priority sport for which they have been earmarked.

### Ronaldo beats Messi to be crowned Player of the Century at Globe Soccer Awards

- **Cristiano Ronaldo and Pep Guardiola were honoured at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai**, the **duo named player and coach of the century** respectively. Barcelona's Lionel Messi, Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and former player Ronaldinho were also in the race to bag the accolade but the Portuguese outclassed all to clinch the award.

### Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67<sup>th</sup> chess Grandmaster

- While every other sport saw setbacks in the year of the pandemic, chess in India **thrived it was for the first time India won the Chess Olympiad**.
- The year 2020 concludes with yet another good news as **Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67<sup>th</sup> Grandmaster at the age of 14 years 9 months and 17 days**.
- **Leon, who was locked out in Europe because of the COVID-induced lockdown**, played a total of 16 tournaments lifting his ELO rating by 140 points (2452 to 2544) and achieving all three GM norms within three months. **His feat makes him the 29<sup>th</sup> youngest GM in the world. He is also the second GM from Goa**.

### India's largest hockey stadium planned in Rourkela, will host 2023 world cup games

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced that **India's biggest hockey stadium will come up at Rourkela and the 20,000-capacity facility will host matches of FIH men's World Cup in 2023**. Spread over 15 acres of land, the stadium will be constructed in the Biju Patnaik University of Technology campus.

### Sports Ministry approves inclusion of four indigenous games in Khelo India Youth Games

- **The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four indigenous Games to be a part of Khelo India Youth Games 2021, scheduled to take place in Haryana**. The games include Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba.
- **The four selected games represent different parts of the country**. Kalaripayattu has its origin from Kerala and has practitioners all over the world. Mallakhamba has been well-known across India and



**Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra** have been the hotspots of this sport. **Gatka originates from Punjab** and this traditional fighting style of the Nihang Sikh Warriors is used both as self-defense as well as a sport. **Thang-Ta, a Manipur marital art** has passed into oblivion in the recent decades, but the sport will get national recognition again with the help of the Khelo India Youth Games 2021.

### **Govt to start 1000 Khelo India small centres to encourage sports culture in country**

- **Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju** said that the **government** has made various policy changes and taken up initiatives to encourage and support sportspersons and the sporting community even after they retire.
- **Addressing the 10<sup>th</sup> Global Sports Summit, TURF 2020, organized by FICCI, Mr. Rijiju said, that we are also starting 1000 Khelo India small centres across the country** that will help retired sports persons get employment or some role in shaping the sports culture of the country.

### **Russia can't use its name and flag at the next 2 Olympics**

- **Russia will not be able to use its name, flag and anthem at the next two Olympics or at any world championships for the next two years** after a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.
- **The Lausanne-based court halved the four-year ban proposed last year by the World Anti-Doping Agency** in a landmark case that accused Russia of state-ordered tampering of a testing laboratory database in Moscow. The ruling also blocked Russia from bidding to host major sporting events for two years.
- **Russian athletes and teams will still be allowed to compete at next year's Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing**, as well as world championships including the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, if they are not banned for or suspected of doping.

### **The ICC Awards of the Decade announced**

- **Virat Kohli**, who had **scored 20,396 runs in all international cricket during the time period, which is more than anyone else**, was also part of team India that won the ICC CWC 2011 and ICC Champions Trophy 2013. He was also named ICC Cricketer of the Year in both 2017 and 2018, so it was no surprise that he **emerged as the clear jury favourite with winning the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade**.
- **All-rounder, Ellyse Perry was a clear favourite in the Female Cricketer of the Decade category and won the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award**, as she had scored 4,349 runs with four centuries and took 213 wickets in all international crickets during the decade – which was also the most wickets taken by any player.
- **Steve Smith bagged the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Decade** for scoring 7,040 runs in 69 Tests in the period at an average of 65.79 with 26 centuries. He was also named the ICC Player of the Year in 2015 and ICC Test Player of the Year in 2015 and 2017. In the MRF Tyres ICC Test Player Rankings, his points tally was of 947 at the end of 2017 which is the second-highest in the history of the ICC Test batting rankings history.
- **Rashid Khan took home the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Decade award**, for taking 89 wickets at an average of just 12.62 apiece with an economy rate of 6.14 runs per over in 48 matches during the decade.
- **MS Dhoni won the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade**, chosen by fans **unanimously for his gesture of calling back former England batter Ian Bell following a disputable runout at Trent Bridge in 2011**.

**The ICC Awards of the Decade is a one-off edition of the ICC Awards annual awards programme**, aimed at celebrating the stand-out performers and moments from the past ten years of international cricket. **For the first time the fans' voice will be heard in selecting the winners across categories including the Sir Garfield Sobers and Rachael Heyhoe Flint Awards**, which celebrate the best overall player from the men's and women's game over the past decade. **The fan vote will make up 10% of the voting, while votes from an expert panel will make up the remaining 90%.** The voting panel took into account **players' performance between 1 January 2011 and 7 October 2020.** The announcement of the ICC World XI Teams, along with the winners of the individual ICC awards, was made on 28 December 2020.

### **Ronaldo beats Messi to be crowned Player of the Century at Globe Soccer Awards**

- **Cristiano Ronaldo and Pep Guardiola were honoured at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai, the duo named player and coach of the century** respectively. Barcelona's Lionel Messi, Liverpool's Mohamed Salah and former player Ronaldinho were also in the race to bag the accolade but the Portuguese outclassed all to clinch the award.

## Breakdancing became an official Olympic sport

- **Breakdancing became an official Olympic sport.** The International Olympic Committee's pursuit of urban events to lure a younger audience saw street dance battles officially **added to the medal events program at the 2024 Paris Games**. Also confirmed for Paris by the IOC executive board were skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing. Those three sports will **make their Olympic debuts at the Tokyo Games which were postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic by one year to open on July 23, 2021**.
- **Breakdancing will be called breaking at the Olympics, as it was in the 1970s by hip-hop pioneers in the United States.** It was proposed by Paris organizers almost two years ago after positive trials at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires.

## Tamil Nadu beat Baroda by 7 wickets to lift second Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy

- **In Cricket, Tamil Nadu lifted the coveted Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy after defeating Baroda** by seven wickets in the final at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad.
- **This was Tamil Nadu's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) triumph**, after winning their first title way back in 2006-07. Baroda, who had won the title twice in the past (in 2011-12 and 2013-14), ended runners-up this time.

## Rishabh Pant voted inaugural ICC Player of the Month

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Novak Djokovic wins his 9<sup>th</sup> Australian Open title

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

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

- Kane Williamson-led New Zealand became the first team to qualify for the finals of the inaugural edition of the ICC World Test Championship.

- **The development comes after Australia's tour to South Africa**, which was scheduled to be held later this month, was postponed due to health concerns.

### ICC signs Byju's as global partner for 3 years

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

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

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

### IOC names Brisbane as preferred bidder to host 2032 Olympic Games

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

### 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.**



## **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 90<sup>th</sup>-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.

## **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.

## **India Legends win 1<sup>st</sup> 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.**

## **Nethra Kumanan becomes first Indian woman sailor to qualify for Olympics**

- **Nethra Kumanan became the first Indian woman sailor to qualify for the Olympics** after she was assured of a top-place finish in the laser radial event of the Asian Qualifiers in Oman.
- **Kumanan has a 21-point advantage over her nearest rival,** who also happens to be an Indian – Ramya Saravanan – in the Laser Radial Class event with one race to go. **The Chennai-based Kumanan currently has 18 points while Saravanan has 39 on the penultimate day of competitions in Mussanah Open Championship,** which is a joint Asian and African Olympic qualifying event.



### **FIFA women's World Cup 2023 to begin in Auckland and end in Sydney**

- **The Women's World Cup in 2023** will be played across 9 cities in New Zealand and Australia as the tournament organisers revealed the venues for the showpiece event.
- **The tournament will begin with a match at Eden Park in Auckland while the final will be played at Sydney's Stadium Australia.** The two semifinal matches will be split between Australia and New Zealand.
- It will be the **first-of-a-kind World Cup, co-hosted by members of different confederations.** This World Cup will also be the **first to feature 32 teams, up from the 24 that participated in the 2019 women's tournament in France.** The U.S. women's national team is the defending champion.

### **Naomi Osaka named "Sportswoman of the Year" at Laureus World Sports Awards**

- **World No. 2 tennis player Naomi Osaka** has been named **"Sportswoman of the Year"** at the **Laureus World Sports Awards** for her achievements on and off the court, while tennis legend Billie Jean King was awarded the "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the Laureus Academy.
- **This is Osaka's second recognition at the Laureus Sports Awards. She won the "Breakthrough of the Year" award in 2019** after a season that saw her win her first WTA title at the BNP Paribas Open and **begin her ascent to the top of the game with her first US Open title that fall.**
- Osaka **won the US Open in 2020, while Spaniard Nadal equalled Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slam men's titles by winning last year's French Open.**
- **Briton Lewis Hamilton claimed the inaugural Athlete Advocate award,** which has been brought in to acknowledge the wider impact on society made by athletes. **During the 2020 Formula 1 season,** Hamilton took a knee on the grid and wore anti-racism slogans as he won a record-equalling seventh drivers' title, while his Mercedes team also adopted a black livery for the campaign in a stand against discrimination.
- **Liverpool and Egypt striker Mohamed Salah won the Sporting Inspiration award** for "his unique contribution over many years to those in need and for those less fortunate". **Nadal's win was his fourth Laureus award, having previously won the Breakthrough, Comeback and main men's awards.**
- Laureus award winners:
- **World Sportswoman of the Year Award: Naomi Osaka**
- **World Sportsman of the Year Award: Rafael Nadal**

### **Manchester City crowned Premier League champions for 3<sup>rd</sup> time in four seasons**

- **In the English Premier League, Manchester City was crowned Premier League champions for the third time in four seasons after Manchester United crashed to a 2-1 defeat against Leicester.** This is Manchester City's **fourth Premier League title.**

### **Leicester beat Chelsea to clinch maiden FA Cup title**

- **Leicester won the FA Cup for the first time in the club's 137-year history.** The Blues also have a Champions League final to look forward to against Manchester City in two weeks' time, but could end the campaign without silverware or a place in Europe's premier club competition next season.

### **Football: Fifa U-17 women's World Cup to be held in India in October 2022**

- **The U-17 women's World Cup** will be held in India from October 11 to 30 next year. **India was earlier scheduled to host the 2020 U-17 World Cup but it was postponed to 2021 before being cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.**

### **India's Sunil Chhetri passes Lionel Messi in international goals**

- **Indian football star Sunil Chhetri has surpassed Lionel Messi in international goals,** after scoring both goals in his country's 2-0 win over Bangladesh in Qatar's capital Doha.
- **Chhetri moved past Argentinian Messi's 72 goals when he opened the scoring in the 79<sup>th</sup> minute** in a qualifying match for the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

### **Aruna Tanwar becomes first Indian taekwondo athlete to qualify for Paralympics**

- **India's Aruna Tanwar, world No.4 in the women's U 49 category,** has been awarded a wild card entry for the Tokyo Paralympic Games 2020. She thus becomes the **first Indian taekwondo athlete to qualify for the Paralympics.**

### **Barbora Krejickova wins French Open women's singles title**

- **Barbora Krejickova of Czech Republic has won the Women's Singles French Open title by defeating 31<sup>st</sup> seeded Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia.**

- This comes a day after Krejčíková won the women's singles title on Saturday. In the doubles event, Krejčíková and Siniaková defeated the pair of Iga Świątek and Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-4 6-2. **With this victory, Krejčíková has become the first player to win both the women's singles and doubles event at the French Open since Mary Pierce achieved the feat way back in 2000.**

### **Wrestler Vinesh Phogat wins gold in women's 53 kg freestyle at Poland Ranking Series**

- Tokyo Olympic Games bound wrestler Vinesh Phogat won the women's 53 kg freestyle gold with an 8-0 win over Khrystyna Bereza of Ukraine at the Poland Ranking Series in Warsaw.

### **Novak Djokovic beats Stefanos Tsitsipas to win French Open title**

- Novak Djokovic fought back from two sets down to beat the Greek fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas to win the French Open title for the second time.
- The Serbian world number one increased his Grand Slam tally to 19 titles and is now one adrift of the men's record held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

### **Ronaldo becomes first person to reach 300 million followers mark on Instagram**

- Portugal striker Cristiano Ronaldo became the first person to reach the 300 million followers mark on social media platform Instagram.
- Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo made European Championships history as he became the all-time top scorer in the summer tournament after his record-shattering 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> finals goals in the opening Euro 2020 match against Hungary.

### **Sajan Prakash becomes first Indian swimmer to qualify for Tokyo 2020 Olympics**

- India's Sajan Prakash made history in Rome as he became the first swimmer from the country to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games after his outstanding performance in the ongoing Sette Colli Trophy.

### **Brazil to host Copa America for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive time**

- In football, Brazil will host Copa America for the second consecutive time after Colombia and Argentina were stripped of hosting rights for the tournament. Colombia was removed as co-host as street protests against President Iván Duque rocked the nation.

### **New Zealand beat India by 8 wickets to win 1<sup>st</sup>-ever World Test Championship**

- In Cricket, New Zealand beat India by eight wickets to win the first-ever World Test Championship at Southampton. This final marked end of a two-year journey to determine Test cricket's first official world champions. Meanwhile, Veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has become the leading wicket-taker in the World Test Championship, surpassing Pat Cummins by taking his 71<sup>st</sup> wicket.
- Kyle Jamieson won the Man of the match award and Marnus Labuschagne was the leading run scorer.

### **Mithali Raj becomes leading run-getter in women's international cricket**

- Mithali Raj became the leading run-getter in women's international cricket, going past Charlotte Edwards' tally of 10,273 runs. Raj and Edwards are the only players to scale the 10,000-run mark in women's international cricket. Mithali Raj crossed England's Charlotte Edwards as the highest scorer in women's international cricket in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ODI against England. Raj has 669 runs in Tests, 7244\* runs in ODIs and 2364 runs in T20Is.

### **Indian-origin Samir Banerjee lifts Wimbledon boys singles title**

- American tennis player of Indian-origin Samir Banerjee lifted the Wimbledon boys singles title with a straight set win over compatriot Victor Lilov.
- Yuki Bhambhani was the last Indian to win a junior singles title when he triumphed at the Australian Open in 2009 while Sumit Nagal won the Wimbledon boys doubles in 2015 with Vietnam's Ly Hoang Nam.
- Ramanathan Krishnan was the first Indian to win a junior major when he won the 1954 Junior Wimbledon championship.

### **Wimbledon men's singles final: Djokovic wins record 20<sup>th</sup> Grand Slam, equals Federer and Nadal**

- World no.1 Novak Djokovic won his third Grand Slam title of 2021 as he beat Matteo Berrettini 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 in the final to clinch the Wimbledon men's singles title. Djokovic has been in spectacular form this year as he has claimed all the Grand Slam titles of 2021 so far. He was made to work hard in the first set by Berrettini but after that Djokovic overwhelmed the Italian to win his sixth Wimbledon championship.

