

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

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Important Days

Date	Day	Theme/Others
February 1	45 th Raising Day	Celebrated by Indian Coast Guard
February 2	World Wetlands Day	Wetlands and Water
February 4	World Cancer Day	It led by the Union of International Cancer Control
February 4	International Day of Human Fraternity	A Pathway to the future
February 6	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (Since 2003)	No time for global inaction: unite, fund and act to end FGM/C
February 8 (2 nd Monday of February)	International Epilepsy Day	Initiative by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)
February 9	Safer Internet Day (18 th edition)	Together for a better internet
February 10	National Deworming Day	Guide issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
February 10	World Pulses Day	Nutritious Seeds for a Sustainable Future
February 11	National Inventors Day	
February 11	World Unani Day	Birthday of Hakim Ajmal Khan
February 11	International Day of Women and Girls in Science	Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19
February 12 to February 18	National Productivity Week	Celebrated by National Productivity Council
February 12	National Productivity Day	By the National Productivity Council
February 13	National Women's Day	Birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu (Popularly known as 'The nightingale of India)
February 13	World Radio Day	New World, New Radio
February 14	Black day for India	40 CRPF personnel were killed on February 14, 2019
February 17	World Human Spirit Day	
February 18 to February 27	Taj Mahotsav	Together in the diverse culture

February 20	World Day Of Social Justice	A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy
Third Saturday of February	World Pangolin Day	It marks the 10th edition of the event
February 21	International Mother Language Day	Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society
February 22	World Thinking Day	Peacebuilding
February 24	Central Excise Day	

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI unveils risk-based internal audit guidelines for select NBFCs, UCBs

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued guidelines on **risk-based internal audit (RBIA)** system for select **non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks (UCBs)**.
- NBFCs and UCBs have grown in size and become systemically important, prevalence of different audit systems/approaches in such entities has created certain inconsistency.
- The entities have to implement the RBIA framework by **March 31, 2022**
- This is mainly for **Strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the internal audit system** of selected entities.
- The regulator also specified that RBIA policy shall clearly document the purpose, authority, and responsibility of the internal audit activity, with a clear demarcation of the role and expectations from risk management function and risk-based internal audit function.
- RBI, in its monetary policy statement on December 4, 2020, had announced that suitable guidelines would be issued to large UCBs and NBFCs for the adoption of RBIA to strengthen the internal audit function, which works as a third line of defence.

RBI Monetary Policy: repo rate unchanged at 4%

- The **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** kept its **repo rate unchanged at 4 percent** while **maintaining an 'accommodative stance'** as long as necessary at least through the current financial year to the next year.
- Reverse Repo Rate- 3.35%
- Marginal Standing Facility Rate- 4.25%
- Bank Rate- 4.25%
- CRR- 3%
- SLR- 18.00%.

- This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22. The six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das meets every two months to analyze the state of the Indian economy and inflation and address the monetary issues in the country.
- This month, it began the 3-day bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 3.
- The CPI projection is revised to 5.2 percent for Q4 FY21 and CPI inflation is pegged at 5-5.2 per cent in H1 FY22.
- Shaktikanta Das announced an integrated ombudsman scheme for customer grievance redressal, which will be rolled out by June 2021.

RBI to set up a 24x7 helpline for digital payment services

- **RBI** has announced certain measures of protection of common bank account holders in the Monetary policy statement.
- It includes setting up of **24*7 helpline for digital payment services**, integrated ombudsman scheme, CTS across all bank branches and allowing retail investors to open Gilt accounts with RBI.
- Reports that the government is **encouraging various modes of digital payments**.
- The helpline will, in addition to building trust and confidence, also reduce expenditure on both financial and human resources, otherwise incurred for addressing queries and grievances.
- The major payment system operators would be required to facilitate setting-up of a centralised industry-wide 24x7 helpline for addressing customer queries in respect of various digital payment products and give information on available grievance redress mechanisms by September 2021.
- RBI has decided to move beyond the aggregator model and provide retail investors online access to the government securities market along with the facility to open their gilt securities account.

RBI to set up expert committee for urban co-op banks

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has decided to set up an **expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** involving all stakeholders in order to **provide a medium-term road map to strengthen the sector**, enable faster rehabilitation/resolution of UCBs, as well as examine other critical aspects relating to these entities.
- This follows the provisions of the **Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020** becoming applicable to **Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) with effect from June 26, 2020**.
- The amendments have brought near parity in regulatory and supervisory powers between UCBs and commercial banks in respect of regulatory powers, including those related to governance, audit and resolution.
- The constitution of the committee as well as the terms of reference will be notified separately by the RBI.

RBI releases Annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes for 2019-20

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** released the **Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes** for the year 2019-20.
- There was an **increase of around 65 per cent** in the receipt of complaints out of which almost 92 per cent have been disposed of.

- RBI has **three Ombudsman- Banking, Non-Banking Finance Company (i.e. NBFC) and digital transactions**. A common man can approach these Ombudsman for their grievances.
- The Banking Ombudsman received major complaints regarding ATM & Debit Cards, Mobile & Electronic Banking.
- NBFC's Ombudsman received most complaints about non-observance of regulatory guidelines, lack of transparency in contract/ loan agreement and levy of charges without notice.
- Digital Transactions Ombudsmen received most complaints about fund transfer
- As announced in the Monetary Policy Statement last week, the three Ombudsman Schemes are being merged and integrated into a single scheme which will be rolled out starting from June this year.

RBI Observes Financial literacy week 2021

- Reserve Bank of India, Delhi is observing **Financial Literacy Week** from **February 8-12, 2021**, to propagate financial education.
- The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Financial Literacy Week on the theme of '**Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions**'.
- This theme is one of the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education 2020-2025. Focus will be on responsible borrowing; borrowing from formal institutions and timely repayments.
- This five-day event was launched on Monday by Ajay Kumar, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, New Delhi
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been conducting Financial Literacy Week (FLW) every year since 2016 to propagate financial education messages on a particular theme across the country.

RBI: expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday constituted an **eight-member expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** that is tasked with examining existing issues and providing a road map for strengthening the sector.
- The panel will function under the **chairmanship** of former **RBI Governor N S Vishwanathan**.
- According to a statement from the RBI, the committee will take stock of the regulatory measures taken by the central bank and other authorities related to UCBs and assess their impact over the last five years.
- The objective will be to identify key constraints and enablers.
- The primary job of the committee will be to "consider the need for differential regulations and examine prospects to allow more leeway in permissible activities for UCBs with a view to enhance their resilience".

RBI sets up 8 member panel to suggest steps for strengthening, consolidating UCBs

- **The Reserve Bank** set up a **committee to draw a vision document for strengthening urban cooperative banks (UCBs)** and exploring the potential of consolidation in the sector.
- The committee, to be **headed by former RBI Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan**,

Other Members are :

- Harsh Kumar Bhanwala (chairman of Nabard)
- Mukund Chitale

- NC Muniyappa
- RN Roshi
- MS Sriram
- Jyotindra Mehta
- Neeraj Niga
- The panel will "draw up a vision document for a vibrant and resilient urban co-operative banking sector having regards to the Principles of Cooperation as well as depositors' interest and systemic issues.
- The committee will consider the need for differential regulations and examine prospects to allow more leeway in permissible activities for UCBs with a view to enhancing their resilience.

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

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

RBI will conduct a special OMO of Rs.15,000 crore on March 4

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will **conduct** simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities **for** an aggregate amount of Rs **15,000 crore** each on **March 4**.
- The central bank will purchase and sell government securities through multiple price auction methods.
- Accordingly, the details of securities for the simultaneous purchase and sale of Government securities under **Open**

Market Operations (OMOs) for Rs.15,000 crore each on March 04, 2021 are as follows:

- Purchase

The Reserve Bank will purchase the following securities using the multiple price auction method:

Sr. No	ISIN	Security	Date of Maturity	Aggregate Amount
1	IN0020190396	6.18% GS 2024	04-Nov-2024	Rs.15,000 crore (There is no security-wise notified amount)
2	IN0020170026	6.79% GS 2027	15-May-2027	
3	IN0020170042	6.68% GS 2031	17-Sep-2031	
4	IN0020050012	7.40% GS 2035	09-Sep-2035	

Sale

The Reserve Bank will simultaneously sell the following securities using the multiple price auction method:

Sr. No	ISIN	Security	Date of Maturity	Aggregate Amount
1	IN0020110030	8.79% GS 2021	08-Nov-2021	Rs.15,000 crore (There is no security-wise notified amount)
2	IN0020060037	8.20% GS 2022	15-Feb-2022	

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

YONO merchant app launched SBI Payments

- India's largest lender, State Bank of India, will launch a **YONO merchant's app** to enable 20 million merchants from tier 2, 3 cities to adopt **digital payments**.
- The lender plans to deploy low-cost acceptance infrastructure across India over the next two years targeting the potential merchants across India in the Retail and Enterprise segment.
- The initiative will enable near field communication (NFC) enabled smart phones of merchants to turn into Point-of-sale devices after downloading the app.

AIIB

Govt. and AIIB sign loan agreement USD 304 million for Assam

- Union Government** and the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** signed a loan agreement for a **304 million dollar Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project** to improve reliability, capacity and security of the power transmission network in the State of Assam.

- The project aims to strengthen Assam's electricity transmission system by constructing 10 transmission substations and laying transmission lines, upgrading 15 existing substations and providing technical assistance to support project implementation.

World Bank

India and World Bank sign 500 million dollar Programme

- The Government of India and the World Bank signed a **500-million US dollar Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Programme (STARS)** to improve the quality and governance of school education in **six Indian states**.
- These include **Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan**.
- Some 250 million students (between the age of six and 17) in 1.5 million schools and over 10 million teachers will benefit from the programme.
- The STARS programme builds on the long partnership between India and the World Bank (since 1994), for strengthening public school education and to support the country's goal of providing Education for All.
- Prior to STARS, the Bank had provided a total assistance of more than three billion US dollars towards this goal.

World Bank to provide USD 500 million to Bangladesh for improving Road and Digital Connectivity

- The government of **Bangladesh** signed an agreement with the **World Bank** for the upgradation of rural roads and connectivity in the western region.
- The project is expected to benefit over **20 million people in the western region of Bangladesh**.
- The project will help upgrade the **48 kilometre two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah** road to a modern **4-lane highway**.
- It will also help improve 600 kilometre of connecting rural roads and build or develop new rural markets.
- The project will finance installation of fiber-optic cables along the highway to ensure fast and reliable internet service
- The project is the first of a multi-phased USD1.4 billion 10-year program to upgrade the existing 110 kilometre two-lane highway, Bhomra-Satkhira-Navaron and Jashore-Jhenaidah. In the current phase, the project will be implemented in four districts namely Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, and Chuadanga.

World Bank Signs \$100 million Project to Support Nutrition-Supportive Agriculture in Tribal-Dominated Areas of Chhattisgarh

- The **Government of India, the Government of Chhattisgarh** and the **World Bank** signed a **\$100 million project to develop sustainable production systems**.
- That will **allow tribal households in remote areas of Chhattisgarh** to practice round-the-year production of diversified and nutritious food.
- **CHIRAAG - Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth Project** 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**.

- The loan agreement was signed by Dr. C S Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Government of India and Mr Junaid Kamal Ahmad, Country Director (India) on behalf of the World Bank

India Accounts for 11 % of Global death in Road Accidents - World Bank

- The **World Bank** has released a comprehensive report titled '**Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society**' in association with the SaveLife Foundation.

India, World Bank ink project for Nagaland

- Indian government, Government of **Nagaland** and the **World Bank** signed a **\$68 million** project to enhance the governance of schools across Nagaland as well as to improve teaching practices and learning environments in select schools.
- The "**Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project**" 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, a Finance Ministry statement said.

NDB

New Development Bank to invest \$100 million in NIIF Fund of Funds

- **New Development Bank (NDB)**, the multilateral development bank established by the **BRICS states**, has announced a commitment of **\$100 million into the NIIF Fund of Funds (FoF)**.
- With NDB's investment, the FoF has secured **\$800 million in commitments** and joins the Government of India (GoI), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) as an investor in the FoF.
- This investment marks **NDB's first equity investment** into India and its first ever investment in an FoF.
- The FoF was established in 2018 with the objective of providing homegrown Indian private equity fund managers access to an India-focused institutional investor that operates at scale.

Other Banking News

Economic Survey: India to become Fastest Growing Economy in next 2-years reported by IMF

- The Union Government said that the country's V-Shaped Economic Recovery happened due to Mega Vaccination Drive, Robust Recovery in the Services Sector and Robust Growth in Consumption and Investment.
- **Chief Economic Adviser K. Subramanian** said, V-Shaped Recovery is due to Resurgence in High Frequency Indicators Such as Power Demand, Rail Freight, E-Way Bills, GST Collection and Steel Consumption.
- The Economic Survey said, **India is to become the Fastest Growing Economy in next two years** as per the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.

- India is to have a Current Account Surplus of two per cent of GDP in financial year 2021, a historic high after 17 years.

Microsoft launches Taj Mahal inspired engineering hub in Noida

- **Microsoft** announced the launch of its new **India Development Center (IDC)** facility at **NCR** that will serve as a premier **hub for driving cutting-edge engineering and innovation**.
- IDC NCR is Microsoft's **third Development Center in India** after Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
- The IDC NCR facility will collaborate with Microsoft teams globally to build products and services for driving digital innovation.
- The center will provide opportunities for engineering talent in the areas of Business & Productivity tools, AI, Cloud & Enterprise, Core Services, and the new Gaming division.
- The IDC NCR workspace architecture is inspired by the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.
- The IDC in NCR will collaborate with Microsoft teams worldwide to design and create products that drive digital innovations.

PNB customers won't be able to withdraw money from these ATMs

- The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has taken a giant step and won't allow its customers to **withdraw money from non-EMV automated teller machines (ATMs) from today(1 February 2021)**.
- To protect our esteemed customers from fraudulent ATM activities, PNB will be restricting transactions **(financial and non-financial)** from Non-EMV ATM machines from February 1, 2021.
- Punjab National Bank has introduced PNB One App that allows PNB debit card users to switch on or off their debit card through this app.

What are non-EMV ATMs

- Non-EMV ATMs are those which read data through magnetic strips and do not hold the ATM card during the transaction.
- In such ATMs, Data Magnetic Chips enabled reading is done by the ATM machine and for a few seconds one's debit card gets locked.

Federal Bank launches 'FedFirst' savings account scheme for children

- **Federal Bank** has announced the **launch of FedFirst**, a **special savings account scheme for children below 18 years of age**.
- The account helps children develop healthy saving and spending habits, thereby giving them the freedom to save, spend and earn.

About the Account Features :

- The account is designed to enable children to learn the **importance of money management**. The account comes with unique features and offers.

- The account holder is provided with a FedFirst contactless Debit Card with a daily cash withdrawal limit of ₹2,500 and POS/e-com limit of Rs.10,000, in addition to free online facilities including access to internet banking, mobile alerts and email alerts.
- Additional benefits including reward points, seasonal cashback and promotional offers and deals on dining, hotels, travel, bill payments through their debit card are available.

PhonePe, Axis Bank partner on UPI Multi-Bank

- Digital payments platform PhonePe announced that it has **partnered with Axis Bank on a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) multi-bank model.**
- The partnership will provide PhonePe users with the option to create and use multiple UPI IDs with Axis Bank's "@axl" handle.
- PhonePe will also start acquiring merchants with Axis Bank in addition to its partnership with YES Bank.
- This partnership with Axis Bank will ensure greater business continuity for both our customers and merchant partners, making their transaction experience seamless."

Irdai panel okays launch of index-linked insurance policies

- Committee set up by the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai)** has recommended the introduction of **index-linked insurance policies (Ilips).**
- The committee was formed about four months ago after requests from insurers for reintroducing Ilips, which were banned by the regulator in 2013.
- The product structures are mainly proposed under the traditional participating (par) and non-participating (non-par) designs. This way Ilips will give additional options to customers under these designs.

AGS Transact Technologies and Mastercard Partner to Introduce First-Ever 'Contactless' Cash Withdrawals on ATMs in India

- **AGS Transact Technologies (AGSTTL)** has partnered with **Mastercard** to provide a pan India 'contactless' cash withdrawal experience at ATMs.
- First, Mastercard cardholders will be able to withdraw cash by scanning a QR code displayed on the ATM screen of all participating Banks.
- **Aim :** The partnership aims to provide a more secure banking experience to customers in India.
- The partnership will allow the Mastercard cardholders to access any participating Bank ATM in the country and carry out three transactions without any additional charges making it a scalable option for banks providing a consistent experience to their consumers.

CREDAI, IPPB ink pact to open bank accounts for construction workers

- The **Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI)** has entered into a **memorandum of understanding** with Indian Payments and Postal Bank (IPPB) to **facilitate opening of bank accounts for construction workers.**
- This labour welfare initiative is aimed at ensuring financial literacy and digital inclusion of construction workers

- At present, around **3 crore workers** are engaged in construction activities across real estate projects in the country.
- The pact aims to cover around 10 lakh workers under this initiative in a year.

Kotak Mahindra Bank launches Kotak Remit

- **Kotak Mahindra Bank** launched its **outward forex remittance service, Kotak Remit**, hence allowing its users to directly send money abroad from their phones.
- The feature is already live on the Kotak Mobile Banking App.
- For **the first time**, Kotak customers can conveniently transfer money internationally to their beneficiaries straight from their mobile.
- Kotak Remit offers remittances in 15 currencies including the US dollar, Australian Dollar, UK Pound Sterling, Hong Kong Dollar, Saudi Riyal, Canadian Dollar, Singapore Dollar, Euro, Japanese Yen.

Kerala Bank launches ATM demo vans

- The Kerala Bank has launched **ATM demonstration vans** to promote digital transactions.
- **NABARD** has sanctioned **10 vans for the Kerala Bank** from its financial inclusion fund.
- **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Cooperation Minister Kadakampally Surendran** addressed the virtual launch.
- Cooperation Secretary Mini Antony and Registrar of Cooperative Societies Geromic George flagged off the two vans which have become operational.
- The Kerala Bank's project brochure was released by Mini Antony by handing over a copy to Nabard chief general manager P Balachandran.
- NABARD chief general managers V Selvarajan and K C Sahadevan and CEO P S Rajan attended.

ICICI Lombard launches corporate risk index

- Private general insurer **ICICI Lombard** has launched the '**Corporate India Risk Index**'. This is intended to be a unified, standardised corporate risk index that spans industries and companies.
- Corporate risk index that uses a risk measurement tool has been developed with the management consulting firm Frost & Sullivan covering **150 top companies** from its own investment portfolio across 15 key sectors, ICICI Lombard chief executive Bhargav Dasgupta told reporters.
- The insurer said that this will help companies understand the level of risk that their business is facing and also assist in developing a successful risk aversion plan. It has worked with consulting firm Frost and Sullivan to develop the risk measurement tool.
- The index showed that most of corporate India's risk management strategies are focused primarily on operational and natural hazard risks, influenced by COVID-19. It added that there is a scope for improvement in the way market, economic, technological and crime or security risks are being managed.

Indian Bank signs MoU with IISc initiative to fund start-ups, MSMEs

- **Indian Bank** has entered into an **MOU with Society for Innovation and Development (SID)**, an initiative of Indian Institute of Science, **for extending exclusive credit facility to Start-ups and MSMEs.**

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- This initiative is a part of the Banks scheme Ind SpringBoard for financing Start-ups and will empower Start-ups and MSMEs to realise their research efforts powered by financial support from the Bank and backed by incubation facilities offered by SID,
- The Bank will extend loans of up to **Rs 50 crore** to these start-ups for their working capital requirements or for purchase of machinery, equipment etc,
- Under the MOU, SID will identify the start-ups and MSMEs based on their credentials and past experience and will refer the list of such members who require financial assistance to the Bank

Bank of Maharashtra partners with Vayana Network to offer help MSMEs

- **Bank of Maharashtra** has entered into a strategic partnership with **Vayana Network** to offer financial support to the **MSME sector**.
- Through this association, BoM will provide short term credit to meet funding requirements of dealers of corporates via **"Mahabank Channel Financing Scheme"** launched by the bank, through Vayana Network's expertise in this segment.
- Under the partnership, Vayana Network will provide its Supply Chain Financing solutions (SCF) to the bank supported by Vayana's technology and service expertise.
- The SCF solutions will include vendor and dealer financing programs across the bank's network of **1,870 branches** across the country.
- Vayana Network's proprietary tech platform will help to digitize the transactions of Supply Chain Financing, while the market services will help to increase penetration in the under-served MSME segment.

ICICI Lombard partners with Flipkart to offer 'Hospicash' Insurance

- **E-commerce company Flipkart** has partnered with **ICICI Lombard** to offer '**Group SafeGuard**' insurance, a group insurance policy to its consumers.
- Compared to the standard **indemnity health insurance policies**, **Group SafeGuard** is a benefit offering that allows consumers to avail a payout for each day of hospitalisation,
- The fixed daily amount enables consumers to pay for incidental medical or emergency expenses
- The insurance is **affordably priced, paperless, and flexible; covering both accidental hospitalisations or planned surgeries/treatment"**

With daily cash benefits **starting from Rs 500**, '**Hospicash**' benefit under **Group SafeGuard** insurance will provide cover to Flipkart consumers.

Revision Points

Organizations	Headquarters	President/CEO/Head
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Dinesh Kumar Khara
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Beijing	Jin Liqun

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World Bank	Washington DC	David Malpass
New Development Bank	Shanghai	Marcos Troyjo
Microsoft	Washington	John W. Thompson
Punjab National Bank	New Delhi	Mallikarjuna Rao
Federal Bank	Aluva	Shyam Srinivasan
PhonePe	Bengaluru	Sameer Nigam
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Amitabh Chaudhry
Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India	Hyderabad	Subhash Chandra Khuntia
AGS Transact Technologies	Mumbai	Ravi B Goyal
Mastercard	New York	Michael Miebach
Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India	Kochi	Image result for credai chairman Irfan Razack
Indian Payments and Postal Bank	New Delhi	J Venkatramu
Kotak Mahindra Bank	Mumbai	Uday Kotak
Kerala Bank	Malappuram	Gopi Kottamurickal
NABARD	Mumbai	Harsh Kumar Bhanwala
ICICI Lombard	Mumbai	Bhargav Dasgupta
Indian Bank	Chennai	Padmaja Chunduru
Bank of Maharashtra	Pune	AS Rajeev
FlipKart	Bengaluru	Kalyan Krishnamurthy
EXIM Bank	Mumbai	David Rasquinha
Essar Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Ltd	Mumbai	Dinesh Sharma
TCS	Mumbai	Rajesh Gopinathan
Indian Oil	New Delhi	SM Vaidya
Council of Scientific and Industrial Research	New Delhi	Shekhar C. Mande
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Seattle, USA	Sue Desmond-Hellmann
Liberty Steel Group	Mayfair, London	Paramjit Kahlon
Stellapps	Bengaluru	Ranjith Mukundan

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National Cooperative Development Corporation	Thiruvananthapuram	Sundeeep Kumar Nayak
Marine Products Export Development Authority	Kochi	KS Srinivas
Paypal	San Jose, USA	Dan Schulman
Ola	Bengaluru	Bhavish Aggarwal
ICRA	Gurgaon	N. Sivaraman
Moody's	New York, USA	Raymond W. McDaniel Jr.
HSBC	London, UK	Noel Quinn
S & P	New York, USA	Douglas L. Peterson
Oxford Economics	Oxford, UK	Adrian Cooper
Nomura	Tokyo, Japan	Koji Nagai
India Ratings	Mumbai	Venkataraman Rajaraman

Important Financial & Economy Affairs

Organization	GDP – FY 21	GDP - FY 22
Reserve Bank of India		10.5%
State Bank of India	- 7.4%	
Nomura	- 6.7%	13.5%
Oxford Economics	- 10.2%	
S&P Global Ratings		10%
India HSBC		11.2%
Moody's		13.7%
ICRA	- 7%	10.5%

India's GDP - 11 per cent next fiscal - V-Shaped recovery

- The government has said that the country is witnessing a **V-Shaped Economic Recovery** which is a testimony to the resilience and intrinsic strength of its economy.
- It happened due to **Mega Vaccination Drive, Robust Recovery** in the Services Sector and Robust Growth in Consumption and Investment.
- The Economic Survey tabled in the Parliament projects India's real GDP to record an 11 per cent growth in Financial Year 2021-22 and nominal GDP to grow by 15.4 per cent, the highest since independence.

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Insurance stocks advance after FM proposes higher FDI limit

- In the Union Budget, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** proposed to amend Insurance Act, 1938 to increase FDI limit from 49% to 74% in insurance companies, and allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards.
- Shares of six insurance companies added 3% to 5% after the central government proposed to amend Insurance Act to allow higher foreign direct investment (FDI) in insurance companies.
- ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company (up 5.86%), General Insurance Corporation of India (up 5.41%), The New India Assurance Company (up 5.16%), HDFC Life Insurance Company (up 4.46%), ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company (up 3.68%), SBI Life Insurance Company (up 3.49%) advanced.

About FDI :

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) is when a company takes controlling ownership in a business entity in another country. With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with day-to-day operations in the other country. This means they aren't just bringing money with them, but also knowledge, skills and technology.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das :GDP growth projected at 10.5% in FY22

- The **Union Budget 2021**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** projected a **GDP growth rate of 10.5 percent** for the financial year beginning 1 April.
- RBI projects GDP at 10.5% in FY22.
- The growth outlook has improved significantly and the vaccination drive will help the economic rebound.
- RBI's estimate is in line with the pre-Budget Economic Survey that predicted a 'V-shaped' recovery that said that the Indian economy will rebound with 11 per cent growth in the next financial year.
- The apex bank expects the Indian economy to grow in the range of 8.3 percent to 26.2 percent in the first half of FY22, Followed by 6 percent growth in Q3FY22.

SBI Research revises India's FY21 GDP estimates to -7.0 percent

- The **State Bank of India's (SBI) Economic Research Department** has revised **GDP estimates of India for FY21 to contract 7.0%**.
- And Earlier this was estimated GDP at -7.4%.
- The SBI Research Report has retained its GDP forecast for FY22 at 11 percent.

India's GDP to bounce back to 10.4% growth in FY22 - India Ratings

- **India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)** estimates **India's gross domestic product (GDP)** to bounce back to **10.4 per cent growth in FY22**.
- The rating agency expects GDP growth to turn positive at 0.3 per cent in the January-March quarter of FY21 after shrinking in the first nine months of the year.

Nomura Projects GDP of India to contract 6.7% in FY 21 & grow 13.5% in FY22

- The **Japanese brokerage** has projected the GDP of India to **grow at 13.5 percent in FY22 (2021-22)**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

- The brokerage expects the real GDP to contract by 6.7 per cent in FY21, followed by a growth of 13.5 per cent in FY22.
- The brokerage said its proprietary index has been on an uptrend since hitting its trough during the strict lockdown in April last year.

Oxford Economics ups India growth forecast to 10.2% for 2021

- **Global forecasting firm Oxford Economics** revised India's economic growth projection for 2021 to **10.2 percent from the earlier 8.8 percent**.
- Because the receding **COVID-19 risks and the shift in the monetary policy outlook**.
- The Budget 2021-22 will create positive externalities for the private sector, and forecast slower fiscal consolidation in FY22 than the government projections.
- The Economic Survey has projected an 11 per cent growth for 2021-22, aided by a V-shaped recovery and a 7.7 per cent contraction for the current year. It also projects a lower 6.8 per cent growth in 2022-23.
- The Reserve Bank of India has projected a GDP growth rate of 10.5 percent for the financial year beginning April 1, on the back of recovery in economic activities.

S&P Global Ratings India to be among the fastest-growing emerging economies in FY22

- **S&P Global Ratings** said **India** will be one of the fastest growing emerging market economies with a **10% growth in the next fiscal**, and future sovereign rating action would hinge on lowering fiscal deficit and sustaining debt burden.
- For the next 2021-22 fiscal, the deficit has been put at 6.8% of the GDP, which will be further lowered to 4.5% by 2025-26 fiscal ending March 31, 2026.
- The continuous good performance by the agriculture sector, flattening of COVID-19 infection curve, pickup in government spending and the recently released budget are some of the factors for the positive growth prospect of the country.

HSBC ups India's FY22 GDP forecast to 11.2%

- **India HSBC** has raised their growth forecasts from **9 percent to 11.2 percent** for the coming fiscal year **2021-22 (FY22)**.
- The **2020-21 GDP forecast of India by HSBC remains -6.3 percent**, as projected earlier.

Global rating agency Moody's ups India's growth projection for FY22

- **Global rating agency Moody's** upped India's growth projection for the **financial year 2021-22 to 13.7 percent from 10.8 percent** estimated earlier.
- In its '**Global Macro Outlook 2021-22**', Moody's said, India's Economy has rebounded quickly from one of the world's longest and most stringent lockdowns, which also came with the steepest fall in GDP in the second quarter of 2020.
- For the current fiscal year, the agency expects the Indian economy to contract by 7 per cent, lower than its previous estimate of 10.6 percent contraction.

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- The revised numbers came on the back of normalisation of activity and growing confidence in the market with the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

ICRA expects Indian economy to contract 7% in FY21; rebound 10.5% in FY22

- ICRA has projected the Indian economy to **contract 7 percent in current fiscal (FY21)**.
- For the next fiscal, i.e. **FY22 (2021-22)**, ICRA expects a considerable rebound in India's **economic growth to 10.5 percent due to higher central government** spending, and a pick-up in consumption.

Important Business News

HAL to launch unmanned fighter jet

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited NSE 3.79 % (HAL)** unveiled a leap in technology of teaming up **unmanned aircraft and vehicles** with manned jets similar to the US project of skyborg.
- It will enhance **Indian military strike capabilities**
- The technology named **Combined Air Teaming System (CATS)** will have a mother ship, operating from faraway, and four autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles known as CATS Warrior.
- HAL is also developing a high-altitude satellite system. It will be solar energised.
- This asset will be flying unmanned around **70,000 feet** height for around two to three months and will be taking all the information.
- HAL is also developing a high altitude asset with long endurance. It will be flying 50,000 feet for 24 hours and it is also part of CATS programme.

About CATS :

- CATS Warrior with a capacity to carry out strikes stealthily entering 700 kilometres inside enemy territory.
- These unmanned aerial vehicles are capable of autonomous functions and will also have all the manoeuvring capabilities.

Paypal to shut domestic payment services in India from April 1

- The **California-based global digital payment platform PayPal** has announced that the company has decided to **wind down its domestic payment services in India** with effect from **April 01, 2021**.
- The US-based company will instead focus on enabling more international sales for Indian businesses.
- Moreover, the global customer will be able to pay Indian merchants using Paypal.
- Paypal was one of the payment options on platforms like ticketing services **BookMyShow, MakeMyTrip, and food delivery platform Swiggy**.
- Earlier in December 2020, Financial solutions provider Razorpay had partnered with global digital payments platform PayPal to facilitate international payments for small businesses and freelancers.

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Hyderabad software firm unveils intelligent neo banking solution

- Hyderabad-based product development and software services startup **Machint Solutions** has launched an **intelligent neo banking platform, Uluka**.
- The launch took place at **Hyderabad International Convention Center**, Novotel & HICC in the presence of Home Minister Mohd Mahmood Ali, Agriculture Minister S Niranjana Reddy, Serilingampally MLA Arekapudi Gandhi, and Chevella MP Dr G Ranjith Reddy, and banking & IT leaders.

All-women operated customer service centre opened in Punjab CEAT

- Tyre maker CEAT announced the opening of all-women operated customer service centre Shoppes at **Bhatinda in Punjab** and said it plans to set up such outlets pan-India in the next few months.
- The **all-women CEAT Shoppes** include women workforce for all service-related assistance to customers.
- This also includes manual jobs like wheel changing, balancing and operating various machinery to service a vehicle, the company said in a release.

Ola begins work on world's largest electric two-wheeler factory in TN

- Ola**, said it had commenced construction of the **world's largest two-wheeler mega-factory on its 500-acre site**.
- The company announced a **Rs.2,400 crore** MoU with the Tamil Nadu government in December 2020 and rapidly completed the land acquisition in January this year.

Ayushmann Khurrana inscribe BoroPlus products

- Kolkata-based FMCG company, Emami Ltd, has roped in National Award winning Bollywood actor, **Ayushmann Khurrana**, for its **BoroPlus** Soaps and Hand Wash range.
- BoroPlus**, India's No.1 Antiseptic Cream Brand, has launched soaps & hand washes under its Hygiene portfolio last year.

Important State Wise News

List of Festivals

Festivals	Place
Three-day Mandu Festival	Mandu, Madhya Pradesh
47th Khajuraho Dance Festival	Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh
39th Agartala International Book Fair	Tripura

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes first Union Territory to be corona free

- **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** has become the **first state or Union territory** in the country to become **Covid-19 free** with active cases falling to zero in the islands.
- Health ministry's website reported that the last four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared cured.
- The UT had reported a total of 4,932 cases and 62 deaths from the virus.
- The share of Kerala in India's daily cases crossed **50 percent for the first time**
- There were 11,024 fresh cases in the country out of which Kerala alone reported 5,716, 51.8 percent of the total.
- The state also has the highest count of active cases at 69,157, out of around 1 lakh 61 thousand in the country.

