

Monthly GK Digest

February 2021



Monthly Digest February-2021

Dear readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a **complete docket** of important news and events that occurred in a month of **February 2021**. This file is important **All Defence exams**.

Important News - India

1. **Smriti Irani** inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair, India's biggest silk fair on Virtual Portal.
Note: The five days event is being held virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic. India has long history of silk production and is the 2nd largest producer of Silk. India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk - Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.
2. The first indigenous metro rakes manufactured by Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) was unveiled for **Mumbai Metro** metro corporation.
Note: Metro line 2A will run from Dahisar to D N Nagar & it is an 18.58-km-long elevated corridor built at an estimated cost of Rs 6,410 crore, the metro line 7 from Andheri (East) to Dahisar (East) is an 16.47-km-long built at an estimated cost of Rs 6,208 crore. The rake was manufactured by Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and delivered the first 'Made in India' rake from the Bengaluru facility of BEML.
3. India's first wetland conservation center 'Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM)' has been set up in **Chennai**.
Note: Coinciding with the World Wetland Day, India got its first specialised institution - Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) - in Chennai which will work as a knowledge hub for various stakeholders for conserving wetlands that occupy 4.6% of the country's total land area. The CWCM has been set up as a part of the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCCSM), Chennai.
4. **Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean** is the theme of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers' Conclave.
Note: The broad theme of the conclave will be 'Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'. The conclave is an initiative to promote dialogue in an institutional, economic and cooperative environment that can foster the development of peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.
5. **53rd** is India's global ranking in the 2020 Democracy Index Report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?" released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
Note: India's overall score fell from 6.9 in 2019 to 6.61 in the Index that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 167 countries. Norway topped The Economist Intelligence Unit's latest Democracy Index report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?", with Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada making up the top five.
6. **IIT-BHU** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to up-grade road construction in India, through scientific research.
Note: In November 2020, Ministry of Education requested all technical institutions in the country (including IITs & NITs) to provide technical supports to upgrade stretches of National Highways on voluntary basis. 18 IITs, 26 NITs & 190 other institutes have opted for the scheme.
7. **Ministry of Education** in collaboration with ASEAN launched the ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021.
Note: It will provide a unique opportunity to India and ASEAN to solve their common identified challenges under broad themes of Blue Economy and Education. ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon is an initiative of Ministry of Education. It was organized online from 1 to 3rd Feb 2021
8. The Union Ministry of Education decided to rename 1,063 residential schools and hostels after **Subhash Chandra Bose**.
Note: A total of 1,063 residential facilities (383 residential schools and 680 hostels) have been sanctioned to States and UTs so far. It has been decided to rename the residential schools and hostels funded under the Samagra Shiksha Scheme as "Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose residential schools.
9. Srivilliputhur-Megamalai will become the 5th Tiger Reserve in **Tamil Nadu**, that has been approved by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
Note: The Forest Department's proposal was to declare 1.48 lakh hectares of land encompassing Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel



