

Monthly GK Digest

January 2021



Monthly Digest January -2021

Dear readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a **complete docket** of important news and events that occurred in a month of **January 2021**. This file is important for, **Bank, SSC, and Railways** exams.

Banking & Financial Awareness

1. **IDBI Bank** has sold 23% of its stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company Limited (IFLI) to Ageas Insurance International NV for a consideration of Rs 507 crore.
Note: IFLI is a three-way joint venture of IDBI Bank, Belgium's Ageas and Federal Bank. On purchasing the stake, Ageas Insurance International NV will hold 49% stake in IFLI earlier from 26%. While IDBI Bank's stake in IFLI will be reduced to 25% from 48%. Federal Bank continues to hold 26 per cent stake in IFLI.
2. The RoDTEP scheme has replaced the popular Merchandise Exports from India Scheme from January 1, 2021.
Note: As per the finance ministry the benefit of Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme will be extended to all export goods from January 1, 2021. Under the scheme, the embedded central, state and local duties or taxes will get refunded and credited in an exporter's ledger account with customs.
3. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a fine of rupees Rs 25 crore on Indian company **Reliance Industries Ltd.** for carrying out manipulative trade.
Note: Two more entities, Navi Mumbai SEZ Pvt Ltd and Mumbai SEZ Ltd have been fined Rs 20 crore and Rs 10 crore, respectively. The fine was imposed on Reliance India Limited because the company violated the Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices (PFUTP).
4. International card payment service RuPay partnered with **RBL Bank** to launch an innovative payment solution for Indian merchants "RuPay PoS" in association with PayNearby.
Note: The announcement for the same was made by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). This collaboration will transform smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for the retailers enabling the latter to accept contactless payments of up to Rs 5,000 through a simple tap and pay mechanism on his Near Field Communication (NFC) enabled mobile phones.
5. **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** has launched health insurance coverage under Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) Social, Endeavour for Health, and Telemedicine (SEHAT) in association with Jammu & Kashmir Government.
Note: This extended scheme was launched by Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi. The scheme will provide universal health insurance cover to all the citizens of J&K, thus ensuring financial security during any medical emergency. This is the first time in India that any scheme is implemented to such huge masses. The scheme will operate on insurance mode in convergence with PM-JAY.
6. To recapitalize, the central government has issued Rs 5,500 crore in zero-coupon bonds -- **Punjab and Sindh Bank**.
Note: This move of capital infusion was approved by the Ministry of Finance on November 10, 2020. It should be noted that the Zero-coupon bonds are debt security that does not pay interest but instead trades at a deep discount, rendering a profit at maturity, when the bond is redeemed for its full-face value.
7. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an advisory council to manage Under chairmanship of **BP Kanungo**, the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme, aimed at encouraging deployment of more digital payments infrastructure across tier-3 to tier-6 centres.
Note: The fund will be used to subsidize banks and non-banks for deploying payment infrastructure, which will be contingent upon specific targets being achieved. The central bank has also constituted an advisory council under the chairmanship of B.P. Kanungo, a deputy governor, to manage the fund. The PIDF will be operational for three years from 1 January 2021, and may be extended for two more years based on progress.
8. Government of India has signed a loan agreement with **New Development Bank**, worth USD 646 million for two road projects in Andhra Pradesh.
Note: The first project is Andhra Pradesh Roads and Bridges Reconstruction Project comprising widening of 1,600 kilometre of State Highways to double lane and reconstructing dilapidated bridges on the State Highway network. The second project is Andhra Pradesh Mandal

- Connectivity and Rural Connectivity Improvement Project comprising widening of 1,400 kilometre of district roads to double lane and reconstructing dilapidated bridges on the district road network.
9. **Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank** has become the first urban co-operative bank (UCB) in India to receive a licence from RBI to operate as a Small Finance Bank (SFB).
Note: The RBI had given an 18-month timeline to commence business. SMCB received the commercial banking license from banking regulator Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 06, 2021, to transition to an SFB, under the voluntary transition scheme. The Shivalik Small Finance Bank (SSFB) will start its banking operations from April 2021.
 10. **Tata Power** has partnered with **Small Industries Development Bank of India** (SIDBI) to provide easy financing scheme for MSME customers in rooftop solar segment.
Note: Tata Power and SIDBI have joined hands to design a solar financing solution to help MSME players with financial aid without any collateral at an interest of less than 10 per cent. The scheme will also be complimented with a sanction time of seven days and disbursement of money in four days.
 11. **SBI Mutual Fund** has acquired an additional 86,993 shares in CSB Bank Ltd which consequently raised its stake in the bank to 5.01% from 4.96% earlier.
Note: The acquisition was made through open market purchase. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given approval to SBI funds management to acquire stake up to 10 % of the paid-up capital of the CSB Bank through various schemes of 'SBI Mutual Fund.' This approval is valid for one year till July 21, 2021.
 12. **Bandhan Bank** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Army for 'Shaurya' salary account.
Note: The serving personnel of Indian Army will be provided the services of the account through the Bank's network of banking outlets. It is a zero-balance salary account with 6% interest on balance above Rs.1 lakh.
 13. **Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh** became the 1st Group of States to complete three out of the Four citizen schemes stipulated by Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance viz. One Nation One Ration Card Reforms, Ease of Doing Business Reforms, & Urban Local Bodies Reforms.
Note: As they have completed the reforms, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance will provide them an additional Financial Assistance of INR 1004 Crore under the newly launched "Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure" scheme. The 4 reforms are One Nation One Ration Card, Ease of doing Business Reform, Urban Local Body/Utility Reform & Power Sector Reform.
 14. The Reserve Bank of India announced the operationalization of the Payment Investment Development Fund (PIDF) with an initial corpus of **Rs 345 crore**.
Note: The objective of PIDF is to increase the number of acceptance devices multi-fold in the country. The Scheme is expected to benefit the acquiring banks / non-banks and merchants by lowering overall acceptance infrastructure cost.
 15. As per the first Advance Estimates (AE) of GDP for the year 2020-21 released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will shrink by **7.7%** in the financial year ending March 2021.
Note: The real GDP at 2011-12 prices in 2020-21 has been estimated to contract by 7.7 per cent and nominal GDP at current prices by 4.2 per cent. That's steeper than a 7.5% drop forecast by the Reserve Bank of India, as well as economists surveyed by Bloomberg and other agencies.
 16. PhonePe in partnership with **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** launched Term Life Insurance plans on its platform.
Note: This policy can be availed by PhonePe users instantly on PhonePe app through an all digital process without the need of any health check-ups and paperwork. This plan enables PhonePe users to protect their families from financial turmoil in case of an untimely demise of them.
 17. **Bank of Baroda** has signed an MoU with the SIDBI to enable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) customers of the bank to apply online for one-time restructuring (OTR).
Note: With this, the eligible MSME entities can get credit exposure up to Rs 25 crore. The restructuring of the borrower account will be implemented by March 31, 2021. The MSME Customer can now access the web-based portal, 'Asset Restructuring Module for MSMEs (ARM-MSME)'.
 18. Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Finance Corporation (JKIDFC) has partnered with **Universal Sompo General Insurance Company Limited** to initiate comprehensive insurance covers for the customers of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.
Note: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Finance Corporation operates in the entire territory of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. It plays a pioneering role in boosting industrial climate in the State by providing financial assistance to various Small and Medium Enterprises besides others.
 19. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) has signed an MoU with **NHPC Limited** for providing its technical expertise in developing renewable energy projects.

- Note:** Under the MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and conservation projects for NHPC. IREDA will assist NHPC in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next five years. IREDA is under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- 20. State Bank of India** in association with Indian Oil Corporation launched a co-branded contactless Rupay debit card.
Note: On spent of Rs 200 at IndianOil fuel station, every time customer will get 6 reward points and loyalty points worth 0.75% against the purchase of fuel. The initiative will promote digital payments and is in alignment with the Government's vision of a Digital India. The card was launched by Dinesh Kumar Khara, chairman, SBI and Shrikant Madhav Vaidya, chairman, IndianOil.
- 21. Central Bank of India** has signed an MoU with NABFOUNDATION to provide working capital to all self-help groups (SHGs) which have an account with it and undertake the 'My Pad My Right' project.
Note: Central Bank of India (CBoI) and NABFOUNDATION signed an MoU to provide working capital to all self-help groups (SHGs) which have an account with it and undertake the 'My Pad My Right' project. NABFOUNDATION is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD. This cheap, collateral-free credit will support rural women needed to take up manufacturing on a regular basis.
- 22.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) gave approval to the acquisition of 100% shareholding of Columbia Asia Hospitals Private Limited (CAHPL) by Hospital Group **Manipal Hospitals**.
Note: After this acquisition MHEPL will become India's 2nd largest healthcare chain, after Apollo Hospitals. In regard to the acquisition MHEPL has entered into a share purchase agreement with CAHPL in November 2020.
- 23.** India's seventh Trade Policy Review (TPR), a comprehensive report issued by the WTO Secretariat which acknowledged India's strong economic growth at **7.4%** during in the last five years from 2015-20.
Note: India's official delegation for the TPR is headed by the Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan. During the TPR, a comprehensive report issued by the WTO Secretariat which acknowledged India's strong economic growth at 7.4% during in the last five years i.e. 2015-20.
- 24.** India's rank in the 3rd edition of Digital Evolution Scorecard 2020 developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard -- **4th**.
Note: It should be noted that India doubled its mobile internet connectivity in the last four years It will add 350 million smartphones by 2023. The scorecard was published in the Harvard Business Review in December 2020. In Digital Evolution-State Category, Singapore Topped followed by United States, Hong Kong.India ranked at 61st position
- 25.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of cooperative bank **Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd.**
Note: The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS), Maharashtra has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. The RBI said the bank has failed to comply with the requirements and continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors.
- 26. Flipkart** has collaborated with NITI Aayog to launch the updated Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).
Note: The revamped platform has multiple regional language support, allows interaction with women, fellow women entrepreneurs and mentors to communicate and also has a Question and Answer Portal. The community on WEP platform will connect women entrepreneurs who seek clarification on GST, funding, effects of the pandemic & progression of already established businesses.
- 27.** Under chairmanship of **Jayant Kumar Dash** RBI has constituted a working group on digital lending to study all aspects of digital lending activities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players.
Note: This is to ensure that an appropriate regulatory approach is put in place. The working group consists of both internal and external members. The internal members include Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI (Chairman); Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Chief General Manager in-charge, Department of Supervision, RBI; S.P. Vasudevan, Chief General Manager, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, RBI; and Manoranjan Mishra, Chief General Manager, Department of Regulation, RBI (Member Secretary).The external members are Vikram Mehta, co-founder, Monexo Fintech; and Rahul Sasi, cyber security expert and founder of CloudSEK.
- 28.** Government of India has decided to sale **10%** of its stake in the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) through an offer for sale (OFS), which could fetch over Rs 2,600 crore for the exchequer.
Note: The government, which held 75 per cent stake in SAIL as of September quarter, will divest 5 per cent equity stake in the company with a 5 per cent greenshoe option, an option to sell further equity in case of over-subscription. The government had last sold 5 per cent stake in the state-owned steel maker in December 2014.
- 29. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** has completed five years of its operation on January 2021.
Note: PMFBY was launched on January 13, 2016 with an aim to provide a comprehensive risk solution at the lowest uniform premium across the country for farmers. So far, 29 crore farmers have insured their crops

- under the scheme and about 5.5 crores new farmers are getting registered every year. The government has disbursed claims worth Rs 90,000 crore in the last five years.
- 30.** The UBS Investment Bank has projected that the Indian Economy will shrink by 7.5 per cent in the 2020-21.
Note: Swiss brokerage major UBS Investment Bank has projected the Indian economy to contract 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal FY21, ending March 2021. UBS further expects the economy to rebound at 11.5 per cent in FY22. For the FY23, GDP growth is expected to stabilise at 6 per cent.
- 31.** The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on foreign bank **Deutsche Bank AG** for non-compliance.
Note: The bank did not comply with "certain provisions of directions contained in the 'Reserve Bank of India (Interest Rate on Deposits) Directions, 2016'. The penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in the RBI under the provisions of Section 47 A (1) (c), read with Section 46 (4) (i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- 32.** According to Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India, banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to **13.5%** by September 2021.
Note: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Financial Stability Report (FSR) of December 2020 has stated that banks' gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) may rise sharply to 13.5 per cent by September 2021, and escalate to 14.8 per cent, nearly double the 7.5 per cent in the same period of 2019-20, under the severe stress scenario. And banks will have to brace for a rollback of regulatory forbearance that was announced in the wake of the pandemic and enhance their capital positions.
- 33.** Mahindra Lifespace Developers has signed an MoU with **State Bank of India (SBI)** to speed up the home loan approvals as well as offer special discounts to customers and employees of both the companies.
Note: Mahindra Lifespace and SBI have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enable an improved and more seamless experience for homebuyers across India. It provides various co-promotional activities and outreach initiatives, customers and employees of SBI and Mahindra Lifespaces. Homebuyers will benefit by saving on expenses incurred on obtaining Title Investigation Report (TIR) and valuation for approved projects.
- 34.** Electric car maker Tesla has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary in India city **Bengaluru**.
Note: It has registered with the Registrar of Companies in Bengaluru, Karnataka as 'Tesla India Motors and Energy Private Limited'. It is also in the process of setting up a manufacturing plant at Dharwad, Karnataka for producing electric vehicles in India. It has registered itself as a private company with an authorised capital of Rs 15 lakh.
- 35.** **Apple** company find the top position in the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world.
Note: Apple tops in the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world with a value of 2.1 Trillion USD followed by Microsoft with a value of 1.640 Trillion and Amazon with a value of 1.610 Trillion and Alphabet with 1.2 trillion USD. The list was released by Hurun in association with China luxury tea brand Empereur. 2020 Hurun Global 500 list – a list of 500 most valuable companies across the globe, of Hurun Research features a total of 11 Indian companies
- 36.** Indian IT company **Tech Mahindra** is set to acquire 100% share of Hong Kong based Payments Technology Service Ltd (PTSL) a subsidiary of Fidelity Information Services (FIS).
Note: In regard to this acquisition, Tech Mahindra had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with FIS. The acquisition will give Tech Mahindra access to Internet Protocol(IP) and licenses for two products – Open Payment Framework (OPF) and Multi-Bank System (MBS). With this agreement, Tech Mahindra has planned to expand its BFSI (banking, financial services and insurance) footprint globally. In support of this strategy, Tech Mahindra will also build a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Chennai, India.
- 37.** **India Post Payments Bank** has collaborated with the leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, Financial Software and Systems (FSS) to promote Financial Inclusion in underserved and unbanked part of India.
Note: To attain this purpose, IPPB will use FSS' Aadhaar Enabled Payment System(AePS). The IPPB Partnership with FSS' AePS solution combines the low-cost structure of a branchless business model, digital distribution, and micro-targeting that lowers acquisition costs & reaches all customers in rural area. After this collaboration, IPPB bank has become the single-largest platform in India for providing interoperable banking services to customers of any bank.
- 38.** **Yes Bank** has launched 'Wellness and Wellness Plus' credit card in partnership with Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited.
Note: As consumers face new realities of home-schooling of children, working from home, and lack of physical contact with loved ones and colleagues, this is an innovative step to encourage and promote self-care, mental and physical well-being. Consumers can now enjoy the bouquet of complimentary health benefits by simply registering on the Aditya Birla Multiply App.
- 39.** **ICICI Bank** has partnered with Niyto, a new age fintech, to issue prepaid cards to workers of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