Andhra Pradesh

Robotic Spa' facility inaugurated in Visakhapatnam railway station

- **Waltair Division**, in its efforts to enhance the passenger amenities at Railway stations, has commissioned another innovative facility called **Robotic Spa under Non-fare revenue here at Visakhapatnam railway station**.
- The first of its kind facility at **Railway station in East Coast Railway** was inaugurated by Divisional Railway Manager, Waltair Chetan Kumar Shrivastava.
- The Robotic Spa comprising Relaxing Chair, Foot massager and Fish pedicure spa gives a pleasant experience to the **Rail Customers waiting at Visakhapatnam railway station**.
- The motto behind such an innovative model is to facilitate the esteemed rail customers to spend quality time while waiting for trains.

Assam

CM Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates first heliport of Assam in Majuli

- **Assam** Chief Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated the **first heliport** of the state in **Majuli** district.
- The heliport having facility for simultaneous landing of three helicopters was constructed at an expenditure of **Rs 50 lakh**.
- The heliport was built with an aim to boost tourism in Majuli, which has a distinct identity as the world's largest river island.
- The state government has also undertaken several projects to strengthen road infrastructure in the river island, and steps are being taken for construction of the bridge connecting Majuli with Jorhat.
- The Assam government made dedicated efforts to put Majuli as an important tourist destination of the world.
- The new heliport would significantly facilitate tourist flow to Majuli.
- The chief minister also laid the foundation for the infrastructure improvement project of Sankarjyoti High School with a financial outlay of Rs 25 lakh.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

PM to lay foundation stone of various development projects in Assam

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will lay the **foundation stone of various development projects** at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district in Assam.
- The Prime Minister will launch '**Asom Mala**', aimed at **helping improve state highways and major district roads networks in the state**.
- The programme is unique for its emphasis on effective maintenance through continuous field data collection and its linkage with the Road Asset Management System.
- 'Asom Mala' will provide quality inter-linkage roads between the National Highways and the rural roads network as well as facilitate seamless multi-modal transportation.
- In addition to that, the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone of two medical colleges and hospitals, which are being set up at Biswanath and Charaideo, at a total estimated project cost of over 1100 crore rupees.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman Initiates 3rd Phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela in Guwahati

- Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** on February 6, initiated the ceremonial distribution ceremony of **Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela in Guwahati**.
- It is to be mentioned that as many as **7,46,667 beneficiaries** of tea gardens were covered under the scheme. Notably, the scheme was launched in **Financial Year (FY) 2017-18**.
- The main objective of the scheme is **to incentivize and strengthen the efforts of financial inclusion of the tea tribe community**.
- Further, in the 1st phase of the scheme, Rs. 2500 was credited to 6,33,411 bank accounts of tea garden workers in FY 2017-18 through Direct Benefit Transfer.
- In phase 2, an additional amount of Rs. 2500 was credited to 7,15,979 bank accounts of tea garden workers in FY 2018-19.
- At the phase, Rs.3000 will be credited to 7,46,667 beneficiaries of tea garden workers.

Kaziranga National Park records 93 thousand 491 birds

- In **Assam, the Kaziranga national park** has recorded a total of **93 thousand 491 birds** as per the latest census.
- There are **112 bird species and 22 families** found during the enumeration.
- The recent bird census has witnessed an increase of over 59 thousand birds in the Kaziranga national park.
- The park authority has recently conducted a 2 day census where 35 teams were involved.
- Last year, the figure stood at 34 thousand 284.

Assam govt hikes daily wage of tea garden workers by Rs 50

- The **Assam cabinet**, chaired by **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal**, approved a proposal **to increase the daily wage of tea garden workers to Rs 217, a hike from Rs 167**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

- Assam Transport Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said the decision was taken by the Assam cabinet after talks between tea garden owners, workers' union and the sub-committee of the state government.
- The Assam cabinet also gave its nod to a proposal seeking the constitution of a one-member committee for fixing an equal wage of small tea garden workers.
- According to the proposal, the labour department's principal secretary JB Ekka will be the only member of the panel.
- The tea tribe community comprising **17% of** the state's population is a deciding factor in almost **40 Assam Assembly seats out of the 126**.

Gujarat

Gujarat govt to set up Indian Institute of Skills in Gandhinagar

- In **Gujarat**, the State Government has asked the **Tata group** to start the work on **setting up Indian Institute of Skills-IIS**.
- This was conveyed during a meeting between the high powered team from Tata Group and senior officials of Gujarat Government held in **Gandhinagar**.
- IIS is being set up by the Labour and Employment Department of Gujarat along with Tata Group at Nasmed village of Gandhinagar.
- The State Government has allotted around **20 acres of land** for Tatas to start Indian Institute of Skills.
- The foundation stone for the proposed IIS at Nasmed was performed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah who is also Lok Sabha Member from Gandhinagar constituency in Gujarat. Proposed IIS at Nasmed is located in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.
- The institute is being developed on a Not-for-profit Public Private Partnership mode by the Tata Group along with the state's Labour and Employment Department.

Coast Guard conducts Pollution Response Workshop and Mock Drill - 2021 in Gujarat

- In Gujarat, the Coast Guard District Headquarters **Number-1** conducted the district-level **Pollution Response Workshop and Mock Drill - 2021 at Porbandar**.
- It was conducted to revalidate the response mechanism for oil pollution incidents and enable the **Indian Coast Guard to fine tune the Regional and National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan**.
- According to official sources, the workshop was inaugurated by Deputy Inspector General S.K. Verghese, the Commander of District HQs Number-1.
- The workshop was conducted in **two phases**.
- The First Phase consisted of Table-top Exercise simulating oil spill while the practical demonstration of oil spill equipment on-board **ICGS Samudra Pavak** for containment and recovery of oil spill was covered in the Second Phase.

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Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India concluded

- The Annual Convention of **Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI)** concluded at Kevadia in Gujarat.
- The convention was jointly organized by the Ministry of Tourism and ADTOI with support from **Gujarat Tourism**.
- It aimed at building public confidence to travel for the revival of domestic tourism in the country.
- The conference was attended by around **400 delegates** comprising ADTOI members from across India, hoteliers, airlines representatives, senior government officials, media-persons among other stakeholders of the tourism industry.

Goa

Goa becomes 6th State to successfully undertake ULB reforms

- **Goa has become the 6th State in the country** to successfully undertake **Urban Local Bodies reforms** stipulated by the Department of Expenditure.
- **Finance Ministry** said, the state has now become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of **223 crore rupees** through **Open Market Borrowings**.
- Goa has joined five other states - **Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Rajasthan and Telangana**, who have completed Urban Local Bodies reforms.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh becomes first State to implement e-cabinet

- **Himachal Pradesh** has become the **first State** in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing **e-cabinet application**.
- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the first e-cabinet at Shimla.
- The entire process from initiation of a cabinet memo, approval of the cabinet memo through concerned Secretary, Chief Secretary, concerned Minister and finally by Chief Minister to place in the cabinet has been made online.
- It will also be possible to monitor the status of implementation of cabinet decisions more effectively through this application.
- The e-cabinet provides for generation of automatic s through SMS on real time basis for various stages involved in processing cabinet issues like receipt of cabinet memo, finalization of cabinet meeting, advice received on cabinet memo for various levels like Secretaries and Ministers.
- The e-cabinet application is also available as a Mobile App on android devices .
- The new system will bring greater efficiency in the overall process of conducting a cabinet meeting by removing dependencies which arise due to the physical movement of cabinet memos.

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'E-Parivahan Vyavstha' launched by Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched 'e-Parivahan Vyavstha' of the State Transport Department to provide faceless services to the people of the State regarding **Driving Licence/Registration Certificates/Permits etc.**
- The Chief Minister said stress must be laid on educating the people to avail this facility.
- He said the success of this system would largely depend on how better and easily the people adopt this service.
- Jairam said credit of this goes to the officers and employees of the State.
- He said the State Government first started e-Vidhan Sabha, then e-Budget and now it has started e-cabinet.
- He said the e-Parivahan was a step forward in this direction.

Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh

Farooq Khan reviews functioning of One-Stop-Centres for women

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Adviser to Lieutenant Governor Farooq Khan reviewed the functioning of **One-Stop-Centres for women** in the UT during a meeting at Civil Secretariat, Jammu.
- The Mission Director of **Integrated Child Protection Services (ICPS)** gave a detailed powerpoint presentation and apprised the Adviser about the working of the centres as well difficulties being faced by them while performing their duties.
- **Aim:** To help the women affected by violence in private and public spaces, within the family, community or at the workplace.
- **Main objective of One-Stop-Centres:** To facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counseling support under one roof to fight against any forms of violence against women.

J&K: Over 22 lakh people applied for golden card

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, **over 22 lakh people** have so far applied for the **golden card** under newly launched **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (ABPMJAY) SEHAT scheme** in various districts across the Union Territory.
- Before the launching of **SEHAT scheme**, only people in the deprived category under the socio-economic census could have availed the facility, however, under SEHAT scheme every J&K resident is being covered under **Rs 5 lakh health insurance**.

Jammu and Kashmir govt restores 4G mobile Internet service in entire Union Territory

- The **high speed mobile data services** have been **restored in Jammu and Kashmir**, bringing respite to people affected by the ban, especially students, working professionals and business community.
- The services were suspended on **August 5, 2019** when the central government abrogated the special status of J&K and bifurcated the erstwhile State into two Union Territories.
- The **2G service on mobile phones** was **restored across J&K in January 2020**.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

- The high speed mobile data services were restored in twin J&K districts including Ganderbal in Kashmir and Udhampur in Jammu division on a trial basis on August 16, 2020, as part of calibrated easing of restrictions.
- The pre-paid SIM card holder will be given access to internet connectivity only after verification as per norms applicable to postpaid connections.

India's first geothermal power project to be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh

- **India's first geothermal power project** will be established at **Puga village of eastern Ladakh**. Puga has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy in the country by the scientists.
- In the first phase of the pilot project, one megawatt (MW) power generation capacity will be generated.
- A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishment and implementation of the first phase was signed.
- India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022. The **tripartite MOU** was signed between **ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh**.
- In the first phase, the pilot project implemented by the ONGC-OEC will explore within the depth of 500 metres and it is planned to supply 24 hours free power to 10 neighbouring villages which are not connected with the northern grid for power supply.
- The second Phase is proposed for deeper and lateral exploration of geothermal reservoirs by drilling optimal number of wells and setting up of a higher capacity demo plant in Ladakh. The second phase will be the Research and Development stage or demonstration of the project.
- In the third phase, it is planned to promote joint ventures and commercial projects. Puga is a place where it is uncovered with a potential of more than 100 mw of geothermal energies.

Manoj Sinha inaugurates General Bus Stand cum Shopping complex Cum Multi Level Parking in Jammu

- In the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir**, **Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha** inaugurated the state of the art **General Bus Stand cum Shopping complex Cum Multi Level Parking** constructed at the **cost of Rs. 213 Crore in Jammu**.
- The LG urged the people of Jammu to take care of the assets in Jammu city and every single resident must shoulder responsibility of building **safe & clean Jammu**.
- The LG also said that the multi-level parking cum shopping complex will help thousands of pilgrims who come for the journey of Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine and this will help address the problem of Jammu people and largely help them address the traffic congestion being faced by them.
- The LG added that Jammu is the only place across the country where there is **IIM, AIIMS and IIT**.

e-Kuber payments system launched in J&K

- **Jammu and Kashmir** formally rolled out **e-Kuber payments system of Reserve Bank of India**.
- J&K is the **first Union Territory** to implement version **2.9 of e-Kuber payments system**

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- e-Kuber would be implemented in the Civil Secretariat treasury on pilot basis and rollout of this system for other treasuries shall follow shortly.
- The system is capable of making **50,000 transactions** at a time, while all government-related financial transactions would be dealt directly with RBI, without any intermediary bank.
- The system would also overcome payment delays and eliminate risk of paper vouchers being lost in transit

Jharkhand

MSME wing of Gol to cooperate in setting up industries up to 20 crore rupees in Dhanbad

- In **Jharkhand**, the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME** wing of the Government of India will cooperate in setting up industries up to **20 crore rupees in Dhanbad**.
- The **central government** will give **70 percent amount**, while the remaining **30 percent** is to be borne by the **state government and industrialists**.
- The Central Government has taken initiatives to set up integrated industries, including the automobile section, tools room, and other subsidiary industries in Dhanbad for Rs 20 crore and more.
- This amount will be received by industrialists through clusters. Director MSME D K Sahu in Dhanbad has assured the industrialists to resolve the above issues and problems, and focus upon Prime Minister's vision of Vocal for Local.

J&K: 7-day long exhibition of NSSH scheme concluded

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, a seven day long exhibition of **National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH)** scheme concluded at ITI, Ground in Rajouri.
- The valedictory function of the exhibition was attended by **Vice Chairperson, Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), Dr. Hina Shafi, DDC, Rajouri, Rajesh Shavan besides officers of KVIB**.
- Dr. Hina while speaking on the occasion said that the Government has taken slew of measures to ensure the upliftment of SC and ST communities and such awareness camps and exhibitions are organised for that purpose.
- She added that under **NSSH** many such exhibitions will be conducted on a regular basis across the Union Territory.

Karnataka

Vijayanagara becomes Karnataka's 31st district

- The **Karnataka government** issued an official notification announcing **Vijayanagara** as the **state's 31st district**, which was carved out of the **ore-rich Ballari district**.
- Vijayanagara will have **six taluks** namely Hosapete, Kudligi, Hagaribommanahalli, Kotturu, Hoovina Hadagali and Harapanahalli.
- **Hosapete** is the headquarters of the new **Vijayanagara district**.
- The Yediyurappa government's plan to create Vijayanagara district had run into opposition, especially from within the ruling BJP.

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- Undivided Ballari was politically significant, comprising nine Assembly constituencies of which the Congress represents five and the BJP four.
- Minister for Infrastructure Development, Haj and Wakf, Anand Singh, who is also the Ballari district in-charge, had anchored the efforts for the new district.

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike launches Swachh Sarvekshan Abhiyan

- The **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike** has launched Swachh Sarvekshan Abhiyan in Bengaluru to educate citizens about solid waste management.
- The Special Commissioner in the Municipal Corporation, Randeep Dev informed that Bengaluru received **214 marks** in Sarvekshan last year.
- To gain a higher rank, he informed that **40 percent of waste is segregated and 18,000 municipal workers, 8000 drivers** are pressed into garbage collection work every day in the city.

Janaushadhi Kendra inaugurated by Union Minister D. V. Sadananda Gowda in Bengaluru

- All the government hospitals in the country will have **Janaushadhi Kendras** that sell affordable generic medicines to the common man.
- **Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers D. V. Sadananda Gowda** informed this during the inauguration of a **Janaushadhi Kendra in Bengaluru**.
- He appealed to all the doctors in government hospitals to prescribe generic medicines.
- There are **7,500** Janaushadhi Kendras in the country and Karnataka alone has 850 such shops.
- The Janaushadhi shops provide BP tablets at a **price of 250 to 300 rupees as against 2,500 to 3,000 rupees** charged for the branded medicines.

2,500 classrooms at higher education level to be converted into smart classrooms - Karnataka Deputy CM

- **Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Dr. C. N. Ashwath Narayana**, who holds the Higher Education portfolio, has informed that **2,500 classrooms** at the higher education level will be converted into smart classrooms in the **next two months**.
- At the **Government Arts College in Bengaluru**, he said that Integrated Learning Management System with high speed internet and the state of the art tabs will be available in the smart classrooms.
- The Learning Management System will make the learning process more accessible and enable teachers to track the learning level of students.

Karnataka to host second Khelo India University Games this year

- Union Sports Minister **Kiren Rijiju** has announced that the second **Khelo India University Games** will be hosted by **Karnataka**.
- Bengaluru along with **Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, Mr Rijiju** said that the largest University games in the country scheduled later this year will be held in **Bengaluru** in partnership with Association of Indian Universities.

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- **Over 4,000 sportsmen under the age of 25** will compete with an opportunity to be selected for the national teams.
- The first edition of University games was held in Bhubaneswar.

Union Minister Kiren Rijju inaugurates state of the art training facilities – Bengaluru

- **Union Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs Kiren Rijju** inaugurated gym complex and modern change room and laid the foundation stone for **330-bedded hostel**, upgradation of kitchen and dining hall and synthetic athletics track in the Bengaluru campus of Sports Authority of India.
- He said that sportsmen who bring laurels to the country are our heroes and they deserve the best state of the art training facilities, hostels and nutritious food.

Kerala

India's First 'Gender Park' inaugurated in Kozhikode, Kerala

- The **Kerala government's Gender Park in Kozhikode** will become **functional from next month**, coinciding with the second edition of the **International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II)**.
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the **February 11-13 ICGE-II** and the Gender Park.
- He will also lay the foundation of the **International Women's Trade and Research Centre (IWTRC)** that envisages a secure and sustained ecosystem for women entrepreneurs and a space for them to market products.
- Along with this Park, a Gender Museum, Gender Library, Convention Centre and an Amphitheatre will also be launched at the event.

About the Gender Park :

- It is the **first space** of its kind in the world.
- Currently working under the Department of Women and Child Development, it aims to become a premier convergence point for gender-related activities," the website mentions.
- Built with an aim to establish an ecosystem for women entrepreneurs, the Gender Park will also see the launch of a Gender museum, Gender library, a convention centre and an amphitheatre which, according to KK Shailaja, will form the first phase of the park.
- The overall cost of establishing the park is around **Rs 300 crore. spread over 24 acre land**.

Kerala to gets its first human milk bank

- The southern state of **Kerala** will get its **first human milk bank**. The state-of-the-art facility will be inaugurated by health minister **K K Shailaja** at state-owned **Ernakulam general hospital in Kochi**.
- It is being set up in partnership with **Rotary Club of Cochin Global**.
- The facility will provide breast milk to newborn babies who are deprived of it because of various issues, including the sickness of their mothers.
- According to the state government, **3,600 babies** are born in the general hospital a year and out of those, **600 to 1,000 sick babies** are admitted into the **Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)**.

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- A similar milk bank - the Northeast's first - opened at Guwahati's Satribari Christian Hospital in December last year.
- It was the 15th milk bank in the entire country.

Kerala Knowledge Mission launched

- The state government has launched **Kerala Knowledge Mission** which aims to transform the state to a knowledge economy.
- Chief Minister **Pinarayi Vijayan** inaugurated the project at an event held at Mascot Hotel, **Thiruvananthapuram**.
- The mission will promote innovative ideas, coordinate knowledge initiatives and equip young people with updated skills.
- The initiative is a comprehensive digital platform for educated youngsters which would help them upskill, enhance knowledge and empower them to face the challenges of ever-changing job market.
- This digital platform will create a great opportunity for those who took a break from work and jobless to connect with global employers.
- They can upskill and earn more knowledge preferred by the employers. This will create at least three lakh jobs in a year and Kerala government also provides benefits such as insurance and loan assistance for the entrepreneurs through this platform.
- The digital platform was developed in collaboration with the Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology.
- It will provide timely and professional training in diverse and most demanding areas such as data analytics, machine learning, artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, full stack development, cyber security, digital content creation, media, synthetic biology, genetic engineering, and agricultural consulting. Trained and educated youth can register on the portal after meeting the criteria.
- It will also provide job training to unemployed educated youth on the basis of their skills and demands from companies.

Civil Aviation Ministry allows - drones to Kochi Metro Rail Ltd

- **Civil Aviation Ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation have granted permission** for usage of drones to Kochi Metro Rail Limited, Kerala.
- The Remotely Piloted Aircraft System is to be used for Integrated Urban Regeneration & Water Transport System Project.
- **The permission is valid till 31st December 2021** from the date of issue of the letter or until the full operationalization of **Digital Sky Platform (Phase-1)**, whichever is earlier.
- This permission shall be valid only if all conditions and limitations specified are strictly adhered to.
- In case of violation of any condition, the permission shall become null and void.

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Kerala CM launches KFON to provide free internet connectivity to Poor families

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the **Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON)** project intended to provide free internet connections to **Below Poverty Line (BPL) families** in the state.
- The first phase of the project, which will also help connect users in schools, hospitals, offices and houses, was launched in Emakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts.
- In Kerala, which became the first state that declared access to internet as a basic human right, private sector Vodafone-Idea is a leading service provider with 51.9% market share, Reliance Jio has 22.6% market share, while public sector BSNL's share is 12.6%.
- The KFON project is a mega infrastructure project that aims to build a high-speed, reliable and scalable fibre network across the state to provide connectivity to 30,000 government institutions and 20 lakh households through the transmission and distribution facility of the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB).
- Both the KSEB and the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited (KSITIL) have 50% shares each in KFON. The 52,746 km-long fibre optic cables are being laid using the poles of KSEB.

Kerala govt sanctions Rs.9 crore to build 'smart' anganwadis

- The Kerala government has sanctioned **Rs.9 crore** to convert the **conventional anganwadis into "smart" structures with better amenities.**
- Under the Smart Anganwadi scheme, the Department of Women and Child Development has granted **48 anganwadis** in the state to construct new buildings.
- To provide early childhood care, the Kerala government has decided to build 'smart anganwadis' in a phased manner. The aim is to make the facility more child-friendly to nurture the mental and physical development of children.
- The smart anganwadis are being designed and constructed as part of the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).**
- It is expected to have various amenities, ranging from study hall, kitchen, dining area, store room, creative zone, garden to swimming pool and outdoor play area as per the availability of land.

Kerala Governor Inaugurates India's First Digital University

- **Digital University** has been set up in Kerala's Technocity, Mangalapuram. The Governor of Kerala Arif Mohammed Khan has inaugurated the country's first Digital University in the state.
- Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (Digital University) is established by upgrading the two-decade old state government's **Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K).**
- The university is formed with a vision of creating a futuristic institution of higher learning, aspiring to set a global benchmark in Digital technologies and its management
- The launch of the first Digital University in the country will open tremendous opportunities for youngsters.

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- India's first Digital University will focus on postgraduate programmes and research along with building strong industry-academic and academic-academic linkages with leading institutions in India and abroad. Developed on a 10-acre campus in Technocity, the university will provide education to 12,000 residential scholars on the campus and many technology-linked learners outside.
- The university seeks to lead the Digital Transformation Initiatives announced by the Kerala Government in the Budget 2021.
- India's first Digital University has been started with five schools
 1. School of Computer Science and Engineering;
 2. School of Digital Sciences;
 3. School of Electronic Systems and Automation;
 4. School of Informatics;
 5. School of Digital Humanities and Liberal Arts, covering science, technology and humanities aspects of the Digital world

Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh launches 'SAANS' campaign to reduce infant mortality

- The **health department** in **Madhya Pradesh** has launched the **Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully ('SAANS')** campaign with the aim of **reducing infant mortality due to pneumonia**.

Purpose :

- **To reduce the death rate** due to **pneumonia** among **infants** a strategy is being chalked out under the Social awareness campaign in which medical staff is being trained.
- Training will be imparted at the community and primary health centres.
- Around **4,000 Health and Wellness Centres** have been set up in Madhya Pradesh for this purpose.
- The State government has also developed training modules in partnership with PGIMER, Chandigarh, and UNICEF, which will be used to enhance the skills of health workers, including doctors and paramedical staff.

Madhya Pradesh: Mandu festival starts

- In Madhya Pradesh, the three-day **Mandu Festival began at Mandu** in the historic town of **Dhar district**.
- **State culture and tourism minister Usha Thakur** inaugurated the mandu festival.
- Handicrafts related to handmade art are also being displayed in the **Mandu Utsav** to encourage vocals for locals.
- **Dino Adventure Park & Fossils Museum** also inaugurated by the state culture and tourism minister.
- The State Minister informed that the **Dinosaur Park is the country's first modern fossil park which has 24 eggs and other fossils of dinosaurs on display**.
- The park also provides information related to the life of dinosaurs.

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- **Principal Secretary Tourism and Culture Shri Sheo Shekhar Shukla** said that Such events will not only familiarize people around the world with the special culture of rural Madhya Pradesh but will also help in realizing the dream of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh by creating new employment opportunities.

Tribal painter Bhuri Bai of MP invited as Chief Guest

- **The tribal painter Bhuri Bai of Madhya Pradesh** was invited as the **Chief Guest** at the **Foundation Day** celebrations of **Bharat Bhavan**.
- The motivational thing is that when the construction of this building started, she used to work as a labourer.
- The journey of a woman tribal artist from labourer at Bharat Bhavan to Chief Guest on the occasion of Foundation Day of Bharat Bhavan is inspirational to many.
- When the construction of this building started, she used to work here as a labourer on a daily wage of Rs six.
- She never expected that she would become the Chief Guest in this **Bharat Bhavan**.

Hoshangabad in MP to be renamed as Narmadapuram

- **Madhya Pradesh** Chief Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** has announced that **Hoshangabad** city in the state would be renamed as **Narmadapuram**.
- He made the announcement during the Narmada Jayanti programme held in Hoshangabad.
- Narmada is the lifeline of Madhya Pradesh.
- The city is famous for its beautiful ghats along the banks of the Narmada river.
- Hoshangabad was so far named after an attacker Hoshang Shah, but will be known after the lifeline Maa Narmada, which is a matter of happiness.

47th Khajuraho Dance Festival begins in MP

- The **week-long 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival** began in **Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh** which is based on the **Indian classical dance tradition**.
- The festival is being organized by the **Culture Department** through **Ustad Alauddin Khan Music and Arts Academy Bhopal. Director of the Academy,**
- Festival will give the audience a chance to watch the performance of the dancers amid the aura of the temple as the event is being held once again in the temple complex of the Western Temple Group of Khajuraho after a gap of 44 years.

Aim :

- The festival aims to promote and encourage dance, artists, culture and heritage of India through several Indian classical dance forms like Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, and Mohiniattam.
- The first day event is dedicated to Bharatanatyam performance by Geeta Chandran and her troupe and Kathak performance by Deepak Maharaj.

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Maharashtra govt signs MoU with Flipkart to promote wooden toys, local artifacts, handicrafts

- To promote **wooden toys, local artifacts, handicrafts** Maharashtra Small Industries Development Corporation and Maharashtra State Khadi & Village Industries Board have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding with Flipkart**.
- This MoU will enable artisans, weavers, craftsmen & MSMEs from Maharashtra to showcase their products to millions of customers in India.
- Flipkart will provide free training for packaging and branding to all these manufacturers.
- Also, product photography will also be done by the company.

IIT Bombay launches fundraising campaign 'Cherish IIT Bombay 2021'

- IIT Bombay launched its first-ever annual fundraising campaign in India, **Cherish IIT Bombay 2021**.
- As per information shared by the IIT, the funds will be used for the creation of **world-class laboratory complexes**, modernization of lecture halls and continuation of awards to attract and retain faculty.
- It says, donations made to IIT Bombay by corporate bodies and individuals are 100% tax-deductible under **section 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act**.

Maharashtra's New Agriculture Pump Power Connection scheme bags good response

- In Maharashtra, the **State Government's New Agriculture Pump Power Connection scheme** has been receiving a good response.
- The scheme announced in **October 2020** has provided various relaxations to farmers to pay their pending dues.
- Since the scheme was announced, as many as three lakh 42 thousand farmers have paid dues to the tune of 312 crore 41 lakh rupees.
- In a bid to provide more relief to the farmers' the State Government has waived-off pending dues of 15 thousand crore rupees, an official press statement said.
- Farmers who will pay their Agri pumps dues in the first year will get **50 per cent relaxation** on their actual dues.
- Besides, the interest and late fees will also be waived off completely.
- This apart, farmers who will pay their total dues will be given nearly 66 per cent concession.

Manipur

Manipur CM N Biren Singh launched PM FME Scheme

- In Manipur, the **State Chief Minister N. Biren Singh** launched the Prime Minister Formalization of **Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) Scheme**.
- The launching of the Scheme was done during the inaugural function of Conference Cum Buyer Meet at Hotel Imphal.
- The PM FME Scheme aims to provide financial, technical and business support to micro food processing units, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs).

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- The Scheme will also promote **One District One Product** to reap the benefit of scales in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.

Nagaland

Two new grants announced by Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio

- **Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio** announced **two new grants, namely, the Chief Minister's Grant for Journalism and the Chief Minister's Research Grant.**
- Delivering the Budget Speech at the ongoing Budget Session, Mr Rio said, the journalism grant will support the strengthening of democracy and thereby positively impact good governance as it is an endeavor to empower a vibrant fourth estate.
- He said, the research grant will support advancement of science and extend funding to research and research scholars.

Odisha

Citizen-centric on-line services of State Transport department launched by Odisha

- Odisha launched various **citizen-centric on-line services** of the State Transport department.
- On the occasion, **Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** said that the digital initiative will allow freedom to the vehicle owners to choose any transport office of the state for vehicle related services.
- The state road transport offices going paperless and contactless, long queues in front of the transport offices across the state will soon be a thing of the past-said the chief minister while rolling out the services.
- While the chief minister described the initiative as a kind of liberation for thousands of people, an official release to this effect says that **Odisha is the first state in the country to introduce document upload through digital signature, using the NIC platform.**
- The state rolled out as many as nine online services that include vehicle registration and ownership transfer.

Odisha Govt announced Rs 200 crore Development Package for Maa Samaleswari Temple

- **Patnaik** announced a **Rs 200-crore package** for the development of the **16th-century shrine of Maa Samaleswari, the presiding deity of western Odisha.**
- The **SAMALEI (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives)** project will be implemented during the 2021-22 fiscal.
- Launching the Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiative (SAMALEI), the Chief Minister said the government will spend Rs 200 crore in 2021-22 to develop an area of 108 acres around the temple.

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- Unveiling a slew of measures, the Chief Minister said gates will be erected on the four sides of the temple to facilitate smooth entry and exit of devotees. The temple office, an interpretation centre and other facilities will be developed at the main gate for convenience of the visitors and smooth darshan of the presiding deity.
- The temple, situated on a 12-acre land on the bank of Mahanadi river, will have adequate facilities for religious functions, a bhoga mandap and rest rooms for sevayats.
- Housing will be developed for servitors and a 30- metre-wide road will be constructed from the temple to the Mahanadi Gate Road.

Dharmendra Pradhan urges Centre to set up Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology in Bhubaneswar

- **Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** has urged the Centre to set up a Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology in **Bhubaneswar** in Odisha.
- In his letter to the **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Earth Sciences and Science and Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Mr. Pradhan** said that in order to strike a balance between Odisha's delicate maritime ecosystems and the growth of its **blue economy**, there is a need for enhanced focus on scientific research, which can be ensured by the setting up of the **Centre of Excellence on Maritime Biotechnology at the Institute of Life Sciences in Bhubaneswar**.

Punjab

Punjab CM launches 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain **Amarinder Singh** virtually launched the 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission as part of the government's campaign to accomplish the goal of **100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households by March next year**.
- The Chief Minister also inaugurated one **Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme** covering **85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages**, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.
- The scheme will benefit more than **1.6 lakh residents** from 155 villages in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur districts by helping replace groundwater with surface water supply for drinking, besides resolving the problem of arsenic affected habitations.
- The scheme is being funded by the **World Bank, Jal Jeevan Mission of GoI, NABARD, and State Budget**.
- The Chief Minister also formally launched 10 new large multi-village surface water supply schemes at a cost of Rs.1,020 Crore. The scheme will cover 1,018 villages in the water quality affected areas of districts Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, and Tarn Taran.

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Punjab becomes 13th State to complete ONOR Card

- **Punjab has become the 13th State in the country** to successfully undertake “**One Nation One Ration Card system**” reform.
- The State has become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of **one thousand five hundred and sixteen crore rupees through Open Market Borrowings**.
- **12 other States** which have completed this reform are Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.
- The implementation of **One Nation One Ration Card System** ensures availability of ration to beneficiaries under **National Food Security Act** and other welfare schemes at any Fair Price Shop across the country.

Punjab Cabinet approves mission ‘Lal Lakir’ in all villages

- The **Punjab Cabinet** approved implementation of mission ‘**Lal Lakir**’
- It aimed at **facilitating villagers to monetise property rights** and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions and banks in all villages across the state.
- ‘Lal Lakir’ refers to land that is part of the village ‘abaadi’ (habitation) and is used for non-agriculture purposes only.
- Under the mission, the right of record of properties within ‘Lal Lakir’ in the villages of the state will be prepared with the cooperation of the government of India under the **SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas)** scheme.
- This will enable mapping the land, households, habitation and all other areas falling within ‘Lal Lakir’.

Sikkim

‘Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of Sikkim’ initiative at Gangtok

- **Sikkim Chief Minister P. S. Tamang** launched the ‘**Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of Sikkim**’ initiative at Gangtok.
- The initiative will benefit around **1,500 students** who would be provided 200 mls of milk every day.
- Mr Tamang called the initiative a step towards eradicating malnutrition and other health problems among the young generation.
- He said that the State Government is planning to extend it on a larger scale.
- He said that proper nutrition is the foundation of a healthy mind and body, and this should be emphasized in educational institutions.

Tamil Nadu

PM Modi unveils several key projects of oil & gas sector in Tamil Nadu

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will dedicate to the nation and lay the foundation of key projects of the oil and gas sector in **Tamil Nadu through video conferencing**.

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- Mr Modi will dedicate to the nation the **Ramanathapuram -Thoothukudi** natural gas pipeline and the Gasoline Desulphurisation Unit at Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited, Manali.
- He will also lay the foundation stone of **Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam**.
- These projects will bring in substantial socio-economic benefits and will boost the country's march towards **Urja Aatmanirbharta**.