- Wildlife Sanctuary and Tirunelveli Wildlife Sanctuary as Tamil Nadu's fifth tiger reserve.
10. As per the information reported to and tracked by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), **2.9 lakh** of cyber security incidents pertaining to digital banking were reported during 2020.
Note: These incidents included phishing attacks, network scanning and probing, viruses and website hacking. The Minister noted that the rising popularity of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) along with e-commerce has also expanded the scope of digital payments.
 11. **Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR)** has been organised at the campus of which institution.
Note: The theme of the National Horticulture Fair 2021 will be: 'Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India'. The theme seeks to encourage the farmers to become entrepreneurs. The fair will be organised by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR).
 12. Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE) has signed a contract with **Seychelles** for delivering 1 Fast Patrol Vessel (FPV) called 'Zoroaster'.
Note: "Zoroaster" will be a powerful, fuel-efficient platform which will be capable of performing operations like Patrolling, anti-smuggling, anti-poaching & search and rescue operations. The overall design of the FPV was developed indigenously by GRSE.
 13. **IIT Kharagpur** has developed solar-powered energy-efficient pest controlling devices for smaller agricultural tracts owned by marginal farmers.
Note: The research team has developed a self-propelled boom-type sprayer that can be operated using solar energy while safely guided through the crops in smaller tracts of land, the leading engineering institute. The device is aimed to increase field capacity and uniformity in liquid spraying and also to reduce drudgery to the operator and dependency on fossil fuel for carrying out spraying in cropped areas.
 14. According to India Energy Outlook 2021, published by the International Energy Agency (IEA) by 2030 year India will overtake the European Union as the world's third-largest energy consumer.
Note: India at present is the fourth-largest global energy consumer behind China, the United States and the European Union. India accounts for nearly one-quarter of global energy demand growth from 2019-40 - the largest for any country. Its share in the growth in renewable energy is the second-largest in the world, after China.
 15. Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the postage stamp to mark the beginning of the centenary celebrations of the Chauri Chaura Incident. Chauri Chaura place is located in **Uttar Pradesh**.
Note: The stamp was released during the event organised to inaugurate the Centenary celebration of the Chauri Chaura incident. The state government has planned various events through 4th February 2022 at all the 75 districts of the state to mark the centenary celebration of Chauri Chaura.
 16. Under the chairmanship **TP Rajendran** the government of India has appointed an expert panel to review the objections of industry to the proposed ban on 27 pesticides, that are mentioned as harmful to animals and humans by the government.
Note: These 27 pesticides that are widely used are part of 66 contentious pesticides that are being reviewed for their toxicity. Already, in 2018, the government had banned 18 of them. In May 2020, The Ministry of Agriculture and Family Welfare has issued the draft Banning of Insecticides Order, 2020 that aimed to ban these 27 pesticides.
 17. **Rs 100 crore** of Grant-in-aid has been approved by the government for the Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizers Corporation Limited (BVFCL), Namrup (Assam) for the strengthening of its urea manufacturing units.
Note: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi has approved Grant-in-aid of Rs.100 crore to Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizers Corporation Limited (BVFCL), Namrup (Assam) for the strengthening of its urea manufacturing units. This approval has been made on the lines of the proposal of the Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (MoC&F).
 18. To encourage and to create awareness about **Stand Up India scheme** SIDBI and Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs of India (COWE) have launched "Swavalamban Sashakt- Mega campaign".
Note: The Swavalamban Sashakt is a 20 webinar series to give a fillip to 'Stand Up India' scheme. The scheme was launched in 2016 and has been extended up to 2025. The scheme is a flagship programme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to facilitate bank loans between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore to at least one SC or ST borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch.
 19. US-based Triton Electric Vehicle has signed an MoU with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** for developing electric vehicles and energy storage systems.

- Note:** As per the MoU, BEL will be the exclusive manufacturing partner to Triton in India for identified products, while Triton will provide the know-how and technical documentation required for manufacturing of these products. For requirements of Energy Storage System (ESS) in India, BEL will address the requirements as a prime contractor and Triton will provide the support as technology partner as per Make in India requirements.
- 20. For the purpose to Improve Road Infrastructure** 'Asom Mala' programme launched in Assam by PM Modi.
Note: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Asom Mala' programme in Dhekiajuli of Sonitpur district of Assam. Asom Mala Programme will focus on maintenance by conducting field studies of the roads and will thus improve Road Asset Management System of the state.
- 21. Indian airport operator and aviation infrastructure developer, GMR group has signed MoU with aerospace corporation Airbus to explore collaboration opportunities across aviation services, technologies and innovation.**
Note: This MoU was signed at Aero India 2021, that was held in Bangalore. The aim of the MoU is to explore potential synergies in several strategic areas of aviation services like maintenance, components, training, digital services both for commercial and military aircraft.
- 22. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) setting up country's first thunderstorm research testbed in Balasore.**
Note: The objective of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimalise human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes. IMD Director-General Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, while speaking with a private television channel, also revealed that a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal.
- 23. India's ranked 10th in the 'Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index' released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).**
Note: Singapore ranked first in the index followed by Taiwan (2nd), Japan (3rd) and Australia (4th). Indonesia ranked 11th in the index. It measures performance against 27 different indicators of personalised health across four categories called 'Vital Signs'.
- 24. Rs. 845 crores** is the corpus of the 'Startup India Seed Fund Scheme' approved by the government of India.
Note: SISFS shall provide financial assistance to startups via a corpus of Rs. 945 cr that will be disbursed through selected incubators across India in 2021-25. A startup, recognized by DPIIT, incorporated not more than 2 years ago at the time of application is eligible for SFS.
- 25. As per the data released by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), India ranked at third in scientific publications.**
Note: Of the 13,045 patents in 2017-18, as many as 1,937 were by Indians. Out of 15,550 patents filed by Indians at Indian Patent Office during the period, 65 per cent were filed from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Delhi.
- 26. Ministry of Education** launched ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon 2021.
Note: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) implemented this important initiative with the support of nodal agencies from all ten ASEAN countries, which included their Education Ministries and prominent universities. The Hackathon was inaugurated by Minister of Education Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' along with other dignitaries from ASEAN and India on 1 February.
- 27. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Discovery Campus of IIT Madras.**
Note: The campus will be built at Thaiyur near Chennai at an estimated cost of Rs 1,000 crores in the first phase, over an area of 2 lakh square metres. PM Modi also inaugurated the Chennai Metro Rail Phase-I extension project, which has been completed at a cost of Rs 3,770 crores.
- 28. PM Modi handed over the Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to Army Chief General MM Naravane, the tank has been indigenously designed, developed and made by Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment.**
Note: The tank has been indigenously designed, developed and made by the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment, attached to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), along with 15 academic institutions, 8 labs and several MSMEs.
- 29. MapmyIndia will partner with Indian Space Research Organization to build an Indigenous, mapping portal and geospatial services which could become an alternative to GoogleMaps & GoogleEarth services.**
Note: According to the agreement, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) & MapmyIndia will partner to build an Indigenous, mapping portal and geospatial services which could become an alternative to GoogleMaps & GoogleEarth services. MapmyIndia's digital maps and ISRO's catalogue of satellite imagery