- Note:** MSMEs will now be able to get 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' powered by Visa, for their blue-collar workers, who are mostly under-banked. With this, MSMEs can upload the salaries of their workers on the card, which the workers can then utilise as per their need in a seamless manner. The 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' allows an individual to receive funds up to ₹1 lakh into the card account.
- 40.** The ADB has partnered with **European Investment Bank** to initiate a Clean and Sustainable Ocean Partnership to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the climate goals as advised in the Paris Agreement.
Note: In this regard, both entities will support the initiatives in Asia and the Pacific. This partnership will strengthen the capacity of both entities to support high-impact projects. They will also develop joint technical assistance programs and advisory support to help their partners in achieving SDGs of blue economy.
- 41.** As per the Reserve Bank of India the State Bank of India, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs) which are 'too big to fail'. The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in **2014**.
Note: SIBs are subjected to higher levels of supervision so as to prevent disruption in financial services in the event of any failure. The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in July 2014. The D-SIB framework requires the central to disclose the names of banks designated as D-SIBs starting from 2015 and place these lenders in appropriate buckets depending upon their Systemic Importance Scores (SISs).
- 42. Adani Group** has signed a concession agreement with state-owned **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** for the operation, development and management of airports at Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram.
Note: According to terms and conditions specified in the concession agreement, the Adani Group will have to take over the airports within six months. The concessionaire will manage, develop and operate the airports for 50 years. The Gautam Adani-led Adani Enterprises had in February 2019 emerged as the highest bidders for AAI-operated airports in Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Lucknow, which were put up for privatization under the public private partnership (PPP) model.
- 43. Mastercard** has launched the Digital Acceleration for Small Businesses microsite across most of its Asia Pacific websites.
Note: The one-stop resource site provides information and resources for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to digitize and operate their business more efficiently. Mastercard has partnered with Wix and Zoho to enhance the resources for SMEs.
- 44. ICICI Bank** has launched 'InstaFX' App for Forex Partners to help customers of any bank to obtain Forex Prepaid Card.
Note: Called 'InstaFX', the app enables the authorised money changers, who are partners of the Bank, to complete the KYC verification and validation of customers digitally and on a real-time basis. This facility significantly improves customer convenience as the 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' gets activated swiftly within a few hours, as against the industry practice of up to two-days.
- 45. Standard Chartered Bank** has entered a co-lending arrangement with IIFL Home Finance Ltd to extend credit to MSME loans.
Note: Under this partnership, IIFL Home Finance and the Standard Chartered Bank will co-originate these loans and the IIFL Home Finance will service the customers through the entire loan life-cycle including sourcing, documentation, collection and loan servicing. Definitive agreements for the said co-lending arrangement had been executed between the IIFL Home Finance and Standard Chartered Bank on 16 January 2021.
- 46. Axis Bank** has launched 'AURA', a credit card with health and wellness benefits at an affordable price for its individual users.
Note: The features of the card is powered by Poshvine , Decathlon, Practo, Fitternity, IndushealthPlus, 1MG etc. The aim of the card is to provide complete health and wellness solutions to its users. Cardholders will can get discount on annual medical checkup through IndushealthPlus.
- 47. Paytm Payments Bank** has partnered with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SFB) Ltd to enable its account holders to avail Fixed Deposit (FD) services.
Note: The payments bank has already been offering fixed deposits service in collaboration with IndusInd Bank with a minimum investment of Rs. 100. With the partnership with Suryoday SFB the Paytm Payments Bank has become the 1st payments bank in India to launch the multi-partner FD service.
- 48.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has given approval to the deal between Future Group and **Reliance retail Ltd**, where Future group will sell its retail, wholesale, logistics and warehouse businesses to Reliance Retail for Rs 24,713 crore.
Note: This deal was earlier approved by Competition Commission of India(CCI). This acquisition is part of the scheme in which Future Group is merging certain companies carrying on the above said businesses into Future Enterprises Limited (FEL). The retail & wholesale undertaking will be transferred to Reliance Retail and the Fashion Lifestyle Limited (RRFL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of RRVL.

- 49. Airtel Payments Bank** has launched 'Safe Pay' a safe way to pay digitally to protect Airtel customers from the growing incidents of online payment frauds.
Note: With 'Airtel Safe Pay', Airtel customers making UPI or net banking-based payments through Airtel Payments Bank, no longer have to worry about money flowing out of their accounts without their explicit consent. An India-First innovation, 'Airtel Safe Pay' leverages Airtel's 'telco exclusive' strength of network intelligence to provide an additional layer of payment validation, compared to the industry norm of two-factor authentication.
- 50.** As per the latest World Economic Outlook released by International Monetary Fund (IMF) the Indian Economy will grow by **11.5 per cent** in the FY 2021-22.
Note: India is the only major economy forecast to grow in double digits next year and forecast to follow that up with the highest 6.8% rise in the FY23 fiscal. The latest forecast for India's FY22 gross domestic product (GDP) marks an upward revision from the 8.8% growth the IMF had estimated in its last assessment in October.
- 51.** As per the 'World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021', produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), India's economy is projected to grow at **7.3 per cent** in 2021.
Note: The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021, produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), said the world economy was hit by a once-in-a-century crisis a Great Disruption unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The global economy shrank by 4.3 per cent last year, over two-and-a-half times more than during the global financial crisis of 2009. The modest recovery of 4.7 per cent expected in 2021 would barely offset the losses of 2020.
- 52.** Global financial services major HSBC has inaugurated its International Banking Unit (IBU) branch in **Gujarat**.
Note: HSBC is one of the earliest global financial institutions setting up a branch at India's GIFT City and was the first bank to get a licence from the newly set up International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), said a release by the company. HSBC's IBU branch at Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City) will be operational for customer transactions with effect from January 27.
- 53.** India government has signed a MoU with **International Energy Agency (IEA)** a strategic partnership agreement to strengthen cooperation in global energy security, stability and sustainability.
Note: This partnership will lead to an extensive exchange of knowledge and would be a stepping stone towards India becoming a full member of IEA. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Power Secretary Sanjiv Nandan Sahai and IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol.
- 54. Accenture** has ranked first most-valued IT services brand globally, according to a report by Brand Finance.
Note: According to a report by Brand Finance, Accenture retained the title of world's most valuable and strongest IT services brand with a record brand value of \$26 billion, while IBM continued at the second place with brand value of \$16.1 billion
- 55.** According to a report by Brand Finance, Indian IT firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) ranked at **Third** place.
Note: Four Indian IT services companies -- TCS, Infosys, HCL and Wipro -- secured spots in the top-10 global tally. TCS has celebrated strong revenue growth as demand grows for its core transformation services and through winning deals - worth over \$6.8 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020 alone.
- 56.** In accordance with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, overseas investment by domestic firms fell by over **42%**.
Note: Of the total FDI investment, USD 775.41 million was in the form of equity infusion, USD 382.91 million was in the form of loan, and USD 287.63 million was in the form of issuance of guarantee. In November 2020, the total outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) was also trimmed by 27% to USD 1.06 billion as compared to October 2020.
- 57. Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched Krishi Sakha App, a one-stop-shop for Indian farmers that offers them relevant information to cater their daily farming needs.
Note: The farmers through this app will also have access to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) portal for crop insurance related information. The aim of it is to empower farmers and educate them to enhance their farming knowledge and productivity.
- 58.** As per the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)'s recent Economic Outlook Survey, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to contract by **8 per cent**.
Note: The survey projected the Fiscal deficit for 2020-21 at 5%. It also expects the Indian economy will perform better and have a median GDP growth rate of 9.6% for the financial year 2021-22, with a minimum growth and maximum growth at 7.5% and 12.5% respectively.
- 59.** The government has approved closure of which loss-making state-owned firm **Scooters India Limited**.
Note: In a BSE filing, Scooters India said the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises has communicated that the competent authority has approved the closure. It has also cleared seeking a loan (with interest) of ₹ 65.12 crore required for the closure from the Government of India. The Scooters India brand name shall be sold separately as the company holds famous brands such as Lambretta, Vijai Super, Vikram and Lambro.
- 60.** According to the report titled "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021" by the United Nations Department

of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India in FY 2020-21 is estimated to contract by **9.6 per cent**.

Note: This projection is highest among major economies of the world. On the global front, the economy is contracted by 4.3%(-4.3%) in 2020 but it projected a recovery of 4.7% in 2021. Earlier, International Labour Organization (ILO) also released its 7th edition of report title "ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work" which states that in 2020, the world faced a job loss of 255 million jobs where South Asia accounted for 80 million.

61. According to the Futures Industry Association (FIA), which stock exchange remained the world's largest derivatives exchange for the second consecutive year in 2020 in terms of number of contracts traded **National Stock Exchange of India**.

Note: In addition, the bourse has been ranked fourth in the world in cash equities by number of trades by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) for calendar year 2020. In the capital market segment, NSE has listed T-bills (Treasury Bills) and SDLs (State Development Loans) facilitating investors to transact in these securities, in addition to the existing dated Government Securities (G-sec) available for trading.

Obituaries

- John Fulton Reid passed away recently, he was former cricketer of **New Zealand**.
Note: The Left-handed batsman was born on March 3, 1956 in Auckland, City in the North Island, New Zealand. He served as the New Zealand Test captain. He played 25 ODIs, 19 tests from 1979 to 1986, where he scored 633 runs in ODIs and 1296 runs in Tests. The test runs of him came at an average of 46.28, along with 6 centuries and 2 half centuries.
- Renowned personality Brian Urquhart, who played a central role in developing the U.N. practice of peacekeeping, passed away recently, he was a diplomat of **UK**.
Note: He was an early leader of the United Nations who played a central role in developing the U.N. practice of peacekeeping. Mr Urquhart, born in Bridport, England in 1919, served in British military and intelligence during World War II before becoming the second official hired by the U.N. after its formation in 1945.
- Olympic Medalist Michael Kindo Passed Away recently, he was associated with **Hockey** sports.
Note: He was born on 20th June 1947 in Odisha. Michael Kindo was a part of the Indian Hockey Team which won the Olympic bronze medal in the Munich Olympic 1972. He was also a part of the Indian team that won the 1975 Hockey World Cup held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Padma Shri awardee, Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar passed away recently, he was an iconic **Mountaineer**.
Note: He was born on 8th December 1933 in Rawalpindi, now in Pakistan. In 1964, he was the first Indian to climb Mount Nanda Devi. He climbed Mount Everest in 1965, Mount Blanc (highest peak in the Alps), and later Mount Kangchenchanga.
- Renowned personality Anil Panachooran passed away recently, he was a poet and lyricist of **Malayalam** language.
Note: He is a lawyer by profession. He was born on November 20, 1969 at Kayamkulam, Alappuzha, Kerala. His last lyrics were penned for the movie Within Seconds (2021). He made his debut in Malayalam industry through the film Makalkku(2005).
- Renowned personality Vilas Patil Undalkar passed away recently, he was a veteran **Politician**.
Note: He was born on 15th July 1938. He was elected has as the MLA for 7 times from the Karad South Assembly constituency for a record 35 consecutive years, i.e., from 1980 to 2014
- Renowned personality Satya Paul passed away recently, he was a veteran **Fashion Designer**.
Note: Paul started his journey in the field of retail in the late 60's and expanded to exports of Indian handloom products to high-end retail stores in Europe and America. In 1980, he launched the first 'saree boutique' in India, L'Affaire, and founded the eponymous fashion clothing brand with his son in 1986. The brand soon became synonymous for its sleek sarees.
- Turlapati Kutumba Rao passed away recently, he was a veteran **Journalist**.
Note: Mr. Rao had the distinction of being a personal secretary to Tanguturi Prakasam, the first Chief Minister of Andhra State. A native of Vijayawada, Mr. Rao had worked as editor and editorial writer of Telugu newspaper Andhra Jyothi for close to three-and-a-half decades. He won laurels for translating into Telugu the speeches of many national leaders and stalwarts.
- Renowned journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Neil Sheehan passed away recently was a citizen of **USA**.