Ramky Enviro contract with Chennai for waste management

- **Ramky Enviro Engineers Ltd (REEL)**, a leading waste management company, announced that it has entered into a seven-year contract with the **Greater Chennai Corporation** to design and implement an IOT-enabled solid waste collection programme.
- The Hyderabad-based company said it will cover **four zones in Chennai including Tiruvottriyur (Zone 1), Manali (Zone 2), Madhavaram (Zone 3), and Ambattur (Zone 7)**.
- The programme which has been **launched by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, will involve 100 per cent waste segregation at source across all the households in the four zones within one year and sustain these efforts consistently.

Desi cloud storage platform DigiBoxx launched in Tamil Nadu

- **DigiBoxx, India's first digital asset management platform** has launched its services in the Tamil Nadu market.
- **State Industries Minister MC Sampath** inaugurated the service.
- DigiBoxx is an Indian digital file storage, sharing and management **SaaS (Software as a Service)** product that provides storage options for businesses as well as individual users to store all files in one centralised location.
- As part of the **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative**, NITI Aayog first launched the indigenously developed platform on December 22, 2020, to provide affordable storage services to individuals and businesses and most importantly to store user data within India.

Retirement age raised to 60 years for Tamil Nadu govt. employees

- In **Tamil Nadu**, **Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami** announced that the retirement age of State Government employees has been increased from **59 to 60 years**.
- Making a suo motu statement in the Legislative Assembly, he said, the order would be applicable to employees of the government and government-aided schools, legal and constitutional bodies, government sectors, local bodies, commissions, boards and unions.
- He said, all those who were in service and those who would retire on **31st of May** this year would be covered under the announcement.

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39th Agartala International Book Fair started at Tripura

- In Tripura, the **39th Agartala International Book Fair** with the theme **"Ek Tripura, Shrestha Tripura"** has begun at Agartala.
- State Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated the fair in presence of Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner Md. Jobayed Hossain and other state cabinet ministers and MLAs.
- The Chief Minister said a book fair helps in building a positive mindset among people and that ensures a positive approach for overall progress in society.
- Cultural troops coming from Bangladesh, Northeastern States including Sikkim will be performing various cultural events on each day as part of the fair.

Uttar Pradesh

UP CM Yogi Adityanath to inaugurate Abhyudaya Yojana

- **Uttar Pradesh** Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** will inaugurate the **Mukhyamantri Abhyudaya Yojana**, a free coaching program meant for students preparing for competitive exams, **on Feb 15, 2021**
- Under the Abhyudaya Scheme, those students who want to prepare for competitive exams such as **IAS, IPS, PCS, NDS, CDS, NEET and JEE** but are unable to do it because of lack of resources, would be provided free coaching.
- Initially, the coaching will begin at the divisional level. This will be followed by district-level coaching centres.
- A 12-member committee headed by a divisional commissioner will make arrangements for guest lectures, motivational speakers, the supply of study material and other resources.

PM Narendra Modi to lay foundation stone for Maharaja Suheldev Memorial in Uttar Pradesh

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone of **Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and Maharaja Suheldev Development project** and dedicated it to the public **Maharaja Suheldev State Medical College (Bahraich)** via **video conferencing**.
- The project includes the installation of a horse-riding statue of Maharaja Suheldev, separate tourist facilities such as a **cafeteria, guest house, and children's park**.
- The Prime Minister will also address a webinar for consultation on the roadmap for effective implementation of Union Budget 2021-22 in the infrastructure sector.

First paperless budget to be presented in Uttar Pradesh Assembly

- The **first paperless budget** will be presented in **Uttar Pradesh Assembly**.
- UP will be the first state in the country to table a paperless budget.
- **The State Finance Minister Suresh Khanna** will present the first paperless budget in the history of the State.
- All members of the State Legislature have been provided **iPads** to view the budget highlights which will also be available on two big screens put up in the House.

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- The **2021-2022 budgets** will also be available on an App which can be downloaded from Google Play Store with the name '**Uttar Pradesh Sarkar Ka Budget**'.

Uttar Pradesh govt to develop Jewar Airport as Asia's biggest airport

- Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government plans to develop **Jewar Airport as Asia's biggest airport with six runways**.
- The state government has to set aside **2,000 crore** for Jewar Airport in its budget for 2021-22 presenting in the Assembly.
- The state government has also increased the number of runways of the Jewar Airport to six, from two proposed earlier.
- The under construction airport in Ayodhya will be named as **Maryada Purushottam Sriram Airport**.
- A provision of **101 crore rupees** has been made for it in the budget.
- Ayodhya airport will also be subsequently made an international airport.

UP govt presents biggest ever budget of around Rs 5,50,270 crores to make self-reliant state

- **Uttar Pradesh** Government presented the biggest ever budget to the tune of around **Rs 5,50,270 crores** to make **Atma Nirbhar or self-reliant Uttar Pradesh**.
- The budget presented by **Finance Minister Suresh Khanna** in the State Assembly was also the first paperless budget of any state in the country.
- The budget focuses on **farmers' welfare, women empowerment and health sector along with the development projects**.
- **Atmanirbhar Krishak Samanvit Vikas Yojna** has been launched for the welfare of the farmers of the state.
- **Seven hundred crores** have been allocated for free irrigation to the farmers
- The State Government also focused on heritage tourism in the state and particularly the overall development of Ayodhya.
- To improve the tourism in Ayodhya city, Rs 101 crore have been allocated in the budget for development of **Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram Airport**.
- Yogi Adityanath Government has also announced to provide financial help to destitute women under **Mahila Samarthya Yojana** till they get alimony from the Court.
- The State Government will provide free tablets to the eligible students under **Abhyudaya Scheme**.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates DRDO Skill Development Centre for Fire Safety Training

- **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh** has inaugurated **Skill Development Centre (SDC) for Fire Safety Training of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** at **Pilkhuwa in Uttar Pradesh** through virtual mode on February 22, 2021
- The facility, created by Delhi based DRDO laboratory **Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES)**

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- **Aim** : At developing trained human resources, fire safety technology and products to save precious human lives and valued assets.

West Bengal

West Bengal: Amit Shah to flag off BJP's Parivartan Yatra

- Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader **Amit Shah** will be visiting West Bengal.
- He is scheduled to flag off **BJP's Parivartan Yatra from Cooch Behar** in North Bengal before addressing a public meeting at Bangaon Thakurnagar in **North 24 Parganas**.
- Earlier, Mr Shah's two day visit to the state in the last week of January had been postponed.

West Bengal: Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav - 14th to 28th Feb

- The **11th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav** is being held between **14th to 28th February at Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Murshidabad in West Bengal**.
- The inaugural programme is going to take place at Coochbehar.
- Governor **Jagdeep Dhankhar** and Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism **Prahlad Singh Patel** will be present in the inauguration.
- All arrangements are in place for hosting the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav at Coochbehar Palace.

Modi inaugurates Railway projects in West Bengal

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** harped on the importance of infrastructure projects as a development index for **West Bengal**.
- While he said infra development was the priority for his government, Modi pulled up the ruling Trinamool Congress for tardy execution of development work.
- Syndicates, extortion and cut-money have been a recurring poll theme in Bengal.

JP Nadda to participate in series of programmes in Kolkata, West Bengal

- BJP national president **JP Nadda** will participate in a series of programmes in **Kolkata and North 24 Parganas** in West Bengal.
- Mr Nadda will launch Lokkho Sonar Bangla manifesto crowdsourcing campaign in Kolkata in the morning before visiting Rishi Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's residence and museum in Naihati.
- The BJP president will have lunch at a jute mill worker's household in Gouripur and visit Anandpuri Kalibari Temple, Barrackpore.
- He will visit Mangal Pandey Memorial before addressing Poriborton Yatra - Nabadwip zone culmination rally in Anandapuri Khelar Math.
- Later in Kolkata, Mr Nadda is scheduled to begin the Lokkho Sonar Bangla intellectuals meeting in Science City.

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Revision Points

State	Chief Minister	Governor
Andhra Pradesh	YS Jagan Mohan Reddy	Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Pema Khandu	B. D. Mishra (Retd.)
Assam	Sarbananda Sonowal	Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Bhupesh Baghel	Sushri Anusuiya Uikey
Delhi	Arvind Kejriwal	
Goa	Pramod Sawant	Bhagat Singh Koshiyari
Gujarat	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Dev Vrat
Haryana	Manohar Lal	Satyadeo Narain Arya
Himachal Pradesh	Jairam Thakur	Bandaru Dattatraya
Jharkhand	Hemant Soren	Droupadi Murmu
Karnataka	B. S. Yediyurappa	Vajubhai Vala
Kerala	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	Anandiben Patel
Maharashtra	Uddhav Thackeray	Bhagat Singh Koshiyari
Manipur	N. Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Conrad Kongkal Sangma	Satya Pal Malik
Mizoram	Pu Zoramthanga	P.S. Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Neiphiu Rio	R. N. Ravi
Odisha	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Capt. Amarinder Singh	V.P. Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	PS Golay	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	K Chandrasekhar Rao	Tamilisai Soundararajan
Tripura	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Yogi Aditya Nath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

List of Governors & Administrators

Union Territory	Lt. Governor & Administrator
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Andaman and Nicobar Island	Admiral D K Joshi
Chandigarh	V.P. Singh Badnore
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	Praful Patel
Delhi (NCT)	Anil Baijal
Jammu and Kashmir	Manoj Sinha
Lakshadweep	Praful Patel
Puducherry	Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan (Addl. Charge)
Ladakh	Radha Krishna Mathur

Important National News

Govt. nods release of Rs 1,751 cr to Assam, Arunachal, Odisha, Telangana & UP

- **The High-Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Home Minister Amit Shah** approved Additional Central Assistance of over **one thousand seven hundred 51 crore rupees** under the National Disaster Response Fund, NDRF to five states, which were affected by floods, landslides during **South-West Monsoon-2020** and **hailstorm during Rabi 2019-20**.
- While approving the Additional Central Assistance, Mr Shah said, the Union Government under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has resolved to help people of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh who braved these natural disasters.

Union Ministers jointly launch unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a **unified web portal** for monitoring the progress of **GOBARDHAN** activities across the nation.
- Gobardhan is an important component of **Swachh Bharat Mission Phase-2** for organic solid waste management.
- The Gobardhan scheme aims at **supporting villages effectively to manage their cattle dung and other organic waste**.
- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation will work with all the other stakeholders to implement Gobardhan, a unified approach across villages.
- Gobardhan pilot project will prove to be an important and useful step in cleanliness
- Through this will get ethanol, bio-diesel and compressed bio-fuel in the coming years.

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Policy of Strategic Disinvestment announced

- **Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman**, while presenting the **Union Budget FY 2021-22** in Parliament announced that the government has approved a policy of strategic disinvestment of public sector enterprises
- That will provide a clear roadmap for disinvestment in **all non-strategic and strategic sectors**.
- The government aims at making use of disinvestment proceeds to finance various social sector and developmental programmes and also to infuse private capital, technology and best management practices in Central Government Public Sector Enterprises
- Two fold classification of Sectors to be disinvested :
- **Strategic Sector** : Bare minimum presence of the public sector enterprises and remaining to be privatised or merged or subsidiarized with other CPSEs or closed.
- **Non- Strategic Sector** : In this sector, CPSEs will be privatised, otherwise shall be closed.
- Following 4 sectors to come under it :
 1. Atomic energy, Space and Defence
 2. Transport and Telecommunications
 3. Power, Petroleum, Coal and other minerals
 4. Banking, Insurance and financial services
- Recognising that Idle assets will not contribute to AtmaNirbhar Bharat and the non-core assets largely consist of surplus land with government Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Enterprises, the Minister proposed to use a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of a company to carry out monetization of idle land.
- This can either be by way of direct sale or concession or by similar means.
- Smt. Sitharaman also proposed to introduce a revised mechanism that will ensure timely closure of sick or loss making CPSEs.

Tax holiday for start ups extended for another year till March 2022

- To help **India's startups** amid the COVID-19 pandemic, **tax holidays for these businesses have been extended by one year till March 31, 2022**, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the **Union Budget 2021-22**
- **The government has also proposed to incentivise incorporation of one-person companies (OPCs)**. The move is likely to help smaller startups and innovators.
- The Government has increased the **FDI limit from 49 to 74 percent** in Insurance Companies and allowed foreign ownership and control with safeguards.
- The Government has proposed to infuse **20 thousand crore rupees** to re-capitalized Public Sector Banks.

India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management in Chennai

- **Sh. Babul Supriyo** announced the establishment of a **Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management**

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(CWCM), as a part of the **National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)**, Chennai, an institution under the Ministry.

- On the occasion of the World Wetland Day and as a part of its commitment towards conservation, restoration and management of India's wetlands, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The event was attended virtually by NCSCM, State Wetland Authorities and the knowledge partners of the Wetland Division.
- India has nearly 4.6% of its land as wetlands, covering an area of **15.26 million hectares** and has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 1.08 million hectares.
- The year 2021 also commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, celebrated annually as World Wetlands Day.
- The Minister also released publications relating to Faunal Diversity of all the Ramsar sites in the country and a brochure on Designation of Ramsar sites.

About the Wetland Conservation and Management :

- The dedicated CWCM Centre would address specific research needs and knowledge gaps, give a fillip to capacity development and cutting-edge research on wetlands of India, as well as aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of the wetlands.

India's First Amputee Clinic Launched In Chandigarh

- An '**amputee clinic**', the first of its kind in India, with the aim of improving amputation patient care by providing a collection of services under one roof with significant coordination was launched in **Chandigarh**.
- The clinic was formally inaugurated by the **Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER)**

Director Prof Jagat Ram.

- The basic intent of this initiative is to bring an Amputee as a near-normal functional human being in society.
- This initiative will attempt to provide appropriate management to amputees to guide them in their path to rehabilitation in society and will support patients with counseling and medical facilities during their treatment and recovery.

'Atmanirbharta' named Oxford Hindi word of 2020

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** pushed for '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**' (**self-reliant India**) an Oxford panel has now chosen '**Atmanirbharta**' in Hindi word of 2020.
- The advisory panel of language experts Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell stated that "it validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic".
- The Oxford Hindi word of the year is a word or expression that is chosen to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.
- The usage of the word '**Aatmanirbharta**' after Prime Minister Modi's address has increased significantly.
- There was a massive increase in the usage of **aatmanirbharta** following the prime minister's address, highlighting

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its increased prominence as a phrase and concept in the public lexicon of India

- Previous Hindi words of the year are **Aadhar (2017)**, **Nari Shakti (2018)** and **Samvidhaan (2019)**.

PM Modi to inaugurate Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations at Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh** on February 4 via video conferencing.
- Mr Modi will also release a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura incident.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion.
- February 4 marks the centenary of a landmark event in the freedom struggle that took place at Chauri Chaura village in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh, known as United Province in British India, when a large group of protesters participating in Mahatma Gandhi's non-cooperation movement clashed with the police, who opened fire.

Budget 2021-22 proposes setting up of 100 new Sainik Schools in country

- **Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-22** has proposed to set up **100 new Sainik Schools** in the country, in partnership with NGOs, private schools and State-owned schools.
- The endeavor is to provide schooling opportunities in '**CBSE Plus**' type of educational environment by involving desirous government, private schools and NGOs to partner in establishing their system with Sainik Schools' ethos, value system and national pride.
- The **aim** of establishing Sainik Schools is to prepare children academically, physically and mentally for entry into the National Defence Academy and to develop qualities of body, mind and character which will enable the young boys to become good and useful citizens.
- From the academic session 2021-22, girl candidates are also eligible for admission to Class **6th** in all **33 Sainik Schools**.

Uttarakhand Sets up Shivalik arboretum

- An arboretum showcasing the floral diversity of the **Shivalik hills** was inaugurated at **Jeolikot in Nainital district**.
- It is Mainly for conserving over **210 species of trees** found in the **Shivalik range of Himalayas**.
- One of the unique features of the "Shivalik Arboretum" inaugurated by noted environmental activist **Ajay Rawat** is that the trees standing there introduce themselves to visitors.
- Shivalik Arboretum **aims** to spread nature education among people so that they are able to feel an emotional connection with the trees, and make them more active towards conservation.
- The facility will showcase information like scientific information about particular species, cultural significance, medicinal use, country of origin, type of habitat in which it is found and all possible uses including timber, dyes or any other peculiar use.
- The tree species include Kaphal (myrica esculenta), Toon (toona ciliata), Tejpat (cinamomum tamala), Banj oak (quercus leucotrichophora) and Buransh (rhododendron arboreum).
- Some exotic tree species like Queensland Kauri Pine (agathis robusta), Atlas Cider (cedrus Atlantica) and

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Montezuma Cypress also stand at the arboretum.

Venkaiah Naidu to inaugurate National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav'

- **Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate Aadi Mahotsav**, a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the National Capital.
- It will continue till **15th Feb**.
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry said, the Aadi Mahotsav - A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce is a successful annual initiative that was commenced in 2017.
- The festival was an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.

Smriti Irani inaugurates India International Silk Fair

- **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair** on Virtual Portal.
- **India** has long history of silk production and is the **2nd largest producer of Silk**.
- India is the only country in the world which produces all the **four major varieties of silk - Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga**.
- The fair is considered to be India's biggest silk fair, being held under one roof on Indian Silk Export Promotion Council's virtual platform.
- The five days event is being held virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- Mrs Irani said that more than 200 overseas buyers have already registered and equal number of their representatives in India will be interacting with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products.
- She called upon the exhibitors and overseas buyers to take part in this initiative to celebrate the beauty and vibrancy of Indian silk.

Cabinet approves Budget for fiscal year 2021-22

- The **Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** approved the **Budget for the fiscal year 2021-22**.
- Earlier, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman called on President Ram Nath Kovind before presenting the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament.
- MoS Finance Anurag Thakur and senior officials of the Ministry of Finance also were present during the meeting.
- Traditionally, copies of the Budget are brought to the Parliament complex before the Finance Minister arrives, this year no document has been printed following the COVID-19 protocol.
- The Budget copies will be disseminated electronically, with documents being uploaded on the government website as well as being made available on a special app developed for the same.

Kashmir's 25-yr-old Ayesha Aziz becomes India's youngest female pilot

- **Ayesha Aziz**, the 25-year-old from **Kashmir** who is the youngest female pilot in the country, **acts as a source of inspiration and a beacon of empowerment for numerous Kashmiri women**.

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- In the year **2011**, **Aziz** became the **youngest student pilot** to **get a license at the age of 15** and underwent training to fly a **MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase** the following year.
- She later graduated in aviation from the **Bombay Flying Club (BFC)** and obtained a commercial license in 2017.

MCA amends One Person Companies (OPCs) rules

- The **Ministry of corporate affairs (MCA)** amended the **Companies Rules to revise** the definition of a small company and **to allow non-resident Indians (NRIs)** to incorporate **one person companies (OPCs)** in India.
- Previously NRIs were not allowed to incorporate OPCs. Now any natural person, who is an Indian citizen, whether resident in India or otherwise would be allowed to form an OPC.
- For being considered as a resident in India, the residency period has been proposed to be reduced to **120 days from 182 days for NRIs**.
- Amendments to the Act in 2018, contained provisions for increasing the paid up capital and turnover thresholds for small companies up to Rs 10 crore and Rs 100 crore, respectively.
- The move is expected to lighten the compliance burden of about 200,000 companies.

J&K Reorganisation Amendment Bill introduced in Rajya Sabha

- Minister of State for Home Affairs **G Kishan Reddy** introduced the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Rajya Sabha**.
- The bill will replace Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Ordinance of 2021 which merged the J & K cadre of the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, and Indian Forest Service with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territory cadre, also known as AGMUT cadre.
- The President had promulgated the ordinance last month to amend the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.

Four more states complete ease of doing business reforms

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, added **four more states** have completed the reforms in the '**Ease of Doing Business**', as stipulated by the **Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance as per recent data**.
- Four more States are **Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab**.
- These States have become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources and have been granted permission to raise additional **Rs 5,034 crore** through Open Market Borrowings.
- The total number of states that have undertaken the stipulated reforms to facilitate ease of doing business has gone up to **12**.
- Earlier, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have also reported completion of this reform.
- On completion of reforms facilitating ease of doing business, these twelve states have been granted additional borrowing permission of **Rs 28,183 crore**.

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- The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy,
- In May 2020, the government had decided to link the grant of additional borrowing permissions to states that will undertake the reforms to facilitate ease of doing business
- The four citizen-centric areas for reforms identified were as follows:
- The implementation of the One Nation One Ration Card System
- Ease of doing business reform
- Urban local body or utility reforms
- Power sector reforms
- Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh became the first state to complete three out of four citizen-centric reforms and received additional funds for capital projects. The Department of Expenditure allocated an additional Rs.660 crore to Madhya Pradesh for capital expenditure.

45th Kolkata International Book Fair to be held in July 2021

- The **45th Kolkata International Book Fair** will be held in **July** this year at the **Central Park Ground of Salt Lake**.
- The Publishers and Booksellers Guild announced that the decision has been taken in view of the Board exams and the ensuing Assembly Elections in **West Bengal**.
- This year the focal theme country is Bangladesh to mark the country's **Golden Jubilee Year of Independence and the Centenary of Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.
- The **125th Birth year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** and Birth Centenary of Satyajit Ray will also be celebrated in the Book Fair. Earlier, the Kolkata International Book Fair was deferred due to the pandemic situation.

PM to inaugurate World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on Feb 10

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **World Sustainable Development Summit 2021** on **10th of February** via video conferencing.
- The theme of the summit is '**Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All**'.
- The 20th edition of **The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI)** flagship event- the World Sustainable Development Summit, will be held online from 10th to 12th February.
- The summit will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth and the civil society in the fight against climate change.
- Energy and industry transition, adaptation and resilience, nature based solutions, climate finance, circular economy, clean oceans and air pollution, are amongst the range of topics to be discussed during the summit.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the summit.

PM dedicates to nation projects worth Rs 4,700 cr at Haldia in West Bengal

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** dedicated to the nation **four projects** related to **oil, gas and road sector** worth rupees

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four thousand and seven hundred crores at Haldia in West Bengal.

- The Prime Minister inaugurated three projects, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited BPCL's LPG Import Terminal at Haldia, GAIL's Dobhi-Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline and NHAI's four lane ROB cum flyover at Ranichak.
- Union ministers Dharmendra Singh, Debasree Chaudhary, Governor of West Bengal Jagdeep Dhankhar were also present on the occasion.

Uttarakhand glacier burst

- A major accident occurred in **Chamoli in Uttarakhand** due to the **breaking of the glacier**
- The glacier burst took place at the **Rishiganga power project** after a portion of **Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Tapovan area of Joshimath** in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district and damaged the Rishiganga dam on Alaknanda river.
- The **13.2 MW Rishiganga hydropower** project near Jashimath was completely washed away; the 520 MW NTPC hydro project on the Dhauliganga river near Raini was partially damaged and at least five bridges were impacted by the surge of water that was unleashed, cutting access to a number of villages in the area.
- A multi-agency rescue operation including — Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) — is in full swing to release people still stuck in the tunnels. The forces have cleared 90 meter stretch of debris in the big tunnel at Tapovan till now, with about 100 meters of clearing still left to do.

Budget 2021: Agricultural credit target set at Rs. 16.5 lakh crore for FY22

- With the **aim of doubling farmers' income by 2022**, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** announced that the **agricultural credit target** was set at **Rs. 16.5 lakh crore for FY22**, during Union Budget 2021.
- It is an increase of **10 percent** over the previous year Rs 15 Lakh Crore
- She also announced that the micro irrigation fund would be doubled by Rs.5,000 crore. Operation green scheme will be expanded to include 22 perishable schemes.
- Agriculture infra fund to be increased to Rs.40,000 crore and this will be available to APMCs.
- 1,000 more mandis will be integrated with the electronic national market (e-NAM) to enhance the infrastructure of APMCs.

President Kovind Inaugurates General KS Thimayya Museum In Karnataka

- On Feb 06, 2021, President **Ram Nath Kovind** inaugurated a **museum**, dedicated to the **life of former Army Chief General Kodandera Subayya Thimayya**, in Karnataka.
- Sunny Side, the erstwhile ancestral house of General Thimayya, who served as the Chief of Army Staff from **1957 to 1961**, has been renovated and converted into a museum.
- **General Thimayya** is the **pride of Kodagu** and the memorial museum aims to retell the life-story of the General in an inspiring manner.

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- A statue of the General from Kodagu in uniform greets as one enters the museum, which also showcases a slice of Indian military history.
- The museum also acknowledges the contribution of General Thimayya's siblings, including two of his brothers, who too were Army officers, and his wife Nina, who was bestowed with "Kaiser-e-Hind" award in recognition of her work in public service.

GMR Group inks MoU with Airbus for aircraft maintenance & other airport services

- **GMR Group** has signed a **memorandum of understanding** with **Airbus** (a leading manufacturer of commercial aircrafts) to explore collaboration opportunities across aviation services, technologies and innovation.
- The MoU was **signed at Aero India 2021, Bangalore**.
- As part of the MoU, GMR Group and Airbus will collaborate to explore a broad scope of aviation services, both for commercial and military aircraft to benefit the entire aerospace ecosystem in the country.
- The **main objective** of this partnership will be to explore potential synergies in several strategic areas of aviation services like maintenance, components, training, digital.

India's First Thunderstorm Research Testbed to be established at Balasore in Odisha

- **Odisha's Balasore** will get the country's **first thunderstorm** research testbed, the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.
- The **objective** of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimize human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.
- The thunderstorm testbed will be established in a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- IMD Director-General Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, while speaking with a private television channel, also revealed that a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal.
- Both the projects are in the planning stage and detailed project reports are being made.

UP Government Announces 16-Digit Unicode To Identify Landholdings

- The **Uttar Pradesh** government has introduced a system of issuing a **unique 16-digit Unicode** to mark all kinds of **landholdings in the state**.

About the 16 Digit Unicode :

- The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the **first six digits based on the population** of the land, the **next 4 digits determining the unique identity** of the land.
- The digits from 11 to 14 will be the number of the division of the land.
- The last 2 digits will have the details of the category, through which, the agricultural, residential and commercial land will be identified.

Purpose of the Digit Unicode :

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- The Unicode will put an end to fake registries of disputed land and the scheme is being implemented across the state.
- The work has started in most of the districts.
- Every piece of land in the state will have its own unique identity from now onwards that would check cases of land disputes and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters.
- While the Unicode assessment for plots has started in all revenue villages, the work of marking the disputed plots in the computerised management system is being done by the revenue courts

Skyroot, Bellatrix signs MoU to use latter's orbital transfer vehicle

- **Skyroot Aerospace and Bellatrix Aerospace** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to use the **Orbital Transfer Vehicle** being developed by **Bellatrix Aerospace** in the upper stage of Vikram series of launch vehicles being developed by Skyroot.
- Skyroot and Bellatrix plan to have the **first mission of a Vikram launcher** with an Orbital Transfer Vehicle by 2023.
- The vehicle is expected to help global operators reduce time and costs for launching communication and earth observation satellites.

About OTV :

- An Orbital Transfer Vehicle is a spacecraft that can perform various in-orbit operations including deployment of customer payload to precise orbits, allowing a launch vehicle to deliver satellites to more orbits than what was conventionally possible.
- In simple terms, it is like a taxi in space to take satellites to their operational orbits.

About Skyroot Aerospace :

- Skyroot Aerospace, founded in 2018, is a National Award winning startup building space launch vehicles. It is founded by former ISRO scientists and plans their first launch to Space in 2021.
- Last year Skyroot successfully tested their upper stage engine Raman and Solid fuel demonstrator Kalam-5.

About Bellatrix Aerospace :

- Bellatrix Aerospace, an IP driven space tech company founded in 2015, is a full-suite solution provider of spacecraft propulsion systems offering both chemical and electric propulsion technologies.

Tamil Nadu set to create state's 5th tiger reserve

- With the Centre's approval, **Tamil Nadu government** passed an order for creating the **fifth tiger reserve** in the state and the **51st in the country**.
- The **Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve** will span the forests of Megamalai wildlife sanctuary and Srivilliputhur grizzled squirrel wildlife sanctuary spread across the districts of Theni, Virudhunagar and Madurai.
- The **100,000-hectare** area is home to a range of mammals and bird species and more than a dozen tigers
- **Fourteen tigers** have so far been identified in Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur sanctuaries following scat analysis between 2017 and 2018.

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- Meghamalai is home to a large population of hoofed animals, spotted deers, Indian gaurs, etc. while Srivilliputhur has Nilgiri tahrs, Sambars, elephants, and bird species among others.
- The first tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu – Kalakkad Mundanthurai – was formed around 1988-89, which was followed by Anamalai and Mudumalai in 2008 and 2009. The fourth reserve – Sathyamangalam was created around 2013-14.

FSSAI notified regulations to limit trans fat in food items

- **Packaged food companies** said the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI)** move to **reduce trans-fat in food items** which use edible oil as an ingredient to **2% from 2022**.
- An FSSAI notification dated February 2 said the latest amendment of the Food Safety and Standards (**Prohibition and Restriction on Sales**) Regulations, 2011 will come into effect from January 1, 2022.
- It is **consumer friendly** and will not put burden on the industry as most companies are already working on reducing trans-fat in their products
- The permissible limit for trans fats in food products in 2021 is **3 percent**, cut down from the previous limit of 5 per cent.
- Food products that incorporate edible oils and fats as ingredients, including edible refined oils, vanaspati/partially hydrogenated oils, margarine, vegetable fat spreads, mixed fat spreads, bakery shortenings, fall under the ambit of the newly issued Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2021.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)**, which has launched a major campaign to eliminate industrially-produced trans fat from national food supplies by 2023, says trans fat intake is responsible for approximately 500,000 premature deaths from coronary heart disease each year around the world.

National Horticulture Fair 2021 Begins in Bengaluru

- The **five-day National Horticulture Fair 2021** has started in **Bengaluru on 8 February**.
- The fair is organized by the **Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR)** at the Institute's Hessarghatta campus on the outskirts of Bengaluru city.
- This is the **first time** when the Horticulture Fair is organized in both physical and virtual ways. Cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices, and processing methods will be demonstrated.
- The theme of NHF 2021 is '**Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India**'.
- Virtual preparations have been made across the country to webcast the program in the premises of KVK, FPO, SSIAT centres of art of living foundation, agricultural training centres of respective state governments.
- Interested farmers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders are requested to register in the NHF 2021 to participate through virtual mode.

About National Horticulture Fair :

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- The fair will showcase live demonstrations of improved varieties and technologies, and farmer-entrepreneur-scientist interactions.
- There will be the sale of seeds, planting materials, and products from ICAR-IIHR and other public and private firms for the benefit of end-users.
- There will be stalls of both public and private sectors.

Govt brings bill to replace ordinance facilitating regularisation of unauthorised colonies in Delhi

- The government introduced a bill in the **Rajya Sabha**, which seeks to replace the **National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020**.
- The ordinance was promulgated by **President Ram Nath Kovind** on December 30, 2020. It amended the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act, 2011.
- The 2011 Act was valid till December 31, 2020. The Ordinance extended the deadline to December 31, 2023.
- The 2011 Act provided for the regularisation of the unauthorised colonies that existed in the national capital as on March 31, 2002 and where construction took place till June 1, 2014.
- Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri introduced the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021

Govt. launches website - India Toy Fair- 2021

- The government will launch the website of the **India Toy Fair- 2021**.
- The website will be launched jointly by Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in New Delhi.

Govt. launches new Scheme - 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs

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

PM inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **World Sustainable Development Summit 2021** via video conferencing.
- The theme of the Summit is '**Redefining our common future: Safe and secure environment for all**'.
- The 20th edition of **The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI)** flagship event, the World Sustainable Development Summit, will be held online from February 10 to February 12 and will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change.

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- India's Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the Summit.
- The Summit series brings together governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change

Rajya Sabha passes Major Port Authorities Bill 2020

- Rajya Sabha passed the **Major Port Authorities Bill, 2020**.
- The Bill was put to Division Voting wherein **84 members** supported the bill and **44 voted against it**.
- The bill seeks to provide for regulation, operation and planning of major ports in the country and provide greater autonomy to these ports.
- It seeks to replace the **Major Port Trusts Act, 1963**.
- The legislation provides for the creation of a Board of Major Port Authority for each major port.
- These Boards will replace the existing Port Trusts.
- **Union Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya** while replying after the discussion on the bill said that it will make the major ports in the country more autonomous and provide major thrust in the maritime sector.

60 km area of India-Bangladesh border cannot be fenced

- **Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai** said, there are **60 kilometres** area in India Bangladesh border which cannot be fenced, **making it prone to infiltration**.
- Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Mr Rai said due to rivers in the area the fencing is difficult.
- He said, **33 land acquisition proposals** are pending with the West Bengal government.
- The minister lamented that the state police does not act in the manner it should act

India's first ever CNG Tractor to be launched

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** will formally launch **India's first-ever diesel tractor converted into a CNG tractor** on February 12.
- This conversion is jointly done by **Rawmatt Techno Solutions and Tomasetto Achille India**.
- The CNG tractor will help farmers to **increase their income**, by lowering costs and help to create job opportunities in rural India.
- This will help them to improve their livelihood.
- The farmers can **save up to 50 per cent** on the fuel cost as the current Diesel prices are around 77 rupees per litre whereas CNG is only 42 rupees per kilogram
- The conversion from diesel to CNG will be beneficial as it is a clean fuel with lowest carbon and pollutant content. It is also economical as it has zero lead and is non-corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating which helps in increasing the life of the engine.

