

## Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – December 2020

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### Important Days

Date	Day	Theme/Others
December 1	World AIDS Day	Ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic: resilience and impact
December 2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	It was commissioned by the United Nations General Assembly.
December 2	World Computer Literacy Day	It was originally founded by the Indian computer company NIIT.
December 2	National Pollution Control	
December 3	Agricultural Education Day	Indian Council of Agricultural Research has designated as Agricultural Education Day
December 3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Not all Disabilities are Visible
December 4	International Bank Day	
December 4	Indian Navy Day	Navy Week: Navy to Earth-2020
December 5	World Soil Day	Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity
December 5	International Volunteer Day	Together We Can Through Volunteering
December 7	International Civil Aviation Day	Recognised by the UN system in 1996
December 7	International Armed Forces Flag Day	Celebrated since 1949
December 9	International Anti-Corruption Day	United Against Corruption (It was first celebrated in the year 2005)
December 9	International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime	UNGA was established in September 2015.
December 10	World Human Rights Day (It was established in 1950)	Recover Better - Stand Up for Human Rights
December 11	International Mountain Day (It was first celebrated in 2003)	Mountain biodiversity (2002 was declared as the UN International Year of Mountains)
December 11	UNICEF Day	The day was created in 1946.
December 12	International Universal Health Coverage Day	Health For All: PROTECT EVERYONE
December 12	International Day of Neutrality	It was first observed in 2017
December 14	National Energy Conservation Day	The Act was first implemented by the Energy Efficiency Bureau
December 15	International Tea Day (It was first celebrated in 2015)	Harnessing Benefits for all From Field to Cup
December 17	International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers	
December 16	Vijay Diwas/Victory Day	Celebrated the 49th Vijay Diwas in 2020. The day observed in Bangladesh as Bijoy Dibos
December 18	International Migrants Day	Reimagining Human Mobility
December 18	Minorities Rights Day	Celebrated by the National Commission for Minorities

December 18	World Arabic Language Day	Arabic Language Academies: Necessity or Luxury? (Established by the UNESCO)
December 19	Goa Liberation Day	
December 20	International Human Solidarity Day	
December 22	National Mathematics Day	2020 ensures 133rd birth anniversary of Ramanujan
December 23	National Farmers Day	The day was first celebrated in 2001.
December 24	National Consumer Rights Day	The Sustainable Consumer
December 25	Good Governance Day	It was founded in 2014 to honour Mr Vajpayee
December 27	International Day of Epidemic Preparedness	

### Nagaland Statehood Day 2020

- **Nagaland** attained statehood with the enactment of **the state of Nagaland Act** in 1962 by the Parliament.
- The interim body was dissolved on **30 November** 1963 and the state of Nagaland was formally inaugurated on 1 December 1963
- Kohima was declared as the state capital. Nagaland became the 16th state of India on 1 December 1963. The state is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna.

### 56th BSF raising Day

- "The **Border Security Force** has always lived up to its motto 'Duty for Life' (Jeevan Paryant Kartavya) with its bravery and prowess.
- As per the official website of BSF, 'India's first line of defence' was officially raised in accordance with an Act of the Indian Parliament on December 1, 1965, soon after the India-Pakistan War of 1965.
- BSF has distinguished itself as a valorous force, unwavering in its commitment to protect the nation and assist citizens during natural calamities.
- Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah also saluted brave personnel of the force for their national service.

## Important Banking News

### RBI

#### RBI asks HDFC to stop new digital business launches; avoid adding new Credit Card customers

- The Reserve Bank of India has asked country's largest private bank, HDFC, to stop new digital business launches and avoid adding new Credit Card customers after repeated reports by its customers facing multiple cases of technical glitches.
- RBI has issued an order dated December 2, 2020, to HDFC Bank Ltd with regard to certain incidents of outages in the internet banking/ mobile banking/ payment utilities of the bank over the past two years, including the recent outages in the bank's internet banking and payment system on November 21, 2020, due to a power failure in the primary data centre.
- Over the last two years, it has taken several measures to fortify its IT systems and will continue to work swiftly to close out the balance and would continue to engage with the regulator in this regard.

#### RTGS To be Made 24X7 from December 14

- Presently RTGS system is available for customers between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

- On 24x7 availability of Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) System, the RBI stated it has been decided to make RTGS available round the clock on all days of the year with effect from 00:30 hours on December 14, 2020.
- The Reserve Bank announced a slew of measures including enhancing the limit for contactless card transactions to Rs 5,000 and making RTGS transaction facility available round the clock from December 14.
- The RBI also decided to increase the limit for contactless card transactions to Rs 5,000 from Rs 2,000 at Point of Sale (PoS) terminals from January 1, 2021

#### **RBI extends validity of the Directions issued to the People's Co-operative Bank Ltd., Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh)**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the Directions issued to the People's Co-operative Bank Ltd., Kanpur for a period of six months from December 11, 2020 to June 10, 2021, subject to review.
- The bank has been under directions since June 10, 2020 vide directive DoS.CO.UCBs-North/D-1/12.28.059/2019-20 dated June 09, 2020 issued under sub-section (1) of Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (AACS).

#### **RBI Announces Introduction of LAF And MSF for Regional Rural Bank**

- Reserve Bank of India introduces Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

#### **Eligible For the Scheme**

- These include Implemented Core Banking Solution (CBS),
- A minimum CRAR of nine per cent
- Full compliance with the terms and conditions for availing LAF and MSF issued by Financial Markets Operations Department (FMOD).

#### **RBI cancels licence of Karad Janata Sahakari Bank**

- The **Reserve Bank of India** has cancelled the licence of The **Karad Janata Sahakari Bank Ltd**, Karad, **Maharashtra**, as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.
- The RBI stated it cancelled the licence of the bank as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. As such, it does not comply with the relevant provisions of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**.
- More than **99 per cent** of the depositors of the bank will get full payment of their deposits from **Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)**, the Reserve Bank stated.
- With the cancellation of licence and commencement of liquidation proceedings, the process of paying the depositors of The Karad Janata Sahakari Bank will be set in motion.
- On liquidation, every depositor is entitled to repayment of his/her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of **Rs 5 lakh only from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)** as per usual terms and conditions.
- Consequent to the cancellation of its licence from close of business on December 7, the bank has been prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' which includes acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits with immediate effect.
- Earlier this year, the RBI had cancelled the licence of CKP Cooperative Bank, another Maharashtra-based cooperative bank stated the financial position of the bank is highly adverse and unsustainable.

#### **RBI to set up Automated Banknote Processing Centre in Jaipur**

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has decided to set up an **Automated Banknote Processing Centre (ABPC)** in **Jaipur** for receipt, storage and dispatch of currency notes.

- The functions of the ABPC will also include processing of banknotes received from currency chests (CCs) and bank branches, and destruction of soiled banknotes in an automated manner.

#### **RBI slaps 50 lakh fine on Urban Co-operative Bank in Kerala**

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹50.00 lakh on **The Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd in Kerala**.
- This fine is for non-compliance with directions issued on **Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC)** norms and on Management of Advances-UCBs.
- Statutory inspection of the bank with reference to its financial position as on March 31, 2019, conducted by RBI, revealed that the bank had not complied with the directions, the central bank stated.
- A notice was issued to the bank asking why penalty should not be imposed for non-compliance with the directions issued by RBI.
- The penalty has been imposed through an order dated December 11.

#### **RBI cancels licence of Subhadra Local Area Bank, In Maharashtra**

- On December 24 The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** cancelled the banking licence issued to **Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd, Kolhapur**, citing problems in the way the bank was run.
- The licence has been cancelled under Section 22 (4) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and the order is made effective from close of business on December 24, 2020.
- The Reserve Bank cancelled the licence of the Subhadra Local Area Bank due to the bank having breached the minimum net worth requirement for two quarters in the financial year 2019-20.
- The cancellation is on account of the fact that the affairs of the Subhadra Bank were conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of its present and future depositors. There are only two Local Area Banks operational in India, i.e.- Coastal Local Area Bank Ltd and Krishna Bhima Samruddhi LAB Ltd.

#### **RBI working paper defends 4% inflation target for India**

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** working paper has recommended that maintaining the inflation target at **4 percent** is appropriate for the country.
- The paper, authored by Harendra Kumar Behera and Michael Debabrata Patra, finds that there is a steady decline in trend inflation to 4.1-4.3 per cent since 2014.
- The RBI working paper, which seeks to examine whether the choice of the target for inflation is consistent with its trend, finds that the concept of trend inflation is vital for the design and conduct of monetary policy to which actual inflation outcomes are expected to converge after short run fluctuations from a variety of sources die out.

#### **RBI Released Draft Guidelines for NBFCs' Dividend Payouts: December 2020**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its recent 4th Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) 2020-21 announced to issue guidelines for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) with regard to distribution of dividend.
- Therefore, on December 9, 2020, the apex bank released the "Draft Circular on Declaration of Dividend by NBFCs" to ensure greater transparency and uniformity in practice.
- It is open for comments by December 24, 2020. The guidelines will be applicable for dividends to be declared for the financial year beginning April 01, 2020 (FY 2020-21) onwards.

#### **RBI Further Extends Restrictions on PMC Bank till March 31, 2021**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) further extended the restrictions of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra Limited for a period of 3 months from December 23, 2020 to March 31, 2021.
- All other terms and conditions of the Directives under reference shall remain unchanged. Earlier the restriction was imposed till June 23, 2020 and then changed until December 22, 2020.

#### **RBI extended CKYCR to Legal Entities from Individual Accounts w.e.f. April 1, 2021: December 2020**

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has amended the Master Direction (MD) on "Know Your Customer (KYC)", dated February 25, 2016, by extending the applicability of centralized KYC registry to legal entities (LEs), from individual accounts w.e.f. April 1, 2021.
- In this regard, Regulated entities (REs) will upload the KYC data pertaining to the accounts of LEs opened on or after 1 April 2021, on to CKYCR in terms of Rule 9 (1A) of the PML (Prevention of Money-laundering) Rules.

#### **Policy Rates:**

Parameter	Percentage
Repo Rate	4%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	4.25%
Bank Rate	4.25%
Cash Reserve Ratio	3%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio	18%

#### **SBI**

#### **NE states, UP, Bihar top in pandemic management: SBI Study**

- According to a study conducted by State Bank of India (SBI) Research, North-Eastern (NE) states (All NE states combined as one) topped the list of states in managing Pandemic, Bihar came second, followed by Uttar Pradesh. Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh were placed at the bottom.
- Soumya Kanti Ghosh, SBI Group Chief Economic Advisor was the author of the report. They were ranked based on 2 parameters – i. macro (Fiscal deficit) & Consumer Price Inflation. 5 performance of states on Central Government Schemes (one nation one ration card, PM Svanidhi, PM Samman, emergency credit linked guarantee scheme and PM Awas Yojana).

#### **ADB**

#### **ADB and GOI Signed loan for strengthen Meghalaya's power distribution Sector**

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the **Government of India** signed a **\$132.8 million loan** to strengthen and modernize the distribution network and improve the quality of power supplied to households, industries, and businesses in India's northeastern state of **Meghalaya**.
  - The signatories to the Meghalaya Power Distribution Sector Improvement Project were Dr. CS Mohapatra, Additional Secretary (Fund Bank & ADB), Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance who signed for the Government of India, and Mr. Takeo Konishi, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission who signed for ADB.
- of Asian Development Bank and the fourth largest shareholder of ADB. The institution has approved nearly \$30 billion to I.

### **ADB, India sign 50 million loan to boost West Bengal's digital platforms for public finance reforms**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$50 million policy-based loan to improve financial management procedures and operational efficiencies aimed at achieving more fiscal savings, promote informed decision making, and improve service delivery in the state of West Bengal.
- The loan builds up on past ADB policy-based programmes in 2012 and 2017, supporting the Government of West Bengal on sustainable public financial management reforms.
- The loan is proposed to be supplemented by a \$350,000 technical assistance grant for capacity building, monitoring of IFMS reforms, and strengthening the integration of social and gender aspects in reform areas.

### **Asian Development Bank approves \$190 mn loan to upgrade power distribution system in Bengaluru**

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 190 million (over Rs 1,400 crore) loan for modernisation and upgradation of power distribution system in Karnataka's capital city of Bengaluru.
- The funding for the Bengaluru Smart Energy Efficient Power Distribution Project by ADB includes a USD 100 million sovereign loan and a USD 90 million without sovereign guarantee loan to Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM).
- BESCOM is one of five state-owned distribution utilities and the largest in Karnataka.
- The project will convert 7,200 kilometer (km) of overhead distribution lines to underground cables with the parallel installation of 2,800 km of fiber-optic communication cables.

### **ADB approves USD 2.5 mn technical assistance for advanced biofuel development in India**

- The Manila Bades Multilateral lending agency Asian Development Bank (ADB) stated it has approved a USD 2.5 million (about Rs 18 crore) technical assistance to support advanced biofuel development in India.
- The grant is funded from the Asia Clean Energy Fund, financed by the Government of Japan under the Clean Energy Financing Partnership Facility, and the Republic of Korea's e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund.
- ADB stated the technical assistance (TA) will support development of advanced bioethanol, bio-compressed natural gas, and biodiesel plants to demonstrate the best practices for suitable feedstock, efficient conversion technology, and sustainable biofuel value chain.

### **ADB launches \$9 billion Covid-19 vaccine scheme**

- The Manila-based **Asian Development Bank** (ADB) has launched an initiative called the **Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX)**, it will offer "rapid and equitable support" for its developing member countries.
- The **\$9billion** coronavirus scheme, structured as a credit facility, will support Asian developing countries' efforts to procure vaccines against the deadly virus rapidly as well as their investments in vaccine production and distribution systems.
- ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa stated APVAX will play a critical role in helping our developing members meet these challenges, overcome the pandemic, and focus on economic recovery.

### **ADB and India sign \$300 million loan to upgrade power projects in Uttar Pradesh**

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the **Government of India** signed a **\$300 million** loan to upgrade rural power distribution networks to provide reliable electricity supply to consumers in the state of **Uttar Pradesh**.
- This is the **first tranche** of the loan for the Uttar Pradesh Power Distribution Network Rehabilitation Project.
- This upgrade helps to provide reliable electricity supply to consumers in the state.

### **About the Project:**



- Overall, the **\$430 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF)** has been approved for the project constituting two tranches.
- The project envisages conversion of 65,000 kilometers (km) of rural low-voltage distribution lines from bare conductors to aerial bundle conductors (ABC) to create a robust distribution network that will benefit an estimated 70 million people in 46,000 villages.

#### **ADB Announces To Give Rs 2100-Crore Loan To Tripura**

- The **Asian Development Bank** has announced to provide **Rs 2,100 crore** loan to the **Tripura government for the development of urban areas and tourism** in the northeastern state that borders Bangladesh,
- From the total amount of Rs 2,100 crore expected to be provided by the ADB as loan, Rs 1600 crore will be for urban development and Rs 500 crore for the tourism sector.

#### **About the Project:**

- Under the loan arrangement, initially ADB would provide **Rs 40 crore** for engagement of project design and management consultants for urban and tourism sectors.
- Once the projects are prepared, ADB would provide **Rs 1,600 crore** for development works in urban areas and Rs 500 crore in tourism sector over the next three years.
- Under this, all **20 urban local bodies** in Tripura would be covered and in the tourism sector, all tourism destinations, roads leading to them and tourist facilities would be covered.
- The Tripura government has recently sent a Rs 40 crore project to the Union Tourism Ministry to sanction funds under the PRASHAD scheme for an all round development of the famous 520-year-old Tripura Sundari Temple in southern Tripura's Udaipur (60 kilometre south of state capital Agartala)
- The Union Tourism Ministry under the schemes -- Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) and Integrated Development of Theme Based Tourist Circuit in the Country, Swadesh Darshan (SD) -- provides financial assistance for infrastructure development and beautification of tourist spots in various states and union territories.

#### **ADB Approves \$231 Million Loan to Construct Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Power Plant**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a \$231 million (Around Rs 1,705 crore) loan to construct the Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Power (LKHEP) plant in Central Assam, India.
- This loan is the 3rd and largest tranche of the \$300 million (about Rs 2,200 crore) Assam Power Sector Investment Program that was approved by ADB in 2014.

#### **ADB, Northern Arc Capital Ltd Signed a \$40 million loan to Support Microfinance Borrowers and MSMEs in India**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$40 million (around Rs 295 crore) loan to Northern Arc Capital Ltd (NACL) for on lending to microfinance borrowers, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and affordable housing finance companies in India who are facing difficulties to attract debt funding from investors.
- As part of ADB's ongoing COVID-19 response, this rupee denominated loan is given to NACL.

### **World Bank**

#### **GOI, World Bank sign 400 million dollar project to protect India's poor from COVID-19**

- The **Government of India** and the **World Bank** have signed a **400 million dollar** project to protect India's **poor and vulnerable from the impact of COVID-19**.



- The programme will strengthen the capability of state and central governments to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable from the shocks triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The agreement was signed by Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs CS Mohapatra and Sumila Gulyani, Acting Country Director, India, on behalf of the World Bank.
- This is the second such assistance in the series of two 'Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Programme'
- The first operation of 750 million dollar was approved in May 2020.

#### World Bank Comes Out with Corrected Doing Business Rankings

- Coming out with corrected **Doing Business rankings** following review of data irregularities, the **World Bank** has announced that **China's ranking** would have been lower by **seven notches** in the index for 2018.
- The World Bank has corrected the Doing Business rankings of **Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan**.
- The ranking of Azerbaijan has been improved to 28 from 34.
- As per the 'Doing Business' 2020 report, India had jumped 14 places to the 63rd position on the ease of doing business ranking.
- India has improved its rank by 79 positions in five years (2014-19).

#### World Bank approves \$800 million project to better education quality

- The **World Bank** has approved **4 india projects** worth **\$800 million** to **support development initiatives**.
- This is the second operation in a programmatic series of two. The first operation of USD 750 million was approved in May 2020.

#### The 4 Projects are :

- USD 250 million : Second Dam Improvement and Rehabilitation Project (DRIP-2)
- USD 68 million : In Nagaland, Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project
- USD 100 million : Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth Project (CHIRAAG)
- USD 400 million : Second Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Program.

#### Dam Improvement and Rehabilitation Project (DRIP-2) :

- DRIP-2 will improve the safety and performance of existing dams across various states of India, the World Bank said, and added it will strengthen dam safety by building dam safety guidelines; bring in global experience; and introduce newer technologies.

#### Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project

- It will improve classroom instruction; create opportunities for the professional development of teachers; and build technology systems to provide students and teachers with more access to blended and online learning as well as allow better monitoring of policies and programs.

#### CHIRAAG project :

- It will develop sustainable production systems that allow tribal households in remote areas of Chhattisgarh to practice round-the-year production of diversified and nutritious food.
- It will be implemented in the southern tribal-majority region of the state where a large population is undernourished and poor.
- The project will benefit over 180,000 households from about 1,000 villages in eight districts of Chhattisgarh.

#### USD 400 million Second Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Programme project:

- It will support India's efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## NDB

### NDB inked \$1bn Loan Agreement with Gol for Economic Revival

- A loan agreement was inked between Government of India (Gol) and New Development Bank (NDB) headquartered at Shanghai, China under which the latter will lend \$1,000 million (\$1 billion) for supporting the former's economic recovery from COVID-19.
- The loan has a tenor of 30 years, including a 5-year grace period. The funding is a part of NDB's fast-track emergency response to COVID-19.

## Other Banking News

### Indian Bank Agreement With SIDBI For MSMEs

- Indian Bank has entered into an agreement with **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** to use the latter's asset restructuring module for MSME borrowers.
- Indian Bank, signed up with SIDBI to help its borrowers use **SIDBI's module**. On its part, Indian Bank has also introduced an online training programme – **MSME Prerana** – to train the MSMEs in basic accounting, maintenance of books of accounts and government / bank schemes meant for MSMEs.

### Mumbai-based fintech start-up has decided to deploy 12 lakh wireless Bharat ATMs by March 2021

- **Mahagram** is all set to deploy **12 lakh wireless ATMs** that will empower **kirana shops** and other retail stores to disburse cash to people, as banks are finding it increasingly unviable to operate and maintain ATMs across the country.
- Bharat ATM already has 1.5 lakh touch points across the country which comprises 20,000 handheld terminals (wireless ATMs) for card payments run on Aadhaar and RuPay card, and the rest are all Android mobiles with the Bharat ATM app installed, which can be used along with a finger print scanner for Aadhaar authentication to dispense cash.
- The four most popular ATMs in the country are those of ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank and SBI, which are big brands.

### QRMP Scheme Launched For GST Payers With Turnover Up To Rs 5 Crore

- The government has launched the 'Quarterly Return filing & Monthly Payment' scheme for small taxpayers under the Goods and Services Tax system.
- The notifications for the same were issued by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).

#### Eligibility:

- Taxpayers with an aggregate annual turnover of up to Rs 5 crore in the preceding financial year and have filed their October GSTR-3B (sales) return by Nov. 30, 2020, are eligible for this scheme.

#### About QRMP Scheme

- The GST Council in its meeting held on Oct. 5, had said that registered person having aggregate turnover up to Rs 5 crore may be allowed to furnish return on quarterly basis along with monthly payment of tax, with effect from Jan. 1, 2021.

- With the launch of the QRMP scheme on Dec. 5, taxpayers up to Rs 5 crore turnover have the option to file their GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B returns quarterly beginning January-March period.
- Taxpayers can make GST payments through challan every month either by self-assessment of monthly liability or 35% of net cash liability of the previous filed GSTR-3B of the quarter. Quarterly GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B can also be filed through an SMS.

#### **Punjab National Bank launches LenS-The Lending Solution**

- Punjab National Bank launched a tech-based loan management solution called 'LenS-The Lending Solution', to speed up and maintain accuracy in online loan processing and sanctioning of credit proposals.

#### **Purpose**

- To standardise the system, process and appraisal formats for loan processing,
- Speed up the process of credit sanctions,
- Auto-generate loan documents, among others.
- This system is envisaged to be implemented in a phased manner for all kinds of loans — MSME, agriculture, retail and other credit.
- Processing and sanction of credit proposals up to ₹10 lakh under the Mudra scheme, including MSME loans (fresh, renewal, enhancement and review) shall be done through LenS with effect from December 1, 2020.

#### **Axis Bank and Rupifi launch credit card for MSMEs**

- Axis Bank strengthened its offerings for the MSME segment with the launch of a business credit card in partnership with Rupifi, an embedded lending fintech company that provides financial solutions to MSMEs.
- The co-branded credit card, powered by Visa
- Rupifi partners with established B2B marketplace and aggregator platforms across sectors including food, grocery, pharma, agri- commodities, e-commerce, fashion, logistics, transport and industrial goods.
- There is a joining fee of Rs 1,000 and there are no annual fees for the co-branded card. It's a revolving card with 51 days interest free credit period.
- The average credit limit offered will be in the range of Rs 1 and 2 lakh per month

#### **Kotak AMC launches India's first international REIT fund of funds**

- On December 7, 2020 Kotak Mahindra Asset Management launched Kotak International REIT funds, which is India's first diversified REIT mutual fund (MF).
- It is an open ended mutual fund scheme that will invest in units of SMAM Asia REIT sub Trust Fund .
- Kotak International REIT Fund of Funds Will Invest in units of Japan Based SMAM Asia REIT Sub Trust Fund.

#### **BoB Launches Atmanirbhar Women Gold Scheme**

- **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has launched the **Atmanirbhar Women Scheme** as part of its Baroda Gold Loan.
- Under the scheme, the bank is offering loans at **0.50%** concession for women.
- The bank under the gold loan scheme is also offering agri-gold loan at **0.25%** concession and for retail loan at **0.50%** concession.
- The scheme was launched at **BOB's Ramamurthy Nagar branch in Bengaluru** and simultaneously in 18 branches coming under 18 zones in the country, virtually by Sanjiv Chadha, MD & CEO, Bank of Baroda.
- This Atmanirbhar scheme is exclusively meant for helping women to be self-reliant.

#### **Central Bank of India ties up with NPCI to launch RuPay Select**

- The **Central Bank of India** has launched a unique variant of a contactless debit card under the name RuPay Select, in association with the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.

#### About RuPay Select Card :

- This RuPay Debit Select Card will focus on customers' **lifestyle, fitness, rejuvenation, nutrition and personal care**.
- Central Bank RuPay Select Debit cardholders will be able to avail complimentary membership and concessional access to **golf courses, gyms, spas and restaurants**.
- The card comes with features such as airport lounge access to over 20 domestic and more than **500 international lounges**.
- The card will also facilitate offline transactions in both transits as well as retail purchases.
- Apart from this, the cardholders would also be entitled to discounted health check-ups with this National Common Mobility Debit Card (NCMC).
- Additionally, it comes up with an accidental and permanent disability insurance cover up to 10 lakh at no extra cost to customers.

#### Indian Army, Bank of Baroda sign MoU for 'Baroda Military Salary Package

- **Indian Army** and **Bank of Baroda** have entered into a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for **Baroda Military Salary Package**.
- The MoU was signed by Lt Gen Ravin Khosla, DG(MP&PS) and Vikramaditya Singh Khichi, Executive Director, Bank of Baroda in the presence of Lt Gen Harsha Gupta, Adjutant General, Indian Army who also chaired the meeting.

#### Benefits :

- Free Personal Accidental Insurance cover,
- Permanent Total Disability cover,
- Partial disability Cover and Air Accident Insurance Cover of sizeable amounts,
- Higher Education Cover and Girl Child Marriage Cover on death in case of serving personnel.
- Unlimited free ATM transactions at all bank ATMs
- Waivers or concessions on various service charges in retail loans, free remittance facility through RTGS/NEFT, free Demand Draft/Banker's Cheque.

#### Punjab National Bank introduce PNB e-Credit Card

- Nation's leading public sector bank, **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, introduced **PNB e-Credit Card, a digital replica of a physical Credit Card**.
- It will allow PNB customers to use PNB e-credit cards at any e-commerce platform or merchant website, without the need of carrying the physical card.
- Customers can view PNB e-Credit Cards details by clicking on the e-Credit Card facility in PNB Genie Mobile app.
- PNB Genie app also helps customers in activation of card for international/ Domestic usage and setting up transaction limits for ATM, Ecommerce, POS and Contactless payments.

#### Businesses with monthly turnover of over Rs 50 lakh to pay at least 1% GST liability in cash

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** has introduced new rule business with monthly turnover Rs 50 lakh will have to mandatorily pay at least **1 percent of their GST liability** in cash, instead of using input tax credits.
- CBIC has introduced Rule 86B in Goods and Services Tax (GST) rules which restricts use of input tax credit (ITC) for discharging GST liability to 99 percent.

### CBIC Makes it Compulsory to Mention 8-digit HSN Code in GST Invoice for 49 Chemical-Based Products

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) made it compulsory for a registered person to mention the 8 digit HSN (Harmonised System of Nomenclature) code or tariff code for 49 chemical based products at the time of issuing Goods and Services Tax (GST) invoice. It is to be noted that this is the first time a specific category of supplier is mandated to use 8 digit HSN Code on every invoice irrespective of the aggregate turnover.

### Centralised Investment Clearance cell by April 15

- The Centralised '**Investment Clearance Cell**', under the proposed single window system, aimed at **facilitating businesses through a one-stop digital platform**, is planned to be launched with relevant Ministries and Departments and select States by **April 15, 2021**.
- The Investment Clearance Cell, which is an integral part of the single window system being worked out by the Commerce and Industry Ministry.
- The idea behind the Central Investment Clearance Cell is to ensure that an investor gets all information and clearances on one platform, instead of visiting multiple platforms.

### AU Small Finance, ICICI Pru Life tie up to offer life insurance solutions

- **AU Small Finance Bank** announced a strategic partnership with **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance to offer life insurance solutions**.
- The tie-up aims to deliver paperless, secure, and hassle-free life insurance.
- Through this agency arrangement, to over 1.8 million customers through digital platforms across 700 banking touchpoints in 13 states and 2 Union territories.
- AU Bank even claimed that these products will enable customers to provide financial security to themselves and their families and help them achieve their financial goals.

### ICICI Bank and Google Pay collaborate to bring digital registration of FASTag

- **ICICI Bank** has announced that it is collaborating with **Google to issue FASTag**.
- It has become the **first bank to join hands with Google Pay** for the issuance of FASTag.
- Customers will now be able to order, track and recharge ICICI Bank FASTag via the Google Pay app.
- The main aim of this initiative is to ensure the safety of applicants during the COVID-19 pandemic since they can complete procedures digitally.

### About the agreement :

- The new partnership will now allow users to conveniently order, track, and recharge ICICI Bank FASTags from the app itself. The government has made January 1, 2021 as the new date for mandatorily adding FASTags to vehicles.
- The announcement makes ICICI Bank the first bank to join hands with Google Pay for the issuance of FASTag. This will also add competition for Paytm, which currently issues FASTags from the app as well and is quite a popular choice for many customers.
- The association gains prominence during the widespread pandemic as this allows any Google Pay user to order and receive FASTag in a seamless and contact-less manner.

### Bank of Baroda starts digital lending platform

- Bank of Baroda (BoB) has launched its **Digital Lending Platform (DLP)**, which will allow prospective retail loan seekers to get loans digitally through a paperless process.
- The bank will also offer '**Online Loan against Fixed Deposits**' via DLP.
- BoB also launches **Atmanirbhar Women Gold Scheme**.

- The platform provides '**in-principle approval**' for home, car and personal loans in **30 minutes** without human intervention
- With the launch of DLP, BoB said personal loan disbursements will be completely digitised first, followed by **MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises)** and agriculture disbursements.
- The bank envisages that the digital share of disbursement in retail lending will grow to **74 per cent over five years**.

#### City Union Bank introduces whatsapp banking option

- Tamil Nadu-based City Union Bank (CUB) is now available on India's most popular messaging application— **Whatsapp**.
- The bank has recently launched a **new Video KYC** facility through which anyone can open a new bank account from the comfort of the home or office, as a next step towards digitisation, through the platform.
- With CUB's "Whatsapp Banking" service, customers can get a **variety of information** and can register for the services by sending 'Hi' to the bank's customer care number '**044-71225000**' through Whatsapp.
- **Services offered through the platform** include Instance Account Openings, Account Balance Enquiry, Deposit Opening, Deposits Balance Enquiry, Mini Statement, Green PIN for Net/Mobile Banking, Bill Payment, Card Blocking and several others.

#### Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Introduces 'Money Mitra' For its Customers

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) Ltd headquartered at Bengaluru(Bangalore), Karnataka introduced 'Money Mitra', a new channel, to make banking services accessible to its customers in their neighbourhood. Money Mitra facilitates entrepreneurs of local businesses like kirana/medical stores or Insurance agencies to offer retail banking solutions to Ujjivan SFB customers exclusively.
- Currently, Ujjivan SFB has established over 100 Money Mitra outlets across the country.

#### ICICI Lombard and Plum Partners Co-Create India's Health Insurance Products

- ICICI Lombard General Insurance Limited partnered with Plum Benefits Private Limited to co-create India's first technologically backed group health insurance products to offer employers and employees flexibility, transparent pricing, and exceptional healthcare experience.

#### Federal Bank Enters into an Online Rupee Remittance Tie-up with OrbitRemit Limited

- Federal Bank Ltd headquartered at Aluva, Kerala entered into an online Rupee remittance tie-up with OrbitRemit Limited.
- This partnership will facilitate Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and small businesses in New Zealand to transfer money to India in a modern, low cost, fast, easy and more reliable way. Usage of OrbitRemit' App and online platform: NRIs in New Zealand can also make use of the mobile app of OrbitRemit and an online platform to transfer money to India.

#### ICICI Bank Becomes Designated Bank for all financial transactions under NHM in WB

- ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India) Bank headquartered at Mumbai won the mandate to be the designated financial institution for all monetary transactions under National Health Mission (NHM) in West Bengal (WB) as it quoted the lowest bid.
- This is on the lines of WB government decision of implementing a single bank account system for NHM.
- Under this, all financial transactions will be conducted through online software, integrated with bank accounts.

#### RBL Bank & ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Enters into a Bancassurance Partnership



- RBL Bank Ltd headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra & ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Ltd entered into a bancassurance partnership to offer a range of life insurance products, i.e., protection and long-term savings products of ICICI Prudential Life to the customers of RBL Bank.

#### **IRDAI proposes a cap of Rs 1 cr in draft norms on Standard Accident Insurance Policies**

- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) issued draft guidelines on standard personal accident insurance policies.
- Under them, the insurance watchdog has recommended that all general and standalone health insurers will have to offer this product from April 1, 2021.

#### **SBI General Insurance & Mahindra Insurance Brokers made partnership to Increase Insurance Penetration**

- SBI General Insurance Company Limited entered into a strategic partnership with Mahindra Insurance Brokers Ltd. (MIBL) to increase the insurance penetration in tier 2 & 3 cities (Rural Indian Cities).
- MIBL has collaborated with SBI General Insurance under its 'Sajhedaari program'.

#### **YES Bank in Partnership with Mastercard Launches 'Yes Private Prime Credit Card'**

- YES Bank headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra in partnership with Mastercard launched 'Yes Private Prime Credit Card' for the Affluent and Ultra High-Net-Worth- Individuals (HNWIs) of India. The card is available on the Mastercard World Elite platform.
- The card is a strictly by-invitation-only lifestyle Credit Card.

#### **Google Pay, PhonePe Together Accounts for More than 82% of UPI market by volume in November 2020: NPCI Data**

- As per the data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Google Pay and PhonePe together account for more than 82% of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) market by volume and more than 86% by value in November 2020. Google Pay has done 960.02 million transactions, worth Rs 1.61 trillion and PhonePe has done 868.4 million transactions, worth Rs 1.75 trillion.

#### **Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance launched its new digital campaign, #heroesofmycity**

- Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) Life Insurance launched its new digital campaign, '#heroesofmycity'. This 2-month long campaign is an extension to the initiative #meformycity.
- #meformycity was launched by Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance in 2018. The purpose of designing the new digital campaign is to recognise the heroes of everyday life of the people who kept the city going when everything was stopped due to COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd Launches 3 in 1 Account**

- Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd (ESFBL) headquartered at Chennai, Tamil Nadu launched a 3-in-1 account (tripartite account), which comprises savings, trading and demat accounts for its customers.
- The account enables customers to hold all their bank and financial investments under one umbrella.
- This account was launched to widen the bank's product offerings.

#### **IRDAI Standardised Health Policies for Robotic and Bariatric Surgeries**

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has standardised all health policies for robotic and bariatric surgeries. The robotic surgeries minimise the trauma caused to the patient.
- India is the most preferred country to get high-quality treatment across the world. Bariatric surgery is also called as Weight loss surgery, or metabolic surgery.

#### **ICICI Lombard and Plum Partners Co-Create India's Health Insurance Products**



- ICICI Lombard General Insurance Limited partnered with Plum Benefits Private Limited to co-create India's first technologically backed group health insurance products to offer employers and employees flexibility, transparent pricing, and exceptional healthcare experience.

#### **DBS Bank India Partners with Haqdarshak to Help Indian MSME**

- DBS Bank India Ltd. (DBIL) headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra partnered with Haqdarshak Empowerment Solutions Private Limited to help Indian MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) to recover from COVID-19 pandemic.
- This aid will happen through the newly launched Haqdarshak MSME platform.
- The platform helps India's enterprises to access MSME-focused government welfare schemes, covering registrations, documentation and applications for financing across India.

#### **Bharti AXA Life Introduced #GotYouCovered Campaign for Frontline Workers**

- Bharti AXA Life Insurance Company Limited introduced '#GotYouCovered Campaign', during the observation of Universal Health Coverage Day 2020 on December 12. The campaign is a special initiative to appreciate the frontline healthcare workers who are working to protect people from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bharti AXA Life Insurance has partnered with Primero Skills & Training Pvt Ltd for its #GotYouCovered initiative.

#### **Exim Bank Extends \$ 448-million Line of Credit to Uzbekistan**

- Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra, on behalf of the Government of India, has extended a Line of Credit (LOC) of \$448 million to the Government of Republic of Uzbekistan for financing the latter's various projects in the Roads & Transport, Water and Technology & Communication sectors.

#### **SEBI forms Corporation Finance Investigation Department (CFID) to check Promoter Frauds**

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has set up a specialised department Corporation Finance Investigation Department (CFID) to tackle initial public offering (IPO) proceed fraud, diversion of funds, bank loans and resources by company promoters.
- The new department will be headed by one of SEBI's executive director.

#### **Aceware in Association with ICICI Bank Launches 'AceMoney Micro ATM service'**

- Aceware in association with ICICI Bank launched 'AceMoney Micro ATM(Automated Teller Machine) service' in Kochi, Kerala.
- This service will enable people to withdraw money from their bank account from home. The customers of all banks can avail this service.
- The money will be delivered, within 30 to 40 minutes of placing the order at the doorstep of the customer.