- **Djokovic has now won 20 Grand Slam titles, equal with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal in the all-time championship winners' list. He is on course for a Career Grand Slam and needs to win the US Open to become the first man since Rod Laver (1969) to do so. Djokovic is only behind Pete Sampras (7) and Roger Federer (8) in the list of players with the most Wimbledon championships in Open era.**

**The four Grand Slam tournaments are the Australian Open in January, the French Open from late May to early June, Wimbledon in late June to early July, and the US Open in August–September, each being played over a two-week period. The Australian and the United States tournaments are played on hard courts, the French on clay, and Wimbledon on grass. Wimbledon is the oldest tournament, founded in 1877, followed by the US in 1881, the French in 1891, and the Australian in 1905. Margaret Court is an Australian retired tennis player and former world No. 1. She won 24 Grand Slam women's singles titles in her career, 19 Grand Slam doubles titles, and 21 Grand Slam mixed doubles titles. She has won more Grand Slam titles than any other player in history, and is considered one of the greatest tennis players of all time. Serena Jameka Williams is an American professional tennis player and former world No. 1 in women's single tennis. She has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles, the most by any player in the Open Era, and the second-most of all time behind Margaret Court (24).**

### **Mirabai Chanu wins silver at Tokyo Olympics**

- **Mirabai Chanu's silver medal on Day 1 of the Tokyo Olympics gave India its perfect start and netizens are coming up with creative ways to congratulate the Olympics medalist winners.**
- **The 26-year-old bagged the silver for the country after she lifted 202 kg (87 kg + 115 kg) in the 49 kg category to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The medal comes as a great achievement to Mirabai, who had failed to log a single legitimate lift in Rio 2016 Olympics. She lifted a total 202 kilograms in clean and jerk category. Hou Zhihui of China won the gold lifting 210 kilograms creating an Olympic record.**

### **Six new sports at the Tokyo Olympics — the most since 1920**

- **Six new sports are being contested this year at the Tokyo Olympics - baseball, softball, karate, skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing - the most since 1920, when 11 new sports were added to the mix. The "new" label is a bit elastic. Two of the sports added to the Tokyo Games — the closely related baseball and softball — were featured at the Olympics as recently as 2008, before being dropped in 2012 and 2016. But the other four are complete newcomers: karate, skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing. All six will join Olympic favorites like track and field, swimming, and gymnastics.**

### **PV Sindhu becomes first Indian shuttler to reach successive Olympic semi-finals**

- **Reigning world champion PV Sindhu brushed aside He Bing Jiao of China 21-13, 21-15 to secure the bronze medal in the women's singles event at the Tokyo Olympics. The 26-year-old silver-medallist from the Rio Games also became the first Indian woman to win two individual Olympic medals.**
- **Pusarla Venkata Sindhu has written her name all over the history of not just Indian badminton but also India's records at the Olympic Games. PV Sindhu has exceeded all expectations by becoming the first Indian shuttler to reach successive semi-finals in the Olympics. It is now a recorded fact that she is one of the greatest badminton players of all time the country has ever seen. She won silver medal in 2016.**
- **Wrestler Sushil Kumar was so far the only Indian to have finished twice on the podium at the quadrennial showpiece event. Sushil had followed up his bronze at 2008 Beijing with a silver at the London edition.**

### **In a first, India to have two flag bearers at Tokyo Olympics opening ceremony**

- **The legendary six-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom and men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh will be India's flag bearers for the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics on July 23, Indian Olympic Association (IOA) announced.**
- **In a first, India is having two flag-bearers - one male and one female - at the upcoming Tokyo Games to ensure "gender parity". World Championships silver medallist wrestler Bajrang Punia will be the country's flag-bearer for the closing ceremony on August 8.**
- **Sajan Prakash became the first-ever Indian swimmer to qualify for the Olympic Games by breaching the "A" standard time, clocking 1:56:38 seconds in the men's 200m butterfly event at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome, Italy.**



- Race walker KT Irfan was the first Indian athlete to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics securing a berth in early 2019. Abhinav Bindra is currently India's only individual Olympic gold medalist. His gold in the 10-meter air rifle event at the 2008 Summer Olympics was also India's first Olympic gold medal since 1980. He is the first Indian to have held concurrently the world and Olympic titles for the men's 10-meter air rifle event, having earned those honors at the 2008 Summer Olympics and the 2006 ISSF World Shooting Championships.

### Australia's Brisbane to host 2032 Summer Olympic Games

- Without any rival bid, Brisbane was confirmed as host of the 2032 Summer Olympics at the 138<sup>th</sup> IOC Session on 21 July 2021 in Tokyo, Japan. As per the new format of choosing future Olympic Games host cities from the IOC's Agenda 2020, the vote was in a form of a referendum to the 80 IOC delegates. According to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 72 of the delegates voted Yes, 5 voted No, and 3 other voters abstained.
- The International Olympic Committee announced that Australian city of Brisbane will host the 2032 Summer Olympic Games. Brisbane will also host the Paralympic Games.
- From the selection of the city as the host for the 2032 Summer Olympics, Brisbane has 11 years to prepare for the games. The Brisbane bid relied on the premise that over 80 per cent of the venues needed to host the games were already existing infrastructure. A 2019 feasibility study suggested that over \$A900 million would be needed from both state and federal funding to host the games. The bid received federal government support in 2019.

### Argentina beat Brazil 1-0 to win Copa America, 1<sup>st</sup> major title in 28 yrs

- Argentina won their first major title in 28 years and Lionel Messi finally won his first medal in a blue-and-white shirt when an Angel Di Maria goal gave them a 1-0 win over Brazil and a record-equalling 15<sup>th</sup> Copa America.
- Di Maria, starting for just the second time in the Copa, justified his selection by scoring the opener midway through the first half. Renan Lodi failed to cut out a long ball forward from Rodrigo De Paul and Di Maria lobbed the stranded Ederson with aplomb.
- The victory was Argentina's 15<sup>th</sup> Copa America triumph and means they draw level with Uruguay as the all-time leading winners.

### Italy crowned Euro Cup 2020 champions after shootout win over England

- Italy crowned Euro Cup 2020 champions after shootout win over England. Italy beat England 3-2 on penalties after the Euro 2020 final ended 1-1 following extra time at Wembley to secure their second European Championship title.
- Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was the hero for the Azzurri in the shootout, while substitutes Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka failed to convert from the spot for England.
- It was the first final to be decided on penalties since Czechoslovakia beat West Germany in 1976. Italy had lost in the final in 2000 and 2012.

### PV Sindhu, the greatest ever: Badminton star becomes first Indian woman to win 2 Olympic medals

- PV Sindhu became the first Indian woman athlete to win two individual Olympic medals, as she beat China's He Bing Jiao to win the bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. She had won the silver medal at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- Reigning world champion PV Sindhu brushed aside He Bing Jiao of China 21-13, 21-15 to secure the bronze medal in the women's singles event at the Tokyo Olympics. The 26-year-old silver-medallist from the Rio Games also became the first Indian woman to win two individual Olympic medals.
- Pusarla Venkata Sindhu has written her name all over the history of not just Indian badminton but also India's records at the Olympic Games. PV Sindhu has exceeded all expectations by becoming the first Indian shuttler to reach successive semi-finals in the Olympics.
- It is now a recorded fact that she is one of the greatest badminton players of all time the country has ever seen. She won silver medal in 2016. Sindhu had fallen agonisingly short of the gold medal as she lost the title match to Spain's Carolina Marin despite winning the opening game five years ago.
- Wrestler Sushil Kumar was so far the only Indian to have finished twice on the podium at the quadrennial showpiece event. Sushil had followed up his bronze at 2008 Beijing with a silver at the London edition.



## Boxer Lovlina Borgohain ends with bronze medal at Olympic Games

- **Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain (69 kg) signed off with a bronze medal in the Olympic Games** after a comprehensive **0-5 loss to reigning world champion Busenaz Surmeneli**.
- Nonetheless, Borgohain goes home as a history-maker as the 23-year-old, who started her career as a Muay Thai practitioner, has **become only the third Indian boxer to ensure a podium finish at the showpiece after Vijender Singh (2008) and M C Mary Kom (2012)**. Hers is also the first Olympic medal in Indian boxing in nine years.

## India's ace grappler Ravi kumar Dahiya creates history, clinches Silver Medal; Men's Hockey team snatch Bronze medal

- **India got one silver and bronze medal in 57 kg freestyle wrestling and hockey**. However they failed to perform in other category in wrestling. Indian grappler Ravi Dahiya has secured silver medal.
- He was **defeated by the reigning world champion Zavur Uguev of Russian Olympic Committee in the freestyle 57 kilogram final by 4-7**.
- The hockey jinx was **finally broken at Tokyo 2020 as the men's team captured its first Olympic medal in 41 years after beating Germany in the medal match**. The last time **India won a medal at Olympics was in 1980 when they clinched gold**. The famous campaign was full of memorable wins. India finished Pool A in the second spot and defeated Britain in the quarter-finals to reach the semi-finals for the first time in 49 years. **The 1980 Games did not have semi-finals**.

## Neeraj Chopra wins Gold in Javelin Throw at Tokyo Olympics

- In Tokyo Olympics, **India's Javelin throw star Neeraj Chopra created history by winning the first ever Gold Medal in Olympic track and field event**.
- **Neeraj Chopra became only the second Indian to win an individual gold in the Olympics**, outperforming the field by quite a distance to notch up the first track-and-field Games medal for the country.
- The 23-year-old farmer's son **from Khandra village near Panipat in Haryana produced the second throw of 87.58m in the finals to stun the athletics world and end India's 100-year wait for a track and field medal in the Olympics**.
- **Chopra won the country's seventh medal and first gold in this Olympics and joined shooter Abhinav Bindra (2008 Beijing Games) as India's individual gold winners in the showpiece**. With this, the country surpassed the previous best haul of six medals achieved in the 2012 London Games.
- **Neeraj Chopra took the flag for India at the Tokyo Olympics closing ceremony**. Earlier, **Abhinav Ajit Bindra won gold in the 10-meter air rifle event at the 2008 Summer Olympics** and that was also India's first Olympic gold medal since 1980.
- **On 19 February 2021, it was announced that Russia would compete under the acronym "ROC" after the name of the Russian Olympic Committee** although the name of the committee itself in full could not be used to refer to the delegation. The ROC team would be represented by the flag of the Russian Olympic Committee.
- **On 6 April 2021, North Korea announced that it would not participate in the 2020 Summer Olympics because of COVID-19 concerns**. This marks **North Korea's first absence from the Summer Olympics since 1988**.
- **The opening ceremony was held on 23 July 2021 in the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo**. It included the traditional Parade of Nations. **Emperor Naruhito formally opened the Games, and at the end of the torch relay the Olympic cauldron was lit by Japanese tennis player Naomi Osaka**.
- **For the first time in the 2020 Olympic Games, it was decided that one male and one female in each country would take turns holding flags and serve as two of them**. This was done by **embodying the "Agenda 2020" set during President Bach's term**.
- **Overall, India finished with seven medals — one gold, two silver and four bronze — the country's best ever finish at the Games**. Wrestler Bajrang Punia who bagged a Bronze in Tokyo Olympics, led the Indian contingent out during the parade of athletes at the closing ceremony.
- For the first time ever in a handover ceremony at the Olympic Games, **the national anthem of the next host country was delivered on film as part of Paris 2024's presentation**.
- **Overall, India finished 48<sup>th</sup> in the medals table**. USA took the top spot with 113 medals, China (88) came second and hosts Japan (58) are third.

### Wrestler Bajrang Punia bags Bronze Medal in 65 kg category

- **Wrestler Bajrang Punia won the bronze medal in the men's freestyle 65 Kg category at the Tokyo Olympics 2020. He defeated Kazakhstan's Daulet Niyazbekov 8-0 in the bronze medal match. This was India's sixth medal in the Tokyo Olympics thus equaling the London Olympic record of six medals.**

### At the Tokyo Olympics, Marcell Jacobs is The World's Fastest Man

- **At the Tokyo Olympics, Marcell Jacobs is The World's Fastest Man. The Italian crossed the line in 9.8 seconds Sunday night, the first medal ever for the country in the 100 meters.** Pietro Mennea won the 200 in 1980 and Livio Berruti won that race at the 1960 Games in Rome.
- **Even in a race with no clear favourites — American Ronnie Baker was a candidate and China's Su Bingtian ran a shocking 9.83 in the semis — Jacobs was a surprise. Jacobs topped America's Fred Kerley and Canada's Andre DeGrasse to take the spot Bolt had commandeered since 2008.**

### Weightlifter Hubbard becomes first trans woman at Olympics

- **Pioneering weightlifter Laurel Hubbard became the first openly transgender woman to compete at the Olympic Games, but her Tokyo dream was cut short when she crashed out of her final early.**
- **Hubbard contested the +87 kg category in a groundbreaking move that Olympic chiefs says makes the Games more inclusive but critics fear will undermine women's sport.**

### Top 5 individual medal winners at the Tokyo Olympics

- **1. Emma McKeon: With seven medals, the swimmer from Brisbane earned the most medals by an individual athlete in Tokyo.** She is now tied with gymnast Maria Gorokhovskaya for the record for most medals won by a woman in a single edition of the Olympics.
- **2. Caeleb Dressel: The star swimmer was selected as a co-captain for the USA men's swimming team. The 24-year-old was on a gold rush in Tokyo, collecting five medals on top of the podium.**
- **3. Kaylee McKeown: The 20-year-old Queenslander made a splash at the biggest stage of swimming. She took the gold in 100m, setting a new Olympic record.** She took another gold, this time in the 200m backstroke. Kaylee clinched her third gold at Tokyo in the women's 4x100m medley relay. She also had a bronze in the mixed 4x100m medley relay.
- **4. Zhang Yufei: One of the breakthrough stars of the Tokyo Olympics, Zhang had a memorable outing. She won the gold in the 200m butterfly, setting a new Olympic record.** She was a member of the 4x200m freestyle team which took the gold by breaking the world record. She took the silver in the 100m butterfly and 4x100m mixed relay.
- **5. Kathleen Ledecky: The most decorated female swimmer of all time bagged four medals in Tokyo.** She began with a silver medal in 400m freestyle, losing to Australia's Ariarne Titmus.

### Elaine Thompson-Herah defended her title as the fastest woman in the world

- **Elaine Thompson-Herah defended her title as the fastest woman in the world, taking first in the 100m at The Prefontaine Classic. Thompson finished with a time of 10.54 seconds, running the second-fastest women's 100m in history.** Fellow countrywomen Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and Shericka Jackson came in second and third for a Jamaican podium sweep.
- **Elaine Thompson-Herah is a Jamaican sprinter who competes in the 100 metres and 200 metres. A five-time Olympic champion, she is the fastest woman alive, and the second-fastest in history, over both distances.**
- **Thompson-Herah rose to prominence at the 2015 World Athletics Championships, winning silver in the 200 m. She is the first woman in history, and the second sprinter after compatriot Usain Bolt, to win the 'sprint double' at consecutive Olympics, capturing gold in both the 100 m and 200 m at the 2016 Rio Olympics and again at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.**

### Tokyo Paralympics: Bhavinaben Patel becomes first Indian to secure silver in TT

- **Indian table tennis player Bhavinaben Patel signed off with a historic silver medal in her maiden Paralympic Games after going down 0-3 to world number one Chinese paddler Ying Zhou in the women's singles class 4 final.**
- **The 34-year-old Patel's impressive run at the Games ended with a 7-11 5-11 6-11 loss to Zhou, a two-time gold medallist, in the women's singles summit clash which lasted 19 minutes.** Athletes in Class 4 category have fair sitting balance and fully functional arms and hands. Their impairment may be due to a lower spinal-cord lesion or cerebral palsy.

### Tokyo Paralympics: Sumit Antil clinches Gold in Men's Javelin Throw F64 event

- In Tokyo Paralympics, India secured its 2<sup>nd</sup> Gold medal. India's Sumit Antil set a new world record to win the gold medal in the men's javelin throw (F64) event at Tokyo. With the best throw of 68.85 metres in the final, he took India's medal count to seven.
- The 23-year-old from Sonapat in Haryana, who lost his left leg below the knee after he was involved in a motorbike accident in 2015, sent the spear to 68.55m in his fifth attempt, which was the best of the day by quite a distance and a new world record.

### 32<sup>nd</sup> Summer Games conclude with closing ceremony at Olympic Stadium in Tokyo

- After a spectacular 16-day action, curtains came down on World's biggest sporting event, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Summer Games with a closing ceremony at the Olympic Stadium in Tokyo.
- Overall, India finished with seven medals — one gold, two silver and four bronze — the country's best ever finish at the Games. Wrestler Bajrang Punia who bagged a Bronze in Tokyo Olympics, led the Indian contingent out during the parade of athletes at the closing ceremony.
- For the first time ever in a handover ceremony at the Olympic Games, the national anthem of the next host country was delivered on film as part of Paris 2024's presentation.
- Overall, India finished 48<sup>th</sup> in the medals table. USA took the top spot with 113 medals, China (88) came second and hosts Japan (58) are third.

### India's Avni Lekhara wins Gold medal in Women's 10 meter Air Rifle Shooting at Tokyo Paralympics

- Indian shooter Avani Lekhara has won Gold medal in Women's 10 metre Air Rifle Shooting at Tokyo Paralympics. She has won the first Gold for the country at the Tokyo Paralympic Games.
- The 19-year-old became the first woman from India to win a Paralympics gold medal. Avani finished with a Paralympic Record and in-process equalled the World Record with 249.6 points.
- India's para table tennis player Bhavina won silver as she lost the gold medal match to China's Zhou Ying 3-0 in the women's singles - Class 4.
- With the silver medal, Bhavina became the first table tennis player ever to win a medal at the Paralympics for India and the second female athlete after PCI chief Deepa Malik to achieve this feat. Deepa had won silver at Rio 2016 in women's shot put.
- Yogesh Kathuniya won Silver medal in Discus Throw. This is the fifth medal for the country at the Tokyo Paralympics.

### Tokyo Paralympics: Mariyappan, Sharad win silver and bronze respectively in men's high jump, India's medal tally hits double-digit

- Double delight for India, in Men's High Jump T42 event this evening at Tokyo Paralympics, Mariyappan Thangavelu has won silver medal while Sharad Kumar clinched bronze. With this, India's medal tally at the Paralympics touched an unprecedented 10.