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Over 1 crore MSMEs registered in country - period of 5 years

- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Ministry** has informed that more than one crore two lakh MSMEs were registered in the country within **five years**.
- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Nitin Gadkari** said that as per Udyog Aadhaar Portal a total of **one crore two lakh 32 thousand 468 MSMEs** were registered between 2015 to June 2020.
- He said, MSME Ministry has implemented various other schemes for the growth and development of MSME sector in the country.
- He added that the government has taken a number of initiatives under **Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan** to support the MSME sector in the country especially in Covid-19 pandemic.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates 'Jala Abhishekam' campaign

- **Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** virtually inaugurated more than **57,000 water structures constructed in Madhya Pradesh** under the 'Jala Abhishekam' campaign from New Delhi.
- **Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar** also attended the program virtually organised in the presence of **Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan at Bhopal**.
- Defence Minister Mr Rajnath Singh while inaugurating water structures virtually under '**Jala Abhishekam**' campaign said that Water conservation work being done by the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan with public participation will be helpful in achieving the goal of water conservation and building self-reliant **Madhya Pradesh**.

Indian Army - Centre for Land Warfare Studies organises National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named Divya Drishti 2021

- Indian Army National Seminar-cum-Webinar, named as **Divya-Drishti 2021 on Multi-Domain Operations: Future of Conflicts** was organised by **Centre for Land Warfare Studies, CLAWS**.
- Divya-Drishti 2021, meaning divine or cognitive perception required for an informed vision, aimed to bring together national and international experts and practitioners to deliberate on the complex and emerging subject on multi-domain operations.
- **The webinar was attended virtually by** Army Chief General MM Naravane, Vice Chief of Army Lieutenant General CP Mohanty, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command Lieutenant General Raj Shukla, along with other dignitaries from the Ministry of Defence, three Services, former Chiefs of the Army Staff and leading security Think Tanks in the country and members of the media.

1st India Toy Fair - Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani

- The Government is organising the first ever **India Toy Fair** from **27th February to 2nd March**.
- **Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal** jointly inaugurated the website of **The India Toy Fair-2021 in New Delhi**.
- Speaking on the occasion, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani said, to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat, to strengthen toy manufacturing industry in the country and to connect children with toys from a learning-perspective, Government had organized the 1st Toycathon last month.

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PM Modi addresses on 'Samarpan Diwas' to commemorate contributions of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** is addressing the party MPs on the occasion of '**Samarpan Diwas**' to commemorate the contributions of his party's founder leader **Deen Dayal Upadhyay** on his death anniversary.
- He is addressing **BJP MPs at Ambedkar International Center, Janpath**.
- Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay was a **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)** thinker and former leader of the political party Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the forerunner of Bharatiya Janata Party.
- Deen Dayal Ji was behind the 'vision of building a self-reliant India'. He said that we need to build an India that is self-reliant not just in agriculture, but also in defence and weaponry.

Skills development ministry launches Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship in partnership with IIMs

- To **strengthen skills training at district level**, the skills development ministry launched the **Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF)** programme nationwide in partnership with nine Indian Institutes of Management across India.
- The programme has been launched under the World Bank loan assisted programme **SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion)**.
- The **two-year academic programme** will have an in-built component of on-ground practical experience with the district administration.
- The **nine IIMs** include the IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Lucknow, IIM Kozhikode, IIM Visakhapatnam, IIM - Udaipur, IIM Nagpur, IIM Ranchi and IIM-Jammu.
- Selected fellows will be given a stipend of about **Rs 50,000 per month during the first year and Rs 60,000 per month during the second year of the fellowship programme**.
- The fellows will be imparted training by the nine top IIMs of the country and in the later phase of the fellowship, the fellows will work on strengthening the District Skill Committees and the District Skill administration.

PM Modi unveils several development projects in Kerala

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled several key development projects worth **6,100 crore rupees at INS Garuda Naval Air Station at Kochi in Kerala**.
- The Prime Minister said, the projects inaugurated will energize the growth trajectory of India.
- The Prime Minister said, Indians can do wonders in achieving the target of **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- The Prime Minister said, India has the ability to rise to the occasion and contribute to the global good.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated the country's **first full-fledged international cruise terminal, Sagarika at Cochin Port and Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd**.
- Among the projects unveiled by the Prime Minister include the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveils several developmental projects at Chennai in Tamil Nadu

- The Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the **foundation stone** of several developmental projects worth over **8000 crore rupees** at **Chennai in Tamil Nadu**.
- The Prime Minister asserted, **these projects are symbols of Innovation and Indigenous development**.
- The Prime Minister said, India has the ability to rise to the occasion and contribute to the global good.
- The Prime Minister also handed over the indigenously designed and **manufactured Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Army**.
- The Prime Minister asserted, these projects are symbols of Innovation and Indigenous development.
- He stated that the projects will further **the growth of Tamil Nadu**.
- **Prime Minister said, Thanjavur and Pudukkottai** will be specially benefited after the foundation for the extension, renovation and modernization of **six hundred and thirty six kilometre long Grand Anicut Canal System was laid**.
- It will improve irrigation facilities for **2.27 lakh acres of land** in the delta districts.
- The Prime Minister lauded the farmers of Tamil Nadu for record **food grain production and good use of water resources**.
- He emphasized the need to remember the mantra of **Per Drop More Crop**.

FinMin to infuse Rs 3,000 cr in state-owned general insurers this quarter

- The **Finance Ministry** will infuse **Rs 3,000 crore** capital into state-owned general insurance companies during the current quarter in a bid to **improve their financial health**.
- The **Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** cleared proposals to provide capital support to National Insurance, Oriental Insurance and United India Insurance.
- The cabinet had also decided to increase the authorised share capital of **National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) to Rs 7,500 crore** and that of **United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL) and Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL) to Rs 5,000 crore** each to give effect to the capital infusion decision.
- The capital infusion will enable the three public sector general insurance companies to improve their financial and solvency position, meet the insurance needs of the economy, absorb changes and enhance the capacity to raise resources and improve risk management.

Odisha govt to construct 'COVID Warrior Memorial' at Biju Patnaik Park in Bhubaneswar

- **Odisha government** to construct '**COVID Warrior Memorial**' at **Biju Patnaik Park** in **Bhubaneswar** in **recognition of the sacrifice & services rendered by COVID19 warriors** who have lost their lives fighting the pandemic.
- More than 60 Covid warriors including health workers in Odisha have succumbed to coronavirus. 19.
- The state government plans to **inaugurate the memorial on August 15 2021**.
- Last year, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik had announced that the martyr status would be accorded to all health personnel and other support services who succumbed to Covid19.

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- The state government also announced ₹50 lakh ex-gratia to all health personnel (private and public) and members of all other support services who died of Covid-19.

PM to lay foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of **Maharaja Suheldev Memorial** and development work of **Chittaura Lake in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh** through video conferencing.
- The event marks the **birth anniversary of Maharaja Suheldev**.
- UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion.
- The complete project will include installation of an equestrian statue of Maharaja Suheldev and development of various tourist amenities like cafeteria, guest house and a children's park

Minority Affairs Ministry organized 26th Hunar Haat in New Delhi

- Minority Affairs Ministry is organising **26th Hunar Haat of indigenous artisans and craftsmen** from across the country at **Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi**.
- More than **600 artisans and craftsmen**, including a large number of **women artisans**, from more than **31 States and Union Territories** will participate in the event.
- The **Hunar Haat will be organised with the theme of Vocal for Local from 20th February to 1st March this year**.
- **Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi** has said that the Hunar Haat is a perfect platform to promote indigenous products of artisans and craftsmen from across the country.
- He said, it has provided employment and employment opportunities to more than five lakh artisans, craftsmen and artists yet.

ISRO and MapmyIndia collaborate to bring India made rival to Google Maps

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and MapmyIndia**, the navigation solutions provider, have joined hands to offer an **indigenous mapping solution to take on Google Maps**.
- According to MapmyIndia CEO and Executive Director, **Rohan Verna**, the services will combine the power of the company's digital maps and technologies with ISRO's catalogue of satellite imagery and earth observation data.
- The collaboration will enable them to jointly identify and build a holistic geospatial portal utilising earth observation datasets, 'NavIC', Web Services and APIs (application programming interface) available in MapmyIndia, ISRO said in a statement adding that the geospatial portals will be called 'Bhuvan', 'VEDAS' and 'MOSDAC'.
- Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System also known as NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation), is an indigenous navigation system, developed by ISRO.
- Bhuvan is the national geo-portal developed and hosted by ISRO comprising geospatial data, services, and tools for analysis.
- The collaboration will use ISRO's database of satellite images and MapmyIndia's digital map platform to develop the new app.

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IIT Bombay launches fundraising campaign 'Cherish IIT Bombay 2021'

- **IIT Bombay** launched its **first-ever annual fundraising campaign** in India, **Cherish IIT Bombay 2021**.
- The funds will be used for the creation of world-class laboratory complexes, modernization of lecture halls and continuation of awards to attract and retain faculty.
- Donations made to IIT Bombay by corporate bodies and individuals are 100% tax-deductible under section 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act.

PM Modi to address NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the **NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF)** via video conferencing.
- The three-day 29th edition of NTLF is being organized till **19th of February**.
- It is a flagship event of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM).
- **The theme of this year's event is 'Shaping the future towards a better normal'.**
- The event will host 1,600 participants from more than 30 countries.
- Over 30 products will be showcased during the talks.

Defence Minister presents Best Marching Contingent award of Republic Day parade 2021

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** has said that unity in diversity is the beauty of Indian democracy and this unique feature is only visible in India.
- He said, India is the largest democracy in the world and diversity plays an important role in strengthening the democracy.
- While giving away the **Best Marching Contingent Award of Republic Day Parade 2021**, Mr. Singh appreciated the efforts of armed forces and central armed police forces.
- He said, Republic Day is a national festival and it gives a glimpse of our progress in military prowess to the world.
- He praised the efforts and role played by the **Delhi Police** in controlling several nefarious acts.

15 states successfully attain Ease of Doing Business reforms

- The number of **states successfully completing the Ease of Doing Business reforms** has increased to **15**.
- The Finance Ministry has said that three more states - **Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** have completed Ease of Doing Business reforms.
- On receipt of recommendation from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the Department of Expenditure has granted permission to these three states to raise additional financial resources of nine thousand **905 crore rupees through Open Market Borrowings**.
- **The Ministry said, earlier, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana** had also reported completion of this reform.
- On completion of reforms facilitating ease of doing business, these 15 states have been granted additional borrowing permission of over 38 thousand crore rupees.

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PM Modi unveils several development projects in Assam

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will launch the **Mahabahu-Brahmaputra** initiative, lay the foundation stone of **Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge** and perform **Bhoomi Poojan** for construction of **Majuli Bridge** Assam through video conferencing.
- Mr Modi said it is a landmark day for Assam's development journey as the **Mahabahu-Brahmaputra** initiative will be launched.
- **Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari**, **Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya**, **DoNER minister Dr. Jitendra Singh** and **Chief Minister of Assam Sarbananda Sonowal**, **Chief Minister of Meghalaya Conrad K Sangma** will be present on the occasion.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs unveils Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan

- **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has launched a **Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan** under **Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban, JJM-U**.
- **Secretary Housing and Urban Affairs Durga Shanker Mishra** informed that it will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.
- He said, as a first step, the Ministry has decided to launch the Survekshan in 10 cities- **Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur**.

Govt increases budget of Dept of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences by 30 per cent

- The **Union Government** has increased the budget of **Department of Science and Technology** and **Ministry of Earth Sciences** by **30 per cent** as compared to the revised **estimate of 2020-21**.
- An allocation of **Rs 16,695 crore** has been given for the two ministries which will add thrust to India's remarkable, accelerated growth in the fields of Science and Technology.
- **Rs 50 thousand crore** have been allocated for the **National Research Foundation**.
- The Minister informed that the **National Research Foundation (NRF)** will be an independent society and it will build on existing national strengths in research and innovation. It will fill gaps in the current research and education ecosystem to augment India's research and innovation achievements.

Nitin Gadkari says, Tamil Nadu has become reducing road accidents by 50 per cent

- **Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari** said that **Tamil Nadu** has **become a pioneer in reducing road accidents by fifty per cent**.
- **Inaugurating Road Safety Schemes in Chennai**, the Minister told that all other states should follow **Tamil Nadu model for road safety**.
- He said that there was a need to increase the width of the roads in the country, identify the black spots and follow excellent road engineering methods.

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President inaugurates Rashtrapati Bhavan Krida Sthal in President's Estate

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** inaugurated the **Rashtrapati Bhavan Krida Sthal** in the President's Estate which includes renovated **Football Ground and Basketball Court**.
- On the occasion, an exhibition football match was played between the children of My Angels Academy, a trust working for the cause of underprivileged children.
- These state-of-art sports facilities are developed with the aim to cater to the needs of the employees of Rashtrapati Bhavan and their families.

An inter-departmental football tournament with **five teams namely - President's Secretariat Heroes, Household Youngs, PBG Warriors, Army Guard Daredevils and Delhi Police Stalwarts** starts to encourage the employees and their family members to take part in the sports activities.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs unveils Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan

- **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has launched a **Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan** under **Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban, JJM-U**.
- **Secretary Housing and Urban Affairs Durga Shanker Mishra** informed that it will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.
- He said, as a first step, the Ministry has decided to launch the Survekshan in 10 cities- Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur.

Amazon announces first device manufacturing line in India

- E-commerce giant **Amazon** has announced its plans to begin **manufacturing devices in India**.
- This is the **first Amazon manufacturing line in India** and reiterates the firm's commitment to the government's **"Make in India"** for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat.
- Amazon will commence manufacturing with contract manufacturer Cloud Network Technology, a subsidiary of Foxconn, in Chennai, and start production later this year.
- The programme will churn out hundreds of thousands of Fire TV Stick devices every year. Amazon will evaluate scaling capacity to additional marketplaces and cities, depending on the domestic demand.
- In 2020 Amazon announced "Local Shops on Amazon", a programme that retailers and local shops be self-dependent, and benefit from selling online.
- It now has over 22,000 neighbourhood stores registered across the country, gathering additional footfalls through their online presence and furthering their earning potential by acting as pickup points, logistics partners, and experience centres for e-commerce.

IIT Madras-incubated Pi Beam launches PiMo e-bike

- **IIT Madras-incubated startup Pi Beam** has launched an **electric two-wheeler, PiMo, for Rs 30,000**.
- The utility e-bike, which is targeted at personal and commercial applications, **has a range of 50 km**.

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- The e-bike does not require a license or registration and has localised most of the components including the lithium-ion batteries and controllers.
- The company aims to sell **10,000 units** by the end of **next financial year (2021-22)**.
- PiMo is a vehicle that's between an electric bicycle and entry-level electric scooter.
- Pi Beam is an incubated company at IIT-M to bring electric mobility in India.

PM Modi to inaugurate key projects of Kerala virtually

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of key projects of power and urban sector in **Kerala through video conferencing**.
- He will inaugurate the **320 KV Pugalur - Thrissur Power Transmission Project**.
- It is a Voltage Source Inverter based High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Project and has India's first HVDC link featuring state-of-the-art VSC technology.
- Built at a cost of **Rs 5070 crore**, it will facilitate transfer of 2000 MW power from the western region and help meet the growth in load for the people of Kerala.
- The Prime Minister will also dedicate to the nation the 50 MW Kasaragod Solar Power Project.
- It has been developed under the National Solar Energy Mission.

Union Cabinet approves production-linked incentive scheme - telecom sector

- The **Union Cabinet** approved a production-linked **incentive scheme for the telecom sector**.
- Briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting, **Electronic and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad** said, the production-linked incentive worth **Rs 12,195 Crore** has been cleared for the telecom sector.
- He said this will create **40 thousand direct and indirect employment**.
- Production Linked Incentive Scheme intends to promote manufacture of Telecom and Networking Products in India and proposes a financial incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract investments in the target segments of telecom and networking products in order to encourage **make in India**.
- The scheme will also encourage exports of telecom and networking products '**Made in India**'.
- Support under the Scheme will be provided to companies and entities engaged in manufacturing of specified telecom and networking products in India.

Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot to Virtually Release 3rd Edition of Indian Sign Language dictionary

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment **Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot** will virtually release the **3rd edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary** with 10,000 terms (including 6,000 earlier terms) on **17th February 2021** in a virtual programme.
- The programme will be webcast live at the following link: <https://webcast.gov.in/msje/>
- The Dictionary has been brought out by the **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC)**, an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

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- The 1st edition of the ISL Dictionary was launched on 23rd March 2018 with 3000 terms and the 2nd edition with 6000 terms (including earlier 3000 terms) was launched on 27th February 2019.
- The 3rd edition of the ISL Dictionary contains a total 10,000 terms of everyday use, academic terms, legal & administrative terms, medical terms, technical terms and agricultural terms.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan

- **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has launched a **Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan** under **Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban**.
- It will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.
- As a first step, the Ministry has decided to launch the Survekshan in **10 cities- Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur**

Jal Jeevan Mission Urban is designed to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal - 6.

- The total outlay proposed for JJM (U) is 2 lakh 87 thousand crore rupees which includes 10 thousand crore rupees for continuing financial support to AMRUT mission.

PM Modi to launch Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative in Assam

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** would launch the **Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative** and lay the **foundation stones of one bridge** and perform a ground-breaking ceremony (bhumi puja) of another in **Assam** via video conferencing.
- **Aim** : To improve connectivity in the eastern states, will be marked by the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari.
- Foundation stone of Inland Water Transport Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on Brahmaputra and launch of digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business will also be a part of the initiative.
- The PM will lay the foundation stone for a four lane bridge over the **Brahmaputra between Dhubri (on North Bank) and Phulbari (on South Bank)**.

Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar launches applications for five pan-India surveys

- The importance of accurate data for policy making, **Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar** launched **software applications for five pan-India surveys**, including on migrant and domestic workers.
- The minister also released instruction manuals with questionnaires for the five pan-India surveys being conducted by the Labour Bureau.
- These five surveys being undertaken by the **Labour Bureau are -- All-India Survey on Migrant workers, All-India Survey on Domestic Workers, All-India Survey on Employment Generated by Professionals, All-India Survey on Employment Generated in Transport Sector, and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey.**
- The objectives of the all-India survey on employment generated by professionals are essentially two-fold, firstly to estimate the total number of active professionals in the country and secondly to capture the employment generated by these professionals.

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PM Modi inaugurates oil and gas sector projects in Tamil Nadu

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone for key **oil and gas sector projects in Tamil Nadu** via video conferencing.
- During his address, the Prime Minister said, **Indian Oil's 143-km-long pipeline from Ramanathapuram to Thoothukudi** will monetise the gas from ONG gas fields.
- This is a part of a larger national gas pipeline project being developed at a cost of **Rs. 4,500 crore**.
- It will benefit Ennore, Thiruvallur, Bengaluru, Puducherry, Nagapattinam, Madurai and Thoothukudi.”
- He will also lay the foundation stone of Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam.
- These projects will result in substantial socio-economic benefits and will boost the country's march towards Urja Aatmanirbharta.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Birth Anniversary - Prime Minister pays rich tribute

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** paid rich tributes to **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** on the occasion of his Birth Anniversary.
- Remembering Chhatrapati Shivaji as an **immortal son of Mother India**, Mr. Modi said that the saga of indomitable courage, valour and intelligence of the great Maratha ruler will keep inspiring countrymen for ages.
- **Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar** remembered Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as a great warrior and strategist of India.

Foreign Ministers of Quad countries demand promoting freedom of navigation in Indo-Pacific region

- Foreign Ministers of Quad countries - **India, Australia, Japan and US** - discussed the necessity to promote freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar** represented India at the **Third Quad Ministerial Meeting**.
- The Foreign Ministers emphasized their **commitment to upholding a rules-based** international order, underpinned by respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, rule of law, transparency, and freedom of navigation in the international seas and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- It was noted that the Indo-Pacific concept had gathered growing international support, including in Europe.

PM calls for special visa for Doctors and Nurses for South Asia to tackle any medical emergency

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has said that India is working towards a **healthy and COVID-19 free neighbourhood**.
- Addressing a Workshop on COVID-19 Management-Experience, Good Practices and Way Forward with nearly ten neighboring countries virtually, Mr Modi said all countries have learned from each other from best practices.
- The Prime Minister said India has achieved the lowest fatality rate globally.
- Mr Modi said all countries should maintain collaborative spirit during the vaccination.
- Mr Modi suggested that there should be special visas for medical professionals and arrangement for **special Air ambulance**.
- Prime minister said, **India's Ayushman Bharat** can be a case study for all the regional countries for healthcare.

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- The Prime Minister insisted that a regional platform may be created for studies on forecasting future pandemics.

'Pariksha Pe Charcha' programme with Prime Minister to be held online

- **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** has announced that the **fourth edition of Prime Minister's Interaction Programme** with school students, teachers and parents - Pariksha Pe Charcha will be held next month.
- Mr Nishank also said that the registration process for the forthcoming '**Pariksha Pe Charcha**' programme has begun which will be open till 14th of March.
- He informed me that this time the programme will be held virtually.
- He said the participants of this programme will be selected through an online competition which will be organised on **MyGov platform**.
- Mr Nishank also informed that the portal for online creative writing competition will remain open till 14th of March.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 launched to expand immunization coverage across country

- **Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan** launched **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0, (IMI 3.0)** to expand immunization coverage across the country.
- It will have two rounds starting from the **22nd of this month and the 22nd of March this year** and will be conducted in pre-identified 250 districts and urban areas across 29 States and UTs in the country.
- Both rounds will be for 15 days each.
- A portal of IMI 3.0 has also been launched besides releasing the Operational Guidelines and the awareness material of the campaign.
- The focus of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 **will be the children and pregnant women who have missed their vaccine doses during the COVID-19 pandemic**.
- They will be identified and vaccinated during the two rounds.
- Beneficiaries from migration areas and hard to reach areas will be targeted as they may have missed their vaccine doses during COVID19.

Hyderabad gets recognition as 2020 Tree City of the World

- The **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization** and the **Arbor Day Foundation** have recognized **Hyderabad as a 2020 Tree City of World**, for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests.
- Hyderabad earned recognition in the Foundation's second year of the programme along with 51 other cities globally (**120 cities from 63 countries assessed**) and the only city in India to get this recognition so far.
- List of **Five Factors to be Eligible for 'Tree City'**
- To be eligible for Tree City, the city must affirm its five requirements, include
 1. Defining responsibility (the declaration written by civic representatives to assign the responsibility for trees)
 2. Setting down the rules (the law or official policy that regulates forest and tree management)
 3. Knowing what you have (an updated inventory or assessment of the local tree resources)
 4. Allocate funds (a dedicated annual tree management plan routine budget)

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5. Celebrate achievements (an annual celebration of trees to raise awareness).

India, Maldives sign five pacts to boost infrastructure projects

- India and its Southern neighbour **Maldives** signed five agreements that would boost infrastructure in the island nation.
- The pacts that were signed during **Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's visit**.
- India has offered a standalone Line of Credit of \$40 million for sports infrastructure in the Maldives.
- Jaishankar, who arrived here on the first leg of his two-nation tour that will also take him to Mauritius, handed over **100,000 additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine** to the Foreign Minister and Health Minister Kerafa Naseem.
- Apart from this, five pacts were signed between India and Maldives to boost infrastructure in the island nation.
- Amendatory Agreement to repurpose an older EXIM Bank of India Line of Credit of USD 25 million for Road Devt
- Letter of Intent between EXIM Bank and local authorities for financing a housing project of 2000 units in Hulhumale.
- MoU on grant funding USD 0.5 million for a fish processing plant in Kendhikulhudhoo in the northern Maldives.
- MoU on capacity building and exchange of content and expertise between Prasar Bharati and Public State Media, Maldives.
- MoU on sustainable urban development between MoHUA and Ministry of national planning, housing and infrastructure, Maldives.

Tourism Minister to inaugurate Incredible India Mega Homestay Development

- **Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlaad Singh Patel** will inaugurate the three day Incredible **India Mega Homestay Development and Training Workshop** in Darjeeling.
- The concept of Homestay is getting popular in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts of Northern part of West Bengal.
- The involvement of the local community is more than ever in this **Homestay Tourism** at one of the most favoured hill stations for domestic and inbound tourists.
- The Tourism Ministry said, a total of **450 homestay** owners will be trained in the workshop where **IIAS School of Management** will train them free of cost in different spheres of Hospitality.
- The aim of this robust hospitality training workshop is to upgrade the hospitality skills of local community stakeholders by capacity building.

National Toy Fair to be organized from Feb 27

- The **first-ever National Toy Fair** will be organized from **27th February to 2nd March** through a virtual medium.
- **IIT Gandhinagar** based Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) will showcase its unique 75 toy creations in the fair.
- IIT Gandhinagar is the only IIT in the country which is running such a centre for creative learning.

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- The centre is inculcating scientific temperament among students and teachers by developing a range of **scientific and educational toys**.
- Founder of **CCL, Manish Jain** said education is supposed to ignite the brains of the children and for this to happen, it is important the children find education interesting

Several projects to be launched by PM Modi in Assam, West Bengal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit **Assam and West Bengal**.
- In Assam, Mr Modi will dedicate important projects of the oil and gas sector to the nation at **Silapathar in Dhemaji district**.
- The Prime Minister will dedicate to the nation the **INDMAX** Unit at Indian Oil's Bongaigaon Refinery, Oil India Limited's Secondary Tank Farm at Madhuban, Dibrugarh and a Gas Compressor Station at Hebeda Village, Makum, Tinsukia.
- He will also inaugurate the **Dhemaji Engineering College** and lay the foundation stone for Sualkuchi Engineering College.
- These projects will usher in an era of energy security and prosperity, and open bright avenues of opportunity for local youth.
- They are in line with the **Prime Minister's vision of Purvodaya to drive Eastern India's socio-economic growth**.

Prakash Javadekar inaugurates Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in Lakshadweep

- Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Prakash Javadekar**, inaugurated the **Atal Paryavaran Bhavan at Lakshadweep on Feb 19, 2021**.
- Prakash Javadekar is on a **four day official visit to Lakshadweep from February 19 to 22, 2021**.
- The minister attended high level meetings with the Secretaries of various departments in UT's administration.
- The Minister is to attend programmes at **Suheli, Kadmat and Bangaram islands** and evaluate major innovative initiatives of the Forest and Environment Department of the Union Territory.
- **Suheli Par is an oval-shaped and 17 km long coral atoll in Lakshadweep**, that is surrounded by a zone of rich marine fauna.
- It is located in the South-West of Kavaratti and 76 km to the south of Agatti.
- The Nine Degree channel in the Indian Ocean, is located between the Islands of Kalpeni and Suheli Par, and Maliku Atoll.
- He will also evaluate the major innovative initiatives of the Union Territory's Forest and Environment Department.

Assam CM Sonowal lays foundation of first skill university of eastern India

- **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** laid the **foundation of the first skill university of eastern India in Darrang district**, aimed at imparting training to over **10,000 students in 12 disciplines**.
- The varsity would be built with a financial outlay of **Rs. 1,000 crore**.

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- It is expected to be completed by 2026, and will have understandings with countries like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan, England.
- Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Development Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary termed the day as historic, as the process has been initiated for setting up the third skill university in India.

PM Modi to address 66th annual convocation of IIT Kharagpur

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the **66th annual convocation of IIT Kharagpur via video conferencing**.
- The institute is organizing its convocation in virtual mode, keeping in view the safety measures during the post pandemic situation.
- **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Minister of State for Education Sanjay Dhotre** will also attend the convocation.
- As many as **75 students including nine Institute Gold medal winners and 66 Institute Silver medal winners** have been invited to receive the awards in person.
- More than **2,800 students will be awarded degrees in online mode**.
- The Institute will also confer DSc, IIT Kharagpur Life Fellow Award and distinguished Alumnus Award to 27 achievers for their contribution to academics and research, social service and public welfare.

Govt sanctions over 56 thousand more houses - PMAY (Urban)

- Government has sanctioned over **56 thousand more houses** under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)**.
- The Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee has approved them.
- **Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri** said, out of the total validated demand of one crore 12 lakh houses by 2022, nearly one crore 11 lakh homes are now sanctioned.
- He informed that over 73 lakh houses have now been grounded.
- The Minister said, 42 lakh 70 thousand houses have been handed over to the beneficiaries.

U.S. Officially Rejoins Paris Climate Agreement

- The **United States** officially **rejoined the Paris Agreement on climate change** designed to limit global warming and avoid its potentially catastrophic impacts.
- Nearly 200 nations have signed on to the landmark accord and committed to limit their greenhouse gas emissions in an attempt to keep global warming **below 2 degrees Celsius** preferably below 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial temperatures.
- Earlier, in November 2020, the US had officially exited the agreement on the order of the then President Donald Trump.
- The landmark Paris climate agreement was signed in 2015, as per which countries are expected to enhance their commitments to curb greenhouse gas emissions every five years.

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Nitin Gadkari inaugurates 50 artisan-based SFURTI clusters

- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Nitin Gadkari** has inaugurated 50 artisan-based **SFURTI clusters** spread over 18 States.
- In these clusters, over **42 thousand artisans** have been supported in the traditional segments of muslin, khadi, coir, handicraft, handlooms, wood craft, leather, pottery, carpet weaving, bamboo, agro processing, tea and others.
- **These clusters have been inaugurated in** Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- The MSME Ministry has funded **85 crore rupees** for development of these SFURTI clusters.
- The Center is implementing the **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)** to organize traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and increase their income.

India becomes 1st country in world - identify need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

- **Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan** said that India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for **Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease**.
- He said this while launching the operational guidelines for integration of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease with the National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke.

88 Railway projects dedicated to nation

- **Railways Minister Piyush Goyal** inaugurated and dedicated a host of infrastructure projects and projects related to passenger amenities at various railway stations in **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka** through video conferencing.
- **88 Railway projects** were dedicated to the nation worth over one thousand crore rupees making Indian Railways future ready.
- Inaugurating the rail projects in Kerala, Mr Goyal said that it is important to improve connectivity in the state which is a keeper of Indian Heritage and for the railway passengers using the various amenities in the state.

President Ram Nath Kovind to inaugurate Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Cricket Stadium

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** will formally inaugurate the **world's largest Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad Gujarat**.
- The President Kovind is expected to watch the third cricket test match between India and England for some time with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah soon after the inauguration ceremony.
- Sardar Patel Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad is all set to make history by hosting the day-night pink ball test match between India and England.

Home Minister releases book 'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha'

- **Home Minister Amit Shah** released a book **'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha'** in New Delhi.

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- The book chronicles the glorious history of CRPF since its raising in 1939 and it has detailed and thoroughly researched accounts of CRPF's journey, challenges, successes, and sacrifices.
- The Home Minister said, The Government is working on a scheme that all CAPF jawans should remain at least 100 days out of 365 days with their family members.
- The CRPF celebrated its **first-ever Veterans Day on February 19, 2021**, which was on Friday.

From now on every third Friday of February will be celebrated as the Veterans Day of the CRPF every year.

Sardar Patel Cricket Stadium In Motera Renamed Narendra Modi Stadium

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** inaugurated the **newly revamped Motera cricket stadium** in **Ahmedabad**, which has been **renamed the Narendra Modi Stadium**.
- The ground, which was earlier named the **Sardar Patel Stadium**, and more popularly known as the **Motera stadium**, has been renamed after the Prime Minister, who was also formerly a president of the Gujarat Cricket Association.
- The Narendra Modi Stadium, which is the world's largest cricket stadium with a capacity of **1,10,000 spectators**, will host the first international match since the stadium was revamped.
- Home Minister Amit Shah and Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, along with the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah**, were also present at the event.
- The Narendra Modi Stadium, the largest cricket ground in the world will host its first international match on Wednesday, when India will take on England in the Day-Night Test.
- The stadium will be a part of the planned Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave in the city.
- The stadium is spread across 63 acres of land and has three entry points. It has a seating capacity of 1,32,000 people.

PM KISAN scheme completes two years

- Feb 24 is the second anniversary of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, PM KISAN**.
- The Scheme was formally launched on **24th February in the year 2019** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a function at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.
- PM KISAN was started with a view to augment the income of the farmers by providing income support to all landholding farmers' families across the country.
- Under the PM KISAN Scheme, an amount of **6000 rupees per year** is transferred in three installments of **2000 rupees directly into the bank accounts of the farmers**.

Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh Gets International Airport License From DGCA

- The under-construction **Kushinagar Airport** in **Uttar Pradesh** has received the **International Airport license from Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**.
- Once operational, this will be the **third international airport in UP after Lucknow and Varanasi**.
- With this, UP is set to become the state with the highest number of airports after the upcoming Ayodhya Airport also joins the list.

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- That will boost tourism in the region & facilitate travel on Buddhist circuit by providing direct aviation connectivity to the city.
- Currently the other two international airports functional in **Uttar Pradesh** are **Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport at Lucknow** and **Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Varanasi**.
- Chitrakoot will be the first airport in Uttar Pradesh with 'Table Top' runway.

Karnataka set to add value to its flower power

- **The Horticulture Department**, in collaboration with the **International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB)**, is setting up a flower processing centre to convert unsold flowers into various useful products.
- This incubation centre will process flowers and convert them to value-added products such as natural dyes, floral papers, incense sticks, flower petal powder for cosmetic usage, floral embedded works, floral arts, and silica-stored flowers.
- A facility was needed as flower farmers have been suffering huge losses whenever there is a glut or market disruption. Growers can learn the art of flower processing from the centre.