#### **HDFC Bank invests in smallcase Technologies**

- HDFC Bank has invested an undisclosed amount in Smallcase Technologies, and bought a minority stake, as part of a recent Series B fund-raise of \$14 million by the Bengaluru-based fintech startup.
- The five-year old startup operates in the capital markets infrastructure space and works with businesses to help individuals invest in simple and transparent products called smallcases.

#### **Edelweiss General Insurance launches a first of its Kind, Open API Gateway**

- Edelweiss General Insurance Company Limited launched a first of its kind, Open Application Programming Interface (API) Gateway to enable full digital collaboration with its business partners.
- The authorised partners of Edelweiss General Insurance, with this gateway can integrate their systems with the technology platform of the company.

#### **Canara Bank Launches 'FX 4 U'**

- Canara Bank headquartered at Bangalore, Karnataka launched 'FX 4 U', a new technology(tech) product. This product helps the users of its Internet Banking (IB) to handle forex transactions.
- The purpose of Launch is for forex remittance through internet banking. Currently, the outward remittance module is being activated, the remaining modules will be activated shortly.

#### **Ewire Softtech in Partnership with YES Bank Launched 'EWIRE - YES BANK Prepaid Card'**

- Ewire Softtech Pvt Ltd under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) launched 'EWIRE – YES BANK Prepaid Card' in partnership with YES bank to establish its presence across the country in its digitisation drive.
- The co-branded digital card will help the common public and corporate houses with providing loans, insurance and CASA account through its channel partners. This can be done via its dedicated RuPay prepaid cards platform.

#### **SBI General Insurance Partners with IntrCity RailYatri to Provide Insurance**

- SBI General Insurance Company Limited has partnered with IntrCity RailYatri to provide domestic travel Insurance to bus customers who travel through IntrCity RailYatri.
- Every IntrCity SmartBus traveler can avail complementary travel cover of Rs. 5 Lakhs along with the travel ticket.

#### **Citibank and NCPA Partners to Offer Scholarships for Young Musicians 2020-21**

- Citibank headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra and National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) partnered to offer 'Citi-NCPA Scholarships for Young Musicians 2020-21(Hindustani Music)' for vocal – khayal / dhrupad and percussion – tabla / pakhawaj.
- The value of scholarship is Rs 10, 000 for one month for one year (April 2021 to March 2022).

#### **Kotak Life Launches 5 city Outdoor Campaign for its 1st Health Insurance Policy, Kotak Health Shield**

- Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company (Kotak Life) launched its five-city outdoor campaign to increase awareness about its 1st health insurance product, 'Kotak Health Shield'.
- The 5 cities are Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Pune.

#### **YES Bank Partners with Visa to Enhance Payments Efficiency**

- YES bank headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra partnered with Visa as a payment processor to enhance salaried and YES FIRST account holders' payment experience.
- The bank has also introduced a new line of vertical Debit cards under the E-series across Mastercard and VISA cards.
- This launch enables customers to avail VISA-branded YES bank debit cards along with Mastercard and RuPay branded debit cards.

#### **IndusInd Bank Partners with Mastercard to Launch its 1st Metal Credit**

- IndusInd Bank headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra in partnership with Mastercard launched its 1st metal credit card, 'Pioneer Heritage Credit Card'.
- This Contactless Credit Card is designed to meet the needs of High-Net-Worth-Individuals (HNWIs), especially of the affluent Indian professionals and entrepreneurs.
- This card is a part of the Mastercard's 'World Elite' platform that offers privileges to complement the lifestyle of HNI cardholders.

#### **PayU Collaborates with Google Pay to Introduce Tokenised Payments Flow for Merchants**

- PayU headquartered at Netherlands collaborated with Google Pay to introduce tokenised payments flow for merchants in India. This collaboration enables the merchants of PayU to offer Google Pay users the option to use

their debit cards, credit cards, or Google Pay UPI to make repeated payments without the need to physically share their card details.

#### **NPCI Introduced RuPay Contactless (Offline) feature**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced RuPay Contactless (Offline) feature, that also provides reloadable wallets within RuPay Card, for daily transit payments.
- NPCI has also introduced RuPay Contactless (Offline) feature for retail payments on pilot basis.
- All these additional features will expand the total transaction experience for RuPay cardholders and also transform the overall card payment ecosystem.

#### **IIFL Home, ICICI Bank join hands for affordable housing, MSME loans**

- IIFL (formerly India Infoline Limited) Home Finance Ltd, the subsidiary of IIFL Finance has joined hands with ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India) Bank for sourcing and servicing arrangement to provide affordable housing and MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) loans.

#### **ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund Launched 'ICICI Prudential Business Cycle Fund', an Open-Ended Equity Scheme**

- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launched 'ICICI Prudential Business Cycle Fund', an open-ended equity scheme following business cycles-based investing theme.
- The New Fund Offer (NFO) opens on December 29, 2020 and closes on January 12, 2021.
- The scheme will invest in equity and equity-related securities in Indian markets with a focus to ride business cycles through dynamic allocation between various sectors and stocks at different stages of business cycles.

#### **Snapdeal Partners with NPCI to Enable Doorstep QR Code Payments for Orders**

- Snapdeal partnered with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to enable buyers to make Quick Response (QR)-based digital payments on getting delivery of their orders.
- New or first-time users who are not comfortable to pay in advance for items at the time of purchase.

#### **SBI along with NPCI & Japan's JCB launched "SBI RuPay JCB Platinum Contactless Debit Card"**

- State Bank of India (SBI) in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Japan's JCB (formerly Japan Credit Bureau) International Co. Ltd. unveiled "SBI RuPay JCB Platinum Contactless Debit Card" with a unique dual interface feature.
- It enables the customers to use it for both contact and contactless transactions as well as for domestic and overseas transactions.

#### **YES Bank Relaunches 'YES Premia' with Premium Banking Services to Customers**

- YES Bank relaunched 'YES Premia' with a premium banking program. It offers personalized solutions focusing on particular needs of key consumer segments, i.e., from small business owners to salaried professionals and senior citizens.
- During 'Truly Yours' Week, from December 1 – 7, 2020 Yes Bank will celebrate the launch of the program, across India with several customer centric programs and partnered activations through dealer, OEM(Original Equipment Manufacturer) and bancassurance partners.

#### **NPCI Allowed Payment Banks and Fintechs in its Shareholding upto 0.44%**

- The National Payments Corporation of India has completed private placement of 4.63% of its equity shares worth Rs 81.64 crores.
- This placement has enabled small finance and payment banks, as well as fintechs to be its shareholders up to 0.44%.

- With this placement, now the total shareholder entities for NPCI stand at 67. Currently, government-owned banks such as State Bank of India (SBI), Union Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank and Canara Bank own more than 40% stake in NPCI's shareholding.

#### **Paytm Partners with Suryoday Small Finance Bank to Offer Instant Digital Loans to MSMEs**

- Paytm headquartered at Noida, Uttar Pradesh partnered with Suryoday Small Finance Bank(SFB) Ltd headquartered at Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra to offer collateral-free instant digital loans to MSMEs(Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises).
- This will empower the MSMEs. This is the 1st lending partnership for Paytm with a small finance bank to help merchants to avail loans seamlessly.
- This partnership aim to democratize access to loans for small businesses and merchants and promote financial inclusion.

#### **NABARD Signs MoU with SBI to Take up Joint Intervention Projects in Karnataka**

- NABARD(National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), Karnataka Regional Office Bengaluru, Karnataka has signed MoU(Memorandum of Understanding) with SBI(State Bank of India), LHO, Bengaluru to provide concessional refinance facility to the beneficiaries of watershed development and tribal development projects.
- NABARD through this MoU, aims to provide grant support, concessional refinance and undertake capacity building of the stakeholders of various livelihood interventions that is promoted by NABARD.

#### **IFSCA Became Member of International Association of Insurance Supervisors**

- International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA) obtained membership of International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS).Now, IFSCA can access IAIS's global network and would be able to exchange ideas and information relating to insurance with other global regulators.
- This membership will aid in developing a global Insurance hub in International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), from current 17 entities, at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT).

#### **Razorpay and PayPal Partnered to Enable Seamless International Payments for Indian MSMEs and Freelancers**

- Razorpay headquartered at Bengaluru( Bangalore), Karnataka and PayPal headquartered at San Jose, California partnered to enable Indian MSMEs(Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) and Freelancers to seamlessly accept international payments.
- It helps MSMEs and freelancers to accept international payments on cards through payment gateways.They lose their prospective global clients due to highly complex payment and banking infrastructure, processes and systems.

#### **Finin Becomes India's 1st full-fledged Consumer Neobank in Partnership with SBM Bank India**

- Finin was launched as India's 1st full-fledged consumer 'neobank'. Finin has launched Hyper-personalised SmartBanking platform in partnership with SBM Bank India.
- The platform helps the users to manage,save and invest their money in a smarter, secured and simpler way.

#### **HDFC Life & Ketto India Initiated a Nationwide Crowdfunding Campaign. 'PromisewalaDabba'**

- HDFC Life in association with Ketto India has initiated 'PromisewalaDabba', a nationwide crowdfunding campaign.
- As part of the campaign, a PromisewalaDabba will be delivered that includes essential supplies such as staple food ingredients, spices and accompaniments, sanitizers and toiletries to their homes.

#### **PayNearby in partnership with NPCI & YES Bank Launched "PayNearby shopping card" for Retailers**

- India's largest Hyperlocal fintech startup, PayNearby Technologies Pvt. Ltd., in collaboration with YES Bank and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched the "PayNearby shopping card" powered by RuPay for its retail partners to provide maximum benefits of e-commerce in a risk-free mode over mass market category.

#### **HDFC Life launches HDFC Life Click 2 Wealth ULIP Digital Campaign**

- HDFC Life launched HDFC Life Click 2 Wealth ULIP(Unit Linked Insurance Plan) digital campaign. The campaign focuses on the role of ULIPs as part of a wise financial plan. The campaign disproves the false myths surrounding the ULIP category.
- It also highlights the unique features of HDFC Click 2 Wealth plan, a A Unit Linked, Non-Participating, Life Insurance Plan. The campaign comprises 1 main and 2 short films, featuring 2 characters, namely Meet (myth) and Jeet (myth burster).

#### **KVGB Launches 'Kirishi OD' Scheme for Farmers**

- Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) launched 'Kirishi OD(Overdraft) scheme' for farmers. The OD facility is given to farmers based on the value of the land.
- 'Kirishi OD' scheme was launched by Neeraja Kumara Verma, Chief General Manager of NABARD, in Dharwad, Karnataka.

#### **Mastercard, ni-msme and CII Partners to Launch Digital Saksham**

- Mastercard, National Institute for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (ni-msme) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) entered into partnership to launch Digital Saksham, a capacity building initiative to drive awareness about digitization for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India. Digital Saksham, an expansive program is designed to strengthen MSME's competitiveness by building their digital know-how and acceptance.

#### **Revision Points**

Name of the Organization	Headquarters	Head of the Organization
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development	Mumbai	Govinda Rajulu Chintala
Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India	Hyderabad	Subash Chandra Khuntia
Federal Bank	Aluva	Shyam Srinivasan
DBS Bank	Singapore	Piyush Gupta
EXIM Bank of India	Mumbai	David Rasquinha
Citi Bank	New York	Michael Corbat
Canara Bank		
DCB Bank	Mumbai	Murali M Natrajan
Jio Payments Bank	Mumbai	Vivek Bhandari
HDFC Bank	Mumbai	Sashidhar Jagdishan
Indian Bank	Chennai	Padmaja Chunduru
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Makhija
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Dinesh Khara
India Post Payments Bank	New Delhi	J Venkatramu

ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
South Indian Bank	Thrissur	Murali Ramakrishnan
Indian Overseas Bank	Chennai	Partha Pratim Sengupta
SBM Bank	Port Louis	Parvataneni Venkateswara Rao
AU Small Finance Bank	Jaipur	Sanjay Agarwal
Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance	Mumbai	Sumit Rai
National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)	Mumbai	Dilip Asbe
PhonePe	Bengaluru	Sameer Nigam
Punjab National Bank	New Delhi	S.S Mallikarjuna Rao
Bank of Baroda	Vadodara	Hasmukh Adhia
YES Bank	Mumbai	Prashant Kumar
Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company	Mumbai	Nilesh Shah
Tata AIG General Insurance	Mumbai	Neelesh Garg
Visa	San Fransico	Alfred F Kelly Jr
Equitas Small Finance Bank	Chennai	Vasudevan PN
Paytm	Noida	Vijay Shekhar Sharma
Small Industries Development Bank of India	Lucknow	Mohammad Mustafa
RBL Bank	Mumbai	Vishwavir Ahuja
HDFC LIFE	Mumbai	Vibha Padalkar
ICICI Lombard	Mumbai	Bhargav Dasgupta
Mastercard	New York	Ajaypal Singh Banga
Canara Bank	Bengaluru	LV Prabhakar
City Union Bank	Kumbakonam	N. Kamakodi
Rupifi	Bengaluru	Anubhav Jain
Central Bank of India	Mumbai	Pallav Mohapatra
ICICI Prudential Life Insurance	Mumbai	N. S. Kannan
Kotak Mahindra Bank	Mumbai	Uday Kotak
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	Bengaluru	Nitin Chugh
Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce	Guragaon	Anuj Mathur
IndusInd Bank	Pune	Sumant Kathpalia
PayPal	San Jose	Daniel Schulman
Razorpay	Bengaluru	Harshil Mathur
International Financial Services Centre Authority	Gandhinagar	Injeti Srinivas
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	Navi Mumbai	Baskar Babu
PayU	Hoofddorp	Laurent le Moal
Snapdeal	New Delhi	Kunal Bahl
ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund	Mumbai	Nimesh Shah
IIFL Home Finance	Guragoan	Nirmal Jain

## Important Financial & Economy Affairs

Organization	GDP FY - 21
Fitch	• 9.4%
ADB	• 8%
CRISIL	• 7.7%
S & P	• 7.7%
SBI Report	• 7.4%
ICRA	• 7.8%
NCAER	• 7.3%
India Ratings	• 7.8%
OECD	• 9.9%

### GST Collection in November

- **Goods and services tax collections** hovered around **Rs 1.05 lakh crore** for the second month with the mop-up in November, 2020, estimated to be **1.4% higher than** the corresponding period last year.
- “During the month, revenues from import of goods was 4.9% higher and the revenues from domestic transactions, including import of services, were 0.5% higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year,” the finance ministry stated.
- On a cumulative basis, collections during April-November were **17% lower**, sharply down from the lows of 56% seen in April when the lockdown was in full force.

### Nomura Expects India would be fastest growing Asian economy in 2021

- **Nomura** has turned positive on India's cyclical outlook for 2021, and believes the country is on the cusp of a cyclical recovery.
- India could well be the fastest-growing **Asian economy** in calendar year 2021 (CY21) the research and brokerage house Nomura estimated.
- The foreign research and brokerage house expects the Indian economy as measured by gross domestic product GDP growth to average **9.9% in 2021** versus **-7.1% in 2020**.

### Fitch raises India's GDP forecast to -9.4% in FY21

- **Fitch Ratings** has raised India's GDP forecast to **-9.4%** in the current fiscal year to **March 2021** (FY21) from a previously projected contraction of 10.5% after the economy staged a sharper rebound in the second quarter.
- In addition to that Fitch has also projected the **FY22 GDP** growth at **11%** and **6.3%** growth in **FY23**.

### ADB expects Indian economy to contract at a slower pace of 8%

- The **Asian Development Bank** expects the Indian economy will contract at a slower pace of **8%** against its earlier estimate of 9% in FY21 on the back of a faster recovery in Asia's third-largest economy following the easing of covid restrictions.
- The earlier South Asia forecast for 6.8% contraction is upgraded to 6.1% in 2020 with growth recovery of 7.2% in 2021.

### CRISIL Revises GDP Forecasts to -7.7% for FY21



- Rating agency **CRISIL** has lowered the contraction rate of **India's GDP**, and now expects the growth rate of Indian economy to **contract 7.7%** in the ongoing **fiscal 2020-21**, compared to the **9%** forecast in September 2020, due to **faster-than-expected** recovery in the second quarter.
- For the fiscal 2021-22 (FY22), CRISIL expects the growth to bounce back to **10%**.

#### **IFSCA notifies IFSC Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations, 2020**

- IFSCA has notified **International Financial Services Centres Authority Regulations 2020**.
- In the Union Budget 2020, Union Minister of Finance Corporate Affairs Smt.
- **Nirmala Sitharaman** had made an announcement for setting up an International Bullion Exchange at the International Financial Services Centre in GIFT City, **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
- Government of India had notified the bullion spot delivery contract and bullion depository receipt (with bullion as underlying) as Financial Products and related services as Financial Services under the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) Act, 2019.

#### **S&P revises India's FY21 GDP contraction forecast to 7.7% from 9% earlier**

- **S&P Global Ratings** has raised India's growth projection for the current fiscal to **(-) 7.7 %** from **(-) 9 %** estimated earlier.
- Falling GDP due to COVID infection rates.
- The US-based rating agency stated For the **next fiscal India's growth rebound to 10 %**.

#### **FY21 GDP to contract at 7.4% on better recovery: SBI report**

- India's GDP growth is expected to be at **(-) 7.4 per cent** in **FY21** on better than projected recovery, stated a SBI research report, upgrading its earlier forecast of **(-) 10.9 per cent**.
- The SBI research report has also forecast India's GDP growth in FY22 at 11 percent.
- The report also believes that it would take seven quarters from the fourth quarter of FY21 for GDP to reach the pre-pandemic level in nominal terms.

#### **ICRA Says India's GDP To Contract 7.8% In FY21**

- Domestic rating agency **ICRA Ratings** expects the technical recession in the country's economy to end in the fourth quarter of the current fiscal, limiting the contraction to **7.8%** in the **financial year 2021**.
- **Earlier** this rate was **11 percent**.
- In the second quarter of financial year 2021, GDP contracted 7.5% as against a decline of 23.9% in the April-June quarter.

#### **NCAER projects GDP contraction of 7.3% in Fiscal Year 21**

- The **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)** has revised upward its **gross domestic product (GDP)** projection for **FY21 to 7.3% contraction from the 12.6%** dip estimated in **September 2020**.
- The Delhi based economic think tank, released its mid-year review of the Indian economy virtually on 21 December 2020.

#### **Ind-Ra revises India's FY21 GDP contraction to 7.8% from 11.8% earlier**

- **India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)** has revised India's GDP estimate for the current financial year to **-7.8 percent** from **-11.8 percent** earlier, primarily due to the easing of COVID-19 curbs and better-than-expected growth numbers in the second quarter.
- Ind-Ra also estimated the GDP to grow by 9.6% in 2021-22 (FY22).

#### **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.
- The introduction of the SIB will attract more investors from public and private sectors to fund public welfare projects and thus help to meet the investment deficit
- The Palladium Group has been appointed for design and structuring expertise for the impact bond.

#### **Singapore & USA Become the Biggest FDI Sources for India : DPIIT's FDI Statistics**

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade ( DPIIT) revealed the Foreign Direct Investment(FDI) data and listed out the top investing countries FDI(Foreign Direct Investment) equity inflows in India during April-September 2020.
- Singapore became biggest source of FDI by investing Rs 62,084 crore(USD 8.30 billion) into India,USA(United States of America) becomes the second biggest source of FDI into India by investing Rs 53,266 crore(USD 7.12 billion) .
- Among states, the highest recipient of FDI inflows so far in the 2nd Quarter(April-September) of FY21 has been Gujarat with Rs 1.19 lakh crore worth inflows.

#### **OECD Revised India's FY21 GDP Forecast to -9.9% from -10.2%**

- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in its December 2020 Economic Outlook titled "A Brighter Outlook But Recovery Will Be Gradual" has revised the India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rate upwards to -9.9% from -10.2% projected in September for FY21.
- It also projected that the Indian economy will rebound to 8% in FY22 and 5% in FY23 on the condition that GDP loss would be substantial.

#### **India's Retail inflation Declined to 6.93% in November 2020: CPI Data**

- As per the Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the Government of India, India's retail inflation based on the CPI declined to 6.93% in November 2020 from 7.61% in October 2020.
- The inflation rate for rural area was 7.20% and urban area 6.73% in November 2020 against 7.75% and 7.33% in October 2020.

#### **BSE Launches 'BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltdn(BEAM)', an Electronic Spot Platform for Agricultural Commodities**

- BSE (formerly known as Bombay Stock Exchange), through its subsidiary BSE Investments Ltd., launched 'BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltd. (BEAM)', an electronic spot platform for agricultural commodities.
- BEAM is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The CEO of BEAM is Rajesh Sinha.

#### **BSE Ebix Launches Beta Version of Term Insurance for ICICI Prudential**

- BSE Ebix Insurance Broking Private Limited partnered with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Co. Ltd. for the beta launch of term Insurance of ICICI Prudential on its on-demand advanced hi-tech platform.
- With this launch, 12 Insurance Companies have been integrated with BSE Ebix platform.

## Important Business News

### Amazon pulls into lead to acquire podcaster Wondery

- Amazon.com Inc. is in exclusive talks to acquire podcasting company Wondery Inc. for more than \$300 million, the Wall Street Journal reported, following a bidding process that also drew interest from the likes of Apple Inc. and Sony Music Entertainment.

### Amul enters milk procurement business in AP

- Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the first phase of Andhra Pradesh-Amul project from his chamber in state secretariat at Amaravati, in the presence of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation managing director Dr R S Sodhi and other executives of Amul.
- He stated under the AP-Amul project, each dairy farmer would get a profit of Rs 5-7 per litre, which would go a long way in improving their financial status.
- Significance:** The tie-up with Amul is for an all-around growth of the dairy sector by giving a helping hand to the dairy farmers ensuring quality feed, veterinary services and marketing facilities.

### USFDA nod for Aurobindo Pharma's generic sedative

- Aurobindo Pharma** has received final approval from the US health regulator for the generic of Precedex injection, used for sedation of patients.
- The company has received final approval from the **US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA)** to manufacture and market Dexmedetomidine Hydrochloride in **0.9% sodium chloride injection**, 200 µg/50 mL and 400 µg/100 mL single dose flexible containers.
- The company stated the product will be launched in **January 2021**.
- Dexmedetomidine Hydrochloride in 0.9% sodium chloride injection is indicated for sedation of initially intubated and mechanically ventilated patients during treatment in an intensive care setting and sedation of non-intubated patients prior to and/or during surgical and other procedures.

### Ola to invest Rs 2,400 corer for world's largest e-scooter factory in Tamil Nadu

- The SoftBank-backed firm **Ola Electric** has announced a **Rs 2,400-crore** (\$320 million) investment plan to set up, what it calls, **the 'world's largest' electric scooter** (e-scooter) manufacturing plant in **Hosur, Tamil Nadu (TN)**.
- It aims to make India a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles (EVs). Ola has signed a memorandum of understanding with the TN government for this facility.
- It will initially have an annual capacity of 2 million units.
- The company stated that in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, Ola's factory was an important step in making India 'atmanirbhar'. It would catalyse the reduction of India's import dependence in a key future sector like EVs, boost local manufacturing, create jobs, and improve technical expertise in the country.

### Indigenously-built Coast Guard Interceptor Boat Commissioned

- An **indigenously-built interceptor boat** joined the **Indian Coast Guard** on December 15 at a function in **Hazira in Surat** district in Gujarat.
- The interceptor boat C-454, built by Larsen and Toubro at its Hazira plant, will operate from Gujarat under the control of the Commander Coast Guard Region of the ICG.
- It was commissioned by Surat Police Commissioner Ajay Tomar.

### National Infrastructure Pipeline: Projects Worth ₹ 44 Lakh Crore Under Implementation

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari stated the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), infrastructure projects worth ₹ 44 lakh crore are under implementation.
- It involves 39 % investment by the central government, 40 % investment by the states, and 21 % by the private sector.
- While addressing the CII Partnership Summit 2020, the minister said that the national infrastructure pipeline encapsulates an investment of ₹ 111 lakh crore on infrastructure projects by the year 2024-2025.
- Currently, projects worth ₹ 44 lakh crore out of the ₹ 111 lakh crore, accounting for 40 per cent are under implementation, while projects worth ₹ 22 lakh crore account for 20 per cent are under development stages.

### PayU ties up with Google Pay to introduce tokenised payments flow for merchants

- Online payments solutions provider PayU has collaborated with Google Pay to introduce tokenised payments flow for merchants in India.
- Google Pay users will now get an option to pay a PayU merchant with their debit cards, credit cards, or Google Pay UPI. And also, Google Pay users do not need to share their card details if they are making repeated payments.
- In that Google Pay users can make repeat payments seamlessly and securely.
- Through the option of one click payment, one doesn't need to re-enter the payment data, as the OTP is read automatically and the payment is processed instantaneously.
- Tokenised payments offer a highly convenient, safe, and friction-free payment experience, and we are excited to partner with Google Pay to make this available for our merchants. It will help them build lasting trust and loyalty with customers, reduce risks of cart abandonment and payment failures, and scale up their businesses.

### Sequoia India launched 'Sequoia Spark' in association with WEP to Promote Women Entrepreneurs

- 2020 Equity financing firm Sequoia India partnered with NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), to promote women entrepreneurship in India. In line with this partnership, Sequoia India, launched a yearlong Programme, 'Sequoia Spark', in association with WEP for women entrepreneurs in India and Southeast Asia.

### RIL, BP commence Gas production from Asia's Deepest Gas Field 'R-cluster'

- Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), BP (formerly known as The British Petroleum Company plc) have commenced Gas production from Asia's Deepest Gas Field 'R-cluster' situated in the KG-D6 block, Krishna-Godavari basin of the Bay of Bengal (eastern coast of India).
- 'R-cluster' is the 1<sup>st</sup> operational project of the 3 deep-water gas projects. Plateau Gas Production (i.e Constant Production Rate) at the 'R-Cluster' is expected to reach ~ 12 Million standard cubic meters per day in 2021.

### Important State Wise News

#### List of Festivals

Festivals	Place
Migratory Birds Festival	Bhagalpur, Bihar
Hornbill Festival	Nagaland
Konark Dance Festival	Odisha
Music Festival Tansen Samaroh	Madhya Pradesh
Losar	Ladakh

## Andhra Pradesh

### Andhra Pradesh House passes Bill that bans online gaming, betting

- The **Andhra Pradesh Gaming Act-1974**, Home Minister M. Sucharitha stated that development of technology and mass communication network and the Internet had opened many opportunities for online activities.
- Andhra Pradesh has **banned online gaming**, online betting and gambling, and has urged the Centre to direct all internet service providers to block access to 132 websites and apps, including **Paytm First Game**, Mobile Premier League and Adda52, that are providing such services in the state.

### AP rolls out free crop insurance scheme

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister **YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** has launched **YSR Free Crop Insurance** scheme.
- In this Scheme **₹1,252 crore** credited into the bank accounts of 9.48 lakh farmers in insurance claims for the agricultural season 2019.
- The previous government spent an average Rs 393 crore per annum for three years towards payment of insurance premium.
- The number of beneficiaries now has gone up to 49.80 lakhs
- The compensation for the crop losses during 2020 will be paid in April next.

### MPEDA launches India's first aquafarmers call centre

- The **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)**, headquartered in Kochi, has launched a **multilingual call centre for aquafarmers at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh**.
- MPEDA will address their technical issues and impart knowledge about efficient farming methods.
- The call centre can also handle calls in English and Hindi.
- The call centre primarily caters to aqua farmers of Andhra Pradesh, the state that contributes more than **60 percent** of the country's marine products export basket.

### Andhra Pradesh CM Launches Navaratnalu-Pedalandariki Illu Housing Scheme

- Andhra Pradesh chief minister **YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** launch of his government's much-publicised programme, **Navaratnalu-Pedalandariki Illu (Nine jewels - housing for all the poor)**, of providing house sites to **30.90 lakh poor people at Komarigiri village of U-Kothapalli block of East Godavari district**.
- Under the scheme, a house site patta (sash) is being given to the beneficiaries at a nominal rate of Re one and will be registered in the name of a women's household. All the beneficiaries will be given either 1.5 cents in rural areas or one cent in urban areas.
- A total of 30.90 lakh houses will be constructed by the government by 2024. These houses are being taken up in 17,500 layouts, named YSR Jagananna Colonies, with all infrastructure facilities. The first phase of the programme will be completed by June, 2022. The second phase will be started in December, 2021 and proposed to be completed by June 2023.

### AP CM Jagan Mohan Reddy launches 'Jagananna Jeeva Kranthi' scheme

- Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister (CM) Jagan Mohan Reddy virtually launched the 'Jagananna Jeeva Kranthi' scheme worth INR 1, 869 Crores for distribution of 2, 49, 151 sheep, goats for improving the living standards of women.
- AP Government has signed into Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Allana Group for the procurement of sheep and goats and as a platform for marketing the meat products.

## Assam

### Assam CM Launches New Scheme To Provide Rs 830 Per Month

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched Orunodoi, a direct benefit transfer scheme to provide financial assistance to poor families in the state by providing money to a female member.
- The scheme, announced in the state budget with an annual outlay of Rs 2,400 crore, was rolled out with 17.86 lakh families in 29 districts as beneficiaries.

### SIDBI inks MoU with Assam government to develop MSME ecosystem

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Assam government to develop the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** ecosystem in the State.
- The MoU was signed by the commissioner and secretary of industries and commerce department, **K K Dwivedi** and SIDBI general manager RK Singh in the presence of minister Chandra Mohan Patowary.
- As per the MoU, a Project Management Unit will be set up by SIDBI in Assam.
- The PMU will support the state government in making necessary interventions for enhancing efficacy of MSMEs in the state.

### Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Announces Multi-Modal Logistics Park In Assam's Silchar

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** has announced that a multi-modal logistics park will be constructed in **Silchar in Assam**.
- The Balacherra-Harengajao section of the Silchar-Saurashtra Highway will be completed in **March 2022**.
- Mr Gadkari made this announcement at a public meeting at Zero Point on the East-West Corridor at Madhurmukh at Rangpur.
- It is pertinent to mention that the Union Minister unveiled a 13-foot tall bronze statue of former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

## Bihar

### Nitin Gadkari inaugurates three lane 1.5 km long Koilwar bridge over Sone river in Bihar

- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the three lane 1.5 km long Koilwar bridge over Sone river in Bihar through Video Conferencing on 10 Dec 2020.
- A sum of 266 crore rupees has been spent on the bridge. The existing two lane bridge for both rail and road traffic is 138 years old.
- A six-lane bridge is being made in its place, of which, a three-lane carriageway has been opened for public.
- The bridge is a major road for transport between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- Mr Gadkari stated, the Ministry has approved a four-lane elevated road from Bharauli (Buxar) to Haidaria for providing connectivity to the Poorvanchal Expressway.

### Bihar wins Digital India award for transferring money to beneficiaries' accounts during COVID-19

- The Chief Minister Secretariat, the Disaster Management Department besides the National Informatics Centre (NIC) of the state have jointly been chosen as winners in the **"pandemic category" Digital India Awards 2020**.
- The Bihar government's initiative to transfer financial assistance directly to the accounts of beneficiaries during the COVID-19 pandemic has made its departments winners of the Digital India Awards, instituted by the central government, this year for innovative steps in e- governance.



- More than 21 lakh stranded workers outside Bihar were provided financial assistance through the "**Bihar Sahayata Mobile App**".
- In addition to that President Ram Nath Kovind will give away the Digital India Awards to winners on December 30 in New Delhi.

## Gujarat

### 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 companies will be investing over **Rs 1,000 crore** to set up this refinery.
- The company will be importing Lithium ore from Australia and will be processing in Gujarat.
- Last year, Manikaran Power had collaborated with Australian firm Neometals to tap the Mount Marion Lithium mine in Western Australia.
- The proposed project is expected to help Gujarat secure the raw material supply for domestic manufacturing of Lithium batteries as it looks to promote electric vehicles.

### Gujarat govt announces its new Solar Power Policy-2021

- The **Gujarat government** announced a new solar power policy comprising provisions to encourage small and medium scale solar projects on residential, commercial and industrial premises.
- Under the new policy, the state government has scrapped the condition that the installed capacity of a solar project needs to be **50 per cent** of the sanction load or contract demand.
- Now, an individual or industry can produce solar power in their premises as per their requirements and without any limit on the capacity, **Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** said, while unveiling the "**Gujarat Solar Power Policy 2021**".
- According to the policy, the power consumers will be able to set up solar projects on their **rooftop or vacant place**.
- They can also offer their space to third party for power generation and utilization.
- This policy will bring down power cost to industry from **Rs. 8 per unit to around Rs. 4.50**.
- It will reduce the production cost, which will help the state manufacturers to be globally competitive.
- Security deposit given to power companies has been cut from **Rs. 25 lakh per MW to Rs. 5 lakh per MW**. New solar power policy will remain effective for the next five years.

### PM Modi lay foundation stone of AIIMS at Rajkot, Gujarat

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will lay the **foundation stone** of **AIIMS at Rajkot, Gujarat** through video conferencing on Dec 31.
- For the project, **201 acres** of land has been allotted.
- It will be built at an estimated cost **Rs. 1195 crores**, and is expected to be completed by **mid of 2022**.
- The state-of-the-art **750 bed hospital** will also have a **30 bed AAYUSH block**.
- It will have **125 MBBS seats and 60 nursing seats**.

### Gujarat Becomes 1st Indian state to have Modernise Fire Safety Certification Process

- Gujarat became the first state in the country that has approved a system to modernize fire safety certification process.



- In this regard, the approval and renewal of fire safety certification will be done entirely on the portal called Fire Safety COP, or Fire Safety Compliance Portal covering facilitation and empanelment of fire safety officers (FSOs) and approval and renewal of fire safety certificate (FSC) along with provision of online payment.
- The system has been designed by Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM) under its director general PK Taneja.

### Haryana

#### Haryana Government Signs MoU with India Accelerator to build Startup Ecosystem

- **Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communication and Government of Haryana** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **India Accelerator (IA)** to build a strong startup ecosystem in Haryana.
- India Accelerator will provide support to the startups through Knowledge sharing & free of cost services to high potential startups.
- The MoU will help in bridging the gap between Industry & Startups.

### Himachal Pradesh

#### HP CM Jai Ram Thakur Unveils Vajpayee's Statue At Ridge Maidan

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur unveiled an 18 feet statue of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the historic Ridge Maidan here on his 96th birth anniversary on Friday.
- The statue has been built at a cost of Rs 1.08 crore. The Ridge Maidan also houses statues of Mahatma Gandhi and former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

#### Himachal Pradesh government to frame integrated Drug Prevention Policy

- The **Himachal Pradesh** government has decided to frame an **integrated Drug Prevention Policy** including **Drug Prevention, Treatment, Management and Rehabilitation Programme**.
- This integrated Drug Prevention Policy mainly for better coordination between the Police, Media and the Nasha Nivaran Board is vital for curbing the menace of drug abuse in the State.
- The state government has decided to introduce a chapter on ill-effects of drug abuse in the syllabus of government schools to sensitize the students.
- And also the State Government has decided to open six drug de-addiction centers in the State

### Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

#### Ladakh LG virtually inaugurates second edition of Ladakh Literature Festival 2020

- Ladakh Lieutenant Governor **R K Mathur** virtually inaugurated the second edition of Ladakh Literature Festival, 2020, in Leh on Dec 10.
- It is a 3 day festival that will host a series of talks, importance of the region, ancient knowledge of Ladakh, Folk music, cultural Dance, geology and wildlife of Himalayas

#### India adds Tso Kar Wetland Complex in Ladakh as its 42nd Ramsar site

- India has added **Tso Kar Wetland Complex** in Ladakh as its **42nd Ramsar site**, which is a second one in the Union Territory of **Ladakh**.

- **Aim** : 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.
- **Tso Kar Basin** : High-altitude wetland complex, consisting of two principal waterbodies, Startsapuk Tso, a freshwater lake of about 438 hectares to the south, and Tso Kar itself, a hypersaline lake of 1800 hectares to the north, situated in the Changthang region of Ladakh.

#### Ladakh UT to get its own Meteorological Centre

- On December 29, 2020, Union Earth Sciences Minister **Dr Harsh Vardhan**, will virtually inaugurate the newly established **Indian Meteorological Department for Ladakh**.
- The IMD will have four **Automatic Weather Stations (AWS)** operating in Leh, Kargil, Drass and Stakna.
- It will Provide :
- Real time weather information from these stations will be available online for every fifteen minutes and hourly basis through the IMD website.
- The new Met centre will provide all information relating to weather and climate for the entire Ladakh region including far-off places like Changthang, Nubra, Zaskar, Zojila and Drass.