### Ronaldo sets world record, becomes highest international goal-scorer

- Cristiano Ronaldo set the world record for most international goals, surpassing Iran's Ali Daei tally of 109 goals in international football. The Portugal captain reached the mark during his side's World Cup Group A qualifying match against Ireland.
- The historic moment, one that was being eagerly looked forward to since the commencement of the tournament, arrived in the 89<sup>th</sup> minute when the Portuguese striker struck a goal to level the scores 1-1 in the match.

### Tokyo Paralympics: Shuttlers Pramod Bhagat wins gold, Manoj Sarkar wins bronze in men's singles SL3 category

- At the Tokyo Paralympics Indian shuttler Pramod Bhagat has won the gold medal in the men's singles SL3 category while in the same event, Manoj Sarkar has won a bronze medal for India.
- Manish Narwal finished on top of the podium in Mixed 50m Pistol SH1 final and Singhraj followed him at the second place for a silver medal. With this India has won total 17 medals so far which include, four Gold, seven Silver and six bronze.
- The 2020 Summer Paralympics branded as Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, were a major international multi-sport para-sports event governed by the International Paralympic Committee. It was the 16<sup>th</sup> Summer Paralympic Games and was held in Tokyo, Japan between 24 August and 5 September 2021.



- Someity is a figure with pink chequered patterns inspired by the Games' official logo and mascot, as well as cherry blossom flowers.
- The event was formerly planned to take place on 25 August to 6 September 2020, but postponed to 2021 along with the 2020 Summer Olympics in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like in the Olympics, the state of emergency happening in Tokyo and the event was held entirely behind closed doors with no physical audience permitted. **For marketing purposes, the event was branded as Tokyo 2020 despite taking place in 2021.**
- This was the **second Summer Paralympics hosted by Tokyo since the 1964 Games**, and the **third time the Paralympics were ever held so far in Japan since the 1998 Winter Paralympics.**
- Tokyo was the first city to host the Paralympics more than once. The Paralympics replaced sailing and 7-a-side football with badminton and taekwondo. The 2020 Summer Olympics were largely held behind closed doors due to the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan and a state of emergency in Tokyo issued by Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, though events in some regions could be held with up to 10,000 spectators or 50% capacity (whichever is smaller).
- The 2020 Summer Paralympics featured 539 events in 22 sports. Badminton and taekwondo made their Paralympic debut in Tokyo, while classifications were added or realigned in other sports; canoe, shooting, table tennis, track cycling, and wheelchair fencing saw increases in the number of medal events held, while there were reductions in athletics and swimming.
- China topped the medal table for the fifth consecutive games, with 96 golds and 207 total medals. Great Britain finished second for the ninth time, with 41 golds and 124 total medals. The United States finished third, with 37 golds, their best finish since the 2008 games, and 104 total medals. The Russian Paralympic Committee finished fourth, with a total of 36 golds and 118 total medals, putting them in third place when ranked by total medals. Paralympics team. (Photo credit: Prime Minister's Office).
- Indian Paralympians produced a historic show at Paralympics 2020 - where the team won 19 medals - five gold, eight silver, and six bronze. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted the Indian Paralympics contingent on September 9. Earlier, Modi had hosted Indian contingent that participated in Tokyo Olympics 2020.
- Before Tokyo Paralympics 2020, India had won 12 medals (4 medals of each colour) in all previous Paralympics appearances combined. While India returned with 19 medals from Paralympics 2020, the total number of Indian Paralympians who participated at Rio Paralympics 2016 was 19. **India ranked 24 in the overall ranking at Tokyo Paralympics 2020.**

### Novak Djokovic's Grand Slam bid foiled as Daniil Medvedev wins US Open

- Daniil Medvedev shattered Novak Djokovic's Grand Slam dream with a straight sets victory in the US Open final denying the world number one a record-breaking 21<sup>st</sup> major men's singles title.
- Russia's second-ranked Medvedev dominated Djokovic 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 to prevent the first calendar-year Grand Slam since 1969 and keep Djokovic level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal atop the career Slam title list.

### Pankaj Advani wins his 24<sup>th</sup> world title in Doha

- Star Indian cueist Pankaj Advani grabbed his 24<sup>th</sup> world title when he triumphed at the IBSF 6-Red Snooker World Cup with a victory over Pakistan's Babar Masih in the final. Pankaj ensured a clean slate of wins over the last fortnight in Qatar across two international championships – Asian Snooker and 6-red Snooker World Cup.

### Hamilton wins 100<sup>th</sup> F1 race to take lead over Verstappen

- Lewis Hamilton became the first Formula One driver to win 100 races with victory in the Russian Grand Prix to retake the championship lead from Max Verstappen.
- Hamilton dropped to seventh place when he was boxed in at the first corner but fought back and passed Lando Norris for the win when the McLaren driver stayed out on slick tires in late rain and slid off the track.

### National Sports Day

- The day is celebrated on 29<sup>th</sup> August every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of legendary hockey player Major Dhyan Chand.



- The Government had announced that **India's highest sporting honour Khel Ratna Award has been named as Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in the honour of the hockey wizard.**

### **Manchester United re-signs Cristiano Ronaldo from Juventus**

- **Manchester United have completed the signing of Cristiano Ronaldo from Juventus on a two-year deal, the Premier League side confirmed as the Portuguese forward returns to the club where he won eight major trophies from 2003-2009.**

### **130<sup>th</sup> edition of Durand Cup kicks off in Kolkata**

- **The 130<sup>th</sup> edition of the Durand Cup kicked off at the Vivekananda Yubabharati Krirangan in Kolkata. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee kicked the ball and inaugurated the tournament.**
- **16 teams are playing in this edition of the oldest club football tournament in Asia while two renowned clubs of Kolkata, East Bengal and Mohun Bagan are not participating.**

### **India wraps up Tokyo Paralympic games with largest-ever haul of 19 medals; Games end with glittering closing ceremony**

- **At Tokyo Paralympics, in its best ever performance India bagged 19 medals with five Gold, eight Silver and six bronze. Indian finished 24<sup>th</sup> in the medals tally.**
- **Shooter Avani Lekhara was India's flag-bearer at the closing ceremony of Tokyo Paralympics. Lekhara has become the first Indian woman to win two medals in the same Paralympics in addition to being the first Indian woman to win gold at the Games.**
- **The 19-year-old has won Gold in the 10 metre air rifle and Bronze in 50 metre rifle 3 position. Indian Paralympic athletes have made the nation proud with their rich haul of medals at the Tokyo Games.**

### **IOC suspends North Korea until end of 2022 after it failed to send a team to Tokyo Games**

- **The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has suspended North Korea until the end of 2022 after it failed to send a team to the Tokyo Games. The suspension means the country will miss out on the Beijing Winter Games.**
- **North Korea did not send a delegation to the Tokyo Games, saying it wanted to protect its athletes from Covid-19. IOC President Thomas Bach said the North Korean Olympic Committee would not receive financial aid during the suspension.**
- **Bach added that the IOC reserves the right to make decisions on any individual North Korean athletes who qualify for Beijing 2022 and to reconsider the duration of the country's suspension. At Rio Olympics 2016, North Korea had won two Golds, three Silvers and two Bronzes.**

### **ISL set to be first Indian sports league to launch unique digital collectibles**

- **The Indian Super League (ISL) is going to be the first Indian sports league to have its exclusive non-fungible tokens (NFTs) as digital collectibles.**
- **The league, co-owned by Reliance Industries (65%) and Star India (35%), has partnered with London-based entertainment-focussed collectible platform Terra Virtua to create unique digital collectibles featuring the league and all its 11 clubs.**

A non-fungible token (NFT) is a unit of data stored on a digital ledger, called a blockchain, that certifies a digital asset to be unique and therefore not interchangeable. NFTs can be used to represent items such as photos, videos, audio, and other types of digital files. Access to any copy of the original file, however, is not restricted to the buyer of the NFT. While copies of these digital items are available for anyone to obtain, NFTs are tracked on blockchains to provide the owner with a proof of ownership that is separate from copyright.

## **F. Awards**

### **Maharashtra zilla parishad educator first in India to win \$1-million teacher prize**

- **A primary school teacher from India was named the winner of the USD 1-million annual Global Teacher Prize 2020 in recognition of his efforts to promote girls' education and trigger a quick-response (QR) coded textbook revolution in India.**
- **Ranjitsinh Disale from Paritewadi village in Maharashtra's Solapur district emerged the winner from 10 finalists from across the world for the annual prize founded by London-based Varkey Foundation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) in 2014 to recognise an exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession.**

## Indian-American Gitanjali Rao named by TIME as first-ever 'Kid of the Year' for work in technology

- **Indian-American Gitanjali Rao, a “brilliant” young scientist and inventor, has been named by TIME magazine as the first-ever Kid of the Year’ for her “astonishing work using technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying.**
- **“The world belongs to those who shape it. And however uncertain that world may feel at a given moment, the reassuring reality seems to be that each new generation produces more of what these kids have already achieved: positive impact, in all sizes.**

## Hina Khan wins big At the Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Awards 2020

- **Actor Hina Khan has recently received Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Award 2020 for Iconic Diva 2020.**
- **Hina Khan was felicitated with the Style Icon of Television Industry (female) and Style Icon of Social Media (female).** She recently posted pictures of herself posing with her trophies. She informed her fans about it on social media.

## Parkash Singh Badal returns his Padma Vibhushan award in solidarity with farmers protesting against farm laws

- **Former Punjab Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal patron Parkash Singh Badal has returned his Padma Vibhushan award in solidarity with the farmers protesting against the three farm laws. Mr. Badal received Padma Vibhushan Award in 2015.**
- **In addition to Badal, another Punjab leader, Shiromani Akali Dal (Democratic) chief and Rajya Sabha MP Sukhdev Dhindsa, has returned his Padma Bhushan award and said it is useless if the farm laws are enacted. He was given the award in January 2019.**

## Joe Biden and Kamala Harris named Time 'Person of the Year'

- **US President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris have been chosen as Time magazine's 2020 “Person of the Year,” the publication announced.**
- **The Democratic pair were chosen ahead of three other finalists: frontline health care workers and Anthony Fauci, the racial justice movement, and President Donald Trump who Biden defeated in November's election.**
- **Time's magazine cover has a picture of Biden, 78, and Harris, 56, with the subtitle “Changing America's story”.**

**Person of the Year (called Man of the Year or Woman of the Year until 1999) is an annual issue of the United States news magazine and website Time that features and profiles a person, a group, an idea, or an object that “for better or for worse... has done the most to influence the events of the year”. The tradition of selecting a “Man of the Year” began in 1927, with Time editors contemplating the news makers of the year. The idea was also an attempt to remedy the editorial embarrassment earlier that year of not having aviator Charles Lindbergh on its cover following his historic trans-Atlantic flight. In 1949, Winston Churchill was named “Man of the Half-Century”, and the last issue of 1989 named Mikhail Gorbachev as “Man of the Decade”. The December 31, 1999 issue of Time named Albert Einstein the “Person of the Century”. Franklin D. Roosevelt and Mahatma Gandhi were chosen as runners-up.**

## Brazil's Carolina Araujo becomes First Non-Indian to win Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians

- **The Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians 2020 has been awarded to Carolina Araujo, Mathematician from the Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics (IMPA), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in a virtual ceremony on December 9, 2020.**
- **Ms Araujo, who is Vice President of the Committee for Women in Mathematics at the International Mathematical Union, is the first non-Indian to receive this prize.** Ms Araujo work area focuses on birational geometry, which aims to classify and describe the structure of algebraic varieties.
- **The prize awarded annually to a researcher from a developing country funded by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India in collaboration with ICTP (International Centre for Theoretical Physics), and the International Mathematical Union was given for her outstanding work in algebraic geometry. Her work area focuses on birational geometry, which aims to classify and describe the structure of algebraic varieties.**

### **UNESCO launched international prize in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib**

- The UNESCO has decided to launch an international prize in the field of 'creative economy' in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Starting November 2021, the dollar 50 thousand award will be given away once in two years for global economic initiatives of the youth.
- According to UNESCO, the international award will create a knowledge-sharing mechanism by capturing, celebrating and communicating best practice in the development of creative entrepreneurship.

### **US President presents 'Legion of Merit' award to PM Modi for his leadership in elevating US-India strategic partnership**

- The then US President Donald Trump presented the prestigious Legion of Merit award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power.
- India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, accepted the award on behalf of the prime minister from the US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien at the White House. Mr Modi was presented with the highest degree Chief Commander of the Legion of Merit which is given only to the Head of State or Government
- Mr Modi was given the award in recognition of his steadfast leadership and vision that has accelerated India's emergence as a global power and elevated the strategic partnership between the United States and India to address global challenges.
- The US President also presented the Legion of Merit to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The awards were received by their respective ambassadors in Washington DC.

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

- Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and late singer SP Balasubramaniam were named for this year's Padma Vibhushan while former Chief Ministers late Tarun Gogoi and Keshubhai Patel, former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan and former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan have been awarded Padma Bhushan. Ram Vilas Paswan served as the Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution who passed away in October 2020.
- Seven persons will get Padma Vibhushan. They include former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, sculptor Sudarshan Sahoo and Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Eminent Singer late S P Balasubramaniam will be awarded the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest civilian award posthumously.
- Ten persons will get Padma Bhushan. They include former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Singer K S Chithra, prominent poet Chandrashekhara Kambara and retired Civil Servant Nripendra Misra. Former Gujarat Chief Minister late Keshubhai Patel, Former Assam Chief Minister late Tarun Gogoi and Former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan will be honoured with Padma Bhushan posthumously.
- 102 persons will get Padma Shri. They include Social Worker Sindutai Sapkal, Musician Bombay Jayashri, British film director Peter Brook and Greek Indologist Nicholas Kazanas. Former Governor of Goa late Mridula Sinha, Spanish-Indian Jesuit priest and author late Father Vallés will be given the award posthumously.
- Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day, are given in three categories – Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service).
- The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year. These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/April every year. The Union Home Ministry said the President has approved conferment of 119 Padma awards – seven Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri. Twenty-nine women are among the Padma awardees and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of foreigners, NRI, PIO AND OCI and one transgender. Sixteen people have been given the award posthumously.

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

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

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

### **Manipur doctor gets Japan’s highest honour for promoting ties between 2 nations**

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

### **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.**

### **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.**

### **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.**

### **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.**
- **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 125<sup>th</sup> 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 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 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex.**

### **63<sup>rd</sup> Grammy Awards: Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish bag top honours**

- **The 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Grammy Awards were held on March 14, 2021, in and around the Los Angeles Convention Center. At the 63<sup>rd</sup> Grammy Awards, Taylor Swift and Billie Eilish won the top prizes while Beyonce became the most awarded female artist in Grammy history with her 28<sup>th</sup> 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.**

## 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 66<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 67<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards - 2019 were announced; Marakkar Arabikadalinte Simham wins best feature film awards

- The 67<sup>th</sup> 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 Arabikkadalinte Simham directed by Priyadarshan will be awarded the Best Feature Film Award.
- Sanjay Puri 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.

## Rajnikanth to be honoured with Dada Saheb Phalke Award for the year 2019

- Actor-politician Rajinikanth will receive the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2019, India's highest film honour, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted. "Happy to announce Dadasaheb Phalke award for 2019 to one of the greatest actors in the history of Indian cinema Rajnikant ji.
- The prestigious 51<sup>st</sup> Dadasaheb Phalke Award will be honoured to superstar Rajinikanth, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar announced.
- Rajinikanth is the 12<sup>th</sup> South Indian to get this award. Legends like Dr Rajkumar, Akkineni Nageshwar Rao, K Balachander have been awarded before. The legendary actor has been honoured with the Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan in the past.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in cinema. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals. It was first presented in 1969; the award was introduced by the Government of India to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke's contribution to Indian cinema.

## Bengaluru-based lady entrepreneur Vibha Harish makes it to Forbes Asia's 30 'Under-30' list

- Bengaluru-based lady entrepreneur Vibha Harish, CEO and founder of herbal nutrition and plant-based supplement company Cosmix, has made it to the Forbes Asia's 30 Under- 30 in just one year of opening her venture. At present, Cosmix is one of the fastest-growing ventures in the country.
- Within one year of its operation, Cosmix has registered a turnover of around Rs 2 crore, all credit goes to the products, its manufacturing and marketing techniques.