Centre Launches National Urban Digital Mission For Creating Digital Infra For Cities

- The **Central government** launched '**National Urban Digital Mission**' to create a digital infrastructure for cities in the country.
- The **Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry (MoHUA)** said the move will institutionalise a citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach to urban governance and service delivery in cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns by 2024.
- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister of Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad launched the 'National Urban Digital Mission' (NUDM) at a virtual event.
- The mission has three pillars – people, process, and platform.

About NUDM :

- The National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) will create a shared digital infrastructure for urban India, working across the **three pillars of people, process, and platform** to provide holistic support to cities and towns. It will institutionalise a citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach to urban governance and service delivery in 2022 cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns in India by 2024.
- NUDM will create a shared digital infrastructure that can consolidate and cross-leverage the various digital initiatives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, enabling cities and towns across India to benefit from holistic and diverse forms of support, in keeping with their needs and local challenges.
- Apart from this, several other digital initiatives of MoHUA were also launched which includes: India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), SmartCode platform, Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS).

Several development projects launched by PM Modi in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will be on a day's visit to **Tamil Nadu and Puducherry** to inaugurate and lay the foundation for **several developmental projects**.

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- Mr.Modi will depart from Chennai to Coimbatore after his visit to Puducherry.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of multiple infrastructure projects worth over **12 thousand 400 crore rupees in Coimbatore**, the manchester of South India.
- Mr. Modi will dedicate the **Neyveli New Thermal Power project**, 709 MegaWatt Solar Power Project and the 8-laning of Korampallam Bridge and Rail Over Bridge built V.O.Chidambaranar Port, Tuticorin.
- Mr.Modi will inaugurate over **4000 tenements** constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana scheme.
- Mr.Modi will lay the foundation stone for the extension, renovation and modernization of **Lower Bhavani Project**.
- He will also lay the foundation for the development of Integrated Command and Control Centers.

Center approves PLI Scheme for IT Hardware and Pharmaceuticals

- Union Cabinet approved Production **Linked Incentive Scheme for IT Hardware**.
- The scheme proposes incentives to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in the value chain of IT Hardware.
- **Communication and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad** said, the target segments of the scheme include laptops, tablets, all-in-one PCs and servers.
- Mr Prasad said, the total cost of the proposed scheme is around **Rs 7,350 crore** over four years.
- Mr. Prasad added that the scheme has direct and indirect employment generation potential of over **one lakh 80 thousand**.
- The Union Cabinet also approved **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** for Pharmaceuticals over a period of Financial Year 2020-21 to 2028-29.
- The Scheme will benefit domestic manufacturers, help in creating employment and is expected to contribute to the availability of a wider range of affordable medicines for consumers.

2nd edition of Maritime India Summit 2021 inaugurated by PM Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 2nd edition of the **Maritime India Summit 2021**.
- The summit will be organised virtually between 2nd to 4th March 2021.
- First summit was organised in 2016 in Mumbai.
- **Rajiv Jalota**, Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust informed that the MIS 2021 will provide a unique platform where various stakeholders in the maritime sectors such as Senior Government Officials, Domestic and International Investors, Shipping Line Owners, Representatives of Major Ports from across the world as well as the Governments of Maritime States in India will participate.
- The Summit will also include an exclusive CEOs' forum with the Minister of State (I/c) of Ports, Shipping & Waterways.

PM Modi inaugurates and lays foundation stone of various development projects in Coimbatore

- On February 25, 2021, **Prime Minister** visited **Tamil Nadu** to **dedicate to the nation and lay the foundation stone of multiple infrastructure projects in Coimbatore**.

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The Projects are :

- **1000 MW Neyveli New Thermal Power Project**
- **709 MW Solar Power Project of NLCIL**
- He laid the foundation stone for design, supply, installation and commissioning of a 5MW grid connected ground based solar power plant at V.O.Chidambaranar Port and for the extension, renovation and modernisation of Lower Bhavani Project System.
- He also laid the foundation stone for development of **Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCC) in nine Smart Cities** including Coimbatore, Madurai, Salem, Thanjavur, Vellore, Tiruchirappalli, Tiruppur, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi.
- He inaugurated the **8-laning of Korampallam Bridge and Rail Over Bridge (ROB) at V.O.Chidambaranar Port** and the tenements constructed under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) scheme**.
- The Prime Minister said that the modernization of Bhavani Sagar Dam will irrigate over 2 lakh acres of land and farmers of several districts will benefit from this project

Governor, Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and Union Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi were present on the occasion.

PM Modi will address Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University's 33rd convocation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will address the **33rd Convocation** of the Tamil Nadu **Dr. M.G.R. Medical University** through video conferencing.
- A total of 17 thousand five hundred 91 candidates will be conferred with Degrees and Diplomas in the Convocation.
- Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit will be present on the occasion.
- The University is named after the former Chief Minister Dr. M. G. Ramachandran.
- It has a total of 686 affiliated institutions under its umbrella, encompassing the disciplines of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, AYUSH, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Allied Health Sciences.
- These institutions are spread across the length and breadth of the state, including **41 Medical Colleges, 19 Dental Colleges, 48 AYUSH Colleges, 199 Nursing Colleges, 81 Pharmacy Colleges** and the rest being specialty post-doctoral medical and allied health institutions.

President's Rule imposed in Puducherry

- Puducherry has been placed under the **President's rule days after the Congress-led Government collapsed after several resignations**.
- The Home Ministry issued a notification of imposing the President's rule in the Union Territory.
- President Ram Nath Kovind suspended the Puducherry Assembly as well.
- The Legislative Assembly of the Union territory is now placed under suspended animation.
- The Assembly polls are due in the Union Territory shortly.

The India Toy Fair 2021 inaugurate by PM Modi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **India Toy Fair 2021** through video conferencing.

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- Toys play a significant part in the development of a child's mind and also help improve psychomotor and cognitive skills in children.
- The Fair aims to provide an impetus to the underlying **themes of Atmanirbhar Bharat and vocal for local campaigns**, launched by the Government to promote indigenous industries.
- It also aims to leverage the potential of toys in making learning joyful across all ages in education.
- The four-day event aims to bring together all stakeholders including buyers, sellers, students, teachers and designers on a virtual platform to create sustainable linkages and encourage dialogue for the overall development of the industry.
- **Over one thousand exhibitors from across 30 States and Union Territories** will display their products in e-commerce enabled virtual exhibitions.
- It will showcase traditional Indian toys as well as modern toys including electronic toys, plush toys, puzzles and games.

Revision Points

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

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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

External affairs Minister discuss his US counterpart

- **External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar** has had a telephonic conversation with US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken.

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- **Dr Jaishankar warmly congratulated Secretary Blinken** on his appointment and wished him success in his new responsibilities.
- Both leaders expressed their commitment to consolidate and expand the multi-faceted strategic partnership.
- They appreciated the robust defence and security ties, growing economic engagement, productive health-care collaboration and strong **people-to-people linkages** as its important pillars.

Prakash Javadekar Launches 2021 as Indo-French Year of the Environment

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Shri Prakash Javadekar** and **Ms Barbara Pompili**, the French Minister for Ecological Transition launched the **Indo-French Year of the Environment in New Delhi**.
- The basic objective is to **strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions in favor of global environment protection and give them greater visibility**.
- The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on **five main themes**: environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, and the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency.
- It is also a platform for engaging in discussions on critical areas of collaboration relating to the environment and allied areas.
- From the French side, it will be held under the aegis of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs with the support of the Embassy of France in Delhi and its partners.
- From the Indian side, it will be coordinated by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** along with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and other concerned Ministries/Departments/Organisations.
- A joint screening committee will also be set up to finalise the calendar of the events for the Indo-French Year of the Environment.

UN World Tourism Organization confirms 2020 as “worst year on record”

- According to the global travel and tourism report ‘**World Tourism Barometer**’ released by the **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, the year 2020 was the “**worst year on record**”.
- Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals dropping by -74% year-on-year according to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- Locations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer worldwide arrivals in 2020 than within the earlier year as a result of COVID-19 disaster, the associated fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions.
- **Asia and the Pacific (-84%)** the primary area to endure the influence of the pandemic and the one with the very best stage of journey restrictions at present in place – recorded the most important lower in arrivals in 2020 (300 million fewer).
- The **Center East and Africa** each recorded a **-75% decline**.
- **Europe recorded a -70% lower in arrivals**, regardless of a quick revival within the Summer season of 2020.

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- Based on the most recent UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, the collapse in worldwide travel represents an estimated lack of US\$1.3 trillion in export revenues – greater than 11 instances the loss recorded in the course of the 2009 world financial disaster.

Vietnam ruling Communist Party chief Trong re-elected for third term

- **Vietnam's** ruling Communist Party chief **Nguyen Phu Trong, 76, has been re-elected for a rare third five-year term.**
- Mr Trong was granted an exception to party rules that say people over the age of 65 should retire, cementing his position as one of the country's strongest and longest-serving leaders for decades.
- It aims to bolster **Vietnam's ongoing economic success, and the legitimacy of the party's rule.**
- **Vietnam's Communist Party governs the nation of nearly 100 million people** and has ruled for more than 45 years since reunification.
- Leadership of the one-party state is split among three positions: the party chief, a president who serves as head of state and a prime minister who runs the government. Since 2018, Mr. Trong has served as both party leader and president.
- A new study by the independent Lowy Institute in Australia ranked Vietnam second in the world behind New Zealand in handling the pandemic's first nine months.

UK applying to join Asia-Pacific free trade pact

- The UK is applying to join a **free trade** area made up of **11 Asia and Pacific nations, under its post-Brexit plans.**
- The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).
- The trade agreement formed in 2018 which includes **Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.**
- In total, it covers a market of around 500 million people, generating more than 13% of the world's income.
- International Trade Secretary Liz Truss will make the request with negotiations expected in the spring.

UK opens visa scheme - Hong Kong residents to become citizens

- A visa scheme to allow **Hong Kong residents** to come to the UK opened, with some **THREE LAKH** people expected to apply.
- The visa, which is open to holders of a **British National (Overseas) passport** and their immediate dependents, will offer a fast track to UK citizenship.
- But the Chinese foreign ministry said it would no longer recognize the BNO passport as a travel document.
- The UK launched the new visa after China imposed a new security law.
- Beijing has previously warned the UK not to meddle in domestic issues.

Nepal decides to award hydropower project

- Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of **679 mega watt Lower Arun Hydropower Project** to India's **Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).**

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- This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by **Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli**.

- The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method.
- **Arun III hydel project**, which will provide 21 per cent free power to Nepal during the concession period.

Military seizes power in Myanmar- report 1 year emergency

- **The Myanmar Military Tatmadaw** has announced a one year state of emergency in the country.
- The **Vice President Myint Swe** has been made the acting President and all powers have been transferred to the **Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing**.
- The development follows early morning detention of the State Counsellor **Aung San Suu Kyi**, President Win Myint and other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) by the military.

Denmark to build world's first energy island in the North Sea

- The **Denmark** to build **world's first energy** island in the North Sea
- The **€28 billion construction** project is the biggest of its kind in Danish history. The government will hold a 51% stake in the island, with the remainder held by the private sector.
- In that Initial phase will be the size of **18 football fields**, will be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines and will supply both power to households and green hydrogen for use in shipping, aviation, industry and heavy transport.
- It will cost around **210 billion Danish crowns (\$33.9 billion)** to build, and is an important part of Denmark's legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels, one of the world's most ambitious.
- The move came as the European Union unveiled plans to transform its electricity system to rely mostly on renewable energy within a decade and increase its offshore wind energy capacity **25-fold by 2050**.
- The island, to be located **80 kilometres off Denmark's west coast**, and its surrounding wind turbines will have an initial capacity of 3 gigawatt and be operational around 2033.
- Denmark also has plans for an energy island in the Baltic Sea. The state will hold a controlling stake in both islands.

14th International Children's Film festival concludes in Bangladesh

- The **14th International Children's Film Festival of Bangladesh (ICFFB)** came to an end in **Dhaka**.
- A total of **12 awards** were presented to the winners at the concluding ceremony.
- **179 films from 37 countries** were shown at various venues during the **7-day long festival organised by the Children's Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh**.
- Apart from Bangladesh, films from India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China among others were shown in the course of the festival.
- **Dutch Film Jackie and Oopjen** was awarded the **Best International Feature Film Award**.
- **Bangladeshi film Maati** got The Young Talent Award while Lottery won the Special mention under the Young Talent Award.

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South Korea To Build World's Largest Offshore Wind Farm

- **South Korea** unveiled a **48.5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion)** plan to **build the world's largest wind power plant by 2030** as part of efforts to foster an environmentally-friendly recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The project is a major component of President Moon Jae-in's Green New Deal, initiated last year to **curb reliance on fossil fuels in Asia's fourth-largest economy** and make it carbon neutral by 2050
- Moon attended a signing ceremony in the southwestern coastal town of Sinan for the plant, which will have a maximum capacity of **8.2 gigawatts**.
- The plan is part of the country's Green New Deal that seeks to transition South Korea to a more sustainable energy future.
- It is accelerating the eco-friendly energy transition and moving more vigorously toward carbon neutrality.
- The estimated cost of the project is 48.5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion).
- The project would provide up to 5,600 jobs and help achieve a goal to boost the country's wind power capacity to 16.5 GW by 2030 from 1.67 GW now.
- Till date, the world's largest offshore wind farm is Hornsea 1 in Britain, which has 1.12 GW capacity.

US freezes dollar 1 billion funds of Myanmar govt

- The military government in Myanmar has stepped up actions against leaders of the **Aung San Suu Kyi led National League for Democracy (NLD)**.
- A close aide to the ousted State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Kyaw Tint Swe was arrested by the army.
- He had served as the minister for the office of the State Counsellor **Aung San Suu Kyi**, reports Reuters.
- An official of the NLD has said that four other people linked to the previous government were also picked up from their homes.
- The **United States has announced that it is going to freeze USD 1 billion in Burmese government funds held in the United States**.
- President Joe Biden has said that the US is announcing a series of actions to impose consequences on the leaders of the **Myanmar coup**.
- He announced that he has signed a new executive order to sanction against the military leaders who directed the coup and their close family members.

Bangladesh receives USD 200 mn from World Bank

- **Bangladesh has received USD 200 million** for Water Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) project for rural areas from the World Bank.
- The agreement was signed between the government of Bangladesh and the World Bank.
- The project is planned to help **3.6 million** to access hygienic sanitation facilities and about 6 lakh people to access clean water in rural areas.
- The WB funding will provide microcredits to both households and entrepreneurs for water and sanitation facilities.

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- More than **3 lakh poorest households** will receive fully subsidised toilets.
- Apart from household water connections, the project will construct **3000 community piped water schemes**.
- The project will install about **312 public toilets and 2,514 hand-washing stations** at crowded public places, such as markets and bus stations.
- About **1,280 community clinics** will have new or renovated facilities, said the press release issued by the World Bank.
- **World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Mercy Tembon** said that the project will help prevent diseases and protect citizens from COVID 19 and other infectious diseases.
- The credit from the World Bank's International Development Association, has a 30-year term, including a five-year grace period.

India and United States review Indo-Pacific developments

- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken** held a "comprehensive discussion and reviewed Indo-Pacific developments and the Quad cooperation".
- Mr Jaishankar said that they also exchanged views on the situation in Myanmar.
- The External Affairs Minister said, he looks forward to remaining in touch with him.
- The telephonic conversation between **Mr Jaishankar and Blinken** came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with US President Joe Biden.
- During the conversation, both the leaders discussed regional issues and the shared priorities.

'Hope' probe of UAE successfully enters Mars orbit

- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** made history as its **first-ever interplanetary Hope Probe mission** successfully entered orbit around **Mars**.
- According to CNN, UAE's first mission to Mars arrived at the red planet and successfully entered orbit on its first attempt.
- When the spacecraft arrived, the Hope Probe marked the UAE as only the fifth country in history to reach the red planet and the Arab nation's first interplanetary mission.
- The Hope Mars Mission is considered as the biggest strategic and scientific national initiative announced by UAE's President His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 2014.
- Prior to this, only the **United States, Soviet Union, Europe and India have achieved this feat**.

US President Joe Biden revokes national emergency - fund to Mexico border wall project

- **United States President Joe Biden** has revoked the national emergency order used to fund **former President Donald Trump's Mexico border wall project**.
- In a letter to Congress, Biden wrote that the order was unwarranted and said that no further tax dollars will be spent on the wall.

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- The announcement is the latest in a series of executive orders from President Biden that have rolled back key parts of the former president's agenda.
- **In 2019**, President Trump had declared a state of emergency over the southern border, which had allowed him to bypass Congress and use military funds for its construction.
- It is estimated that when Donald Trump left the Presidential office, about **25 billion dollars** had been spent on the project.

China celebrates Lunar New Year

- **China is celebrating Lunar New Year** as it ushered into the **Year of the Ox**.
- It is one of the most important Chinese festivals, also known as the **Chinese New Year or Spring Festival**.
- Though the occasion is meant to be spent with family and friends, the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has made the celebrations little different.
- China entered the year of Ox, people welcomed the spring, good luck and new beginnings by staying up late after feast on the **New Year's Eve**.
- It's still very wintry, but the spring festival holiday marks the end of the coldest days.

Iraq invites 52 countries to monitor elections

- **The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) of Iraq** has sent invitations to embassies of 52 countries to monitor the country's elections slated to take place on 10th of October this year.
- **IHEC Spokeswoman Jumana al-Ghalai** told the media that the Commission's law allows the recruitment of international observers to monitor the election process to ensure its transparency.
- October's elections will decide the 328 members of the Council of Representatives who will in turn elect a new President and Prime Minister.

Pakistan test-fires surface-to-surface cruise missile

- **Pakistan** conducted a **successful training launch of a surface-to-surface cruise missile** which can **strike targets up to 450 kilometres**,
- This was the **country's third missile test in three weeks**.
- The **Babar missile** "is capable of engaging targets at land and sea with high precision.
- The Babur cruise missile IA was launched from a **"state of the art Multi Tube Missile Launch Vehicle**
- On January 20, the army conducted a successful test of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-III.
- Earlier this month, the army successfully conducted the 'training launch' of nuclear-capable ballistic missile sile Ghaznavi as part of its annual field training exercise.
- Earlier in January this year, the army had also test-fired an indigenously developed extended-range guided **Multi-Launch Rocket System (MLRS)**.

India to fund USD 50M for restoration of 3 cultural heritage projects in Nepal

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- India will provide **Nepalese Rupees(NR)** 142 million to Nepal for the **restoration and conservation of three cultural heritage sites in the Kathmandu Valley**.
- The **three sites** are part of **cultural heritage projects** being taken up by India for **post-earthquake conservation and restoration under an MoU signed between the two countries**.
- The projects are being implemented under USD 50 million grant assistance committed by India for post-earthquake reconstruction of the cultural heritage sites across eight districts of Nepal.
- The agreements were signed by the **Project Director of CLPIU (Building) of National Reconstruction Authority** and Contractors for conservation and retrofitting of Seto Machindranath Temple (Total Cost - NRs 626 million), construction of Dharamshala at Budhaneelkantha (Total Cost NRs - 334 million) and conservation and development of Kumari Home in Lalitpur district (Total Cost NRs - 456 million), according to a press release issued by the Indian Embassy.

U.S. extends New START nuclear treaty with Russia for 5 years

- The **United States** extended the **nuclear arms control treaty** known as the **New START with Russia for the next five years**.
- The United States took the **first step toward making good** on that pledge when it extended the **New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty with the Russian Federation** for five years
- The new strategic arms reduction treaty, was formally **signed on April 8, 2010** and after ratification, entered into force on 5 February 2011.
- Blinken added that extending the New START Treaty ensures the US has verifiable limits on Russian ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers until February 5, 2026.
- The agreement also included a five-year extension clause that allowed both nations to extend the pact with approval from both presidents.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla : 2-day visit to Moscow

- **Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla** will pay a two-day visit to **Moscow on 17th and 18th of February** at the invitation of Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov.
- The Foreign Secretary will hold the next round of **India-Russia Foreign Office Consultations with Deputy Foreign Minister Morgulov**, during which the two sides will review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including the forthcoming high-level exchanges.
- During the visit, the Foreign Secretary will also meet Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov for an exchange of views on topical issues of regional and international importance.
- He will also deliver a speech on India-Russia relations at the prestigious Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

'Pahela Phagun' spring festival begins in Bangladesh

- The first day of the spring called '**Pahela Phagun**' was celebrated in Dhaka despite the continued shadow of Corona pandemic in the country.

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- Cultural organisations held programmes at different venues in the city to herald the beginning of the spring.
- Programmes were held at the **Suhrawardy Udyan, Nandan Manch of Shilpakala Academy and several other locations.**
- **The Jatiya Basanta Utsab Udjapan Parishad** organized the programme at the Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka.
- Young women wearing yellow saris and youth dressed in 'Punjabis' took part in the festivity.
- The programme featured dance and musical performances.
- The traditional programme of 'Basanta Utsab' at the **Fine Arts faculty in Dhaka university** was cancelled since educational institutions have been closed till Feb. 28 by the government due to the Corona pandemic.

China overtakes US, becomes European Union's biggest trading partner

- **China** last year overtook the **United States as the EU's biggest trading partner**, the **EU statistics agency Eurostat**
- The European Union, was the third-largest trading partner for the bloc, behind China and the United States.
- Eurostat said the trade volume with China reached **586 billion euros (\$711 billion) in 2020**, compared to 555 billion euros (\$673 billion) for the US.
- The agency said EU exports rose by 2.2 percent to 202.5 billion euros while at the same time, imports from the People's Republic of China increased by 5.6 percent to 383.5 billion euros.

Ethiopian Deputy PM arrives in New Delhi

- Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs **Demeke Mekonnen Hassen** arrived in New Delhi on a **four-day official visit to India.**
- Mr Hassen will inaugurate the new Chancery and Residence at **Ethiopian Embassy** in New Delhi along with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.
- He is scheduled to meet Dr Jaishankar at **Hyderabad House.**

Facebook blocks Australian users to sharing or viewing news content

- **Facebook** has **blocked Australian users** from **sharing or viewing news content on the platform**, causing alarm over public access to key information.
- Australians woke up this morning to find the Facebook pages of all local and global news sites were unavailable.
- Several government health, emergency and other pages were also blocked.
- Later the tech giant asserted it was a mistake.
- **Those outside of Australia are also unable to read or access any Australian news publications on the platform.**
- Facebook's move is in response to a proposed law in Australia which would make tech giants pay for news content.

France Passes Anti-radicalism Bill

- The **French Parliament** has approved an **Anti-radicalism Bill** in a bid to **fight the Islamic radicalism.**

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- The bill would **strengthen oversight of mosques, schools and sports clubs** to safeguard France from radical Islamists and ensure respect for French values, one of President Emmanuel Macron's landmark projects.
- The vote in the lower house was the first critical hurdle for the legislation that has been long in the making after two weeks of intense debate. The bill passed 347 to 151 with 65 abstentions.
- To adapt to the changes, the bill amends the French law of 1905 guaranteeing the separation of Church and State.

AI based translation software 'Amar Vasha' launched by Bangladesh Supreme Court

- The **Bangladesh Supreme Court** launched the **Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software 'Amar Vasha'** through a virtual event.
- The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla.
- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Law Minister Anisul Haq, Law Secretary Md. Golam Sarwar and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami spoke during the virtual function.
- The Software has been developed with '**EkStep**' foundation of India.
- It is based on their '**Anuvaad**' translation software used in India to translate from English to Indian languages including Bangla.
- **Anuvaad** was deployed by the Supreme Court of India as **SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software)** from November 2019.

India and Australia - work together for peace, prosperity and security in Indo-Pacific region

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison.**
- Mr. Modi said, both the countries reiterated their commitment to consolidate Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and discussed regional issues of common interest.

He said, India is looking forward to **working together for peace, prosperity and security** in the Indo-Pacific region.

Free period products to all students offered by all New Zealand schools

- The scheme to provide free menstrual products for the next three years comes after a six-month pilot program launched last year in **15 schools in the Waikato region where 3,200 young people** were provided with period products.
- **Every school in New Zealand will** be stocked with free period products for female students from June, **the prime minister, Jacinda Ardern**, has confirmed.
- Principals and poverty groups have been calling for the move for years, saying period poverty meant some girls ended up skipping school during their periods because they could not afford the sanitary products to manage them hygienically.

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India signs 50 million dollar Defence line of Credit agreement with Maldives

- Reaffirming its commitment for overall development and security of its maritime neighbour, India has signed a **50 million dollar Line of Credit agreement** in the defence sector with the **Maldives**.
- **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar**, who was in the Maldives, said that the agreement will facilitate capability building in the maritime domain.
- The credit line agreement for defence projects was signed between the **Finance Ministry of Maldives and the Export-Import Bank of India** to boost the maritime capabilities of the strategically vital Indian Ocean island nation.
- Dr Jaishankar also co-signed the **UTF Harbour Project agreement** with Maldives Defence Minister Mariya Didi.
- The launches were monitored by senior scientists from various DRDO labs involved in the design and development of the system.
- During the test launches, flight path and vehicle performance parameters were monitored using flight data, captured by various Range instruments.

India offers USD 100 million line of credit to Mauritius

- India offered a **USD 100 million line of credit to Mauritius** to facilitate procurement of **defence assets** and the two countries signed a Comprehensive Economic **Cooperation Partnership Agreement following talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth** here.
- "SAGAR policy reaffirmed. Pleased to witness, along with PM @JugnauthKumar, the exchange of USD 100 million Defence Line of Credit.
- Will facilitate procurement of defence assets, guided by the needs of Mauritius,".

Israel launches "green pass" for people with vaccination certificate

- **Israel** has launched a coronavirus '**green pass**' system, and that allows people who have been vaccinated to access public facilities.
- Israelis who have gotten both Pfizer vaccine shots and those who have recovered from the virus get a "Green Pass" certificate in the form of a **QR code or printout for people** without smartphones.
- Pass-holders could prove their status by presenting a vaccination certificate or downloading a health ministry app linked to their medical files.
- The pass allows entry to gyms, swimming pools, hotels, entertainment venues and sporting events. Restaurants and bars will be added to the list in March.
- Meanwhile, Israel has faced international criticism for largely excluding Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from its highly successful vaccination campaign, widening the persistent inequality with Israelis that began long before the pandemic.

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Jasmine Harrison becomes youngest woman to row solo across the ocean

- A British woman, **Jasmine Harrison** of **England** has become the **youngest woman** to row solo across an **Ocean** by **completing a 3,000-mile (4828 km)** journey across the Atlantic.
- The **21-year-old** from the landlocked town of Thirsk, England, set a world record as the youngest female to row solo across any ocean **70 days, 3 hours and 48 minutes** by **finishing the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge**, according to organizer Atlantic Campaigns.
- Harrison began her journey in Spain's Canary Islands on December 12, 2020 and arrived in Antigua on February 20, 2021.

External Affairs Minister inaugurates new Indian High Commission building in Mauritius

- **External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar** inaugurated the new Indian High Commission building in Mauritius in the presence of **Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth** and **Foreign Minister Alan Ganoo**.
- Dr Jaishankar said, the green and efficient project reflects New India.
- He expressed confidence that it will inspire the work of the Indian High Commission even more.
- He reviewed the Dagotièrre Social Housing Project in Mauritius accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Minister Louis Steven Obeegadoo.
- Dr Jaishankar expressed happiness that the **956 Housing Units** built with Indian support will be occupied soon.
- He thanked the workers who have done India proud.

China Surpasses US to become India's top trade partner in 2020

- **China** has regained its position as the **top trading partner of India in 2020**, which was held by the **United States**, since 2018-19.
- **Two-way trade** between the longstanding economic and strategic rivals stood at \$77.7 billion last year, according to provisional data from India's commerce ministry.
- The U.S. bilateral trade with whom came in at \$75.9 billion amid muted demand for goods in the middle of a pandemic.
- The bilateral trade gap with China was at almost \$40 billion in 2020, making it India's largest.
- Total imports from China at \$58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the **U.S. and the U.A.E**, **which are its second- and third-largest trade partners**, respectively.

Pakistan unlikely to exit 'grey list' as FATF meets

- **Pakistan** is unlikely to exit the '**grey list**' of the **FATF** as some European countries have taken the stand that Islamabad has not fully implemented all the points of a plan of action set by it, on the eve of the plenary meeting of the global watchdog for money laundering and terror financing.
- A **global dirty money** watchdog decided to keep Pakistan on its "**grey list**", despite progress by Islamabad on meeting international anti-terrorism financing norms.

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Australia passes law to Facebook, Google pay for news

- **Australia's parliament** passed landmark legislation requiring **global technology giants** to pay for the news content shared on their platforms, in a move that is being closely watched around the world.
- The law was passed after a last-gasp deal that watered down binding rules **Facebook and Google** had fiercely opposed and which last week prompted Facebook to remove all news from its Australian platform.
- **Google** will now pay for news content that appears on its Showcase product and Facebook is expected to pay providers who appear on its **News product**, which is to be rolled out in Australia later this year.

Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister meets with External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar

- **Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov** who is on a two day visit to India met with **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar** in New Delhi.
- The discussion provided an opportunity to discuss various bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- The Ministers positively assessed the progress on the outcomes of the **India-Uzbekistan Virtual Summit** between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held on 11th December last year.
- Both Ministers also discussed the evolving situation in Afghanistan and noted the importance of a stable and peaceful Afghanistan for regional peace, stability and security.

24th edition of India-USA Executive Steering Group meeting concluded

- The **24th edition of the India-USA Executive Steering Group meeting** was held at New Delhi from 22nd to 24th February.
- The meeting was attended by a **12 member delegation** from the US Army in person and virtually by 40 officers from different locations from the US. Major General Daniel McDaniel, Deputy Commanding General; US Army Pacific was the Head of delegation from the US side.
- Indian Army delegation consisted of **37 officers**.
- The forum is an Army to Army engagement that meets every year alternately in India and US to discuss Army to Army cooperation.

Siliguri-Dhaka train service begin on Independence Day of Bangladesh

- The new Passenger train service between **India and Bangladesh** will start from 26th of March, the day the neighbouring country begins the **Golden Jubilee celebrations of its Independence**.
- Divisional Railway Manager of Katihar Division Ravindra Kumar Verma said, the train will leave NJP on every **Thursday and Monday** while it will depart from **Dhaka**.
- The **Haldibari-Chilahati** (in Bangladesh) train route was opened after a gap of 55 years for goods trains on 17th of December last year.
- The passenger train between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka will take the same route.

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MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh label India-Maldives Workshop

- **Union Minister of State for Personnel, Dr. Jitendra Singh** has said that India's successful commencement of the **COVID-19 vaccination programme** with two indigenously developed vaccines, offers a lot of hope of a decisive victory against the pandemic in the coming months.
- **India-Maldives Workshop on Good Governance Practices in a pandemic in New Delhi**, the Union Minister said the roadmap ahead for both the nations in winning the battle against the COVID-19, lies in restarting the economy, strengthening cooperative federalism with thrust on stronger institutions, stronger e-Governance models, digitally empowered citizens and improved healthcare.