- Note:** His account of the Vietnam War, *A Bright Shining Lie*: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam, took him 15 years to write. The 1988 book won the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction. Sheehan served as a war correspondent for United Press International and then the Times in the early days of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War in the 1960s.
- 10.** Veteran politician and former chief minister of **Gujarat** Madhavsinh Solanki passed away recently.
Note: Born on July 30, 1927, the nonagenarian leader was the chief minister of Gujarat four times and also Union external affairs minister. Under his leadership, the Congress rode to power in the Gujarat assembly in 1985, winning 149 of the 182 seats -- an electoral feat that has not been matched so far. Solanki, Congress stalwart had left active politics since last two decades as he was pursuing his passion for reading and writing.
- 11.** Famous Indian-American Ved Prakash Mehta passed away recently, he was a veteran **Novelist**.
Note: The New Yorker magazine, where he had been a staff writer for 33 years, reported that he had died on Saturday. Mehta provided the first introduction to India for many contemporary Americans through his popular books and articles that ranged from the autobiographical to the political and historic.
- 12.** Renowned personality Prof Shashikumar Madhusudan (M.) Chitre, passed away, he was a famous **Astrophysicist**.
Note: He is the recipient of Padma Bhushan. He was born on May 7, 1936 in India. He retired as a senior professor from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, in 2001. He served as the visiting professor of many universities across the world namely, University of Columbia, University of Virginia among others.
- 13.** Renowned personality Sheldon Adelson passed away recently, he was associated with **Casino**.
Note: Adelson, whose net worth was estimated by Forbes to be around \$33 billion, had been among the most-watched donors supporting President Trump's 2020 reelection effort. He was a staunch supporter of Israel.
- 14.** Renowned personality D Prakash Rao passed away recently, he was a veteran **Social Activist**.
Note: He was basically a tea seller based in Cuttack, who spent his entire earning to educate slum children, through the school 'Asha O Ashwasana', which he started in 2000. He was conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2019 for his contribution towards boosting the value of education among slum kids in Cuttack. Apart from this, Rao was also a well-known blood donor.
- 15.** Renowned personality Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passed away recently, he was a veteran **Classical Musician**.
Note: Born on March 3, 1931 in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh, Khan was the eldest son in a family of four brothers and three sisters. His father, Ustad Waris Hussain Khan was the son of celebrated musician Ustad Murred Baksh, while his mother, Sabri Begum, was the daughter of Ustad Inayat Husain Khan, credited as the founder of the Rampur-Sahaswan gharana of music. Khan got his basic classical music training from his father and later studied music under his cousin, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan.
- 16.** Renowned personality Dr V Shanta passed away, she was a famous **Oncologist**.
Note: Dr V Shanta was known for her work on cancer care and for building the Cancer Institute with her mentor. The institute is known for providing state-of-the-art health care to all patients, irrespective of their economic condition. Dr V Shanta's work won several awards, including the Magsaysay Award, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan. Dr Shanta was active till her hospitalisation.
- 17.** Co-founder of Precision Automation and Robotics India (PARI) **Mangesh Kale** passed away recently.
Note: Kale had set up the company along with Ranjit Date in 1990. PARI, which is a leading provider of turnkey solutions in industrial and robotic automation was sold to Wipro Infrastructure for an undisclosed sum in December 2020. Anand Deshpande, founder of Persistent Systems, another Pune-headquartered firm tweeted saying this was a great personal loss.
- 18.** Renowned personality Kamal Morarka has passed away recently he was a veteran **Industrialist and Union Minister**.
Note: The 74-year-old leader, a businessman who was also a former BCCI vice president. He was incumbent president of Samajwadi Janata Party (Chandra Shekhar). He was elected to **Rajya Sabha in 1988**.
- 19.** Renowned politician Mata Prasad passed away recently, he was former governor of **Arunachal Pradesh**.
Note: Former Arunachal Governor Mata Prasad has passed away at the age of 95. He served as minister in the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh in 1988-89 and appointed as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in 1993.
- 20.** Renowned personality Unnikrishnan Namboothiri has passed recently, he was veteran **Actor**.
Note: The actor, who had charmed viewers with his benevolent grandfather roles, died a day after it was reported that he had recovered from COVID-19. The actor had started his career in the 1990s when he was well over 70 years of age. But his performances have

- seeped into the psyche of cinema lovers. Some of his notable works are Kaliyattam, Kalyana Raman, Madhuranombarakattu, Pokkiri Raja and Rappakal.
- 21.** Renowned personality Cloris Leachman passed away recently, she was a veteran **actor**.
Note: A character actor of extraordinary range, Leachman defied typecasting. In her early television career, she appeared as Timmy's mother on the "Lassie" series. She played a frontier prostitute in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," a crime spree family member in "Crazy Mama," and Blucher in Mel Brooks' "Young Frankenstein," in which the very mention of her name drew equine commentary.
- 22.** Larry King, iconic radio and television host, who passed away hailed from **USA**.
Note: The company he co-founded, Ora Media, did not state a cause of death but media reports said King had been battling Covid-19 for weeks and had suffered several health problems in recent years.
- 23.** Renowned personality Narendra Chanchal passed away recently, he was a veteran **Bhajan singer**.
Note: He sang a Bollywood song Beshak Mandir Masjid for the 1973 film Bobby and won Filmfare Best Male Playback Award. Some of his ever-popular bhajans include Chalo Bulawa Aaya Hai, Tune Mujhe Bulaya Sherawaliye, Ambe Tu Hai Jagadambe Kali, Hanuman Chalisa, Sankat Mochan Naam Tiharo, Ram Se Bada Ram Ka Naam among others.
- 24.** Renowned sportsperson Prasanta Dora passed away, he was associated with **Football sports**.
Note: He was represented Tollygunge Atragami, Calcutta Port Trust, Mohammedan Sporting, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal in domestic football. He has also adjudged the Best Goalkeeper when Bengal lifted back-to-back **Santosh Trophy** titles in 1997-98 and 99.

Important Days

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) observed the 63rd Foundation Day on **1st January, 2021**.
Note: DRDO was established in 1958 with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in the Defence sector. At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for Indian Armed Forces.
- World Braille Day is observed globally every year on **4th January**.
Note: The day is celebrated to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people. The day is marked remembering the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille – for people with visual disabilities. Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in the town of Coupvray in northern France.
- The World Day of War Orphans is observed every year on **6th January**.
Note: The day aims to raise awareness about children who have been orphaned due to wars. The objective of the day is to spread awareness about the predicament of war orphans and highlight the emotional, social, and physical challenges they face while growing up.
- The theme of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention to be organized on 9th January 2021 -- **Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat**.
Note: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention is the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs and provides an important platform to engage and connect with the overseas Indians. In view of the sentiments of our vibrant diaspora community, the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, is being organized on 9th January 2021, despite the ongoing Covid pandemic.
- The World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on **10th January**.
Note: The day was observed as on this day in 1975, India's former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurated the first World Hindi Conference. The basic aim of observing this day is to promote the Hindi language worldwide.
- The theme of 'National Youth Day 2021' observed every year on 12th January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda -- **'YUVAAH – Utsah Naye Bharat Ka'**.
Note: National Youth Day is celebrated in India every year on 12 January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The day was declared by the Government of India in 1984 while the event was first celebrated in 1985. The main aim behind this is to make sure that the students across the country can be encouraged to learn about the life, the ideas and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and apply them in their lives.
- In India, the Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each year on **14 January**.
Note: In India, the Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each year on 14 January since 2017 to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice of our veterans in the service of the nation. The day was initially called Armistice Day. 2021 marks the 5th Armed Forces Veterans Day.
- Ministry of Transport and Highways has decided to observe Road Safety Month from **18 January to 17 February 2021**.

- Note:** During this period, various nation-wide activities have been planned to be conducted throughout the country in association with the state governments/ UT administrations, OEMs and other stakeholders. The month-long event will see awards being given to best performance in road safety to a state as well as Swachhta Award, road safety activities by NHIDCL (National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited), HOAI (Highway Operator Association of India), NHAH among others.
9. The Army Day in India is celebrated every year on **15th January**
Note: India is celebrating its 73rd Army Day on 15 January 2021. On 15 January, 1949, then Lieutenant General KM Cariappa took over as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.
 10. The theme of the 'Swachhata Pakhwada' organized by the 'National Cadet Corps, NCC at India Gate, New Delhi -- '**Clean India, Green India, Yeh Hai Mera Dream India**'.
Note: The event was inaugurated by Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar. The theme of this Swachhata Pakhwada is 'Clean India, Green India, Yeh Hai Mera Dream India'. During the Swachhata Pakhwada the NCC cadets will keep Rajpath clean for the Republic Day Parade - 2021 by spreading awareness through displaying banners, distribution of pamphlets and showcasing Swachhata through Nukkad Nataks.
 11. The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Raising Day** celebrated every year on -- **19th January**.
Note: The NDRF came into existence on January 19, 2006. The specialised task force has been constituted for "special response to a threatening disaster situation or a disaster." National Disaster Management Authority is the parent body of the NDRF. Located at 12 different locations in the country, there are 12 NDRF battalions.
 12. The government of India has decided to celebrate 'Parakram Diwas' every year on which date the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose -- **23rd January**.
Note: The Day will be mark to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation. The Government of India has decided to celebrate the 125th birth anniversary year of Netaji beginning from January 2021 in befitting manner at national and international level.
 13. National Girl Child Day in India is celebrated every year on **24th January**.
Note: National Girl Child day 2021 is being celebrated across the country with the objective of raising awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR).The celebrations will also mark the anniversary of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme.
 14. International Day of Education is observed every year on **24th January**.
Note: Every year, International Education Day is celebrated with a unique theme. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's theme for International Education Day is "Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation."
 15. The National Voters Day is observed every year on **25th January**.
Note:The Election Commission was founded in 1950 on this day. The occasion was first celebrated in 2011.This year's theme is "Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed". One focus this year is highlighting the EC's feat of running elections safely during the pandemic.
 16. National Tourism Day is observed every year on **25th January** in India.
Note: It is not known when exactly this day came about. However, in 1948, a Tourist Traffic Committee was formed to promote tourism. The first regional offices of the same were established in Delhi and Mumbai. Three years later, in 1951, more offices were added in Kolkata and Chennai.
 17. International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on **26th January**.
Note: It is the day designated to honour the custom officials and agencies for their function in taking care of the flow of goods across the world borders. 2021 will witness the theme of "Customs bolstering recovery, renewal and resilience" which will focus on the endeavours of customs to emerge from the pandemic crisis and help people.
 18. 'Data Privacy Day' is observed every year on **28th January** to create awareness and promote privacy and data protection.
Note: The main motto is to enhance awareness among businesses and users about protecting the privacy of their personal information online. Recently there has been a hue and cry from different sections of people when WhatsApp has announced data transfer of its users to it' parent organisation the Facebook.
 19. Every year, Martyrs' Day is observed on **30th January**.
Note: The day is marked the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, known as the father of the nation, across the country. Martyrs' Day or 'Shaheed Diwas' aims to pay tribute to the freedom fighters who lost their lives fighting for the freedom, welfare and progress of our nation.

New Appointments

1. **P Ravi Kumar** has been appointed as the 38th Chief Secretary of Karnataka.
Note: P Ravi Kumar will hold this post until May 2022, i.e., till he attains the age of 60. Prior to his appointment, P Ravi Kumar was the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of Karnataka govt and was ACS of Karnataka CM, BS Yediyurappa. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, a 1981-batch IAS officer was appointed as CS of Karnataka govt in 2018.
2. **Suneet Sharma** has been appointed as the New Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Railway Board under the Ministry of Railways.
Note: He takes over the charge from the incumbent VK Yadav upon the completion of his term as the Chairman and CEO of the board on 31st December 2020. Previously Suneet Sharma served as the General Manager of the Eastern Railway. He is also appointed as the ex-officio Principal Secretary to the Government of India.
3. **Umesh Sinha** has been appointed as the deputy election commissioner in the Election Commission of India.
Note: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved extension in the term of reemployment of Sinha as deputy election commissioner on contract basis for a period of six months beyond December 31, 2020. Sinha is a part of a committee set up by the Election Commission to look into the issue of revising the election expenditure of candidates during campaigning.
4. **Soma Mondal** has taken over as first-ever woman head of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).
Note: Before joining SAIL as a Director, Mondal was the Director (Commercial) at fellow Central public sector enterprise, National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO). In a company statement, Mondal said that the first target is to improve the financial performance of SAIL.
5. **Nancy Pelosi** has been elected as the as the speaker of US House of Representatives for the 117th Congress.
Note: The House voted 216-209 to reinstate Pelosi, after Democrats lost 11 seats in the November elections to command a narrower 222-212 majority. Five Democrats chose not to support her - two voted for Democratic lawmakers who were not running, while three others simply voted "present."
6. **Major General Gautam Chauhan** has been appointed as the first Additional Director General-ADG (Human Rights-HR) in the newly created Human Rights cell in the Indian Army.
Note: He will function under the Indian Army Vice Chief Lieutenant General SK Saini. This is the 1st time, Indian army has appointed a major general rank officer to examine the human rights issue and suggest means to better the track record of the force. This appointment is part of the ongoing restructuring of Indian Army headquarters.
7. **Ram Vinay Shahi** will head the high-level group named "South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE)" for the development of South Asia energy security architecture set up by the Government of India.
Note: It has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)-run think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). The development of South Asia-focused energy security architecture is on the lines of India's neigh-bourhood-first policy under which Cross-border energy trade is a key part. The energy architect by India includes cross-border electricity trade, supplying petroleum products and setting up liquefied natural gas terminals.
8. **Karan Bajwa** has been appointed as the leader of Google Cloud for Asia-Pacific region.
Note: Presently, Bajwa leads Google Cloud in India. He will lead all regional revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud, including on Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and Google Workspace.
9. According to the **Global Economic Prospects** (GEP-January 2021) report released by the World Bank (WB), India is expected to grow at **5.4%** in the Financial Year (FY) 2021-22.
Note: Global Economy is expected to expand by 4% in 2021. The major causes of India's contraction are sharp declines in household spending & private investment. The report also states that Vaccine Deployment & Investments as the need to sustain the Global recovery.
10. **Ashish Pethe** has been appointed as the chairman of the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC).
Note: Pethe has been closely associated with GJC and was the Zonal Chairman West, which he will continue even after this new position.
11. **Sanjay Kapoor** has been appointed as the president of the All India Chess Federation (AICF).
Note: Kapoor, representing Uttar Pradesh Chess Association, defeated incumbent P R Venketrama Raja in a close contest. Kapoor received 33 votes as against 31 of Raja.Naresh Sharma, belonging to the Chauhan faction, was elected as treasurer, beating Kishore Bandekar 34-30. The AICF has been split into two factions, one led by Raja and the other by Chauhan.
12. **Hima Kohli** has been appointed as the first woman chief justice of Telangana High Court.
Note: She is the first woman chief justice of the state. She came here from Delhi high court. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered the oath of office to her. Justice Hima Kohli got enrolled as an Advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi. She was appointed as an Additional Judge of the High Court of Delhi on 29 May, 2006.