- and earth observation data will be utilized to build the indigenous portal.
- 30. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** is developing a futuristic high altitude pseudo satellite namely Combined Air Teaming System (CATS).
Note: Once developed the pseudo-satellite will be capable of taking information flying unmanned around 70,000 ft for 2-3 months. The system will have mother-ship carrying components and four autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles known as CATS Warrior.
- 31.** The Central government and Uttarakhand government have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up of ₹173 crore science city in **Dehradun**.
Note: The MoU was signed between Uttarakhand State Council for Science & Technology (UCOST) and National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), an autonomous organisation under the Indian Ministry of Culture. The project will take four years to complete. The Centre will provide ₹88 crore while the state government will contribute ₹85 crore for the ambitious project.
- 32.** The union finance ministry announced to infuse **Rs 3000 crores** in state-owned general insurance companies during the current quarter in a bid to improve their financial health.
Note: Last year, the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared proposal to provide capital support to National Insurance, Oriental Insurance and United India Insurance.
- 33.** The HCL Technologies (HCL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Institute of Technology – Kanpur** to collaborate in the field of cybersecurity.
Note: HCL will also work with the C3iHub, a specialised cyber security research centre of IIT-K. To bring in the brightest minds, advanced research capabilities and global resources to develop advanced solutions in cybersecurity. Under this MoU, the teams will develop a security framework and solutions for cybersecurity issues in the present and future operational technologies as one of the areas of interest.
- 34.** India's first Children's Boat library inaugurated in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.
Note: The Young Readers' Boat Library features 500 and more perfectly-curated collections of books in Hindi, English and Bengali across several genres in a pleasant reading ambiance. The boat library will take visitors on a three-hour trip along the river from Millenium Park to Belur Math and back to its original site.
- 35.** Recently, Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority signed an MoU with IGNOU for telecasting Investor Awareness Programme through distance learning mode.
Note: IGNOU has carved a niche for itself as the national resource Centre for Open and Distance Learning with international recognition and presence. It is heartening to see that IGNOU is providing seamless access to sustainable and learner-centric quality education and training to all by using innovative technologies.
- 36.** The Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative launched was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in **Assam**.
Note: Under which Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari inaugurated. Foundation stone of Inland Water Transport Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on Brahmaputra and launch of digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business were also the parts of the initiative.
- 37.** Instant messaging platform **Sandes** launched by the National Informatics Centre on the lines of WhatsApp.
Note: Currently, the Sandes platform is only available to authorised government employees. Like WhatsApp, the app offers features like groups, broadcast messages, message forwarding and emojis. While the Sandes app allows users to backup chat histories to a registered email, it does not allow users to change their mobile number or email address registered with the app.
- 38. International Energy Agency (IEA)** released the "India Energy Outlook 2021", that predicted India will surpass European Union to become the World's 3rd largest energy consumer by 2030.
Note: India at present is the fourth-largest global energy consumer behind China, the United States and the European Union. India accounts for nearly one-quarter of global energy demand growth from 2019-40 - the largest for any country. Its share in the growth in renewable energy is the second-largest in the world, after China.
- 39.** The Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators (ADTOI) was held in **Kevaldia, Gujarat**.
Note: The convention was jointly organized by the Ministry of Tourism and ADTOI with support from Gujarat Tourism. It aimed at building public confidence to travel for the revival of domestic tourism in the country.
- 40. Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad and Essar Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Ltd (EOGEP)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to undertake research and development on various advanced coal bed methane (CBM) technological innovations.