'Lantern Festival' a traditional festival celebrated by China

- China is celebrating its traditional **Lantern festival**.
- Celebrated on the 15th day of the first Chinese lunar month, the Lantern Festival traditionally marks the end of the Chinese New Year also known as the 'Spring Festival' period.
- In 2021, China ushered into **Lunar New Year - the 'Year of the Ox' on 12th February**.
- The Lantern Festival is also the first full moon night in the Chinese calendar, marking the return of spring and symbolizing the reunion of family.
- According to China's various folk customs, people get together on the night of the Lantern Festival to celebrate with different activities.
- Lantern Festival customs and activities vary regionally including lighting and enjoying lanterns, appreciating the bright full moon, setting off fireworks, flying drones, guessing riddles written on lanterns, eating tangyuan or dumplings, lion dances, dragon dances, and walking on stilts

Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Myanmar	Naypyitaw	Burmese kyat	Win Myint
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Birr	Sahle-Work Zewde
Denmark	Copenhagen	Krone	Mette Frederiksen
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

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China	Beijing	Renminbi	Xi Jinping
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Mikhail Mishustin
Italy	Rome	Euro	Giuseppe Conte
South Korea	Seoul	Won	Chung Sye-kyun
Estonia	Tallinn	Euro	Kersti Kaljulaid
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Yoshihide Suga
Israel	Jerusalem	Shekel	Reuven Rivlin
New Zealand	Wellington	Dollar	Jacinda Ardern
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
Pakistan	Islamabad	Rupee	Madagascar
Australia	Canberra	Dollar	Scott Morrison
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	So'm	Abdulla Nigmatovich Aripov
Vietnam	Hanoi	Dong	Nguyễn Phú Trọng
Mauritius	Port Louis	Rupee	Pravind Jugnauth
Iraq	Baghdad	Dinar	Barham Salih
Georgia	Tbilisi	Lari	Salome Zourabichvili
Albania	Tirana	Lek	Ilir Meta
Ecuador	Quito	US Dollar	Lenín Moreno
Micronesia	Palikir	US Dollar	David W. Panuelo
Guatemala	Guatemala City	Quetzal	Alejandro Giammattei
Guinea	Conakry	Franc	Alpha Condé
Kyrgyz Republic	Bishkek	Som	Sadyr Japarov
Libya	Tripoli	Dinar	Muammar Gaddafi
Philippines	Manila	Peso	Rodrigo Duterte
Sierra Leone	Freetown	Leone	Julius Maada Bio
Ukraine	Kyiv	Hryvnia	Volodymyr Zelensky

Important Appointments

National Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
RS Sharma	Chief Executive of Ayushman Bharat or PMJAY	Indu Bhushan
Bhavya Lal	Acting Chief of Staff of NASA	

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Rama Mohan Rao Amara	MD & CEO, SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd	
Praveen Sinha	Interim director, Central Bureau of Investigation	RK Shukla
Air Marshal GS Bedi AVSM VMVSM	Director General (Inspection & Safety)	
Ajay Singh	President, Boxing Federation of India	
Bikram Singh Bedi	Managing Director, Google Cloud - India	
Sridhar Vembu	Doval-led National Security Advisory Board	
Praveen Sinha	Acting Chief , CBI	Rishi Kumar Shukla
Jiten Chopra	Chief financial officer, IndiGo	Aditya Pande
VP Joy	Kerala's chief secretary	
Hima Das	Deputy Superintendent of Police	Appointed by Assam
Sanjay Bangar	Batting consultant, Royal Challengers Bangalore (IPL 2021)	
Aditya Mittal	Chairman & CEO, Arcelor Mittal	
Satishwar Balakrishnan	MD & CEO, Aegon Life Insurance	
Marc Llistosella	MD & CEO, Tata Motors Ltd	
Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar	Chief Justice of Manipur HC	He served as a Judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.
Dr Ajay Mathur	Director General, International Solar Alliance	Upendra Tripathy
Om Prakash Dadhich and Sandeep Kumar	Members in the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs	Dadhich replaces Dr John Joseph & Sandeep Kumar replaces Ashok Kumar Pandey
Mahesh Palashikar	Chairman, GE T&D India Ltd	Vishal K Wanchoo
Preeti Sinha	Executive Secretary, UN Capital Development Fund	Oversee UNCDF's 'last mile' finance models
Umakant Dash	Director, Institute of Rural Management- Anand	
Debashis Mitra	Vice President, ICAI	

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Nihar N Jambusaria	President, ICAI	
Dr. TAMILISAI Soundararajan	Puducherry Lieutenant Governor	Kiran Bedi
Amrit Singh	Chief Financial Officer & Executive Vice President – Strategy , Max Life Insurance	
Mehbooba Mufti	President of Peoples' Democratic Party	She is the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir
Yanira Ramirez	H&M Country Sales Manager for India	
VS Ganesh	Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer, Page Industries	Vedji Ticku
K P Krishnan	Chairman, Shriram Capital	
Sachin Tendulkar	Brand Ambassador, Unacademy	
Shantanu Mitra	CEO & MD, Fullerton India Credit Company	
Timothy Prentice	Vice President – Design, TVS Motor Company	
Dr Mangu Hanumantha Rao	Executive director, All India Institute Medical Sciences (AIIMS) - Madurai	
Vijay Sampla	Chairman, National Commission for Scheduled Castes	
Rear Admiral Tarun Sobti	Command of the Eastern Fleet, the Sword Arm of the Eastern Naval Command	
Kalpesh Kikani	CEO, Piramal Alternatives	
Ramakrishna Karanth	CEO, Siegwark India	
Dushyant Chautala	President, Table Tennis Federation of India	He is Haryana's Deputy Chief Minister
Manu Sharma	Vice President and General Manager , Nothing India	

International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation	Predecessor/Others
Andy Jassy	Amazon CEO	Jeff Bezos

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Jeff Bezos	Executive Chairman, Amazon	
Henry Moniz	1 st Chief Compliance Officer, Facebook Inc	
Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	Director general, World Trade Organization	First woman and the first African national to lead the organization
Michael Bloomberg	Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions	Appointed by the United Nations
Mario Draghi	Prime Minister, Italy	He is the former European Central Bank chief
Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Nigerian Economist)	First female chief, World Trade Organization	
Mahender Singh Kanyal	Indian Ambassador to Syria	He is the Ambassador of India to Suriname
Toshihiro Mibe	CEO, Honda	Takahiro Hachigo
Seiko Hashimoto	Next Tokyo 2020 president	Yoshiro Mori
Gautam Thakar	Global CEO, OLX Autos	
Natalia Vodianova	UN goodwill ambassador	She is a Russian supermodel and philanthropist
Deepika Padukone	Global brand ambassador, Levi	

Resignation/Retirement

Name of the Person	Designation
Giorgi Gakharia	Prime Minister of Georgia
Vedji Ticku	CEO, Page Industries
V Narayanasamy	Puducherry Chief Minister
G R Arun Kumar	Chief Financial Officer, Vedanta

Expert committee to review proposal to ban 27 pesticides

- The government has appointed an **expert panel** to **review industry's objections** to the proposed ban on **27 widely used pesticides** which officials say are harmful to animals and humans.
- The committee, led by **chairman TP Rajendran**, former assistant director general of ICAR
- These are widely used are part of 66 contentious pesticides which are being reviewed for their toxicity. In 2018, the government had already banned 18 of them.
- Among these 27 pesticides which are widely used, and some of these were used to kill locusts recently industry and companies are said to have strongly defended 23, by submitting scientific evidence.

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- Apart from, the banning will put an additional financial burden on farmers as the cost of these contentious pesticides range between Rs 275-450 a litre as against the cost of their alternatives which are being imported at Rs 1500-2000 a litre.

Hyd-based Recykal becomes first Indian startup in WEF accelerator program

- Recykal**, a digital 'waste commerce' solutions provider, has been selected as the first member from India for the **World Economic Forum's Circulars Accelerator programme 2021**.
- This programme is led by Accenture along with Ecolab, Schneider Electric and the World Economic Forum, and will connect industry leaders with 17 circular economy entrepreneurs.
- The aim of this programme is to recognise individuals and companies that are making a notable contribution to the circular economy.

2 new judges in Delhi HC, 4 additional judges in Kerala HC appointed by President

- President Ram Nath Kovind** has appointed **Jasmeet Singh and Amit Bansal** as Judges of the **Delhi High Court**.
- Mr Kovind has also appointed four Additional Judges in the **Kerala High Court**. **Four Additional Judges of the Karnataka High Court have been elevated as Judges of this Court**.
- The Law Ministry has issued notifications in this regard.

Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize	Awarded By/Theme/Purpose
AR Rahman & Saidapet Hari Krishnan	Fourth edition of the Alert Being Awards 2020	By NGO ALERT, for their Good Samaritan work Note: Hari Krishnan had been appointed by the Greater Chennai Corporation as a district volunteer head for Covid-19
Hariharan	J C Daniel Award	Pinarayi Vijayan released the stamp published in connection with the International Film Festival of Kerala
Dr Krishna Mohan Pathi	2021 Padma Shri Award	Work in tribal districts of the Odisha.
Nanda Prusty of Kantira in Sukinda block	2021 Padma Shri award	Fondly known as 'Nanda Mastre'
Purnamasi Jani from Odisha's	2021 Padma Shri Award	Her biography was subsequently

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Kandhamal		written by Dr Surendranath Mohanty and a teacher Duryodhan Pradhan compiled all her songs
K Jayakumar (poet-lyricist)	JC Daniel Award	
Tamil film Koozhangal	Tiger Award	At the International Film Festival of Rotterdam
Manasa Varanasi from Telangana	VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020	Suman Ratan Singh Rao from Rajasthan crowned her successor, Uttar Pradesh's Manya Singh crowned VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 Runner Up
Muthalankurichi Kamarasu	Tamil Semmal award	Awarded by Tamil Nadu
Chandana A from a remote village in Mysuru	Award for 'gourd art'	At the National Kala Utsav
S Hareesh's novel 'Meesha'	Best novel for the year 2019	By Kerala Sahitya Akademi
P Raman's 'Rathri Pandhradarakku Oru Tharattu'	Best poem award	By Kerala Sahitya Akademi
Vinoy Thomas's 'Ramachi'	Akademy's award for the best short story for 2019	By Kerala Sahitya Akademi
Sajitha Madathil's 'Arangile Matsyagandhikal' and Jisha Abhinaya's 'Eli Eli Lama Sabaktani'	Best Play	By Kerala Sahitya Akademi
Writer P Valsala and writer-academician N V P Unithiri	The Akademi fellowships	
Madhurima	National Bal Shree award	Awarded by Kerala govt
UST	'Top Employer' in the US, the UK, Malaysia, India, Mexico, Spain, Singapore, and the Philippines for 2021	2021 by the Top Employers Institute (TEI), the global authority
ITC Grand Chola Hotel, Guindy	'Swachh Hotel' award	As part of Swachh Survekshan 2021 by the Greater Chennai

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		Corporation
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy	Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award	
Bharat Biotech	Genome Valley Excellence Award for 2021	For its “breakthrough, pioneering research, development and commercialisation of vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin
Jayakrishnan Babu of Wayanad and Muhammed Hamras K of Malappuram	General Awards	Selected for the national bravery awards instituted by the Indian Council for Child Welfare
Ummer Mukthar of Malappuram	Special Awards	Selected for the national bravery awards instituted by the Indian Council for Child Welfare
Wildlife Crime Control Bureau	Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020	Awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme
Rafiqul Islam (Nazrul scholar)	First International Mother Language Day award	By Bangladesh govt
Mathura Bikash of Tripura	First International Mother Language Day award	Contribution in preserving and promoting mother languages of small ethnic groups in Bangladesh
Uzbek Researcher Islaimov Gulom Mirzaevich and a Bolivian organisation named Activismo Lenguas	The biennial prize	By Bangladesh govt
Anjali Bharadwaj	International Anti-Corruption Champions Award	Named by the Biden Other Winners 1. Ardian Dvorani of Albania 2. Diana Salazar of Ecuador 3. Sophia Pretrick of Micronesia

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		4. Juan Francisco Sandoval Alfaro of Guatemala 5. Ibrahima Kalil Gueye of Guinea 6. Dhuha A Mohammed of Iraq 7. Bolot Temirov of Kyrgyz Republic 8. Mustafa Abdullah Sanalla of Libya 9. Victor Sotto of The Philippines 10. Francis Ben Kaifala of Sierra Leone 11. Ruslan Ryaboshapka of Ukraine
Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation	Digital Technology Sabha Award (2 nd time)	In the category of “Internet of Things”

Jallikattu out of final list at Oscar Awards

- **Lijo Jose Pellissery's Jallikattu** is officially out of the race for the Oscars in the Best International Feature Film category.
- The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences did not include the Malayalam flick when it published the list of final 15 movies.
- In all, films from **93 countries** were nominated to the category.
- **The shortlisted 15** will now be viewed by the Academy members and five of them will make it to the final five of Oscar nominations.

SERB announces Women Excellence Award 2021 in Science on the International Day of Women

- The **SERB Women Excellence Award** was announced on the occasion of **International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2021**.
- The SERB Women Excellence Award that has been conferred on them provides a grant of **Rs. 15 lakhs for a period of three years to the awardees to pursue their research ideas**.

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- The award given by the **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**, a Statutory body of the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** supporting basic research in the frontier areas of science and engineering, was launched in the year 2013.
- It is a one-time award given to women scientists below 40 years of age who have received recognition from any one or more of the National Academies such as Young Scientist Medal, Young Associateship, etc.

List of winners

- **Dr. Shobhna Kapoor**, Assistant Professor at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, working in the area of Chemical Biology with expertise in 'Host-Pathogen Interactions and Membrane Biology, Chemical Biology and Biophysics'
- **Dr. Antara Banerjee**, Scientist B National Institute For Research In Reproductive Health, Mumbai, Maharashtra from the Health Sciences area with expertise in Signal Transduction, Biology of Reproduction and Endocrinology,
- **Dr. Sonu Gandhi** Scientist D from National Institute Of Animal Biotechnology, Hyderabad from Bionanotechnology area focusing on Nanosensors, Design and Fabrication of Label-free Biosensors
- **Dr. Ritu Gupta**, Assistant Professor at Indian Institute Of Technology Jodhpur, Rajasthan working on Nanotechnology with expertise in Materials Science, Nanodevices and Sensors, Health & Energy.

Awards for writing competition: High Commission of India, Bangladesh

- The High Commission of India in Dhaka announced the winners of the writing competition on the subject '**What Liberation means to me**' for the youth of Bangladesh.
- The prize giving ceremony was organised at the High Commission of India in Dhaka.
- The competition received over **1050 submissions from Bangladesh and abroad**.
- The Minister of State for ICT **Zunaid Ahmed Palak** gave away the prizes as Chief Guest of the function.
- In **Category A** of Bangla competition, **Afsara Tasnim of Dhaka University was adjudged the Champion**.
- **Farsia Kawsar Chowdhury of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) was given the prize as the first runners up**.
- In the English category, **Maliha Momtaz Oishi** from Viqarunnisa Noon School and College was declared as the Champion while Ipshita Kajuri from North South University was the first runner up.
- In both the categories **a total of 14 prizes were given away**.
- **Champions** of each category were awarded with **laptops**, the **first and second runner up received Tabs**.
- Other winners received a smartphone, along with a crest, certificate and book.
- The top essays from each category will be published in Bharat Bichitra magazine of the Indian High Commission, said the Press release issued by the High Commission of India.
- The aim of the competition was to give Bangladeshi youth a platform to show their creativity and share their own understanding and meaning of Liberation.
- The competition was organised jointly by the High Commission of India, Dhaka and Youth Opportunities.

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Environmental Enforcement Awards recognize 8 winners on the frontline of protecting our planet

- Exceptional efforts on the frontlines to stop environmental crime, including the illegal trade in wildlife and in plastic waste, have been recognized by **the United Nations, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization with the presentation of the 5th Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards.**
- The Awards are given annually for achievement in **combating transboundary environmental crime.**

About the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards 2020

- The 2020 Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards are presented by the UN Environment Programme in partnership with the UN Development Programme, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL, the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the World Customs Organization.
- The awards encourage government officials and institutions or teams in the region to combat environmental crime and reward excellence in enforcement.

PRSI National Awards 2020 - SAIL bags six awards

- The **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** has bagged six awards for its efforts in the field of communication at the **PRSI National Awards-2020** conferred upon by the Public Relations Society of India.
- The awards were presented by **Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** and **Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya** during a virtual ceremony on February 21.
- "SAIL has been awarded in House Journal (English), **Best Communication Campaign (External Publics)**, Communications Campaign of the Year - COVID-19, Special/Prestige Publication, E-newsletter, and Corporate Website categories," according to an official statement.

10th National Awards for Technology Innovation in Petrochemicals and Downstream Plastics Processing Industry - presented by DV Sadananda Gowda

- **Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister DV Sadananda Gowda** will present the 10th National Awards for Technology Innovation in Petrochemicals and Downstream Plastics Processing Industry in New Delhi.
- The award is aimed at felicitating and recognizing the innovative efforts of renowned scientists, researchers and industrialists in the broad areas of **Polymer Science and Technologies.**

Sushant Singh Rajput posthumously honoured at Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards

- The **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2021**, has honoured late actor **Sushant Singh Rajput** with the **Critic's Best Actor** accolade in the award ceremony.
- The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards was introduced by the Government of India in 1969, to commemorate 'the father of Indian cinema', Dadasaheb Phalke.

The winner of the Award for 2021 :

1. Best Actor (Female) – Deepika Padukone, Chhapaak
2. Best Actor (Male) – Akshay Kumar, Laxmii
3. Critic's Best Actress – Kiara Advani, Guilty

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4. Critic's Best Actor – Late Sushant Singh Rajput, Dil Bechara
5. Best Film – Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior
6. Best International Feature Film – Parasite Most Versatile Actor – Kay Kay Menon
7. Best Director – Anurag Basu, Ludo
8. Best Actor in a Supporting Role – Vikrant Massey, Chhapaak
9. Best Actress in Supporting Role – Radhika Madan, Angrezi Medium
10. Best Actor in Comic Role – Kunal Kemmu, Lootcase
11. Best Actor (Web Series) – Bobby Deol, Aashram
12. Best Actress (Web Series) – Sushmita Sen, Aarya
13. Best Web Series – Scam: 1992
14. Album of the Year – Titliyaan

Akshaya Oorja Awards distributed in Kerala

- The **Akshaya Oorja Awards 2019**, instituted by the **Agency for Non-conventional Energy and Rural Technology (ANERT)**, were distributed here y at the agency's headquarters.
- **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** inaugurated the function through videoconference.
- Power minister MM Mani chaired the event.
- The individual award for outstanding contribution was handed over to field expert and researcher V K Damodaran by V K Prasanth, MLA, while the best industrial unit went to Malayala Manorama and Neelambari Exports.
- **Perinjayam panchayat in Thrissur** won the best local body award.
- The **best education institution** was awarded to National Skill Training Institute, Kozhikode, while the best commercial establishment was shared by Calicut University Cooperative Stores Ltd and Vallapat Clinic and Dentistry in Thrissur.
- In the category of non-profit organisations, Care Home Helping Hands, Kozhikode, won the award.

Five awards conferred for Vijayawada postal division

- **Vijayawada Postal Division bagged five AP Circle level awards** in Aadhaar (first place), Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (first place), postal life insurance (second place), India Post Payments Bank (second) and Philately (second) for the financial year 2019-20.
- The awards were announced at the AP Circle Level Divisional Heads Conference held in Vizag.
- **KVLN Murthy**, senior superintendent of post offices, Vijayawada division congratulated the staff and appealed to them to continue the same tempo this year also.

TSSPDCL bags four energy awards

- **Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL)** bagged four awards, two of which were the '**ICC - 8th Innovation with Impact Awards 2020**', under the categories of Overall Innovation with Impact (General States) and Quality of Service and Customer Empowerment.
- They were presented at the **14th India Energy Summit 2020-21**.

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- The two other awards, as part of **IPPAI Awards 2020**, were bestowed on Discom under the categories of Best Distribution Company to Promote Consumer Awareness and Best Distribution Utility Achieving Highest Electrification, including metering of un-electrified households.

Important MOU's

Ford, Google join hands to offer cloud-based data services

- **Ford Motor Co** will tap into software, artificial intelligence and **cloud computing** offered by **Alphabet Inc's Google** to develop new consumer services and modernize internal operations.
- As part of a **six-year partnership**, the Dearborn, Michigan-based automaker will incorporate the tech giant's Android operating system into its Ford and Lincoln vehicles starting in 2023.
- Ford will offer its customers built-in Google apps, including its map and voice technology.
- It will deploy Google artificial intelligence technology to improve the efficiency of vehicle development, supply chain and manufacturing operations

NBCFDC signs MoU with Apollo Medskills for providing COVID Vaccine Administration training

- The **National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC)** has signed an MoU with Apollo Medskills Private Ltd for providing COVID Vaccination Administration training to Nurses, Medical and Nursing students and Pharmacists.
- The programme has been sanctioned with the **aim of Up-Skilling the competency level** of the health care workers as well contributing to the national programme of vaccination under progress.
- The Corporation has sanctioned training programmes for **1,000 trainees in the State of Bihar, Delhi, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.**

About NBCFDC :

- National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation was incorporated 13 January 1992 as a non profit company under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India to improve and develop the economic activities for the members of Backward Classes who are living below double the poverty line

HAL inks deal with MIDHANI to develop, manufacture composite raw materials

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and **Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI)** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for development and production of composite raw materials during the **Aero India 2021 in Bengaluru on February 04, 2021**
- This is the **first time** that such an MoU has been signed for composite raw materials.
- The MoU was signed by Chairman and Managing Director, HAL Shri R Madhavan and Chairman and Managing Director, MIDHANI Dr S K Jha in the presence of other senior officials.
- Composites raw materials, mainly in the form of prepregs used in platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) are currently imported.

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- The usage of composites in aerospace is going to exist and increase, particularly for fighter aircraft/helicopters because of its inherent advantages over metallic raw materials.
- In addition, similar requirements exist for other aerospace and defence programmes, including those of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL).

Reliance receives world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from US

- Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.
- The Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Sea Pearl containing the carbon-neutral oil unloaded the cargo at Jamnagar on January 28.
- This transaction is a first step in the creation of a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil.
- It is also a bridge to the development of a further differentiated petroleum product, net-zero oil, which Occidental intends to eventually produce through the capture and sequestration of atmospheric CO₂ via industrial-scale direct air capture (DAC) facilities and geological sequestration.
- Reliance, which operates the world's largest single location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year, got 2 million barrels of consignment Permian basin.
- This transaction, which was arranged in conjunction with Macquarie Group's Commodities and Global Markets group (Macquarie), is the energy industry's first major petroleum shipment for which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the entire crude lifecycle, well head through combustion of end products, have been offset.

1st India-Bahrain Joint Working Group meeting in the field of Renewable Energy

- The 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain held On Feb 04, 2021 in virtual format.
- H.E. Dr. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation.
- The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. H.E. Sh. Piyush Srivastava, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain also participated in the meeting.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain was signed in July 2018 for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

About the Meeting :

- It was a very productive meeting, in which both sides underscored the importance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals, and presented the initiatives taken, progress made and future targets set by their respective governments as well as opportunities available in this sector.
- Both sides agreed to forging deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.

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- The meeting took place in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. It was agreed to hold the next round of JWG meetings at mutually convenient dates, which will be decided through diplomatic channels.

201 MoUs Signed:Aero India 2021 Concludes

- A total of **201 MoUs**, product launches, and technology transfers were concluded at the **Bandhan ceremony** held on the last day of **Aero India 2021** at **Yelahanka, Bengaluru** on February 05, 2021.
- Over **600 exhibitors attended physically while 108 in virtual mode**.
- And then around 3,000 Business-2-Business meetings were conducted.
- Conclave of Defence Ministers of **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**
- **Theme:** 'Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'.
- The first ever IOR Defence Ministers' Conclave was attended by ministers and delegates from 26 IOR countries.
- A conclave of Chiefs of Air Staff was also organised to pursue the objectives of collaborative security for the region and beyond.
- The 6th India-Russia Military Industrial Conference, iDEX 'Start-up Manthan' was also held.
- Aero India 2021 would help in achieving the target set by the ministry to achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 crore, including exports of Rs 35,000 crore in aerospace and defence goods & services by the year 2024.

PM SVANidhi scheme: Zomato sign MoU to take street food vendors' businesses online

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Zomato for empowering street food vendors** with new digital technology and to provide greater income-earning opportunities on the food delivery platform.
- As part of Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNibhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme, MoHUA and Zomato will work together to onboard street food vendors on Zomato's food-tech platform,
- This agreement will give street vendors access to thousands of customers and would thus help them in growing their business. MoHUA has also introduced 'PMSVANidhi se Samridhi'

Karnataka govt sign Memorandum of Understanding with 34 Aerospace and Defence firms

- **Karnataka** has benefitted from the **Aero India** show that concluded in **Bengaluru**.
- The State Government signed **Memorandum of Understanding with 34 Aerospace and Defence firms** with an investment prospect of **2464 crore rupees** that can generate **6462 direct employment opportunities**.
- The agreements signed during the Aero India Show will encourage aerospace and defence equipment manufacturers to set up bases in the state.
- Karnataka has a vibrant aerospace and defence sector manufacturing ecosystem contributing over 65 percent of defence and aerospace exports in the country
- The state Industrial policy of 2020-25 provides several incentives and regulatory reforms related to land access and labour market regulations.

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Defence ministry, BEL ink pact to procure ship-borne modern radio system

- India's Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) -hju (BEL) have signed a contract for procurement of **Software Defined Radio Tactical (SDR-Tac) worth over ₹1,000 crore.**
- The SDR-Tac, jointly designed and developed by Defence Electronics Applications Laboratory (DEAL) of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) through a consortium of domestic agencies and industry, comprising Weapons and Electronics Systems Engineering Establishment (WESEE), BEL, Centre for Artificial Intelligence & Robotics (CAIR) and Indian Navy will bring strategic depth to the Armed Forces.
- The SDR-Tac is a four Channel Multi-mode, Multi Band, 19" Rack mountable, ship borne Software Defined Radio system.
- It is intended to serve ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and ship-to-air voice and data communication for network centric operations. It supports simultaneous operation of all the four channels covering V/UHF and L Band.

India, Afghanistan ink deal for construction of the Lalandar "Shahtoot" Dam in Afghanistan

- Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in **Afghanistan** to end a spike in violence, as the **two countries signed an agreement for building a dam to supply water to Kabul city.**
- The project, which costs nearly **\$ 300 million**, is a part of the New Development Partnership between India and Afghanistan.
- The MoU for Shatoot dam was signed by foreign minister **S Jaishankar** and his counterpart **Hanif Atmar.**
- The Lalandar (Shahtoot) dam would meet the safe drinking water needs of Kabul city, provide irrigation water to nearby areas, rehabilitate the existing irrigation and drainage network, aid in flood protection and management efforts in the area, and also provide electricity to the region.
- This is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam [Salma Dam], which was inaugurated by Modi and Ghani in June 2016.

Exim Bank to provide \$400 million for Maldives project

- **Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank)** will provide **\$400 million** to **Maldives** to fund **Greater Male Connectivity Project.**
- The agreement under the line of credit is **effective January 28, 2021.**
- The **6.7 km Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)** will be the largest civilian infrastructure project in Maldives, connecting Male with three neighbouring islands Villingili, Gulhifahu and Thilafushi.
- India will fund the implementation of a major connectivity project in Maldives through a USD 400 million line of credit and USD 100 million grant.

HCL Tech signs MoU with IIT-K for cybersecurity

- **HCL Technologies** announced it has **signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU)** with Indian Institute of Technology, **Kanpur (IITK)** to collaborate in the area of **cybersecurity.**

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As part of the **MoU**, HCL will work with **C3iHub**, a specialised **cybersecurity** research center at **IITK**, the company said in a statement.

Essar Oil and Gas signs MoU with Indian School of Mines

- **Essar Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Ltd (EOGEPL)**, India's leading Coal Bed Methane (CBM) gas producer, said it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration with the prestigious **IIT (Indian School of Mines)**, Dhanbad, to jointly work on research and development of various advanced CBM technological innovations indigenously.
- EOGEPL, an investee company of Essar Global Fund Limited (EGFL), is one of India's largest operators of unconventional hydrocarbon acreages.
- EGFL's investments in EOGEPL are a part of its portfolio of **Essar Capital's upstream business**, which is increasingly focused on clean energy.
- As energy transitions happen in the world, CBM gas is widely seen as the green fuel of this century.

India, Nepal sign MoU - reconstruction of secondary schools in Himalayan Nation

- **India and Nepal signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the reconstruction of six secondary schools in the Himalayan nation.**
- The MoU was signed between the **Indian Embassy** and Nepal's Central Level Project Implementation Unit (Education) of **Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA)**.
- The MoU was for the construction of six secondary schools at a total cost of Nepali Rupees 518 million, according to a statement by the Indian Embassy.
- **Of the six schools**, four including Kanti Bhairab Secondary School, Champa Devi Secondary School, Dhapasi Secondary School and Bishnu Devi Secondary School are located in Kathmandu district and remaining two Siddheshwar Secondary School and Harisiddhi Secondary School are located in Kavre district.
- Of the six schools, a groundbreaking ceremony of one was held amid a ceremony in Thali of Kathmandu.

TCS signs MoU with invest up to Rs.1,500 cr on Kerala digital hub

- Global IT leader **TCS** will **invest** an estimated **Rs.1,200 - Rs.1,500 crore** to expand operations in **Kerala** and has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with Technopark here for leasing 97 acres of land at its Technocity campus to set up a **digital hub** for engineering, product development and IT services across manufacturing sectors, Kerala Chief Minister's office informed.

Flipkart, Tamil Nadu MSME inks MoU to support small, local products

- **Flipkart, Tamil Nadu MSME inks MoU to support small, local products.**
- **Flipkart** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with **Tamil Nadu MSME** Trade and Investment Promotion Bureau (MTIPB) to bring **local** artisans, weavers, craftsmen and **Small** and Mid-size Business (SMBs) of the State into the e-commerce fold.

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India, Ethiopia sign agreements on visa facilitation & leather technology

- **India and Ethiopia** signed two agreements related to visa facilitation and leather technology.
- The **agreements** were signed in the presence of **Ethiopia Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen Hassen** and **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar**.
- Hassen is on a 4-day visit to India, from February 16.
- S. Jaishankar tweeted that he had useful and productive discussions with Hassen on a range of bilateral and regional issues.
- The two ministers agreed to expand India and Ethiopia bilateral agenda especially defence, economic, S&T, digital and cultural cooperation.

Indian Oil signs pact with Greenstat Norway for hydrogen fuel

- A **national hydrogen mission to accelerate plans to generate the carbon-free fuel** from renewables, state-owned **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** signed a pact with **Greenstat Norway** for setting up a **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen**.
- In the Union Budget for 2021-22, the government pledged to focus on generating hydrogen from green power sources as well as build more diverse and efficient energy infrastructure.
- This association aims to develop a **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H)** including CCUS and Fuel Cells by IndianOil and M/s Greenstat for clean energy in cooperation with Indo-Norwegian Hydrogen Cluster companies/organizations.
- The CoE-H will facilitate the transfer and sharing of technology, know-how and experience through the green hydrogen value chain and other relevant technologies including hydrogen storage and fuel cells.
- The CoE-H will be a vehicle for promoting R&D projects in Green and Blue Hydrogen between Norwegian and Indian R&D institutions/universities.
- The partnership between IOC and Greenstat will actively assist partners/stakeholders to develop business models based upon feasibility studies besides facilitating consultancies to industry, utilities and regulators on hydrogen storage, hydrogen production, refueling stations, fuel cells and CCUS technologies.

Chennai Port Trust to sign port to port MoU

- Development of a multi-modal logistics park (MMLP) and feasibility to run a ferry service between **Chennai** and Karaikal in Puducherry are some of the projects for which **MoUs** will be **signed** with various agencies by the **Chennai Port Trust (ChPT)** at the **Maritime India Summit 2021** to be held online from March 2 to 4.

CSIR and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation sign MoU in area of health research

- **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** and the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** have signed a memorandum of understanding to support the development, conduct and promotion of health research in the country.

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- Gates Foundation and CSIR will **work together to identify opportunities to initiate scientific and technological collaborations.**
- The MoU was signed by Hari Menon, Director, India Country Office on behalf of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and G N Dayananda, Head, Technology Management Directorate – Industry Interface, CSIR.
- These will focus on developing and testing new preventions, therapies and interventions that can help to solve major health concerns that affect India and other developing countries.

Areas of research:

- Genetic diseases that impact infant and neonatal mortality
- New diagnostics and devices for infectious disease and environmental surveillance
- Development of cost-effective processes for drug, vaccines, biologics, and diagnostics manufacturing
- Novel microbiome-directed foods; socio-economic impact of science and technological tools
- Other areas of health and development.

Liberty Steel forms tie-up with hydrogen-based steel plant in France

- **UK-based Liberty Steel Group**, owned by Indian-origin metals tycoon Sanjeev Gupta, has signed MoUs with **two European companies to set up France's first hydrogen-based steel making plant.**
- Liberty Steel Group is part of diversified GFG Alliance, which has a presence in India.
- Last year in February, GFG Alliance made a foray into the domestic steel industry with the acquisition of Adhunik Metaliks Ltd and its arm Zion Steel for about Rs 425 crore.

Stellapps tie up with IPPB to drive financial inclusion for dairy farmers

- **Dairy-tech start-up Stellapps** has **tied up** with India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to digitise the **milk** procurement value chain and promote banking facilities at **milk** collection centres.
- Through the tie-up, Stellapps is aiming to deliver dairy farmers within the monetary mainstream throughout villages in **Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Bihar, and Rajasthan within the coming months**, the corporation mentioned in a statement.
- IPPB will present entry to money and different banking providers like deposits, **Aadhar-enabled cost providers, home cash switch, invoice funds, and different associated providers.**
- Stellapps mentioned it plans to leverage IPPB's last-mile distribution community of over 1.36 lakh publishing places of work and practically **1.9 lakh postmen and Grameen Dak Sevaks**, geared up with smartphones and biometric gadgets.

TSIC signs MoU with Navam

- In the **next three to five years**, students in Telangana will get a one-of-its-kind innovation centre.
- Proposed on a **15-acre campus**, the **Innovation Lab & Centre of Excellence (ILCE)** will come up in Kamareddy district.
- The Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) signed a **MoU** with **Navam Innovation Foundation** to set up this centre.
- This will be a collaborative effort between **Agastya International Foundation and Pravaha Foundation**, with an investment of **Rs 3,000 crore for the next 10 years.**

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- The ILCE will serve as a resource centre for mini science centres, labs-on-bikes and immersive teacher training programmes.

MPEDA ink MoU with NCDC for promotion of marine exports

- The **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)** and the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** have inked a memorandum of understanding to synergies their various programmes in the interest of export-oriented capture and culture of fisheries and allied sectors for bringing better value to the stakeholders.
- The **MoU** was signed by KS Srinivas, Chairman, MPEDA and Sundeep Kumar Nayak, Managing Director, NCDC, here.

India and Mauritius sign ink pact for Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement

- **India and Mauritius** have signed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA).
- This is the **first trade Agreement** signed by India with a country in Africa.
- **The Agreement is a limited agreement**, which will cover Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Financial Services, Customs Procedures and Cooperation in other areas.
- Commerce Secretary Dr Anup Wadhawan and Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mauritius Haymandoyal Dillum signed the agreement in Port Louis.
- Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar were also present on the occasion.