#### J&K conducts Intra State Level programme

- Jammu and Kashmir Govt conducts Intra State Level programme begins at **Teacher's Bhawan Gandhi Nagar, Jammu**
- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, as part of **National Youth Festival 2021**, an Intra State Level event begins at Teacher's Bhawan Gandhi Nagar, Jammu amid festivity.
- The programme was organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports, J&K in collaboration with **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan**, J&K.
- The intra state festival would culminate on 4th January 2021 followed by an inter-state level programme commencing on 5th.
- The programme will be concluded on 8th of January, which will include various cultural events.
- The **theme of this mega carnival** is **"Standing together for truth, we the power of youth"**.

#### Cycle rally 'Fit India campaign': Udhampur in J&K

- In the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir**, to generate awareness among the common masses about the **Fit India campaign**, Municipal Council Udhampur organized a cycle rally at Udhampur.
- **Dr Piyush Singla flagged off the cycle rally**, which passed through Slathia Chowk, Ramnagar Chowk, Court road, Gole market, Bus Stand and culminated at Town Hall Udhampur.
- Cycle rally highlighted the importance of physical and mental fitness in the development of a healthy society.
- The main objective of organizing this awareness rally is to sensitize the common masses about the Fit India campaign launched by the Government of India.

### Karnataka

#### Foundation stone for a 11.5 megawatt power plant run on municipal waste

- Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa laid the foundation stone for a 11.5 megawatt power plant run on municipal waste. The first of its kind power plant in the state will be capable of converting 600 tonnes of municipal waste into 11.5 megawatt energy.

- The Chief Minister said that the power plant being constructed at a cost of 260 crore rupees, is likely to be ready by 2022.
- Once operational, the power plant will help the city municipal corporation save 14 crore rupees annually on solid waste management.

#### Karnataka Assembly adopts Bill against cow slaughter

- The **Karnataka Legislative Assembly** passed the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and **Preservation of Cattle Bill-2020**.
- The Bill was moved by Animal Husbandry Minister **Prabhu Chavan**, which calls for a blanket ban on cattle slaughter and stringent punishment to those indulging in these activities.
- The new act defines "cattle" as including cows, calves, bulls, bullocks, and male and female buffalos below 13 years. "Beef" is defined as the flesh of cattle in any form.
- Slaughter of cattle as per the new Bill will be a cognisable offence and will attract **three to seven years** imprisonment and a fine that shall not be less than **₹50,000** extendable to **₹5 lakh**.
- The minister stated the new Bill will repeal the Karnataka **Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, 1964** (Karnataka Act 35 of 1964) to prohibit the slaughter of cattle and for the preservation of improvement of the breeds of cattle and to endeavour to organise agriculture and animal husbandry in terms of Article 48 of the Constitution of India, by enacting a comprehensive legislation.

#### Government of Karnataka Inaugurated 1st Fruits Portal

- On 22 December 2022, the **FRUITS (Farmer Registration and Unified Beneficiary Information System) Portal**, a project of e-Governance, Government of Karnataka was inaugurated with BHOOMI Package of **Karnataka** state to fetch and validate land details.
- Canara Bank also will take the project on a pilot basis.
- It is the first kind of technology adopted by the government of Karnataka, to combine 70 lakh farmers with land and other details under a single platform.

#### Karnataka govt setup new building of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute in PPP mode

- Karnataka Chief Minister **B S Yediyurappa** inaugurated the new building of **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre in Bengaluru**.
- The **13 storey tall building** will house **13 departments** of medicine and a research centre for the medical college students.
- The state health and medical education minister **Dr. K Sudhakar** informed that the Government is planning to establish medical colleges in **PPP mode**.
- The minister said that the Gujarat model will be adopted to set up medical colleges with private participation to reduce the financial burden on the government.
- Saying that the Central Government has a **vision** to set up **22 AIIMS across the country**.
- Dr. Sudhakar said that efforts are on to get one for the state of Karnataka.
- He also added that a **new health and medical education policy** will be introduced in the state based on the **national health policy** introduced in 2017.

#### New Government Tool Room & Training Centers set by-Karnataka govt

- **Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Dr. C N Aswatha Narayana** has said that new Government Tool Room and Training Centers will be established in different parts of the state to impart training in different skills.

- The minister said that annually **6000 youth** are offered short term courses and the aim is to increase it to 15000 next year.
- He informed that two new Tool Room and Training Centers will start functioning in Bengaluru apart from one that exists now.
- Training Centers under construction in Challakere, Koppala, Chitradurga, Hunsuru and Madakeri will be ready soon.
- **Vijayapura and Bengaluru Rural districts** are chosen for building new skill training Centers apart from **24 Centers functioning now**.
- He added that the Mechanical Electronics course has overwhelming demand and hence the seats in this discipline will be increased.

## Kerala

### UN Women signs pact with Kerala govt's Gender Park

- On December 21, 2020 **UN Women**, the United Nations entity working for the empowerment of women, entered into an agreement with the Kerala government's **Gender Park** that has been **initiating gender equality activities**.
- UN Women will be offering project development and capacity building for the Gender Park for the empowerment of women in South Asia.
- Gender Park will be developed into a **South Asia hub** for gender-related activities.
- A Gender Data Centre at Kozhikode campus is one of the highlights of the tie-up with UN Women.
- UN Women Deputy Country Representative Nishtha Satyam and Gender Park Chief Executive Officer P T M Sunish signed the MoU in the presence of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Health and Social Justice Minister K K Shailaja.
- Satyam lauded various women empowerment initiatives of Kerala like She Taxi, jobs for transgender persons and stress management amid the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

### Kerala's 21-yr-old Arya Rajendran elected as Thiruvananthapuram Mayor

- **Arya Rajendran**, the 21-year-old college student, has been elected as the **new mayor of Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, of Kerala**.
- The **Communist Party of India (CPI)Marxist** leader, Arya is the youngest person in India to occupy the post of mayor anywhere in the country.
- She won 54 votes out of 99 votes cast in the civic body polls in Kerala.
- Arya is also the state president of Balasangam, the children's wing of the CPI(M).
- Arya is a second-year student of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) in Mathematics at the All Saints College

## Madhya Pradesh

### Madhya Pradesh cabinet approves Dharma Swatantrya (Religious Freedom) Bill 2020

- The **Madhya Pradesh** cabinet approved the **Dharma Swatantrya (Religious Freedom) Bill 2020**.
- Under the provisions of the bill, forced conversion of a woman will be punishable for a term up to 10 years and minimum fine of **Rs 50,000**.
- Specific provisions are also made in the cases of religious conversion of minors, groups, or of those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

- Blood relatives, including parents of victims of such religious conversion, can file complaints under the proposed Act.

### Madhya Pradesh Aims to completely eliminate AIDS by 2030

- In Madhya Pradesh, the number of AIDS patients is growing rapidly in the state. 69 thousand 400 people have been infected in the state so far.
- The highest number 12 thousand 773 patients reported in Indore. Bhopal is at number two with more than 7 thousand patients.
- Jabalpur has around 6 thousand patients while Gwalior has more than 3 thousand HIV patients. Dr KD Tripathi, project director of MP State AIDS Control Society, says that the AIDS infection rate in MP is 1.64 percent.
- The highest 68 percent HIV infected people belong to the age group of 25 to 49 years.
- AIDS Control Society informed that more than 60 projects for HIV control are underway in collaboration with voluntary organizations. The government aims to completely eliminate AIDS by 2030

### Maharashtra

#### Maharashtra Government introduces Unified Development Control Rules

- The government of Maharashtra's Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations (UDCPR) are expected to bolster real estate development.
- This Uniform set of Regulations will specify height of buildings to the width of roads and the size of amenity spaces.
- The new regulation will also help developers manage their finances better.

#### Maharashtra Approves 10 New Conservation Reserves & 1 New Wildlife Sanctuary

- Maharashtra approved the declaration of 10 new Conservation Reserves (CR) & 1 New Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) in Maharashtra. Kanhargaoon in Chandrapur district was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary making it Maharashtra's 50th Wildlife Sanctua
- The 10 CRs are Mahendri, Amboli- Dodamarg (Sindhudurg), Jor-Jambhli (Satara), Munia (Nagpur) and Chandgad, Panhalgad, Vishalgad, Gaganbawda, Mayni and Ajra-Bhudargad.

#### Maharashtra Government Launches "Sharad Pawar Rural Prosperity Scheme" and passes "Sakthi Act"

- Maharashtra govt launched scheme "Sharad Pawar Rural Prosperity Scheme" named after Sharad Pawar.
- To strengthen the law on prevention of atrocities against women, children, Maharashtra Cabinet has passed "Shakti Act" which Envisages death sentence for rape, acid attack and child abuse.

### Meghalaya

#### North East's first-ever Ginger Processing Plant in Meghalaya

- **North East's first-ever specialised "Ginger" Processing Plant** at district Ri-Bhoui in Meghalaya is being revived and is likely to become functional in the beginning of 2021.
- Disclosing this here today after reviewing the functioning of the **North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC)**, a PSU working under the aegis of the Ministry of DoNER, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr.Jitendra Singh said that the only Ginger Processing Plant of North East India was established around the year 2004 but has remained non-functional for many years.

- The NERAMAC has now undertaken the responsibility of reviving it and initiated steps to operationalize the closed Plant through PPP mode.
- The ginger products being prepared from this Plant, said Dr.Jitendra Singh, will not only be available for domestic consumption but will also have a wider demand and this will also be in keeping with **Prime Minister Modi's calls for "Vocal for Local"**.
- For the **PPP mode**, an Operation and Maintenance Operator was selected through the tendering process and the work on setting up and reviving the Plant is under progress.

### Mizoram

#### Mizoram CM Launches Employment Generation Project to assist Migrant Workers

- The Chief Minister of Mizoram Zoramathnga launched an employment generation project, "Livelihood Generation for Returned Migrant Workers project", in the state to assist migrant workers who lost their job in the Covid-19 pandemic. The total outlay of the project is Rs 3.3 crores under Mizoram Youth Commission (MYC). The project will be funded by North East Council.

### Nagaland

#### Centre announces Nagaland 'disturbed area' for six months

- The entire state of Nagaland has been declared a disturbed area for **six more months**.
- The Home Ministry in a notification said, the Central government is of the opinion that the area comprising the whole of Nagaland is in such a disturbed and dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary.
- It said, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by **Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958**, the Central government declares that whole of the State of Nagaland to be disturbed area for a period of six months. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act has been in force in Nagaland for several decades.

#### Nagaland government totally banned use of flex banners, boards and posters

- Nagaland Government has totally banned the use of flex banners, boards and posters by departments, institutions and agencies during functions or programmes in government offices with immediate effect.
- In a notification issued by Urban Development Department, Nagaland in pursuance of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change stated that Flex banners/ boards/ posters are made up of Poly-Vinyl-Chlorides (PVC), a plastic polymer, which is a non-biodegradable material.
- If it is burned, it releases harmful toxins and gets bio-accumulated in the food chain of the ecosystem causing serious hazards to human health and the environment.

### Odisha

#### Odisha launches career portal for students in collaboration with UNICEF

- The **Department of School and Mass Education, Government of Odisha** in collaboration with **UNICEF** has launched a career portal for Secondary and Higher Secondary students to help them with expert advice on their future careers.
- **Samir Ranjan Dash**, Odisha's School and Mass Education Launched the **Odisha Career Portal** on 24th December 2020.



- The portal can be accessed through the website [www.odishacareerportal.com](http://www.odishacareerportal.com) with the student login ID and password.
- The portal will provide easy access to information on different careers and will give students an opportunity to interact with teachers. Students will also be able to access career guidance services through a mobile friendly app created specifically for the portal.

#### Odisha Govt school students to get quota for admission into medical & engineering colleges

- Students who studied in government schools in **Odisha** will now get the quota in admission into **MBBS and BTECH** in colleges of the state.
- A decision to this effect was taken by the **state cabinet**.
- According to the decision, a high level committee under the chairmanship of a retired judge of the **Odisha High Court** will be constituted to establish the modalities to implement the policy.
- The decision is consequent upon the realisation by the government that even meritorious students from government schools are not adequately represented in the medical and engineering colleges of the state.
- The government felt that these students, particularly those of rural hinterland, fail to prove their talent in **All India Entrance Tests like JEE and NEET**, for lack of exposure to specialised coaching due to both geographical and economic constraints.
- The decision is an effort towards addressing such unequal competition thereby instilling a sense of self- confidence in such deserving students to realise their dream of becoming a doctor or an engineer.

#### Odisha got Union Cabinet approval for project to enhance facilities at Paradip port

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the project '**Deepening and Optimization of Inner Harbour Facilities including Development of Western Dock on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT)** basis under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode to handle cape size vessels at Paradip Port'.
- The estimated cost of the project is **Rs.3,004.63 Crore**. This includes development of the new Western Dock on BOT basis and capital dredging by the selected Concessionaire at a cost of **Rs.2,040 Crore** and **Rs.352.13 Crore** respectively; and Paradip Port's investment will be to the tune of **Rs.612.50 Crore** towards providing Common Supporting Project Infrastructure.
- Union Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** has said that development of the Western dock at Paradip port in Odisha, is in line with the NDA government's commitment to building next-generation infrastructure for a 21st century self-reliant India.
- The Union Cabinet had approved a project to enhance the facilities at Paradip port.
- Mr Pradhan said, the project will enhance the **cargo handling capacity** of the port, while boosting industrial economy and generating employment opportunities.
- The Minister said that it will also usher in port-led development in Odisha and eastern India in sync with the **Prime Minister's vision of Purvodaya**.

#### Odisha hosts 9th International Sand Art festival and 31st Konark Dance festival

- Odisha government's tourism department has organised the 9th edition of International Sand Art festival at Chandrabhaga Beach in Odisha's Puri district and parallelly the 31<sup>st</sup> edition of Konark dance festival following the COVID-19 protocols. Theme of 2020 event-"environment" and "COVID-19". India's renowned sand artist and Padma Shri Awardee, SudarsanPattnaik, is the Brand Ambassador and Chief Curator of the event.



### Odisha Government launches 2nd Edition of Eco-Retreat programme at 5 locations

- Tourism Department of Odisha launched the 2nd Edition of its flagship “Eco-Retreat” programme – Eco-Retreat 2020 at five locations in Odisha – Konark, Bhitarkanika, Daringibadi, Hirakud and Satokosia.
- They will be open to Tourists till February 28, 2021.

## Tamil Nadu

### 5 kg of 'chana' free as COVID-19 relief

- The beneficiaries of the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**, as covered under **the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** and the priority household (PHH) cards, totalling around one crore cards, will be given 5 kg of 'chana'. Those who are part of the 97.9 lakh non-priority household (NPHH) cards will receive 1 kg of 'tur dal'.
- The measure will cost the State government around Rs.30 crore, according to an official of the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation.
- The supply of 'chana' to the NFSA beneficiaries is being made possible under the Central government's Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), while the provision of 'tur dal' is a State government initiative.

### Madras High Court gets 10 additional judges

- The President of India, in exercise of the power conferred by clause (I) of Article 224 of the Constitution of India, appointed Justices S/Shri Govindarajulu Chandrasekharan, A.A. Nakkiran, Veerasamy Sivagnanam, Ganesan Ilangovan, Sathi Kumar Sukumara Kurup, Murali Shankar Kuppuraju, Miss Manjula Ramaraju Nalliah and Smt. Tamilselvi T. Valayapalayam, would be for a period of two years.
- The period of appointment of Smt. Ananthi Subramanian and Smt. Kannammal Shanmuga Sundaram, would be with effect from the date they assume charge of their office till 30th July, 2022 and 19th July, 2022 respectively.

## Telangana

### TRS emerges as single largest party in GHMC polls

- In Telangana, the ruling **Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)** has emerged as the **largest party** in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation election.
- The -TRS won 55 of the 150 division-GHMC elections while the BJP got 48 wards and the AIMIM led by Asaduddin Owaisi secured 44. The Congress could win only two divisions.
- Counting of votes had to be stopped in one division at Neredmet, following a high court direction. In the previous election held in 2016, the TRS scored 99 seats, the AIMIM 44 and the BJP 4.

## Uttar Pradesh

### UP govt launches scheme for Tharu tribe

- **Uttar Pradesh** government has recently launched a scheme to take the unique culture of the **Tharu** tribes across the world.
- The UP state government is planning to connect the villages of the Tharu tribals located on the International border of Nepal.
- The state government is working to connect Tharu villages in the districts of **Balrampur, Bahraich, Lakhimpur and Pilibhit** bordering Nepal, with the home stay scheme of the UP Forest Department.

- The idea is to offer tourists an experience of living in the natural Tharu habitat, in traditional huts made of grass collected mainly from the forests.

#### UP Govt launches Special Varasat campaign to curb property and land-related disputes in rural areas

- In **Uttar Pradesh**, the government has launched a **special campaign to curb property & land-related disputes in rural areas**.
- This is a **first of its kind campaign** to end the nagging land-related issues in the rural areas.
- **Aim** : It is aimed at eradicating the exploitation of the villagers in the name of 'Varasat' of land and property.
- This special campaign will **continue** till **15 th February next year**.

#### Mega Leather Park with Rs. 5850 crore investment to come up in Kanpur : to create 50,000 Jobs

- A **mega leather park** will come up in **Ramaipur village** of **Kanpur** with an investment of **Rs 5,850 crores**.
- The park which is part of the mega leather cluster project is likely to create **50,000 jobs**, for **1.5 lakh people**.
- Recently, the project has received approval from the **Union Commerce Ministry**.
- The mega leather cluster project will attract an **investment** of about **Rs 13,000 crores**.

#### UP launches P2P trading platform for rooftop solar power in Lucknow

- **Uttar Pradesh** has become the **first in India and South Asia** to launch the block chain-enabled **peer to peer (P2P) trading platform** for **rooftop solar power producers**.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL)** and **Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA)** are hosting the first-of-its-kind pilot project involving energy generated from solar rooftop systems installed on buildings in Lucknow.
- The Project is being implemented by Indian Smart Grid Forum (ISGF)
- This pilot project will demonstrate the feasibility of rooftop solar energy trading through smart contracts on the blockchain platform between prosumers with their neighbouring households.

#### PM Modi to inaugurate New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of EDFC

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **New Bhaupur-New Khurja** section of **Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, EDFC** through video conferencing.
- The 351-kilometre New Bhaupur- New Khurja section of EDFC is situated in Uttar Pradesh and is built at a cost of **Rs. 5,750 crore**.
- The section will open new vistas of opportunity for the local industries such as aluminium industry in Kanpur Dehat district, dairy sector in Auraiya, textile production in Etawah, glassware industry in Firozabad and locks and hardware in Aligarh district.
- The section will also decongest the existing Kanpur-Delhi main line and will enable Indian Railways to run faster trains.
- The Prime Minister will also inaugurate EDFC's Operation Control Centre (OCC) at Prayagraj, This will act as the command centre for the entire route length of the EDFC.
- The Centre is one of the largest structures of its type globally, with modern interiors, ergonomic design and best-in-class acoustics.

#### UP Renames Dandupur Railway Station as Maa Barahi Devi Dham

- The Government of India consented to change the name of Dandupur railway station located between Pratapgarh and Badshahpur on the Varanasi railway section, Uttar Pradesh(UP) as "Maa Barahi Devi Dham".

- Following the consent of the central government Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath also approved the name change. The official notification for the name change will be issued after the approval of the Chief Minister.

#### Uttar Pradesh CM Named Jewar Airport as 'Noida International Greenfield Airport'

- Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, approved the name, design and logo of the international airport to be constructed in Jewar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. Name– Noida International Greenfield Airport.
- Logo– Image of 'sarus' (stork), the state bird.

### Uttarakhand

#### Union Minister Launches Five-star village postal scheme in Uttarakhand

- The Union Minister of State for Communication Sanjay Dhotre launched a five star village postal scheme to ensure the universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in Dehradun for rural areas of Uttarakhand.
- He also distributed Sukanya Samridhi Yojana passbooks, checkbooks, ATM Cards and saving bank passbooks to the beneficiaries of senior citizens welfare fund schemes. State Minister of Communication also chaired the review meeting of Uttarakhand Postal circle at Dehradun's General Post Office.

#### Uttarakhand gets its first eco-bridge for small animals

- The **Ramnagar** Forest Division in **Nainital District**, of **Uttarakhand** has constructed the state's **first eco-bridge** across Kaladhungi Nainital Highway.
- This is 90-feet-long and 5-feet-wide bridge is Uttarakhand's first eco-bridge.
- Aim: **To enhance wildlife connectivity that can be disrupted because of highways or logging.**
- It is mainly for small animals and reptiles such as squirrels, snakes, monitor lizards
- The Forest officer Amit Kumar Gwaskoti has also informed that no iron or cement has been used in the construction of the bridge and it is made of eco-friendly items such as rope, bamboo, and grass.

### West Bengal

#### Kolkata's Majerhat Bridge Named "Jai Hind"

- Chief Minister **Mamata Banerjee** named the **newly-built Majerhat bridge** in Kolkata as **"Jai Hind"** bridge to commemorate the **125th birth anniversary** of Subhas Chandra Bose.
- The new bridge, which has been built in the place of an old one that collapsed in September 2018, will be inaugurated by Ms Banerjee.
- The 650-metre-long bridge will be thrown open to traffic as soon as Ms Banerjee inaugurates it.

#### West Bengal Cabinet approves construction of State's 1st Deep Sea port at Tajpur

- West Bengal Cabinet approved the Construction of the State's 1st Deep Sea Port at Tajpur, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee stated that the port will be built entirely by the West Bengal Government.
- The Tajpur Deep Sea Port under West Bengal Maritime Board & West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) will boost the seafood exports industry in East Midnapore and also benefits lakhs of fishermen.

### Revision Points

State	Capital	Chief Minister	Governor
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Andhra Pradesh	Amaravati	Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy	BiswaBhusanHarichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Pema Khandu	Brigadier BD Mishra
Assam	Dispur	Sarbananda Sonowal	Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Patna	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Bhupesh Baghel	AnusuiyaUikey
Goa	Panaji	Pramod Sawant	Bhagat Singh Koshyari (Additional Charge)
Gujarat	Gandhi Nagar	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Dev Vrat
Haryana	Chandigarh	Manohar Lal Khattar	Satyadeo Narain Arya
Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	Jai Ram Thakur	Bandaru Dattatraya
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	Droupadi Murmu
Karnataka	Bengaluru	B S Yediyurappa	Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Anandiben Patel
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Uddhav Thackrey	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Sangma	Satya Pal Malik
Mizoram	Aizawl	Pu Zoramthanga	P S Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Kohima	Neiphiu Rio	RN Ravi
Odisha	Bhubaneshwar	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Chandigarh	Amarinder Singh	V P Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	Gangtok	Prem Singh Tamang(PS Golay)	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	Hyderabad	K. Chandrasekhar Rao	TamilisaiSoundararajan
Tripura	Agartala	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Yogi Adityanath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

## Important National News

### PM participates in Dev Deepawali Mahotsav in Varanasi

- The Prime Minister named **Guru Nanak Dev** ji himself as the biggest symbol of reforms in the society and system.
- The Dev Deepavali** ("the Diwali of the Gods" or "Festival of Lights of the Gods") is the festival of Kartik Poornima celebrated in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. It falls on the full moon of the Hindu month of Kartika (November - December) and takes place fifteen days after Diwali.
- The festival is also observed as Tripura Purnima Snan or Worship of Shiva.

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

- The government has recently implemented **new farm Acts** in this direction which include **Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020** and the **Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020**.
- These Acts provide for creation of an ecosystem where the farmers and traders will have freedom of choice of sale and purchase of agri-produce. It will promote barrier free inter-state and intra-state trade and commerce outside the physical premises of markets notified under State Agricultural Produce Marketing legislations which will reduce marketing costs for the farmers.
- The farmers will not be charged any cess or levy for sale of their produce. The Acts aim at creating additional trading opportunities outside the APMC market yards to help farmers get remunerative prices due to additional competition.

### India's 5G Connection by 2026

- India, which has the highest average monthly mobile data traffic per smart phone, is expected to surpass **350 million 5G subscriptions by 2026**, accounting for 27% of all mobile subscriptions in the country, according to a report by Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson.
- In the India region, LTE (long-term evolution technology) subscriptions are forecast to increase from 710 million in 2020 to 820 million in 2026" by which time 3G will be phased out.
- The average traffic per smartphone is expected to further increase to about 37GB per month in 2026, it added.

### National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) meeting held Through video conference

- Cabinet Secretary **Rajiv Gauba** chaired a **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)** meeting through video conferencing.
- In view of the deep depression emerging along the Southern coast of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, Mr Gauba held the meeting with the Chief Secretaries of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Advisor Lakshadweep and Secretaries of different ministries.
- India Meteorological Department stated. "A depression has formed over southeast Bay of Bengal," the department and in a subsequent post on pre-cyclone watch for south Tamil Nadu and south Kerala coasts stated it is very likely to intensify further into a deep depression during the next 12 hours.
- As per the naming convention, it is named as '**Burevi**' (**बुरेवि**), and the name has been contributed by the Maldives.

### First Mobile CNG Dispensing Unit Launched

- The unit was launched by **Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan**. The **Mobile Refuelling Unit** will be operated by **Mahanagar Gas Ltd (MNGL)** in Pune.
- Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Tarun Kapoor, stated the company should ensure that **2-3 compressed biogas plants** are connected to the gas network.

### Board of Trade meeting Scheduled on Dec 2

- Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** will chair a meeting of the **Board of Trade (BOT)** through a Video Conference.
- The meeting will be also addressed by ministers of state for commerce and industry **Som Parkash** and **Hardeep Singh Puri**.
- The discussions in the meeting will focus on the new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) (2021-26) and the strategies and measures to be taken in order to take forward domestic manufacturing and exports.

- Board of Trade will take an Overview of the Export and Import Performance, Investment Promotion Strategy for AtmaNirbhar Bharat.

#### Global Terrorism Index 2020: India 8th most affected country

- India ranked eighth - with a score of 7.353 - on the index that measures the impact of terrorism.
- Afghanistan (9.592) was reported to be the most impacted of the 163 countries, Iraq (8.682) was the second most affected nation, followed by Nigeria (8.314).

#### India's first 100 Octane petrol

- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) launched the nation's first 100 Octane petrol, helping India join a select league of nations globally that have such superior quality fuel.
- Launching the fuel, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan stated XP100 premium petrol will initially be available at select outlet of IOC in 10 cities
- The Cities are Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Agra, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad

#### Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah addressed inaugural session of Annual DGsP/IGsP Conference

- This is the first such Conference organised by the Intelligence Bureau in virtual mode. Paying homage to the Police martyrs, the Union Home Minister awarded Indian Police Medals to 50 awardees and congratulated them on their achievements.
- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi later joined the Conference virtually and reviewed the action points of the previous Conference.
- A session on various initiatives of security forces on the LWE front was held in which discussions were held to improve the security situation in LWE infested areas.

#### Prime Minister to virtually inaugurate Agra Metro Rail project on December 7

- **Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation** has set a deadline of **five years** for the completion of two corridors of Agra metro which will connect all the major tourist destinations and the tourists coming from all over the world to see the Taj will get a new experience of green transport.
- Agra Metro will be a boon to tourism and it will take around 3 years for the first metro train on the priority section between Tajmahal to Jama Masjid.
- He stated that First time Heritage impact assessment was done with the help of IIT Madras and archaeological survey of India as per the guidelines of UNESCO before starting of work.
- In the first phase, three metro stations - Taj East Gate, Basai and Fatehabad road, and an elevated four-km-long track will be constructed within 26 months and at an expected cost of Rs 273 crore.
- The tendering process has been completed. The **UP Metro Rail Corporation Limited (UPMRC)** has begun preparations in this regard.
- According to the UPMRC, the Rs 8,379.62 crore Agra Metro Rail project will be a major boost to the urban public transport connectivity in the city.

#### Ayush ministry to develop Nisarg Gram campus in Pune

- The **Union Ministry of Ayush** has recently announced that the upcoming new campus of the **National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN)**, Pune will be called Nisarg Gram.
- To start with, the new institute's curricula will be prepared in light of National Education Policy, 2020. The curricula will be rationalised to bring about qualitative, pedagogical understanding of naturopathy and allied disciplines at the under-graduate (UG) and post-graduate (PG) levels.

- Located at a distance of 15 kilometres from NIN's present premises at Babu Bhavan

#### **Government Announces List of 10 best performing police stations in India 2020**

- The **Government of India** selects the **best-performing police stations** across the country every year, to incentivise more effective functioning and bring healthy competition.
- This year's survey for the best police stations was conducted under challenging circumstances by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- 19 parameters were identified to evaluate the standards of service delivery and identify techniques of improvement in policing.

#### **The Top 10 Police Stations In The Country For 2020:**

1. NongpokSekmai, Manipur
2. AWPS-Suramangalam, Tamil Nadu
3. Kharsang, Arunachal Pradesh
4. Jhilmili (Bhaiya Thana), Chhattisgarh
5. Sanguem, Goa
6. Kalighat, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
7. Pakyong, Sikkim
8. Kanth, UP
9. Khanvel, Dadra & Nagar Haveli
10. Jammikunta Town PS, Telangana

#### **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana Participates in 7th WASH Conclave**

- A 3 day virtual 7 th edition of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene conclave 2020 started in Hyderabad from Dec 2 to Dec 4.
- Theme - Hygiene Matters
- Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan participated as Chief Guest of seventh WASH Conclave organised by UNICEF and the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR).
- Target - It should be ensured to achieve the target to provide access to and use of safe and adequate drinking water to all households within premises by 2024."

#### **IIT Bombay Releases Urban Quality of Life Index: Mumbai Bagged the 1 st Place**

- IIT-Bombay researchers have come up with an urban quality of life index tailored to the reality of life in India.
- The first time, they have factored in gender parity
- Chennai, it turns out, is the most women-friendly and Patna the least.
- Overall, Mumbai tops the list of 14, followed closely by Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai.
- The study found that Jaipur has the highest crime rate against women, Chennai has the lowest .

#### **PM virtually inaugurates construction of Agra Metro project in UP**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the phase one of construction of the Agra metro project via videoconferencing on 7 th dec.
- Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandi Ben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath marked their virtual presence on the occasion.
- The Agra metro project comprises two corridors with a total length of 29.4 km and will connect major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra with railway stations and bus stands.



- The estimated cost of the construction of the project is Rs 8,379.62 crore and it will be completed in five years, an official stated.
- The project will benefit Agra's population of 26 lakh and also cater to more than 60 lakh tourists who visit the historic city every year. It will provide an environment-friendly mass rapid transit system to Agra.

#### **The ICAR Wins King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award 2020**

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), has bagged the prestigious International **King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award** conferred by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome.
- The announcement to this effect was made on a virtual function by the FAO on the World Soil Day 5th December 2020 Through Video Conferencing.
- The prestigious global award was conferred to the ICAR for its commitment to raising awareness of the importance of healthy soils.
- The World Soil Day Award was conferred to the ICAR for last year's World Soil Day celebration, which addressed soil erosion under the motto "Stop soil erosion, save our future".
- ICAR organised "Soil Health Awareness Week" during 1-7 December 2019 with participation of more than 13 000 people, including scientists, government institutions, officials, students, farmers and the general public, in the social media campaign "SOIL – Our Mother Earth" on 5 December 2019.
- Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, will give the award to the ICAR in an official ceremony that will take place in Bangkok in January 2021.

#### **PM Modi to share his thoughts in 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on Dec 27**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share his thoughts with the people in the country and abroad in the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on All India Radio at 11 AM on 27th of this month. It will be the 19th edition of Prime Minister's Mann ki Baat 2.0.
- The programme will be broadcast on the entire network of AIR and Doordarshan and also on AIR News website [www.newsonair.com](http://www.newsonair.com) and newsonair Mobile App. It will also be streamed live on the YouTube channels of AIR, DD News, PMO and Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
- AIR will broadcast the programme in regional languages immediately after the Hindi broadcast. Citizens can share their suggestions and ideas for the upcoming Mann ki Baat programme through Namo App, MyGov Forum or through toll free number 1800-11-7800.

#### **Gwalior, Orchha in UNESCO world heritage cities list: MP Govt**

- The historical fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCO's world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme, according to the state government.
- Under the plan UNESCO will suggest best measures and resources for the development of these places under the Historic Urban Landscape recommendations, the official said.

#### **About Gwalior and Orchha**

- Gwalior was established in the 9th century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaha and Scindias.
- Orchha is popular for its temples and palaces and was the capital of the Bundela kingdom in the 16th century.

#### **PM Modi to inaugurate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention on 9th of Jan'21**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** Convention on **9th of Jan 2021** in virtual format.

- President **Ram Nath Kovind** will deliver the Valedictory address to the diaspora.
- The website for the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2021 was inaugurated by the Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan.
- Theme - **Contributing to Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards will also be announced to honour eminent overseas Indians for their contributions to various fields both in India and abroad.

#### Government announces CO-WIN mobile app for COVID-19 vaccine delivery

- The central government has introduced a new digital platform called **CO-WIN** for COVID-19 vaccine delivery.
- There will be a new mobile app that will allow people to register for the vaccine.
- CO-WIN app is set to be available for smartphone users and will be publicly available as soon as possible.
- The platform will be used for recording vaccine data and will form a database of healthcare workers.
- The app will have separate modules for administrator, registration, vaccination, beneficiary acknowledgement and reports.

#### PM Modi to address International Bharati Festival 2020 On Dec 11

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will address the **International Bharati Festival**, 2020 on **Dec 11** at 4:30 pm via video conferencing.
- This year the festival is being organised in virtual mode and will see participation of several national and international poets and artists.
- The festival is being organised by **Vanavil Cultural Centre** to celebrate the **138th** birth anniversary of **Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati**.

#### PM Modi to lay foundation stone of new Parliament House building On Dec 10

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will lay the foundation stone of the New Parliament Building at **Sansad Marg** in Parliament Complex.
- The new building is an intrinsic part of the vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- It will be a landmark opportunity to build peoples' Parliament for the first time after independence.
- The new Parliament building will match the needs and aspirations of New India in the 75th anniversary of independence in 2022.
- The new 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 proposal for the New Parliament Building was made by Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, during the proceedings of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, on 5th August last year.

#### Punjab agricultural scientist declines award

- **Varinderpal Singh**, an agricultural scientist with the Punjab agricultural University, refused to accept an award being presented to him by a Union Minister to express his solidarity with the farmers agitating against the Centre's farm laws.
- Dr. Singh, a principal soil chemist on the PAU in Ludhiana, Punjab, was chosen for the '**FAI Golden Jubilee Award for Excellence**' for finest work executed in plant vitamins.

#### New School Bag Policy 2020 Proposed By Union Education Ministry

- The **Union Education Minister** proposed a **new School Bag Policy 2020** and recommends that weight of the school bag needs to be monitored on a regular basis as per NCERT recommendation.

- As per the new School Bag Policy 2020 proposed by the Education Ministry, the maximum weight of the school bags has been **not more than 10% of the student's weight**.
- In addition to this, the new policy also proposed that students below Class 2 will not be given any homework as per the proposal of the new policy.
- The NEP 2020 proposes that the weight of the school bag should be in the ratio of 1:10 with the body weight and in accordance with this the New School Bag Policy caps the max weight to 10% of the student's weight.

#### **Cabinet Approves PM- WANI Scheme**

- The Central government's scheme is called the Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) on 9th December 2020, and is being seen as an attempt by the government to elevate wireless internet connectivity in the country.
- It aims to promote the growth of public wi-fi networks in the country.
- The scheme would enable our small shopkeepers to provide Wi-Fi service. This will boost incomes as well as ensure our youth gets seamless internet connectivity.
- Salient Features: This Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface will be known as PM-WANI. PM-WANI ecosystem will be operated by different players as described herein under:
- Public Data Office (PDO): It will establish, maintain, and operate only WANI compliant Wi-Fi Access Points and deliver broadband services to subscribers.
- Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA): It will be an aggregator of PDOs and perform the functions relating to Authorization and Accounting.
- App Provider: It will develop an App to register users and discover WANI compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet service.
- Central Registry: It will maintain the details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs. To begin with, the Central Registry will be maintained by C-DoT.

#### **Cabinet approves Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY).
- Aim: To incentivise the creation of new employment opportunities.
- ABRY will also incentivize creation of new employment opportunities under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0.
- Cabinet has approved an expenditure of Rs 1,584 crore for the current financial year and Rs 22,810 crore for the entire Scheme period i.e. 2020-2023.