Note: Though this MoU both entities will work together on research and development of various advanced coal bed methane (CBM) technological innovations. EOGEPL is an investee company of Ruia-family owned Essar Global Fund Ltd (EGFL) producing over 1 million standard cubic meters per day of gas.

41. The theme of the 29th NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF) 2021 -- **Shaping the future towards a better normal.**

Note: It is organized by NASSCOM with Maharashtra Government as a state partner and Microsoft as Technology Partner. NASSCOM stands for National Association of Software and Service Companies. On February 17, 2021, the forum was virtually addressed by Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi.

42. **Bureau of Energy Efficiency** has been mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem under the recently launched 'Go Electric' campaign.
Note: 'Go Electric' logo was also unveiled on the occasion. Bureau of Energy Efficiency is mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem. BEE will extend technical support to the SDAs and other partners to ensure uniformity of information to implement the campaign.
43. Recently India signed a MoU with **Nepal** for reconstruction of six secondary schools in Himalayan region.
Note: The MoU was signed between the Indian Embassy and Nepal's Central Level Project Implementation Unit (Education) of Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA). The MoU was for the construction of six secondary schools at a total cost of Nepali Rupees 518 million, according to a statement by the Indian Embassy.
44. **Go Electric** campaign was launched by central government to ensure energy security in the country.
Note: 'Go Electric' logo was also unveiled on the occasion. Bureau of Energy Efficiency is mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem.
45. **Hyderabad** city has got recognition as 2020 Tree City of the World.
Note: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Arbor Day Foundation have recognized Hyderabad as a 2020 Tree City of World, for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests.
46. Construction of **56,368** houses have been approved under PMAY-U at 53rd Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee Meeting.

Note: These houses are proposed to be constructed under various verticals of PMAY-U Mission. A total of 11 States/UTs attended the meeting. The participating States/UTs were also directed to use the online mechanism (MIS) for proper implementation and monitoring of the Mission.

47. For **Nagaland** state the Government of India and the World Bank signed a \$68 million project to enhance the governance of schools across state as well as to improve teaching practices and learning environments in select schools.
Note: The "Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project" will improve classroom instruction; create opportunities for the professional development of teachers; and build technology systems to provide students and teachers with more access to blended and online learning as well as allow better monitoring of policies and programs. Such an integrated approach will complement conventional delivery models and help mitigate the challenges posed by COVID-19.
48. Eight manufacturing clusters have been approved by the Central Government at a cost of Rs 2,300 crore.
Note: This decision has been taken on the lines of "National Action Plan for Indian Toy Story" that seeks to reduce import dependence of toys which was around \$1.5 billion in FY2020 of which 90% of imports was from China and Taiwan. In this regard, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) will develop toy clusters under existing schemes such as the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (Sfurti) which is currently being implemented in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
49. The '3rd edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary with **10,000 terms** has been published by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), it is an autonomous Institute under **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.**
Note: The Dictionary has been published by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. The 3rd edition is the culmination of an innovative 4 year project that was initiated in November 2016 by ISLRTC).
50. **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi** has completed two year of its implementation in February, 2021.
Note: PM-Kisan scheme was launched with an aim to ensure a life of dignity as well as prosperity for our

hardworking farmers, who work day and night to keep our nation fed. The tenacity and passion of our farmers is inspiring. Over the last 7 years, the Government of India has taken many initiatives for transforming agriculture