India and Uzbekistan agree to strengthen multilateral cooperation

- **India and Uzbekistan** agreed to strengthen multilateral cooperation.
- Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov and Dr S. Jaishankar discussed the bilateral relations concerning both the nations.
- Mr Kamilov, who is in Delhi, also discussed development, defence, connectivity, trade and culture.
- Both the leaders also exchanged views on the Afghanistan situation.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs sign MoU with CBIC for exchange of data to enhance Ease of Doing Business in India

- **The Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** have signed an **MoU** for exchange of data for enhancing ease of doing business in India and improving overall regulatory enforcement.
- Both the organisations will benefit from access to each other's databases which include details of import-export transactions and consolidated financial statements of companies registered in the country.
- The **MoU** was signed by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs Manoj Pandey and Additional Director General, CBIC B. B. Gupta.

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IWAI signs inks pact with MOL for transportation of LPG through inland waterways

- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the **Inland Waterways Authority of India and the MOL (Asia Oceania) Limited for transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas through barges on National Waterways-1 and National Waterways-2.**
- The MoU was inked in the presence of Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways **Mansukh Mandaviya.**
- The Inland Waterways Authority will provide support for, facilitating with adequate fairway, handling of LPG cargo on IWAI terminals or Multimodal Terminals at Haldia, Sahibganj and Varanasi.
- MOL Group is the world's largest gas carrier company and will invest for construction and operation of dedicated LPG barges under Make-in-India initiative.

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

- **The Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs signed a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi for data exchange between the two organisations.**
- It is in line with the vision of both organisations to harness data capabilities to ensure effective enforcement.
- Both are going to benefit from access to each other's databases which include details of import-export transactions and consolidated financial statements of companies registered in the country.
- The data sharing arrangement gains significance in light of development of **MCA21 Version 3** which will utilise state of the art technology for enhancing ease of doing business in India and improve the regulatory enforcement and similar steps by CBIC like the launch of Advanced Analytics in Indirect Taxation ADVAIT, a 360-degree taxpayer profiling tool.

Revision Points

Organizations	Purpose
Ford & Google	Cloud-based data services
NBCFDC & Apollo Medskills	Providing COVID Vaccine Administration training
HAL & MIDHANI	To develop, manufacture composite raw materials
Zomato & Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	To take street food vendors' businesses online
Karnataka & 34 Aerospace and Defence firms	To generate 6462 direct employment opportunities.
Ministry of Defence and BEL	To procure ship-borne modern radio system
India & Afghanistan	For construction of the Lalandar "Shahtoot" Dam
HCL Technologies & IIT Kanpur	Cybersecurity
Essar Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Ltd & Indian School of Mines	To work on research and development of various advanced CBM technological innovations

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India & Nepal	For the reconstruction of six secondary schools in the Himalayan nation
Flipkart & Tamil Nadu MSME	To support small, local products
India & Ethiopia	Visa facilitation & leather technology
Indian Oil & Greenstat Norway	For hydrogen fuel
TSIC & Navam	To set up an Innovation Lab & Centre of Excellence
Marine Products Export Development Authority & NCDC	For promotion of marine exports
India & Mauritius	To cover Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measure
India & Uzbekistan	To strengthen multilateral cooperation
Ministry of Corporate Affairs & Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs	To enhance Ease of Doing Business in India
Inland Waterways Authority of India & MOL	For transportation of LPG through inland waterways
Ministry of Corporate Affairs & CBIC Delhi	For Data Exchange

Important Summit & Conference

Union Minister of Agriculture informed Lok Sabha about AGRI INDIA HACKATHON

- The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** has started organising **KRITAGYA**- a National level hackathon in the month of August, 2020 to promote innovation in agriculture and allied sectors in the country.
- Agri-Hackathon is to give opportunity to the students along with faculties, **innovators for showcasing their innovative approaches & technologies in agriculture and allied sectors**.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has put in place an Institutional mechanism through Research Institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Agriculture Universities (AUs) to address the problems being faced by the farming sector.

Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS) Conclave Organised at Bengaluru

- The **Indian Air Force** will host a **Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS)** Conclave on 3rd and 4th Feb 21 at **Air Force Station Yelahanka**.
- The Conclave will be a unique one where Chiefs of Air Staff from various countries would brainstorm and synergize their thoughts on current issues related to aerospace power strategy and technological developments.

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- The Conclave will be inaugurated by Hon'ble **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath**. It is expected to be attended by about **75 countries**.
- The Conclave will also be a perfect example of India's Defence Cooperation with other countries working as a diplomatic instrument, giving an opportunity for building bridges of friendship, mutual trust and capacities on a global basis. Promoting transparency in defence cooperation and building areas of common interests in military aviation will be focus areas of the CAS Conclave.

First ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021 Concludes

- The first-ever **ASEAN-India Hackathon** concluded on **February 4 with more than 400 students**, mentors, and officials from **10 ASEAN countries** and India participating.
- Hackathon held by Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India is in line with the vision of ASEAN - plan of action on science, technology and innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025.
- From the Ministry of Education, the ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021 aims at enhancing the cooperation between India and ASEAN countries in science, technology, and education.
- Mr Pokhriyal and Union Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar attended the award ceremony.

About ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021:

- The participating teams consisted of 330 students and 90 mentors. The students were divided in 54 cross-country teams, where each team consists of six students and two mentors.
- These diverse teams competed on developing the best solution for 11 problem statements provided by various different international organisations and government bodies.

First India-EU High-Level Dialogue On Trade, Investment Held

- The **first High-Level Dialogue (HLD)**, co-chaired by the **Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal** and the European Union Executive Vice-President and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, was held on Feb 05, 2021.
- Commitment to the establishment of this Dialogue was a major outcome of the **15th India-EU Leaders Summit held in July 2020**.
- **Objective** : For ministerial-level guidance towards the bilateral trade and investment relations, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The ministers emphasized the importance of global cooperation and solidarity in a post-COVID-19 era and agreed for further deepening of bilateral trade and investment relationship through a series of regular engagements, aiming at quick deliverables for the businesses in these tough times.
- The ministers also agreed to meet within the next three months, with an objective for reaching consensus on a host of bilateral trade and investment cooperation issues viz. a bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue to explore further possibilities of cooperation; etc.

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- They concluded with confidence and commitment towards a renewed India-EU commercial and economic partnership reflecting the full potential of bilateral commercial relations.

PM Modi to inaugurate Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **Maritime India Summit-2021** on 2nd March.
- In this **20 thousand delegates will participate**, **24 partner countries** will join and more than 400 Projects are set to be showcased in the 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit 2021 to be held virtually from 2nd March to 4th March.
- Maritime India Summit is going to provide a powerful platform for international collaboration and bring in partner countries for mutual exchange of knowledge and opportunities.
- The event is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner.
- The entire summit will be held on virtual platform **www.maritime india summit.in**. The registration for the visitors and exhibitors has started

A three-day Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India starts at Kevadia in Gujarat

- The slogan of '**Dekho Apna Desh**' by the Prime Minister has given **boost to domestic tourism** stated Union Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture, **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel**, while inaugurating via video conferencing **Kevadia, Gujarat**.
- The **three-day event** has been organised from **February 12 to 14, 2021**.
- The three day ADTOI 10th Annual Convention-cum-Exhibition at the **Statue of Unity (SOU)**, Tent City 2 in Kevadia, is based on the theme: 'Domestic Tourism Hope for the revival- Dekho Apna Desh'.
- This convention has been jointly organized by the **Ministry of Tourism and ADTOI with support from Gujarat Tourism**.
- It aims at building public confidence to travel for the revival of domestic tourism in the country and is being attended by around 400 delegates comprising ADTOI members from across India, hoteliers, airlines representatives, senior government officials, media-persons among other stakeholders of the tourism industry.

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission & Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation kick-start the I-ACE Hackathon, 2021

- **AIM and Australia's national science agency (CSIRO)** kick started the **India-Australia Circular Economy (I-ACE) Hackathon, 2021**.
- The concept of I-ACE joint Hackathon originated in the virtual bilateral summit between the **Hon. Prime Minister of India and the Hon. Prime Minister of Australia, held on June 4th, 2020** where they committed to joint circular economy innovation initiatives between the two countries.
- I-ACE is supported by the Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), AIM Atal Incubation Centre network, and various domain experts.
- The total prize pool for the I-ACE Hackathon is around fifty-six lakh rupees altogether. The winners will be felicitated in presence of key Government dignitaries from both the countries.

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- AIM and CSIRO are committed towards enabling the youth of their countries to further strengthen the circular economy in both India and Australia.

PM addresses NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum 2021

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** addressed the **29th** edition of **Nasscom Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF)** which is being **organized from 17th - 19th Feb** through video conferencing.
- It is the flagship event of the **National Association of Software and Service Companies**.
- This is a vibrant platform that brings together key leaders from the world of technology and innovation.
- The event is hosting almost **1600 participants from more than 30 countries and more than 30 products will be showcased during the three-days of talks**.
- NTLF 2021 with the overarching theme '**Shaping the future towards a better normal**'
- **Aim** : To achieve three key objectives – mark as a celebration of technology which has served as a backbone to boost businesses during the crisis, draw a roadmap for the way ahead towards building a better future and bringing out the importance of trust and responsible tech in this hyper virtual world.
- February 2021 marks the 29th year of NASSCOM Technology & Leadership Forum - a platform which has been the voice of the 190-billion-dollar industry ecosystem.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses 'Population versus Planet' Conference

- **Dr. Harsh Vardhan**, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare today participated and expressed his views in

WION and Zee Media's 'Population versus Planet' Conference

- It is a part of its year-long campaign called '**Mission Sustainability: Population Vs Planet**'.
- This e-conclave marking the campaign's launch will host deliberations between numerous policy experts, demographic researchers & academicians on socially important themes like population stabilisation, empowering women & youth through education among various others as the world population witnesses an increase from 1 billion in the year 1800 to 7.8 billion today.
- The **crude birth rate** which was recorded at **40.8 per 1000 in 1951 has declined to 20.0 in 2018**;
- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)** has declined from **6.0 in 1951 to 2.2 in 2015-16**;
- The death rate in India has declined from **7 in 2012 to 6.2 in 2018**.

Asia Economic Dialogue 2021 to Begin on Feb 26

- The **Asia Economic Dialogue 2021 (AED 2021)** jointly convened by the **Ministry of External Affairs and Pune International Centre (PIC)**
- It will be held over **three days from February 26 to February 28**.
- This is the fifth AED and the second one organised by PIC, a prominent policy research think tank based in Pune, with the well-known scientist Dr. R A Mashelkar as its President and the noted economist, Dr. Vijay Kelkar, as Vice President.

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- The theme for this year's conference is 'Post Covid-19 Global Trade and Finance Dynamics' featuring high-level international participation from foreign ministers of a number of countries, senior bureaucrats, industry leaders and global financial experts.

- The Asia Economic Dialogue is a geoeconomics conference supported by India's Ministry of External Affairs.

11th India-EU Macroeconomic dialogue held through video conferencing

- The **11th India-EU Macroeconomic dialogue** was held through video conferencing.
- Secretary Economic Affairs Tarun Bajaj led the Indian delegation. The delegation from European Union was led by Director General of Economic and Financial Affairs **ECFIN in European Commission Maarten Verwey**.
- The dialogue today covered sharing of their experiences to enable both sides on various aspects including collaboration in the G20 on finance track matters.
- It covers all dimensions-political, economic, security, trade and investment, environment, research and innovation.
- The EU is one of India's largest trading partners, one of the largest investors in India and an important source for technology, innovation and best practices.

India, Australia, and France hold trilateral dialogue with Indo-Pacific in focus

- A **trilateral dialogue** was held among **India, France, and Australia** on February 24, 2021 at the senior officials' level, with **focus on further enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**.
- The first India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue was held virtually on September 9, 2020.
- The meeting was held with the objective of **building on the strong bilateral relations that the three countries share with each other and synergising their respective strengths to ensure a peaceful, secure, prosperous and rules-based Indo-Pacific Region**.
- The three sides agreed to hold the dialogue on an annual basis.
- The Indian side was led by Joint Secretary (Europe West) in MEA, Sandeep Chakravorty, while the French side was led by Bertrand Lortholary, Director (Asia and Oceania), and the Australian side was led by Mr Gary Cowan, First Assistant Secretary (North and South Asia Division) and Mr John Geering, First Assistant Secretary (Europe and Latin America Division).

International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium on Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins inaugurated

- The **International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium** on Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins was inaugurated by **Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat**, Minister for Jal Shakti as Chief Guest and Shri R.K. Singh, Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Govt. of India presided over the Opening Ceremony.
- The theme of the symposium is "**Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins**".
- International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) in collaboration with Central Water Commission (CWC), Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP) and National Hydrology Project (NHP) is organising Symposium on "Sustainable

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Development of Dams and River Basins” under the aegis of ICOLD at New Delhi as Hybrid event from 24th - 27th February 2021. More than 300 delegates from across the country and abroad will participate in the Symposium.

Objective ICOLD Symposium :

- The symposium is being organised to provide an excellent opportunity to Indian Dam Engineering Professionals and Agencies to share their experiences, ideas and latest developments in new materials and construction technologies, advancement in investigation techniques, best engineering practices, dam safety issues etc.
- Besides this offers the opportunity to network with the world renowned dam experts from different countries and global organizations involved in Dam Construction, management and operation and maintenance for mutual benefits.

2nd edition of Global Bio-India - organised from 1st to 3rd March

- To showcase the strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community, the second edition of **Global Bio-India will be organized from 1st to 3rd March**.
- The **theme** for this year is **transforming lives** and **tag line** is **Biosciences to Bio economy**.
- **Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan** will inaugurate the event virtually.
- Global Bio-India is one of the largest biotechnology stakeholders' conglomerates that is being co-organized by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology along with its Public Sector Undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, BIRAC in partnership with industry association CII, Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises and Invest India.

Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue/Host Country	Chaired By/Theme/Addressed By/Others
KRITAGYA		Organized by Indian Council of Agricultural Research
Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS) Conclave	Bengaluru	Hosted by Indian Air Force
First ASEAN-India Hackathon		Held by Association of SouthEast Asian Nations
The first High-Level Dialogue		Co-chaired by Piyush Goyal
Maritime India Summit-2021		Inaugurated by PM Modi
3-day Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India	Slogan - 'Dekho Apna Desh'	Organized by the Ministry of Tourism and ADTOI with support from Gujarat Tourism
India-Australia Circular Economy (I-ACE) Hackathon, 2021		Organized by AIM and Australia's national science

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		agency (CSIRO)
29th edition of Nasscom Technology and Leadership Forum		Shaping the future towards a better normal
'Population versus Planet' Conference		Campaign-'Mission Sustainability: Population Vs Planet
Asia Economic Dialogue 2021		Convened by the Ministry of External Affairs and Pune International Centre
11th India-EU Macroeconomic dialogue		Economic Affairs Tarun Bajaj led the Indian delegation
2nd edition of Global Bio-India		Theme - Transforming lives and Tag line -Biosciences to Bio economy

Important Defence News

Aero India 2021: Asia's Biggest Aero Show

- In a first, the **13th edition** will see an **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** defence minister's conclave as **India seeks a bigger role** in this volatile hub of global geopolitical rivalry.
- It can be seen that the conclave is an initiative that promotes dialogue in an institutional, economic and cooperative environment that can foster development of peace and stability.
- It can be seen that Bengaluru has hosted all **13 editions of the show**.
- Since 1996, Aero India has come a long way to become Asia's largest defence and aerospace air show over the years.
- In its 25th year, the government is using it to further geopolitical goals with strategic events.

India-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 20' commences in Rajasthan

- The **India-US joint military exercise "Yudh Abhyas 20"** commenced in **Mahajan Field Firing Range of Bikaner district in Rajasthan**.
- This is the **16th edition of annual bilateral** joint exercise of both the armies.
- It will continue till the 21st of this month.
- The previous version of the joint exercise was held at Seattle in the United States.
- About **250 US and 250 Indian army** soldiers are participating in the exercise. Both the armies will share their war-related techniques, skills and experience with each other during this exercise.

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- The exercise is one of the largest military training and defense cooperation efforts between India and the United States.
- This exercise is another step in the growing military cooperation between the two countries, which shows the growth in Indo-US relations.
- It is also a sign that both India and the US understand the threat of terrorism and are standing shoulder to shoulder in combating the same.

CRPF Inducts Women Commandos Into Elite Anti-Naxal CoBRA Unit

- **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** inducted **women commandos** in its **anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA)** unit which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal-hit areas.
- These **34 women personnel** were inducted in the elite CoBRA wing during the **35th Raising Day** of the force's 88th Mahila Battalion, the first all-women battalion in the world.
- According to the CRPF, on the occasion of the 88th all-women battalion Raising Day, these women commandos have been inducted along with the introduction of all Mahila brass bands which will make CRPF the first force to have a women brass band.
- The 34 women personnel from the **6 Mahila Battalions of CRPF** who are joining the CoBRA, will undergo a strenuous CoBRA pre-induction training of 3 months, before being sent to Naxal-hit areas of the country.
- Taking another step towards women empowerment, the 88th Mahila battalion of CRPF has the distinction of being the first all-Mahila battalion in the world.

Indian Army lays foundation of 100-foot-high national flag in J-K's Gulmarg

- The **Indian Army** has laid the foundation stone of the tallest '**Iconic National Flag**' at the famous **ski-resort of Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The flag will be on a **100 feet-high pole, the highest Tricolour** in the Valley.
- The Indian Army in collaboration with the Solar Industry India will install the 'Iconic National Flag' at Gulmarg.
- The foundation stone for the iconic national flag was laid by **Dagger Division General Officer Commanding (GoC) Major General Virendra Vats** along with Bollywood actor-producer **Arbaaz Khan** and actress **Vidya Balan**.
- This iconic Indian national flag will be a first in many ways. The site is expected to become another tourist attraction, among the snow-clad mountains of Kashmir.

India joins Russia-Iran's two-day naval exercise

- **India has joined Iran and Russia** in a **two-day navy exercise** dubbed "**Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021**" in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.

About the drill :

- The drill will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles).

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- It will include shooting at sea and air targets and liberating hijacked ships, as well as search and rescue and anti-piracy operations, Al Jazeera reported.

L&T-built Interceptor Boat, the 17th in series, commissioned at Chennai

- **Indian Coast Guard Ship C-453**, the 17th of the 18 Interceptor Boat (IBs) project indigenously constructed by **Larsen & Toubro Ltd**, has been commissioned at **Chennai**.
- ICGS C-453, the **27.8-metre-long** Interceptor Boat with a displacement of **105 tonnes and Max Speed of 45 knots (85 kmph)** is capable of undertaking multifarious tasks including Surveillance, Interdiction, close coast patrol, Search and Rescue, in addition to rendering assistance to boats and craft in distress at sea.
- The vessel is equipped with advanced navigation and communication systems. The quick-reaction feature coupled with modern equipment endows the vessel with the capability to swiftly respond to any maritime situation at very short notice.
- ICGS C-453 is commanded by Assistant Commandant Animesh Sharma and will be based at Chennai under the operational control of Commander, Coast Guard Region (East).
- The ship will be deployed extensively for EEZ surveillance and other duties as enshrined in the Coast Guard Charter, to safeguard the Maritime interests of India.
- The Indian Coast Guard with this Ship joining the fleet will have 157 Ships & Boats and 62 Aircraft.

Important Science and Technology News

Students in Karnataka's Hubballi made robot to help in banking services

- **Engineering college students in Hubballi** have come up with '**Maya**', a robot that has been programmed to serve in banks and **speaks in many regional languages**.
- The students of the Automation and Robotics department of KLE Technological University have spent nearly **eight months** and spent **Rs 5 lakh to develop the robot**.
- It was developed keeping banking sectors in mind and programmed with all banking activities such as advising the customers on opening accounts, sending them to designated counters for queries.
- With the help of **artificial intelligence**, it recognises customers' faces and responds to them by using a chatbot.
- After the banking hours, it automatically goes to the docking yard and charges its batteries without the help of any human being.

NASA chooses SpaceX to launch \$99M astrophysics mission

- **NASA** has chosen **SpaceX** to provide **launch services** for its **upcoming two-year astrophysics mission** slated to kick off in **June of 2024**.
- The mission is **dubbed Spherex**, which stands for Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, **Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer**.
- Its goal is to "**survey the sky in the near-infrared light**," which could then help answer questions about the birth of the universe and the development of galaxies.

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- SPHEREx will also look for water and organic molecules in areas where stars are formed from gas and dust, as well as disks around stars where new planets could be forming.
- The mission will allow astronomers to collect data on more than 300 million galaxies, and more than **100 million stars in the Milky Way**.
- The small astrophysics spacecraft, SPHEREx, **weighs 329-lb. (178 kilograms)**.
- The mission, which costs around **\$98.8 million** to launch, will take off on a **Falcon 9 rocket** from Space Launch Complex-4E at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Square Kilometre Array Observatory launched

- A new intergovernmental organisation called **Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council** has been formed with the intention of building the **world's largest radio telescope**.
- The council held its **first-ever meeting** to approve the plans and start **a new journey in space exploration**.
- Though it is **headquartered** in the **UK**, SKAO has **members from Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and the Netherlands**.
- French-born **Dr Catherine Cesarsky** has been **appointed as the first Chair of the SKAO Council**.
- The Indian contingent of over 20 institutions will be led by **Pune-based National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of TIFR**.

Objective of SKAO

- To look into some of the unexplored areas of the universe and seek answers about its history and evolution, study fundamental physics in extreme environments and know about galaxies over cosmic time.
- The telescope will enable astronomers to monitor the sky in unprecedented detail and survey the entire sky much faster than any system currently in existence.

What are radio telescopes?

- Unlike optical telescopes, radio telescopes can detect invisible gas and, therefore, they can reveal areas of space that may be obscured by cosmic dust.
- Significantly, since the first radio signals were detected by physicist Karl Jansky in the 1930s, astronomers have used radio telescopes to detect radio waves emitted by different objects in the universe and explore it.
- According to NASA, the field of radio astronomy evolved after World War II and became one of the most important tools for making astronomical observations since.

So what is significant about the SKA telescope?

- The telescope, proposed to be the largest radio telescope in the world, will be located in Africa and Australia whose operation, maintenance and construction will be overseen by SKAO.
- The completion is expected to take nearly a decade at a cost of over £1.8 billion.

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- Significantly, the development of SKA will use the results of various surveys undertaken using another powerful telescope called the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP), which is developed and operated by the country's science agency CSIRO.

Petroleum Ministry Launches Investment Corner On Revamped Site

- **Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan launched** the Investment Corner under the Project Development Cell (PDC), on the revamped website of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- It has taken this initiative to dedicate a section showcasing investible sectors and opportunities and as a means to channelise investors' interest to the MOPNG PDC Team.
- The Investor corner will enable the Ministry to effectively implement Union Cabinet's decision to set up Project Development Cells (PDC) in GoI Ministries/Departments to enhance the investment friendly ecosystem that supports and handholds investors for the grounding of investible projects and also supports in coordination of issues with stakeholder agencies of Government of India and State Governments.

Isro tests satellites developed by private sector for the first time

- The first time in its history, the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has opened its **UR Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru for testing satellites developed by the private sector.**
- Two satellites by Indian startups **SpaceKidz India and Pixxel (incorporated as Sygzy)** were tested at the UR Rao Satellite Centre.
- Isro helped these two companies fix problems with the solar panels on their respective satellites.
- This is a first for the space agency, which so far has only taken help in manufacturing and fabrication of various parts of satellites and rockets from the Indian industry.
- Two firms will also test their engines at Sriharikota spaceport and Thiruvananthapuram rocket centre.
- A satellite designed by students from SpaceKidz had been launched by ISRO as an experiment in January 2019 using the fourth stage of the PSLV as the platform for the KalamSat.

Brazilian, Indian startup satellite in ISRO's first mission in 2021 on Feb 28

- In its first mission in 2021, **India's space agency ISRO** planned to launch on **February 28 Brazilian satellite Amazonia-1 and three Indian payloads**, including one built by a home-grown start-up.
- The satellites are slated to be launched on board the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C-51** at 10.28 am from the Sriharikota spaceport, over 100 kms from Chennai.
- PSLV – C51/Amazonia – 1 is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under the Department of Space.
- Secretary in the Department of Space and Chairman of Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) K Sivan confirmed the PSLV-C51 schedule to PTI.
- **Amazonia – 1** is the primary payload on board ISRO's PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) rocket.
- **'Anand'** is built by Indian space startup, Pixxel, and **'Satish Dhawan Satellite'** by Chennai-based Space Kidz India.

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- **UNITYsat** is a combination of three satellites designed and built as a joint development by Jeppiaar Institute of Technology, Sriperumbudur (JITsat), G.H.Raisoni College of Engineering, Nagpur (GHRCEsat) and Sri Shakthi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore (Sri Shakthi Sat).
- “PSLV – C51 marks the launch of the country’s first commercial private remote-sensing satellite (Anand) on an ISRO PSLV rocket.

India successfully test fires Helina, Dhruvastra anti-tank guided missiles

- India successfully test fired indigenously-developed anti-tank guided missile systems ‘Helina’ and ‘Dhruvastra’, paving their induction into the **Army and the Indian Air Force** respectively.
- The missiles were test fired at **Pokhran deserts in Rajasthan**.
- The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**.
- Helina, which is the helicopter-launched version of the Nag missile system, is a third-generation fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the ALH.
- The Helina has also undergone successful trials in 2018. Both Nag and Helina were part of the DRDO’s Republic Day display, which showcased its entire anti-tank missile family

Indian And Indonesian Navies Conduct Exercise In Arabian Sea

- The **Indian and Indonesian navies** carried out a **military exercise in the Arabian sea to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation**.
- Indian naval ship INS Talwar and Indonesian Navy’s multirole corvette KRI Bung Tomo were part of the exercise,

Purpose :

- **Enhancing Interoperability & strengthening Bilateral Maritime Cooperation** Indian Navy Ship INS Talwar and Indonesian Navy’s multirole Corvette KRI Bung Tomo, conducted **Passage Exercise (PASSEX) in the Arabian Sea**.
- The Indian Navy participated in maritime exercises in the last few months with a number of countries, including Japan, Russia, Australia and the US.

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

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has conducted **two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM)**.
- The launches were carried out from a static vertical launcher from Integrated Test Range, **Chandipur off the coast of Odisha**.
- Indigenously designed and developed by the DRDO for **Indian Navy, VL-SRSAM** is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.
 - The launches were monitored by senior scientists from various DRDO labs involved in the design and development of the system.

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- During the test launches, flight path and vehicle performance parameters were monitored using flight data, captured by various Range instruments.

EAM S Jaishankar launches BRICS 2021 Website

- The **External Affairs Minister of India S. Jaishankar** on February 19, 2021, unveiled India's **BRICS 2021 website** www.brics2021.gov.in in New Delhi.
- India assumed the BRICS Chairship in 2021, at a time when BRICS is celebrating its **15th anniversary**.
- Under the theme **BRICS@15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation**, India's approach is focused on **strengthening collaboration through Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus**.
- The newly launched website will be maintaining a dynamic and updated information repository and will be displaying all the relevant information for BRICS, along with the press releases, documents, a media gallery, and a registration platform for the events that have been planned over the year.

Important Rankings and Indexes

Index	India's rank	Top	Presented By
Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index	10th	Singapore	Economist Intelligence Unit
International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank	2nd	Germany	PHDCCI
2020 Democracy Index	53rd	Norway	The Economist Intelligence Unit

India ranks 10th in Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index

- India ranked 10th out of 11 Asia Pacific countries in a newly-launched health index to measure the progress towards personalised healthcare.
- Overall, **Singapore has topped the index**. It is followed by Taiwan (2nd), Japan (3rd) and Australia (4th).

About EIU Report :

- The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** report **"Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index"** measures the readiness of **11 health systems** across the region--Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand--in adopting personalised healthcare, enabling the right care to be tailored to the right person at the right time.
- The 'Personalised Health Index' measures performance against **27 different indicators** of personalised health across four categories called **Vital Signs**.
- These include Policy Context, Health Information, Personalised Technologies and Health Services.

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Maharashtra tops 2nd India Justice Report for delivering justice to people

- The **second edition** of the India Justice Report, **India's only ranking** of states on delivery of Justice to people, announced.
- **Maharashtra** once again at the **top of the 18 Large and Mid-sized states** (with population of over one crore each), followed by Tamil Nadu (2019: 3rd), Telangana (2019: 11th) Punjab (2019: 4th) and Kerala (2019: 2nd).
- The India Justice Report (IJR) is an initiative of Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives. The maiden IJR was announced in 2019.
- Through a rigorous 14-month quantitative research, the India Justice Report 2020 once again tracks the progress states have made in capacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver services to all.
- It takes account of latest statistics and situations as they existed prior to March 2020. It brings together otherwise siloed statistics from authoritative government sources, on the four pillars of Justice delivery–Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid.

About India Justice Report (IJR)

- The India Justice Report (IJR) is launched by Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives
- The states are ranked based on publicly available data of different government entities on the four pillars of justice delivery which are police, judiciary, prisons and legal aid.
- The first edition of IJR was released in 2019.

India to emerge as most resilient economy after Germany in 2021: PHDCCI

- **Germany ranks first** in the **PHDCCI International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank** followed by **India and South Korea at second and third positions**, respectively, according to the report released by industry body PHDCCI.
- It is based on analysis of **five** lead macroeconomic indicators reflecting a country's economic performance including
 1. real GDP growth rate,
 2. merchandise export growth rate,
 3. current account balance (as percentage of GDP),
 4. general government net lending/borrowing (as percentage of GDP)
 5. gross debt-to-GDP ratio.
- India's IER Rank stands at second among the top-10 leading economies, indicating strong resilience of the Indian economy to the daunting pandemic of COVID-19,
- India's real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest at 11.5% in the year 2021 among the top-10 leading economies in the world, according to the industry body.

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India slips two places to 53rd spot in EIU's 2020 Democracy Index

- India slipped two places to 53rd position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit.
- India is ranked higher than most of its neighbouring countries. India's overall score fell from 6.9 in 2019 to **6.61 in the Index** that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 167 countries.
- **Norway has topped** the Index. Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada are the top five countries in the list.
- Out of 167 countries, the Democracy Index classifies 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes and 57 as authoritarian regimes. India has been classified as a 'flawed democracy' along with countries.

Important Schemes List

Commerce Ministry notifies Rs 945 crore seed fund Scheme for startups

- The government has approved the **Rs 945-crore Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)** for the period **2021-25** to offer early-stage funding to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization.
- It is implemented by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- The Rs 945 crore Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) will be operational from **April 1, 2021**, to 2025 as the government looks to boost the ecosystem, providing the crucial capital for young companies.
- The government announced that Startup India Seed Fund Scheme will provide financial assistance to startups that have been recognised by the DPIIT and incorporated not more than two years ago at the time of application.
- The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme is sector-agnostic and will have a central common application on Startup India portal for startups and incubators on an ongoing basis.
- Earlier, on January 16, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the launch of this Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.

Maharashtra Government Approves Water Conservation Programme

- The **Maharashtra** Cabinet approved the implementation of the Chief Minister **Water Conservation Programme**, costing **Rs.1,340.75 crore**.
- Under the programme, water sources would be repaired, which will enhance the State's irrigation capacity.
- The period of the programme is from **April 2020 to March 2023**,

About the Scheme :

- Around **7,900 water sources** need repairing to restore water storage and irrigation capacity
 - Under the programme, various ponds, and lakes with the irrigation capacity up to 600 hectares would be repaired.
- Also, repair work of canals due to breakage of its lining will also be undertaken.

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- The programme will be undertaken by the soil and water conservation department to restore irrigation capacity of the water sources.
- The canal repair works will also be taken up to stop the wastage of water

Delhi Cabinet Approves 'Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha' Scholarship Scheme

- The Delhi cabinet approved "Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha" in which Rs 5,000 will be provided to Rs 1,000 meritorious students of Class 9 in schools of Delhi as a science scholarship.
- The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level.
- According to the release, the students studying in Delhi schools who have secured more than 60 percent in Class 8 are eligible for the examination. Students belonging to SC, ST, PH, or OBC category will be given a relaxation of up to 5 percent of marks.
- In Addition to that The cabinet approved procurement of close to 1200 computers, multi-functional printers, and UPSs for all the schools, branch offices, and district offices under the education department.

Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani rolls out commercial Jute seed distribution scheme

- Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani rolled out the commercial Jute seed distribution scheme.
- Jute Corporation of India had last year signed an MoU with National Seeds Corporation for commercial distribution of 1 thousand Metric Tonne certified jute seeds for the year 2021-22.
- The government increased the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Jute by nearly 76 per cent in the last 6 years.
- Both the Agriculture Ministry and the Textile Ministry are working with enhanced synergy to extend support to the Jute growing farmers.
- She informed that centre's decision regarding mandatory packaging in jute materials will benefit over 4 lakh farmers directly including nearly 40 lakh agri-based households.
- The minister also informed that inclusion of excavation for Jute-retting tanks under MGNREGA will help create 46 lakh mandays of work under the central scheme.

Cabinet approves over Rs 12,000-cr PLI scheme for telecom sector

- The Union Cabinet approved a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme worth Rs 12,195 crore for telecom equipment manufacturing.
- It will be implemented from April 01, 2021.
- The decision was taken to offset the imports of telecom equipment worth more than Rs 50,000 crore and reinforce it with "Made in India" products both for domestic markets and exports.
- The support under the PLI scheme will be provided to companies manufacturers of specified telecom and networking products in India like Gigabit Passive Optical Networks (GPON), base routers, Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM), Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS/ IPMPLS) and 5G/4G radios.

Govt directs Public Sector Banks to facilitate quick and easy loan disbursal under PM-SVANidhi scheme

- Union Government has asked Public Sector Banks to facilitate quick and easy loan disbursal under the PM-

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SVANidhi scheme.