#### **Salient features of the Scheme are as under:**

- Government of India will provide subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after 1st October 2020 and up to 30th June 2021
- Government of India will pay both 12% employees' contribution and 12% employers' contribution i.e. 24% of wages towards EPF in respect of new employees in establishments employing up to 1000 employees for two years
- The Government of India will pay only employees' share of EPF contribution i.e. 12% of wages in respect of new employees in establishments employing more than 1000 employees for two years.

#### **G Kishan Reddy inaugurates National Centre for Divyang Empowerment in Telangana**

- Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy inaugurated National Centre for Divyang Empowerment (NCDE) at the CRPF Group Centre in Hakimpet near Hyderabad in Telangana on 10th December 2020.

- This is a centre to skill and re-skill the specially-abled people who suffered disability while serving the nation.
- NCDE aims to provide the soldiers who suffered and sustained grievous injuries during operational duties and rendered physically challenged, a chance to enhance and train them for various fields of work including Information Technology and para-athletes.

#### Ministry of AYUSH, AIIMS to set up Department of Integrative Medicine

- The Ministry of AYUSH and AIIMS have decided to initiate work on setting up a Department of Integrative Medicine at AIIMS.
- This was decided in a joint visit and review by Secretary, AYUSH Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha and Director, AIIMS, New Delhi Dr. Randeep Guleria.
- CIMR receives notable support through the Centre of Excellence Scheme of the Ministry of AYUSH.
- It was decided that the Centre for Integrative Medicine and Research (CIMR) AIIMS may develop an integrated protocol with Ayurveda and Yoga for study on Post COVID treatment.

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

- The **Ministry of Agriculture** has declared **Lakshadweep** as India's **first Union Territory** to become **100% organic**.
- Earlier in **2016**, **Sikkim** was declared as the **first organic farming state** in India.
- The success of acquiring a certification of being 100% organic was achieved with the help of the central government's **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana** and the financial assistance earmarked for the UT under the scheme.

#### BSE Launches e- agricultural spot market platform

- **BSE** (earlier known as **Bombay Stock Exchange**) has launched an **electronic spot platform** for **agricultural commodities** through its subsidiary BSE Investments Ltd.
- BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltd (BEAM) will function as a national level, institutionalised, electronic, transparent commodity spot trading platform in line with the Prime Minister's vision to create a single market, BSE stated.
- **Importance of BEAM** : With the help of BEAM, farmers in one state will be able to reach out to markets in other states and auction their produce.
- BEAM has leveraged on modern technology to offer customised solutions to farmers, traders, and stakeholders to facilitate risk-free and hassle-free purchase and sale of various agri commodities.

#### Indian Railway Launches Hospital Management Information System

- **Indian Railways** has launched the **Hospital Management Information System (HMIS)** to provide better health care facilities to its work force with the help of information technology.
- The HMIS Trial Project has been launched over **South Central Railway**.
- The HMIS has been developed by Indian Railways in coordination **with RailTel Corporation Limited**.
- Presently, three modules of HMIS – Registration, OPD doctor desk, and pharmacy – are being taken up implemented.
- **Objective** : The objective of the HMIS is to provide a single-window of clearance of hospital administration activity such as clinical, diagnostics, pharmacy, examinations, industrial health etc.

#### NITI Aayog releases a white paper Vision 2035 - Public Health Surveillance in India

- The white paper lays out India's vision for public health surveillance through the integration of the three-tiered public health system into **Ayushman Bharat**.
- It also spells out the need for expanded referral networks and enhanced laboratory capacity.

- The white paper was released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman **Dr Rajiv Kumar**, Member (Health) Dr Vinod K Paul and CEO Amitabh Kant.
- **Vision :** The vision of this white paper is to make India's public health surveillance system more responsive and predictive to enhance preparedness for action at all levels.
- Citizen-friendly public health surveillance system will ensure individual privacy and confidentiality, enabled with a client feedback mechanism

#### Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure scheme

- All the states except **Tamil Nadu** have availed benefits of the newly announced scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure.
- The scheme was announced by the Finance Minister on 12th October as a part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package.
- **Aim:** The Scheme is aimed at boosting capital expenditure by the State Governments who are facing a difficult financial environment this year due to the shortfall in tax revenue arising from the COVID 19 pandemic.
- So far, capital expenditure proposals of over 9,879 crore rupees of 27 States have been approved by the Finance Ministry.

#### Housing & Urban Affairs secretary launches PM SVANidhi beneficiaries & their families

- Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary **Durga Shanker Mishra** launched a programme of Socio-Economic Profiling of **PM SVANidhi** beneficiaries and their families, as an additional component of PM SVANidhi Scheme.
- Under this, a complete profile of each PM SVANidhi beneficiary and their family members will be prepared. Based on the profiled data, benefits of the various eligible Central Schemes would be extended to them for their holistic socio-economic upliftment.
- In the first phase, **125 cities** have been selected for the programme.

#### Handicraft and GI Toys exempted from Quality Control Order

- Centre has **exempted Handicraft and Geographical Indications toys from Quality Control Order**. Order will come into effect from **1st January next year**.
- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade mentioned this exemption in Toys (Quality Control) Second Amendment Order, 2020.
- **Aim :** This order aims to bring forward the synergized efforts of the centre, states and the stakeholders to promote 'Team up for toys' vision keeping quality standards of the indigenous toys as the priority.

#### Health minister releases 5th National Family Health Survey for 17 states & 5 UTs

- Health minister **Harsh Vardhan** released the **5th National Family Health Survey (NFHS)** which contains detailed information on population, health and nutrition for India and its states and UTs.
- In **Phase I** results Show the status of **17 States and 5 UTs**.
- **Phase II** covering the remaining **12 States and 2 UTs** and is expected to be completed by **May 2021**.

#### Goal of the Survey:

- To provide essential data on health and family welfare needed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and other agencies for policy and programme purposes.
- To provide information on important emerging health and family welfare issues.

#### British PM Boris Johnson to be Chief Guest at Republic Day Of India

- The **United Kingdom** has confirmed that **Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson** will be the chief guest at **Republic Day Parade in January 2021**.

- This was confirmed by **British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab**, on **14 December 2020**.
- And also Prime Minister Boris Johnson has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to join the UK-hosted **G7 summit** next year
- India will be observing **72nd Republic Day on 26 January 2021**.

#### **GRSE Kolkata launches 'Himgiri', its 1st 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 on **December 14**.
- P17A ships are the first gas turbine propulsion and largest combat platforms ever built at GRSE.
- Project 17A has upheld India's vision for **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- 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 Modi Inaugurates World's Largest Renewable Energy Park Opens in Kutch**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone of the **world's largest renewable solar and wind energy 30,000 megawatts (MW)** Ultra Mega Hybrid Park in **Gujarat's Kutch**.
- It will be the largest renewable energy park of its kind in the world.
- The vast project in western Gujarat's Kutch region spread over **1,80,000 acres**
- The energy project in PM Modi's home state will account for a large chunk of India's ambitious target of generating 175 GW in renewable energy by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030.
- The desalination plant will be able to process 100 million litres of water a day for 8 lakh people living in the arid region.
- PM Modi also laid the foundation stone for the Rs 129-crore fully automated dairy plant under the Centre's Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. As the then CM, Modi had set up the district's first dairy plant with 2 lakh litre processing capacity in 2013-14.

#### **Key features of the renewable energy park**

- The park is being constructed between Khawda and Vighakhot villages near India-Pakistan border.
- The renewable park will have two dedicated zones, one each for wind energy and solar energy.
- It will be spread over 72,600 hectares of waste land, including 49,600 hectares for solar project and 23,000 hectares of land for wind power.

#### **ISRO sets up dedicated control centre for Space Situational Awareness**

- The **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** has set up a dedicated **Space Situational Awareness (SSA)** Control Centre, at its ISTRAC campus at **Peenya, Bangalore**.
- The control centre was formally inaugurated by Chairman, ISRO and Secretary, Department of Space **K Sivan** on **December 14**.
- According to ISRO, the **Network for space object Tracking and Analysis (NETRA)** project is initiated as a first step towards meeting this goal, its main elements being a radar, an optical telescope facility, and a control centre.

#### **Cabinet approves assistance of Rs 3,500 crore for sugarcane farmers**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister **Mr. Narendra Modi** has approved assistance of about **Rs. 3,500 crore** (US\$ 476.10 million) for sugarcane farmers (Ganna Kisan).



- This subsidy aims at covering expenses on marketing costs including handling, upgrading and other processing costs and costs of international and internal transport and freight charges on export of up to 60 LMT of sugar limited to Maximum Admissible Export Quota (MAEQ) allocated to sugar mills for sugar season 2020-21.

#### QCI Launches Recognition Scheme for Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies

- **Quality Council of India (QCI)** at the behest of the FSSAI has come out with a Scheme for approval of **Hygiene Rating** Audit Agencies to scale up Hygiene Rating by increasing the number of recognised Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies in the country.
- This rating will be in the form of smileys (1 up to 5) and the certificate should be displayed prominently in the consumer facing area.
- **Aim** : To help consumers take informed decisions regarding food outlets where they prefer to eat by encouraging businesses to improve hygiene and safety standards, the Commerce and Industry Ministry. The recognised agency will verify compliance with food hygiene and safety procedures laid down by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- FSSAI's initiative of '**Food Hygiene Rating Scheme**' is a certification system for food businesses supplying food directly to consumers, either on or off premise, the ministry said in a statement.

#### India and Bangladesh to reopen Chilahati-Haldibari rail link after nearly 55 years

- **India** and **Bangladesh** reopened the **55 years old Chilahati-Haldibari rail** link between the two nations. The inauguration took place during a virtual bilateral summit between **PM Modi** and PM **Sheikh Hasina** on December 17, 2020.

##### Significance:

- The inauguration of the railway link will help in enhancing connectivity to West Bengal and Assam from Bangladesh.
- It will enhance the railway network accessibility and will also give a boost to the economic development and bilateral trade in the region.

#### CCEA approves revised cost of Rs 6.7k cr for power transmission project

- **CCEA (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs)**, chaired by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, has approved the Revised Cost Estimate (RCE) of North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP) at an estimated cost of **Rs 6,700 crore**
- The central government approved the revised cost estimate of Rs 6,700 crore for North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project for **six states** to strengthen intra-state transmission and distribution systems.
- six beneficiary the north-eastern states – **Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura**, and are targeted to be commissioned by December 2021.
- The main objective of the project is the government commitment for the total economic development of the North Eastern Region and to strengthen the intra-state transmission and distribution infrastructure in the region.
- The scheme will also increase the per capita power consumption of these states, and contribute to the total economic development of the region.
- The scheme was initially approved in December 2014 as a Central Sector Plan Scheme of Ministry of Power and is being funded with the assistance of World Bank fund and by the government through the Budget support of the



ministry on 50:50 basis (World Bank: Gol) except for the capacity building component for Rs 89 crore, which will be entirely funded by the Centre.

#### **British PM invites Prime Minister Modi to attend UK hosted G-7 summit next year**

- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has invited India to attend the **G7 Summit next year**.
- Mr Johnson has sent a letter inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the summit. UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab called on Mr Modi and handed over the letter in New Delhi.
- Mr Johnson's ambition to work with a group of like-minded democracies to advance shared interests and tackle common challenges.
- This year, the G7 grouping will also reportedly witness an expansion and will include ten democracies, naming it **D10**.

#### **India and Bangladesh sign 7 MoUs, agreements**

- **India and Bangladesh** signed **seven MoUs** and agreements during the virtual summit between Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina**.
- The agreements and MoUs were signed in Dhaka by the High Commissioner of India Vikram Doraiswami on behalf of India and officials of Bangladesh.
- The agreements include a framework of understanding in Hydrocarbon sector, framework agreement on High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP), protocol on transborder elephant conservation, an MoU on the supply of equipment and improvement of Garbage and solid waste disposal, MoU in the field of agriculture, an MoU between National Museum Delhi and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial museum, Dhaka and terms of reference for India Bangladesh CEO forum.

#### **EAM S Jaishankar launches economic diplomacy website**

- External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** launched a dedicated **economic diplomacy website**.
- Aim : To provide critical and relevant information on major economic indicators, central and state government policy updates as well as the latest business news and trade data.
- The website [www.indbiz.gov.in](http://www.indbiz.gov.in) will act as a two-way funnel connecting Indian nationals' businesses and states globally for enhancing exports, exploring employment opportunities.
- The website also includes information on global mineral resource endowments, opportunities for agricultural exports, and employment abroad for Indian nationals and businesses, he said at the virtual launch event.
- It has been launched to showcase India's economic, sectoral and state-wise trends that make for an attractive economic partnership.

#### **India signs one billion dollar loan agreement with NDB for Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**

- **The Government of India and New Development Bank** signed a loan agreement for **one thousand million dollars** to provide support to Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan through **MGNREGA Scheme**.

#### **Significance of the Scheme:**

- It will support the Government in mitigating the adverse economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic and enable economic recovery in the rural areas through Natural Resource Management (NRM) works.
- This will facilitate economic activity and employment generation to stimulate rural demand, to combat the decline in economic activity due to outbreak of COVID-19.
- The programme proposes creation of durable rural infrastructure assets relating to NRM and generation of employment opportunities for rural poor, especially migrant workers who have returned from urban areas and have lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Defence Acquisition Council approves proposals worth Rs 27,000 crore to procure equipment from domestic industry

- **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** meeting, headed by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh**, approved proposals to procure equipment worth **Rs 27,000 crore** from the domestic industry.
- DAC approved Capital Acquisition proposals of various weapons, platforms, equipment and systems required by the Indian Army, the Navy and Air Force at an approximate overall cost of Rs 28,000 crore.
- AIR Correspondent reports, this was the first meeting of the Council under the new regime of Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 and this will give a boost to the Make in India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiatives of the Government.

### AICTE to Release Rs 20,000 Maintenance Allowance For Jammu And Kashmir, Ladakh Students

- **AICTE** has decided to release the instalment of **Rs 20,000** as maintenance allowance under **Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS)** for the students of **Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**.
- Aim: To Support & Empower Students for Completing their online studies.

#### About PMSSS:

- Under the PMSSS Scheme, the youths of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are supported by way of scholarship in two parts namely the academic fee and maintenance allowance.
- It is Implemented by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

### On 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Ministry dedicates a Museum in Kolkata

- To commemorate Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniversary on 23rd January, the Union Culture Ministry was planning a museum in Kolkata.
- The government has also decided to expand the current museum of Netaji at Red Fort in Delhi.
- Centre is considering reprinting books written by Subash Chandrs Bose, along with fellowships for students.
- Historical documents, clippings, photos, videos, memorabilia and other material is available with the families of Bose as well as those of INA members which would be brought together at one place for display and dissemination.

### Government Finalises GPS based Technology toll collection across India

- Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs **Nitin Gadkari** has stated that the Government has finalised **GPS-based(Global Positioning System)** technology toll collection to ensure seamless movement of vehicles across the country.
- That will ensure India becomes **'toll booth free'** in the next two years.
- In this, the toll amount will be deducted directly from the bank account based on the movement of vehicles.
- And then the Government will come up with some plan to install GPS technology in old vehicles.

### Nehru Zoo gets ISO certification from UK

- The **Nehru Zoological Park** in Hyderabad has become the **first zoo in the country** to receive the **ISO 9001:2015** Quality Management Standards Certification from the Accreditation Services for Certification Bodies (ASCB), UK.
- In this achievement, the Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad has also become the **first zoo in the country to get this certificate**.
- This was **presented** to Telangana Forests Minister **A. Indra Karan Reddy**.
- HYM International Certifications, Accredited by ASCB(UK) recently conducted assessment of the Zoo for ISO 9001:2015 Certifications, and expressed satisfaction and happiness in the standards being followed in Nehru

Zoological Park in the area of sanitation, food processing, animal breeding, Zoo Hospital, animal care, hygiene maintenance and establishment.

#### Odisha CM launches Pareshram portal

- Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik** launched '**Pareshram**' Portal along with **22 online services** of **Labour and Employees State Insurance Department**.
- The Chief Minister hoped that the portal and the online services shall be helpful in **ease of doing business** and contribute significantly to the industrial development of the state.

#### Key features of 'PARESHRAM' Portal

- The 'PARESHRAM' portal is the foundation of the **5-T initiative** and this will have all the information regarding different labour laws, to help the industries, commercial organisations, small entrepreneurs and the general public.
- Portal will provide 52 types of services

#### Nitin Gadkari to inaugurate and lay foundation stone for 33 highway projects in Karnataka

- Road Transport and Highways Minister **Nitin Gadkari** will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for **33 highway projects in Karnataka**.
- The project worth **11 thousand crore rupees**, has a road length of nearly 1200 kilometers.
- Paving the way for development of Karnataka, these roads will enhance better connectivity, convenience and economic growth in the State.

#### Skill India establishes first Centre of Excellence for Skill Development in Power Sector

- **Skill India** has established the **first Centre of Excellence for Skill Development in the Power Sector** in the campus of **National Institute of Solar Energy, Gurugram Haryana**.
- Inaugurating the Centre, Minister of State for Skill Development **Raj Kumar Singh** stated that India is taking rapid strides to move towards renewable energy to accelerate economic development, improve energy security and energy access while mitigating climate change challenges too
- The Centre of Excellence located in Gurugram is an outcome of collaboration between the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India**, along with the **Ministry of National Education and Youth, Government of France and Schneider Electric**.
- Centre has high-end modern labs designed keeping in mind the future technology, which will further strengthen India and France's relationship in the energy sector.
- The Centre of Excellence will focus on creating a pool of highly skilled trainers and assessors for further training to increase employability of candidates in the field of Electricity, Automation and Solar Energy Sectors.

#### PM Modi to be chief guest at virtual centenary celebrations of Aligarh Muslim University

- In **Uttar Pradesh**, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will be the **chief guest** at the **virtual centenary celebrations of Aligarh Muslim University**.
- This is for the first time in over five decades that any Prime Minister of India will attend a function at Aligarh Muslim University.
- Earlier to this Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri attended an event at AMU in 1964. Before Lal Bahadur Shastri, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had visited AMU four times. He visited the AMU campus first time in 1948 and lastly in 1963.
- Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank will also join the event via videoconferencing.

### PM Modi to address India-Japan Samvad Conference On Dec 21

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** is set to address the **India-Japan Samvad Conference** on **December 21**.
- This Samvad Conference revolves around the need to **build the future of Asia** on the positive influence of traditions of non-violence and democracy in Asia.
- The first conference, **Samvad-I**, was held in **New Delhi in 2015**, at **Bodh Gaya**. During Samvad I, leading scholars, religious leaders, academics, and political personalities had exchanged views on conflict avoidance and environmental consciousness.

### PM Modi to deliver inaugural address at IISF 2020

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will deliver the inaugural address at the **India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020** through video conferencing.
- **Purpose** : To promote scientific temper in society, the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati conceptualized the India International Science Festival.
- Launched in **2015**, IISF is a celebration **to promote science and technology**.
- **Aim** : The aim is to engage the public with science, celebrate the joy of science and show how Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, STEM can provide solutions to improve lives.
- **Goal** : The goal of the IISF 2020 is to help youth develop 21st century skills, with a focus on scientific knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. A long-term objective is to encourage students to study and work in scientific fields.

### PM Modi Presents ASSOCHAM Enterprise of the Century Award to Shri Ratan Tata

- Prime Minister, **Narendra Modi** addressed the '**ASSOCHAM Foundation Week 2020**' via video conferencing on **19th December 2020**.
- The theme of the programme : India's resilience: Atmanirbhar roadmap towards a \$5 trillion economy.
- Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM) Foundation Week was organised from 15 to 19 December 2020.
- And also Mr. Tata will also be honored with the **Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace** award by the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce on December 21.

### New electricity rules give consumers across India the right to 24x7 supply

- Government Notifies **New Electricity Rights of Consumers Rules, 2020** to give consumers the right to **24x7 supply**.
- Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power and New and Renewable Energy **R K Singh** on **21 December 2020** stated, Power distribution companies (discoms) across the country are monopolies whether government or private and the consumer has no alternative.
- These rules provide for **rights of consumers and obligations of distribution licensees**, release of new connection and modification in existing connection, metering arrangement, billing and payment.
- The distribution licensee shall supply 24x7 power to all consumers. However, the commission may specify lower hours of supply for some categories of consumers like agriculture.
- According to Union Power Secretary Sanjiv N Sahai, this relaxation has been allowed since pumps do need to be run 24x7 for supplying water to fields.

#### Union environment Minister releases Status of Leopards in India 2018 report

- The Union environment minister Shri Prakash Javadekar released a report of the **Status of Leopard in India 2018**.
- The population of leopards in India has **increased by 60 percent**, according to a report released by the government.
- As per report, India now has **12,852 leopards**.
- More than 60 per cent increase in population has been recorded over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014.
- To the States of **Madhya Pradesh (3,421)**, **Karnataka(1783)** and Maharashtra(1690) who have recorded the **highest leopard** estimates.

#### 8th North East Festival 2020 Held in Guwahati

- On Dec 19 to 20, 2020, The **8th North East Festival (NEF)** was held at **Radisson Blu Hotel in Guwahati, Assam**.
- This is the **first time** that Guwahati hosted this annual two day event.
- Due to COVID-19, this year the festival will be organized with minimum human presence and broadcasted on all over the globe through digital platforms.
- The Inaugural Session on Development Agenda for North East will be about highlighting the positive works done by the various Chief Ministers of the region in the presence of Union DoNER Minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh.
- This festival mainly focuses on the **Growth Agenda for North East Post COVID-19**.

#### Dharmendra Pradhan Dedicates Bengal's First Oil And Gas Reserve To Nation

- **Union Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister**, dedicated **West Bengal's first oil and gas reserve, Bengal Basin**, to the nation.
- He stated production from the petroleum reserve in Ashoknagar, about 47 km from Kolkata, has started with the extracted oil being sent to Haldia refinery of **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)**.
- The Bengal Basin is explored and owned by **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)**, and It is the **eight producing basin** of India by ONGC.
- ONGC Limited commenced the production of crude oil from the Asokenagar-1 well, Bengal Basin in 24 Paragana district of the state on 20 December 2020.
- The **first proven reserve of oil and gas** in the state was discovered in **2018**.

The other seven are :

- Krishna-Godavari (KG),
- Mumbai Offshore,
- Assam Shelf,
- Rajasthan,
- Cauvery,
- Assam-Arakan Fold Belt
- Cambay

#### Centre and WB sign USD 500 million project to build Green National Highway Corridors

- The **Centre and the World Bank** signed a **USD 500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh**.
- The project will also enhance the capacity of the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.

About the Project :

- The Green National Highways Corridors Project will support the Road Transport and Highways Ministry to construct 783 kilometres of highways in various geographies by integrating safe and green technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial byproducts and other bioengineering solutions.
- The project will help reduce GHG emissions in the construction and maintenance of highways.
- Dr C S Mohapatra, Additional Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance stated that this project will set new standards in the construction of safe motorable roads.
- The selected stretches in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh will also help improve connectivity and promote economic development.
- The Government of India has launched many investment programmes in road infrastructure to strengthen and improve logistics performance.

#### **Govt decides to constitute High Level Committee to commemorate 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**

- Government has decided to **constitute a High Level Committee to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.**
- The Committee will decide on the activities for a one year long commemoration starting **23rd January, 2021.**
- The High Level Committee will be **headed by Home Minister Amit Shah.**
- The Commemoration is being held as a tribute and as a mark of gratitude to the colossal contribution Netaji made to India's freedom struggle.
- And also this Committee will include the members of experts, historians, authors, family members of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as well as eminent persons associated with Azad Hind Fauj-INA.

#### **IMD releases End of the Season Report for Southwest Monsoon 2020**

- National Weather Forecasting Centre of the **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)**, has released the **End of the SeasonSouthwest Monsoon 2020 report.**

#### **Features :**

- The report noted that seasonal (June-September) rainfall over the country as a whole was 109% of its **Long Period Average (LPA)** in 2020. It was the third highest after 112% of LPA in 1994 and 110 % of LPA in 2019.
- **Southwest monsoon current** reached the south Andaman Sea and Nicobar Islands on 17th May 2020 (5 days ahead of its normal date), but further advance was sluggish. It set in over Kerala on 1st June coinciding with its normal date for onset over Kerala; Monsoon covered the entire country on 26th June 2020; 12 days before its normal date (8th July).
- Monsoon started withdrawing from western parts of northwest India on 28th September 2020 against the normal date of 17th September 2020 with a delay of around 11 days. The Southwest Monsoon withdrew from the entire country on 28th October 2020.
- During the season, one Severe Cyclonic Storm **NISARGA** formed during 1st to 4th June.
- This year also witnessed absence of monsoon depression during the season.

#### **Prime Minister to launch SEHAT, health insurance scheme for Jammu-Kashmir on Dec 26**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will launch the **PMJAY - SEHAT scheme** on December 26 for Jammu and Kashmir.
- The scheme will cover the remaining population which has not been covered under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.
- Under **Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)** eligible beneficiaries were covered under Health cover of **Rs 5 lakhs.**



- According to the Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, SEHAT scheme stands for **Social, Endeavour for Health and Telemedicine**, a health insurance scheme for the Union Territory.
- Under PMJAY scheme, 30 lakh people are being covered in J&K. With the launch of 'SEHAT' Scheme by the Prime Minister on December 26, J&K will be among the first in the country to achieve Universal Health Coverage.
- Programmes will be organized across the UT and the distribution of Golden cards will be started on the same day. Around 16 Lakh registrations have been done as on date and the registrations for the rest of the beneficiaries is underway.

#### **NITI Aayog launches india's first indigenous digital storage platform DigiBoxx**

- NITI Aayog's CEO Amitabh Kant has virtually launched **India's first digital asset management and storage platform DigiBoxx**.
- 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 platform provides an easy and secure way to store all the files in one centralised location.
- DigiBoxx has free 2GB storage space and the file shared stays for 45 days.

#### **Cabinet gives nod to merger of 4 Film Media Units with NFDC**

- The **Cabinet approved the merger of Films Division, Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Archives of India, and Children's Film Society, India with National Film Development Corporation**.
- The Cabinet also approved revision in guidelines for providing **DTH services** in India.
- Under the DTH licence will be issued for 20 years in place of present 10 years.
- Guidelines have been amended to allow **100 percent FDI** in DTH services.
- And also the Cabinet approved an ordinance for extending National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Act for another 3 years, giving protection to unauthorised colonies from punitive action in Delhi.
- The Cabinet also gave its nod for signing the revised Air Services Agreement between India and Philippines. It also gave its approval for signing the revised Air Services Agreement between India and Afghanistan.

#### **Ministry of Environment rolls out Firefly bird diverter initiative**

- The **Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** along with the **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)** India has come up with a unique initiative of a **firefly bird diverter** for overhead power lines in areas where **Great Indian Bustard (GIB)** populations are found in the wild.
- Firefly bird diverters are flaps installed on power lines. They work as reflectors for bird species like the GIB. Birds can spot them from a distance of about 50 meters and change their path of flight to avoid collision with power lines.

#### **PM Narendra Modi Releases Postal Stamp To Mark Centenary Celebrations Of AMU**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** released a special **postal stamp** to mark the **centenary celebrations** of the **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)**.
- This is the **first time** in five decades that a prime minister has attended an AMU event as the chief guest. Prime Minister Modi attended the event via video conferencing.
- Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** also Participated in the event.
- Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank recalled the achievements of the AMU over the century and contributions of its alumni.
- The last time a prime minister attended an event at AMU was Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1964.



- Before him, prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had visited the AMU four times.

#### PM Modi to release Rs. 18,000 crore under PM-Kisan scheme to more than 9 crore farmers

- Prime Minister **Modi** will release **Rs. 18,000 crore** for the next instalment of financial benefit under the **PM-Kisan scheme** to more than **9 crore farmers** through video conference.
- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will also be present during the programme.
- Under the PM-KISAN Scheme, a financial benefit of **Rs. 6,000 per year** is provided to small and marginal farmers, payable in three equal 4-monthly installments of Rs. 2,000 each.
- The fund is transferred directly to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

#### Cabinet approves post matric scholarship scheme for more than four crore SC students

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has also approved **Rs. 59,048 Crore** post matric scholarship scheme for more than **4 Crore Scheduled Castes** students in 5 years.
- Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot stated, the Central Government will spend Rs. 35,534 Crore for it which is 60 percent and the balance 40 per cent will be spent by the State Governments.
- It is estimated that 1.36 Crore such poorest students, who are currently not continuing their education beyond 10th standard would be brought into the higher education system in the next 5 years.

#### India's largest hockey stadium to be set up at 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 in Rourkela.
- The tournament will be organised both in the capital city Bhubaneswar and Rourkela in Sundargarh district.
- Once operational, the Rourkela city stadium would be the biggest hockey stadium in India.

#### Union Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot Launches Swachhata Abhiyan

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment **Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot** launched a Mobile Application **Swachhata Abhiyan** in the presence of Ministers of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Ram Das Athawale and Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar in **New Delhi**.
- It Provides the authorities concerned details of any insanitary latrine or manual scavenger.
- This would help in rehabilitating all manual scavengers and replace insanitary with sanitary ones.
- As per the 2011 census, insanitary latrines is the main reason for manual scavenging.

#### India's 1st tiger reserve hot air balloon safari launched in Madhya Pradesh

- **India's first hot air balloon wildlife safari** in a **tiger reserve** was launched in the world famous Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve by **Madhya Pradesh** forest minister **Vijay Shah**.
- The activity will be restricted to the buffer area and people can watch tigers, leopards, Indian sloth bears and other wild animals from a height.
- It is the **first in any tiger reserve in the country**.
- The service is being operated by **Jaipur-based Sky Waltz**.

#### MoRTH extends validity of vehicular documents till 31st March 2021

- **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has extended the validity of vehicular documents such as **driving licenses (DLs)**, **registration certificates (RCs)** and **Permits** till **31st of March 2021** in the light of need to prevent the spread of Covid-19 Pandemic.

- The Ministry had earlier issued advisories on 30th March, 9th June and 24th August this year regarding extension of validity of documents related to **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988** and **Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989**.
- It was advised that the validity of Fitness, Permit (all types), License, Registration or any other concerned documents may be treated to be valid till 31st of December this year.
- It is further advised that the validity of all of the above referred documents may be treated to be valid till 31st March 2021.
- This covers all documents whose validity has expired since 1st Feb, 2020 or would expire by 31st March 2021.

#### **Rajya Sabha MP RCP Singh unanimously elected as National President of JD (U)**

- Rajya Sabha MP **RCP Singh** was unanimously elected as the **national president of the Janata Dal**.
- This decision was taken at the **party's national executive meeting in Patna**.
- The 62-year-old leader from Bihar's Nalanda took over from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who was re-elected as the JD(U) president in 2019 for three years.
- Outgoing President Nitish Kumar proposed the name of RCP Singh and members of the Executive Committee supported the proposal. Mr. Singh was holding the post of General Secretary of the party.

#### **Home Minister Amit Shah to lay foundation stone for 7 major projects in Manipur**

- On December 27, 2020, **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** will lay the **foundation stone for seven major projects** while two other projects will be inaugurated.
- The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Dr. Jitendra Singh will also attend the function.
- The convention was organised by the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), which was formed to spearhead public movement against any outcome of the Indo-Naga peace talks that could potentially disintegrate Manipur.
- Shah will address a public gathering at Hapta Kangjeibung ground before inaugurating Thoubal multipurpose project worth Rs 1,998.99 crores and Bishnupur-Tupul-Thoubal-Kasom Khullen road worth Rs 475.68 crore.
- The seven major projects, including the Churachandpur Medical College estimated to cost Rs 325 crore, IIIT worth Rs 128 crore, IT SEZ worth Rs 950 crore, and State Government Guest House worth Rs 237.49 crore, among others.

#### **Jai Ram unveils Vajpayee's statue at Ridge**

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister **Jai Ram Thakur** unveiled an **18 feet statue** of former prime minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** at the historic Ridge Maidan here on his **96th birth anniversary**.
- The statue has been built at a cost of **Rs 1.08 crore**. The Ridge Maidan also houses statues of Mahatma Gandhi and former prime minister Indira Gandhi.
- **December 25** is also marked as **Good Governance Day**, which was established in 2014 to honour Vajpayee by fostering awareness on accountability in government among the people.

#### **PM Modi launches Ayushman Bharat PMJAY SEHAT scheme**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** launched the **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT scheme** via video-conferencing to extend health insurance coverage to all residents of **Jammu and Kashmir**.

#### **About the Scheme:**

- The scheme will ensure **universal health coverage**, and **focus on providing financial risk protection and ensuring quality and affordable essential health services** to all individuals and communities.

- Nearly **229 Government Hospitals and 35 private hospitals** have been listed under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- The scheme will provide free-of-cost insurance cover to all residents of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the PMO said, adding that it will extend financial cover of up to 5 lakh per family on a floater basis to all residents of the UT.
- After the health plan, all 21 lakh families will get the same benefit under the SEHAT Scheme.

#### PM Modi flags off 100th run of Kisan Rail in Maharashtra

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** flagged off the **100th run of Kisan Rail** in **Maharashtra** On December 28, 2020.
- The move is a big step toward **empowering farmers of the country**.
- The 100th run of the Kisan Rail was flagged off from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in **West Bengal** virtually.
- Union ministers Narendra Singh Tomar and Piyush Goyal were also present at the event.
- More than 80 per cent of the small and marginal farmers of the country have got great power through Kisan Rail, PM Modi stated.
- The first Kisan Rail train service of Indian Railways was launched on 7 August 2020, from Devlali to Danapur, which was further extended up to Muzaffarpur.
- Kisan Rail train service will carry and transport vegetables such as cauliflower, chillies, onion, cabbage, capsicum, drumsticks, as well as fruits such as bananas, grapes, pomegranate, custard apple, oranges, etc.

#### PM Modi flags off India's first driverless train on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** flagged off the country's **first ever fully-automated driverless train** service on the Magenta Line of the **Delhi Metro**.
- With the commencement of these new-generation trains, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation has entered the elite league of "seven per cent of world's Metro networks" which can operate services without drivers, according to DMRC.
- PM also launched a fully operational **National Common Mobility Card (NCMC)** on the Airport Express Line of Delhi Metro, to connect DMRC with the NCMC service.
- NCMC, dubbed as 'One Nation One Card', is an inter-operable transport card that allows the holders to also pay for their bus travel, toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping and even withdraw money.

#### Skyroot Aerospace successfully test fire solid-fueled rocket engine

- **Skyroot Aerospace**, a Hyderabad based start-up in the space sector, has successfully test-fired a solid propulsion rocket engine named **Kalam-5**.
- It is the country's **first private sector company** to successfully test-fire a solid propulsion rocket stage engine.
- The company's first launch vehicle 'Vikram-I' is under active manufacturing and targeting launch in Dec 2021 with the help of ISRO.
- Kalam is a series of five solid-fueled rocket engines with a thrust ranging from 5kN to 1000kN (approx 100Tons).
- The remaining four motors are in various stages of manufacturing and will be tested in 2021.

#### Home Secretary and Secretary DoPT, A K Bhalla releases progress report of e-HRMS

- Home Secretary and Secretary DoPT, **A K Bhalla** released the progress report of **e-HRMS (Electronic-Human Resource Management System)**.

#### About e-HRMS:

- e-HRMS was launched by Minister for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions **Dr Jitendra Singh** on **25th December, 2017**.

- It had 25 applications of 5 modules of the system.
- It is a Standard ICT Solution for the Government Sector, addressing maximum requirements of State Government personnel Management.

#### Indian Institute of Skill invites applications for its first batch

- The first batch of training at the **Tata-Indian Institute of Skills, Mumbai** was launched to provide an **impetus to Skill India programme through private sector participation**.
- The institute is a joint initiative between the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**, Government of **India** and **Tata-Indian Institute of Skills (Tata-IIS)**.
- A formal agreement for setting up the institute has been signed between MSDE and Tata-IIS on November 11, 2020.
- The institute will also offer scholarships to the first 100 students along with attractive fee options during this initial launch phase.

#### Amit Shah lays foundation stone of medical college, law colleges in Assam

- Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** laid the foundation stone of a **medical college and nine law institutes**, besides launching two other projects in **Assam**.
- The Union home minister laid the foundation stone of Guwahati's second medical college and hospital which will be set up by amalgamating the Mahendra Mohan Choudhury Hospital and the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Chest Hospital at an estimated amount of **Rs 755 crore**.

The Nine law colleges to be set up at

- Diphu,
- Silchar,
- Dhubri,
- Dibrugarh,
- North Lakhimpur,
- Jorhat,
- Nalbari,
- Rangia and Raha.
- Under Asom Darshan " scheme the Union Minister distributed financial grants to 8000 Namghars (Traditional Vaisnave monasteries of Assam ).