- 13. Raj Iyer** has been appointed as the first Chief Information Officer of the US Army, after the Pentagon created the position in July 2020.
Note: One of the highest-ranking Indian-American civilians in the US Department of Defense, Raj Iyer, who holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering, serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Army and directs representation of the secretary in matters relating to information management/information technology (IT). Equivalent in rank to a three-star General, Raj Iyer will supervise an annual budget of USD 16 billion for the US Army's IT operations.
- 14. Rabi Narayan Mishra** has been appointed as full-time Director of the College of Supervisors (CoS), which was set up by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to further broaden and strengthen the supervisory skills among RBI's regulatory and supervisory staff.
Note: The College of Supervisors (CoS) has now been fully operationalized for effective supervision of the regulated entities. It was set up by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in May 2020 to further broaden and strengthen the supervisory skills among RBI's regulatory and supervisory staff at entry level and on a continuous basis.
- 15. Sabrina Singh** has been appointed as Deputy Press Secretary to the Vice President in the White House.
Note: Singh was Press Secretary to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on the Biden-Harris campaign. Prior to her role on the campaign, Singh served as senior spokesperson for Mike Bloomberg's presidential campaign and National Press Secretary for Cory Booker's presidential campaign.
- 16. RS Sharma** has been appointed as the head of a 10-member empowered committee for administration of COVID-19 vaccine by the Government of India.
Note: The members of the committee comprises senior officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The committee can invite distinguished persons when there is a need to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine through Co-WIN app.
- 17. Jai Shah** has been named as the official representative of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Board meetings.
Note: Shah is the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). He will replace BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, who was currently representing India at the ICC Board, but he suffered a heart condition recently and had to be admitted to hospital where he underwent primary angioplasty.
- 18. Japarov Sadyr Nurgojoevich** was elected as the president of **Kyrgyzstan**.
Note: He served as the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan till 14th November 2020 after which his official powers in office are suspended due to the pending results of the January 2021 presidential election. He served as the acting president of the country after the resignation of Sooronbay Jeenbekov. After his resignation, Talant Mamytov, speaker of Kyrgyzstan's Parliament became the acting president of the country.
- 19. Samantha Power** has been nominated as the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) by US President-elect Joe Biden.
Note: If confirmed by the Senate, Power, 50, will head the agency which oversees US foreign humanitarian and development aid, Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. Biden also announced that he is elevating the position to the National Security Council within the White House.
- 20. Nazhat Shameem Khan** has been elected as president of UN Human Rights Council in an unprecedented secret ballot, She is an ambassador of **Fiji** to the UN body.
Note: The island nation's ambassador in Geneva, Nazhat Shameem Khan, beat off competition from Bahrain and Uzbekistan to lead the only intergovernmental global body to promote and protect human rights worldwide. Khan, who served as the council's vice president in 2020 and is considered a rights champion, won with 29 out of 47 votes. Bahrain's ambassador and his Uzbek counterpart received 14 and four votes, respectively.
- 21. Sandeep Aggarwal** has been appointed as the chairman of Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC).
Note: Aggarwal, the **Managing Director** and Promoter of Delhi-based Paramount Communications, will take over from Shyamal Ghosh. TEPC is an independent body set up by the government to promote and develop the export of telecom equipment and services. Aggarwal is also the Chief Mentor of PHDCCI's Telecom Committee, besides being the Chairman of Telecom Equipment Manufacturers Association (TEMA) and President of Railway Cable Development Association.
- 22. Narendra Modi** has been appointed as the Chairman of the Somnath Temple Trust.
Note: He becomes the second Prime Minister who has been appointed the chairman of the temple trust after former PM Morarji Desai. As per trust records, PM Modi has become the eighth chairman of the trust. The post of the Somnath Trust's chairman fell vacant after the death of the incumbent, former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel, in October last year.
- 23. Kiren Rijiju** has been assigned the additional charge of the Ministry of AYUSH during the hospitalization and treatment of AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik following a road accident.
Note: The move was necessitated as Shripad Yesso Naik, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the

- Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Goa. Mr Naik, 68, was admitted to the hospital on January 12 after he met with an accident while on his way back to Goa from Karnataka.
- 24. Vishwavir Ahuja** has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the RBL Bank for three years.
Note: The bank has recommended this re-appointment to the Reserve Bank of India(RBI) for approval. He has been the MD& CEO of RBL bank since June 30, 2010. Earlier to joining RBL Bank in July 2010, he was the MD & CEO of Bank of America, India from 2001 to 2009.
- 25. Sanjeev Kumar** has been appointed as the new Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL).
Note: According to an order from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Kumar has been appointed to the post for a period of five years from the date of assumption of the charge of the post, or till the age of superannuation, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He is currently serving as Director (Technical) in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL).
- 26. Siddhartha Mohanty** has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of India's largest insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).
Note: Currently, he is serving as the managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of LIC Housing Finance. He will serve as the MD of LIC till his superannuation on June 30, 2023. Mohanty will be replacing TC Suseel Kumar, who is set to retire on January 31, 2021.
- 27. Jayati Ghosh** has been appointed to the **20-members High-Level Advisory Board of United Nations** that will provide recommendations for the U.N. Secretary-General to respond to the current and future socio-economic challenges in the post-COVID-19 world.
Note: Ghosh, 65, is a professor of economics at University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has taught economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University for nearly 35 years and has authored several books. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) announced that the 20 "prominent personalities, globally renowned for their intellectual leadership in economic and social fields, will form the second United Nations High-level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Economic and Social Affairs."
- 28. Justice Gita Mittal** has been appointed as the new chairperson of Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC).
Note: Justice Mittal succeeds former Supreme Court Judge, Justice Vikramajit Sen, whose tenure as BCCC chairperson has ended. Having served as the first woman Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, she is also the first woman chairperson of BCCC.
- 29. J K Shivan** has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of **Dhanlaxmi Bank**.
Note: It may be recalled that the shareholders of the Kerala-based had voted against MD & CEO Sunil Gurbaxani On September 30, 2020. Then, in December that year, the lender appointed Shivan as the new MD & CEO. However, the banking regulator, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), had asked the Dhanlaxmi Bank Board to get shareholders' approval before appointing J K Shivan as the next chief of the bank.
- 30. Treasury secretary of USA - Janet Yellen.**
Note: Yellen steps into the role with some advantages: She is well known and well respected among lawmakers of both parties, and she has experience with enormous economic challenges. The 74-year-old previously broke barriers as the first female Fed chief.
- 31. Antony Blinken** has been sworn in as the new U.S. Secretary of State.
Note: Blinken will become America's top diplomat as the world confronts a confluence of threats: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and a great-power competition that increasingly pits the United States against China on trade, technology and other issues. Blinken will be charged with unraveling much of President Donald Trump's foreign policy, which made even some of his most ardent Republican supporters squeamish.
- 32. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa** has been re-elected as the president of **Portugal**.
Note: He belongs to Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata-PSD). He was elected as the president for 1st term in 2016. He was one of the founders of the People's Democratic Party, later the Social Democratic Party, and was party leader from 31 March 1996 to 27 May 1999.
- 33. Swaminathan Janakiraman** has been appointed as the new Managing Director of State Bank of India (SBI) for a period of 3 years.
Note: Swaminathan Janakiraman was serving as the deputy MD(finance) of SBI. Ashwini Kumar Tewari was serving as MD and Chief Executive Officer(CEO)of SBI Card, a subsidiary of SBI. The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) in October 2020 recommended their names for post of MD at SBI.
- 34. Kaja Kallas** has been appointed as the first female Prime Minister of **Estonia**.
Note: She succeeds Jüri Ratas. She is the leader of the Reform party. The 15-member Cabinet of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas is a coalition of 2 parties namely, Reform Party & Centre Party.
- 35. Thomas Bach** re-elected second term as President of **International Olympic Committee**.
Note: Mr Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC

session in March in Athens. Bach was initially elected for an eight-year term as Olympic chief in September 2013, taking over from Belgian Jacques Rogge. If re-elected,

Bach's term will end in 2025, a year after the Paris Olympics.

Important News – India

- V. Muraleedharan** has launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and Mobile application to connect with 3.12 Crore Indian Diaspora across the world.
Note: The portal web interface will be used by Indian Missions whereas the mobile app will be used by diaspora & Indian nationals. The portal will be used by MEA for sharing information on Visa, Passport & other activities like consular services, conducting surveys and news about events organised by missions. It will also connect the Indian diaspora community to connect them to new & existing Government schemes.
 - National Metrology Conclave 2020 was organized in **New Delhi**.
Note: The theme of the conclave is 'Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurated the conclave.
 - Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' laid the foundation stone of the buildings for School of Engineering and Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management and Entrepreneurship in **Jawaharlal Nehru University**.
Note: Pokhriyal expressed his delight at the naming the School of Management after late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was not only a visionary Prime Minister of India, but an inspiring author too.
 - Hubbali, Karnataka** railway station is set to get the "world's longest railway platform" of 1500 plus meters' length and 10 meters width.
Note: The construction of the platform is done with an expenditure of Rs. 90 core for remodeling of wards, building work, signalling, third entrance construction, electrical and other related works. This project is a part of doubling between Hubbali and Bengaluru which is underway since November 2019.
 - 4th Global Ayurveda Festival 2021(GAF2021) will be organized in **Kerala**.
Note: The event, which showcases Ayurveda as a global treatment programme, will serve as a meeting place for those working towards this goal around the world. The festival, which was scheduled to be held in Angamaly from May 16 to 20 last year was postponed due to COVID-19.
 - Under chairmanship of **R P Tiwari** the University Grants Commission has set up a 7-member committee to look at the possibility and review the feasibility of holding the Common Entrance Test at undergraduate level from the next academic year in central universities.
- Note:** The committee is headed by Raghavendra P Tiwari, Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Punjab. If CET is implemented, the National Testing Agency(NTA) will be responsible to conduct this test and a common exam for a discipline at least twice a year for admission to Central universities.
 - 1.9 Km long Feni Bridge also known as Maitree Setu will connect which **Tripura** state with Bangladesh scheduled to be operational soon.
Note: It provides access to the Chittagong seaport and is all set to be opened in a few months. Its construction was started in 2017 but it got delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic. The bridge has been taken over by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), the project execution authority which will recheck the safety standard of the work.
 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation for **six** Light House Projects (LHPs).
Note: These will be developed as a part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India) initiative under which 1,000 houses at each location are to be constructed in a year (12 months), using six distinct technologies. GHTC-India aims to adopt innovative technologies in the housing construction sector.
 - The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** (FSSAI) has capped the amount of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to **3%** for 2021.
Note: The country's food regulatory body notified the amendment on December 29, more than a year after it issued a draft on the subject for consultation with stakeholders. The revised regulation applies to edible refined oils, vanaspati (partially hydrogenated oils), margarine, bakery shortenings, and other mediums of cooking such as vegetable fat spreads and mixed fat spreads. Trans fats are associated with increased risk of heart attacks and death from coronary heart disease.
 - The five day long 'National Folk Dance Festival' 2020 was held in **Jammu**.
Note: A 5 day long 'National Folk Dance Festival' was held in Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory- JKUT) from December 26, 2020. It was organised by the North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala (Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India) jointly with Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.
 - The DRDO has signed an MoU with **Maha Metro** Rail Corporation to render technical support to implement

the advanced biodigester Mk II technology to treat human waste in Metro Rail Network.

Note: The MoU was signed by Dr DK Dubey, Director DRDE, Gwalior and Atul Gadgil, Director, Maha-Metro Rail Corporation Limited, Pune, as per an official release. DRDO's biodigester is an indigenous, green and cost-effective technology, with a rare distinction of having one of the largest numbers of DRDO-licences (ToT holders).

12. Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', virtually laid foundation stone for India's first Test bed for Autonomous Navigation Systems in **IIT Hyderabad**.
Note: Department of Science & Technology, Government of India sanctioned INR 135 Crore to IIT Hyderabad under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to establish 'TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad'. An area of 2 acres of land has been allocated in IIT Hyderabad campus for the setting up of a hub. 'TiHAN Foundation' was incorporated as a Section-8 company by the institute in June 2020.
13. India flagged off the 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (40-ISEA) from **Mormugao Port, Goa**.
Note: The Expedition will have 43 members and the chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasiliy Golovnin will take the team to Antarctica. On return, the vessel will bring back the members of the 39th Expedition. The Ministry of Earth Science launched the expedition. National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research (NCPOR), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is the implementation agency of the Indian Antarctic Programme.
14. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Inaugurated India's 1st of its kind Migrant Worker Cell at **Surat, Gujarat**.
Note: An initiative of Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) it aims to help Migrants from Odia & other parts of the country working in different industries of Surat. The cell will be based at iLab, Udhna, Surat and has been created under the 'National Urban Livelihood Mission Scheme'.
15. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission signed an MoU with **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** to supply of 1,72,000 cotton durries every year.
Note: The agreement has been signed for one year which will be renewed thereafter. The development comes after Home Minister Amit Shah gave instructions to the paramilitary forces to encourage local products to support the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. The cotton durries will be produced by Khadi artisans in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.
16. In collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA) **Central University of Punjab, Bathinda** has organized the Virtual International

Akhand Conference 'EDUCON 2020', inaugurated by the Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

- Note:** This two-day International Conference is being organized by Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA). The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 is "Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace".
17. The government of India has formulated a New Industrial Development Scheme for Union Territories **Jammu and Kashmir**.
Note: The government of India has formulated a New Industrial Development Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir (J&K IDS, 2021) as the Central Sector Scheme for the Development of Industries in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The main purpose of the scheme is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio-economic development of the area.
 18. Under chairmanship of **G Kishan Reddy** the Union Government has decided to form a committee to find a solution to issues associated with preservation of Ladakh's land, culture and language.
Note: A 10-member delegation from Ladakh met Home Minister Amit Shah Wednesday. The delegation is learnt to have expressed concern over threat to the region's unique culture, language and demography due to recent changes brought about by the Centre to the status of the region. The delegation included former MPs Thiksay Rinpoche and Thupstan Chhewang, former BJP minister Chering Dorjay, Leh chief executive councillor Tashi Gyalson and sitting BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal.
 19. The Central government has sanctioned Rs 37.87 crore for the facelift of Parshuram Kund pilgrimage site located in **Arunachal Pradesh**.
Note: Parshuram Kund is one of the most sacred places in the country which is visited by a large number of pilgrims throughout the year and thousands of people take a holy dip in the Lohit river during Makar Sankranti. It is expected to boost the livelihood of the locals & socio-economic development of the area.
 20. The theme of Virtual International Akhand Conference 'EDUCON 2020' -- **Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace**.
Note: The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 was Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace. This two-day International Conference is being organized by Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA).
 21. **Ajit Doval** represented India in the Annual India and France Strategic Dialogue 2021 to discuss regional and global issues.