- 51. Go Electric** campaign was launched by central government to ensure energy security in the country. **Note:** 'Go Electric' logo was also unveiled on the occasion. Bureau of Energy Efficiency is mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem.
- 52.** Recently Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in **Lakshadweep**. **Note:** 'Go Electric' logo was also unveiled on the occasion. Bureau of Energy Efficiency is mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem. BEE will extend technical support to the SDAs and other partners to ensure uniformity of information to implement the campaign.
- 53. Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad** has been renamed the Narendra Modi Stadium. **Note:** President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly revamped Motera cricket stadium in Ahmedabad, which has been renamed the Narendra Modi Stadium. The ground, which was earlier named the Sardar Patel Stadium, and more popularly known as the Motera stadium, has been renamed after the Prime Minister, who was also formerly a president of the Gujarat Cricket Association.
- 54.** The 18th Edition of BioAsia 2021 was conducted virtually from **Hyderabad**. **Note:** Organized by the Telangana Government, BioAsia is Asia's Largest Life Sciences & healthcare forum. It is also a flagship event of the Telangana Government. It is the 18th edition in the annual series and was held virtually for the first time. The theme of the summit is 'Move the Needle'.
- 55.** Under chairmanship of **Janakiram**, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has set up 14-member committee to relook its information and security guidelines. **Note:** The economic situation owing to the pandemic has seen an exponential increase in cyber-attacks across the globe and in particular, the financial sector. This situation has necessitated regulators to re-look into their Cyber Security Guidelines applicable to all regulated entities in an effort to protect the financial systems. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) had issued guidelines on
- cyber security in April 2017 as a part of its governance mechanism.
- 56. SIDBI** has partnered with Social Alpha, to set up the Swavalamban Divyangjan Assistive Tech Market Access (ATMA) fund, a Social Impact fund. **Note:** It is a first of its kind inclusion fund that offers financial grants to Social Alpha-incubated startups that work in the Assistive Technology (AT) sector. The purpose of the partnership is to promote innovation and reduce the expenses for persons with disabilities to procure new technologies.
- 57.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Dhubri Phulbari bridge that would be India's longest bridge is being built on **Brahmaputra** river. **Note:** The 19.282 km four-lane bridge, expected to be completed by 2026-27, will connect Phulbari in Meghalaya and Dhubri in poll-bound Assam. The initiation of work on the bridge will be among a slew of projects that the BJP-led government in Assam has been pushing through ahead of elections to the 126-member Assembly.
- 58.** The Union Government approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for **13** many sectors as per the announcement made by Finance Minister while presenting budget 2021-22. **Note:** She announced that the government aims to spend ₹1.97 lakh crore on various PLI schemes over the next 5 years, starting from this fiscal. She informed, to achieve double-digit growth, PLI schemes to create manufacturing global champions for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat have been announced for 13 sectors.
- 59.** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) is a scheme implemented under **Ministry of Food Processing Industries**. **Note:** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) is a flagship scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. The Union Food Processing Industries Ministry cleared 20 projects worth Rs 363.4 crore for two schemes under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY).
- 60. Ministry of Minority Affairs** has organized "Mushaira" on the theme of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat". **Note:** Renowned poets and poetess such as Shri Wasim Barelvi; Mrs Shabeena Adeeb; Shri Manzar Bhopali; Shri Popular Meeruthi; Mrs Saba Balrampuri; Ms Naseem Nikhat; Mrs Mumtaz Naseem; Col. V. P. Singh; Shri Alok Shrivastava; Sardar Surendra Singh Shajar; Shri Khursheed Haider; Shri Aqeel Nomani; Dr. Nayyar Jalalpuri; Shri Sikandar Hayat Gadbad will enthral the audience in "Mushaira", to be organised at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Janpath in New Delhi.

- 61.** Drinking Water Survey, 'Pey Jal Survekshan' is an initiative of **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
Note: It is a drinking water survey launched in 10 cities under Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban). It will ascertain the equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater in target cities. It will cover 10 cities; Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat, and Tumkur.
- 62. Ajay Malhotra** has become the first Indian to be elected as chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council.
Note: Ajay Malhotra becomes the first Indian Chairperson of the Advisory Committee at the Human Rights Council. Malhotra has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania.
- 63. Hyderabad** city has got recognition as 2020 Tree City of the World.
Note: The capital of Telangana is the only city of India to be recognised as the Tree City. Hyderabad has been chosen for this recognition for its commitment towards maintaining and growing the urban forest.
- 64.** According to "National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM)" by **2024** year a digital infrastructure will be created all over country.
Note: The Central government Tuesday launched National Urban Digital Mission' to create a digital infrastructure for cities in the country, a statement stated. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister of Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad launched the National Urban Digital Mission' (NUDM) at a virtual event.