#### Centre sets up panel to work out common entrance test for UG Admission

- The **UGC set up a seven-member committee** , headed by Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Punjab R P Tiwari, to consider the issue holding common entrance tests at undergraduate level only from the next academic year in central universities to provide a single platform for admission.
- This is the first attempt, after the introduction of the **new National Education Policy**,
- The new NEP, released in July this year, advocates reducing the number of entrance tests to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams
- The National Testing Agency will be tasked to conduct a common aptitude test as well as specialised common exams for different disciplines at least twice a year.

#### Union Health Minister Launched India's first indigenous pneumonia vaccine, developed by SII

- On 28th December 2020, **Harsh Vardhan**, Union health minister, launched **Pneumosil, India's first Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV)**.

- The Pneumosil' has been developed by Serum Institute of India in collaboration with the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**.
- Pneumosil has been extensively evaluated in **5 randomized** controlled clinical trials and has demonstrated comparable safety and immunogenicity
- Pneumosil was found to be safe and effective in preventing Pneumonia disease during the clinical trials and it is available at an affordable price in single dose and Multidose.

#### **President Ram Nath Kovind to be on a four days visit to Diu**

- President **Ram Nath Kovind** will be on a four days visit to **Diu** in the **UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu** starting from **December 25 to 28, 2020** .
- In this Visit, He will inaugurate the **Jalandhar Circuit House in Diu**.
- The President will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for various developmental projects in Diu such as inauguration of first academic session of **IIIT Vadodara-International Campus Diu**, improvement of **1.3 kilometre** heritage walk-way on **Diu City Wall** and upgradation of fruits and vegetable market at **Fort Road**.
- Mr Kovind will also inaugurate the **INS Khukhri Memorial**.

#### **Indian Railways launches HMIS for UMID**

- The **Indian Railways** has launched the recently **integrated Hospital Management Information System (HMIS)** and a mobile application for downloading **Unique Medical Identity Card (UMID)**.
- The HMIS project has accordingly been launched with four modules in **five units at Central Hospital**, Lallaguda and health units located at **Chilkaiguda, Moulali, Kacheguda and Nampally** and **2 units at Northern Railways**.
- The HMIS in Railways has been developed by **Indian Railways in coordination with RailTel Corporation Limited**.
- The objective of the HMIS is to provide a single window of clearance of hospital administration activity such as clinical, diagnostics, pharmacy, examinations and industrial health.
- A mobile application has also been launched for downloading UMID cards through mobile phone for enhancing the integration of UMID with HMIS and also to facilitate the railway employees for conveniently using UMID cards while accessing their health care services.

#### **PM Modi dedicates to nation section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor in UP**

- On December 29, 2020, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** dedicated to the nation the ambitious **New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor in Uttar Pradesh** through video conference.
- Governor of Uttar Pradesh **Anandiben Patel** also attended the function through video conferencing.
- The **351-kilometre** New Bhaupur- New Khurja section of EDFC is built at a cost of **Rs. 5,750 crore** and most of its part passes through Uttar Pradesh.
- The section will decongest the existing Kanpur-Delhi main line and will enable Indian Railways to run faster trains.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor's Operation Control Centre at Prayagraj.
- This will act as the command centre for the entire route length of the EDFC.

#### **Dr Harsh Vardhan issue a report – Action Agenda**

- Science and Technology Minister **Dr Harsh Vardhan** releases report - **Action Agenda** for an **Atma Nirbhar Bharat** prepared by **Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council, TIFAC in New Delhi**.
- **TIFAC's White Paper** on Focused Interventions for **Make in India: post COVID -19** which was released earlier in July this year.

- The Minister said, a roadmap should be drawn for implementing the key suggestions in the report by **15th August, 2022** when India turns **75 years old**.

#### **National commission for welfare of scheduled caste students: Thawarchand Gehlot**

- **Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawarchand Gehlot** announced, the Central government is committed for the **welfare of scheduled caste students** as it has made a historic change in the **scholarship available to students of this community pursuing higher education**.
- He explains about the commission in a meeting which is held in **Newdelhi**, the government has approved **Rs. 59,048 Crore** post matric **scholarship scheme** for **over four crore SC students** for the **next five years**.
- Mr. Gehlot said, **Central Government** will spend **60 per cent** of the scholarship amount and remaining **40 per cent** will be spent by the **State governments**.
- Mr Gehlot said, it is estimated that **1.36 Crore SC students**, who are currently not continuing their education beyond **10th standards** would be **brought into the higher education system** through this initiative.
- The Minister said the money will be released through **DBT(Direct Benefit Transfer) mode into the bank accounts** of the students.
- Mr. Gehlot added that the list with the **account number** of the students will be sought from the state governments.

#### **Make sure all last mile connectivity in DFC- Shri Piyush Goyal**

- **Union Minister for Railways and Commerce & Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal** reviews the progress of upcoming DFC.
- It may be noted that **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** is going to inaugurate the **351 km long 'New Bhaupur- New Khurja section'** of **Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC)** in Uttar Pradesh.
- During the event, Prime Minister will also **inaugurate EDFC's Operation Control Centre (OCC)** at Prayagraj as well.
- **Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India** is constructing the **Western DFC, 1504 Route kilometer** and **Eastern DFC, 1856 route kilometer** including **Sonnagar-Dankuni PPP Section**.

#### **Uttarakhand: India's first pollinator park comes up at Haldwani**

- The country's **first pollinator park** with over **40 species** of butterflies, honey bees, birds and insects has been developed over four acres at **Nainital's Haldwani**.
- Developed by the research wing of the **Uttarakhand Forest Department**, the colourful park was inaugurated by renowned butterfly expert Peter Smetacek.
- **Objective of the Park** : The objective behind developing the park is to conserve various pollinator species, create awareness among people in general about the importance of conservation of these species and to promote further research on various aspects of pollination, including threat to habitat and impact of pollution on pollinators.
- There are at present 40 species of pollinators at the park.

#### **Union Cabinet approves export of Akash missile system**

- The **Union Cabinet** chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has approved the proposal to export indigenously-developed **Akash Missile System**.
- Akash is the country's important missile with over **96 percent** indigenisation. Akash is a Surface to Air Missile with a range of 25 Kms.
- The export version of Akash will be different from System currently deployed with Indian Armed Forces
- The missile was inducted in **2014 in IAF** and in **2015 in Indian Army**.

#### **Indian Railways Completes 180 Kmph Speed Trail Run**



- **Indian Railways** successfully completed a speed trial for **180 km per hour** of a new design vistadome tourist coach.
- According to the Railway Ministry, the new vistadome tourist coach has been manufactured by the **Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai**.
- These vistadome coaches mostly operate in mountain railways and are specially designed to make train journeys scenic and memorable.
- The coaches also give a boost to tourism.
- The European-style coaches are made with see-through glass rooftops and wide windows for the indulgent sightseeing experience.
- These vistadome tourist coaches boast of large windows on the sides and have glass panels on the roof of the trains.
- These coaches are being operated on selected routes on the Indian Railways network including the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Kangra Valley Railway, Kashmir Valley, Kalka-Shimla Railway, Matheran Hill Railway between Dadar in Mumbai as well as Madgaon in the Araku Valley.

#### PM to lay foundation stone of Light House Projects at six sites

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will lay the foundation stone of Light House Projects under the **Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India)** at six sites across six states on January 1 in video conference.
- The Prime Minister will also announce winners under **Affordable Sustainable Housing Accelerators (ASHA)**- India and give out annual awards for excellence in implementation of Pradhan **Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) Mission**.
- During the event, he will release a certificate course on innovative construction technologies named '**NAVARITI**' (**New, Affordable, Validated, Research Innovation Technologies for Indian Housing**) and a compendium of 54 innovative housing construction technologies identified through GHTC-India, the Prime Minister's Office said.
- The LHPs are being constructed at **Indore** (Madhya Pradesh), **Rajkot** (Gujarat), **Chennai** (Tamil Nadu), **Ranchi** (Jharkhand), **Agartala** (Tripura) and **Lucknow** (Uttar Pradesh).
- They comprise about **1,000 houses** at each location along with allied infrastructure facilities.

#### PM Modi chaired the 34th PRAGATI interaction

- Modi chaired the meeting to review the **various projects, programmes & grievances**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the **34th PRAGATI** interaction.
- Projects of the **Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** were discussed.
- These projects, with a total cost of about one lakh crore rupees, pertained to ten states and Union Territories including, **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli**.
- During the interaction, the programmes, **Ayushman Bharat** and **Jal Jeevan Mission** were reviewed.
- Grievances related to the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs** were also taken up.
- The Prime Minister directed all the officials to ensure and expedite comprehensive resolution of grievances.

#### Prime minister remembers Netaji's 75 th anniversary

- "To mark the **75th anniversary** of **Netaji Subash Chandra Bose**, he had gone to Port Blair and had the **honour of hoisting the Tricolour**,"

- The Prime Minister said, **30th December 1943**, a day etched in the memory of every Indian, when the brave Netaji Subhas Bose hoisted the Tricolour at Port Blair.
- Born to advocate **Janakinath Bose** in **Odisha's Cuttack** on January 23, 1897, Netaji went on to play a key role in the freedom movement.
- He is also known for establishing the Azad Hind Fauj.

#### **Centre has achieved remarkable achievement: Power Minister R K Singh**

- The renewable energy minister was speaking at the Chief Ministers' **Plenary session of the virtual 3rd Global RE-INVEST Summit**.
- Power Minister **R K Singh** said that Centre has achieved remarkable achievement in terms of expanding access to electricity in the country.
- India will have around **60 per cent** of its installed electricity generation capacity from clean and green sources by 2030.
- Union Power Minister and Minister of New & Renewable Energy, R K Singh said that the centre is committed to promote new and renewable energy resources in the country.
- He added that the centre has asked every state government to earmark at least one city within their territory as **green city**.
- Mr. Singh asserted that the government is working with a focused approach towards clean and green energy with emphasis on areas which require special attention.

#### **Highlighting the achievements :**

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** said Gujarat has been a pioneer in the space of renewable energy (RE) and in the last 3 years, the capacity of RE has increased considerably despite challenges.
- "Gujarat has given subsidies to **55,000 people** to install solar panels and have a vision of achieving 5,000 MW solar and bringing solar energy in agriculture," he said.
- **Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot** said Rajasthan is the second largest state in terms of investments in solar energy projects.
- "When we started **20 years ago**, cost of RE was **Rs 16** and now it is **Rs 2 per unit**.
- This is sure to reduce further. It is our duty to work towards renewable energy and climate change," Gehlot added.
- He further said incentives have been extended to the investors in terms of reduction in **stamp duty**, easy availability of land, free electricity for 10 years, **90 per cent subsidy in GST** etc.
- Gehlot also said Rajasthan has 1,25,000 acres of desert land across cities which have been utilised in Jodhpur and Bikaner for large mega scale solar projects.
- **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** said India is an ideal country for renewable energy.
- "With Madhya Pradesh being a centrally located state, it has a lot of possibilities and can supply RE power to neighbouring states if needed," he added. Madhya Pradesh is planning a **15,000 MW solar project**, the cost of which is **Rs 5,000 crore**, he said. Besides starting work on power transmission, the state has also started survey work for some other innovative RE projects, like floating solar etc. in the state.
- He announced that "Aatmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh' plan is being developed and RE will play an important role".
- **Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur** said "Himachal Pradesh is a small state, but we are making all efforts to harness our RE potential.

- Our target is to achieve **24,000 MW of RE**. So far, we produce **10,000 MW** of hydro power and plan to double these numbers in the next decade".
- **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath** informed the session that producers have plans to set up 12,000 MW of solar energy parks in UP. Two plants of 600 MW each will be set up in Jhansi. These will be commissioned soon, he added.
- Talking about the multi-pronged benefits of the **PM-KUSUM Yojana**, launched by the **Union government in 2019**, Mr. Singh said that the scheme has financially empowered the farmers, discoms and has also benefitted the state and union territories in terms of huge financial savings.

#### **Cabinet approves MoU between India and Bhutan**

- Cabinet approves MoU between **India and Bhutan** on **Cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space**.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of India and the Royal Government of Bhutan on Cooperation in the peaceful users of outer space signed on November 19, 2020 by both sides at Bangalore/Thimpu and exchanged.
- This MoU shall enable India and Bhutan to pursue cooperation in potential interest areas, such as remote sensing of the earth.
- Satellite communication and satellite based navigation.
- Space science and planetary exploration; use of spacecraft and space systems and ground systems; and application of space technology.

#### **DoS Signed 1st of its kind NDA with Agnikul Cosmos for Launch Vehicle Development Programme**

- Department of Space (DoS) has signed first one of its kind Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Agnikul Cosmos Pvt. Ltd under which the latter can access the facilities and technical expertise of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for its launch vehicle development programme.

#### **FM Nirmala Sitharaman released 'Smuggling in India Report 2019-20' during 63rd Founding Day of DRI**

- The 63rd Founding Day of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) was observed virtually which was attended by Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) and Ministry of Finance.
- During the occasion Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled "Smuggling in India Report 2019-20" which analysed smuggling trends on Gold & Foreign Currency, Narcotic Drugs, Security, Environment, Commercial Frauds.
- Bravery Awards were conferred upon Najimudheen T S of DRI Cochin Zonal Unit and Sumer Sen, an independent witness of a case booked by DRI, Jaipur. The DRI Utkrisht Seva Samman, 2020 was awarded to B. Sankaran.

#### **India Pledges USD 1 Million to WADA's Scientific Research Budget towards doping free sport**

- India pledged to contribute USD 1 Million (Approximately INR 7.35 Crores) to the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) Scientific Research Budget.
- The amount will be India's contribution to WADA's initiative of raising a corpus of USD 10 Million. This will contribute greatly towards WADA's mission for doping-free sport.
- The contribution will be used for the development of innovative anti-doping testing and detection methods.

#### **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launches Economic Diplomacy website**

- Minister of External Affairs (MEA) S. Jaishankar launched an economic diplomacy website to highlight India's economic, sectoral and state wise strength.
- This website paves way for the Global business community to utilise India's ease of doing business initiatives and enhance trade with India.

- Website will provide multidimensional global business thereby creating a dynamic “Brand India”.

#### **Vice President virtually releases Postage Stamp in honour of late Prime Minister of India, I K Gujral**

- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu virtually released a commemorative Postage Stamp in honour of the Late Prime Minister of India & Freedom Fighter, I K Gujral (Inder Kumar Gujral). I K Gujral was the 12th Prime Minister of India, he served as the Prime Minister from April 1997-March 1998. He was born in Jhelum, Punjab (now in Pakistan) in 1919.

#### **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman delivers Keynote address at the Inauguration of 20<sup>th</sup> Edition of SLES 2020**

- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman delivered the Keynote Address virtually at the inauguration of the 20th Edition of Sri Lanka Economic Summit (SLES) 2020.
- It was organized by the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC). President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session. The Theme for SLES 2020 is ‘Roadmap for Take-off: Driving a People-Centric Economic Revival’.

#### **Central Zoo Authority grants recognition to New Zoos at Bihar & Uttar Pradesh**

- 37th General Body meeting of Central Zoo Authority (CZA) chaired by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Prakash Javadekar granted recognition to 2 New Zoos – Rajgir Zoo Safari in Nalanda, Bihar & Shaheed Ashfaq Ullah Khan Prani Udyaan in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- Prakash Javadekar stated that an Investors Summit will be held in 2021 to raise funds and take forward the Modernization agenda.

#### **NHPC to commission 2, 000 MW Hydropower project on Subansiri River by March 2022**

- NHPC stated that the 2, 000-Megawatt (MW) Hydropower Project on Subansiri River would be commissioned by March 2022. The project is located near North Lakhimpur on the border of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- The project was delayed due to protests by many groups in Assam.

#### **A.K. Singh CMD of NHPC, lays foundation stone of head regulator works for Indo-Nepal Link Canal**

- The Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of NHPC limited, A.K. Singh, has laid foundation stone of head regulator works of Indo-Nepal Link Canal at Barrage of 94.2 MW Tanakpur Power Station of NHPC at Uttarakhand. This project is constructed under the “Mahakali Treaty” signed between India and Nepal. The Indo-Nepal Link Canal is 1.2 Km long Canal.

#### **Government launches Viability Gap Funding (VGF) Scheme to boost India’s Infrastructure**

- Finance Ministry notified the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) scheme to provide financial support to Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in selected Infrastructure projects.
- The selection of Private companies will be done through transparent, open and competitive bidding process.

#### **Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates 3 lane 1.5 Km long Koilwar bridge over Sone river in Bihar**

- Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the Rs.266 crore 3 lane 1.5km long Koilwar Bridge over Sone river in Bihar through video conferencing. Construction of the 6 lane Bridge to connect Bihar and Uttar Pradesh through road.
- Other Initiatives:
  - i. 7-km four lane Koshi bridge worth Rs 1478 crore planned to get completed by 2023.
  - ii. 4 km long Rs 1110 crore, Vikramshila bridge to be completed by 2024.
  - iii. Other 2 lane bridge over Ganga river in Patna by 2021.

#### **India’s 1st Maritime Theatre Command to get its final shape in 2021**

- India's 1st Maritime Theatre Command (MTC) will get its final shape in 2021 and its headquarters will be set up at Karwar Naval Base, Karnataka. It will be the first new "Geographical" Theatre command to be created as part of military restructuring plans.

#### **RK Singh Launches India's 1st CoE for Skill Development in Power Sector at NISE, Haryana**

- Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), RK Singh virtually launched India's 1st Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Skill Development in Power Sector at the campus of National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Gurugram, Haryana.

#### **GOI sets up HLC to Commemorate 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**

- The Government has decided to constitute a High-Level Committee (HLC), to be headed by Union Minister Amit Shah, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), for commemoration of 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Netaji was born on January 23, 1897 at Cuttack, Bengal Presidency, British India (present-day Odisha, India).
- A permanent exhibition and a 'Light and Sound show' on Netaji has been planned to be set up at Kolkata at the historic Victoria Memorial building.

#### **International Gita Mahotsav 2020 begins in Haryana's Kurukshetra**

- The International Gita Mahotsav 2020 (17 to 25 December) commenced in Kurukshetra, Haryana.
- The highlight of the day is when 55,000 school students will collectively recite 19 verses from the Bhagavad Gita on the concluding day.
- The international festival is held every year, where about 9,000 students will be from Kurukshetra and the remain will be from the rest of 21 districts in the state.

#### **Arjun Munda launches 'Aadi Mahotsav'**

- The **10-day-long 'Aadi Mahotsav'**, a festival of tribes will be launched by **Union Minister** for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda in a virtual format. Due to COVID 19 the TRIFED has decided to organise its annual event Aadi Mahotsav-2020 in an online mode.

#### **Guests of honour for this online inauguration**

- Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Renuka Singh
- Minister for Tribal Development, Madhya Pradesh Meena Singh
- TRIFED chairman Ramesh Chand Meena

#### **Power Minister RK Singh Launches 'Green Charcoal Hackathon'**

- Minister of State (MoS) (Independent Charge) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Raj Kumar Singh virtually launched 'Green Charcoal Hackathon' to deliberate on technology to convert Farm Residue into Green Charcoal. The hackathon has been organised by Energy Efficiency Service Limited (EESL) & NVVN (NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation Limited) Vidyut Vyapar Nigam). The Hackathon has been launched to reduce India's Carbon footprint.

#### **Ministry of Home Affairs approves Rs. 90.6 Crore to Land Ports Authority of India for new ICP in Tripura**

- Ministry of Home Affairs approved Rs.90.6 crores to the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) for construction of a new Integrated Check Post (ICP) along the India- Bangladesh border at Sabroom in South Tripura.
- This will be the 6th multi-facilitated ICP in the India- Bangladesh Border.

Portfolio	Union Minister	Constituency
Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions	Narendra Modi	Varanasi
Ministry of Defence	Rajnath Singh	Lucknow
Ministry of Home Affairs	Amit Shah	Gandhinagar
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways & Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises	Nitin Gadkari	Nagpur
Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers	DV Sadananda Gowda	Bangalore North
Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs	Nirmala Sitharaman	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution	Piyush Goyal (Additional charge)	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, Ministry of Rural Development & Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Narendra Singh Tomar	Morena
Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of communications & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Ravi Shankar Prasad	Patna Sahib
Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Narendra Singh Tomar (Additional charge)	Morena
Ministry of Social justice and empowerment	Thaawar Chand Gehlot	RS
Ministry of External Affairs	Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar	RS (Gujarat)
Ministry of Human Resource Development	Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Haridwar
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Arjun Munda	Khunti
Ministry of Women and child Development & Ministry of Textiles	Smriti Zubin Irani	Amethi
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology & Ministry of Earth Sciences	Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk
Ministry of environment, forest and climate change & Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise	Prakash Javadekar	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Railways & Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Piyush Goyal	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Ministry of Steel	Dharmendra Pradhan	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Minority Affairs	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of coal & Ministry of Mines		Dharwad
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Chandauli
Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying and fisheries	Giriraj Singh	Begusarai

### Important International News

#### US President-elects Treasury Secretary & Director of Office Management & Budget

- Us President Elect Joe Biden names **Jenett Yellen** as **Treasury Secretary** (If confirmed by the Senate, she will be the first woman ever to hold the post ). **Neera Tanden** as Director of Office of Management & Budget



- Mr Biden also named **Wally Adeyemo**, a former Obama administration official and the first CEO of the former president's nonprofit foundation, as his nominee for deputy treasury secretary.

#### Moderna to Seek US EU vaccine authorisation

- **Moderna Inc** stated it will apply for **U.S. and European emergency authorization** of its COVID-19 vaccine based on full results from a late-stage study showing its vaccine was 94.1% effective with no serious safety concerns.
- Of the 196 volunteers who contracted COVID-19 in the more than 30,000-person trial, 185 had received a placebo versus 11 who got the vaccine. The company reported 30 severe cases - all in the placebo group - which means the vaccine was 100% effective at preventing severe cases. The trial included one COVID-19-related death in the placebo group.
- Moderna stated it was on track to have about **20 million doses** of its vaccine ready to ship in the United States by the end of 2020, enough to inoculate 10 million people.

#### Jet Airways may fly in the sky again from summer of 2021: Report

- According to the report, Murari Lal Jalan, the businessman who led the winning consortium for Jet, plans to hold more than **51 per cent stake** in the airline. Around 14 per cent will be held by London-based financial advisory firm **Kalrock Capital** while lenders will keep close to 10 per cent in the Naresh Goyal-promoted airline. The new owners are stated to pump in more money after the regulatory clearance. The consortium has proposed to invest around Rs 1,000 crore.
- The resolution plan proposed by Kalrock Capital and Jalan, which was approved by the lenders of Jet Airways in October, is currently awaiting approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
- Jet Airways saw its losses widening to Rs 5,535.75 crore in the year ended March 2019, mainly due to surge in expenses, as against a loss of Rs 766.13 crore in 2017-18. These figures are for standalone comprehensive losses.

#### First Country To Approve sale of Lab Grown Meat

- **Singapore** Becomes **First Country** In World To Give **Approval For Sale Of Lab-created Meat**.
- The first-in-the-world regulatory allowance of real, high-quality meat created directly from animal cells for safe human consumption paves the way for a forthcoming small-scale commercial launch in Singapore.

#### US imposes sanctions on Chinese firm over Venezuela internet curbs

- **The United States** has imposed sanctions on **Chinese firm China National Electronics Import & Export Corporation (CEIEC)**, accusing it of supporting President Nicolas Maduro's efforts to undermine democracy in Venezuela.
- While slamming China, US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo has stated that CEIEC provides cyber support and technical experts to state-run telecommunications providers which frequently blocks online independent newspapers and speeches by opposition members.
- The US Department of Treasury has stated that CEIEC has been supporting the Maduro regime's malicious cyber efforts since 2017 and providing technical expertise to Venezuelan government entities, against the people of the country.

#### Non-resident Indians (NRIs) may soon get to vote remotely with e-ballots

- Election Commission, in a proposal sent to the law ministry, has suggested that **NRIs** be allowed to vote through **electronically-transmitted postal ballot system (ETPBS)**, a facility already extended to service voters that include members of the Armed forces and para-military forces and government employees serving abroad.

#### India, US hold talks on counternarcotics, agree to boost collaboration on regulation

- The two countries agreed to enhance their **data sharing operations** to combat the production, distribution and export/import of drugs and precursor chemicals.
- During the inaugural meeting of **the Counternarcotics Working Group (CNWG)**, held virtually on November 24, the two countries also agreed to enhance their data sharing operations to combat the production, distribution, diversion, and export/import of drugs and precursor chemicals.
- The Indian delegation was led by **Sachin Jain**, Deputy Director General, Narcotics Control Board, Ministry of Home Affairs, while the US side was headed by White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Assistant Director Kemp Chester.

#### World Leaders To address High Level, Special Session of UN General Assembly on Covid 19

- The Special Session of the **United Nations General Assembly** in Response to the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) Pandemic will take place on December 3 and 4 at the **UN Headquarters**.
- The session's first day will feature statements by the President of the General Assembly **Volkan Bozkir**, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, President of the Security Council for the month of December South African Ambassador Jerry Matthews Matjila and Chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev. The General Assembly will then hear from world leaders.
- The second day will feature speeches from WHO Director-General **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** and other UN and intergovernmental agencies.

#### The 7th India-Suriname Joint Commission Meeting held virtually

- The JCM was co-chaired by the Minister of state for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname, Albert R. Ramdin,
- The discussions were held in an atmosphere of warmth against the backdrop of friendly India - Suriname relations
- It was agreed that the next JCM Meeting would be held in 2022 in Paramaribo

#### India Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre – Annual Conference

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare to chaired the inaugural session of the annual conference of the India Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre – 'health talks,' under Sweden India Nobel memorial week.
- India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre announces 14 winning healthtech solutions

#### Bangladesh Signs Preferential Trade agreement with Bhutan

- Bangladesh signed its maiden preferential trade agreement (PTA) with Bhutan to boost bilateral trade between the two countries.
- Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi and Bhutanese Economic Affairs Minister Lyonpo Loknath Sharma signed the agreement on behalf of their respective sides.
- This is the first such agreement Bangladesh has signed with any country since independence in 1971.
- The signing was held on December 6 to make the day memorable as on this day in 1971, Bhutan became the first country in the world to recognize Bangladesh's independence. And then Besides, the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Bhutan will also be celebrated on this day.
- In this PTA 100 Bangladeshi products will get duty-free access to Bhutan. Meanwhile, 34 Bhutanese products that will get duty-free access to the Bangladeshi market.

### 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 on Dec 7.
- 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.

### The Second Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) 2020 Conference Inaugurated In New Delhi

- The Minister of Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan held the second TCGA-Cancer Genome Atlas 2020 conference in New Delhi.
- The conference brought together scientists and clinicians from all over the world to jointly establish the Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA).

### About ICGA

- It aims to create an indigenous, open-source and comprehensive database to collect molecular profiles of all prevalent cancers in the Indian population. A variety of molecular mechanisms, including genetic and lifestyle factors, cause cancer, posing major challenges to treatment. Therefore, it is necessary to better understand the underlying factors of the patient.

### Mount Everest is 8,848.86 metres tall, says Nepal and China after remeasurement

- The world's highest peak is now taller by 86 centimetres, Nepal and China jointly announced after they remeasured Mt. Everest at 8,848.86 metres, over six decades after India conducted the previous measurement in 1954.
- The new height is 86 cms more than the previous measurement. According to the measurement done in 1954 by Survey of India, the height of Mount Everest is 8,848 metres.
- In 1955, the height of Mount Everest was measured at 8848 m (29,028 feet) by the Survey of India.

### UK become first country to roll out Covid 19 Vaccine

- The United Kingdom will become the first country to roll out the Covid-19 vaccine. As per the government, the shots will be initially available at hospitals before distributing stocks to doctors' clinics.
- Britain gave emergency use approval for the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech.
- The National Health Service is giving top priority to vaccinating those above 80 years, frontline healthcare workers and care home staff and residents.
- Britain has ordered 4 crore doses of COVID Vaccine.

### WEF 2021 to be held in Singapore instead of Switzerland

- The **World Economic Forum** will hold its 2021 annual meeting in **Singapore** instead of its traditional home of Switzerland, which is battling a rising number of coronavirus infections.
- The meeting is generally held in Davos, Switzerland, but amid covid, the meeting was first shifted to Lucerne-Burgenstock, Switzerland in October 2020. Now again the venue has been shifted to Singapore.
- The event is expected to **return to Davos in 2022**.

### Joe Biden & Kamala Harris jointly named Time magazine's Person of the Year

- U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were jointly named Time magazine's 2020.
- The US president was named as Person of the Year in 2016 by Time.
- Trump, the 45th U.S. president and Time's 2016 Person of the Year

- Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg last year became the youngest individual winner of the accolade.
- Along with its Person of the Year honor, Time magazine named the Korean pop group BTS as its Entertainer of the Year, and basketball star LeBron James was crowned Athlete of the Year.

#### UNESCO to launch 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.
- **Purpose** : 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.
- UNESCO has declared 2021 as '**International Year of Creative Economy** for Sustainable Development'.
- Currently, there are 23 UNESCO International Awards in the name of international celebrities and organisations.

#### UNESCO launches 2020 State of the Education Report for India

- The State of the Education Report for India 2020: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), was launched virtually by UNESCO New Delhi.
- 400 attendees, including representatives from the government, civil society, academia, partners and youth.
- It is the second edition of the State of Education Report focuses on technical and vocational education and training (TVET).
- India has made considerable progress towards its goal of creating a skilled workforce of 110 million people by 2022, as stated in the National Policy of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (NPSDE), released in 2015. It is presently training 10 million youth annually through the many schemes that are ongoing.
- It was Developed by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

#### Singapore's Foodie 'Hawker' Culture Given UNESCO Recognition

- **Singapore's** tradition of communal dining at hawker centres, has been recognised by **UNESCO** for its **cultural significance**.
- The **United Nations'** cultural agency announced it had added the city-state's **hawker culture** to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- Singapore's hawker centres were set up to house former street vendors, or "hawkers" in an effort to clean up the island in the 1970.
- Singapore must submit a report every six years to UNESCO, showing the efforts made to safeguarding and promoting its hawker culture.

#### UNICEF launches the COVID-19 vaccine market dashboard

- On December 21, The **Unicef** announced the launch of a **Covid-19 vaccine market dashboard**.
- It is an interactive tool to follow the developments of the rapidly evolving coronavirus vaccine market and the efforts of the COVAX Facility to ensure fair and equitable access for every country in the world.

#### About Dashboard:

- The dashboard provides a regularly updated overview of the global research and development pipeline, the projected production capacity, publicly announced bilateral and multilateral supply agreements.
- In 2021, the dashboard will provide an update on the status of procurement by the Unicef and other buyers participating in the COVAX Facility.

- It will also track the status of deliveries by the Unicef and other participating national and institutional buyers.

#### Jaishankar holds virtual meet with Spanish counterpart Arancha Gonzalez Laya

- On December 23, External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** and his Spanish counterpart **Arancha Gonzalez Laya** held a virtual meeting, during which they agreed to maintain the momentum of cooperation in a range of areas like defence and energy.
- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated the ministers also deliberated on relations between India and the European Union and agreed to work closely in the context of the forthcoming India-EU summit, proposed to be held in Portugal in May next year.

#### US financial body to invest USD 54 mn in India to support critical infrastructure projects

- The **US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** has announced to invest **USD 54 million** in India to support the development of critical infrastructure projects in the country in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The DFC will invest USD 54 million in equity for the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) in India to support the development of critical infrastructure projects.

#### Myanmar Navy formally commissions INS Sindhuvir submarine, handed over by Indian Navy

- The **Myanmar Navy** has officially commissioned the submarine **INS Sindhuvir**, which was handed over by the Indian Navy to the country in October 2020.
- INS Sindhuvir was commissioned as UMS Minye Theinkhathu and inducted on the **73rd anniversary of the Myanmar Navy**.
- During the commissioning ceremony, Indian ambassador to Myanmar Saurabh Kumar was also present along with top brass of Myanmar's Navy.
- The kilo class submarine has a displacement of 3000 tonnes, a diving depth of 300 meters and top speed at 20 knots.
- This was the first time India has given a submarine to another country.
- The submarine has been refurbished for the Myanmar Navy by state-run defense shipbuilder, **Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)** in Visakhapatnam.

#### India to replace UK as fifth-biggest economy in 2025

- The **Centre for Economics and Business Research** stated **Indian economy** will again overtake the **UK to become the fifth largest economy in 2025** and race to the third spot by 2030.
- India had overtaken the UK in 2019 to become the fifth largest economy in the world but has been relegated to 6th spot this year.
- The Research organisation forecasts that the Indian economy will expand by 9 percent in 2021, and another 7 percent in 2022.
- As per the report, **China** will become the **World's Biggest Economy in 2028** meanwhile, Japan will remain on 3rd spot till 2030s.

#### US plans to set up nuclear reactor on moon

- US's plan to have the **first nuclear reactor** on the **moon by the end of 2026**.
- The US Department of Energy in collaboration with Nasa intends to solicit industry design proposals in early 2021 got an impetus with a recent White House directive.
- On December 16, outgoing President Donald Trump, issued the National Strategy for Space Nuclear Power and Propulsion.

- President Trump issued **Space Policy Directive-6 (SPD-6)**, the Nation's Strategy for Space Nuclear Power and Propulsion (SNPP), which aims at increasing US presence on the surface of the moon and Mars too.

#### Indian & Vietnamese Navy conclude two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX in South China Sea

- **Indian and Vietnamese Navy** concluded the **two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX** in the **South China Sea** from **December 26 & 27, 2020**.
- This two-day exercise was conducted as part of efforts to boost maritime cooperation between the two countries.
- Indian Naval Ship Kiltan, carrying humanitarian assistance, reached Vietnam's Nha Rong Port in Ho Chi Minh City to deliver 15 tonnes of relief material for flood-affected people under Mission Sagar-III.
- This mission of INS Kiltan was part of India's **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries during the ongoing pandemic.

#### Jaishankar 2 Day visit to Qatar

- External Affairs Minister (EAM) **Dr S Jaishankar**, two-day visit to **Qatar** from 27 to 28 December.
- During the visit, he called on The Amir and Father Amir as well as the Prime Minister and Interior Minister of the State of Qatar and held detailed discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.
- EAM held detailed discussions with Deputy PM and Foreign Minister H.E. Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani on bilateral as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest.
- Both Ministers discussed ways to **strengthen the multifaceted bilateral relationship** in areas such as energy, trade, investment, food processing, healthcare, education, culture, defence and security. They agreed to maintain regular consultations and coordination on all issues of mutual interest at multilateral fora.
- EAM also extended an invitation to Deputy PM and Foreign Minister of Qatar to visit India for the first **Joint Commission Meeting in 2021**.

#### Cambodia's first commercial extraction of oil begun in Gulf of Thailand

- Cambodia's first commercial **extraction of oil** begins in Gulf of Thailand.
- **Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen**, the country's **long-awaited** first commercial extraction of oil has finally begun.
- The **first drop of oil** was extracted by **KrisEnergy, a Singapore-based oil and gas company**, from a well in offshore Block A in the Gulf of Thailand, west of the coastal Cambodian province of Preah Sihanouk.
- **"The start of production is a blessing for our Cambodia,"** Hun Sen stated.
- The **3,000-square-kilometer** (1,158-square-mile) Block A concession is estimated to hold as much as **30 million barrels of oil reserves**.

#### Bill for citizenship of 11 million undocumented Migrants: Kamala Harris

- **US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris** promised to bring a bill to Congress with a roadmap to citizenship for **11 million undocumented people**.
- Her **first priority** after assuming office would be to **save American lives** from coronavirus, and along with Biden.
- She also vowed to join the **Paris climate agreement** from which the Trump administration had withdrawn earlier.

#### Joint working group on fisheries – Meeting held by India and Sri Lanka

- The **Fourth Meeting** of the **India-Sri Lanka** Joint Working Group on Fisheries was held through virtual mode.
- The meeting covered the entire gamut of issues related to fishermen and fishing boats which have been on the agenda of bilateral discussions between India and Sri Lanka for many years.



- It may be recalled that during the Virtual Bilateral Summit between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa** held on 26 September this year, both leaders agreed to continue engagement to address the issues related to fishermen through regular consultation and bilateral channels.

#### CinemaSCOpe – India’s exclusive movie series for members of SCO Organisation

- Indian Embassy in Beijing, China has launched “CinemaSCOpe” exclusively for the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), more than a 2 dozen Indian films will be dubbed in Russian. Screenings will continue till India’s Chairmanship of the SCO ‘Council of Heads of State’ meeting in 2023.
- The movie series will coincide with “SCO Year of Culture” in 2021.