## Saudi activist wins top European rights prize

- Saudi Arabian rights activist Loujain al-Hathloul, who was detained for campaigning to allow women to drive in the country, was honored with the prestigious eighth Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

- She was **awarded the 60,000-euro (\$72,238) prize in an online ceremony for “outstanding civil society action in defense of human rights.”** Hathloul, who was released in February after spending 1,001 days in prison and is forbidden from travelling outside the country as well as speaking to the media, was not present for the ceremony.
- **Hathloul was detained in May 2018 along with several women activists in an apparent crackdown on dissent in the kingdom.** She was at the **forefront of the campaign to end the rudimentary system of male guardianship and ban on women driving in public.** Before and after her arrest, **Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman unleashed a series of reforms including lifting the archaic ban on driving, allowing women to drive in public, in a bid to modernize the Saudi society.**

#### **Rumana Sinha Sehgal won the Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021**

- **Rumana Sinha Sehgal, Software engineer turned entrepreneur from Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, won the Nelson Mandela World Humanitarian Award 2021** by the Diplomatic Mission Global Peace. She was **virtually awarded for her contribution to the field of developing innovative and functional green products by recycling varied materials and non-biodegradable materials.**

#### **Mumbai-born Dr Tahera Qutbuddin first Indian to win Arab World Nobel Prize**

- **Dr Tahera Qutbuddin, a professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Chicago, recently became the first person of Indian-origin to win the 15<sup>th</sup> Sheikh Zyed Book Award.** The award is **considered to be the Nobel Prize of the Arab world.**
- **Dr Qutbuddin, who was born in Mumbai and was educated until class 12 in India,** also serves on the editorial board of NYU Abu Dhabi's Library of Arabic Literature.
- **She won the award for her latest book, Arabic Oration – Art and Function, published by Brill Academic Publishers of Leiden in 2019.**
- In the book, she puts forth a **comprehensive theory of Arabic literature in its foundational oral period dating the seventh and eighth centuries AD.** She discusses its influence on modern-day sermons and lectures as well.

**Sheikh Zayed Book Award** is a literary award begun in the UAE. It is **presented yearly to “Arab writers, intellectuals, publishers** as well as young talent whose writings and translations of humanities have scholarly and objectively enriched Arab cultural, literary and social life.” **The award was established in memory of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the principal architect of United Arab Emirates, the authoritarian ruler of Abu Dhabi and president of the UAE for over 30 years (1971–2004). The first award was in 2007. The total value of the prizes is DH 7,000,000 making it one of the richest literary awards in the world.**

#### **Chloé Zhao wins Oscar award for best director**

- **Chloe Zhao’s “Nomadland,” a wistful portrait of itinerant lives on open roads across the American West, won best picture at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Academy Awards,** where the **China-born Zhao became the first woman of color to win best director,** and a historically diverse group of winners took home awards.
- **Chloé Zhao has made history by becoming the first woman of colour - and the second woman to win the best director award at the Oscars.** Chinese-born, British-educated, US-based 39-year-old Zhao also **won best picture for Nomadland, her third feature film.**
- In the biggest surprise of a socially distanced Oscar ceremony held during the pandemic, **best actor went to Anthony Hopkins for his performance in the dementia drama “The Father.”** The award had been **widely expected to go to Chadwick Boseman for his final performance in “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.”** The night’s last award, it ended the ceremony on a down note, particularly since Hopkins wasn’t in attendance.
- **With a howl, “Nomadland” star Frances McDormand implored people to seek out her film** and others on the big screen. Released by the Disney-owned Searchlight Pictures, “Nomadland” premiered at a drive in and debuted in theaters, but found its largest audience on Hulu. **Soon after, McDormand won best actress, too — her third such win. Only Katharine Hepburn, a four-time winner, has won best actress more times.**
- **Danish director Thomas Vinterberg’s “Another Round” won the best international film,** an award he dedicated to his daughter, Ida, who in 2019 was killed in a car crash at age 19. For the first time ever, this year’s nominees were overwhelmingly seen in the home during a pandemic year that forced theaters to close and prompted radical change in Hollywood.



## World Food Prize 2021 won by Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted of Indian Descent

- **World Food Prize 2021 won by Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted of Indian Descent.** The prize has been awarded to Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh for her work has transformed aquatic food systems. World Food Prize is an award that aims to recognise achievements made in the field of food and agriculture.
- According to the official website, the research must have resulted in “a demonstrable increase in the quantity, quality, availability of, or access to food for a large number of people”. The award is also referred to as the Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture. Every year, the committee selects one person who will be awarded the title and prize money of \$250,000.
- **The World Food Prize 2021 award goes to Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted** - a global nutrition expert of Indian descent. She has won the prize for her ground-breaking research in developing holistic, nutrition-sensitive approaches to aquaculture and food systems.

The World Food Prize is an international award recognizing the achievements of individuals who have advanced human development by improving the quality, quantity, or availability of food in the world. Since 1987, the prize has been awarded annually to recognize contributions in any field involved in the world food supply. Ms. Stinson will become the second president of the Foundation since Dr. Norman Borlaug established it in 1986. **Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan won the World Food Prize for advancing human development through increased quantity, quality or accessibility of food, 1987.**

## Klara and the Sun, the first novel by Kazuo Ishiguro since he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature

- **Klara and the Sun** is the eighth novel by the Nobel Prize-winning British writer Kazuo Ishiguro, published on March 2, 2021. It is a dystopian science fiction story.
- The novel is set in a dystopian future in which some children are genetically-engineered (“lifted”) for enhanced academic ability.
- **As schooling is provided entirely at home by on-screen tutors**, opportunities for socialization are limited and parents who can afford it often buy their children androids as companions.
- **The book is narrated by one such Artificial Friend (AF) called Klara.** Although exceptionally intelligent and observant, Klara’s knowledge of the world is limited.

## Andrea Meza crowned Miss Universe 2021

- **The 2021 Miss Universe pageant** is finally underway and the world finally has the **new Miss Universe for the year.** The show, which was delayed last year due to the ongoing coronavirus endemic, returned to crown their new winner.
- **And found a worthy candidate in Miss Mexico Andrea Meza out of the 74 women who competed in the competition. The 26-year-old Andrea, who had previously won the Miss Mexico crown in 2019, took home the Miss Universe crown,** beating out runner-up, Miss Brazil Julia Gama, and second runner-up, Miss Peru Janick Maceta Del Castillo.

## Amartya Sen gets Spain’s top award

- **Indian economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen** has been conferred with Spain’s top Princess of Asturias Award in the social sciences category, the Spanish prize foundation announced.
- **The award comprises a Joan Miro sculpture representing and symbolising the award, a diploma, an insignia and a cash prize of 50,000 Euros.** The award was announced via video-conference.

## International Booker Prize: David Diop becomes first French winner

- **David Diop** has become the first French writer to win the International Booker Prize. His second novel, *At Night All Blood is Black*, was inspired by his Senegalese great-grandfather’s silence about his experiences in World War One.
- **The £50,000 prize** will be split between Diop and the book’s translator - US author and poet Anna Moschovakis. It fended off competition from five other shortlisted titles, including Éric Vuillard’s *The War of the Poor*. **The International Booker Prize is awarded every year** for a single book that is translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. **David Diop is the first French author to win the International Booker Prize.**

## RK Sabharwal gets highest civilian award of Mongolia

- **Engineers India Limited (EIL) Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), RK Sabharwal** has been honoured with the highest civilian award of Mongolia ‘The Order of Polar Star by his excellency.



- The President of Mongolia recognises the **outstanding contribution made by him towards the establishment of the first-ever oil refinery in Mongolia**. On behalf of the government of Mongolia, this award was presented by His Excellency, the Ambassador of Mongolia to India, Gonching Ganbold, at a ceremony organised at the Embassy of Mongolia.

### **Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to be honored by DU**

- In honour of Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the country's Liberation War as well as India's diplomatic ties with Dhaka. Rahman is popularly called 'Bangabandhu' (friend of Bengal) by the people of Bangladesh, **Delhi University's Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) will establish the 'Bangabandhu Chair'**. The Chair will be occupied by a foreign visiting professor or subject expert on Bangladesh preferably a person of that country's origin.
- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is called the "Father of the Nation" in Bangladesh. He served as the first President of Bangladesh and later as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 17 April 1971 until his assassination on 15 August 1975.

### **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award renamed Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award will now be known as the **Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award**. The Prime Minister said that this was being done for "respecting the sentiments of citizens across the country". The Khel Ratna award is the highest sporting honour in the nation.
- "Major Dhyan Chand was among India's foremost sportspersons who brought honour and pride for India. Our nation's highest sporting honour should be named after him," the Prime Minister said.
- Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award (Major Dhyan Chand Sport Jewel Award), formerly known as Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award in Sports and Games, is the highest sporting honour of the Republic of India. It is awarded annually by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The recipient(s) is/are selected by a committee constituted by the Ministry and is honoured for their "spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports over a period of four years" at international level. As of 2020, the award comprises a medallion, a certificate, and a cash prize of Rs. 25 lakh. Instituted in 1991-1992, the award was given for the performance by a sportsperson in a year. The award from 1991-2021 was named after Rajiv Gandhi (1944-1991), former Prime Minister of India.
- The award since August 6, 2021 is named after Major Dhyan Chand (1905-79), an Indian field hockey player, widely regarded as one of the greatest field hockey players of all time, who scored more than 1000 goals over a career that spanned over 20 years from 1926 to 1948.
- The first recipient of the award was Chess Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand, who was honoured for the performance in the year 1991-92. In 2001, sport shooter Abhinav Bindra, then aged 18, became the youngest recipient of the award
- The most recent recipients of the award are Rohit Sharma (Cricket), Mariyappan Thangavelu (Para Athletics), Manika Batra (Table Tennis), Vinesh Phogat (Wrestling), and Rani Rampal (Hockey).

### **President Ram Nath Kovind confers 144 Gallantry awards in 2021**

- President Shri Ram Nath Kovind, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, has approved 144 Gallantry awards for armed forces, police and paramilitary personnel on the occasion of Independence Day 2021. Besides, President Kovind also approved 28 Mention-in-Despatches to the army personnel for their significant contributions in different military operations.
- Ashok Chakra: Babu Ram (posthumously), ASI, Jammu and Kashmir Police.
- Kirti Chakra: Altaf Hussain Bhat (posthumously), Constable, J&K Police.

### **Mahatma Gandhi to be given the US Congressional Gold Medal**

- An influential US lawmaker from New York reintroduced a resolution in the US House of Representatives to posthumously award the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal to Mahatma Gandhi in recognition of his promotion of peace and nonviolence.
- The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award in the United States. Gandhi would be the first Indian to receive a Congressional Gold Medal, an honour bestowed upon such great figures as George Washington, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and Rosa Parks.

## Bangladeshi Fairouz Faizah Beether gets 2021 Changemaker Award

- **Fairouz Faizah Beether of Bangladesh** has been chosen for the 2021 Changemaker Award for her work promoting good health and well-being by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- **The Award celebrates an individual who has inspired change using personal experience or from a position of leadership.** Fairouz Faizah is co-founder of Moner School which is an anonymous online platform active in the field of mental health.
- **It works with youth to educate them about the importance of mental health care through training, workshops, and a 24/7 online mental health first aid service in Bangladesh.**
- **The Changemaker Award is part of the Goalkeepers Global Goals award instituted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** to accelerate progress towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN.
- **Former United Nations under-secretary-general and executive director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, has been chosen as the winner of the 2021 Global Goalkeeper Award for her ‘unwavering global leadership on gender equality and continued advocacy to address the COVID pandemic’s disproportionate impact on women and girls’.**
- **The Goalkeepers is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s campaign to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) announced by the UN in 2015 to achieve the objectives of ending poverty, fighting inequality and injustice and fixing climate change.**

## President Shri Ram Nath Kovind gives away National Florence Nightingale Award 2020 to Brigadier S V Saraswati

- **Deputy Director General of Military Nursing Service Brig S V Saraswati** has been bestowed with the **National Florence Nightingale Award 2020**. President Shri Ram Nath Kovind conferred the award in a virtual ceremony for her immense contribution to the MNS as nurse administrator.
- **National Florence Nightingale Award is the highest national distinction a nurse can achieve for selfless devotion and exceptional professionalism.** Brig Saraswati hails from Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh and was commissioned in to the MNS on December 28, 1983. She has served in the MNS for more than three and half decades, especially in perioperative nursing.
- As a renowned operation theatre nurse, **she has assisted in more than 3,000 lifesaving and emergency surgeries** and has trained residents, operation room nursing trainees and auxiliary staff in her career. **She has prepared patient teaching materials and improvised drape kits and suture packing for cardiac surgeries.**

## Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021 Winners: 5 Winners Announced

- **Ramon Magsaysay Award 2021 awardees have been announced**, the winners will be formally awarded the Magsaysay Award during the November 28 event at the Ramon Magsaysay Centre in Manila. **Among the awardees is Dr Firdousi Qadri of Bangladesh and Muhammad Amjad Saqib of Pakistan, as well as Philippine fisheries and community environmentalist Roberto Ballon, American citizen Steven Munsu, who works for humanitarian work and help refugees, and Indonesian WatchDoc for investigative journalism.**
- **The Ramon Magsaysay Award is an annual award, which is also known as Asia’s Nobel Prize.** The award was cancelled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Manila-based foundation had issued a statement saying that it had no choice but to cancel the 2020 awards with COVID-19 almost immobilizing the world.
- **Ramon Magsaysay Awards 2021 will be conferred to five people who have made selfless and extraordinary contributions to the eradication of poverty and the development of the society in Asia.** The awards will be conferred on November 28<sup>th</sup>.
- **Indian journalist Ravish Kumar was among the five recipients of Ramon Magsaysay Award 2019 for “harnessing journalism to give voice to the voiceless”.** He was recognised for his real-life reporting of problems of ordinary people during his prime time programme.
- **Other prominent Indians who have won the Ramon Magsaysay Award in the past include Arvind Kejriwal (2006), Kiran Bedi, Jayaprakash Narayan (1965), T. M. Krishna (2016), Jayaprakash Narayan (1965), Baba Amte (1985), Vinoba Bhave (1958), Verghese Kurien (1963), Manna Dey (1966), Satyajit Ray (1967), R. K. Laxman (1984) and Mother Teresa (1962).**

**Ramon Magsaysay Award** was established in 1957 as an annual award in memory of the third president of the Philippines, Ramon Magsaysay. The award is conferred every year to honour individuals and organizations in Asia who transform lives and societies by manifesting selfless service. The award was established by the trustees of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund based in New York City with the concurrence of the Philippine government. The award aims to perpetuate former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay's example of integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society. The annual award is presented every year on August 31<sup>st</sup>, on the birth anniversary of Magsaysay.

## **G. Persons & Appointments**

### **Indian-origin Raj Chouhan elected Speaker of Canada's British Columbia Province**

- **Raj Chouhan, an Indian-origin legislator in Canada, has been elected as the Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, becoming first from the community to occupy the post.**

### **Kylie Jenner tops Forbes' list of highest-paid celebrities of 2020**

- **American media personality and reality TV star Kylie Jenner has been crowned the highest-paid celebrity of 2020 by Forbes.**
- **The top-earning stars in the world earned a combined of \$6.1 billion in 2020 with Kylie Jenner and Kanye West at the top of the list. Setting aside Kylie's history with Forbes, the financial experts there calculated her earning this year to be at \$590 million after she sold a majority of her beauty brand's stake to Coty Inc.**

### **Major General Gautam Chauhan becomes first to head Indian Army's human rights cell**

- **The Indian Army has appointed a Major General rank officer to head its newly created human rights cell to give high priority to the observance of human rights convention and values.**
- **Major General Gautam Chauhan took charge as the first Additional Director General Human Rights in the Indian Army and will work under the India Army vice Chief Lieutenant General SK Saini.**

### **ISRO Chairman K Sivan gets one-year extension**

- **ISRO Chairman K Sivan has been given an one-year extension, till January 14, 2022, as the secretary, Department of Space, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued.**
- **The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of tenure of K Sivan, secretary, Department of Space and chairman, Space Commission, for a period of one-year beyond January 14, 2021, that is up to January 14, 2022, it said.**

### **Sanitation Worker Manish Kumar becomes first Indian to get Covid-19 Vaccine**

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

### **Austin becomes first Black Pentagon chief**

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

### **Janet Yellen becomes first US woman treasury secretary**

- **The US Senate has confirmed eminent economist Janet Yellen as the first woman Treasury Secretary of the United States. Yellen was confirmed by the Senate in a broad bipartisan support of 84-15 votes. Both the Democratic and the Republican parties have 50 members in the 100-seat Senate.**

### **India's First Woman Fighter Pilot Participates In Republic Day Fly-Past**

- **Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth, the first woman in India to qualify for combat mission in a fighter jet became the first woman fighter pilot to participate in the Republic Day fly-past.**

- **Bhawana Kanth joined the Indian Air Force fighter squadron in 2017 and flew her first solo flight on an MiG-21 Bison in March 2018. She is currently posted at a fighter base in the western sector. Along with Mohana Singh and Avani Chaturvedi, Flight Lt Kanth was the first woman selected for the IAF fighter stream in 2016.**

### **Priyanca Radhakrishnan created history by becoming the first Indian-Kiwi woman to become a minister in New Zealand**

- **Indian-origin politician Priyanca Radhakrishnan created history by becoming the first Indian-Kiwi woman to become a minister in New Zealand.** Radhakrishnan was one of five new ministers inducted into freshly reelected Labour Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern who also unveiled a revamped cabinet that she has described as “incredibly diverse”.