Important News – State

- 1. Kerala** is going to open its first Human Milk Bank (HMB), a state-of-art facility with the support of the Rotary Club to ensure breast milk for newborn babies, who are not being breastfed by their own mothers.
Note: Set up with the support of the Rotary Club of Cochin Global, the milk bank is to ensure breast milk for newborn babies, who are not being breastfed by their own mothers who may be sick, deceased or due to insufficient production of breast milk, in the hospital. The milk will be collected by following all the safety protocols and procedures and it will be preserved and provide it to needy children as per government guidelines.
- 2. Punjab** government has launched 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission, aimed at providing 100% potable water supply to all rural households of the state by March, 2022.
Note: Punjab government inaugurated Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme, covering 85 villages in Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic & Iron removal plants. Funded by World Bank, Jal Jeevan Mission of GoI, NABARD and State Budget. The scheme will benefit residents from 155 villages in Amritsar, Tarn Taran and Gurdaspur districts by helping replace groundwater with surface water supply for drinking, besides resolving the problem of arsenic affected habitations.
- 3.** Assam government has launched 'Pragyan Bharati' scheme for college students under which each student will be given Rs 1,500 for purchasing new text books.
Note: Under Pragyan Bharati scheme, 3,26,046 college students were given Rs 1,500 each for purchasing text books, while a total of Rs 161 crore was reimbursed for free admission of 4 lakh eligible students. The second scheme is Bhasha Gourab, under which the state government provided 21 Sahitya Sabhas (literary bodies) with a total of Rs 43 crore as contribution towards their corpus funds.
- 4. Maharashtra** state government has launched Intellectual Property Rights Scheme and Quality Testing & Certification Scheme to provide financial support to the innovative startups to file for IT patents.
Note: Both the schemes will be implemented by the Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS) under the Department of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of Maharashtra. Under the Intellectual Property Support Scheme more than 125 to 150 startups will be supported in the first phase of the scheme with a financial support of upto Rs.2 lakh for Domestic Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Applications and upto Rs.10 Lakh for International IPR Applications.
- 5.** India's first geothermal power project will be established in **Ladakh**.
Note: In the first phase of the pilot project, one megawatt (MW) power generation capacity will be generated. India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022. The

- tripartite MOU was signed between ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh.
6. The third phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar mela was organised in **Assam** in which a financial assistance of 3 thousand rupees to each of 7.5 lakh people who belongs to tea garden areas was distributed.
Note: It is to be mentioned that as many as 7,46,667 beneficiaries of tea gardens were covered under the scheme. Notably, the scheme was launched in Financial Year (FY) 2017-18. The main objective of the scheme is to incentivize and strengthen the efforts of financial inclusion of the tea tribe community.
 7. Madhya Pradesh state government has launched the Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully ('SAANS') campaign with the aim of reducing infant mortality due to pneumonia.
Note: Around 4,000 Health and Wellness Centres have been set up in the state for this purpose. The state government has also developed training modules in partnership with PGIMER, Chandigarh, and UNICEF.
 8. Denmark has approved a project to build the world's first energy island, in the North Sea.
Note: It will produce and store enough green energy to meet the electricity needs of three million households in European countries. The first-of-its-kind giant island will be as big as 18 football pitches (120,000sq m), estimated cost around 210bn kroner (\$34bn). The artificial island will be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines.
 9. **Uttar Pradesh** state government has introduced a system of issuing a unique 16-digit Unicode to mark all kinds of landholdings in the state.
Note: The main purpose of the system is to check the cases of land disputes, put an end to fake registries of the disputed land and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters. Every piece of land in the state will have its own unique identity
 10. 12 states have completed the reforms in the 'Ease of Doing Business', as stipulated by the Ministry of Finance.
Note: These states have become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources to the tune of Rs 5,034 crore through open market borrowings. Now the total number of state that has undertaken the reforms to promote Ease of Doing Business till now has gone up to 12. The other states are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
 11. **Delhi** state government has approved "Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha" in which Rs 5,000 will be provided to 1,000 meritorious students of Class 9 in schools of state as a science scholarship.
Note: The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed this as a crucial step for our government to promote excellent and talented students.
 12. India's first of its kind 'PGI Amputee Clinic' launched in **Chandigarh**.
Note: The basic intent of this initiative is to bring an Amputee as a near-normal functional human being in society. This initiative will attempt to provide appropriate management to amputees to guide them in their path to rehabilitation in society and will support patients with counselling and medical facilities during their treatment and recovery.
 13. The three-day famous "Mandu Festival" was held in **Madhya Pradesh**.
Note: The festival will culminate on February 15, 2021. The festival is organised by the state government of Madhya Pradesh to showcase each and every aspect of the ancient Mandu city, ranging from food, music, history & heritage, art & craft etc.
 14. **Bihar** state government has signed an MoU with UNEP to develop a framework for achieving climate resilience & low-carbon development in the state by 2040.
Note: Bihar became the 1st Indian State to sign such an agreement. As part of the Agreement, UNEP will assist Bihar to prepare a GreenHouse Gas (GHG) Inventory & Carbon Footprint Analyses and to develop Climate Impact Vulnerability Assessments.
 15. **Uttar Pradesh** state government has launched the Abhyudaya scheme to provide free coaching for competitive exams like NEET and IIT-JEE to students at the district level.
Note: This scheme aims at providing quality guidance and teaching to all aspirants coming from diverse backgrounds like rural areas, poor families and marginalised sections, who are not able to afford and avail private coaching services. There will be separate classes for NEET and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for admission into the IITs.
 16. **West Bengal** state government has launched 'Maa' scheme under which her government would provide a meal at a nominal cost of Rs 5 mainly to poor people.
Note: They will get a platter of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry for Rs 5. The government will bear a subsidy of Rs 15 (per plate) while people will get it at Rs 5. Self-help groups will operate the kitchens from 1 pm to 3 pm every day and such kitchens will be set up everywhere in the state gradually.