#### Facebook-Backed Libra Association Renamed Itself as Diem

- Libra Association, a Facebook-backed digital payment group has renamed itself as ‘Diem’. It’s currency name has also been changed from Libra currency to Diem. Diem will be backed by government currency.
- Diem, which means "day" in Latin, now aims to initially launch a single dollar-backed digital coin.

#### UN CND removes Cannabis from “Most Dangerous Drug” Category

- In the Ongoing 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UN-CND), Cannabis has been removed from the “Most Dangerous Drug” category.
- It is removed after UNCND voted to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, decades after they were first placed on the list. Out of the 53-member CND, 27 member states voted in favour including India, US and most of European Nations and 25 members against.

#### Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Myanmar	Naypyitaw	Burmese kyat	Win Myint
Uruguay	Montevideo	Peso	Luis Lacalle Pou
France	Paris	Euro	Emmanuel Macron
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Maldives	Malé	Rufiyaa	Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
UK	London	Pound Sterling	Boris Johnson
UAE	Abu Dhabi	Dirham	Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
USA	Washington D.C	Dollar	Joe Biden (Elected)
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	K. P. Sharma Oli
China	Beijing	Renminbi	Xi Jinping
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Mikhail Mishustin
Italy	Rome	Euro	Giuseppe Conte
South Korea	Seoul	Won	Chung Sye-kyun
Eswatini	Mbabane	Swazi lilangeni	Ambrose Dlamini
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Yoshihide Suga
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Reuven Rivlin

New Zealand	Wellington	Dollar	Jacinda Ardern
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Rupee	Gotabaya Rajapaksa
Madagascar	Antananarivo	Ariary	Andry Rajoelina
Senegal	Dakar	CFA Franc	Macky Sall
Pakistan	Islamabad	Rupee	Imran Khan
Australia	Canberra	Dollar	Scott Morrison
Peru	Lima	Sol	Francisco Sagasti
Austria	Vienna	Euro	Alexander Van der Bellen
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	So'm	Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	Riel	Hun Sen
Qatar	Doha	Riyal	Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani
Vietnam	Hanoi	Dong	Nguyễn Phú Trọng
Sweden	Stockholm	Krona	Stefan Löfven
Singapore	Singapore City	Dollar	Lee Hsien Loong
Spain	Madrid	Euro	Pedro Sánchez
Norway	Oslo	Krone	Erna Solberg
Ghana	Accra	Cedi	Nana Akufo-Addo
Romania	Bucharest	Leu	Klaus Iohannis
Venezuela	Caracas	Bolivar	Nicolas Maduro
Kenya	Nairobi	Shilling	Uhuru Kenyatta

## Important Appointments

### National Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Rajeev Chaudhry	27 th Director General of the Border Roads	He was serving as the ADG LW & E in QMG's Branch
Kuldeep Handoo	Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Fit India Ambassador	He is the first Dronacharya awardee
Anil Soni	Chief Executive Officer for the WHO Foundation	
Uday Kotak	Managing Director, Kotak Mahindra Bank	
Sukhbir Singh Sandhu	Chairman, National Highways Authority of India	
Aditya Nath Das	Chief Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh	

Vineet Agarwal (Managing Director of logistics major Transport Corporation of India Ltd)	President, Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India	Niranjan Hiranandani (Co-Founder and MD, Hiranandani Group)
Satyendra Garg	Andaman and Nicobar DGP charge	
Prasanth Prabhakaran	MD & CEO, YES Securities	
Florin Citu	Prime Minister, Romania	
Atanu Chakraborty	Chairman (likely), HDFC Bank	Shyamala Gopinath
Rajeev Mishra	Additional Director - Genereal	Promoted by West Bengal govt
Niranjan Banodkar	Chief Financial Officer, YES Bank	Anurag Adlakha
Harsh Vardhan	Nominated Member of the GAVI Board	Nominated by Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation
Shrikant Madhav Vaidya	Vice President, World Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association	
Akshay Kumar	Brand Ambassador, Hindustan Unilever Limited	
Rajesh Bindal	Chief Justice of the Common High Court for the UT of J & K and Ladakh	

#### International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Debendranath Sarangi	Vice President, World Squash Federation	President, Squash Rackets Federation of India
Dr Vivek Murthy	Surgeon General, Joe Biden Administration	
Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah	Prime Minister, Kuwait	
Zena Wooldridge	President, World Squash Federation	Jacques Fontaine of France
Annika Sorenstam	President, International Golf Federation	Peter Dawson
Shashi Shekhar Vempati	Vice President, Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union	
Nana Akufo-Addo	President, Ghana	

#### Resignation/Retirement

Name of the Person	Designation
Ajit Pai	Chief, Federal Communication Commission
Nicolae Ciuca	Prime Minister, Romania

#### Ramesh Pokhriyal constitutes Task Force to impart Technical Education in Mother Tongue

- Union Minister of Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' constituted a Task Force for preparing a blueprint on imparting Technical Education in Mother Tongue.
- The Task Force will be headed by Secretary of Higher Education (Amit Khare).

- The decision was taken by Union Education Minister during a high level meeting on the Implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) – 2020.
- The Main objective is that no students should be deprived of Technical Education due to lack of Knowledge of English Language.

### Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize	Awarded By/Theme/Purpose
Gitanjali Rao	TIME's first-ever kid of the year	Greta Thunberg was named Time's Person Of The Year last year
Ranjitsinh Disale	2020 Global Teacher Prize \$1 million	A teacher at Zilla Parishad Primary School
Anita Anand's 'The Patient Assassin'	PEN Hessel-Tiltman history prize	
Raj Kamal Jha (Indian Writer and chief editor of The Express)	Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2020	The City and the Sea
Mondo Duplantis of Sweden	Male World Athletes of the Year	
Yulimar Rojas of Venezuela	Female World Athletes of the Year	
Carolina Araujo	Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians 2020	First non-Indian women mathematician to receive this prize.
Bajrang Punia	Male Sportsperson of the Year award	Presented by the Federation of Indian Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
Elavenil Valarivan	Female Sportsperson of the Year award	Presented by the Federation of Indian Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
Ashraf Patel	Social Entrepreneur of the Year award (Presented by Smriti Zubin Irani)	Instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation.
Paul Sein Twa	Goldman Environmental Prize 2020 for Asia	The 2020 prize winners are: Kristal Ambrose from The Bahamas, Chibeze Ezekiel from Ghana, Nemonte Nenquimo from Ecuador, Leydy Pech from Mexico, Lucie Pinson from France, Paul Sein Twa from Myanmar.
Steel Authority of India Limited	Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2020	

Ratan Tata	Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace award	
Sreenivas Karanam of Bangalore	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards	
Subrat Kar of New Delhi	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards	It was launched in 2017 by DoT
Vidyut Mohan	Young Champions of the Earth winners by United Nations Environment Programme	Other Winners: Nzambi Matee (Kenya), Xiaoyuan Ren (China). Lefteris Arapaki's (Greece), Niria Alicia Garcia, Max Hidalgo Quinto. Fatemah Alzelzela
Lewis Hamilton	BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2020	
Captain Sir Tom Moore	Helen Rollason Award	Presented by BBC Sports
Marcus Rashford	Expert Special Panel Award	Presented by BBC Sports
Jurgen Klopp	Coach of the Year	Presented by BBC Sports
Liverpool FC	Team of the Year	Presented by BBC Sports
Sgt Matt Ratana	Unsung Hero	Presented by BBC Sports
Tobias Weller	Captain Tom Young Unsung Hero	Presented by BBC Sports
Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix	Young Sports Personality of the Year	Presented by BBC Sports
Narendra Modi	Legion of Merit	Presented by Donald Trump
NGO HelpAge India	UN Population Award for 2020	It was established by the United Nations General Assembly
Amar Singh College, in Srinagar	UNESCO Award	It been awarded for cultural heritage protection by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Asia-Pacific in 2020.
NTPC Ltd	CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 in corporate social responsibility	
K. Veeramani (Dravidar Kazhagam President)	Dr.Narendra Dabholkar Memorial Award	
Hemant Kumar Pandey	DRDO's Scientist of the Year Award	
Steel Authority of India Limited	Golden Peacock Environment Management Award	
Amar Singh College, Srinagar	Award of Merit, 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural	

	Heritage Conservation	
Ratan Tata	Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace	Honoured by Federation of Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce
Seeni Viswanathan	Bharathi Award 2020	

### **'Pandemic' chosen as Word of the Year 2020 by Dictionary.com and Merriam Webster**

- For the first time, two dictionary companies on Monday - Merriam-Webster and Dictionary.com - declared the same word as their tops.
- Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of "pan," for all, and "demos," for people or population.

### **Cambridge Dictionary Named "Quarantine" as Word of the Year 2020**

- Cambridge Dictionary has named "Quarantine" as the Word of the Year 2020 based on its data which showed that the word 'quarantine' is one of the most searched words on the Cambridge Dictionary in 2020.
- Runners-up for Word of the year 2020 are, Lockdown and Pandemic. Cambridge's word of the year 2019 was "Upcycling".

### **Serum Institute's Adar Poonawalla Named As 1 Of 6 Asians Of The Year**

- Adar Poonawalla, the chief executive of the world's largest vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India, is among six people named "Asians of the Year" by Singapore's leading daily, The Straits Times for their work in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) has collaborated with the University of Oxford and the British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca for making the COVID-19 vaccine, 'Covidshield', and is conducting trials in India.
- The Serum Institute was founded by Adar Poonawalla's father Cyrus Poonawalla in 1966.
- Adar Poonawalla joined the Serum Institute of India in 2001 and became the CEO of Serum Institute with complete control of the day-to-day operations of the company in 2011.
- Sars-CoV-2, the virus that has brought death and hardship to the world's largest and most populous continent, is meeting its tamer in The Virus Busters, the award citation stated.
- The Five others who made it to the list are Chinese researcher Zhang Yongzhen, Major General Chen Wei ( China ), Dr. Ryuichi Morishita (Japan), Ooi Eng Eong (Singapore) and South Korean businessman Seo Jung-jin.

### **UNEP announces 2020 Champions of the Earth Award**

- The **UN Environment Program (UNEP)** on announced six winners of the 2020 Champions of the Earth Award for their pioneering initiatives aimed at healing the planet amid natural and man-made threats.
  - According to UNEP, the six individuals bagged the prestigious award for demonstrating commitment to restore the health of ecosystems and advance sustainable development.
  - This year's Champions of the Earth Award paid tribute to trailblazers in a range of categories including **Lifetime Achievement, Inspiration and Action, Policy Leadership, Entrepreneur Vision, Science and Innovation.**
1. Policy leadership - Frank Bainimarama ( Prime Minister of Fiji )
  2. Inspiration and action - Yacouba Sawadogo ( a farmer from Burkina Faso )
  3. Inspiration and action - Nemonte Nenquimo (Ecuadorian female green campaign )
  4. Science and innovation - Fabian Leendertz (German scientist )



5. Social entrepreneur - Mindy Lubber (an American social entrepreneur )
6. Earth Lifetime Achievement Award - Robert D. Bullard (American scholar for promoting environmental justice )

#### ATP awards 2020: Djokovic, Federer, Nadal among winners

- **Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Frances Tiafoe** were among the winners of the **ATP's top awards for 2020**.
- Djokovic was the year end No.1 for a record equalling sixth time after winning four titles including a record eighth Australian Open.

#### Other ATP Winners:

- Player of the Year – Novak Djokovic
- Doubles Team of the Year – Mate Pavic and Bruno Soares
- Coach of the Year – Fernando Vicente (coached Andrey Rublev)
- Tim Gullikson Career Coach Award – Bob Brett (Australia)
- Most Improved Player – Andrey Rublev (Russia)
- Newcomer of the Year – Carlos Alcaraz (Spain)
- Comeback Player of the Year – Vasek Pospisil (Canada)
- ATPTour.com Fans' Favourite – Roger Federer (Switzerland)
- ATPTour.com Fans' Favourite Team – Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski
- Stefan Edberg Sportsmanship Award – Rafael Nadal (Spain)
- Arthur Ashe Humanitarian of the Year – Frances Tiafoe (US)
- Ron Bookman Media Excellence Award – Kevin Mitchell (A sportswriter for The Guardian)

#### Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2020 announced

- The **New India Foundation** announces the shortlist for the third edition of the '**Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize**', recognising and celebrating excellence in non-fiction writings on modern/ contemporary India.
- The Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Book Prize celebrates high-quality, non-fiction literature by emerging writers from all nationalities, published in the previous calendar year. Established in 2018, the Book Prize carries a cash award of INR 15 lacs and a citation.
- The 6 shortlisted books are a testimony to the quality and diversity of non-fiction writing about India.

The six books shortlisted for the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2020 are:

- 1.Mobilizing the Marginalized
- 2.Midnight's Machines
- 3.The Unquiet River
- 4.A Chequered Brilliance
- 5.Bottle of Lies
- 6.Wild Himalaya

#### President Kovind Give out Digital India Awards 2020

- President **Ram Nath Kovind** will virtually confer the Digital India Awards 2020 through video conference.
- The Digital India Awards 2020 have been announced under six categories including '**Innovation in Pandemic**'.
- In line with **Digital India's vision**, this is the **first time** that the entire process of the Digital India Awards is being conducted online from nominations to screening to the final awards ceremony.

- **National Informatics Centre** under **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has been conducting the **biennial Digital India Awards** to promote innovation in **eGovernance** and **digital transformation** of government service delivery mechanism.
- Minister for Communications and IT, **Ravi Shankar Prasad**, and IT secretary **Ajay Sawhney** and other dignitaries would attend the virtual event.

### Important MOU's

#### PwC, UNICEF & YuWaah to upskill 300 Mn people in India

- PwC India has announced the launch of a strategic collaboration with UNICEF and YuWaah (Generation Unlimited in India) to help bridge the digital gap and help upskill 300 million young people in India over the next 10 years.
- Kiren Rijju, Minister of State (IC), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and Usha Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, were present during the launch.
- This announcement is part of PwC's global collaboration with UNICEF in support of Generation Unlimited; a multi-sector partnership aimed at helping 1.8 billion young people transition from school to work by 2030.
- This partnership will focus on three facets to India's digital empowerment for youngsters, which are education, skilling and entrepreneurship.

#### NTPC inks MoU with IIFM-Bhopal for Narmada Landscape Restoration Project

- NTPC, an integrated energy company and a PSU under the Ministry of Power, inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, on 4 December 2020, to implement the Narmada Landscape Restoration project.
- The programme is in partnership with a grant in aid from NTPC and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in equal proportions.
- Narmada Landscape Restoration project is a 4 year Project.
- The four-year project will be implemented in Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh, in the catchments of selected tributaries of the river Narmada between Omkareshwar and Maheshwar dams.
- IIFM, Bhopal, an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) with the grant-in-aid from NTPC will be jointly implementing this project with Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), an intergovernmental organisation that promotes sustainable and inclusive economic growth in emerging economies.

#### SJVN signs MoU with IREDA for green energy projects

- State-run power producer **SJVNL** has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency** (IREDA) for **green energy projects**.
- MoU to assist in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next 5 years.
- The MoU was signed by Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVNL and Pradip Kumar Das, CMD, IREDA through virtual mode.
- SJVNL is developing 100 MW Dholera Solar Power Project & 100 MW Raghanseda Solar Power Project in Gujarat.
- IREDA will undertake techno-financial due diligence of renewable energy, energy efficiency & conservation projects for SJVN.

#### Joint Statement on India-Uzbekistan Virtual Summit:

- Prime Minister of the Republic of India Shri **Narendra Modi** and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan **H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev** co-chaired a Virtual Summit between **India and Uzbekistan** on 11 December, 2020.
- India and Uzbekistan signed **nine Agreements** and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs).

Nine Agreements are enlisted below :

1. Solar Energy
  2. Digital Technologies
  3. High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP)
  4. Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation
  5. Defence and Security
  6. Civil Nuclear Energy
  7. Connectivity
  8. Culture, Education and People- to-People Contacts
  9. Terrorism
- Government of India approved **448 million US dollar** Line of Credit to be extended by India for four developmental projects in Uzbekistan in the fields of road construction, sewerage treatment and information technology.

#### India inks with Austria on tech cooperation in road infrastructure sector

- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has inked a pact with **Austria** for technical cooperation in road infrastructure space.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of the Republic of Austria on technology cooperation.
- **Aim** : To create an effective framework for bilateral cooperation in the field of road transportation, road/highways infrastructure development, management and administration, road safety and intelligent transport systems between both countries.
- And it also strengthen ties, promote long standing bilateral relations and enhance trade and regional integration between the two countries.

#### Norway Research Institute signs an MoU with Clean Ganga Mission

- **Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research** has signed an MoU with cGanga, a think-tank of National **Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** for development of **sludge management** framework in India.
- Norwegian Diplomat in India Karina Asbjørnsen, stated Norway intends to deepen relationship with India especially in prevention of climate change and conservation of environment.
- The MoU was signed during the **5th edition** of the India Water Impact 2020, held **from 10-15 December 2020**.

#### Indian Navy, INCOIS sign MoU to share ocean services data

- **Indian Navy** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** for sharing **ocean services data**.
- This MoU is focused on sharing ocean services, data, and expertise in the field of operational oceanography and the same will benefit both Indian Navy and INCOIS in furthering meaningful interactions and professional exchanges in future.

- **Dr. T. Srinivasa Kumar**, Director INCOIS and Commodore A A Abhyankar, who heads Indian Navy's Oceanology and Meteorology Directorate, signed the MoU.

#### **DGT - MSDE inks pact with MICROSOFT and NASSCOM FOUNDATION for digital skilling**

- The **Directorate General of Training (DGT)** joined hands with **Microsoft and NASSCOM Foundation** to provide digital content for ITI students.
- Nearly 1,20,000 students in around 3000 ITIs across India can be benefited by this digitized e-learning module via the Bharatskills portal.

#### **Karnataka signs three agreements with different firms**

- Karnataka signs **three agreements** with different firms to **impart skill training to youths for jobs abroad**.
- The Deputy Chief Minister and minister for higher education **Dr. C N Ashwath Narayana** has informed that the state has signed **three agreements** with different firms to impart skill training to the youths of the state for fetching them jobs abroad.
- **THREE AGREEMENTS**
  - The ITI trained youth will be further trained by **Peenya Industrial Association member industries**.
  - A **skill university** has come forward to train the apprentice in various trades.
  - A learning foundation has come forward to **train ITI students in entrepreneurship**.
- **Dr. Ashwath Narayana** said that these trainings will shape up human resources by imparting them skills that meet the contemporary requirements of the industries.
- He added that these agreements are in line with the **new National Education Policy**.

#### **APEDA and NABARD signed MoU to Cooperate in Agriculture Activities & Implementing Agriculture Export Policy**

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to address the key interests of Agriculture and allied sectors for bringing better value to the stakeholders and Implementing Agriculture Export Policy.

#### **IAF Signed MoU with CSIR-NML for Research in Material Science, Engineering**

- Indian Air Force (IAF) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Metallurgical Laboratory (CSIR-NML), Jamshedpur, Jharkhand for the research and development in the field of material science and engineering.
- The IAF delegation led by Air Marshal Vibhas Pande VSM, Air Officer in charge Maintenance along with senior officials of NML signed the agreement.

#### **NBCFDC, NSFDC sign MoA with Central Bank of India to implement VISVAS Yojana**

- National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC) & National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Central Bank of India for implementation of 'Vanchit Ikai Samooch aur Vargon ki Aarthik Sahayta (VISVAS) Yojana' – an Interest Subvention Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India.
- With the signing of the agreement, interest subvention for the beneficiaries under the VISVAS Yojana will be provided through Central Bank of India which is headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra.

#### **WCF, NITI Aayog Partner to provide training to Country's Children and Youth on Cybersafety**

- WCF (WNS Cares Foundation), the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) wing of Private firm WNS Global Services has partnered with Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL), an initiative under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog for providing training to India's children and youth on cybersafety.
- WCF will provide digital education through its platform CyberSmart.

#### **WHO, IFRC sign MoU for implementation of Emergency Medical Team (EMT) initiative**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) & International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) known as 'Red Channel Agreement' for the implementation of Emergency Medical Team (EMT) initiative.
- EMT initiative will strengthen the delivery of emergency medical and health services during humanitarian crises.

#### **FADA, ASDC partner with Google India to bridge digital skills gap in India's auto dealerships**

- Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) & Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC) announced partnership with Google India to reduce the digital skill gap in India's auto dealership sector.
- The Training programme will be conducted under Google India's 'Grow with Google' initiative.

#### **CII Signs MoU with Amazon India to Bring to MSMEs**

- CII signed a MoU with Amazon India to enable benefits of Electronic(e)-commerce to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in 10 states across India at the 17th CII Global SME Business Summit 2020 organized by CII in partnership with the Ministry of MSME, Government of India under the theme: Reboot to Rebound: Stimulating Demand & Supply Side, this will boost MSMEs in domestic & international trade.

#### **NSDC Signs MoU with BYJU'S to Support Skilling of Teachers and Trainers**

- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BYJU'S to support the skilling of teachers and trainers.
- The partnership is as part of Skill India Mission. This alliance will help to achieve the Digital India vision.
- NSDC has entered into partnership with LinkedIn and the women's wing of FICCI to accelerate the digital skills training for youth and women for digital workforce.

#### **IESA, UNIDO tie up to Boost Energy Storage Innovations in India**

- India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) collaboration was done on the lines of the launch of the 4th round of innovation challenge by UNIDO's Facility of Low Carbon Technology Deployment (FLCTD) to support and encourage new innovations in Indian energy storage and e-mobility space.
- There will be grants of up to USD 50,000 for winning technologies, and recognition from the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, UNIDO and IESA.

#### **UP government and IWAI signs MoU to promote Water Tourism**

- Uttar Pradesh (UP) State tourism department signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) to promote water tourism in the state.
- This will allow the operation of 2 Ro Pax Passenger vessels in Varanasi by the tourism department.

#### **Andhra Pradesh, Survey of India sign MoU for implementation of Land Survey**

- Andhra Pradesh (AP) Government and Survey of India (Sol) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of 'YSR Jagananna Saswath Bhoo Hakku- Bhoo Raksha Pathakam' – a land resurvey project in Andhra Pradesh. This is the 1st time in 100 years that such a survey is being conducted in India.
- The project is estimated to cost about INR 1, 000 Crore.

#### **Maharashtra Govt Signs 1st of its kind MoU with Cornell University to Set up World-Class Incubation Centre**

- Maharashtra Govt signed a 1st of its kind Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cornell University, to set up a world-class incubation centre in Navi Mumbai,
- Maharashtra becomes the 1st state in India to set up an incubation centre.
- Maharashtra Govt signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with XED Institute of Management (Asia Partner for Cornell) to Launch 'Cornell Maha 60', an accelerator programme for entrepreneurs.

#### **Tamil Nadu CM signs 18 MoU's for 24 Projects worth Rs. 24,248 Crores**

- Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K Palaniswami signed 18 Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) for 24 projects with multiple companies attracting investment in the state, which has the potential to create 54,218 jobs in the state
- Ola has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tamil Nadu state government to set up a Rs. 2400 crore Electric vehicle manufacturing hub in the state, this turns out to be the world's largest scooter factory.

#### **IndiGrid Collaborates with IBM for Digital Transformation of Critical Power Infrastructure**

- India Grid Trust (IndiGrid) and IBM enters into a multi-year collaboration agreement to build asset management platform that is enabled with AI for Digital Transformation of Critical Power Infrastructure.
- The Enterprise asset management (EAM) is important to obtain the insights and the visibility needed to maintain and control intelligent assets and equipment.

#### **MoFPI Signed Joint Communiqué with MoTA along MoUs with 5 Govt. entities**

- Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) signed a Joint Communiqué with Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) and also inked MoUs with 5 government entities TRIFED, ICAR, NSFDC, NAFED and NCDC for the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme. MoFPI with Union Bank of India as nodal bank for PM FME scheme.

#### **CGWB and CSIR-NGRI sign MoA for High-Resolution Aquifer Mapping & Management in Arid Region of NW India**

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed between Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Ministry of Jal Shakti and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research–National Geophysical Research Institute (CSIR-NGRI) in Hyderabad (Telangana) for use of advanced heliborne geophysical survey and other scientific studies in parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana under the Aquifer Mapping Programme.
- This is the first time MoJS will use the state of the art technology for identification of aquifers in large/semi-arid areas. The estimated cost of phase- I of the project would be Rs 54 Crore.

#### **IBM Collaborates with TASK to offer online Skill Development Programs in Telangana**

- International Business Machines (IBM) announced collaboration with Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) to offer free degree and polytechnic courses on emerging technologies to empower 30,000 students yearly through IBM's free digital education platform "Open P-TECH" for a period of one year.

#### **UN Women Signs MoU with Kerala Govt's Gender Park for India's first Gender Data Hub**

- UN Women signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Kerala Govt's first Gender Park to establish India's Gender Data Hub at the Gender Park at 24-acre Kozhikode campus, where International Institute for Gender and Development is also present.



- Gender Park will function as the South Asian hub for gender equality that aims to share knowledge and experiences from the region.

#### **DITECH, Haryana & India Accelerator sign MoU to improve startup ecosystem in Haryana**

- Startup Haryana setup by the Department of Information Technology, Electronics, and Communication (DITECH), Government of Haryana has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India Accelerator (IA) to build a strong startup ecosystem in Haryana. The MoU will help in bridging the gap between Industry & startups.

#### **Gujarat, Cerestra Ventures sign MoU to set up Gujarat-Special Education Region at Dholera**

- Government of Gujarat & Cerestra Ventures entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of Gujarat-Special Education Region (G-SER) at the Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR). The establishment of G-SER will help in overall development of the region, and in the establishment of Gujarat as a knowledge-driven economy,

#### **Revision Points**

<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
PwC, UNICEF & YuWaah	To help bridge the digital gap
NTPC & IIFM - Bhopal	Narmada Landscape Restoration Project
SJVNL & IREDA	Green Energy projects
India & Austria	Road Infrastructure
Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research & Mission for Clean Ganga	Development of sludge management framework
Indian Navy, INCOIS	Sharing Ocean Services data
DGT-MSDE, Microsoft & NASSCOM	Digital Skilling
APEDA and NABARD	To Cooperate in Agriculture Activities & Implementing Agriculture Export Policy
IAF & CSIR-NML	For Research in Material Science, Engineering
NBCFDC, NSFDC & Central Bank of India	To implement VISVAS Yojana
WCF, NITI Aayog Partner	To provide training to Country's Children and Youth on Cybersafety
WHO, IFRC	Implementation of Emergency Medical Team (EMT) initiative
FADA & ASDC & Google India	To bridge digital skills gap in India's auto dealerships
CII & Amazon	To bring MSMEs
NSDC & BYJU's	To Support Skilling of Teachers and Trainers
IESA & UNIDO	To Boost Energy Storage Innovations in India
Uttar Pradesh & IWAI	To promote Water Tourism
Andhra Pradesh, Survey of India	Implementation of Land Survey
Maharashtra Govt & Cornell University	To Set up World-Class Incubation Centre
India Grid Trust & IBM	Digital Transformation of Critical Power Infrastructure

CGWB and CSIR-NGRI	High-Resolution Aquifer Mapping & Management in Arid Region of NW India
IBM & TASK	To offer online Skill Development Programs in Telangana
UN Women & Kerala;s	To establish India's Gender Data Hub
DITECH, Haryana & India Accelerator	To improve startup ecosystem in Haryana
Gujarat, Cerestra Ventures	To set up Gujarat-Special Education Region at Dholera

## Important Summit & Conference

### PM Modi to give inaugural address at virtual IMC 2020

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address at the virtual India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2020, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) stated.
- The fourth edition of the three-day telecom industry event will be held online for the first time due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- IMC 2020 is being organised by the department of telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) and will be held from December 8-10.
- The title theme for IMC 2020 is Inclusive Innovation - Smart, Secure, Sustainable
- Vision : To promote Aatmanirbhar Bharat, digital inclusivity, sustainable development, entrepreneurship and innovation." IMC 2020 also "aims to drive foreign and local investments, encourage Research and Development in the telecom and emerging technology sectors.

### India & Uzbekistan to held first bilateral virtual summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a virtual summit
- This was the first bilateral Virtual Summit between India and a central Asian country.
- The leaders discussed the entire spectrum of bilateral relationship, including strengthening of India-Uzbekistan cooperation in the post-COVID world.
- They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- The visits of Prime Minister Modi to Uzbekistan in 2015 and 2016 and President Mirziyoyev to India in 2018 and 2019 have imparted a new dynamism to the strategic partnership.

### PM to deliver inaugural address at FICCI's 93rd Annual General Meeting and Annual Convention

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will deliver the inaugural address at FICCI's **93rd Annual General Meeting and Annual Convention via video conferencing** and also inaugurate the virtual FICCI Annual Expo 2020.
- FICCI's Annual Convention is being held virtually on **11th, 12th and 14th December**.
- The virtual expo will provide an opportunity to exhibitors from across the globe to showcase their products and advance their business prospects.
- The **theme** of this year's **Annual Convention is "Inspired India"**
- The convention will witness various stakeholders deliberating on the implications of Covid-19 on the economy, reforms being undertaken by the government and the way forward for the Indian economy.

### 5th India Water Impact Summit begins

- The **5th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS)** began on 10th December 2020 virtually. The **five day programme** will conclude on 15 December 2020.

- Theme - **Arth Ganga - river conservation synchronised development.**
- Objective of IWIS 2020 is Comprehensive Analysis and Holistic Management of Rivers and Water Bodies.
- The conference will have comprehensive analysis and review of river rejuvenation and local river. It will also have deliberation about Arth Ganga, i.e. how river conservation synchronised development can take place.
- It is being organised virtually by the **NMCG and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga).**
- **Ratan Lal Kataria**, Minister of State in the Jal Shakti Ministry, inaugurated this summit.

#### **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, addresses ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus online**

- Raksha mantri Shri **Rajnath Singh**, attended the **14th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus** organized online at **Hanoi, Vietnam** on **10 December 2020** that marked the 10th anniversary of ADMM Plus.
- **Members** : 10 ASEAN Countries and eight partner countries, Australia, China, Japan, India, Korea, New Zealand, Russia, United States.
- It is a Platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners to Strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region

#### **The 5th India- Myanmar Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation held Virtually**

- The **5th India-Myanmar** Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation was held virtually on **December 10, 2020**.
- The meet was between the **Narcotics Control Bureau**, India and the **Central Committee on Drug Abuse Control, Myanmar**.
- The Indian delegation was led by **Shri Rakesh Asthana**, Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau.
- The meeting between the two countries concluded with constructive and meaningful discussions as well as commitment to cooperation in future.
- It was also decided that the **6th India-Myanmar** Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation will be held in **India in 2021**.

#### **9th edition of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit begins in Dehradun**

- The **ninth edition** of the **Sustainable Mountain Development Summit (SMDS)** in **Dehradun** has begun from **December 11 to 14**.
- The theme for this year is **Emerging Pathways for Building a Resilient Post COVID-19 Mountain Economy, Adaptation, Innovation and Acceleration**.
- The four-day-long summit was organised by **Indian Mountain Initiative (IMI)** and hosted by **Sustainable Development Forum Uttarakhand (SDFU), Dehradun**.
- The summit will focus on the overall objective of building pathways toward a resilient and sustainable mountain economy in the context of a post COVID-19 scenario and Climate Change.
- Uttarakhand Chief Minister **Trivendra Singh Rawat** and Meghalaya Chief Minister **Conrad K Sangma** attended the function.

#### **Climate Ambition Summit 2020 held virtually**

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** address the **Climate Ambition Summit 2020**, **United Nations**, **United Kingdom** and **France** Virtually Co-hosted.
- The Climate Ambition Summit, held virtually, marked the **five years** of the adoption of the **Paris Agreement on Climate Change**.

- The Summit heard from about **70 world leaders** highlighting new announcements and steps they are taking to reach the goal of net-zero emissions.
- Next UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (**COP26**), which will be hosted by the **UK** next November in **Glasgow**.

#### 1st TWG Meeting between India, Iran, Uzbekistan on joint use of Chabahar Port held virtually

- The **first Trilateral Working Group** Meeting between **India, Iran and Uzbekistan** on the joint use of **Chabahar Port** was held virtually On Dec 14.
- The Meeting was jointly chaired by Secretary (Shipping), **Sanjeev Ranjan**, Government of India, Deputy Minister of Transport, Uzbekistan D. Dehkanov and Deputy Transport Minister of Iran, Shahram Adamnejad.
- This Meeting Mainly Focus Joint Use of Chabahar Port trade and transit purposes along with enhancing regional connectivity.

#### 20th IORA Council of Ministers meeting held in UAE, Virtually

- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** hosted the **20th IORA Council of Ministers (COM)** Meeting on **17 December 2020**, virtually.
- The theme of the meeting was **Promoting a Shared Destiny and Path to Prosperity in the Indian Ocean**.
- The Indian delegation was led by Shri V. Muraleedharan, MoS, Ministry of External Affairs.
- The 20<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers was inaugurated by Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Arab Emirates.
- All 22 Member States and 10 Dialogue Partners, to discuss ways in coordinating efforts to achieve IORA's vision for a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indian Ocean region as outlined in the Jakarta Concord and IORA Action Plan.
- During the 2020 COM, France was inducted as the 23rd member state of IORA.

#### India, Vietnam sign seven agreements during virtual summit

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, **Nguyen Xuan Phuc**, jointly addressed the **India-Vietnam Virtual Summit**, held on **21 December 2020**, through video conferencing.
- India and Vietnam have signed agreements in varied areas such as **defence, scientific research, renewable energy, nuclear energy, petro-chemicals, and cancer treatment** demonstrating the expanding ties and existing potential for increased cooperation between the two nations.
- This Joint Vision for peace, prosperity and people will send a strong message of our deepened ties to the world.
- Both leaders agreed to support each other's national development and work together towards the shared objective of a peaceful, stable, secure, free, open, inclusive and then rules-based Indo-Pacific region.

#### Seven agreements :

- Implementing Arrangement on Defence Industry Cooperation between Dept. of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, India and General Dept. of Defence Industry, Ministry of National Defence, Vietnam.
- Agreement for US\$ 5 million Indian Grant Assistance for Army Software Park at National Telecommunications University, Nha Trang, Vietnam between Embassy of India, Hanoi and Telecommunications University, Ministry of National Defence, Vietnam.
- Implementing Arrangement between Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, India and Vietnam Dept. of Peacekeeping Operations for Cooperation in United Nation Peacekeeping.
- MOU between India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and Vietnam Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety (VARANS).

- MOU between CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum and Vietnam Petroleum Institute.
- MOU between Tata Memorial Centre of India and Vietnam National Cancer Hospital.
- MOU between National Solar Federation of India and Vietnam Clean Energy Association.

#### 12th GRIHA Summit concludes with awards ceremony

- The **12th Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment Summit** was held virtually from **December 15-16, 2020**.
- It was inaugurated by Vice President of India **Venkaiah Naidu virtually**.
- The theme is **Rejuvenating Resilient Habitats**
- It is the annual flagship event organized by **GRIHA Council** in association with 'key stakeholders in the construction industry' to discuss and deliberate on furtherance of Sustainable Habitat Development in India.
- The Summit provides a platform to deliberate on innovative technologies and solutions to help in creating robust mechanisms for developing sustainable and resilient solutions for the benefit of the entire community.

#### Global Indian Scientists & Technocrats (GIST) meet begins at IISF2020

- Union Minister for S&T, ES and MoHFW, **Dr Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the **Global Indian Scientists & Technocrats (GIST)** meet which is being organized as a part of the **Indian International Science Festival (IISF) 2020**.
- That Meet would enable developing long term linkages for creating and effectively applying S&T tools for sustainable development particularly in the rural sector.
- GIST Meet has participants from several countries including **USA, UK, Qatar, Angola, Anguilla, Australia, Switzerland and India**.
- Deliberations and presentations in the area of Agriculture, Water, AI applications, Healthcare, Education and Skilling for better employability etc...

#### Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar launches DGNCC Digital Forum in New Delhi

- The **Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar** launched the **DGNCC Digital Forum** in **New Delhi** On December 24, 2020.
- This Digital Forum hosted on the DGNCC website, will provide a platform to National Cadet Corps cadets all over the country to share their experiences of various NCC activities.
- This forum will help NCC cadets to share their opinions and suggestions on NCC training, Social Service and Community Development and a host of other issues related to National Security, National Integration and National Building.