- Note:** The key focus areas of discussions were Covid-19 vaccines, cooperation within the Indo-Pacific area, nuclear, space, maritime safety, environment, digital economy, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity and defence sectors. The last edition of the Strategic Dialogue was held in February 2020 in Paris, France. It is held with the two countries as alternating as hosts.
22. Public sector company **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to establish Clean & Energy Efficient Interventions at NHAI Establishments.
Note: EESL will set up Solar Power Projects, energy efficient LED lighting and EV Charging stations at NHAI establishments. The MoU was signed in the presence of Rajeev Sharma, Chairman, EESL & RK Pandey, Member-Projects, NHAI.
23. **Amit Shah** has launched the 'Single Window Clearance System' for coal mines.
Note: The platform is expected to ease the process of obtaining clearances for the smooth operationalisation of coal mines. It will help in reducing the time taken to grant approvals in the sector. The Unified platform will reduce the need for companies to approach different for operationalisation of coal mines, which is the main cause for delay.
24. India's rank in the Henley Passport Index 2021 released by Henley & Partners, based on the exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) -- **85th**.
Note: Last year, India held 84th position. Indian passport got a score of 58, which means Indian passport holders get to visit 58 countries without prior visa. India shared the rank with Tajikistan. Japan, once again topped the list with a visa-free score of 191. The nation has been holding the position for three consecutive years, either solely or jointly, with Singapore. This year, Singapore sits at the second position with 190 countries.
25. Bharti Airtel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)** for the digital transformation of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in order to achieve the goal of "Atma Nirbhar Bharat".
Note: With this MSMEs will be served with business automation and connectivity needs viz. data/voice connectivity, marketing solutions, cloud security and collaboration. Under this assistance, NSIC aggregates services of various technology providers as per the needs of MSME.
26. India's rank in the Arton Capital Passport Index 2021 -- **61st**.
- Note:** Sweden, Finland and Spain all ranked second, with a mobility score of 133. While all the passport holders of all the three countries require visas for 65 countries, the Swedish passport holders can go to 99 countries without requiring a visa, and to 34 countries on a visa-on-arrival arrangement. Passports of Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and New Zealand ranked at the third place, with all the countries having a mobility score of 132, requiring a visa for 66 countries.
27. **Subhash Chandra Khuntia** will head the 'Health Insurance Advisory Committee' set up by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) to examine the availability of health insurance products in the country.
Note: The expert committee will be headed by IRDAI Chairperson, Subhash Chandra Khuntia and will have a Member (Non-Life) as the vice-chairperson. The committee, which has a term of one year.
28. Under **Preeti Pant** chairmanship the Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a committee to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey-5.
Note: The Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a technical expert group to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey-5 and "recommend programmatic and policy interventions to improve" indicators pertaining to malnutrition, stunting, anaemia, and C-section. The committee is chaired by Joint Secretary Preeti Pant and includes experts from medicine and nutrition. There are also State programme officers from Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.
29. **Apur Sansar** was the inaugural film of Kolkata International Film Festival 2021.
Note: Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, the brand ambassador of West Bengal virtually attended the inaugural ceremony from Mumbai. As a part of the 26th KIFF, 81 full length movies and 50 short films and documentaries from more than 45 countries will be screened at 8 venues which include the state run halls, Nandan, Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta Information centre, Sisir Mancha and others. "Apur Sansar" by Satyajit Ray was screened as the inaugural film.
30. India's rank in the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world -- **10th**.
Note: The total value of these 11 companies grew 14 per cent and has been pegged at \$805 billion or nearly a third of the Indian GDP. All these companies in the list of non-state enterprises have gained in value during 2020, which was hit by the pandemic, barring tobacco major ITC and second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank, as per the Hurun Global 500 report.

- 31. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** has launched a month-long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about green and clean energy.
Note: The pan-India campaign will focus on the adoption of cleaner fuels. They include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive biofuels and increased use of electric vehicles.
- 32. Prarambh: Startup India International Summit 2021** was held in **New Delhi**.
Note: The Summit is being organizing by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, M/o Commerce & Industry, as a follow up of the announcement made by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the 4th BIM. 6STEC Summit held in Kathmandu in August, 2018. Declaring the Summit open, the Minister of Railways, Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal said that the Summit is a demonstration of neighbourhood first policy which will booster partnership among the member countries.
- 33. Rajnath Singh** unveiled India's first indigenously designed and developed 'Driverless Metro Car' manufactured by Bharat Earth Movers Limited.
Note: The 'Driverless Metro Car' are being manufactured by BEML for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) MRS1 project. The project needs 576 cars which will be supplied by January 2024. In this regard, BEML recently opened its Depot office at Charkop Metro Depot, MMRDA, Mumbai for commissioning, testing and round-the- clock services for Driverless Metro cars.
- 34. Total outlay of the Third Phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0) 2020-21** aims to provide training to around 8 Lakh candidates -- **948.90 crore**.
Note: The PMKVY 3.0 has been designed based on the learnings from the previous 2 editions PMKVY 1.0 (2015-16) & PMKVY 2.0 (2016-2020). PMKVY 3.0 aims to provide training to around 8 Lakh candidates during the period of 2020-21 with an outlay of INR 948.90 Crore. It will be implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and will focus on demand-driven skill development, digital technology & Industry 4.0 skills.
- 35. According to a report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), India Collected 10% of e-waste generated in 2018-19.**
Note: In 2017-18, India generated 7, 08, 445 Tonnes of which only 3.5% was collected. Further the amount of e-waste generated increased by 32% to 1, 014, 961 tonnes in 2019-20. In September, 2020, CPCB had issued show-cause notices to 186 producers for not meeting collection targets for 2018-19.
- 36. Ministry of Panchayati Raj** has received the SKOCH Challenger Award under "Transparency in Governance" category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms.
Note: Ministry of Panchayati Raj received the SKOCH Challenger Award conferred under "Transparency in Governance" category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms leading to outcome-based performance improvement, better transparency and strengthening of the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country. The SKOCH Challenger Award for best performance in the area of Transparency in Governance was given virtually during the 70th SKOCH Summit.
- 37. The Indian Farm Forestry Development Co-operative Ltd (IFFDC)** entered into an MoU with **TRIFED** entity to work together for tribal livelihood generation.
Note: The two organizations have agreed to partner with each other to organise training programmes for tribal artisans in the area of entrepreneurship skill and business development. They will also collaborate further to identify and implement Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and tribal development efforts.
- 38. NITI Aayog** releases the India Innovation Index on the line Global Innovation Index.
Note: The India Innovation Index-2020 seeks to rank the States and Union Territories based on their relative performance of supporting innovation and to empower them to improve their innovation policies by highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The ranking methodology is designed in a way that states can draw lessons from the national leaders in innovation. The States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States, and nine City States and Union Territories, for effectively comparing their performance. The States and Union Territories have been ranked on two broad categories: outcome and governance
- 39. India's rank in the "Global Firepower Index 2021"** that ranks the countries based on their potential military strength -- **4th**.
Note: Each country is evaluated on a multitude of factors related to a prolonged offensive or defensive military campaign. USA topped the Index with 904 attack helicopters and eleven aircraft carriers and sixty-eight submarines and 40,000 armoured fighting vehicles. USA was followed by Russia with 189 fighter aircrafts and 538 attack helicopters. China ranked at third place with 1,200 combat aircrafts and 327 attack helicopters and seventy-nine submarines.

- 40. Jaya Jaitley** was the chairman of the **10-member** task force set up by the Union Govt to evaluate the marriageable age of girls which has submitted its recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office and the Women and Child Development Ministry.
Note: The Committee has sent its recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office and the Women and Child Development Ministry. The committee was tasked with examining the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood with health, medical well-being and nutritional status of mother and neonate/infant/child, during pregnancy, birth and thereafter, key parameters like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), Child Sex Ratio (CSR) etc.
- 41.** In collaboration with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will establish a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country.
Note: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) will establish a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country, to accelerate quantum computing-led research and development (R&D) and enable new scientific discoveries. The MeitY Quantum Computing Applications Lab will provide quantum computing as a service to government ministries and departments, researchers, scientists, academia, and developers, to enable advances in areas such as manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and aerospace engineering.
- 42.** The Global Risk Report is published by **World Economic Forum(WEF)**.
Note: The findings of the report are based on the Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS) undertaken by over 650 members of WEF's diverse leadership communities. The Report is prepared with Strategic Partners, Marsh McLennan in Partnership with SK Group and Zurich Insurance Group. The report is being released before WEF's upcoming virtual Davos Agenda scheduled to be held between January 25-29, 2021.
- 43.** The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) signed an MoU with **DRDO** to boost collaboration in the field of technical exchange & cooperation on sustainable Geo-hazard management.
Note: This initiative will ensure safety of road users on NHs in the country against the adverse effects of landslides and other natural calamities.
- 44.** The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the new Joint Venture Company (JVC) for an investment of Rs.5281.94 crore in Ratle Hydro Electric Project (850 MW). It is located **Chenab** river.
Note: The project is located on river Chenab, in Kishtwar district of Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It will be commissioned within 60 months. The life cycle of the project will be 40 years.
- 45.** Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed an agreement with **Himachal Pradesh** state to improve telecom connectivity in the remote & hilly areas of the state.
Note: POWERGRID has created about 67, 500 kms of Optical Fiber Communication (OFC) network which connects over 1000 plus locations across India. POWERGRID's OFC network covers all major towns & cities of India including the hilly & difficult terrains of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) & North Eastern Region.
- 46.** According to the **Global Climate Risk Index 2021**, India is at **Seventh** position among the most-affected countries by the devastating impact of climate change globally in 2019.
Note: As per the report by Germanwatch, a Bonn-based environmental organization, India was preceded by Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Bahamas, Japan, Malawi and Afghanistan in the list of countries most affected by the impacts of extreme weather events in 2019. Between 2000 and 2019, over 475,000 people lost their lives as a direct result of more than 11,000 extreme weather events globally and losses amounted to around US \$2.56 trillion (in purchasing power parities).
- 47. Om Birla** inaugurated the 'Bharat Parv 2021', a virtual national festival showcasing the country's diverse culture, cuisines and handicrafts.
Note: Minister of State (Independent charge) for Tourism and Culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel was also present on this occasion. The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with other central Ministries is organizing this year a virtual 'Bharat Parv' event from 26th to 31st January 2021, showcasing the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.
- 48.** For the first time, a 122-member tri-service contingent of **Bangladesh** country participated in Republic Day Parade 2021.
Note: The 122-member contingent of the Bangladesh Armed Forces comprising soldiers of the Bangladesh Army, sailors of the Bangladesh Navy, and air warriors of the Bangladesh Air Force was led by the contingent Commander Lieutenant Colonel Abu Mohammed Shahnur Shawon and his deputies, Lieutenant Farhan Ishraq and Flight Lieutenant Sibat Rahman. All the three services of the Bangladesh Armed Forces had played a key role in securing independence for their country in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971
- 49. Akshay Kumar** has launched the mobile action game Fearless and United Guards (FAU-G) on the occasion of the 72nd Republic Day.
Note: Akshay unveiled the game with an animated trailer. He wrote, "FAU-G : Fearless And United Guards.

Face the enemy. Fight for your country. Protect our Flag. India's most anticipated action game, Fearless and United Guards: FAU-G takes you to the frontlines and beyond! The game has been developed by Bangalore based studio nCore Games, with a concept by Akshay himself.

50. The Textiles Committee of the Ministry of Textiles has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Nissenken Quality Evaluation Centre of **Japan** country to boost export of Textile and Apparel in that country. **Note:** The MoU signing ceremony was held through video conferencing which was presided over by Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani and State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan Yasumasa Nagasaka. The main objective of the MoU is to provide required support to textile's trade and industry for ensuring quality as per the requirement of Japanese buyers.
51. India's rank out of 98 countries in the COVID-19 performance index published by the Australian think-tank, Lowy Institute -- **86th rank**. **Note:** In the index India ranked 86 out of 98 countries, while the United States placed 94 and Brazil at the bottom of the index. Sri Lanka was the best faring nation in South Asia, ranking 10, while the Maldives was at 25, Pakistan at 69, Nepal at 70, and Bangladesh at 84. The think-tank said China was not included "due to a lack of publicly available data on testing".
52. India's rank among 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) – 2020 released by the Transparency International -- **86th**.

Note: India's ranking on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) – 2020, has slipped from 80 to 86, even as its score has decreased only slightly by one point from 41 in 2019, to now stand at 40. The index released annually by Transparency International, which is a global civil society, ranks 180 countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people.

53. **Madhya Pradesh** state has launched 'PANKH Abhiyan' for girl child on the occasion of National Girl Child Day 2021. **Note:** Wherein 'P' stands for protection, 'A' for awareness of their rights, 'N' for nutrition, 'K' for knowledge and 'H' for health. The abhiyan will go on for a year. The National Girl Child Day is celebrated every year since 2008 to spread awareness about the inequalities and atrocities girls have to face in our patriarchal society.
54. The 15th edition of Toshali National Crafts Mela inaugurated **in Bhubaneswar**. **Note:** Artisans showcased various handicrafts including lanterns, carpets among other decorative items. Several women were seen shopping several necklaces, hair-bands, rings and other artificial jewellery items.
55. **FICCI** has organized the 7th edition of 'MASCRADE 2021-- Movement against Smuggled and Counterfeit Trade'. **Note:** The aim of MASCRADE 2021 is to foster a healthy discussion on newer and practical strategies to mitigate the challenges of counterfeiting and smuggling, especially in a post-COVID era.

Important News – State

1. **Punjab** government has launched a mobile application 'DigiNest' that will enable people to have digital access to the directory of state govt. **Note:** Punjab CM, Captain Amarinder Singh virtually launched a mobile application 'DigiNest' that will enable people to have digital access to the directory of state govt. In addition to this, he also launched an online Punjab Advertisement Release Order System. This will bring transparency and efficiency in the entire process of releasing State Government's advertisements and payments to media houses.
2. **Jharkhand** government has launched state's own crop relief scheme 'Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana' which will replace Government of India's crop insurance scheme Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). **Note:** The new scheme is a compensation scheme which will provide security cover to farmers of Jharkhand in cases of crop damage due to natural hazards. Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Co-

operative, Jharkhand will be the implementing agency of the scheme. The main objectives of the scheme are – Food Safety, Crop Diversification, rapid development in Agriculture & paving way for competition.