17. 3-Days 'Kanchoth Festival' is celebrated in Jammu & Kashmir.

Note: It is mainly celebrated by Nag followers. Kanchoth festival 2021 begins from February 14, 2021. Reason for the Celebration: It is believed that on Gouri Tritiya (February 14), Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati got married. Kanchoth festival is like 'Karva Chouth' that is being celebrated in other parts of the country.

18. Maharashtra government has signed an MoU with Flipkart to promote wooden toys, local artefacts, handicrafts.

Note: Maharashtra Small Industries Development Corporation and Maharashtra State Khadi & Village Industries Board have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Flipkart. This MoU will enable artisans, weavers, craftsmen & MSMEs from Maharashtra to showcase their products to millions of customers in India.

19. Karnataka government has signed an MoU with the Indian Economic Trade Organization (IETO) to work closely to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) more effectively in the state and to expand the scope of the sustainable future.

Note: This partnership will improve Karnataka's ranking at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

20. The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has partnered with National Health Authority (NHA) to upgrade the medical infrastructure available under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) in **Maharashtra**.

Note: Initially, the partnership with PM-JAY was implemented on a pilot basis in Maharashtra in the district of Ahmednagar. Now, it has been extended to the entire state except the south Mumbai region, Pune and Kolhapur districts. This means that, now 807 PM-JAY empanelled hospitals will be available to the already existing empanelled hospitals in the state.

21. Kerala state government has launched a web portal on 'Digital Workforce Management System' under its Knowledge Mission.

Note: The aim of the mission is to transform Kerala into a knowledge economy by promoting innovative ideas, coordinating knowledge initiatives & equipping young people with New Skills. Kerala Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC) is heading the mission. It is supported by Kerala Startup Mission and ICT Academy.

22. Uttar Pradesh has introduced a '16-digit unicode' to identify the landholdings in the state.

Note: The unicode will be used to check on cases of land dispute and protect people from fraudsters. The revenue department of UP will be issuing these 16 digits unicode. The revenue court is working on marking the disputed plots in the computerised management system.

23. The 11th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav was held in **West Bengal**.

Note: The Mahotsav is a flagship programme of Ministry of Culture, which was organised under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative. During the inauguration, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel was also present.

24. First of its kind Solar-based Water Supply Projects has been launched in **Punjab** state under its 'Har Ghar Paani, Har Ghar Safai' Mission.

Note: The project is expected to benefit around 141 households of Jagrawan & Muradpur and 102 households of Talwara village. The Solar-based projects have been commissioned at a cost of INR 67.71 Lakhs.

25. According to the Grant Thornton Bharat's Britain Meets India report, Maharashtra state becomes the top investment destination for UK companies.

Note: The report is prepared in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and with the support of the UK's Department of International Trade. It should be noted that Maharashtra is the top investment destination for UK companies, followed by Haryana, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Karnataka.

26. PM Modi has recently dedicated to the nation the **Rs 6000 crore** Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project (PDPP), developed by the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), in **Kerala**.

Note: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was on a day long visit to Kochi in Kerala. He inaugurated the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project (PDPP), developed by the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at a capital cost of about Rs 6000 crore.

27. Kerala state government has launched KFON project, aimed at providing free internet connections to BPL families.

Note: Phase I of the project will also help connect users in schools, hospitals, offices and houses. In Kerala private sector Vodafone-Idea is a leading service provider with a 51.9% market share. Both the KSEB and the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited (KSITIL) have 50% shares each in KFON.