#### MoS, External Affairs V Muraleedharan addresses the 6th India-CLMV Business Conclave 2020 held virtually

- Minister of State (MOS), External Affairs V Muraleedharan addressed the 6th India-CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar & Vietnam) Business Conclave 2020: "Building Bridges for Constructive Development" held in CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) HIVE, the virtual platform of CII.
- The conclave was organised by the CII, in partnership with the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry was the Chief Guest at the event.

#### Dharmendra Pradhan virtually represents India at 7th IEF-IGU Ministerial Gas Forum 2020

- Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan represented India at the Virtual Ministerial Roundtable of 7th IEF-IGU (International Energy Forum-International Gas Union) Ministerial Gas Forum held from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Forum was hosted by the Government of Malaysia. It is a Biennial event and is being held Online for the First Time.

- The Theme of the Forum – “Towards Recovery and Shared Prosperity: Natural Gas Opportunities for a Sustainable World”.
- It was inaugurated by Muhyiddin Yassin, Prime Minister of Malaysia.

#### **Nityanand Rai Virtually addressed 4th South Asia Forum on SDGs 2020**

- UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) South Asia and Pacific & Government of Maldives organized 4th South Asian Forum of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2020 virtually. During the Forum, a special dialogue on disaster and climate resilience in South Asia was also organized.
- The Forum is a part of the preparatory process for the 8th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) to be held in March 2021, which in turn contributes towards the High-Level Policy Forum (HLPF) 2021.

#### **IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) Global Summit-2020 held Virtually from Hyderabad**

- World's largest virtual entrepreneurial summit, The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) Global Summit-2020 (TGS 2020) was held virtually from December 8-10, 2020. It was hosted by TiE Hyderabad. Vice- President Venkaiah Naidu virtually inaugurated the TGS 2020. Theme of TGS 2020 - 'Entrepreneurship 360'.

#### **6th India-Japan ICT Joint Working Group meet held virtually**

- 6th Meeting of Joint Working Group under the India-Japan ICT (Information & Communications Technology) was held virtually. Cooperation in 5G technologies, medical applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) were some of the key issues discussed during the meeting.
- The virtual meeting was held through VC Solution, a web platform developed by India's C-DOT (Centre for Development of Telematics).

#### **Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh participates in the 14th ADMM/7th ADMM Plus Meeting 2020 held virtually**

- Union Minister of Defence, Rajnath Singh attended the 14th ADMM-Plus Meeting (ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Defence Ministers' Meeting)/7th ADMM Plus Meeting 2020 held virtually at Hanoi, Vietnam.
- The meeting was held on the 10th Anniversary of ADMM-Plus. The meeting was hosted by Vietnam. Rajnath Singh welcomed Brunei Darussalam as the new Chair of ASEAN in 2021.

#### **Sports Minister addressed the 10th Global Sports Summit, TRUF 2020**

- Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually addressed the 10th Global Sports Summit, TRUF 2020, organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
- The Minister made the announcement on the establishment of 1000 Khelo India Small Centres in the country.

#### **EAM Jaishankar virtually Addresses the 2020 GTS – 5th Edition organized by MEA, CI**

- External Affairs Minister (EAM), Jaishankar virtually addressed the 2020 Global Technology Summit (GTS) – 5th Edition, it was jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Carnegie India (CI).
- The Theme of 2020 GTS is “Geopolitics of Technology”. GTS is one of the four Flagship annual conferences organized by MEA, the other three being – Raisina Dialogue, the Geo-Economic Dialogue & the Indian Ocean Conference.

#### **8th edition of North East Festival (NEF) 2020 Held in Guwahati, Assam for 1st time**

- The 8th edition of the North East Festival (NEF) 2020 was held at Radisson Blu Hotel in Guwahati, Assam .
- It was for the first time that Guwahati hosted this annual two-day event. The inaugural ceremony was graced by Union Minister Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) as the Chief Guest of the festival, Assam Chief Minister (CM) Sarbananda Sonowal, and Tripura CM Biplab Deb among other dignitaries.
- The focus of this year was on 'Growth Agenda for North East Post COVID-19'.



### PM Narendra Modi addressed IIT-2020 Global Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed the World's largest virtual Summit- IIT-2020 Global Summit on the inaugural day of the summit. The 2 day summit is organised by PanIIT USA. The summit is chaired by Sanjiv Goyal & Co-chaired by Witty Bindra.
- Theme of the IIT-2020 Global Summit – "The Future is Now". The PM urged the community to share ideas and inputs on the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence day in 2022. The summit also saw the participation of Union Minister of Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

### MoEFCC Minister Prakash Javadekar represents India at the 2020 Industry Transition Leadership Virtual Summit organized by LeadIT

- Union Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Forest Minister, Prakash Javadekar represented India at the 2020 Industry Transition Leadership Summit organized by Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT). The Summit was held in Virtual Mode due to Pandemic.
- The Meeting was held ahead of the 5th Anniversary of the signing of the 2015 Paris Agreement. The summit focuses on aligning public and private action for implementation of the agendas and targets under the Paris Agreement.

#### Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue/Host Country	Chaired By/Theme/Addressed By/Others
4 <sup>th</sup> India Mobile Congress	Virtual	Inclusive Innovation - Smart, Secure, Sustainable
1 <sup>st</sup> bilateral Virtual Summit between India Uzbekistan	Virtual	
FICCI's 93rd Annual General Meeting and Annual Convention	Virtual	Inspired India
5th India Water Impact Summit	Virtual	Arth Ganga - river conservation synchronised development
14th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus	Hanoi, Vietnam	
5th India-Myanmar Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation	Virtual	Indian delegation was led by Shri Rakesh Asthana
9th edition of Sustainable Mountain Development Summit	Dehradun	Emerging Pathways for Building a Resilient Post COVID-19 Mountain Economy, Adaptation, Innovation and Acceleration
Climate Ambition Summit 2020	Virtual	Addressed by PM Modi
1 <sup>st</sup> Trilateral Working Group Meeting between India, Iran and Uzbekistan	Virtual	Chaired by Sanjeev Ranjan
20th IORA Council of Ministers	Hosted by UAE	Promoting a Shared Destiny and Path to Prosperity in the Indian Ocean
12th Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment Summit	Virtual	Rejuvenating Resilient Habitats
Global Indian Scientists & Technocrats meet	Virtual	Inaugurated by Harsh Vardhan

DGNCC Digital Forum	New Delhi	Launched by Dr Ajay Kumar
6th India-CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar & Vietnam) Business Conclave 2020	Virtual	Building Bridges for Constructive Development
7th IEF-IGU	Virtual	Towards Recovery and Shared Prosperity: Natural Gas Opportunities for a Sustainable World
4th South Asia Forum on SDGs 2020	Virtual	Organized by UNESCAP
The IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) Global Summit	Hosted by TiE Hyderabad	Entrepreneurship 360
6th Meeting of Joint Working Group	Virtual	
14th ADMM-Plus Meeting	Virtual	Hosted by Vietnam
10th Global Sports Summit, TRUF 2020	Virtual	Organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
5th Edition of Global Technology Summit	Organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Carnegie India	Geopolitics of Technology
8th edition of North East Festival (NEF) 2020	Guwahati	Growth Agenda for North East Post COVID-19
IIT-2020 Global Summit	Chaired by Sanjiv Goyal & Co-chaired by Witty Bindra	The Future is Now
2020 Industry Transition Leadership Virtual Summit	NA	Organized by LeadIT

### Important Defence News

#### Indian Navy successfully test fires BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode

- Ministry of Defence stated 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
- The Indian Navy stated, "Indian Navy hones its combat readiness as BrahMos AShM launched by **INS Ranvijay** **strikes** target ship at max range with pinpoint accuracy in Bay of Bengal. INS Ranvijay is a Rajput-class destroyer warship of the Indian Navy.

#### Passage Exercise between Russian Federation Navy and Indian Navy

- The **Indian Navy** is undertaking a **Passage Exercise** with **Russian Federation Navy** in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from 4 to 5 December 2020.
- The exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability, improving understanding and imbibing best practices between both the friendly navies, and would involve advanced surface and anti-submarine warfare exercises, weapon firings, seamanship exercises and helicopter operations.

- This exercise is being conducted on the occasion of '**Navy Day**' of the IN on 4th December, which emphasizes the strong bonds of friendship shared between the two friendly militaries.
- This **PASSEX** would be another step towards strengthening Indo-Russian defence relations.
- The two navies have built a robust relationship through regular exercises such as INDRA Navy conducted biennially, with the last edition held in the Northern Indian Ocean Region from 4 to 5 September 2020.

#### Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Sujeet' to be commissioned

- **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** ship **Sujeet**, the second in the series of five **Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV)** built by **Goa Shipyard Limited**, will be commissioned at **Goa on December 15**.
- This vessel has been made in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in India'. will be commissioned by Secretary of Defence Production **Raj Kumar**.

#### Indian Navy to conduct coordinated patrol with Indonesian Navy on December 17-18

- The **35th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)** between the **Indian Navy** and the **Indonesian Navy** will be conducted between **December 17 and 18**.
- Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Kulish**, an indigenously built missile corvette along with **P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA)** will undertake coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship **KRI Cut Nyak Dien**, a **Kapitan Pattimura (Parchim I)** class corvette and an **MPA** of the Indonesian Navy.
- As part of Government of India's vision of '**Sagar**' (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region for coordinated patrols, cooperation in **EEZ** surveillance, passage exercises and bilateral/multilateral exercises, towards enhancing regional maritime security.
- The two navies have been carrying out **CORPAT** along their International Maritime Boundary Line since 2002, with the aim of ensuring safety and security of shipping and international trade in the region.
- **CORPATs** build up understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitate institution of measures to prevent and suppress **Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU)** fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.

#### Rajnath Singh hands over DRDO Systems

- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** handed over three indigenously developed systems to **Army, Navy and Air Force** at a function held in Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) **Bhawan**.
- That three systems are
  1. **Indian Maritime Situational Awareness System (IMSAS)** - Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh
  2. **ASTRA Mk-I Missile** - Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria
  3. **Border Surveillance System (BOSS)** - Chief of Army Staff General M M Naravane.
- **IMSAS, Astra Mk-1, BOSS** have been designed and developed **DRDO** only.
- **Astra Mk - 1** is the first Indigenously developed beyond visual range missile.

#### India successfully test-fires medium range surface-to air missile off Odisha coast

- India successfully test-fired a **medium range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM)** from **Odisha** coast on December 23, 2020.
- An unmanned air vehicle (UAV), '**Banshee**', was first flown into the air, which was hit by the **MRSAM**.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has jointly developed the missile in collaboration with **Israel Aerospace Industries**.
- The **MRSAM** has been manufactured by **Bharat Dynamics Ltd**.

- The missile will significantly enhance the combat effectiveness of the defence forces.

#### **China launches Gaofen-14 – Earth Observation Satellite from XSLC**

- China National Space Administration (CNSA) successfully launched Gaofen-14, a New Earth Observation Satellite from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre (XSLC) in Southwest China's Sichuan province.
- The Satellite was sent into orbit by Long March-3B/G5 Carrier Rocket. This was the first use of the G5 version of the Long March-3B launch vehicle which features a longer fairing.

#### **Indigenous Howitzer – ATAGS developed by DRDO undergoes trial in Ahmednagar**

- The Indigenous Howitzer (known as Artillery Guns)- Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) developed by DRDO underwent Trials at Ahmednagar, Maharashtra.
- The Howitzer has a strike range of around 50 Kms.
- DRDO partnered with Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), and private companies Bharat Forge Limited, Mahindra Defence Naval System, Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division and Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) for the project.

#### **Japan's Hayabusa2 brings Rocket Samples from Asteroid "Ryugu"**

- A small capsule containing First rock samples from beneath the surface of Asteroid 'Ryugu' landed at Woomera in South Australia, it was released by Japanese Spacecraft Hayabusa 2.
- The samples are expected to provide clues regarding the origin of the solar system & life on our planet.
- Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) stated that this is the 1st time that an international spacecraft has visited a celestial body which is under 100 metres in diameter.

#### **Indian Navy finalises procurement of Israeli 'SMASH 2000' Anti-Drone Systems**

- Indian Navy has finalised the contract for procurement of a batch of Israeli 'SMASH 2000 Plus fire Control Systems' Anti-Drone Systems which is capable of destroying high-speed enemy drones.
- It is manufactured by Israel Firm 'Smart Shooter'. It will be used in border security, bases and strategic facilities protection.
- The Smash Fire Control Systems Are Electro-optical rifle sights which will be mounted on Assault rifles such as AK-47/103 rifles.
- They are expected to be delivered by 2021.

#### **China successfully launches 2 satellites from XSLC for Gravitational Wave Detection**

- China successfully launched the Gravitational Wave High-energy Electromagnetic Counterpart All-sky Monitor (GECAM also called Huairou-1) comprising of 2 satellites for Gravitational Wave Detection from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre (XSLC), Sichuan Province, China.
- The launch is the 355th Flight of the Long March Carrier Rocket Series and developed by China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

#### **DRDO designed submachine gun '5.56X30 mm JVPC' undergoes successful Trials**

- 5.56 X 30 mm Joint Venture Protective Carbine (JVPC) designed by Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), a lab of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully finished the final phase of user trials.
- The Gun will now be inducted into the Indian Army. JVPC is a Gas Operated Semi Bull-pup automatic weapon and is capable of firing around 700 rpm (rounds per minute).

### **China becomes 2nd country to Plant its National Flag on Moon**

- China's Chang'e-5 probe planted the Chinese National Flag on the Moon's Surface. The United States was the first country to plant its National Flag on the Lunar surface during the manned Apollo 11 mission in 1969.
- Chang'e-5 planted the flag before starting on its return journey from the moon. It is carrying China's first Lunar Samples.

### **Russia Test Launches 'Angara A5' Heavy Lift Space Rocket from Plesetsk Cosmodrome**

- Russia Successfully test launched 'Angara A5' - Heavy Lift Space Rocket from Plesetsk Cosmodrome in Northwest Russia.
- This is the 2nd successful test flight of the vehicle after 1<sup>st</sup> successful test flight in 2014.
- Angara is a new series of space launchers being built by Russia after the collapse of Soviet Union.
- The Angara Rocket series is developed & manufactured by Khrunichev State Research and Production Space Centre.

### **ICGS C-454 commissioned in Hazira Plant, Gujarat; Built by Larsen & Toubro**

- An indigenously built Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) – C-454 Interceptor boat was commissioned at Hazira, Surat, Gujarat by Surat Police Commissioner Ajay Tomar. The ship has been built by Larsen & Toubro (L&T).
- The ship will be used for tightening security along Gujarat's 1600 km maritime borders. C-454 Interceptor Boat is the 54th boat built by L&T for ICG.

### **Israel successfully Test fires 3 Missile Defence Systems over Mediterranean Sea**

- Israel Missile Defense Organization (IMDO) together with United States Missile Defense Agency (MDA) successfully test fired a series of Israel's 3 multi-range missile defence systems namely – "Arrow", "David's Sling" & "Iron Dome" over the Mediterranean Sea. The tests are being conducted amidst heightening tensions between Israel & Iran.
- "Arrow Missile" – An anti-ballistic missile intercepts long-range missile, "David's Sling" – shoots down medium-range missiles, and "Iron Dome" air defence system to engage incoming rocket fire.

### **ICG Launches 5th & Final OPV 'Saksham' in Goa**

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) launched the 5th & Final Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) 'Saksham' into water at Vasco da Gama, Goa.
- The OPV is being built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and is expected to be delivered to the ICG by October 2021.

### **ISRO sets up 'NETRA' – Dedicated Control Centre for Space Situational Awareness**

- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has set up 'NETRA' (Network for space object TRacking and Analysis) – an dedicated Space Situational Awareness (SSA) Control Centre at ISTRAC (ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network) Campus at Peenya, Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- The main objective of NETRA is to protect Indian Space Assets from Space debris close approaches and collisions.
- NETRA was formally inaugurated by ISRO Chairman K Sivan on December 14, 2020.

### **India successfully test-fires two Prithvi-2 Missiles from Odisha's Balasore Coast**

- India successfully fired two Nuclear Capable Prithvi-2 Ballistic Missiles from Balasore, the eastern coast of Odisha.
- Prithvi-2 is a Surface-to-Surface Short-Range Ballistic Missile (SRBM). The Missile is developed by DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP) and is deployed by SFC (Strategic Forces Command).

### **Russia launches 36 UK Telecom Satellite into Space**

- Russian space agency Roscosmos Space Agency launched a Soyuz rocket carrying 36 UK telecommunications and internet satellites into space from Vostochny launch site.
- The satellites were made by British company OneWeb. This was the first launch of OneWeb satellites from the Vostochny spaceport.

## Important Science and Technology News

### Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine Approved By UK

- **Britain** became the first country in the world to approve the **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine** for use and stated that it will be rolled out soon.
- The government has accepted the recommendation from the independent Medicines and Healthcare products **Regulatory Agency (MHRA)** to approve **Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine** for use," the government stated.
- The vaccine will be made available across the UK from next week." in trials of their vaccines, which are both based on new messenger RNA (mRNA) technology.
- Health Secretary Matt Hancock stated the programme would begin early next week. Hospitals, he stated, were already ready to receive it.

### Instagram launches 'Live Rooms' feature

- **Instagram** rolled out the **'Live Rooms' feature** that allows up to three additional users to go live in the same session. Instagram Live views grew **60%** compared to the week prior, the company stated.
- With the introduction of this feature, an Instagram live session will now be able to hold 4 people instead of 2 which was the previous limit. Users will now not have to end their live session with the current user to add another participant.
- After creating a live session by swiping left from the feed or by clicking on the '+' button, you will have to tap on the 'Rooms' icon to bring more participants into your live session.

### China unfurls flag on Moon, becomes second country to achieve this feat after America

- China has become the second country to plant its national flag on the moon's surface.
- The China National Space Administration (CSNA) released pictures of Chinese flag placed on the lunar surface.
- Earlier this was achieved only by the USA, during the Apollo mission in 1969.
- The spacecraft comprises an orbiter, a lander, an ascender, and a returner. It was launched on November 24.
- China achieved the historic feat a designer of the Chang'e-5 probe from China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation stated.
- If the return journey concludes successfully, China will be only the third country to have samples from the moon following the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s.
- China made its first lunar landing in 2013.

### Pixxel to launch remote-sensing satellite on Isro rocket in early 2021

- 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.
- The Bengaluru-based firm has entered into an agreement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under the Department of Space.



- The company's first satellite was scheduled to be launched towards the end of this year on a Russian Soyuz rocket.
- Pixxel aims to put a constellation of 30 earth observation micro-satellites into a sun-synchronous orbit by mid-2023.
- 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.

#### HAL-IISc Skill Development Centre in launches its first training programme

- HAL-IISc Skill Development Centre in Challakere of Chitradurga district in Karnataka launched its first training programme offering five courses in virtual mode.
- The programmes offered are in the niche engineering areas of aerospace, mechanical, electrical and electronic sectors, and in line with the "Make in India" mission.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had formally inaugurated the Skill Development Centre in Challakere on August 13th this year.
- The Centre is located in IISc's new 1500 acre campus in Challakere, projected as a Science and Technology city.
- The Skill Development Centre spread over 75000 sq.feet was constructed at a cost of 73.7 crore rupees.
- It is well equipped with modern labs, classrooms, auditorium and residential accommodation for 250 trainees and faculty members.

#### BSNL ties-up with Skylotech India for Satellite based network

- Global machine connectivity solutions company **Skylotech** India has partnered with **BSNL** to launch a satellite-based **narrowband IoT network** in India.
- That will enable it to provide connectivity for millions of unconnected machines, sensors and industrial IoT devices across the country.
- This solution, developed by Skylo, will connect with BSNL's satellite ground infrastructure and provide pan India coverage, including indian seas.
- This is the **World's first satellite based NB-IoT network**.
- **Skylo User Terminal** interfaces with sensors transmits data to Network.

#### DRDO Conducts Joint Venture Protective Carbine trials

- DRDO designed **5.56x30 mm** Protective Carbine has successfully undergone the final phase of User trials on 7th December 2020 meeting all the GSQR parameters.
- JVPC has successfully met the stringent performance criteria of reliability and accuracy in addition to quality trials conducted by DGQA.
- **JVPC** is a Gas Operated Semi Bull-pup automatic weapon having more than **700 rpm** rate of fire.
- Its effective range of the carbine is **more than 100 m** and weighs about 3.0 kg with key features like high reliability, low recoil, retractable Butt, ergonomic design, single hand firing capability, and multiple Picatinny rails.
- The carbine has been designed as per **Indian Army's GSQR, by Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE)**, a Pune based laboratory of DRDO.

#### ISRO to launch Communication Satellite CMS-01 on December 17

- The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** will launch communication satellite **CMS-01** aboard **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C50)** on December 17, 2020. This would be India's 42nd Communication Satellite.

- The mission would be the 52nd mission of PSLV and 22nd flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration (with 6 strap-on motors). The launch vehicle will take off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- CMS-01, India's 42nd Communication Satellite, has been envisaged to provide services in the Extended-C Band of the frequency spectrum.
- This will be the 77th launch vehicle mission from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- The CMS-01 will be a replacement for GSAT-12 that weighed 1,410 kg and was launched on July 11, 2011 with a mission life of eight years.

#### Indian-American Raja Chari, Selected By NASA For SpaceX Mission

- **Indian-American US Air Force Colonel Raja Chari** has been selected as the **Commander of the SpaceX Crew-3 mission** to the **International Space Station (ISS)** by **NASA** and the **European Space Agency**.
- Raja Chari, 43, will serve as the commander while NASA's Tom Marshburn will be pilot and ESA's Matthias Maurer will serve as a mission specialist for the SpaceX Crew-3 mission to the ISS, which is expected to be launched next year.
- He is a colonel in the US Air Force and joins the mission with extensive experience as a test pilot.
- He has accumulated more than 2,500 hours of flight time in his career.

#### India's first hypersonic wind tunnel test facility inaugurated in Hyderabad

- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated the advanced **Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT)** test facility in **Hyderabad**.
- HWT Test facility is free jet facility having nozzle exit diameter of 1 metre, pressure vacuum driven enclosed.
- That will simulate **Mach No 5 to 12** (Mach represents the multiplication factor to the speed of sound).
- After America and Russia, **India is the third country** to have such a large facility.
- In that test Defence Minister also visited two anti-drone technologies which were demonstrated by DRDO labs on the occasion.

#### China's new space carrier rocket successfully launches five satellites

- On December 22, China's new medium-lift carrier **rocket Long March-8** made its maiden flight on, sending **five satellites** successfully into planned orbit.
- The rocket was launched from the **Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site** in **Hainan**.
- The new rocket, which was developed by the **China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT)**
- The five experimental satellites will carry out the in-orbit verification of microwave imaging and other technologies.

#### About Long March-8 rocket:

- The Long March-8 rocket which has a total length of 50.3 meters, and a take-off mass of 356 tonnes can carry a payload of at least 4.5 tonnes to a sun-synchronous orbit at an altitude of 700 km, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) stated.
- The rocket fills the gap in China's launch capability to the sun-synchronous orbit from 3 tonnes to 4.5 tonnes, and is of great significance for accelerating the upgrading of launch vehicles.

#### Delhi airport's Terminal 3 installs new passenger tracking system

- **Delhi airport's** Terminal 3 has installed a **new passenger tracking system** that would help manage the flow of people, reduce waiting time and ensure social distancing.
- The Xovis **passenger tracking system (PTS)**, a queue management system, displays live waiting time, taken at various processes like check-in, security check etc., on screens put up at various places.
- In this PTS, passengers are counted and tracked anonymously using the ceiling-mounted sensors.

- The PTS receives data streams from the sensors and provides the airport operator with valuable key performance indicators (KPIs) such as waiting times, process times and passenger throughput.

#### China launches remote sensing satellite Yaogan-33

- **China** has successfully launched a **new remote sensing satellite** into space, on December 27, 2020.
- The satellite was launched from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China**.
- The satellite, Yaogan-33, was launched aboard a Long March-4C rocket and entered the planned orbit successfully. It was the **357th flight** mission of the Long March carrier rocket series,
- The mission also sent a micro and nano technology experiment satellite into orbit.
- The two satellites will be used for scientific experiments, land resources survey, crop yield estimation and disaster prevention and reduction.

#### DRDO facility develops Quantum Random Number Generator

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has achieved a milestone in quantum technology by successfully developing a **Quantum Random Number Generator (QRNG)**.
- The facility has developed a fiber-optic branch path based QRNG.
- Random numbers have essential roles in various fields ranging from quantum communication, cryptography applications like key generation, key wrapping, authentication along with scientific simulations, lotteries and fundamental physics experiments.
- On December 8, the DRDO announced that their Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) technology underwent a successful trial between two laboratories in Hyderabad.

#### India launches first remote monitoring system for oil refineries

- **Indian Oil Corp (IOC)**, the country's largest fuel retailer, announced it has launched the country's first remote monitoring system for oil refineries' turbines. The project, located in **Hyderabad, was inaugurated by oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan**.
- The Remote Monitoring & Operation Centre for Tracking of Indian Oil's Refinery Gas Turbines was implemented by **BHEL-GE Gas Turbine Services (BGGTS)**, a joint venture of BHEL and General Electric.
- The technology called Proactive Predictive Analytics-based Automated Anomaly Detection will allow Gas Turbine Operational Data flowing in digitally from 27 turbines of the eight IndianOil refineries to be analysed round-the-clock in Hyderabad.
- This analysis will help in detection and diagnosis of emerging issues relating to gas turbines before they become critical and trigger corrective actions. This will help avoid refinery process unit shutdowns.

#### IIT Bombay Released Urban Quality of Life Index 2020; Mumbai Tops, Patna Ranked Last

- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B) released the Urban Quality of Life (UQoL) Index 2020 which ranked 14 Indian cities in India using 29 indicators grouped into 7 categories.
- In accordance to this, Mumbai (Maharashtra) tops the index followed by Delhi, Kolkata (West Bengal) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) by providing Highest Quality of Life while Bihar's capital city Patna provides poorest quality of life to its people.
- This is for the first time the index has considered the factor of gender parity under which Chennai is named as the most women-friendly city while Patna stood last.

#### IIT Kanpur Researchers Develop "Damaru" Inspired Lattice for Vibration Isolation in High Speed Trains and Stealth Submarines

- Under the SPARC project of Ministry of Education, IIT Kanpur researchers develop a 'Dambaru' or 'Damaru' inspired lattice, which shows tremendous application in vibration isolation in high-speed trains, Stealth submarines and Helicopters rotors.
- The hour-glass shaped meta-structure provides superior absorption of electromagnetic and sonic waves.

#### Revision Points

Institutions/Persons	Things to be Discovered/Developed
UK	Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine
Instagram	Live Rooms
Pixxel	Remote-sensing satellite on Isro
BSNL & Skylotech India	Satellite based network
Indian Space Research Organisation	CMS-01
Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT) test facility in Hyderabad	Mach No 5 to 12
China	Yaogan-33
DRDO	Quantum Random Number Generator
IIT Kanpur	Damaru

#### Important Environment News

##### Fossil Fuel Production to Exceed Climate Targets: Production Gap Report, 2020

- In accordance with the report titled "The Production Gap, 2020" produced by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) the world is planning to produce more than double the amount of Coal, Oil and gas by 2030.
- It is planning an average annual increase of 2% for coal, oil, and gas production in 2030 as against the requirement of fossil fuel reduction by around 6% per year between 2020 and 2030 to attain warming target of 1.5°C.

##### 2020 set to be among one of the Three Warmest Year Ever Recorded: WMO's State of the Global Climate 2020

- According to the "State of the Global Climate 2020" Interim report released by the United Nations World Meteorological Organization (WMO) based on the temperature data from January-October (of 2020), the year 2020 is set to be among one of the Three Warmest Years Ever recorded. 2020 becomes the 2<sup>nd</sup> warmest year followed by 2016.
- The Finalized version of the 2020 report will be published in March 2021. WMO assessment is based on five global temperature datasets.

##### Malayan Giant Squirrel could fall by 90% in India by 2050; ZSI's 1st of its kind Survey

- According to a First-of-its-kind survey conducted by Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Malayan Giant Squirrel or Black Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*) could fall by 90% in India by 2050 due to shrinking of its original habitat zone.
- Malayan Giant Squirrel is one of the World's Largest Squirrel species and also one of the 3 Giant Squirrels species found in India.

##### Global CO2 Emissions expected to fall by 7% in 2020 due to Pandemic: UNEP's Emission Gap Report 2020

- According to 11th Edition of Emissions Gap Report 2020 (Annual report) released by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), The Global CO2 (Carbon Dioxide) Emissions are set to fall by 7% in 2020 owing to Pandemic.

- The report states that emissions of the richest 1% of the Global Population (Countries like United States of America (USA), European Union (EU), Australia and New Zealand) account for more than twice of the share of poorest 50% of countries.

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- Malayan Giant Squirrel is one of the World's Largest Squirrel species and also one of the 3 Giant Squirrels species found in India.

#### IUCN Report named India's Western Ghats under Significant Concern

- In accordance with the new report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) namely "IUCN World Heritage Outlook 3", India's Western Ghats, inscribed by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 2012 as a natural world heritage site, is threatened by population pressure, urbanization and climate change. The site is regarded as of significant concern.

#### New species of Pygmy Grasshopper named "Tettilobus trishula" after Shiva's Trishul

- A new species of wide-nosed Pygmy Grasshopper documented by researchers in Eravikulam National Park (Idukki, Kerala) in January, 2018 has been named 'Tettilobus Trishula' (common name Shiva's pygmy trishula) as its protrusion in pronotum resembles the three-pronged spear 'Trishul' used by Lord Shiva. The discovery has been published in the Journal Zootaxa.

#### Ischaemum janarthanamii: A New Species of Indian Muraingrasses Discovered in Goa by ARI Researchers

- A team of researchers of Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) led by Dr. Mandar Datar and Dr. Ritesh Kumar Choudhary have discovered a tough novel new species of Indian Muraingrasses (Genus *Ischaemum*) named *Ischaemum janarthanamii* in Goa in the Western Ghats.
- The research paper about this species was published in *Annales Botanici Fennici*, a Finland based journal.

### Important Rankings and Indexes

Index	India's rank	Top	Presented By
Climate Change Performance Index	10th	Sweden (4 <sup>th</sup> ) Top 3 empty.	
Human Development Index	131	Norway	United Nations Development Programme
Human Freedom Index	111st	New Zealand	Cato Institute

#### Kotak Wealth - Hurun Wealthy Women List 2020

- **Roshni Nadar Malhotra**, chairperson of IT major HCL Technologies, topped the list of the richest women in the country with a net worth of Rs 54,850 crore, according to Hurun India and Kotak Wealth Management's 'Kotak Wealth Hurun – Leading Wealthy Women' report.
- The list is based on the net worth of women as on September 30, 2020.
- The 2020 edition of the report focuses exclusively on women who play an active role in their family business, entrepreneurs and professionals," the organisation stated.

### India ranked 10th in Climate Change Performance Index

- On December 7, 2020 Germanwatch has released the 16 th edition of CCPI.
- The list is prepared by assessing performances of 57 countries and European Union in four categories.
- GHG emissions - 40%
- Renewable Energy - 20%
- Energy Use - 20%
- Climate Policy - 20%
- These 57 Countries and European Union Collectively are responsible for about 90% of Global GHG emissions.
- Though India slid one position down from ninth in 2019 to 10 th this year and scored 63.98 out of 100.
- No countries were ranked in top 3 Positions, the top rank in the CCPI 2021 Index is the 4 th Rank.
- Sweden (4th) United Kingdom (5th), Denmark (6th), Morocco (7th), Norway (8th), Chile (9th) were among the top 10 rankers in the index.
- No country was doing enough to meet the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement, according to the index. Six G20 countries were ranked among very low performers. The United States, with a rank of 61, was the worst performer.
- Paris Agreement commitment of keeping global warming increase below 2 degree celsius by the end of the century and actually to make efforts to restrict it to 1.5 degree celsius rise.

### Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at 41 on Forbes 2020 list of 100 most powerful women

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has made it to the list of the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes, for the second year in a row.
- Sitharaman is ranked 41st on the list this year. In 2019, she was ranked at 34.
- 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 10th year in a row.
- European Central Bank head Christine Lagarde is at second position the second year in a row while US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris is at third spot, entering the list for the first time.
- Sitharaman was appointed India's finance minister in 2019 and is also the minister for corporate affairs.

### Sonu Sood tops '50 Asian Celebrities In The World' 2020 list

- Indian actor Sonu Sood has been named the number 1 Asian celebrity on the planet for 2020, which is published by UK based Eastern Eye newspaper.
- He ranked ahead of global stars, including from Hollywood, the music industry, television, literature and social media, for his inspiring philanthropic work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The top 50 list celebrating Asian stars who shone the brightest in 2020, is based on those who did good work, made a positive impact, broke boundaries, shattered glass ceilings, gave hope, did philanthropic deeds or were just inspiring in their own unique way.

### India Ranks 131 in UN's Human Development Index

- **India** has been ranked 131 among 189 countries in the 2020 human development index, according to a report released by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**.
- Human Development Index is the measure of a nation's health, education, and standards of living.
- **Norway topped** the index, with a score of 0.957 and followed by Ireland, Switzerland, Hong Kong and Iceland. **Niger** is the **lowest ranked** country at 189, placed among Low human development category, with a score of 0.394.



### Top 10 Countries in HDI Index 2019 :

1. Norway (HDI value – 0.957)
2. Ireland (HDI value – 0.955)
3. Switzerland (HDI value – 0.955)
4. Hong Kong, China (SAR) – (HDI value – 0.949)
4. Iceland – (HDI value – 0.949)
6. Germany – (HDI value – 0.947)
7. Sweden – (HDI value – 0.945)
8. Australia – (HDI value – 0.944)
8. Netherlands – (HDI value – 0.944)
10. Denmark (HDI value – 0.940)

### India Ranks 111 in Human Freedom Index 2020

- **India** was ranked **111th out of 162 countries** in the **Human Freedom Index 2020** report released by the **Cato Institute**, plummeting 17 spots from its position in the last index.
- In 2019, India was ranked 94 on the index.
- The countries that ranked in the top 10 are **New Zealand (8.87)**, Switzerland(8.82), Hong Kong(8.74), Denmark, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Estonia, and Germany and Sweden (with the last two tied in the 9th place).
- Syrian Arab Republic is the last ranked country with a human freedom score of 3.97 out of 10.

### HDFC Bank top among 100 BFSI firms

- **HDFC Bank** is the **top ranked** company among the **100 BFSI** companies in the country, as per the BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020 report by **Wizikey**.
- HDFC Bank has topped because of its customer service, monetary management, and innovative offerings amid the coronavirus pandemic.
- **ICICI Bank** and **State Bank of India** (SBI) are ranked second and third, respectively
- Yes Bank, PNB, HSBC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bank of Baroda, Deutsche Bank and IDBI are the top-10 banks of 2020.

### Other categories winners

- While Google Pay and PhonePe were the top wallets among the customers.
- In Payments bank Category: Airtel Payments Bank, Paytm Payments Bank, and Jio Payments Bank ranks top.
- In the Neo Banks segment Category YONO, Niyo, Kotak 811 ranks top.

### India Tops the List of Sending Most Number of Educated Migrants to OECD Countries: OECD Data

- According to the data released by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development(OECD) in the Most Common birth countries of Highly Educated Migrants residing in OECD Nations, India came at the top with around 3.12 Million Highly Educated Migrants living in the OECD Nations as of 2015-16 data.
- The Data reveals that around 120 Million Migrant People live in the OECD Member Countries. China with 2.25 Million (48.6 % Highly Educated Migrants) came next to India in the list followed by Philippines – 1.89 Million Migrants.

### Fortune's Businessperson of the Year 2020: India's Shantanu Narayen ranked 8th & Ajay Banga ranked 9th; Elon Musk Tops

- The Fortune ranked India's Shantanu Narayen, Chief Executive Officer(CEO) of Adobe in 8th position and Ajay Banga, CEO of Mastercard in 9th position in its list of Businessperson of the Year 2020.

- The list is topped by Elon Musk, co-founder & CEO of Tesla. He is also CEO of Space Exploration Technologies Corp.(SpaceX). Lisa Su, CEO of AMD has been ranked in 2nd spot followed by Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia in the 3rd spot.

#### **UNESCO Launched 2020 State of Education Report for India to Support GoI in Youth's Skill Development**

- UNESCO has launched the 2nd edition of "State of the Education Report for India 2020: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)". This report is an overview of the present capacity for TVET provision through short-term and long-term courses.
- It has been developed by an experienced team of researchers from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, Maharashtra under the guidance of UNESCO New Delhi.