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

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

### **ISA announces Dr Ajay Mathur as its new Director-General**

- **International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members. Dr Mathur replaces Mr Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since the inception of the ISA.**

### **S Ramann appointed as SIDBI Chairman & MD**

- **The government has appointed S Ramann as Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). The appointment is for a period of three years from the date of his assuming the charge or until further orders.**
- **Ramann, a 1991-batch Indian Audit & Accounts Service officer, is currently the CEO of National E-Governance Services Ltd, India’s first Information Utility.**

### **Accenture’s Rekha Menon takes over as Nasscom’s first woman Chairperson**

- **Rekha Menon, chairperson and MD of Accenture India, has been appointed as the first woman chairperson of IT industry body Nasscom.**
- **Menon, who succeeds Infosys COO Pravin Rao, would be at the helm for 2021-22. Krishnan Ramanujam, president and head of business & technology services at TCS, will be vice-chairperson for the year. The industry body also has a new executive council — of which 40% members are women.**

### **Priyanka Mohite becomes first Indian woman to scale Mt Annapurna**

- **Priyanka Mohite from Satara in western Maharashtra has scaled Mt Annapurna, the 10<sup>th</sup> highest mountain peak in the world, becoming the first Indian woman climber to achieve the feat.**
- **Mount Annapurna is a massif in the Himalayas located in Nepal that includes one peak over 8,000 metres and is considered to be one of the toughest mountains to climb.**

### **Vanita Gupta becomes first Indian-American to be Associate Attorney General**

- **Prominent Indian-American civil rights lawyer Vanita Gupta has been confirmed by the US Senate as associate attorney general, making her the first person of colour to occupy the third-highest position at the Department of Justice.**
- **Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski broke away from her party colleagues to support Gupta (46), giving the Democrats 51 votes to see her through the historic confirmation.**

### **Miss Universe 3<sup>rd</sup> runner-up Adline Castelino**

- **LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020 Adline Castelino returned to India after being ranked the third runner-up at the 69<sup>th</sup> Miss Universe pageant.**



### **Kami Rita Sherpa creates new record, climbs Mt Everest for the 25<sup>th</sup> time**

- **Nepali Sherpa climbed the world's highest peak, Mt Everest, for the 25<sup>th</sup> time breaking his own record** for summing the mountain most number of times. **The group successfully reached the summit of Mt Everest helping Kami better his own record of climbing the peak for the 25<sup>th</sup> time.**
- **Kami had climbed Mt Everest for the 24<sup>th</sup> time in 2019. In 2019, he had reached the summit of Mt Everest twice in one month. Kami had climbed Mt Everest for the first time in May 1994.** Between 1994 and 2021, he has **summited Mt Everest 25 times, K2 and Mt Lhotse once each, Mt Manaslu three times, and Mt Cho Oyu eight times.**

### **David Attenborough appointed as People's Advocate of COP26 for Climate Change**

- **Sir David Attenborough, a natural historian and a world-renowned broadcaster was appointed as the People's Advocate of the COP26 for the UK's Presidency of the UN Climate Change summit to be held in Glasgow in November 2021.**
- **Attenborough has been tasked with putting forward a case to key decision-makers, global leaders, and the public to explain why climate action matters, highlight the progress to achieve the climate goals, and what actions will the decision-makers need to take ahead of COP26.**

### **CISF chief Subodh Kumar Jaiswal appointed CBI Director**

- **CISF chief Subodh Kumar Jaiswal was appointed as the new CBI director for two years, according to a Personnel Ministry order.**
- **Jaiswal is a 1985-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Maharashtra cadre. He has also served as Maharashtra's director general of police in the past.**
- **The Central Bureau of Investigation was working without a regular chief for over three months after Rishi Kumar Shukla completed his two-year tenure on February 3.**

### **India's first transgender international beauty queen wins Empress Earth 2021-22 title**

- **Naaz Joshi, a Delhi-based transgender female, won the Empress Earth 2021-22 title, an international title in a virtual contest. The first runner-up was Valentina from Colombia and the second runner-up was Olivia from Mexico.**

### **Indian-origin Justice becomes first person of colour to be nominated to Supreme Court of Canada**

- **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has nominated Indian-origin Justice Mahmud Jamal to the Supreme Court of Canada, becoming the first person of colour to be named to the apex court of the country. Trudeau announced Jamal's nomination to replace the retiring Rosalie Silberman Abella, the first refugee and first Jewish woman to sit on the top court.**

### **Man with roots in Kot Kalan becomes Australia's first Indian Judge**

- **Barrister Pardeep Singh Tiwana has become the first Indian to be appointed as a judge of the County Court of Victoria (Australia).**
- **Earlier, Jalandhar's Palbinder Kaur Shergill had become the first Sikh turbaned baptised woman to be appointed as a Supreme Court Judge of Canada in 2017.**

### **Amitabh Kant gets one-year extension as NITI Aayog CEO**

- **The central government has extended for another one year the tenure of Amitabh Kant, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) till June 2022 – third extension since he took charge of the public policy think tank in 2016.**
- **Amitabh Kant, an Indian Administrative Service official of the Kerala cadre, has been instrumental in several policy initiatives of the government, including 'Make in India', 'Start-up India', and 'Incredible India' and has recently been spearheading the ease of doing business initiatives of NITI Aayog.**

### **Dhriti Banerjee becomes 1<sup>st</sup> woman director in 100 years of Zoological Survey of India history**

- **Dhriti Banerjee has become the first woman to be appointed as director of the 105-year-old Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).**
- **ZSI, headquartered in Kolkata with 16 regional centres under the ministry of environment, forests and climate change, started hiring women scientists as late as 1949, after more than three decades since its inception on 1 July 1916. Mira Mansukhani thus created history in an organization which until then was largely dominated by men.**

### **Rekha Sharma gets 3-year extension as National Commission for Women Chairperson**

- **Rekha Sharma** was given a three-year extension as the Chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW). The Women and Child Development Ministry said, “Central Government hereby nominates Rekha Sharma as Chairperson of the National Commission for Women, for another term of three years or till the age of 65 years or until further orders whichever is the earliest.”
- The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** is the statutory body of the Government of India, generally concerned with advising the government on all policy matters affecting women. It was established on 31 January 1992 under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act. The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik.

### **Amitabh Bachchan replaces Alexa, becomes first indian celebrity to give voice on Amazon Alexa**

- **Amazon Alexa and Amitabh Bachchan** partnered in September last year and now a year later, **Amazon Alexa has got the voice of Amitabh Bachchan.**
- **Amazon Alexa is now ready to answer your questions in Big B’s voice.** The company announced that you can talk to Amitabh Bachchan through Alexa and ask him questions and answers. **Amitabh Bachchan’s voice has become available on Celebrity Voice Feature on Amazon Alexa.**
- **Alexa users can now connect Amitabh Bachchan to any speaker or Echo Display** and take advantage of this feature. However, this feature will only work on Android for now.

### **Amitabh Bachchan 1<sup>st</sup> Indian star to roll out NFT collection**

- **Amitabh Bachchan has launched his own NFTs (Non-fungible tokens), becoming the first Indian actor to do so** at a time when the world is warming up to digital assets. **These NFTs will be a collection of unique and limited artworks themed around Amitabh Bachchan and his life.**
- The NFTs up for grabs will include the mega star’s recital of poems from Madhushala, the renowned collection of poems by his father Harivansh Rai Bachchan. **He will also share anecdotes from his much-celebrated career. Amitabh Bachchan will roll out his NFT collection on the BeyondLife.club platform.**
- **In simple terms, NFTs are digital assets, backed by blockchain technology, representing things such as art, collectibles such as photos, videos and music, or even real estate.** These assets are non-fungible, which means each token is unique and one cannot get a like-for-like replacement when they are traded.

### **Virat Kohli became the first Indian to cross the 150 million followers’ landmark on Instagram.**

- **In the overall list, Kohli is the fourth sporting celebrity to reach the 150 million mark on the photo-blogging platform. Ronaldo tops the chart with 337 million followers, while Lionel Messi and Brazil’s Neymar stand second and third in the list with 260 million, 160 million followers respectively. Kohli had earlier become the first Asian to reach 75 million followers on Instagram.**

### **Sonu Sood is the brand ambassador of Delhi govt’s ‘Desh ka mentors’ programme**

- **Bollywood actor Sonu Sood met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the national capital. Kejriwal confirmed that Sonu Sood agreed to become the brand ambassador of Delhi govt’s ‘Desh Ke Mentors’ program which will be launched soon.**

### **Tim Cook, Elon Musk among TIME Magazine’s 100 most influential techies of 2021**

- **Tech honchos like Apple CEO Tim Cook and Tesla CEO Elon Musk are among the list of the 100 Most Influential People of 2021 according to TIME’s newly published rankings.** Cook’s inclusion comes a day after Apple revealed the iPhone 13 series, Apple Watch Series 7 and upgraded iPads during a virtual event, reports CNET.
- In Time’s profile, **Nike co-founder Phil Knight praised Cook’s “character, compassion and courage”.** He also noted that **“Apple stock has gone up 1,000 per cent, making it the most valuable company in the world”** during Cook’s decade as CEO.

### **Pune team scales Mt Manda in Himalaya, becomes first from India to succeed on difficult route**

- **Climbers from Pune have scaled the 6,510-metre peak Mt Manda-I in Himalaya by a route that is considered highly difficult.** The team of ‘Giripremi’, a mountaineering club, **achieved the feat and became the first from India to summit the peak from the North Ridge, he said.**
- **Globally, it was only the second successful ascent by this route,** said club member and the expedition’s mentor Umesh Zirpe. A Japanese team had succeeded in reaching the top by this route earlier.

## Retired Lt. General Gurmeet Singh sworn in as new Governor of Uttarakhand

- Retired Lt. General Gurmeet Singh is the new Governor of Uttarakhand. Chief Justice of Nainital High Court Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan administered the oath to Retired Lt. General Gurmeet Singh. He is 8<sup>th</sup> Governor of the State.

## Government of India decides to appoint Air Marshal V R Chaudhari as next Chief of IAF

- Government has decided to appoint Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari, presently Vice Chief of Air Staff, as the next Chief of the Indian Air Force.
- Air Marshal V R Chaudhari was commissioned into the Fighter stream of Indian Air Force on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1982 and has held various Command, Staff and Instructional Appointments at various levels including the present one as Vice Chief of Air Staff. Air Marshal Chaudhari is decorated with Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal and Vayu Sena Medal.

The Chief of the Air Staff is the head of military staff of the Indian Air Force. The CAS is the leader of the governing body of the Air Force, and is usually the highest ranking officer of the Air Force unless the Chief of Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces is taken as an officer of the aerial branch of the armed forces. The position is abbreviated as CAS in the Indian Air Force cables and communication, and is always held by a full Air Chief Marshal since 1966. The chief is directly responsible for leading the Indian Air Force as the chief military adviser on aerial affairs. They are responsible for coordinating and chairing the military air staff of the Air force and ultimately are subject to the Chief of Defence and the government of India. The current CAS is Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria who took office on 30 September 2019, following the retirement of Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa. Bhadauria will be succeeded by Vivek Ram Chaudhari after 30 September 2021.

## H. Obituaries

### Col Narendra 'Bull' Kumar, who helped India secure Siachen glacier, passes away

- Ace mountaineer Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar who helped India secure the Siachen Glacier passed away at the Army Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi due to age-related illness.
- Col Kumar, who was awarded the Kirti Chakra, Padma Shri, Arjun award and the McGregor medal, carried out multiple expeditions in the Siachen glacier area in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

### Legendary Indian classical musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away

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

### Former RBI Governor Maidavolu Narasimham passes away

- The former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Maidavolu Narasimham, has passed away. He was famously known as the "Father of Indian Banking Reforms".
- He was the 13<sup>th</sup> Governor of RBI and served from May 2, 1977, to November 30, 1977. He was known for being the chair of two high-powered committees on banking and financial sector reforms. The idea of bank mergers and creating strong megabanks was first mooted by the Narasimham Committee. The first Narasimham Committee report presented in 1991.
- In 1998 the government appointed yet another committee under the chairmanship of Mr Narsimham. It is better known as the Banking Sector Committee. It was told to review the banking reform progress and design a programme for further strengthening the financial system of India. The committee focused on various areas such as capital adequacy, bank mergers, bank legislation, etc.

### Renowned Classical singer Rajan Mishra passes away

- Renowned Classical singer Rajan Mishra passed away. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over his death. Pandit Rajan Mishra was a legend of Hindustani music.
- Belonging to the Benaras gharana, Pandit Rajan Mishra, along with brother Sajan Mishra have performed for both Indian and global audiences for decades now. They have been honoured by the

**Padma Bhushan award, the Sangeet Natak Akademi award and the Gandharva National award for their contribution to the music.**

### **Veteran Athlete Milkha Singh passes away**

- **Indian Athlete Milkha Singh passed away at the age of 91 due to Covid-19 related complications on June 18, 2021. During the 1960 Olympic Games, he finished to fourth-place in 400 metres final.** Several records were broken in race. He finished to fourth-place in 45.73 seconds which was an Indian national record for almost 40 years.
- **Captain Milkha Singh, known as The Flying Sikh, was an Indian track and field sprinter. He was introduced to sport while serving the Indian Army. He is the only athlete who won gold in 400 metres race at Asian Games & Commonwealth Games. He won gold medals in 1958 and 1962 Asian Games. He also represented India in 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne, 1960 Summer Olympics in Rome and 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. He was conferred India's fourth-highest civilian honour, Padma Shri for his sporting achievements.**

### **Legendary Actor Dilip Kumar passes away in Mumbai**

- **Legendary actor Dilip Kumar passed away after a prolonged illness in Mumbai. Popularly known as the 'Tragedy King' of Bollywood, Dilip Kumar was known as a method actor who was never limited to genres.**
- **Dilip Kumar made his Hindi film debut in 1944 with the movie 'Jwar Bhata'.** In a career spanning over six decades, Dilip Kumar gave multiple hits such as 'Mughal-e-Azam', 'Naya Daur', 'Baabul', 'Deedar', 'Madhumati', 'Devdas', 'Ganga Jamuna', 'Ram Aur Shyam', 'Karma' and others. Dilip Kumar's portrayal in various doomed movies earned him the title of 'tragedy king'.
- **He was awarded the prestigious Padma Bhushan award in 1991 for his outstanding contribution to Indian Cinema. Dilip Kumar was bestowed with Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1994 and Padma Vibhushan in 2015.**
- **The Government of Andhra Pradesh honoured Kumar with NTR National Award in 1997. The Government of Pakistan conferred Kumar with Nishan-e-Imtiaz, the highest civilian award in Pakistan, in 1998.**

### **Former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadra Singh passes away**

- **Former Himachal Pradesh chief minister and senior Congress leader Virbhadra Singh died after a prolonged illness. The nine-time MLA and five-time MP, Singh served as Himachal Pradesh's chief minister for six times.** The veteran Congress leader remained chief minister of the state for six times- from April 8, 1983 to March 5, 1990, December 3, 1993 to March 23, 1998 and from March 6, 2003 to December 29, 2007 and for the sixth time from December 25, 2012 to December 26, 2017.

### **Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh dies at 89**

- **Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister and former Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh passed away at Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow due to sepsis and multi-organ failure.**
- **Mr Singh was Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, twice -- June 1991 to December 1992 and September 1997 to November 1999. He also served as Governor of Rajasthan between 2014 and 2019.**
- **His first term as Chief Minister is remembered for the demolition of the long-disputed Babri mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.** This incident sent shock waves across the country and is widely viewed as a milestone in modern India's socio-political history and in the rise of his party, the BJP.
- **Mr Singh resigned as Chief Minister immediately following the demolition while the then President Shankar Dayal Sharma also dismissed the Uttar Pradesh government on the same day. Along with other BJP stalwarts like LK Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, Mr Singh was charged with conspiracy over the incident.**

## **I. Books & Authors**

### **'PM Modi and his Government's Special Relationship with Sikhs' Book released on the occasion of Gurupurab**

- **Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri released a Book titled 'Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Government's Special Relationship with Sikhs' on the occasion of Gurupurab.**



- The book was released in New Delhi in presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar. **The book, published by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, was released in English, Hindi and Punjabi languages.

### India's first female, comic book superhero tackles COVID-19 in 'Priya's Mask'

- **India's first female superhero, Priya, and her trusted flying tiger Sahas, find themselves amid a global, ongoing crisis: COVID-19.** Save the flying tiger, this is a familiar premise to us all, by now. Priya's Mask is the newest edition of the Augmented Reality-enabled comic book series featuring the teenage, female superhero.
- **For the first time, it is accompanied by an animated short film.** Voiced by actors from India and the US (Mrunal Thakur as Priya, Vidya Balan and Rosanna Arquette as Sahas and Sairah Kabir as eight-year-old Meena), the film visually narrates a segment from the comic. Set against the city of Jodhpur, Priya befriends Meena to show her how indispensable frontline workers are and instills a sense of hope and courage in her.