3. **Delhi** government and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan have signed an agreement with Oakridge Energy to solarise schools in the state. **Note:** The project will be developed by Oakridge and subsidised under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy's (MNRE) capital subsidy scheme for Government Buildings. The installation of solar plants will help in making institutions energy independent, reduce their electricity bills and generate additional income through sale of surplus power. Oakridge has set a target to solarise 1, 000 schools & educational institutions by 2022.
4. The TRIFED has signed a memorandum of understanding with Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to setup TRIFOOD parks in **Madhya Pradesh**.

- Note:** In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged between the two organisations to work together for setting up of TRIFOOD Parks in 5 districts in Madhya Pradesh. The two organisations will work together by undertaking various initiatives all aimed at improving the livelihood of tribal people and implementation of the Van DhanYojana through the mobilization of Self Help Groups (SHGs) / VanDhanVikas Kendra (VDVKs) / VPCs / TRIFOOD Parks.
5. **Delhi** government has set up a Tamil academy to promote the South Indian language and culture in the state.
Note: It also appointed former municipal councillor and member of the Delhi Tamil Sangam N. Raja as vice-chairman of the academy. It is diversity that forms Delhi's vibrant and cosmopolitan culture as people from all parts of the country come to settle in the Capital for work.
 6. **Uttar Pradesh** won the "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Awards-2019" in the Best Performing State category.
Note: The PMAY(U) awards were instituted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2019. Uttar Pradesh (UP) won the award in the best performing state followed by Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Andhra Pradesh (AP).
 7. **Madhya Pradesh** government has rolled out a 'Launch Pad Scheme' to provide such a platform to the youth, through which they will be able to become self-reliant by continuing their education and training.
Note: The objective of this scheme of the Women and Child Development Department is to provide such a platform to these youth, through which they will be able to become self-reliant by continuing their education and training. Under the launch pad scheme, 52 districts of the state have been divided into 5 clusters. Five divisional headquarters are being started in Indore, Sagar, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Bhopal.
 8. **Uttar Pradesh** government has launched 'Kisan Kalyan Mission' for farmer welfare and to double the farmers income of the state.
Note: Uttar Pradesh government has launched a special program named as Kisan Kalyan Mission for farmer welfare and to double the farmers income of the state. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will launch the Kishan Kalyan Mission from Sarojininagar development block of state capital Lucknow.
 9. The World's Largest Floating Solar Energy Project (600 MW) is being built in **Madhya Pradesh** that is set to begin power generation by the year 2022-23.
Note: The production of electricity will be in about 2000- hectare water areas and the Floating panels will be installed in the backwaters of Omkareshwar dam.
- Estimated Investment of the project stands at INR 3, 000 Crore. International Finance Corporation, World Bank & Power Grid have granted consent to provide funds for the development of the project.
10. **Punjab** government has launched E-Daakhil portal to streamline grievances redressal system.
Note: The E-Daakhil has been developed under the new Consumer Protection Act 2019 envisages aass
 11. **Kerala** government has waive entertainment tax and reduce the fixed charges on electricity during the post-COVID-19 outbreak period for Cinemas to help the film industries in the state.
Note: In 2019, the Kerala government had issued an order allowing local self-governing institutions to collect entertainment tax from cinema halls upto 8.5% from the sale of movie tickets. The order was issued in order to compensate for the loss of revenue incurred by the state due to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
 12. An annual Cherry Blossom Mao Festival was celebrated in **Manipur**.
Note: The Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur is known for Cherry Blossom, a plant which is popularly known as Sakura in Japan. It was jointly organised by the Department of Tourism and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Shillong in association with the Organising Committee Flower Festival, Mao.
 13. **Punjab** government has approved the 'One Time Settlement (OTS) Scheme for Recovery of Outstanding Dues - 2021' for Traders to clear their Pending Arrears.
Note: The OTS will help Traders to settle their Pending arrears under the Punjab Value Added Tax Act, 2005 & Central Sales Tax Act, 1956. It will cost around INR 121.06 Crore to the Punjab Government. Will benefit Small & Medium Business Dealers/Traders who suffered due to COVID-19. Dealers who have filed assessments upto December 31, 2020 can apply under the scheme till April 30, 2021
 14. **Jammu & Kashmir** signed an MoU with the North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council to promote Bamboo Cultivation and related entrepreneurship in the region.
Note: The North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC) will provide technical guidance in cultivating various species of Bamboo in the region. This will promote development of Bamboo based industries in Jammu & Kashmir leading to exports of bamboo based products. The MoU was in line with the Prime Minister's vision to encourage tree plantation on farm land "Har Medh Par Ped" mission.
 15. India's first 'Fire Park' was inaugurated in **Odisha** and also a virtual platform 'Agnishama Seva' has been launched.

- Note:** On that occasion CM Patnaik also launched the virtual platform 'Agnishama Seva' to provide through which 16 fire related services can be availed. The Fire Park is a first of its kind initiative to provide awareness on fire safety measures, mainly focusing on School and College students. It is located under the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.
- 16.** India's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, will be launched in **Kerala**.
Note: The museum will feature a huge repository of documents and exhibits that shaped the labour movements across the continents and impacted Alappuzha, the cradle of the labour movement in the country, in particular and Kerala in general. Located alongside the Port and Coir museums displaying the town's rich maritime heritage, the Labour Movement Museum, the first such window in the country on the class struggle and spirited fight of workers, is part of a larger project that will also be of tourist appeal.
- 17.** The **Madhya Pradesh state government** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Kerala** to for replicating the latter's pioneering Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative.
Note: The States signed a joint declaration under which Kerala will extend a series of services under a 16-point programme. The MoU was exchanged by Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran and his Madhya Pradesh counterpart Usha Thakur. As part of the agreement, Kerala will provide a series of services under a 16-point programme.
- 18.** **Haryana** state government has inaugurated India's 1st air taxi service under Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) of Govt of India.
Note: As part of the inauguration, Haryana CM flagged off the 1st flight from Chandigarh under the scheme. It is the 1st time in India a small aircraft is being used for services in form of an air taxi. The airline Aviation Connectivity & Infrastructure Developers Pvt. Ltd (Air Taxi) will operate the air taxi services and has become the 1st startup airline of India to assist India with this service.
- 19.** Mahananda wildlife sanctuary located in **West Bengal** state where the First Mahananda Bird Festival will be organized in February 2021.
Note: The Darjeeling Wildlife Division will be organising the 1st Mahananda Bird Festival from February 20 to 23. The participants will be taken to the popular birding spots such as Rongdong and Latpanchor, besides other birding trails within the forests. Visitors will be able to witness the diverse landscapes of rivers, plains, forests and hills during the festival.
- 20.** A geographical indication (GI) tag has been sought for one of the costliest mushrooms in the world that grows in **Jammu and Kashmir**.
Note: Locally called Gucchi, or Morel, the mushroom, priced at over ₹20,000 a kg, is a forest produce collected by local farmers and tribals. Last June, saffron from the State had been granted a GI tag. The GI tag application for Gucchi mushroom was filed at the Geographical Indication Registry recently by Jammu-based NGO Border World Foundation and facilitated by the Director of Agriculture, J&K.
- 21.** **Uttarakhand** government has announced to increase the number of days under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from 100 to 150.
Note: government will increase the number of working days from 100 to 150 under MGNREGA and the entire cost will be borne by the state government. This decision was taken during a meeting of the State Employment Guarantee Council. NREGA was first proposed in 1991 by former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao. Passed in Parliament in 2008, it aims to provide 100 days of wage employment to enhance livelihood security in rural areas.
- 22.** **Karnataka** state finds the top position in the India Innovation Index 2020 released by the NITI Aayog.
Note: In the India Innovation Index-2020, the States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and nine Union Territories and Small States for effectively comparing their performance. In the 2020 ranking, Karnataka retained its first position in the Major States category. Maharashtra moved one position higher and stood at 2nd spot while Tamil Nadu slid to 3rd position.
- 23.** Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE Hub) of Telangana Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 'I-Hub' (Independent Hub) of **Gujarat** state to enable & support startups by women to raise capital in various focus sectors.
Note: The partnership will not only benefit women entrepreneurs from Telangana & Gujarat but also others from all over India. WE Hub is India's 1st state-led Incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs, it was established in 2017. The MoU was signed by Jayesh Ranjan, Telangana IT & Industry Principal Secretary & Anju Sharma, Gujarat Higher and Technical Education Principal Secretary.
- 24.** **Madhya Pradesh** became the first state to give electricity subsidy through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
Note: With this, it has fulfilled a power reform condition as proposed by the Centre and thus eligible for additional borrowing. The scheme has been

- implemented in Vidisha district of the State, where electricity is being supplied through the MP Madhya Kshetra Vidut Vitaran Co Ltd with effect from December 2020. Under the scheme, an amount of ₹32.07 crore was transferred to the bank accounts of 60,081 beneficiaries in December.
- 25.** The BSE has signed an MoU with **Maharashtra** to create awareness about the benefits of listing among Small & Medium scale Enterprises of the state.
Note: In this regard, BSE has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government of Maharashtra. This MoU will help the micro, small and medium industries in the state to get registered in the capital market and raise capital from the public capital market. BSE will also provide technical support to all the MSME industries in Maharashtra.
- 26.** **Gujarat** government has announced for the formation of 'Mukhyamantri Bagayat Vikas Mission' to accelerate agriculture, horticulture and promote farming of herbal plants.
Note: The aim is to accelerate agriculture, horticulture and promote farming of herbal plants. It will also create employment opportunities through an increase in the export of such products. Under this mission, the waste land of the government (around 20000 hectare) will be given on 30-year lease for farming of horticulture and medicinal crops.
- 27.** The NASSCOM has partnered with **Telangana** state's Artificial Intelligence Mission to launch an Innovation Factory to identify and promote innovative artificial intelligence solutions to address challenges in agricultural sector.
Note: They have announced an 'innovation challenge' for start-ups, inviting ideas that can make the lives of farmers easier by helping them increase incomes. The winner will get a chance to win a prize money of ₹1 lakh, while the runner-up will get ₹50,000.
- 28.** **Karnataka** government has launched 'Avalokana software' a transparent e-governance tool.
Note: The software provides focused eye view on Sustainable Development goals, Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, Tribal Sub-plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The Chief Minister issued directions today to the Deputy Commissioners of each district to the data in the software at regular intervals.
- 29.** **Uttar Pradesh** government has launched 'Udyam Sarathi' app to help youth to explore self-employment opportunities.
Note: On the occasion of 71st foundation day of Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched 'Udyam Sarathi' app to help youth to explore self-employment opportunities. As per the government statement, this application will provide all information related to self-employment and the job industry at one click.
- 30.** **Uttar Pradesh** government has launched ambitious 'Abhyudaya', state-wide, free coaching facility programme.
Note: Named 'Abhyudaya', the free coaching facility will start from upcoming Basant Panchmi, the day of worship to the goddess of learning, Saraswati. From the day of Basant Panchami, 'Abhyudaya', the free coaching facility for students of the state appearing in various competitive examinations will commence.
- 31.** **Maharashtra** government announced to start 'Jail Tourism Initiative'.
Note: Home minister Anil Deshmukh announced the jail tourism initiative. Of the 60 prisons in the state, Thane, Aurangabad, Ratnagiri, Dhule, Nashik, Chandrapur, Byculla women's jail and others, are of historical importance. Based on a proposal initiated by the state prisons department, the state government has decided to launch jail tourism at Yerawada.
- 32.** **Rajasthan** government has launched new School of Public Health to make policy intervention for building public health capacity and skills and bridge gaps between education and practices in the state.
Note: Named after Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) chairperson S.D. Gupta, the school will provide technical support to health systems and render help to the State government in harnessing new technologies. IIHMR Dean (Research) D.K. Mangal said on Tuesday that the SPH has taken up a study on non-communicable diseases, climate change and antimicrobial resistance as its first project to identify priority areas in public healthcare.
- 33.** **Karnataka** government has launched a 1st of its kind initiative in India where, beneficiaries of old-age pensions will be automatically selected using the Navodaya app and their pension amount will be paid through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.
Note: This model was piloted in Udupi and Ballari districts of the state. Navodaya app is developed in accordance with the National Education Policy guidelines. The aim of the initiative is to enable beneficiaries to get the pension without the need of middlemen.
- 34.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi released financial assistance of Rs 2,691 crore to 6.1 lakh beneficiaries in **Uttar Pradesh** state under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.
Note: Prime Minister Narendra Modi released financial assistance of ₹2,691 crore to 6.1 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G). Modi released the assistance via video conference.

- 35. Andhra Pradesh** was the 1st state to launch door-delivery of rations under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
Note: Fine quality of rice will be distributed right at the door-steps of the cardholders across the state from February 1. The move is expected to give huge relief particularly to the elderly people and differently abled as they need to wait for longer hours in the queue lines at the ration shop.
- 36. Punjab** Government signed an MoU with International Digital Health & Artificial Intelligence Research

Collaborative (I-DAIR) in Geneva, Switzerland to develop and deploy digital technologies in the health sector.

Note: The MoU was signed by Punjab's Additional Chief Secretary (governance reforms) Anirudh Tewari. Under this MoU, I-DAIR will work on the projects related to data interoperability, real-time epidemiology and benchmarking of digital health solutions. Both state government and I-DAIR will promote synergy across communities of practice which will support the digital health work in the state.