#### **India records 60% rise in Leopard population across the Country: Status of Leopards in India, 2018 report**

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), Prakash Javadekar released the 'Status of Leopards in India, 2018' report.
- The report states that India has recorded a 60% rise in Leopard population across the country and it now has 12, 852 Leopards.
- The states Madhya Pradesh (3, 421), Karnataka (1, 783) & Maharashtra (1, 690) recorded the most number of leopards.

#### **NE states, UP, Bihar top in pandemic management: SBI Study**

- According to a study conducted by State Bank of India (SBI) Research, North-Eastern (NE) states (All NE states combined as one) topped the list of states in managing Pandemic, Bihar came second, followed by Uttar Pradesh. Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh were placed at the bottom.
- Soumya Kanti Ghosh, SBI Group Chief Economic Advisor was the author of the report. They were ranked based on 2 parameters – i. macro (Fiscal deficit) & Consumer Price Inflation.
- 5 performance of states on Central Government Schemes (one nation one ration card, PM Svanidhi, PM Samman, emergency credit linked guarantee scheme and PM Awas Yojana).

#### **India drops to 9th spot in Global Spam Call Tally – 4th Edition of Insights Report by Truecaller**

- According to the 4th Edition of Global Insights Report for 2020 released by Truecaller, a Swedish Caller ID and Spam Blocking app, India ranked 9th in the list of countries affected by spam calls in 2020.
- In India, Gujarat received the most spam calls. The list was topped by Brazil, United States & Hungary.
- The report also stated that 8 out of 10 women in India receive sexual harassment, inappropriate calls and SMS regularly.

#### **India drops to 2nd Position in BNEF's 2020 Climatescope survey**

- According to Climatescope Survey 'Emerging Markets Outlook 2020: Energy Transition in the World's Fastest Growing economies' released by Bloomberg New Energy Finance Limited (BNEF) India dropped to the 2nd position in the 2020 survey due to decline in Clean Energy Investment.
- Chile topped the survey rankings with a score of 2.85, Brazil came third with a score of 2.44.
- India topped the BNEF's Climatescope Emerging Markets Ranking in 2019.

#### **Low-Paid Workers, Women most impacted due to Wage Gaps created by COVID-19: ILO Report 2020-21**

- According to “Global Wage Report 2020-21: Wages and minimum wages in the time of COVID-19” released by International Labour Organization (ILO), Women and Lower-paid workers were impacted the most due to decrease in wages because of reduced working hours during the COVID-19 crisis.
- The report is the 7th in the series of 2020’s ILO Global Wage Report, it provides evidence of the effects of the crisis on wages in different countries due to Pandemic.

#### India only high endemic country to report a decline of 17.6 % in Malaria cases in 2019

- According to the World Malaria Report 2020 released by the World Health Organization (WHO), India became the only high endemic country to report a decline of 17.6 % in 2019 compared to 2018.
- India reported the largest fall in Malaria cases in the WHO South-East Asia Region. As per the ‘World Malaria Report 2020’, Meghalaya has topped the list in reducing malaria cases by 59% in India. Nigeria, Congo, Tanzania, Mozambique, Niger & Burkina Faso accounted for 51% of Global malaria deaths in 2019.

#### Pandemic has pushed 32 Million People into Extreme Poverty in LDCs : UNCTAD Report 2020

- According to “The Least Developed Countries Report 2020: Productive Capacities for the New Decade” released by UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), Pandemic has pushed around 32 Million People into Extreme Poverty in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
- Due to the Pandemic 32 million people live on less than USD 1.90 per day. These are measured on Three Criterias – Per Capita income, Human Assets Index (HAI), economic and environmental vulnerability index.

### Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
A. Sivathanu Pillai (Released by Venkaiah Naidu)	40 Years with Abdul Kalam – Untold Stories
Amish Tripathi (co-authored by Bhavana Roy)	Dharma: Decoding the Epics for A Meaningful Life (published by Westland India)
Madhav Bhandari (released by Devendra Fadnavis)	Ayodhya
PS Sreedharan Pillai	Oh Mizoram (Released by Venkaiah Naidu)
Kailash Satyarthi	Covid-19: Sabhyata ka Sankat aur Samadhan (Covid-19: Crisis of Civilisation and Solutions)
Dr Roopa Chari (Released by Shripad Naik)	Sutranivednachi sutra- ek an bav (Konkani Book)
Dr. Stuti Sharma, Manoranjan Vishwas (CO-author)	Element of Quantitative Genetics
Rajindar Sachar	In Pursuit of Justice (The autobiography of late Justice Rajindar Sachar)
Amrit Raj	Indian Icon: A Cult Called Royal Enfield
Alfredo Covelli	Vahana Masterclass
Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank	Pioneer of Humanity: Maharishi Arvind
Nidhi Vadhera	Romancing Targets: Get Closer to Selling in 7 Steps
Ms Nitu (Co-author)	The Shaurya Unbound-Tales of Valour of the Central Reserve Police

	Force
Prem Prakash	Reporting India: My Seventy 0Year Journey As A Journalist

## Important Peoples' in News

### Corey Anderson retires from international cricket

- New Zealand all-rounder Corey Anderson retires from international cricket, signs up with MLC in the USA. Anderson has signed a 3-year contract with Major League Cricket (MLC) in the USA.
- In the 93 international games across formats, he scored 2277 runs with two hundreds and 10 half-centuries. He also picked up 90 wickets.
- Anderson rose to fame after scoring the fastest 100 in the history of One Day International cricket (ODI), in 36-ball against West Indies in January 2014.
- His 36-ball hundred against West Indies on the New Year's Day in 2014, was the fastest ODI hundred for a year before AB de Villiers' broke the record with a 31-ball feat against the same opposition.

### Jehan Daruvala creates history, becomes first Indian to win F2 race at Sakhir

- Jehan Daruvala emerged on top in the support race of the season-ending Formula 1 Grand Prix after a thrilling battle against F2 champion Mick Schumacher and Daniel Ticktum.
- The 22-year-old Indian emerged on top in the support race of the season-ending Formula 1 Grand Prix.
- His Japanese teammate, Yuki Tsunoda came second and Britain's Daniel Ticktum was in a third position

### Parthiv Patel announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- Former India **wicketkeeper-batsman** Parthiv Patel announced his retirement from all forms of cricket after an 18-years-long cricket career.
- The 35-year-old left-hander, who made his international debut in 2002, played 25 Tests, 38 ODIs and two T20Is for India.
- While the Gujarat cricketer represented his state in **194 first-class matches**.
- Parthiv, made his Test debut under Sourav Ganguly, at the age of 17 years and 153 days, played 65 international games for the country, which included 25 Tests, 38 ODIs and two T20 Internationals.
- Parthiv scored nearly 1700 runs (1696) across formats with 934 runs (6 half centuries) coming in the longest format.
- He last played for India in 2018 during a Test match against **South Africa in Johannesburg**.

### Russian badminton player Nikita Khakimov banned for five years over betting, fixing offences

- Russian doubles badminton player **Nikita Khakimov** has received a five-year ban after being found guilty of offences relating to **betting, wagering and irregular match results**, the **Badminton World Federation (BWF)**.
- The BWF opened an investigation against Khakimov after obtaining a statement from a whistleblower, who claimed the shuttler had approached him to manipulate match results at the European Teams Championships held in Feb. 2018.
- Khakimov, 32, was part of the Russian men's team that won the bronze medal at the 2020 European Team Championships.

### MS Dhoni named captain of ICC Men's ODI and T20I Teams of the Decade, Kohli leads Test side

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced the **Men's T20I and ODI teams** of the decade and named former **India captain MS Dhoni as the leader of both sides**.
- The T20I side comprises four players from India, two from Australia, two West Indies and one each from Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Afghanistan.
- Current Indian captain Virat Kohli, pacer Jasprit Bumrah and Rohit Sharma are the other Indians in the T20I team.

#### List of Members :

- **ICC's T20I Team of the Decade:** Rohit Sharma, Chris Gayle, Aaron Finch, Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Glenn Maxwell, MS Dhoni (c), Kieron Pollard, Rashid Khan, Jasprit Bumrah, and Lasith Malinga.
- **ICC's ODI Team of the Decade:** Rohit Sharma, David Warner, Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Shakib Al Hasan, MS Dhoni (c), Ben Stokes, Mitchell Starc, Trent Boult, Imran Tahir and Lasith Malinga.
- **ICC's Test Team of the Decade:** Alistair Cook, David Warner, Kane Williamson, Virat Kohli (c), Steve Smith, Kumar Sangakkara, Ben Stokes, Ravi Ashwin, Dale Steyn, Stuart Broad, James Anderson.

### Pakistan pacer Mohammad Amir announces retirement from international cricket

- Pakistan fast bowler **Mohammad Amir** has decided to quit international cricket alleging 'mental torture' from the **Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)**.
- Amir played 30 Tests, 61 ODIs, and 50 T20Is in his international career, picking up 119, 81, and 59 wickets in the three formats respectively.
- His last appearance for Pakistan came in the T20I series against England in August earlier this year.

### Vijaykumar Yo Mahesh, Former TamilNadu and CSK Bowler Announced Retirement from All Forms of Cricket

- Vijaykumar Yo Mahesh, who played for TamilNadu and Chennai Super Kings(CSK) announced retirement from all forms of cricket.
- The right-arm medium-fast bowler(seamer) has also played for Delhi Daredevils.
- He took 108 wickets in 50 first-class games and 93 wickets in List A cricket at an average of 24.67.

## Important Mergers and Acquisitions

### ICICI Bank acquires 9.09% stake in ed-tech platform Myclassboard Educational Solutions

- Private sector lender **ICICI Bank** will acquire 9.09 percent stake in educational technology platform Myclassboard Educational Solutions Pvt Ltd for cash consideration of **Rs 4.5 crore**.
- The transaction is expected to be completed by the end of **February 2021**.

### UBS Principal Capital Asia Ltd Sells Over 20 lakh shares of IndusInd Bank Ltd Worth Rs 184.51 crore

- UBS Principal Capital Asia Ltd. sold 20,70,000 shares of IndusInd Bank Ltd through open market transaction. The shares were sold at an average price of Rs 891.4 a piece, valuing the transaction at Rs 184.51 crore. BofA Securities Europe SA purchased the shares of IndusInd Bank at the same price.
- As per the shareholding data of IndusInd Bank for September quarter 2020, UBS Principal Capital Asia held 3.22% stake in the bank as a public shareholder.

### CCI Approves Acquisition of AES's 49% stake in OPGC by OHPC

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) gave the approval for the acquisition of the shares of Odisha Power Generation Corporation Ltd (OPGC) by Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC) under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- CCI gave approval to the acquisition of certain assets of the Prestige Group by affiliates of Blackstone Group Inc.
- Prestige has signed term sheets to sell a large portfolio of its retail and hotel properties for an enterprise value of about Rs 9,160 crore to Blackstone Group, in November 2020.

#### Central Govt Sells Nearly 1 Crore shares of SUUTI's Stake in Axis Bank; Earns about Rs 600 Crore

- The central government, in the last 2 weeks has sold nearly 1 crore shares of Axis Bank worth around Rs 600 crores held through the Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI).
- SUUTI held 4.33% stake in Axis Bank as on September 30, 2020. After this transaction, SUUTI holds 3.92% stake(11.98 crore shares) in Axis Bank.

#### Warburg Pincus Sells 4.47% stake in AU Small Finance Bank for Rs 1,247.69 crore

- Redwood Investment Ltd, an entity owned by Warburg Pincus sold a 4.47% stake(13.7 million shares)in AU Small Finance Bank for Rs 1,247.69 crore through open market transactions.
- As per the latest shareholding data, Warburg Pincus held 4.58% of AU Small Finance Bank.

#### Revision points

Company	Merging Company
ICICI Bank	Myclassboard Educational Solutions (9.09%)
Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited	Odisha Power Generation Corporation Ltd (49%)
SUUTI	Axis Bank (3.92%)

#### Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

##### India Post Payments Bank unveil new digital payment app 'DakPay'

- Department of Posts and India Post Payments Bank unveiled a new digital payment app **DakPay** on **December 15, 2020**.
- The App is launched as part of its ongoing efforts to provide Digital Financial inclusion at the last mile across India.
- The app was launched by Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Law & Justice **Ravi Shankar Prasad**.
- It will facilitate services such as sending money, scanning QR code and making payment for services and merchants digitally.

##### About features of the app:

- Sending money to others Through DMT
- Scan QR code and make payment for services, merchants digitally
- Enabling cashless ecosystem through biometrics,
- Providing interoperable banking services to the customers of ANY BANK and Utility Bill Payment services.



### Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches E-Sampada web portal and mobile app

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister **Hardeep Singh Puri** launched **E-Sampada**, a new web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day.
- The new application provides a **single window for all the services** including allotment for over one lakh government residential accommodations, office space allotment to government organisations in 45 office complexes in 28 cities and booking of 1,176 holiday home rooms.

#### About E-Sampada Portal :

- The portal provides online facility to users across India to lodge complaints, submit documents and appear for virtual hearing.
- This is a significant step towards promotion of e-governance to enhance transparency and accountability in providing various estate services like allotment, retention, regularisation and no dues certificate
- The real time information on utilisation of assets and delivery of service will facilitate optimum utilisation of resources.
- The automated processes will minimize human intervention and will lead to greater transparency.

### Amarinder Singh Launches Digital 'PR Insight' Mobile App And Web Portal Platform

- Punjab, Chief Minister Captain **Amarinder Singh** launched Mobile Application and web portal '**PR Insight**' to monitor the feedback and subsequently improve the delivery of citizen centric services to ensure responsive and transparent administration in the State.
- It has been developed by the **Directorate of Information & Public Relations Department, Punjab**.
- It is mainly for the application to restructure the existing schemes & Programmes after analyzing the feedback received from people.
- As many as 31 leading Newspaper agencies/portals have been integrated online with PR Insight application & portal and all the State Departments' news articles are fetched from these newspaper agencies on a real time basis.
- The app will help the Government in identifying best practices from positively perceived programmes.

### Union Minister Harsh Vardhan launches Ocean Data Management 'Digital Ocean' developed by INCOIS

- Union Minister for Science and Technology **Harshvardhan** launched the '**Digital Ocean**' platform on December 29, 2020.
- It is developed by Indian **National Centre for Oceanic Information Services (INCOIS)**.

#### About Digital Ocean App :

- Digital Ocean is the **one stop-solution** for all data related needs of a wide range of users, including research institutions, operational agencies, strategic users, academic community, maritime industry, and the public.
- It can be accessed at [www.do.incois.gov.in](http://www.do.incois.gov.in) website.
- It will play a central role in sustainable management of our oceans.

### Minister of state for External Affairs Launches Global Pravasi Rishta portal and mobile App

- Minister of State for External Affairs V. **Muraleedharan** launched the Global Pravasi Rishta portal and mobile App, to connect with **3.12 crore** strong diaspora across the world.
- The Minister said, the portal will act as a **dynamic communication platform** between our pravasis, the Ministry of External Affairs and missions abroad and will help in engaging Indian diaspora more intensively.
- This portal is created to enable the registration of Indian diaspora members i.e. **NRIs, PIOs and the OCIs** which is not just going to facilitate the **Indian government to connect with the overseas Indian community** but also facilitate NRIs,

OCIs and PIOs community by connecting them to various **new and existing government schemes** benefiting them in various areas of interest.

#### **ICICI Bank Launches Online Portal Called Infinite India for foreign firms**

- **ICICI Bank** has launched an online platform **Infinite India** to support foreign companies to establish or expand business in India.
- The platform offers them banking solutions as well as value-added services such as incorporation of a business entity, corporate filings, licences and registrations, HR services, compliances and taxation among others.
- Through this initiative, ICICI bank **aims to strengthen** its position in the **multinational corporations (MNC)** segment.
- And also this initiative is part of our strategy to further strengthen our technology enabled offerings aimed to partner with foreign companies coming to india.

#### **ICICI Bank launches iMobile Pay**

- ICICI Bank has launched a new version of mobile banking app, called iMobile pay, that offers payments and banking services to customers of any bank.

##### **About iMobile pay**

- iMobile Pay, the app offers a unique combination of facilities of a payment app such as enabling customers to pay to any UPI (Unified Payments Interface) ID or merchants, pay bills and do online recharges among others
- In addition to that it offers instant banking services namely savings account, investments, loans, credit cards, gift cards, and travel cards, along with other banking services.
- Another prominent feature of iMobile Pay is 'pay to contacts' that enable users to automatically see the UPI IDs of their phone book contacts, registered on the ICICI Bank UPI ID network, of any payment app and digital wallet.

#### **Universal Sampo General Insurance Company Launched the Upgraded USGI PULZ Mobile App**

- Universal Sampo General Insurance Company Limited, a non-life insurance company launched the upgraded Mobile application – USGI PULZ to enhance service delivery.
- The Universal Sampo General Insurance Company Limited is a joint venture of Indian Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Karnataka Bank Ltd, Dabur Investment Corporation and Sampo Japan Insurance Inc, a leading general insurer from Japan.

#### **Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches PARESHRAM portal with 22 online services of Different Labour Laws**

- Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha virtually launched PARESHRAM portal with 22 online services of different labour laws and Employees State Insurance (E.S.I) Department under the 5T initiative of the state govt. 5T – Technology, Transparency, Teamwork and Time Leading to Transformation.
- The portal will provide 52 types of services shortly.

#### **Max Life Launches 'Max Life Critical Illness and Disability Rider', a Health Insurance Rider and 'Max Fit', a Wellness App**

- Max Life Insurance Company Limited launched 'Max Life Critical Illness and Disability Rider' is a health insurance rider that offers customers protection from upto 64 critical illnesses.
- The company also launched 'Max Fit', a comprehensive wellness programme(app).

#### **"JSA II: Catch the Rain" Awareness Generation Campaign Launched by NWM & NYKS**

- National Water Mission (NWM), Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MoYAS) launched the "JSA II: Catch the Rain" Awareness Generation Campaign in New Delhi. JSA stands for Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

- The awareness generation phase of the campaign will run from mid-December 2020 to March 2021 with the tagline “catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls”.

#### Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By/Developed By
DakPay	India Post Payments Bank
E-Sampada	Hardeep Singh
PR Insight	Amarinder Singh
Digital Ocean	National Centre for Oceanic Information Services
Global Pravasi Rishta portal	V. Muraleedharan
Infinite India	ICICI Bank
USGI PULZ	Universal Sompo General Insurance Company
iMobile pay	ICICI Bank
PAReSHRAM portal	Odisha CM
Max Fit	Max Life Insurance Company
CO-WIN mobile app	Central Government

### Important Sports News

#### Cricket

##### Virat Kohli beats Tendulkar's record

- India captain **Virat Kohli** became **the fastest cricketer** to score 12,000 ODI runs, breaking a record held by legendary compatriot **Sachin Tendulkar**.
- Kohli reached the milestone during the third and final match against Australia in Canberra.

##### BCCI Clears 10-Team IPL From 2022

- The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** confirmed that **10 teams** will take part in the **Indian Premier League from 2022**. The decision was taken in the BCCI AGM meeting in **Ahmedabad**.
- Two new teams will be added to the Indian Premier League (IPL) from the 2022 edition, making it a 10-team league
- In addition to that, former cricketer **Chetan Sharma** has been appointed as the **new chairman** of selectors for national men's cricket team by the **Cricket Advisory Committee headed by Madan Lal**.
- The cricket governing body also decided to increase the retirement age of referees, umpires and scorers to 60. Earlier it was 55.

##### The ICC Awards of the Decade winners announced

- The winners of the prestigious **ICC Awards** of the Decade were announced on 28th December 2020. The ICC Awards of The Decade **recognise the best players across Cricket over the past 10 years**.

##### List of Winners

- ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade – **MS Dhoni**

##### ICC Men's Awards :

- Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade – **Virat Kohli**

- ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Decade –Virat Kohli
- ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Decade – Rashid Khan
- ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Decade – Steve Smith
- ICC Men's Associate Cricketer of the Decade – Kyle Coetzer

#### ICC Women's Award :

- Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for ICC Female Cricketer of the Decade – Ellyse Perry
- ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Decade – Ellyse Perry
- ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Decade – Ellyse Perry
- ICC Women's Associate Cricketer of the Decade – Kathryn Bryce

### Football

#### FIFA cancels U17 and U20 World Cups in 2021

- FIFA has canceled the **Under-17 and Under-20 World Cups** scheduled for next year due to the pandemic. The next editions are now due to be staged in 2023, with **Indonesia still hosting the U20s and Peru the U17s**.
- So **Peru** will host the **FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2023**.
- In the same year, the FIFA U-20 World Cup will be held by Indonesia.

#### Japan to host 7-team FIFA Club World Cup in 2021

- FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) announced that Japan will host the existing Seven-Team format of FIFA Club World Cup in December, 2021.
- It will be the 18th Edition of FIFA Club World Cup.
- The year 2021 will witness 2 FIFA Club World Cup Tournaments - The 2020 Edition FIFA Club World Cup (17th Edition) will be held in Qatar from February 1-11, 2021 and the 2021 Edition of FIFA Club World Cup will take place in Japan in December, 2021.

### Others

#### Sergio Perez wins Sakhir Grand Prix 2020

- Sergio Perez Mexico-Racing Point-BWT Mercedes , Sergio Perez , won the 2020 Sakhir Grand Prix,, at the Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir, Bahrain.
- Sergio Perez became the first Mexican victor in F1 since Pedro Rodriguez in 1970, ending a series of races dominated by Mercedes for whom Valtteri Bottas finished eighth and George Russell ninth.
- The race was the maiden edition of the Sakhir Grand Prix and sixteenth race of the 2020 Formula One World Championship.

#### Sri Lanka to host Asia Cup in 2021, Pakistan in 2022

- PTI, PCB Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Wasim Khan said, "The next Asia Cup will be hosted in Sri Lanka in June and we have got hosting rights now for the 2022 Asia Cup."
- The tournament which was supposed to take place in Pakistan this year, will now be taking place in Sri Lanka in 2021.
- PCB Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Wasim Khan said, "The next Asia Cup will be hosted in Sri Lanka in June and we have got hosting rights now for the 2022 Asia Cup."
- Since, it has been pushed to June 2021 in Sri Lanka now, Pakistan automatically gets the 2022 edition hosting rights as compensation.

### Kiren Rijiju launches 2nd edition of Fit India Cyclothon

- Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has launched the second edition of Fit India Cyclothon via social media.
- The mega cycling event which started from 7 th Dec to till 31st December 2020 for 25 days.
- The event will be held across the country in each district and citizens can participate by registering on Fit India website
- The Participants can cycle daily a distance of their choice, and share their images and videos on social media.
- They may also tag @FitIndiaOff and use the hashtag - FitIndiaCyclothon and #NewIndiaFitIndia.

### Madagascar replaces Maldives as host of 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games

- Madagascar has replaced the Maldives as the host of the 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games due to concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The event had been awarded to the Maldives last year, but members of the Indian Ocean Island Games Federation voted to move the Games to Madagascar.
- The Maldives had requested pushing back the 2023 Games to 2025 but the IOIGF was keen to avoid a six-year void between editions of the multi-sport event.
- Maldives had received the hosting right of the event in 2019.

### Max Verstappen wins 2020 Abu Dhabi

- **Max Verstappen** won **Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020**, held on 13 December 2020 in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- The Red Bull driver led from start to finish in the race, ending Mercedes' run of six consecutive wins at the Yas Marina Circuit circuit.
- The win was Verstappen's second victory of the season and 10th in his career to date.
- The race was the 17th and final round of the 2020 Formula One World Championship.
- **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes-Finland) stood second, followed by world champion **Lewis Hamilton** (Mercedes-Great Britain) at third place.

### Ankita Raina wins ITF doubles title in Dubai

- Top Indian tennis player **Ankita Raina** won her third doubles title of the pandemic-hit 2020 season, clinching the Al Habtoor challenge with Ekaterine Gorgodze.
- The unseeded Indo-Georgian pair won 6-4 3-6 10-6 against Aliona Bolsova Zadoinov from Spain and Slovakian Kaja Juvan in the final of the USD 100,000 hard court event.

### Odisha to host 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup

- The FIH, **International Hockey Federation** had announced that **the 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup** Will be hosted in **Odisha** for a second Consecutive Time.
- This time it will be held in Two venues, namely **Bhubaneswar** and **Rourkela**.
- The 2023 tournament will be **15th edition** of the Men's FIH Hockey World Cup. It will be held at the **Kalinga Stadium** in **Bhubaneswar** and at the **Biju Patnaik Hockey Stadium** in **Rourkela**.
- The Men's Hockey World Cup 2018 was also hosted by **Odisha**.

### ICC Announces Womens World Cup Schedule

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced the schedule for the **2022 Women's World Cup** in New Zealand with 31 matches to be played across 31 days from **March 4 to April 3, 2022**.
- Six cities in New Zealand will play host to the competition - Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin.

- **New Zealand, Australia, England, South Africa and India** have already qualified for the World Cup

#### **Doha to host 2030 Asian Games, Saudi Arabia in 2034**

- **Doha** will host the **2030 Asian Games** and rival **Riyadh** will stage the event in 2034 following a vote by the **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** General Assembly in **Muscat**.
- The second hosting city, for 2034, is **Riyadh**.
- The double award comes after OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah arranged a "win win" situation which saw the city with the most votes awarded the 2030 Games and the runner-up given 2034.
- 2030 Asian Games will be the **21st edition** of the multi-sports event, held after every **four years**. It is also known as **Asiad**.
- It means back-to-back Games will be held in West Asia with an intriguing race between two fierce political opponents ending with both Qatar and Saudi Arabia having something to show for it.
- Qatar will also host the 2022 World Cup.

#### **Robert Lewandowski and Lucy Bronze win FIFA player of the year awards**

- The **Best FIFA Football Awards 2020** was announced on **17th December 2020**, during a virtual event held at **Zurich**.
- The Poland national team captain **Robert Lewandowski** has been named The **Best FIFA Men's Player for 2020**. And he has won the title for the first time in his career.
- **Lucy Bronze**, plays as a right-back for the English club Manchester City and the England national team, bagged The Best FIFA Women's Player for 2020.

#### **The Best FIFA Awards 2020**

- The Best FIFA Men's Coach: Jurgen Klopp (Liverpool)
- The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper: Sarah Bouhaddi (France/Olympique Lyonnais)
- The Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper: Manuel Neuer (Germany/Bayern Munich)
- The Best FIFA Men's Player: Robert Lewandowski (Poland/Bayern Munich)
- The Best FIFA Women's Player: Lucy Bronze (England/Olympique Lyonnais/Manchester City)
- The Best FIFA Women's Coach: Sarina Wiegman (Netherlands)
- FIFA Fair Play Award: Mattia Agnese (Italy)
- FIFA Puskas Award: Son Heung-min (South Korea/Tottenham)
- FIFA Fan Award: Marivaldo Francisco da Silva (Brazil)

#### **Yogasana gets formal recognition as a competitive sport- AYUSH Ministry**

- The **Ministry of AYUSH** and **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** announced the formal recognition of **Yogasana** as a **Competitive Sport**.
- Union Minister of State for AYUSH **Shripad Naik**, and the Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports **Kiren Rijiju** announced this at a joint press conference.
- The government's success in getting the United Nations to declare June 21 officially as International Yoga Day was viewed as a significant milestone in its charge to ignite both national and global interest in the practice.
- Between 2014 and 2019, the Centre spent approximately Rs 140 crore on Yoga Day with the fifth International Yoga Day event held in Ranchi in 2019, drawing a crowd of over 30,000
- **Purpose:** The move was made to encourage yoga, spread awareness about its benefits and to help improve the physical and mental wealth of the people.



### Govt approves inclusion of four indigenous sports in Khelo India Youth Games 2021

- The **Sports Ministry** has approved the inclusion of **four indigenous Games** to be a part of **Khelo India Youth Games 2021**, scheduled to be held in **Haryana**.
- The games include **Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba**.
- The four selected games represent different parts of the country and will get national recognition with the help of the Khelo India Youth Games 2021.

### Origin of 4 new games :

- Kalaripayattu has its origin from Kerala
- Mallakhamba is practiced in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- Gatka originates from Punjab. It is a traditional fighting style of the Nihang Sikh Warriors, used both as self-defense as well as a sport.
- Thang-Ta is a Manipur marital art.

### Boxing World Cup: Indian Boxers Bag 9 Medals, Including 3 Gold

- **Indian boxers** bagged **nine medals including three golds, two silver and four bronze** at the **Cologne Boxing World Cup** held in **Koln, Germany**.
- The Cologne Boxing World 2020 was hosted by the **European Boxing Confederation (EUBC)**.

### List of Medal Winners

- **Gold:** The three gold medals for India were bagged by Amit Panghal (52kg), Manisha Moun (57kg) and Simranjit Kaur (60kg) in their respective categories.
- **Silver:** Silver medals were claimed by Sakshi Choudhary (57kg) and Satish Kumar (91kg).
- **Bronze:** Sonia Lather (57kg), Pooja Rani (75kg) Gaurav Solanki (57kg) and Mohamed Hussamudin (57kg) claimed the bronze medal in their respective categories.

### Indian men to finish 2020 in 4th position, women in 9th in FIH rankings

- The **Indian men and women hockey** teams will finish 2020 in **fourth and ninth** positions, respectively.
- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) confirmed that the Belgium men's team and the Netherlands' women will finish the year at the top of the world rankings.
- In the men's FIH world rankings, reigning world and European champions Belgium (2496.88 points) sit at the top ahead of 2019 FIH Hockey Pro League winners Australia (2nd place - 2385.70), Netherlands (3rd place 2257.96) and India (4th place 2063.78).
- Among women, the Netherlands (2631.99 points) are at the top followed by Argentina (2174.61). Germany (2054.28) occupy the third position and India (9th place 1543.00).

### Anshu Malik grabs silver in Wrestling, India's first medal at Individual World Cup

- **Anshu Malik** has become the **first wrestler** of the country to finish on the podium position at the **Individual Wrestling World Cup in Belgrade, Serbia**.
- The 19-year-old put up a bold and brave fight before she lost to reigning European champion Anastasia Nichita of Moldova in the 57 kg women's freestyle final, bagging a silver.

### Yash Vardhan wins Gold at the 6th International Online Shooting Championship (IOSC)

- Yash Vardhan won gold medal in the 10 m air rifle event at the 6th International Online Shooting Championship (IOSC), the event saw the participation of Olympic bound Martin Strempl of Austria who won the silver medal and Oleksandr Halkin from Ukraine won the bronze.

### Kenya's Kibiwott Kandie breaks half marathon World Record in Valencia Half Marathon 2020

- Kenya's Kibiwott Kandie smashed the World Record by completing the 13.1 Mile Marathon in 57 minutes 32 seconds at the 2020 Valencia Half Marathon Trinidad Alfonso EDP held at Valencia, Spain.
- With this, Kandie overtook Geoffrey Kamworor's (Kenya) record of 58.01. He also became the First person to finish the Half Marathon in 58 minutes. Jacob Kiplimo (Uganda) came second while Rhonex Kipruto of Kenya finished Third.

### Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
Bombay Stock Exchange	Mumbai	Ashishkumar Chauhan
IBM	Armonk	Arvind Krishna
HCL Technologies	Noida	C Vijayakumar
World Economic Forum	Cologny, Switzerland	Klaus Schwab
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	New Delhi	Thulani Dlamini
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Washington D.C.	Kristalina Georgieva
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Beijing, China	Jin Liqun
Competition Commission of India (CCI)	New Delhi	Ashok Kumar Gupta
Amazon	Washington	Jeff Bezos
Ola	Bengaluru	Bhavish Aggarwal
US Food and Drug Administration	Silver Spring	Stephen M. Hahn
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)	New Delhi	Rita Teaotia
National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)	New Delhi	Manish Kumar
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)	New Delhi	Sangita Reddy
NTPC Ltd	New Delhi	Gurdeep Singh
Board of Control for Cricket in India	Mumbai	Saurav Ganguly
International Cricket Council	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	Shashank Manohar
World Bank	Washington D.C, USA	David Malpass
Asian Development Bank	Mandaluyong, Philippines	Masatsugu Asakawa
NHPC Limited	Faridabad	Abhay Kumar Singh
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC	James Morhard
United Nations Childrens' Fund (UNICEF)	New York, USA	Henrietta H. Fore
World Health Organization	Geneva, Switzerland	Tedros Adhanom
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)	Zürich, Switzerland	Gianni Infantino
International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)	Lausanne, Switzerland	Steve Dainton
Citigroup Inc	New York	Anand Selva
Prasar Bharati	New Delhi	Shashi Shekhar Vempati

Microsoft	Redmond, Washington	Satya Nadella
Invest India	New Delhi	Deepak Bagla
Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency	New Delhi	Pradip Kumar Das
NASSCOM	New Delhi	Nitin Rakesh
World Health Organization		Byju Raveendran
Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations	New Delhi	Vinkesh Gulati
Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)	New Delhi	Uday Kotak
Byju's	Bengaluru	Byju Raveendran
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	Vienna, Austria	Li Yong
Defence Research Development Organization	New Delhi	Sateesh Reddy
FlipKart	Bengaluru	Kalyan Krishnamurthy
United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization	Paris	Audrey Azoulay
Indian Council of Medical Research	New Delhi	Balram Bhargava
Google	California, United States	Sundar Pichai
Amazon	Washington, United States	Jeff Bezos
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Washington, D.C., United States	Philippe Le Hou��rou
United Nations Development Programme	New York	Achim Steiner
Bharat Electronics Limited	Bengaluru	Venkateswara Gowtama Mannava
Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd	Bengaluru	R Madhavan
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)	New Delhi	Anupam Shrivastava
Indian School of Business	Hyderabad	Ankur Warikoo
India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA)	Bengaluru	Rajesh Ram Mishra
FADA	New Delhi	Saharsh Damani
Amul	Gujarat	R.S. Sodhi
SpaceX	California, United States	Elon Musk
Inland Waterways Authority of India		
United Nations Environment Programme	Nairobi, Kenya	Inger Andersen
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	Bengaluru	K Sivan
Indian Council of Social Science Research	New Delhi	Bhushan Patwardhan

### Important Obituaries

Name	Field
Papa Bouba Diop	Senegalese Footballer
Zafarullah khan Jamali	Former PM of Pakistan
Abhay Bhardwaj	Rajya Sabha MP

Valery Giscard d'Estaing	Former French President
Maulana Kalbe Sadiq	Shia cleric and Islamic scholar
S Ramakrishnan	Indian Space Scientist and Former VSSC & LPSC Director
Rafer Johnson	Decathlon Champion of 1960 Rome Olympics
Tabaré Vázquez	Former & 1st Socialist President of Uruguay
Mahashay Dharampal Gulati	The owner of MDH Masala, King of Space
Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali	Former Prime Minister of Pakistan
Dineshwar Sharma	Lakshadweep Administrator
G.R Udhwani	Gujarat High Court sitting Judge
Monu Mukherjee	Bengali actor
Ravi Patwardhan	Actor
Dennis Ralston	Tennis Player, Five-time Grand Slam doubles champion
Narinder Singh Kapany	Father of fiber optics & Sikh activist
Madhukar Gangadhar	Hindi writer
Divya Bhatnagar	TV actress
Narendra Bhide	Music composer
Paolo Rossi	Italian Footballer
Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya	Sanskrit Scholar
Chuck Yeager	First person to travel at a speed faster than the speed of sound
Radhika Ranjan Pramanik	Politician and five-time MP
Ambrose Dlamini	Prime Minister, Eswatini
Roddam Narasimha	Eminent aerospace scientist and Padma Vibhushan awardee
Mahbubullah Muhibbi	Deputy governor of Kabul
Shripati Khanchanale	Wrestler and first Hind Kesari
Vice Admiral Srikant	Director General of Project Seabird
Eric Freeman	Former Australia Test all-rounder
Satya Dev Singh	Former Gonda MP
Madhav Govind Vaidya	Ideologue and first spokesperson of RSS
Motilal Vora	Former two-time chief minister of undivided Madhya Pradesh, former Governor of Uttar Pradesh
Sugathakumari	Malayalam poet, Padma Shri awardee
Madan Lal Sharma	Two-Time Congress MP From J&K
Shamsur Rahman Faruqi	Urdu poet
John Edrich	Former England and Surrey batsman
Robin Jackman	Former England cricketer
Jon Huber (Brodie Lee or Luke Harper)	US wrestler

Sunil Kothari	Dance scholar
Kadambur M. R. Janardhanan	Former Union Minister and senior AIADMK leader
Nikhil Nandy	Footballer
Manglesh Dabral	Hindi Poet
Dharmalingam Ethiraj	South Korean director
Kim Ki-duk	Former Indian Football player
UA Khader	Malayalam writer
Gérard Paul Francis Houllier	Former Liverpool manager & France Football Coach