### PM Modi pays floral tributes and release a book titled 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee' in Parliament

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays floral tributes and also **release a book titled Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Parliament : A Commemorative Volume on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**
- The book also contains some rare photographs from Atal Bihari Vajpayee's public life. **December 25<sup>th</sup>, this year marks the 96<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This day is also celebrated as Good Governance Day.**

### Ravi Shastri's First-Ever Book to Share Insights of His Life in Cricket

- **Indian cricket team coach Ravi Shastri is all set to come up with his first-ever book** in which the former player will **share the never-before-revealed anecdotes and insights of his life in cricket.** HarperCollins India announced the acquisition of Shastri's first book on his life in cricket, to be published in summer 2021.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 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.**

### 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.**

### Cricket legend Ravi Shastri's book 'Stargazing' to release this year

- **Cricket legend, commentator and one of Team India's most successful coaches, Ravi Shastri has penned a book titled 'Stargazing: The Players in My Life'.**
- **In 'Stargazing: The Players in My Life', Shastri writes about some 60 extraordinary talents he has met from across the world who have inspired him.**

### Neena Gupta announces tell all autobiography 'Sach Kahun Toh'

- **Veteran actor Neena Gupta is reflecting on her journey in Indian cinema and her life in her new book. Titled 'Sach Kahun Toh', Neena's autobiography will be her first book and the Badhaai Ho actress recently showcased the cover of her book.**

### All-Time Favourites for Children by Ruskin Bond

- **India's favourite writer Ruskin Bond has brought forth a carefully curated and handpicked collection of his short stories in a new book titled 'All Time Favourites For Children'. His first novel, 'The Room on the Roof', which was written when he was seventeen, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957.**
- **Since then he has written over 500 short stories, essays and novellas (including 'Vagrants in the Valley' and 'A Flight of Pigeons') and more than forty books for children. Bond's 'All Time Favourites For Children; is published under the Puffin imprint of Penguin Books.**

### The book "Sikkim: A History of Intrigue and Alliance"

- **Former diplomat Preet Mohan Singh Malik combines insights into the unique history of the erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim with the intriguing story of how it became India's 22<sup>nd</sup> state in his new book. The book "Sikkim: A History of Intrigue and Alliance", published by HarperCollins India, released on May 16, which is celebrated as Sikkim Day.**
- **Sikkim remains significant from a strategic point of view, given its proximity to Tibet and the crucial Siliguri Corridor that connects India's northeastern states with the rest of the country. Sikkim also remains an enigma for most, with many misconceptions about its history and its merger with India in 1975.**

### Book on Veer Savarkar to hit stands

- **Historian Vikram Sampath's concluding volume on the life and works of Veer Savarkar will hit the stands on July 26, Penguin Random House India announced on the occasion of 138<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the Hindutva ideologue.**
- **The book, titled "Savarkar: A contested Legacy (1924-1966), will cover the story of one of the most contentious political thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from 1924 to 1966 — the year he died.**
- **The first volume, "Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past" released in 2019, covered Savarkar's life from his birth in 1883 to his conditional release from prison in 1924.**

### Meghan Markle releases first children's book 'The Bench'

- **The first children's book by Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, is a multicultural tribute to fatherhood. "The Bench," a picture story published by Random House Children's Books, celebrates the bond between Meghan's husband Prince Harry and son Archie and fathers and sons in general.**
- **The book's jacket describes Meghan, the actor formerly known as Meghan Markle, as "a mother, wife, feminist, and activist," committed to "activating compassion in communities across the world. She currently resides in her home state of California with her family, two dogs, and a growing flock of rescue chickens." In announcing "The Bench" last month, she said it began as a Father's Day poem written a month after Archie's birth, in 2019.**

- Publication of “The Bench” comes four days after the birth of the couple’s second child, Lilibet “Lili” Diana Mountbatten-Windsor, named in part for Harry’s grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, whose family nickname is Lilibet, and his late mother, Princess Diana. Meghan was pregnant with Lilibet while working on the book and the final illustration shows Harry and Archie, now a toddler, at the family’s chicken coop. Meghan is in the garden on the opposite page, wearing a sun hat, holding an infant in a sling.

#### VP M. Venkaih Naidu receives book entitled ‘Urdu Poets and Writers - Gems of Deccan’

- Vice President M. Venkaih Naidu received a book entitled ‘Urdu Poets and Writers - Gems of Deccan’ authored by senior journalist, J.S. Ifthekhar. Mr. Naidu commended the author for the book which traces the rich literary and cultural traditions of the Deccan.

## J. Important Days

### World AIDS Day: 1 December

- Every year, on 1 December, the world commemorates World AIDS Day. COVID-19 is showing once again how health is interlinked with other critical issues, such as reducing inequality, human rights, gender equality, social protection and economic growth. With this in mind, this year the theme of World AIDS Day is “Global solidarity, shared responsibility”.

### World Soil Day: 5 December

- World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on 5 December as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- The theme for World Soil Day 2020 is “Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity”.

### Human Rights Day: 10 December

- Human Rights Day is celebrated annually across the world on 10 December every year. The date was chosen to honor the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption and proclamation, on 10 December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the first global enunciation of human rights and one of the first major achievements of the new United Nations.
- 2020 Theme: Recover Better - Stand Up for Human Rights.

### International Migrants Day 2020

- Every year, December 18, is celebrated as International Migrants Day. The day was appointed by the General Assembly of United Nations on December 4, 2000, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world.
- Each year, International Migrants Day observed around a specific theme. The International Migrants Day 2020 theme is Reimagining Human Mobility.

### National Consumer Rights Day

- National Consumer Rights Day is observed on 24 December every year in India. The day aims to highlight the importance of the consumer movement as well as the need to make them aware and informed of their rights and responsibilities.
- The theme of the National Consumer Day is ‘The Sustainable Consumer’. The theme is in view of the urgent need for action to approach the worldwide crisis, global temperature change and biodiversity loss. The movement highlights the changes in lifestyle of consumers.

### Good Governance Day 2020

- Good governance is observed annually on December 25. The day aims to let the citizens, the students, who are the future of the country know about the government’s responsibilities and duties that it needs to fulfill.
- The day is also celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of India’s former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. On December 23, 2014, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (posthumously) were announced as recipients of India’s highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna.

### International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, 27 December

- The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed December 27 the “International Day of Epidemic Preparedness.”
- A year into the global battle against the coronavirus, the international body hopes the designation will help strengthen global measures against and preparedness for future health crises.

### World Braille Day: 4 January

- **World Braille Day is observed on January 4 every year to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille language. Born on January 4, 1809 in France, Braille is credited for developing Braille language for blind and visually impaired people.**
- **The first World Braille Day was celebrated on January 4 in 2019** after it got approval from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) via a proclamation in November 2018.
- **World Braille Day Theme spreads awareness about Braille and other accessible forms of communication.** Everyone deserves the same accommodations, service, and right of ability.

### World Hindi Day 2021

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

### International Day of Education 24 January

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

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

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

### National Voters' Day

- **The National Voters' Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year since 2011,** all across the country to mark the foundation day of Election Commission of India, i.e. 25<sup>th</sup> January 1950. 11<sup>th</sup> National Voters' Day (NVD) celebrated on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021. **Theme for this year's NVD is 'Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed'.**

### World Leprosy Day

- **World Leprosy Day is observed internationally every year on the last Sunday of January** to increase the public awareness of Leprosy or Hansen's disease. This date was chosen by French humanitarian Raoul Follereau as a tribute to the life of Mahatma Gandhi who had compassion for people afflicted with leprosy.
- **World Leprosy Day 2021 theme is to "Beat Leprosy, End Stigma and advocate for Mental Wellbeing."**

### World Wetlands Day

- **World Wetlands Day is celebrated on the second day of February every year,** though it was **not originally celebrated until 1997.** This day serves to recognize the influence and positive production that Wetlands have had on the world and in terms brings communities together for the benefit of Mother Nature.
- **This year's theme is 'Wetlands and Water'.** According to UNESCO, the particular theme has been adopted to highlight the "importance of wetlands as a source of freshwater" and encourage "action to restore them and stop their loss".

### World Cancer Day

- **World Cancer Day is an international day marked on February 4** to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. World Cancer Day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, written in 2008.
- **The theme for World Cancer Day 2021 is 'I Am and I Will.'** It is a multi-year campaign that began in 2019 and this year will mark the last year. The theme represents an empowering call-to-action urging personal



commitment, it also represents the power of action taken now to have a positive impact on the future. **The theme clearly focuses on “together all our actions matter”.**

### International Mother Language Day 21 February

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

### National Science Day

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

### International Women’s Day to be celebrated

- **International Women’s Day was celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> March.** The day is celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> 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 Consumer Rights Day

- **The consumer movement marks 15<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.**
- **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.

### 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 Tuberculosis Day being observed on 24<sup>th</sup> March

- **The day is observed on 24<sup>th</sup> 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).

### National Civil Services Day

- **The National Civil Services Day is observed on April 21 every year** and is dedicated to India’s civil servants for their contribution and hard work in public administration. **The first National Civil Service Day was observed in the year 2006.**
- **The Government of India chose April 21 as the National Civil Service Day as on this day the country’s first home minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed the newly appointed Administrative Services Officers in 1947.** The historic occasion took place at the Metcalfe House in Delhi. Sardar Patel had referred to the civil servants as the **“steel frame of India”** or in other words the **backbone of the country’s administration.**

### Earth Day celebrated on April 22

- **April 22 is Earth Day, an international event celebrated around the world to pledge support for environmental protection.** The year 2021 marks the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the annual celebrations. **This year’s theme for Earth Day is ‘Restore Our Earth’.**
- **In 2009, the United Nations designated April 22 as ‘International Mother Earth Day’.** “Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is a chance to set the world on a cleaner, greener, more sustainable path,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.
- **Earth Day is an annual event on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First held on April 22, 1970,** it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EarthDay.com (formerly Earth Day Network) including 1 billion people in more than 193 countries.

### National Panchayati Raj Day

- **National Panchayati Raj Day is the national day of Panchayati Raj System in India celebrated by Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 24 April annually.** Then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh declared the **first National Panchayati Raj Day on 24 April 2010.**

### World Malaria Day

- **World Malaria Day is an international observance commemorated every year on 25 April** and recognizes global efforts to control malaria. Globally, 3.3 billion people in 106 countries are at risk of malaria.
- **The theme of World Malaria Day 2021 is “Reaching the zero malaria target”.**

### May Day being observed across the globe

- **1<sup>st</sup> May is International Labour Day.** The day is **celebrated to honour the contribution of workers across the world. It is also known as May Day.** The day aims at paying tribute to workers’ sacrifices in achieving economic and social rights all over the world.

- On the occasion, **Director-General of International Labour Organization, Guy Ryder has called on workers, employers, governments, international organizations and all who are committed to building back better**, to join forces to bring in a world of work with justice and dignity for all.
- **In 1889, May Day was chosen as the date for International Workers' Day by the socialists and communists of the Second International**, as well as anarchists, labor activists, and leftists in general around the world, **to commemorate the Haymarket affair in Chicago and the struggle for an eight-hour working day**. International Workers' Day is also called "May Day", but it is a different celebration from the traditional May Day.

### International Day for Biological Diversity 2021

- **The International Day for Biological Diversity is marked on May 22.** As the name suggests, International Day for Biological Diversity is observed to raise and create awareness about biodiversity issues.
- **The theme of the day this year has been finalised as, "We're part of the solution #ForNature."** The idea behind choosing this as the theme is to draw people's attention towards the fact that biodiversity continues to be the answer for a significant number of sustainable development challenges.

### World Environment Day 5 June

- **World Environment Day is celebrated on 5 June. The theme of this year's World Environment Day is 'Reimagine. Recreate. Restore.'** as the year 2021 marks the beginning of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

### World Day against Child Labour observed

- **The World Day Against Child Labour, which is held every year on June 12**, is intended to foster the worldwide movement against child labour. **The theme of this year's World Day Against Child Labour is: 'Act now: end child labour.'**
- **Ahead of World Day Against Child Labour a report by UNICEF and International Labour Organization (ILO) said, the number of children in child labour has risen to 160 million worldwide - an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed millions on the brink of poverty and child labour is directly linked to it.**

### June 21 is observed as International Yoga Day

- **The UN proclaimed June 21 as International Day of Yoga by passing a resolution on December 11, 2014** during the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly.
- **UN theme for yoga-2021: "Yoga for well-being".** The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also asked its member states to practice Yoga and has included it in its Global Action Plan for physical activity 2018-30.

### Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day, 27 June

- **The General Assembly declared 27 June Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day**, to raise public awareness of their contribution to sustainable development and the global economy.
- **In 2021, the theme is "MSME 2021: key to an inclusive and sustainable recovery."** That is why the UN will be hosting a series of events to explore how MSMEs – the backbone of our economies – can be equipped to ensure an equitable and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery.

### National Doctors' Day 2021

- **Every year, July 1 is celebrated as National Doctors' Day by the Indian Medical Association (IMA).** The day is observed to commemorate the birth and death anniversary of former Bengal's Chief Minister Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy. The day is dedicated to all the doctors and healthcare workers who have been serving the people by risking their lives. **For the year 2021, the theme is "Save The Saviours."**

### World Population Day 11 July

- **World Population Day is an annual event, observed on July 11 every year, which seeks to raise awareness of global population issues.** The event was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989.
- This year amid the Coronavirus pandemic and vaccination drive, **the theme for World Population Day is the "impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility".** On this special day, the world comes together with the goal of highlighting the difficulties created by overpopulation.
- It also **raises awareness about how overpopulation may harm the ecosystem and the progress or growth of humanity. Currently, India has the world's second-largest population after China.**

## World Malala Day

- **July 12 is dedicated to celebrating Malala Yousafzai, the young activist from Pakistan. Malala was shot at by Taliban insurgents while she was on her way to school in 2012.**
- **Later, the United Nations declared July 12, Malala's birthday, as World Malala Day in honour of the young education activist. Malala, at the age of 17 received Nobel Peace Prize and became the youngest recipient to receive it.**

## World Youth Skills Day 15 July

- **In 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared 15 July as World Youth Skills Day, to celebrate the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.**
- **This year's theme is 'The future of youth skills'. Photos should highlight the innovative aspects of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and showcase how TVET is equipping young people with skills for a sustainable future.**

## International Tiger Day observed

- **The International Tiger Day is being celebrated on 29<sup>th</sup> July.** The day aims to promote a global system for protecting the natural habitats of tigers and to raise public awareness and support for tiger conservation issues.
- **India is home to 51 tiger reserves spread across 18 states. India achieved the target of doubling of tiger population four years ahead of schedule of the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation.** 14 Tiger Reserves in India which received the accreditation of the Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards.
- **The theme for the 2021 International Tiger Day is "Their survival is in our hands".**

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## International Youth Day

- **In the year 1999, in its resolution, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth that 12 August be declared International Youth Day.** The day provides an opportunity for governments and others to draw attention to youth issues worldwide.
- **The theme of the International Youth Day 2021 is - Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health** which highlights the success of such a global effort will not be achieved without the meaningful participation of young people.

## World Hepatitis Day

- **World Hepatitis Day, observed on July 28 every year, aims to raise global awareness of hepatitis — a group of infectious diseases known as Hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E — and encourage prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Currently, there is no vaccination for hepatitis C.** Hepatitis affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide, causing acute and chronic disease and killing close to 1.34 million people every year.
- **In 2021, the theme is 'Hepatitis Can't Wait', conveying the urgency of efforts needed to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.**

## International Day against Nuclear Tests 29 August

- **On 2 December 2009, the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests by unanimously adopting resolution.**
- **The resolution calls for increasing awareness and education "about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world." The first nuclear test, called Trinity, was conducted by the United States Army in a desert site in New Mexico, on July 16, 1945. The test gave the US confidence to drop atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.**



## International Literacy Day 8 September

- The 8<sup>th</sup> of September was proclaimed International Literacy Day by UNESCO in 1966 to remind the international community of the importance of literacy for individuals, communities and societies, and the need for intensified efforts towards more literate societies. **The issue of literacy is a key component of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**
- International Literacy Day (ILD) 2021 will be celebrated under the theme “Literacy for a human-centered recovery: Narrowing the digital divide”.

## Hindi Day

- Hindi Day is celebrated every year on 14 September marking the declaration of Hindi language as official language of Union government of India. On 14 September 1949, Hindi was adapted as official language in India.
- Hindi, written in the Devanagari script along with English was adopted as the official language in India out of the 22 recognized Indian languages under Article 343 (1). Out of the 22 languages of the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India, Hindi is used at the Union level.