Important News – World

- The Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) has named 4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites from **China, Japan and South Korea** as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems.
Note: The Pu'er Tea Agroecosystem in Yunnan is the world's largest area of tea forest plantations established by village ancestors thousands of years ago. The Fuzhou Jasmine and Tea Culture System developed over more than 2000 years is rich in biodiversity. GIAHS is an initiative started by FAO in 2002 for the identification & conservation of traditional agricultural systems all over the world. These sites also represent models of sustainable agriculture production
 - Japan** is developing wooden satellites to reduce the space debris.
Note: The partnership will begin experimenting with different types of wood in extreme environments on Earth. Wooden satellites would burn up without releasing harmful substances into the atmosphere or raining debris on the ground when they plunge back to Earth.
 - China** has deployed a fleet of underwater drones called Sea Wing Glider in the Indian Ocean region.
Note: These sea gliders, which the Chinese are deploying "en masse", are a type of Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle (UUV) which were launched in mid-December 2019. According to the defence expert, reports from December last year suggested that 14 would be employed in the Indian Ocean mission but only 12 were used.
 - USA** Parliament has passed the "Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act" which will expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women to receive higher education.
Note: Passed by the House of Representatives in March 2020, the bill was passed by the United States Senate by a voice vote on January 1. The bill now heads to the White House for US President Donald Trump to sign into law. The bill requires the US Agency for
- International Development to award at least 50 per cent of scholarships under a Pakistan-based higher education scholarship programme to Pakistani women, from 2020 to 2022, across a range of academic disciplines and in with existing eligibility criteria.
 - India** will co-chair the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP), a regional forum to conserve wildlife habitats for three years.
Note: India will replace South Korea which held this position for three years till November, 2020. Notably APAP is chaired by IUCN Asia and co-chaired by an APAP country member. India got this opportunity after successfully increasing the population of wild animals such as tigers, lions and leopards through protecting their habitats.
 - Pakistan** has successfully test launched Fatah-1, the indigenously developed guided multi-launch rocket system.
Note: The rocket system is capable of delivering a conventional warhead up to a range of 140 kilometres. The weapon system will give Pakistan Army the capability of precision target engagement deep in enemy territory.
 - Japan** has decided to assist India by providing a loan of up to INR 2,129 Crore for its efforts to mitigate socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.
Note: The Exchange of Notes for the COVID-19 Crisis Response Support Loan for Social Protection were signed by SUZUKI Satoshi, Ambassador of Japan to India and Dr C. S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs. This yen loan is the latest addition to Japan's supports to India in its fight against COVID-19.
 - Bangladesh** will be the Country in Focus for the 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) to be held in Goa from 16th to 24th January.
Note: According to an official release by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), the Country in Focus is a special segment that recognizes the

- cinematic excellence and contributions of a particular country. In addition, the 51st Edition of IFFI has announced a line-up of programmes that will be showcased on the OTT platform during the festival.
9. **France** has organised the fourth 'One Planet Summit', through videoconferencing, which aimed at protecting the world's biodiversity.
Note: The Summit was organised in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank. The theme of the Summit was "Let's act together for nature!" It was inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, French President Emmanuel Macron, and President of the World Bank Group David Malpass.
 10. **Germany** topped in the Arton Capital Passport Index 2021.
Note: Sweden, Finland and Spain all ranked second, with a mobility score of 133. While all the passport holders of all the three countries require visas for 65 countries, the Swedish passport holders can go to 99 countries without requiring a visa, and to 34 countries on a visa-on-arrival arrangement. Passports of Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and New Zealand ranked at the third place, with all the countries having a mobility score of 132, requiring a visa for 66 countries.
 11. The National Institute of Oceanography and National Geophysical Research Institute virtually signed an MoU with **Russia** country in the field of Marine Sciences and Technology.
Note: The POI is the largest research institution in the Far Eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences comprising 31 research units equipped with modern scale devices. Whereas, CSIR-NIO and CSIR-NGRI, the constituent research laboratories of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) are world renowned Institutes in the fields of Oceanography and Earth Sciences respectively.
 12. India has signed an MoU with **Japan** to enhance cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technology & standardization of 5G.
Note: The MoU was signed by Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Takeda Ryota. It was exchanged through a video conference today.
The Department of Telecom and Japan's Ministry of Communications will enhance mutual cooperation in the field of 5G technologies, telecom security, submarine optical fiber cable system to islands of India, spectrum management, smart cities, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, disaster management and public safety etc.
 13. According to the 'International Migration 2020' report released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) of **India** had the world's largest transnational community in 2020.
Note: The United Arab Emirates (3.5 Million), the United States of America (2.7 Million) and Saudi Arabia (2.5 Million) host the largest numbers of migrants from India. At the Global level, the number of International Migrants living outside their country of birth reached 281 Million in 2020. International Migrants represent about 3.6% of the World's population.
 14. India has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with **Japan** on a basic partnership framework for operation of the 'specified skilled worker' (SSW) system.
Note: SSW is a new status of residence created in Japan in April, 2019, to accept foreign nationals who have a certain level of expertise and skill. Indian nationals with certain professional and language skills will be eligible to work under the SSW system. There are 14 specified industry fields that fall under SSW and workers and professionals in those sectors could be eligible.
 15. Mountaineers of **Nepal** makes history by becoming the first to scale in winter the world's second highest mountain K2.
Note: considered as the world's most dangerous and challenging peak located in Gilgit-Baltistan side of Karakoram range. The achievement was the result of a collaborative effort between the climbers affiliated with multiple teams: one led by Nirmal Purja and the other by Mingma Gyalje Sherpa. It was the only one among 8,000-meter high peaks that was never scaled in winter.
 16. **United Kingdom** unveiled new laws to protect England's cultural and historic heritage in the form of statues and monuments.
Note: This was done to ensure that they are not removed at a whim. The move comes in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests in the country last year targeting several historic monuments, including with graffiti on Mahatma Gandhi's statue in Parliament Square in London.
 17. **China** overtook the USA as world's top destination for new foreign direct investment last year.
Note: New investments by overseas businesses into the U.S., which for decades held the No. 1 spot, fell 49% in 2020, according to U.N. figures released Sunday, as the country struggled to curb the spread of the new coronavirus and economic output slumped. China, long ranked No. 2, saw direct investments by foreign companies climb 4%.
 18. **The Netherlands** hosted the online international Climate Adaptation Summit 2021.

- Note:** CAS Online build on the advances of the UN Climate Action Summit by showcasing pioneering solutions to the climate emergency, and sustaining momentum through to UNFCCC's COP26 in Glasgow in 2021. As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAS will deliver action and inspire change to help societies build back better. It was aimed to help realize the transitions required for a climate-resilient world.
- 19. New Zealand and Vietnam** were ranked the best performing countries in their response to the pandemic according to a COVID-19 "performance index" released by the Australian think-tank, Lowy Institute.
Note: In the index India ranked 86 out of 98 countries, while the United States placed 94 and Brazil at the bottom of the index. Sri Lanka was the best faring nation in South Asia, ranking 10, while the Maldives was at 25, Pakistan at 69, Nepal at 70, and Bangladesh at 84. The think-tank said China was not included "due to a lack of publicly available data on testing".
- 20.** India has launched 2021 as the Year of the Environment along with **France**.
Note: The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on five main themes including environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, renewable energy and energy efficiency according to a statement by the ministry. From the French side, it will be implemented by the Ministry of Ecological Transition along with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs.
- 21. Turkey** hosted the 17th Ministerial Meeting of Asia Cooperation Dialogue 2021 virtually under the theme "The New Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism".
- Note:** Indian side was represented by Ms. Riva Ganguly Das, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs. During the meeting, She highlighted that India is focusing on tourism promotion as a part of 3T's strategy which includes "Trade, Tourism and Technology".
- 22.** Global Climate Risk Index 2021 is released by **Germanwatch** organization.
Note: India ranked as the seventh worst-hit country in terms of climate change in 2019. The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 is the 16th edition of the annual report and has taken into account the data available for 2019 and from 2000 to 2019.
- 23.** Recently India held 14th edition of Joint Working Group meet on Counter-Terrorism with **United Kingdom**.
Note: Both the nations strongly condemned the terrorism activities in all forms. Both nations assured to deepen cooperation in order to combat global terrorism and cross-border terrorism in South Asia. They also assured to enhance bilateral cooperation to combat counter-terrorism, extremism and radicalization, financing of terrorism, prevention of internet exploitation for cyber-crimes etc.
- 24. UNEP** organization released the "Global Climate Litigation Report 2021" that highlights that the Climate litigation cases have increased in recent years.
Note: According to the report Climate litigation cases have spiked in recent years, making the courtroom increasingly relevant to efforts to address climate change around the world. The report, published by UNEP in cooperation with the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University, shows climate litigation has become more common and more successful worldwide.

Honor & Awards

- 1. Department of Post** has won the gold icon award in the category, 'Excellence in Digital Governance Ministry/Department (Central)' in the 6th Digital India Awards (DIA) 2020.
Note: President of India, Ram Nath Kovind conferred 6th Digital India Awards (DIA) 2020 through video conferencing in a virtual awards ceremony. 24 digital governance initiatives/ products by Government entities under 7 categories received Digital India Awards 2020. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) organized the awards online. The Department of Post won the gold icon award in the category, 'Excellence in Digital Governance Ministry/Department (Central)' for implementing an IT application in the land registration system in India, named as a National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS).
- 2.** India's richest man Mukesh Ambani, the chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries limited (RIL) dropped down to **12th** position in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021.
Note: The net worth of Ambani dropped from 90 billion USD (around Rs. 6.62 lakh crore) (in early 2020) to 76.7 billion USD (around Rs. 5.6 lakh crore). The drop in the net worth of Mukesh Ambani was due to the correction in the shares of RIL which has fallen to Rs.1995.50 on 30th December 2020, which is 16% from its all-time high of Rs.2369.35. Zhong Shanshan, referred to as "Lone Wolf", has replaced Ambani as

- Asia's richest person, he is one of the fastest in the history to achieve the feat.
3. **Elon Musk** has become the world's richest person according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index surpassing Amazon's Jeff Bezos.
Note: Musk had a net worth of more than \$188.5 billion, \$1.5 billion more than Bezos. Mukesh Ambani is now 13th richest in the world. Zhong Shanshan, chairman of Chinese bottled-water company Nongfu Spring, become Asia's richest person and 6th richest person in the world.
 4. Medical Institution **JIPMER** was awarded the second prize under the Kayakalp Awards scheme in category 'Group A' Central government health facilities.
Note: These awards are meant for health facilities with the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene and are given annually by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. Union Minister for Health Harsh Vardhan, along with Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey, presented the awards via video conferencing.
 5. Medical Institutions **AIIMS, Bhubneswar** has received the best central government hospital under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness for the third consecutive time.
Note: The Rairangpur Sub Divisional Hospital of Mayurbhanj district was felicitated as the best Sub-divisional hospital community health centre category. Rani Durgavati Hospital received the award for the fourth time consecutively.
 6. **Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** has been honoured by the Hindi Writers Guild, Canada for his literary work.
Note: Nishank was conferred with the "Sahitya Gaurav Samman" in the presence of the Governor through a virtual programme. India's High Commissioner in Canada Ajay Bisaria was also present on the occasion.
 7. **Bilkis dadi** has been conferred with Quaide Milleth Awards 2021.
Note: Dadi was the face of the Shaheen Bagh anti-CAA protests. Both were awarded for Probity in Political and Public Life at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi. The award consists of a shawl, citation and cash of ₹2.5 lakh.
 8. **Azim Premji** has been chosen for 'Press Club Person of the Year' given by the Press Club of Bangalore.
Note: The founder chairman of Narayana Health Dr Devi Prasad Shetty and actor-Director Sudeep Sanjeev have been selected for the 'Press Club Special Award.' Besides them 25 senior journalists have been selected for the 'Press Club Annual Awards'. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa will facilitate the awardees at a function scheduled for the third week of February.
 9. **Biswajit Chatterjee** has been conferred with 'Indian Personality of the Year' at International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
Note: The Award has been announced at the opening ceremony of the festival, by Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Shri Prakash Javadekar. Biswajit Chatterjee is known for his roles of Kumar Vijay Singh in Bees Saal Baad, Raja Amit Kumar Singh in Kohra, Ashok in April Fool, Ramesh Kumar in Mere Sanam, Jeevan in Night In London, Shekhar in Do Kaliyaan and Vicky in Kismat.
 10. **Shyam Srinivasan** has been named as the Business Standard Banker of the year for 2019-20.
Note: Shyam Srinivasan, managing director and chief executive officer (CEO) of Federal Bank has been named as Business Standard Banker of the Year for 2019-20 for his bank's consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed large stress on asset quality, registered losses, or even invited regulatory actions. The unanimous decision was taken by a high-profile jury of five, chaired by former Reserve Bank of India deputy governor S S Mundra.
 11. **Bhawana Kanth** became the 1st woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade.
Note: She was a part of the Indian Air Force's tableau in the 2021 Republic Day Parade that will showcase mock-ups of the light combat helicopter, light combat aircraft, and the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane.
 12. **Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS)** has been conferred with the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2021 award for their contribution in disaster management.
Note: The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of ₹51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and ₹five lakh and a certificate in case of an individual. The award is given to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management by the central government.
 13. **Nikhil Srivastava** from India has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others. The prize was given to him in **Mathematics** field.
Note: Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, Adam Marcus, the Ecole polytechnique federale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize, the National Academy of Sciences said in the statement. The prize consists of a medal and USD 100,000.

- 14. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari** has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for excellent work in Disaster Management.
Note: Union Home Ministry announced the award every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash

prize of 51 lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an institution and five lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an individual. Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society, SEEDS has done commendable work in building community resilience to disasters.

Sports News

- Claire Polosak** became the first female umpire to officiate in a men's Test match.
Note: The 32-year-old already holds the distinction of being the first woman to officiate (as an on-field umpire) in a men's ODI match. Polosak had umpired in ICC's World Cricket League Division 2 final match between Namibia and Oman in 2019. In Sydney though, Polosak will officiate as a fourth umpire.
- Abhishek Yadav** has been appointed as the first deputy general secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF) after the sports body decided to create a new post in its hierarchy.
Note: The 40-year-old former international, who has played with the likes of Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chhetri, Mahesh Gawli and Climax Lawrence, has been serving as national team's director since January 2018. He was the member of AIFF and has been serving as national team's director since January 2018.
- Indian athlete who has secured fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021 -- **Jigmet Dolma**.
Note: Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police. Two more women runners from India and a total of 8 athletes participated in the marathon. In the marathon, Hicham Lakohi of Morocco came first in the elite competition of the marathon in men's category while Angela Jim Asunde from Kenya won the women's category in the same event. The marathon was organized to commemorate the return of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Pakistan jail to Bangladesh in 1972.
- Carolina Marin** has won the women's singles title at the Thailand Open Super 1000 badminton tournament held in Bangkok.
Note: Marin, 27, beat Chinese Taipei's top seed Tai Tzu Ying in straight games in an ominous display of form as she prepares to defend her Olympic title later in the year in Tokyo. Tai was limited to a single digit score in the first game and while she fought hard in the second, Marin ended up winning the match 21-9, 21-16.
- Viktor Axelsen** has won the men's singles title at the Thailand Open Super 1000 badminton tournament held in Bangkok.
Note: Axelsen, meanwhile, recorded his second consecutive tournament win with a 21-14, 21-14 win over Hong Kong's Angus Ng Ka Long. Axelsen had earlier won the All England Open Championship in March. Indonesia's Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu beat Thailand's Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai 21-15, 21-12 to win the women's doubles final.
- India** will host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022.
Note: The tournament will feature 12 teams, expanded from eight in the previous edition, comprising three groups of four with a minimum of 25 matches being played over 18 days. Eight teams will qualify for the newly-introduced quarterfinals. The event will also serve as a qualification tournament for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, which will see a record five Asian teams seal their spots to join co-host Australia for the newly-expanded 32-team global showpiece.
- Indo-Tibetan Border Police** team won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI)'s 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy held at Gulmarg.
Note: The match was held at Gulmarg Ice Rink. Teams from Delhi, Maharashtra, Indian Army also participated in the tournament, said ITBP. Top teams of Ice Hockey in India participated in the Championship organized from January 16 to 22, 2021.
- Ajinkya Rahane** has become the first recipient of the iconic Mullagh Medal.
Note: He is the first recipient of the iconic medal which is named after former Australian skipper and cricket Johnny Mullagh. Rahane scored 112 runs in the first innings and helped India reach a total of 326 runs in the first innings.