- The Housing and Urban Development Ministry in a letter written to the banks has suggested several measures to increase the outreach of the scheme extending collateral free loans to the street vendors in the country .
- It also added that the banks need to review their guidelines for extending credit to the vendors having low CIBIL score under this scheme.
- The Housing and Urban Development Ministry has also informed that camps will be held in various cities across the country by the bank officials to facilitate a one stop solution for the beneficiaries.

Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Dalai Lama (Edited by Renuka Singh) (Published by Penguin Random House)	The Little Book of Encouragement
Hunter Biden	Beautiful Things
Hamid Ansari	By Many a Happy Accident
Sangeet Paul Choudary (Published by Penguin Random House India)	Platform Scale for a Post-Pandemic World
R.P.Gupta (launched by Jwal Oram)	Turn Around India: 2020- Surmounting Past Legacy
Peter Mukerjee (Former chief executive of Star India)	Starstruck: Confessions of a TV executive (Published by Westland)
Published by Penguin Random House	Unfinished (Priyanka Chopra's Childhood & teenage life)
Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari (Released by Rupa Publications)	Mapping Love
Released by M Venkaiah Naidu (political biography of 'N T Rama Rao')	Maverick Messiah
Kabir Bedi's memoir (published by Westland Publications)	Stories I Must Tell

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Important Peoples' in News

Bengal fast bowler Ashoke Dinda retires from all forms of cricket

- **Fast bowler Ashoke Dinda, 36**, has retired from all forms of the game after **15 years in Bengal cricket**.
- Addressing the media, in Kolkata, Dinda announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on **February 2**.

About Ashoke Dinda:

- The right-handed pacer made his international debut in 2009, in a T20I against Sri Lanka, followed by making his ODI debut in Zimbabwe in 2010.
- He went on to play **13 ODIs**, with the last one being against England at Rajkot in 2013 and **9 T20I matches for India**.
- Dinda played 116 first-class matches for Bengal, bagging 420 wickets at a bowling average of 28.28. In List A matches, he played 98 fixtures in his career bagging 151 wickets- all for Bengal cricket team.
- He last appeared in T20 fixtures for Goa, last month, in the **Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy**.

ICC nominates Rishabh Pant for Men's Player of the Month award

- **India's wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant** has been nominated for the **ICC Men's Player of the Month** award along with England skipper Joe Root and Ireland's Paul Stirling.
- The **International Cricket Council** announced the nominees for the inaugural **Player of the Month Awards** which will **recognise and celebrate the best performances from both male and female cricketers** across all forms of international cricket throughout the year".
- The **23-year-old Pant** played two Tests against Australia where he scored a 97 at Sydney to ensure a draw before an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane that led India to a historic series-clinching win.
- In January, Root played two Tests against Sri Lanka, where he scored a 228 and 186 and led his team to a **2-0 Test series victory**.
- The third nominee in the category, Stirling played two ODIs against the UAE and three ODIs vs Afghanistan, where he scored three centuries.

Pacer Ishant Sharma becomes third Indian pacer to take 300 Test wickets

- Veteran fast bowler **Ishant Sharma** became the **sixth Indian and the third pacer from the country to take 300 wickets in Test cricket**
- The **32-year-old Ishant** reached the milestone in 98 matches, more than the other Indian bowlers in the club.
- Ishant reached the landmark when he trapped Dan Lawrence with a delivery that swung back sharply before hitting his pads in England's second innings on the fourth day of the opening Test
- Besides Kumble (619) and Kapil (434), Ravichandran Ashwin (377 before this game), Harbhajan Singh (417), and Zaheer Khan (311) are the other bowlers from the country who have reached the landmark.
- The ICC also lauded the seasoned fast bowler's achievement, coming after more than 13 years of toil.

Naman Ojha announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- Former India wicketkeeper-batsman **Naman Ojha** announced his **retirement from all forms of cricket**.

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- The 37-year-old from Madhya Pradesh, who holds the record for the most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy, has featured in one Test, one ODI and two T20 Internationals.
- Ojha made his international debut in 2010 in his only ODI against Sri Lanka, followed by his first T20I match in Zimbabwe a week later. His lone Test came in 2015 against Sri Lanka in Colombo.
- He last appeared in a **Ranji Trophy** match for MP against Uttar Pradesh in January last year.
- He captained MP in that Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match in Indore.
- In the Indian Premier League, Ojha played for Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Daredevils.

5 Indian Origin Persons, Indian Activist Feature | in TIME Magazine's List of 100 Emerging Leaders

- **Bhim Army Chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad and five Indian-origin personalities** have been featured in **Time magazine's annual list of 100 'emerging leaders** who are shaping the future.'
- Five Indian-origin personalities, including **Twitter's top lawyer Vijaya Gadde and UK's finance minister Rishi Sunak, and an Indian activist feature in TIME magazine's** annual list of 100 "emerging leaders who are shaping the future".
- The 2021 TIME100 Next, released on Wednesday, is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world.
- Other Indian-origin personalities on the list are Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, doctor and Executive Director of nonprofit Get Us PPE Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve Rohan Pavuluri.

Sri Lanka pacer Dhammika Prasad quits international cricket

- **Sri Lanka fast bowler Dhammika Prasad** has announced his **retirement from international cricket**.
- Prasad, 37, last played a Test match in October 2015 against the West Indies here.
- He represented Sri Lanka in **25 Tests and 24 ODIs, bagging 75 and 32 wickets** respectively.
- He also played lone T20 International against Australia in 2011.

Chris Morris becomes most expensive player in auction history : IPL Auction 2021

- **South-African all-rounder Chris Morris** became the **costliest player** in the history of **Indian Premier League (IPL) auction** when Rajasthan Royals snapped him up for **Rs 16.25 crore in the 2021 auction in Chennai**.
- The 33-year-old was released by Royal Challengers Bangalore after the IPL 2020 season.
- Morris has played 218 T20s overall and scored 1764 runs at 21 and a strike rate of 151.02. He has also picked up 270 wickets at 22.09 and an economy rate of 7.76 runs per over.
- Morris has played 70 IPL matches for 80 wickets at an economy of 7.81, apart from 551 runs at a strike rate above 157.
- **Earlier, Yuvraj Singh was the costliest-ever buy in auction history** as he was bought for **Rs 16 crore by Delhi Daredevils in IPL 2015**. Following the former India all-rounder are Pat Cummins (Rs 15.5 crore, 2020) and Ben Stokes (14.5 crore, 2017).

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Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

SEC launches its own poll app, eWatch, in Andhra Pradesh

- State Election Commissioner **N. Ramesh Kumar** launched a software application called '**eWatch**' to keep tabs on **poll-related irregularities**.
- It was an in-house software application developed at the request of the State Election Commission by **Reliance Jio** for use in the ensuing **gram panchayat elections**.
- Developed exclusively for the election watch, the app comes with features that enable people to interact with the SEC about everything related to the panchayat polls being held in the state after a prolonged conflict between the SEC and the government.
- The e-watch app will be available on **Google Play Store from Thursday**, he added and called upon people to use their franchise with enthusiasm.
- Ramesh Kumar also inaugurated a call center exclusively set up for receiving and resolving election related complaints.

Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles

- Delhi Chief Minister **Arvind Kejriwal** launched the '**Switch Delhi**' campaign to promote electric vehicles and appealed to people to buy such vehicles to combat pollution in the city.
- Kejriwal said his government will hire **only electric vehicles for various purposes** in the **next six weeks**.
- In the 'Switch Delhi' campaign, awareness will be created about the benefits of electric vehicles and how it can contribute to making Delhi clean and pollution free.
- Under its electric vehicle policy, the Delhi government has planned extensive subsidies on purchase of electric two-wheelers and four-wheelers, besides waiving road tax and registration charges
- More than 6,000 electric vehicles have been purchased since the policy launch in August 2020. The government has also issued tenders for setting up 100 charging stations across the city,
- The government has fixed an ambitious target of **25 per cent electric vehicles** among total vehicle registrations in **Delhi by 2024**.

Manipur chief minister launches organic products and Loumiconnect App

- Manipur chief minister **N Biren Singh** launched a new range of packaged organic products and Loumi Connect App apart from distributing Bolero Camper vehicles and nurseries to seven **Farmers Producer Companies (FPCs)**.
- A function organized jointly by Directorate of Horticulture and Soil Conservation and **Eastern Border Areas Development Authority (EBADA)** at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Imphal.
- He also launched Loumi Connect App which would enable connect farmers with Horticulture and Agriculture experts.
- The chief minister also released Illustrative guide booklets on organic farming and **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER)**.

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- The chief minister also informed that Food Park, Nilakuthi, will have a packaging facility soon. He also informed that the state government has already submitted a INR400 crore project proposal for bamboo to the union government.

Puducherry launches a campaign to become Covid-free by February 28

- In **Puducherry**, a campaign has been launched titled **"Zero Covid by Feb28"** to ensure that there are no COVID-19 cases by the end of February 2021.
- Under the "Zero Covid by Feb 28" campaign, all those who had **come into contact with people infected with coronavirus would be identified and provided treatment**, so that the further spread of the pathogen could be prevented

Defence Minister launches e-Chhawani portal

- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** launched **e-Chhawani portal**.
- Launching the portal, Mr Singh said, residents of Cantonment areas can register their complaints regarding civic issues and resolve them while sitting at home.
- The minister said, government is committed to refine the system and improve the Ease of Living for people.
- Mr Singh said, **e-Chhawani project aims to provide online municipal services** to more than 20 lakh citizens across 62 Cantonment Boards through a multi-tenancy central platform.
- Through this portal, online application for renewal of leases, online registration of births and deaths and online application for water and sewerage connection will be very simpler.
- **CDS General Bipin Rawat** was also present at the event.

Indian Government Launches Sandes, a Whatsapp Like Instant Messaging App For Government Employes

- The **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** of India has launched an **instant messaging app** just like **WhatsApp** for **government employees called Sandes**.
- The government is currently asking employees to use the GIMS/Sandes app. There is still no word if this app will ever be available for all users in the future.
- Just like WhatsApp, one can share images, videos, voice messages, create groups on the app. Users can also set up their profile pictures and status.
- Notably, this app is an upgrade to NIC's existing **Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS) app**.
- While the Sandes app allows users to backup chat histories to a registered email, it does not allow users to change their mobile number or email address registered with the app

Centre kicks off 'Go Electric' campaign to promote e-mobility

- The Union government launched the **'Go Electric' campaign to spread awareness** about the **benefits of e-mobility and electric vehicle (EV)** charging infrastructure in India.
- The campaign was launched in the presence of Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Micro, Small, Medium Enterprise and R K Singh, MoS (IC) Power and New & Renewable Energy, MoS Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

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- **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**, under the aegis of the Ministry of Power, is mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem
- To implement the Go Electric campaign at the national and state levels, BEE will extend technical support to the State Designated Agencies (SDAs) and other partners to ensure uniformity of information.
- State agencies are expected to support BEE in consumer awareness initiatives to accelerate the deployment of EV charging infrastructure and electric mobility ecosystem at the state level.

Snakepedia' mobile app launched in Kerala to help people, doctors treat snake bites

- A team of scientists, nature lovers and doctors have come up with a **mobile application 'Snakepedia' on snakes in Kerala to help the public as well as doctors to treat snake bites.**
- Snakepedia is a **comprehensive android mobile application** that documents information on snakes with the help of pictures, infographics and podcasts and analyses its first aid, treatment, myths and superstitions.
- The **main aim** of the app is **to help the public identify snakes, avail proper treatment on time for snakebites**
- There are about 3,600 species of snakes known so far in the world and over 300 species are found in India.
- Snakepedia was developed as an answer to the question of how to find a useful way for the general public to identify snakes.

Vodafone-Idea launches premium VOD service on Vi Movies & TV app

- Vodafone Idea announced the launch of **Premium Video On Demand (PVOD)** service on **Vi Movies and TV App**, in partnership with Hungama, as the Telco looks to strengthen its **OTT play**.
- The PVOD market in India is **"premature but promising"** as the Indian audience continues to be price-conscious and choosy, Vodafone Idea (VIL) said in a statement adding such models are changing in the new post pandemic era as consumers explore alternate options of entertainment from comfort of their homes.

Chandigarh became the first state or Union Territory in India to launch Carbon Watch

- **Chandigarh** became the **first state or Union Territory** in India to **launch Carbon Watch**, a mobile application to **assess the carbon footprint of an individual.**
- Although the app can be accessed by everyone, it has specific options for the residents of Chandigarh to compile a detailed study.
- The application can be **downloaded through a QR code in Android supported smart cell phones.**
- Carbon footprint is the amount of greenhouse gases-especially carbon dioxide-released into the atmosphere by a particular human activity

About the Carbon Watch Mobile app :

- As a person downloads the application, they will need to fill details in four parts **Water, Energy, Waste Generation and Transport (Vehicular movement).**
- In the category of Water, the person will be required to inform about the consumption of water.

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- In the Energy category, the details regarding the electricity units consumed every month at the house, monthly bill etc and usage of solar energy will have to be furnished.
- In the Waste category, the individual will need to inform about the waste generation on their part and their family. In the transport section, the individual will have to inform them about the mode of transport used by them - four wheeler, two-wheeler or bicycle.
- With the mentioned information, the mobile application will automatically calculate the carbon footprint of the individual. The application will also provide information such as the national and world average of the emission, and the individual's level of emission generation.
- The mobile application will suggest methods to reduce the carbon footprints. The application will suggest ways as per the information furnished by the individuals.

Indian Railways to reactivate facility of UTS ON MOBILE App

- **Indian Railways** has decided to reactivate the facility of **UTS ON MOBILE App** in zones **where unreserved train services are reintroduced**.
- To **decongest ticket booking counters** and to ensure smooth compliance of social distancing norms, the facility to book unreserved tickets through UTS ON MOBILE app is being reactivated by Indian Railways.
- The Railways Ministry said, it has been decided that in addition to UTS ON MOBILE App facility available on suburban sections, this facility may also be reintroduced on non-suburban sections of zonal Railways.

District panchayat plans to launch app, website of workers - 'labour bank'

- **Finding blue-collar jobs in the district** will no longer be a herculean task.
- If all goes as per the plan, the opportunity will knock at the door in the form of a mobile message.
- **The district panchayat of Kochi Corporation** has decided to develop an android-based application to end the uncertainty that loomed over hundreds of blue-collar workers in the district, especially after Covid-19 hit the country.
- The district panchayat, which has set aside Rs 2 lakh for developing the android-based app and web platform by associating with an engineering college in the city, is expected to launch the project within six months.
- "There are talented plumbing and construction workers, mechanics and other daily wage employees available in the district.

But most of the time, it is hard for the employer to find the right person and this has resulted in depending more on the migrant workers.

Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By/Developed By
eWatch	State Election Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh
Switch Delhi	Arvind Kejriwal
Loumi Connect App	Manipur

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Zero Covid by Feb28	Puducherry
e-Chhawani portal	Rajnath Singh
Sandes	National Informatics Centre of India
Go Electric	Central government
Snakepedia	'Scientist in Kerala
Premium Video On Demand (PVOD) service on Vi Movies and TV App	Vodafone - Idea
Carbon Watch	Chandigarh

Important Sports News

Cricket

BCCI : Ranji Trophy cancelled for the first time in 87 years

- The **BCCI** will not be conducting its premier **first-class domestic tournament Ranji Trophy** for the first time in **87 years** as the parent body opted for the **Vijay Hazare Trophy** .
- The BCCI will also host the U-19 National One Day tournament for the Vinoo Mankad Trophy and the Women's national 50-over tournament as per a letter sent by BCCI secretary Jay Shah to the state units.

Jay Shah takes over as Asian Cricket Council President

- **BCCI secretary Jay Shah** was unanimously elected as the **president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC)** at its **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**.
- The 32-year-old replaces **Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)** chief **Najmul Hasan Papon** .
- Pakistan was to originally host the tournament but the tournament is now expected to be held in either Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

Joe Root becomes first batsman to score 200 in 100th Test

- **Joe Root**, the England captain, sent India on a leather hunt, becoming the **first player in history to score a double century in his 100th Test match**.
- Root, who was unbeaten on **128 overnight, batted on against India on Day 2 in Chennai** and notched up the fifth double century of his career – second in three Tests.
- In the process, Root also surpassed former Pakistan captain Inzamam-Ul-Haq as the player with the highest individual score playing the 100th Test match of his career. Inzamam had hit 184 against India in a Test match in Bengaluru in 2005, which Pakistan had won by 168 runs.
- His record stood for 15 years before being broken by Root, who reached his double-century with a six off R Ashwin, the second time he hit the off-spinner over the ropes.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

Steve Smith wins third Allan Border Medal, Beth Mooney bags maiden Belinda Clarke Award

- Former captain **Steve Smith** claimed his **third Allan Border Medal** while **Beth Mooney** bagged her **maiden Belinda Clarke Award**, the top two honours of the Australian Cricket Awards.
- Smith was honoured for his performances in all three formats of the game, while Mooney bagged the recognition in the Australian women's game for the first time.
- The awards were decided by a voting process for the period 2020-21.

List of 2021 Australian Cricket Awards:

- Belinda Clark Award: Beth Mooney. Votes: Beth Mooney 60, Meg Lanning 58, Georgia Wareham 50.
- Male One Day International Player of the Year: Steve Smith. Votes: Steve Smith 28, Aaron Finch 23, Adam Zampa 19.
- Female International Twenty20 Player of the Year: Beth Mooney. Votes: Beth Mooney 30, Alyssa Healy 18, Ash Gardner, Megan Schutt and Georgia Wareham 16.
- Male International Twenty20 Player of the Year: Ashton Agar. Votes: Ashton Agar 19, Aaron Finch 14, David Warner 13.
- Men's Test Player of the Year: Pat Cummins. Votes: Pat Cummins 16, Josh Hazlewood 9, Marnus Labuschagne 8.
- Women's One Day International Player of the Year: Rachel Haynes. Votes: Rachel Haynes 11, Meg Lanning 10, Georgia Wareham 6.

Rishabh Pant and Shabnim Ismail voted ICC Player of the Month for January 2021

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced the winners of the **Inaugural ICC Player of the Month Awards** which recognise and celebrate the best performances from **both male and female cricketers** across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.
- India's **Rishabh Pant** won the **ICC Men's Player of the Month for January 2021** for his performances in the **two Tests against Australia where he scored a 97 at Sydney** and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane that led India to a historic series win against arch-rivals Australia.
- South Africa's **Shabnim Ismail** was named the **ICC Women's Player of the Month for January 2021** for her performances across three ODIs and two T20Is during the month.
- Ismail took seven wickets in the victorious ODI series against Pakistan, before taking five wickets in the second T20I against the same opposition.
- Pant has been honored for his superlative performances in the two Tests against Australia in January 2020, wherein he scored a 97 at Sydney and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane, leading India to an incredible series win.

ICC announces BYJU'S as global partner until 2023

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has announced **Indian edu-tech company BYJU'S** as its **global partner from 2021 to 2023**.

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- The three-year agreement will see BYJU'S partner all ICC events over the period, including the forthcoming men's T20 World Cup in India and the women's World Cup in **New Zealand**.
- As a global partner, BYJU'S will have extensive in-venue, broadcast, and digital rights across all ICC events.
- In August 2019, the company became the official jersey partners of the Indian cricket team.
- In addition to the integrated brand presence at some of the world's biggest sporting events, BYJU'S will work closely with the ICC to deepen engagement with fans through the creation of innovative campaigns.

ICC Test Rankings: Kohli slips to fifth spot

- Indian captain **Virat Kohli** has slipped to **No. 5** in the latest **ICC Men's Test Player Rankings**.

The top ten Batsmen in the list :

1. Kane Williamson – New Zealand
2. Steve Smith – Australia
3. Joe Root – England
4. Marnus Labuschagne – Australia
5. Virat Kohli – India
6. Babar Azam – Pakistan
7. Cheteshwar Pujara – India
8. Henry Nicholls – New Zealand
9. Ben Stokes – England
10. David Warner – Australia

Top 10 Bowlers in the list

1. Pat Cummins – Australia
2. Stuart Broad – England
3. James Anderson – England
4. Neil Wagner – New Zealand
5. Josh Hazlewood – Australia
6. Tim Southee – New Zealand
7. R Ashwin – India
8. Jasprit Bumrah – India
9. Kagiso Rabada – South Africa
10. Jason Holder – West Indies

All-rounders (top five)

1. Ben Stokes - England
2. Jason Holder – West Indies
3. R Jadeja - India

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4. S Al Hasan - Bangladesh
5. Kyle Jamieson - New Zealand

IPL 2021: Kings XI Punjab officially renamed as Punjab Kings

- The Mohali-based IPL franchise formally known as Kings XI Punjab were renamed as Punjab Kings, ahead of the 2021 auctions due to be held in Chennai on February 18.
- The new logo honors the liveliness and vibrancy of the brand and provides modern elements, while we stand out from the rest of the teams.
- The franchise, jointly owned by Mohit Burman, Ness Wadia, Preity Zinta and Karan Paul, is yet to win an IPL title since the event's inaugural edition in 2008.
- In the tournament's 13-year history, Kings were runners-up once (2014) and achieved a third-place finish on another occasion (2008). They finished sixth in the 2020 edition, held in the UAE.
- The next IPL is set to start in the second week of April.

VIVO back as title sponsor for IPL 2021

- Indian Premier League Governing Council chairman Brijesh Patel revealed at the IPL 2021 Auction that VIVO is back as the title sponsor of the league.
- Brijesh Patel spoke ahead of the auction in Chennai on February 18 and announced that VIVO is back as the title sponsor of the T20 league after Dream 11 had been roped in as sponsor for the 2020 season.
- Last year, the IPL signed up Dream 11 for Rs 222 crore for one season whereas they had been getting Rs 440 crore per year from VIVO.
- In 2018, VIVO had signed a five-year deal worth Rs 2199 crore

Others

Former pacer Merv Hughes inducted into Australian Cricket Hall of Fame

- Former pacer Merv Hughes has been inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, the country's board (CA) announced.
- The 59-year-old captured 212 Test wickets at an average of 28.38 in a career spanning 53 Tests and 33 ODIs for Australia from 1985 to 1994.
- His career-best figures of 8-87 against the West Indies at the WACA in 1988 included the final wicket of a hat-trick spread across three separate overs, two innings and two different days.

S Sports Minister launches the First Reference Material synthesized by NDTL and NIPER to strengthen anti-doping measures

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Kiren Rijiju launched a breakthrough Reference Material for use in chemical testing.
- It is synthesized by collaborative efforts of National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Guwahati.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NDTL and NIPER Guwahati was signed in August 2020 which proposes to synthesize 20 rarely available Reference Materials (RMs) during a period of **3 years**.

About RM :

- This Reference Material (RM), has been identified by NDTL as one of the rarely available RMs globally and would be used to strengthen anti-doping measures in all World Anti Doping Agency (WADA)-accredited laboratories.
- These RMs are used essentially during dope testing for quality control purposes and therefore their availability remains critical in sports dope testing, globally.
- The availability of these RMs would help the anti-doping laboratories to strengthen their testing capacity. This will help in the greater cause of promoting fair play in sports.
- It has also been decided to distribute 5 mg of this indigenously developed RM to all the WADA-accredited dope testing laboratories all around the world free of cost for the first occasion.

India top medals tally at first Asian Online Shooting Championship

- **India's 24-member shooting contingent topped the medals tally in the first Asian Online Shooting Championship.**
- The squad won **four out of the eight gold medals on offer, besides two silver and five bronze medals**, for a total of **11 podium finishes**.
- The two-day competition, held on Thursday and Friday, was organised by the Kuwait Shooting Federation and **saw 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries take part.**

List of Medal Winners from India

Gold

- Saurabh Chaudhary – men's 10m air pistol
- Divyansh Singh Panwar- men's 10m air rifle
- Kynan Chenai – men's trap
- Rajeshwari Kumari – women's trap

Silver

- Arjun Babuta – men's 10m air rifle
- Shreyasi Singh – women's trap

Bronze

- Manu Bhaker – women's 10m air pistol
- Sarabjot Singh – men's 10m air pistol
- Deepak Kumar – men's 10m air rifle
- Prithviraj Tondaiman – men's trap
- Manish Keer – women's trap
- There were a total of eight events on the roster with no final rounds in the pistol and rifle competitions. In the shotgun events, 150-bird matches were held.

Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – February 2021

Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu defeat Baroda to win Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy

- **Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu clinched their second national T20 championship** as they beat **Baroda by seven wickets** in the final of **Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy in Ahmedabad**.
- This was Tamil Nadu's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph, after winning their first title way back in 2006-07.
- **Baroda**, who had won **the title twice in the past** (in 2011-12 and 2013-14), ended runners-up this time.
- Siddharth (4/20) spun his web around the Baroda batsmen to restrict them to a meagre 120 for 9 and then Tamil Nadu overhauled the target in 18 overs, with opener C Hari Nishaanth top-scoring with 35.
- Chasing 121 for a win, Tamil Nadu lost opener Narayan Jagadeesan (14) early as pacer Lukman Meriwala (1/34) picked up the first wicket, with the opposition at 26/1.
- This is the second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) title for Tamil Nadu, and their first title in 13 years. The team claimed their first SMAT title in 2006-07, that too under Karthik's captaincy.
- The Player of the match title was won by Manimaran Siddharth (Tamil Nadu) who picked 4 wickets, conceding 20 runs

Drass Red win 13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship

- In **Kargil Ladakh**, **Drass Red** has won the **13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship** beating Hockey Club Chiktan team in the Final match.
- The **1st Women CEC Ice Hockey Cup 2021** was lifted by **Shakar Chiktan Team** defeating Wakha Mulbekh Team.
- 32 Men teams and 5 Women Teams participated in the tournament which was organized by the District Youth Services & Sports.

Ankita wins maiden WTA title, clinches Phillip Island Trophy doubles

- **India's Ankita Raina** On February 19 won her maiden **WTA title** as she and her **Russian partner Kamilla Rakhimova** clinched the doubles event in the **Phillip Island Trophy in Melbourne**.
- The Ankita-Kamilla pair beat Russia's Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6 6-4 10-7 in the final.
- The win will propel the 28-year-old Ankita to top-100 in the WTA rankings in doubles. She will be the second Indian woman player to be in top-100 after Sania Mirza.
- Ankita had won the ITF doubles title and WTA 125k series title before Friday's win.

About WTA :

- The Women's Tennis Association (WTA) is the principal organizing body of women's professional tennis.
- It governs the WTA Tour which is the worldwide professional tennis tour for women and was founded to create a better future for women's tennis. The WTA's corporate headquarters is in St.

Manika Batra wins national title, eyes Tokyo Olympic spot via Doha

- **Star paddler Manika Batra** clinched her **second title** by **defeating Reeth Rishya 4-2** in the **women's singles final of the Senior National Table Tennis Championship**

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- Manika Batra ,in action during final of women's singles final at the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship 2020 at Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula.
- She ranked 63rd in world ranking.
- She had just beaten Reeth Rishya 8-11, 10-12, 11-1, 11-9, 11-5, 11-6 at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula to win the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship
- She represented the **Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB)** had won her maiden title in **2015 at Hyderabad**.

Naomi Osaka overpowers Jennifer Brady to win second Australian Open Title

- **Japan's Naomi Osaka** Has won the **Women's single title in the Australian open 2021**.
- She defeated Jennifer Brady in straight sets to clinch the women's singles final of the 2021 Australian Open.
- This is Osaka's second Australian Open title, she had earlier conquered the Melbourne Grand Slam in 2019.
- Naomi Osaka won her fourth Grand Slam title as she defeated Jennifer Brady in straight sets to clinch the women's singles final of the 2021 Australian Open.
- Osaka, the first Japanese player to win a major, extended her winning streak to 21 matches with this victory.
- She won the **US Open in 2018 and 2020**.

IOC names Australia as preferred bidder to host 2032 Olympic Games

- The **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** has named **Brisbane, Australia** as the preferred bidder to host the **2032 Olympic Games**.
- The IOC's future host commission recommended that the body enter **"targeted dialogue"** with Brisbane bid organisers and the Australian Olympic Committee.
- The state of Queensland had hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games and Brisbane was praised for its high percentage of existing venues, a good masterplan, experience in organising major events and its favourable weather.
- Several cities and countries had expressed an interest in hosting the Games, including Indonesia, Budapest, China, Doha and Germany's Ruhr Valley.
- The delayed 2020 Olympics will be held in Tokyo, Japan in the summer, with Paris in France staging the 2024 Games and Los Angeles in the United States hosting the 2028 Olympics.

Prime Minister Modi to inaugurate 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games

- **PM Modi** will virtually inaugurate and deliver the inaugural address at the **2nd Khelo India National Winter Games on February 26, 2021**.
- The games will commence from **February 26 and will continue till March 2, 2021**.
- The games taking place in Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir will feature around 1200 athletes from 27 states and union territories, apart from the army personnel.
- The event has been organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

Khelo India National Winter Games:

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- Alpine Skiing
- Nordic Ski
- Snowboarding
- Ski Mountaineering
- Ice Skating
- Ice Hockey
- Ice Stock

Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
Ford	Michigan, United States	Jim Farley
Asian Cricket Council	Mumbai	Sridhar Balakrishnan
IBM	Armonk	Arvind Krishna
HCL Technologies	Noida	C Vijayakumar
Vedanta	Mumbai	Srinivasan Venkatakrishnan
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	New Delhi	Thulani Dlamini
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
National Commission for Scheduled Caste	New Delhi	Vijay Sampla
World Trade Organization	Geneva, Switzerland	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Arcelor Mittal	Luxembourg	Aditya Mittal
TVS Motor Company	Chennai	K. N. Radhakrishnan
Indigo	Gurugram	Rono Dutta
Levi	California, USA	Charles V. Bergh
Facebook	California, USA	Mark Zuckerberg
National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)	New Delhi	Manish Kumar
Aegon Life Insurance	Hyderabad	Satishwar Balakrishnan
Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited	Hyderabad	Sanjay Kumar Jha
Board of Control for Cricket in India	Mumbai	Saurav Ganguly
International Cricket Council	Dubai, United Arab	Shashank Manohar

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	Emirates	
National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation	New Delhi	D. Devaraj Urs
SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd	Gurugram	Rama Mohan Rao Amara
Boxing Federation of India	New Delhi	Ajay Singh
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC	James Morhard
Central Bureau of Investigation	New Delhi	Praveen Sinha
Tata Motors Ltd	Mumbai	Marc Llistosella
International Solar Alliance	Gurugram	Dr Ajay Mathur
International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)	Lausanne, Switzerland	Steve Dainton
GE T&D India Ltd	Henderson, USA	Mahesh Palashikar
Piramal Alternatives	Hyderabad	Kalpesh Kikani
Microsoft	Redmond, Washington	Satya Nadella
Shriram Capital	Chennai	K P Krishnan
UN Capital Development Fund	New York	Preeti Sinha
Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)	New Delhi	Nihar N Jambusaria
Max Life Insurance	New Delhi	Prashant Tripathy
Page Industries	Bengaluru	VS Ganesh
Byju's	Bengaluru	Byju Raveendran
Unacademy	Bengaluru	Gaurav Munjal
Defence Research Development Organization	New Delhi	Sateesh Reddy
FlipKart	Bengaluru	Kalyan Krishnamurthy
Fullerton India Credit Company		Shantanu Mitra
Indian Council of Medical Research	New Delhi	Balram Bhargava
Google	California, United States	Sundar Pichai
Amazon	Washington, United States	Jeff Bezos
Bharat Electronics Limited	Bengaluru	Venkateswara Gowtama Mannava
Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd	Bengaluru	R Madhavan

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Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)	New Delhi	Anupam Shrivastava
Indian School of Business	Hyderabad	Ankur Warikoo
Zomato	Gurugram	Deepinder Goyal
SpaceX	California, United States	Elon Musk
Inland Waterways Authority of India	Noida	Amita Prasad
Vivo	Dongguan, China	Shen Wei
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	Bengaluru	K Sivan
Women's Tennis Association	St. Petersburg, USA	Steve Simon
Siegwerk India	New Delhi	Ramakrishna Karanth
Table Tennis Federation of India	New Delhi	Dushyant Chautala
Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs	New Delhi	M Ajit Kumar
Honda	Minato City, Japan	Toshihiro Mibe
International Olympic Committee	Lausanne, Switzerland	Thomas Bach

Important Obituaries

Name	Field
Paul Crutzen	Nobel Prize-winning chemist
Hilton Valentine	Animals guitarist
Cicely Tyson	Hollywood actress (First black woman to take on a main role in the TV drama East Side/West Side in the 1960s)
Christopher Plummel	Canada-born actor (known for his popular role as Captain von Trapp in The Sound of Music)
Bansi Kaul (Padma Shri awardee)	Founder of Rang Vidushak and theatre director
Akhtar Ali	Indian Tennis Player (A former Davis Cup coach)
George Shultz (Father of India's current Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali)	Former US Secretary of State
Bruce Taylor	Former New Zealand all-rounder
Rajiv Kapoor	Bollywood actor
Ezra Moseley	Former West Indies fast bowler

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Carlos Menem	Former Argentine President
Mandagadde Rama Jois (Former Rajya Sabha MP)	Former Bihar-Jharkhand governor and noted jurist Justice
Basant Kumar Mahapatra (Fondly known as 'Tank Man')	Indo-Pak wars' retired Major General (conferred with the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal)
Satish Sharma	Congress leader and Gandhi loyalist
Rahul Khullar	Former chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India