## World Ozone Day 2021

- September 16 was designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer. This year's theme for the International Day for the Prevention of the Ozone Layer is ‘Montreal Protocol — Keeping us, our food, and vaccines cool’. The Montreal Protocol started life as a global agreement to protect the ozone layer, a job it has done well, making it one of the most successful environmental agreements to date.

## International Day of Peace 21 September

- Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire.
- 2021 Theme: Recovering better for an equitable and sustainable world.

## World Rhino Day 2021

- World Rhino Day is marked every year on 22 September to create awareness about the different kinds of Rhinoceros species as well as the dangers they face. The day also aims to celebrate all five species of Rhino including greater one-horned, Sumatran, black, white, and Javan Rhinos that are found in Africa and Asia. With time, Rhinoceros' have become critically endangered in the wild because people desire their unique horns.
- This year, the theme of World Rhino Day is “Keep the Five Alive.”

## K. Miscellaneous

### Gwalior hosts much-awaited Tansen Music Festival under strict COVID-19 guidelines in place

- In Madhya Pradesh, the much-awaited Tansen Music Festival concluded in Gwalior with strict COVID-19 guidelines in place. In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player Pt Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman. Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.
- The inaugural day events started with cross-cultural offerings of Harikatha, Milad and shehnai vadan at Tansen's samadhi sthal in Hazira. The festival concluded on December 30 at Behat village, the birthplace of the music maestro Tansen.

### Lahore again tops list of world's most polluted cities

- Pakistan's cultural capital Lahore has once again topped the list of world's most polluted cities. “Lahore ranks the most polluted city in the world,” according to air pollution data released by the US Air Quality Index.
- According to the index, Lahore reported a particulate matter (PM) rating of 423. Pakistan's financial capital Karachi ranked at 7 on the AQI. New Delhi came in second with a PM of 229, while Nepal's capital Kathmandu ranked the third-worst city with a PM of 178.

## Ladakh celebrates New Year 'Losar'

- **People in Ladakh region are celebrating Ladakhi New Year, Losar.** Due to considerable Covid19 cases in Leh and strict SOPs in place, this year Losar is observed in a low key.

## Cherry Blossom Mao Festival held in Manipur

- **In Manipur, the Cherry Blossom Mao Festival was held at Senapati district marking the beginning of pink season in the district.** Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh graced the function virtually due to the pandemic.
- **The Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur is known for Cherry Blossom, a plant which is popularly known as Sakura in Japan.** The Manipur government started organizing the festival every year from 2017 onward. However this year, the authority decided to scale down the festival due to COVID-19 pandemic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 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.

## Haridwar Kumbh Mela 2021

- **The Kumbh Mela at Haridwar is a mela held every 12 years at Haridwar, India.** The exact date is determined according to Hindu astrology: **the Mela is held when Jupiter is in Aquarius and the sun enters Aries.** An Ardh Kumbh ("Half Kumbh") Mela is held six years after a Kumbh Mela. Currently Deepak Rawat IAS is the Kumbh mela officer, Haridwar.

- **The event possesses deep religious significance to Hindus** as well as other spiritual seekers. Historically, it was an important commercial event, and was attended by merchants from as far as Arabia. **The Haridwar Kumbh Mela is currently happening in 2021 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.**

### **J-K constitutes Special Task Force for cases invoking Article 311**

- **The J&K government has constituted a Special Task Force (STF) for identifying and scrutinising the government employees who are involved in any cases related to posing threat to the security or anti-national activities.** STF will scrutinise cases of **employees suspected of activities requiring action under Article 311(2)(C) of the Constitution.**
- To tighten noose against employees waging war against India, **STF headed by Additional Director General of Police (CID), has been assigned the task of speedily scrutinising and screening such cases in a time-bound manner.**
- Employees who will be found to be **involved in aiding terror - directly or indirectly** - will be immediately dismissed from service. To avoid any legal hassle, last year on July 30, **the General Administration Department (GAD) of the J&K invoked a special provision - under Art 311 - of the Constitution of India for the purpose of terminating the services of the employees or reducing their ranks without holding an inquiry, but on the basis of evidence against them.**

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveils new version of 'Exam Warriors' to make them stress free before examinations**

- **The new version of Exam Warriors written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now available with many new mantras for students as well as parents.** It is available at retail stores as well as online. **The Exam Warriors module is also available on the NaMo App.**
- **The new edition of the book has been enriched with valuable inputs from students, parents and teachers.** Substantive new parts have been added that would especially interest the parents and teachers.

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

### **UNESCO says, Great Barrier Reef should be put on list of World Heritage Sites**

- **The Great Barrier Reef should be put on a list of World Heritage Sites that are in danger due to damage caused by climate change, says UNESCO.**
- The UN's cultural body says the **world's biggest coral reef system should be downgraded** to the list at a meeting next month. It has **urged Australia to take accelerated action on global warming.** But, the Australian government said it would strongly oppose the recommendation.
- The latest row is part of an ongoing dispute between Unesco and the Australian government over the status of the iconic site. **The reef, stretching for 2,300 km off Australia's north-east coast, gained World Heritage ranking in 1981 for its enormous scientific and intrinsic importance.**

### **Delhi, Mumbai first to get mobile CNG filling service**

- **Delhi and Mumbai became the country's first cities to get mobile CNG filling service.** IGL designed the **mobile refuelling units for Delhi-NCR and Mahanagar Gas Ltd for Mumbai,** with Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organisation as the co-developer for both.
- **According to the Government these Mobile Refueling Unit (MRU) will help achieve supply of CNG in areas not yet connected through pipelines or at places** where there is scarcity of land parcels to set up conventional CNG stations. They will ensure round-the-clock and doorstep delivery of CNG at no extra cost. It can store up to 1,500 kg CNG and can fill 150 to 200 vehicles per day.

### **Hemis Festival of Ladakh**

- **Hemis Festival of Ladakh (now a Union Territory) is being observed with due religious fervour but sans the crowd it usually attracts** from around the globe. While most monasteries in the region hold their festivals in winter, **the Hemis Festival is usually held in June/July.** The monastery's nearness to Leh (about 45 km away by road), the pleasant weather, and the extravagant play of colours (the monastery, the attire of the dancers, the blue sky) makes it one of the most photographed festivals of India.

## Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) reservation being implemented in Andhra Pradesh

- The Andhra Pradesh government has issued orders for implementation of 10 per cent EWS reservation in all government recruitments henceforth. The order is in accordance with The Constitution (103<sup>rd</sup>) Amendment Act 2019 that provides for the creation of the special EWS quota to be implemented by the state.
- The ruling YSR Congress Party government had started implementing EWS reservation in educational institutions soon after forming the government in June 2019. The AP Government has simplified the norms stipulated by the Central Government for the implementation of 10 percent reservation to the EWS in employment and education, without any sub-categorisation. People who are not covered under the existing reservations for BCs, SCs, STs and whose gross annual family income is below Rs 8 lakh per annum, are eligible for EWS reservation in both employment and educational opportunities.
- The AP government has removed most of the specifications prescribed by the Centre to be eligible for EWS quota. It has decided to do away with the clause that considers family assets to calculate total annual income. The 10 per cent EWS quota would be over and above the 5 per cent quota for the Kapu community. The AP government has also earmarked one-third of the appointments in government posts under EWS category for women.

**The One Hundred and Third Amendment of the Constitution of India**, officially known as the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act, 2019, introduces 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of society for admission to Central Government-run educational institutions and private educational institutions (except for minority educational institutions), and for employment in Central Government jobs. The Amendment does not make such reservations mandatory in State Government-run educational institutions or State Government jobs. However, some states have chosen to implement the 10% reservation for economically weaker sections. Currently, the quota can be availed by persons with an annual gross household income of up to Rs.8 lakh. Families that own over 5 acres of agricultural land, a house over 1,000 square feet, a plot of over 100-yards in a notified municipal area or over a 200-yards plot in a non-notified municipal area cannot avail the reservation. Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced that Gujarat would implement the 10% reservation policy beginning 14 January 2019, becoming the first state to implement the law.

## Keralites celebrate their biggest festival 'Thiruvonam' across the globe

- Keralites all over the world celebrated Thiruvonam, the most important day of the Onam festival. With Covid 19 cases showing no signs of abatement, the celebrations remained highly subdued. For the second consecutive year, Kerala celebrated Onam in the midst of a pandemic. The festival usually brings forth a multitude of colours and flavours, but this time, the exuberance and grandeur associated with it was clearly missing.
- The warnings by the state Health authorities made people to stay away from crowds and massive celebrations. Many confined themselves to their homes. The festivities at the Thrikkakara Temple in Kochi, associated with the legend of Mahabali, remained low key. The Onam feast, a regular feature of the festival held at the temple was cancelled due to the prevailing Covid 19 situation.

## Ramappa temple, Telangana's first World Heritage Site

- Situated in Palampet in Telangana, the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Ramappa temple was recently inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The temple is located in the village of Palampet, which is about 200 km north of Telangana's capital Hyderabad.
- The temple complex was built by Racherla Rudra Reddy during the period of the Kakatiya ruler Ganapati Deva. It was built using sandstone and its construction, which began in 1213 CE, is believed to have continued for over four decades.

## Textile Ministry celebrated 7<sup>th</sup> National Handloom Day

- Textile Ministry celebrated the 7<sup>th</sup> National Handloom Day on 7<sup>th</sup> August. The handloom weaving community will be honoured for its contribution in the socio-economic development of this country.
- It is a sector that directly addresses women's empowerment with over 70 percent of all weavers and allied workers being female. Three Handloom Craft Villages at Kovalam in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Mohpara Village, District Golaghat in Assam and Kanihama, Budgam in Srinagar are being set up by the Ministry in collaboration with the State governments.



- The aim behind setting up the craft villages is to provide additional attraction for domestic and international tourists and promote the well-known Handloom and Handicraft Products of the region. **In the 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the people to buy Indian Handloom products and showcase their grandeur.**
- **August 7 was chosen as the National Handloom Day to commemorate the Swadeshi Movement** which was launched on this day in 1905 in Calcutta Town Hall to protest against the partition of Bengal by the British Government. The movement had aimed at reviving domestic products and production processes.

#### **LG RK Mathur inaugurates 2-Day Ladakh Nomadic Festival at Korzok Phu**

- **Ladakh Lieutenant Governor RK Mathur inaugurated a 2-Day Ladakh Nomadic Festival at Korzok Phu, Changthang region of eastern Ladakh.**
- **The festival is organised by Ladakh Cultural Academy in collaboration with Ladakh Tourism Department,** aims to bring the distinctive culture of Changthang region on the tourism map of Ladakh.

#### **Indian Nutritional Week**

- **In India, the National Nutrition Week is observed every year from September 1 to September 7 to raise public awareness about nutrition and healthy eating habits.** The week is observed to make people understand the importance of nutritional and adaptive eating habits so that they can maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- **In the year 1982 National Nutrition week celebration was started by the Central Government in India.** The campaign was started to spread awareness and encourage people as a society to understand the importance of nutrition and adopt a healthy, sustainable lifestyle. We all know that **malnutrition is one of the main hurdles in the overall development of the country** which is necessary to overcome it and curb it National Nutrition Week is celebrated. **The theme for National Nutrition Week 2021 is “Feeding smart right from start”.**

## 2. International and National Organizations their heads and headquarters

S.No.	Name of the organization	Headquarter	Head of the Organization/(Designation)
1	United Nations	New York, USA	Antonio Guterres (Secretary-General)
2	UNICEF	New York, USA	Henrietta Holsman Fore (Head)
3	UNESCO	Paris, France	Audrey Azoulay (Director General)
4	FAO	Rome, Italy	Qu Dongyu (Head)
5	WHO	Geneva, Switzerland	Tedros Adhanom (Director General)
6	ILO	Geneva, Switzerland	Guy Ryder (Head)
7	ICJ	The Hague, The Netherlands	Ronny Abaraham (President)
8	UNCTAD	Geneva, Switzerland	Mukhisa Kituyi (Secretary-General)
9	ADB	Manila, Philippines	Masatsugu Asakawa (President)
10	OECD	Paris, France	Mathias Cormann (Secretary General)
11	OPEC	Vienna, Austria	Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo (Nigeria) (Secretary General)
12	EU	Brussels, Belgium	Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen (President of the European Commission)
13	NATO	Brussels, Belgium	Jens Stoltenberg (Secretary-General)
14	IAEA	Vienna, Austria	Rafael Mariano Grossi (Head)
15	SAARC	Kathmandu	Esala Ruwan Weerakoon (Secretary General-2020) Member countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
16	IBSA	Political Forum	India+ Brazil+ South Africa
17	New Development Bank	Shanghai, China	Marcos Troyji (President)
18	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)	Beijing, China	Jin Liqun (President) Dr. D.J. Pandian to the position of Vice President, Chief Investment Officer
19	World Bank	Washington D.C	David Malpass (President)
20	IMF	Washington D.C	Ms. Kristalina Georgieva (Managing Director)
21	WTO	Geneva, Switzerland	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
22	European Central Bank	Frankfurt, Germany	Christine Lagarde (President)
23	Bank for International Settlements	Basel, Switzerland	Agustín Carstens (General Manager)
24	Federal Reserve Bank of America	Washington D.C	Jerome Powell (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

S.No.	Name of the organization	Headquarter	Head of the Organization/(Designation)
25	Financial Action Task Force (FATF)	Paris	Dr. Marcus Pleyer (President)
26	RBI	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das (Governor)
27	NABARD	Mumbai (Maharashtra)	Harsh Kumar Bhanwala (Chairman)
28	SEBI	Mumbai (Maharashtra)	Ajay Tyagi (Chairman)
29	IRDA	Hyderabad	Subhash Chandra Khuntia (Chairman)
30	SIDBI	Lucknow	Devendra Kumar Singh (CMD)
31	TRAI	New Delhi	P D Vaghela (Chairman)
32	Competition Commission of India (CCI)	New Delhi	Devender Kumar Sikri (Chairman)
33	Niti Aayog	New Delhi	Narendra Modi (Chairman) Dr. Rajiv Kumar (Vice Chairman)
34	IDFC FIRST Bank	Mumbai	Mr. V. Vaidyanathan (MD & CEO)
35	EXIM BANK	Mumbai	Mr. David Rasquinha (CMD)
36	ICICI	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakhshi (MD & CEO)
37	CAG	New Delhi	G. C. Murmu
38	CEC	New Delhi	Sunil Arora
39	15 <sup>th</sup> Finance commission	---	N. K. Singh (Chairman)
40	Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)	New Delhi	Union Finance Minister (Chairman)
41	GST Council	New Delhi	Union Finance Minister (Chairman)
42	BIMSTEC	Dhaka	Tenzin Lekphell (Secretary-General) Member countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand
43	BRICS	---	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
44	International Solar Alliance	Gurugram	Ajay Mathur (Director General)
45	G7 Countries	---	Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States

### 3. Countries and their heads of Governments

S.No.	Country	President	Prime Minister
1	Afghanistan	Hibatullah Akhundzada (Head of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan)	Mohammad Hasan Akhund
2	Argentina	Alberto Fernández	
3	Australia	Elizabeth II (Monarch)	Scott John Morrison
4	Bangladesh	Abdul Hamid	Sheikh Hasina
5	Bhutan	Jigme Kheysar Namgel Wangchuck (Monarch)	Lotay Tshering
6	Canada	Mary May Simon (Governor General of Canada)	Justin Trudeau
7	Egypt	Abdel Fateh el-Sisi	Mostafa Kemal Madbouly
8	France	Emmanuel Macron	Jean Castex
9	Greece	Katerina Sakellaropoulou	Kyriakos Mitsotakis
10	India	Ram Nath Kovind	Narendra Modi
11	Indonesia	Joko Widodo	
12	Iran	Ebrahim Raisi	Supreme Leader – Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
13	Iraq	Barham Salih	Mustafa Al-Kadhimi
14	Israel	Isaac Herzog	Naftali Bennett
15	Italy	Sergio Mattarella	Mario Draghi
16	Japan	Naruhito (Monarch)	Fumio Kishida
17	Jordan	Abdullah II (Monarch)	Bisher Al Khasawneh
18	Kazakhstan	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev	Askar Uzakbaiuly Mamin
19	Kyrgyzstan	Talant Mamytov (Acting President)	Talant Mamytov (Acting President)
20	Libya	Abdulhamid Al-Dabaiba	Abdulhamid Al-Dabaiba
21	Malaysia	Abdullah (Monarch)	Ismail Sabri bin Yaakob
22	Mexico	Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador	
23	Myanmar	Myint Swe (Acting President)	Min Aung Hlaing (Chairman of the State Administration Council)
24	Nepal	Bidhya Devi Bhandari	Pushpa Kamal Dahal
25	Nigeria	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida	
26	North Korea	Kim Jong Un	
27	Pakistan	Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi	Imran Khan
28	Palestine	Mahmoud Abbas	Rami Hamdallah
29	Philippines	Rodrigo Duterte	
30	Russia	Vladimir Putin	Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin
38	Saudi Arabia	Mohammad bin Salman	
31	Singapore	Halimah binti Yacob	Lee Hsein Loong
32	South Africa	Cyril Ramaphosa	
33	South Korea	Moon Jae-in	Kim Boo-kyum
34	Sri Lanka	Gotabaya Rajapaksa	Mahinda Rajapaksa
35	Syria	Bashar Hafez al-Assad	Hussein Arnous