Books and Authors

1. **K S Vijayanath** has authored the book titled "Sabarimala Vijnanakosham" released by Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala.
Note: Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala released the book titled "**Sabarimala Vijnanakosham**" authored by K S Vijayanath at Raj Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He presented the **first copy** of "Sabarimala Vijnanakosham" to **S Sreejith**, Inspector General of Police (Crime Branch) Kerala. He also presented the Limca Book of World Records certificate to Swami Maheswarananda who erected a 111 feet Shiv Linga Sthoopa at Maheswaram Sri Siva parvathi Temple in Chenkal, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
2. **R Kaushik** has authored the book titled 'India's 71-Year Test: The Journey to Triumph in Australia'.
Note: The book, a Bradman Museum initiative, is authored by senior cricket scribe R. Kaushik, and it chronicles a rivalry that has given a fillip to Test cricket. In his foreword to the book, Shastri wrote: "Australians hate losing, and it's a thought process entertained not just by the 11 on the field, but the whole nation, the fans and the media. When a team tours Australia, there is a combined assault like no other."
3. **K S Vijayanath** has authored the book titled "Sabarimala Vijnanakosham" released by Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala.
Note: He presented the first copy of "Sabarimala Vijnanakosham" to S Sreejith, Inspector General of Police (Crime Branch) Kerala. He also presented the Limca Book of World Records certificate to Swami Maheswarananda who erected a 111 feet Shiv Linga Sthoopa at Maheswaram Sri Siva parvathi Temple in Chenkal, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
4. **R Giridharan** has authored the book titled 'Right Under Your Nose'.
Note: This is his debut Book. The book is published by Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. The book portrays how Superintendent Vijay along with his trusted aide Dalvi, and Journalist Padmini spots the murderer who killed a woman and a team of scientists. Their skills are pitted by a genius who eliminates all possible lead, right under their nose. The story is set in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
5. **Konsam Himalay Singh** has authored the book titled 'Making of a General – A Himalayan Echo'.
Note: The book was released by Dr Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur through a virtual mode at Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan, Imphal, Manipur. It is a memoir of Lt Gen (Dr) Konsam Himalay Singh who discovered his journey from a small village in Manipur to becoming the 1st Lieutenant general (Three Star General of the Indian Army) from North East India.
6. **Romila Thapar** has authored the book titled 'Gazing Eastwards: Of Buddhist Monks and Revolutionaries in China, 1957'.
Note: The book is published by Seagull Books London Ltd. She declined the Padma Bhushan award in 1992 and 2005. The book accounts a few months that Romila Thapar spent in China in 1957 along with Sri Lankan art historian Anil de Silva, where she worked at two cave sites, namely Maijishan in north China and Dunhuang on the edge of the Gobi desert in Northwest China.
7. **S Y Quraishi** has authored the book titled "The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India".
Note: The book will hit the stands on February 15, 2021. It has been published by HarperCollins India. The book evaluates India's demographics from a religious perspective and seeks to demolish two basic myths that 'Islam is against family planning' and "Muslim rate of growth" is linked to capture political power.
8. **Vidhu Vinod Chopra** has authored the book titled 'Unscripted: Conversations on Life and Cinema'.
Note: The book is scheduled to be released on January 25. The book gives a glance into the mind, method and madness of Vidhu Vinod Chopra, one of contemporary Hindi cinema's best filmmakers. In this book, Vidhu Vinod Chopra speaks to his long-time collaborator and scriptwriter Abhijat Joshi about his journey.
9. **Waman Subha Prabhu** has authored the book titled 'Manohar Parrikar -Off the Record'.
Note: The book has been written by senior journalist Waman Subha Prabhu. The book 'Manohar Parrikar-Off the Record' is a collection of memories of Mr Prabhu who happened to be with late Parrikar during the journey of his life. In the book the author has endeavored to narrate multi-faceted personality of late Manohar Parrikar.
10. **Ram Sewak Sharma** has authored the book titled "The Making of Aadhaar: World's Largest Identity Platform".
Note: Sharma begins by summing up his experiences during various bureaucratic postings in Jharkhand, ranging from streamlining personnel records and digitising public grievances to managing election logistics — all using innovative digital means. The learnings from these episodes proved to be the building blocks of the Aadhaar project.
11. The Maharashtra government has renamed Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur after **Balasaheb Thackeray**.
Note: The zoological park will come up on nearly 2,000 hectares forest land. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate the Indian safari at the zoo on January 26. Three special 40-seat capacity vehicles and an

online ticket booking facility will be made available to the people as soon after the Indian safari is inaugurated.

12. **Mohamed Zeeshan** has authored the book titled 'Flying Blind: India's Quest for Global Leadership'.
Note: The book is published by Penguin Random House. The book describes the difficulties that stand as an obstacle to the current India's foreign policy, each of which have led to many instabilities in the foreign policy practice, which in turn has affected India's interests. It tries to explain why the ordinary Indian citizen should care about foreign policy and how a more proactive foreign policy can deliver economic growth at home.
13. **Fareed Zakaria** has authored the book titled "Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World".
Note: The book published by Penguin book speaks about the nature of the post pandemic world and the social, political, technological and economical effects that may take years to develop. The book with 10 lessons includes the acceleration of natural and biological risk, datedness of the political categories, the rise of digital life, globalization and the developing world order split between US and China.
14. **Gautam Chikermane** has authored the book titled "India 2030: The Rise of a Rajasic Nation".

Note: The book features 20 themes on various fields ranging from education to healthcare, science, energy, politics and foreign policy, that predicts the evolution of India in this decade. The book showcases the numerous aspects of the future that will result in India becoming the world's 3rd largest economy and regional power. This book will act as a roadmap for policymakers and guide for scholars.

15. **Dr. Abhishek Singhvi & Prof. Khagesh Gautam** has authored the book titled "The Law of Emergency Powers: Comparative Common Law Perspectives".
Note: It presents a detailed study on legal and constitutional provisions of Emergency powers under Article 356. It also includes detailed discussions on Martial law, wartime & peacetime invocations, Constitutional & statutory law. The book also compares the emergency powers of India, USA & UK.
16. **Audrey Truschke** authored the book titled "The Language of History: Sanskrit Narratives of Muslim Pasts".
Note: Published by Penguin India, the book, The Language of History: Sanskrit Narratives of Muslim Pasts, seeks to collect, analyse, and theorize Sanskrit histories of Muslim-led and, later, as Muslims became an integral part of Indian cultural and political worlds, Indo-Muslim rule as a body of historical materials.

Science and Defence

1. Indian Aerospace company **Skyroot Aerospace** has successfully test fired a solid propulsion rocket engine named 'Kalam-5' from a Private Test Facility at Nagpur, Maharashtra.
Note: Skyroot Aerospace, an Indian Space Startup successfully test fired a solid propulsion rocket engine named 'Kalam-5' from a Private Test Facility at Nagpur, Maharashtra. It is the 1st Private company of India to successfully design, develop & test a full solid-fueled rocket stage. It will now be used for propulsion of their maiden rocket 'Vikram-1' which is expected to be launched in December, 2021 with the help of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). 'Kalam-5' is the 1st of 5 Kalam series of solid rocket motors, the other four rocket motors are expected to be tested in 2021.
2. The Ministry Defence has signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited** for procurement of 10 Lynx U2, a Naval Gun Fire Control System.
Note: The Lynx system has been designed and developed indigenously that will further the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The LYNX U2 GFCS is a Naval Gun Fire Control System designed to acquire, track and engage targets amidst sea clutter.
3. India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container of which successful maiden test trial was conducted recently -- **SAHAYAK-NG**.
Note: The trial was conducted by the Indian Navy to enhance its operational logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering stores to ships that are deployed more than 2000 kilometers from the coast. Two DRDO laboratories--Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam and Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra-- were involved in the development of the SAHAYAK-NG container along with the industry partner M/s Avintel for GPS integration.
4. The Indian Army has signed an agreement with **Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL)** to procure the 12 high-performance patrol boats to boost its surveillance of Pangong Lake in eastern Ladakh.
Note: The construction will be done at GSL, Goa under the program Atma Nirbhar Bharat and only a few crafts will be in the world for such specialized operations. India started its surveillance of the lake after the violent clash began in early May between India and China.
5. **Bharat Electronics Limited** has signed a contract with Indian Navy in New Delhi to supply 20 Indigenously

developed Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation Dazzlers.

Note: The Laser Dazzlers have been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and will be manufactured by BEL, Pune Plant. Laser Dazzler is a non lethal weapon for warning & stopping suspicious vehicles, boats, aircrafts, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). The product has been designed & developed indigenously for the First Time for Armed Force.

6. **Patna Meteorological Observatory** has been conferred the status of 'Centennial Observing Station' by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to recognize its contribution towards long-term meteorological observation.

Note: The decision to confer the status was taken during the 72nd WMO Executive Council Meeting held virtually from September-October, 2020. The Patna meteorological observatory was established in 1867 by the British Corps of Engineers.

7. **Harsh Vardhan** has launched Coastal Research Vehicle (CRV) 'Sagar Anveshika' at the Chennai Port that will be used to carry out environment indexing and bathymetric (mapping underwater features) in both coastal and offshore waters.

Note: The vehicle will be used to carry out environment indexing and bathymetric (mapping underwater features) in both coastal and offshore waters. It will be used for research purposes by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) and has been built by Titagarh Wagons, Kolkata, West Bengal. Anveshika has been built under Indian Register of Shipping (IRClass) and is a DP (Dynamic Positioning)-Capable vessel.

8. The second edition of the coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-21' was conducted by Indian Navy in **the entire coastline**.

Note: The exercise aims at assessing India's preparedness in the domain of coastal defence and maritime security. The Defence exercise involved 13 coastal states/union territories. It also include fishing and costal communities. The exercise was conducted to assess the strength and weakness of India's Coastal Defence and Maritime Security.

9. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be adopting 100 Atal Tinkering Labs under the Atal Innovation Mission to promote education in the field of STEM, these Labs have been established by **NITI Aayog**.

Note: Through this collaboration, Isro will facilitate coaching and mentoring of students in advanced 21st-century cutting-edge technologies, including those related to space. Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog

have established over 7,000 ATIs across the country so far, enabling more than three million students between classes six to 12 acquire a problem solving, tinkering and innovative mindset.

10. **Bharat Dynamics Limited** has signed an agreement with European defence company Thales to manufacture STARStreak Air Defence System in India.

Note: The Teaming Agreement was signed at a virtual ceremony held on 13 January 2021. BDL will become a part of the STARStreak global supply chain, providing the opportunity for export of the system to existing and future STARStreak Air Defence customers, including the UK Armed Forces through this agreement. BDL, as a part of its Global Outreach, is endeavouring to forge alliance with foreign companies to take the "Make in India" mission further.

11. Motor Bikes ambulances that have been created on 350cc Royal Enfield Classic bikes by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS)--**Rakshita**.

Note: It was developed by DRDO lab Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), New Delhi. It is a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle. The customised 'Rakshita' ambulances have been created on 350cc Royal Enfield Classic bikes. Rakshita is fitted with a customized reclining Casualty Evacuation Seat (CES).

12. Joint military exercise 'Ex-Desert Knight 21' is to be conducted between India and **France**.

Note: It is expected to see Rafale jets of the two countries engaging in complex maneuvers to enhance operational coordination. The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure and share best practices towards enhancing combat capability. Both the air forces will deploy frontline fighter jets as well as transport, and tanker aircraft in the exercise.

13. The Union Government has decided to export **Akash** missile to friendly foreign countries.

Note: The decision to export the missile systems was taken at a Cabinet meeting presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Akash missile systems have over 96 per cent indigenous components and the weapon can hit targets at a range of 25km.

14. A Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) successfully test fired from **Hawk-I** aircraft for the first time by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Note: It is the first smart weapon to be fired from an Indian Hawk Mk132 trainer aircraft. The company-owned Hawk-I platform is being extensively used for certification of systems and weapons developed indigenously by DRDO and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research labs.

15. Indian Army has signed an MoU with Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers to provide further impetus to indigenisation under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Note: Collaboration between the Indian Army and industry started in 1995 with the indigenisation of spares and has progressed to major defence platforms and a wide range of weapons and equipment. The MoU has been signed to provide further impetus to indigenisation under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and to achieve strategic independence by reducing dependence on foreign origin equipment.

16. A large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise AMPHEX – 21 was conducted in **Andaman & Nicobar**.

Note: The exercise involved participation of Naval ships, amphibious troops of the Army and different

types of aircraft from the Air force. The exercise was aimed at validating India's capabilities to safeguard the territorial integrity of its island territories. It also sought to enhance operational synergy and joint warfighting capabilities amongst the three Services.

17. Space organization **SpaceX** successfully created a New World Record by launching 143 Satellites in a single mission.

Note: With this, SpaceX bettered Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) record of deploying 104 satellites in a single mission in February 2017. The Launch is also the first dedicated mission for SpaceX under SmallSat 'Rideshare' program called Transporter-1. With the launch of the satellites, SpaceX is planning to provide Global broadband internet coverage by 2021.





Gradeup Green Card

Features:

- › 700 + Full-length Mocks
- › 35+ Bank & Insurance Exams Covered
- › Tests Available in English & Hindi
- › Performance Analysis & All India Rank
- › Previous Year Question Papers in Mock Format
- › Available on Mobile & Desktop



www.gradeup.co