<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Prime Minister</b>
36	Turkey	Recep Tayyip Erdogan	
37	United Arab Emirates	Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan (President)	Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum (Prime Minister)
38	USA	Joseph Robinette Biden Jr.	
39	UK	Elizabeth II (Monarch)	Boris Johnson
40	Venezuela	Nicolas Maduro disputed with Juan Gerardo	
41	Yemen	Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi	Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed
42	Zimbabwe	Emmerson Mnangagwa	

## 4. Banks their heads, headquarters and punch lines

### (A) Nationalized Indian Banks and their Heads

S.No.	Name of the bank	Head/Chairman	Headquarter	Punchline
1	Bank of Baroda	Hasmukh Adhia (Chairman)/ Shri Sanjiv Chadha (MD & CEO)	Mumbai	India's International Bank
2	Bank of India	Shri Atanu Kumar Das (MD & CEO)	Mumbai	Relationship beyond banking
3	Bank of Maharashtra	A. S. Rajeev	Pune	Ek Parivar Ek Bank
4	Canara Bank	Chairman: T.N. Manoharan, MD & CEO: Shri Lingam Venkata Prabhakar	Bangaluru	Together we can
5	Central Bank of India	Chairman and Managing Director: Mr. Matam Venkata Rao	Mumbai	"CENTRAL" to you since 1911
6	Indian Bank	Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer: Padmaja Chunduru	Chennai	Your own Bank
7	Indian Overseas Bank	Partha Pratim Sengupta (MD&CEO)	Chennai	Good people to grow with
8	Punjab National Bank	MD & CEO: Shri CH. S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao	New Delhi	...the name you can BANK upon!
9	Punjab & Sindh Bank	Chairman and Mangaing Director: S Krishnan	New Delhi	where service is a way of life
10	UCO Bank	MD & CEO: Atul Kumar Goel	Kolkata	Honours your trust
11	Union Bank of India	Shri Rajkiran Rai G.: Managing Director & CEO	Mumbai	Good People to Bank With
12	State Bank of India	Chairperson: Shri Dinesh Kumar Khara	Mumbai	The Banker to every Indian

**Note:** State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur (SBBJ), State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH), State Bank of Mysore (SBM), State Bank of Patiala (SBP) and State Bank of Travancore (SBT), besides Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB), merged with SBI with effect from April 1, 2017.

#### 1. Mega Bank Merger List 2020

1. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has taken over Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and United Bank of India (UBI) to become India's largest lender after State Bank of India (SBI) in terms of business. Shri CH. S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao is presently the MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank.

#### 2. Canara Bank has subsumed Syndicate Bank;

T. N. Manoharan is presently the chairman of Canara Bank and Shri Lingam Venkata Prabhakar is the current Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer in Canara Bank.

#### 3. Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank have merge with Union Bank of India.

Shri Rajkiran Rai G. has joined Union Bank of India as Managing Director & CEO on July 01, 2017.

#### 4. Allahabad Bank has become part of Indian Bank.

Padmaja Chunduru is the current Managing Director and CEO of Indian Bank

## **(B) Private Indian Banks and their Heads**

<b>Sr No.</b>	<b>Bank</b>	<b>Head</b>	<b>Head Office</b>	<b>Punch line/Motto</b>
1.	HDFC Bank	Sashidhar Jagdishan, MD & CEO	Mumbai	We Understand Your World
2.	ICICI Bank	Sandeep Bakhshi, MD & CEO	Mumbai	"Khayal Aapka"
3.	Axis Bank	Amitabh Chaudhry, MD & CEO	Mumbai	Badhti Ka Naam Zindagi
4.	Yes Bank	Prashant Kumar is the new CEO of the Yes Bank and Sunil Mehta is the current Non-Executive Chairman	Mumbai	Experience our expertise
5.	Kotak Bank	Uday Kotak, MD	Mumbai	Lets make money simple
6.	Bandhan Bank	Chandrashekhar Ghosh, MD & CEO	Kolkata	"Aapka Bhala, Sabki Bhalai"
7.	Indusind Bank	Mr. Sumant Kathpalia, MD & CEO	Mumbai	We Make You Feel Richer
8.	IDFC FIRST Bank	Mr. V. Vaidyanathan (MD & CEO)	Mumbai	Banking Hatke
9.	Karur Vysya Bank	B Ramesh Babu, MD & CEO	Karur	Smart way to Bank
10.	IDBI Bank Ltd.	MD & CEO : Rakesh Sharma	Mumbai	Banking for All, Aao sochein Bada

## **(C) Foreign Banks and their countries of origin**

<b>Name of the Bank</b>	<b>Country of their origin</b>
<b>Australian banks</b>	1. Australia and New Zealand Banking Group 2. Commonwealth Bank of Australia 3. National Australia Bank 4. Westpac Banking Corporation
<b>Bahraini bank</b>	1. Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait
<b>Bangladeshi banks</b>	1. AB Bank 2. Sonali Bank
<b>Belgian bank</b>	1. Antwerp Diamond Bank
<b>Canadian bank</b>	1. Bank of Nova Scotia
<b>Chinese bank</b>	1. Industrial & Commercial Bank of China
<b>French banks</b>	1. BNP Paribas 2. Credit Agricole 3. Societe Generale
<b>German banks</b>	1. Deutsche Bank
<b>Indonesian bank</b>	1. Bank Internasional Indonesia
<b>Japanese banks</b>	1. Mizuho Corporate Bank 2. Sumitomo Mitsui Banking 3. Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi
<b>Mauritian bank</b>	1. State Bank of Mauritius
<b>Dutch bank</b>	1. Rabobank
<b>Qatari bank</b>	1. Doha bank
<b>Russian banks</b>	1. Sberbank 2. VTB
<b>Omani bank</b>	1. HSBC Bank Oman
<b>Scottish bank</b>	1. Royal Bank of Scotland

<b>Name of the Bank</b>	<b>Country of their origin</b>
<b>Singaporean banks</b>	1. DBS Bank 2. United Overseas Bank
<b>South African bank</b>	1. FirstRand Bank
<b>South Korean banks</b>	1. Shinhan Bank 2. Woori Bank
<b>Sri Lankan bank</b>	1. Bank of Ceylon
<b>Swiss banks</b>	1. Credit Suisse 2. UBS AG
<b>Taiwanese bank</b>	1. Chinatrust Commercial Bank
<b>Thai bank</b>	1. Krung Thai Bank
<b>UAE banks</b>	1. Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank 2. Mashreq Bank
<b>UK banks</b>	1. HSBC 2. Barclays Bank 3. Standard Chartered Bank 4. The Royal Bank of Scotland(RBS N.V)
<b>US banks</b>	1. American Express 2. Bank of America 3. Citibank 4. J.P. Morgan Chase Bank



## 5. Name of G-20 nations, stock exchange and official currency

S.No.	Country	Stock Exchange	Official Currency
1	Argentina	Buenos Aires Stock Exchange (BCBA)	Argentine Peso
2	Australia	ASX (Australian Securities Exchange)	Australian Dollar
3	Brazil	BM&F BOVESPA	Brazilian Real
4	Canada	TSX (Toronto Stock Exchange)	Canadian Dollar
5	China	Shanghai Stock Exchange & Shenzhen Stock Exchange	Renminbi (Yuan)
6	France	Euronext Paris	Euro
7	Germany	Frankfurt Stock Exchange & DAX	Euro
8	India	BSE & NSE	Rupee
9	Indonesia	IDX (Indonesia Stock Exchange)	Indonesian Rupiah
10	Italy	Borsa Italiana	Euro
11	Japan	Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE)	Yen
12	Mexico	Mexican Stock Exchange (BVM)	Mexican Peso
13	Russia	Moscow Exchange	Ruble
14	Saudi Arabia	Tadawul (Saudi Stock Exchange)	Saudi Riyal
15	South Africa	Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE)	South African Rand
16	South Korea	Korea Exchange (KRX)	South Korean Won
17	Turkey	Borsa Istanbul	Turkish Lira
18	United Kingdom	London Stock Exchange	Pound sterling
19	United States	NYSE & NASDAQ	US Dollar

## 6. Brand and their tagline (India and World)

### Brand (Indian)

Tagline	Brand (Indian)
The taste of India/ Utterly Butterly Delicious	Amul
Daag Acche hain	Surf Excel
Har Ghar Kuchch Kahta hein	Asian Paints
Simplifly Deccan	Air Deccan
The Complete Man	Raymond
Born Tough	CEAT
Tyres with Muscle	MRF
An Idea can Change your life	Idea
The King of Good Times	Kingfisher
Express Yourself	Airtel
Desh ki Dhadkan	Hero Motocorp
Total health Total water purification	Aquaguard
Is se sasta aur accha kahin nahi	Big Bazaar
Connecting India	BSNL
Building India	DLF
Creating tomorrow today	GMR
No dream too big	Jaypee
Growth is life	Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)
Flying for everyone	Spicejet
Experience certainty	TCS
Moving Forward	Toyota
Applying thoughts	Wipro
Do you have it in you?	Indian Army
Isko laga dala to life to life zinga lala	Tata Sky
Zindagi ke Saath bhi, zindagi ke baad bhi	LIC
Desh ka namak	Tata Salt
The Power of Knowledge	The Economic Times
Jiyo sar utha ke	HDFC Std Life
The Indian Multinational	Videocon
Jio Digital Life	Reliance Jio
Wah Taj!	Taj Mahal Tea
Tedha Hai Par Mera Hai	Kurkure
India ka Dil India ka AC	Voltas
Fly the good times	Kingfisher Airlines
Journalism of Courage	The Indian Express
Stay ahead of times/India's National Newspaper since 1878	The Hindu
Let the Truth Prevail	Times of India
Jiyo befikar	Bajaj Allianz
Taking India to the World	Aditya Birla Groups
BE 100% Sure	Dettol

**Brand (World)**

<b>Tagline</b>	<b>Brand (World)</b>
Better by Adobe.	Adobe
The road will never be the same.	Acura
We know money.	AIG
Something special in the air.	American Airlines
Don't leave home without it.	American Express
Do more.	American Express
My life. My card.	American Express
"For fast, fast, fast relief."	Anacin
Think different.	Apple Computer
The power to be your best.	Apple Computer
Think outside the box.	Apple Computer
Never follow.	Audi
We try harder.	Avis
Higher standards.	Bank of America
Sheer driving pleasure.	BMW
The ultimate driving machine.	BMW
Better sound through research.	BOSE
The way to fly.	British Airways
The world's favourite airline.	British Airways
Wassup?!	Budweiser
The king of beers.	Budweiser
Inspiration comes standard.	Chrysler
Empowering the Internet generation.	Cisco Systems
Live richly.	Citi
The most trusted name in news.	CNN
Coca-Cola refreshes you best.	Coca-Cola
The pause that refreshes.	Coca-Cola
Have a coke and smile.	Coca-Cola
"Healthy, beautiful smiles for life."	Crest
"Look, Ma, no cavities!"	Crest
A diamond is forever.	DeBeers
Easy as Dell.	Dell Computer
You'll love the way we fly.	Delta Airlines
We love to fly and it shows.	Delta Airlines
We move the world.	DHL
Yellow. The new Brown.	DHL
Competition. Bad for them. Great for you.	DHL
Time to make the doughnuts.	Dunkin Donuts
The miracles of science.	DuPont
Better living through chemistry.	DuPont
The power of all of us.	eBay
The world's online marketplace.	eBay
Nothing sucks like an Electrolux.	Electrolux

<b>Tagline</b>	<b>Brand (World)</b>
"It keeps going, and going, and going..."	Energizer Batteries
Quality in everything we do.	Ernst & Young
Don't just travel. Travel right.	Expedia.com
"Relax, it's FedEx."	FedEx
The world on time.	FedEx
"When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight."	FedEx
Built for the road ahead.	Ford
Ford has a better idea.	Ford
Quality is job one.	Ford
Fair and balanced.	Fox News
Extinct is forever.	Friends of the Animals
Imagination at work.	General Electric
We bring good things to life.	General Electric
Celebrate the moments of your life.	General Foods
"Look sharp, feel sharp."	Gillette
The best a man can get.	Gillette
Never let 'em see you sweat.	Gillette Dry idea
The best tires in the world have Goodyear written all over them.	Goodyear
American by birth. Rebel by choice.	Harley Davidson
Hertz puts you in the driver's seat.	Hertz
57 varieties	H.J. Heinz
Invent.	Hewlett Packard
The power of dreams.	Honda
We're behind you every step of the way.	Huggies
Solutions for a small planet.	IBM
Intel Inside.	Intel
Finger-lickin' good!	Kentucky Fried Chicken
Nobody does chicken like KFC.	KFC
Share moments. Share life.	Kodak
It's time for clarity.	KPMG
Betcha can't eat just one.	Lay's Potato Chips
Because I'm worth it.	L'Oréal
"Melts in your mouth, not in your hands."	M & Ms
Come to Marlboro Country.	Marlboro
There are some things that money can't buy. For everything else there's MasterCard.	Master Card



## 7. Important Books and Authors

1	Arundhati Roy	The God of Small Things; Power Politics; War Talk; Public Power in the Age of Empire; An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire; The Algebra of Infinite Justice; Capitalism: A Ghost Story; The Hanging of Afzal Guru; 13 December; and <b>The Ministry of Utmost Happiness</b>
2	Chetan Bhagat	<b>Half Girlfriend</b> ; What Young India Wants; Revolution 2020; <b>2 States</b> ; <b>The 3 Mistakes of my Life</b> ; One Night @ the Call Center; and Five Point Someone.
3	V.S. Naipaul	An Area of Darkness; Mr Stone And The Knights Companion; A Flag on the Island, The Loss of El Dorado: A Colonial History, Finding the Center; The Mystic Masseur; <b>In a Free State</b> ; <b>India: A Wounded Civilization</b> ; India: A Million Mutinies Now; Half a Life; Magic Seeds; A House for Mr Biswas; A Bend in the River; and The Enigma of Arrival
4	Amitav Ghosh	<b>Sea of Poppies</b> ; River of Smoke; The Glass Palace; and The Circle of Reason
5	Anita Desai	<b>Fasting, Feasting</b> ; The Village by the Sea; Fire on the Mountain; Games at Twilight; and The Village by the Sea
6	Kiran Desai	<b>The Inheritance of Loss</b> ; Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard; India Pack – 2003; and Generation 1.5
7	A P J Abdul Kalam	<b>Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power within India</b> ; Turning Points: A Journey through Challenges; <b>India 2020: A Vision for The New Millennium</b> ; My Journey: Transforming Dreams into Actions; Indomitable Spirit; Inspiring Thoughts; The Scientific Indian: A Twenty-first Century Guide to the World around Us; Mission India: A Vision for Indian Youth; <b>You Are Born To Blossom: Take My Journey Beyond</b> ; You are Unique: Scale New Heights by Thoughts and Actions; <b>Forge your Future</b> ; The Luminous Sparks; Spirit Of India; <b>India My Dream</b> ; <b>Transcendence My Spiritual Experiences with Pramukh Swamiji</b> ; Scientist to President; The Righteous Life: The Very Best of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam; <b>Wings of Fire: An Autobiography</b> ; The Family and The Nation
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9	Taslima Nasareen	<b>Lajja</b> ; Amar Meyebela; <b>Utal Hawa</b> ; <b>Dwikhondito</b> ; Oporpokkho (The Opponent); Shodh; Nimontron (Invitation); <b>Phera</b> (Return); Bhromor Koio Gia (Tell Him The Secret); Forashi Premik (French Lover); and <b>Nirbasan</b>
10	Jhumpa Lahiri	Hell-Heaven; Brotherly Love; <b>The Lowland</b> ; Improvisations: Rice; <b>Unaccustomed Earth</b> ; The interpreter of maladies; <b>The Namesake</b> ; and The Third and Final Continent
11	Vikram Seth	<b>A Suitable Boy</b> ; An Equal Music: A Novel; <b>A Suitable Girl</b> ; <b>The Golden Gate</b> ; Three Chinese Poets; The Humble Administrator's Garden; The Rivered Earth; and All You Who Sleep Tonight
12	Aravind Adiga	<b>The White Tiger</b> ; Last Man in Tower; and Between the Assassinations

Wish you all the very best!

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