28. The total outlay of the new central sector scheme has been launched for industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir -- **Rs 28,400 crore**.

- Note:** The scheme is approved with a total outlay of 28 thousand 400 crore rupees. It will be effective from 1st April this year and will remain in force up to 31st March 2037. The main purpose of the scheme is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio-economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 29.** Recently Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in **Lakshadweep**.
Note: 'Go Electric' logo was also unveiled on the occasion. Bureau of Energy Efficiency is mandated to undertake an awareness drive for promoting public charging, e-mobility and its ecosystem. BEE will extend technical support to the SDAs and other partners to ensure uniformity of information to implement the campaign.
- 30.** **Sikkim** state government has launched "Free Gift Milk to girl students" initiative.
Note: Sikkim Chief Minister P. S. Tamang launched the 'Free Gift Milk to Girl Students of Sikkim' initiative at Gangtok last week. The initiative will benefit round 1,500 students who would be provided 200 mls of milk every day.
- 31.** **Kerala** state hosted 13th edition of annual cultural festival Utsavam 2021.
Note: Organized by Kerala Tourism along with Kerala Folklore Academy, Bharat Bhavan, and District Tourism Promotion Councils. The festival brings alive Kerala's rich and diverse folk and ritualistic art traditions in 30 venues across the state, the 7-day annual cultural festival 'Utsavam 2021' started on a colourful note on February 20.
- 32.** India's first Digital University has been launched in **Kerala**.
Note: The state government of Kerala, on the line of its Digital Transformation Initiatives announced in Budget 2021, has launched India's first Digital University, Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT) in Technocity at Mangalapuram in Thiruvananthapuram by upgrading its two-decade old Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K), a center of excellence in information technologies.
- 33.** **Karnataka** state will host the 2nd Edition of Khelo India University Games (KIUG) in 2021.
Note: The KIUG 2021 will see the addition of 2 new native sports namely 'Yogasana' & 'Mallakhamb' in the medal events. The total number of medal events/sports will be 19. The games will be conducted in the U-25 age category in accordance with the World University Games norms.
- 34.** **Punjab** state government has approved the implementation of mission 'Lal Lakir' to enable villagers living within the 'Lal Lakir' to monetise their property rights and for availing benefits provided by the government departments, institutions and banks.
Note: Lal Lakir refers to land that is a part of the village habitation and is used for non-agriculture purposes only. Earlier, these properties can be sold through power of attorney (POA) and the sale deeds could not be registered.
- 35.** The 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival was celebrated in **Madhya Pradesh**.
Note: Khajuraho Temples come alive with splendour, beams, and the hustle-bustle of art lovers at the Festival. The first-day event is dedicated to Bharatanatyam performance by Geeta Chandran and her troupe and Kathak performance by Deepak Maharaj.
- 36.** The 17th India International Mega Trade Fair & Home Decor Exhibition 2021 was organized in **Odisha**.
Note: It was organized by the Odisha Chapter of the Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI). Partner Country for the 2021 Fair – Bangladesh & focus countries are Afghanistan & Iran. Bihar is the Partner State for the Fair. It was inaugurated by the Odisha Law Minister Pratap Jena.

Important News – World

- Myanmar's military has taken power for a year after declaring a state of emergency in response to its claims of election fraud.
Note: The Vice President Myint Swe has been made the acting President and all powers have been transferred to the Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing. The development follows early morning detention of the State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) by the military.
- Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 MW Lower Arun Hydropower Project to **Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN)**.
Note: This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method. Similar to the Arun III hydel project, which will provide 21 per cent free power to Nepal during the concession period, the developer of the Lower Arun

- hydel project should also prioritise providing certain percent of power free of cost.
3. The government of Bangladesh signed a USD 500 million loan agreement with **World Bank** for the upgradation of rural roads and digital connectivity. **Note:** The project is expected to benefit over 20 million people in the western region of Bangladesh. The project will help upgrade the 48 kilometre two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah road to a modern 4-lane highway. It will also help improve 600 kilometre of connecting rural roads and build or develop new rural markets. The project will finance installation of fiber-optic cables along the highway to ensure fast and reliable internet service.
 4. Norway topped the Economist Intelligence Unit's latest Democracy Index report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health." **Note:** Among India's neighbours, while Sri Lanka, at 68th rank, is classified as a flawed democracy, Bangladesh (76), Bhutan (84) and Pakistan (105) are classified in the 'hybrid regime' category. Afghanistan is ranked 139th and classified as an 'authoritarian regime' in the index. India slipped two places to 53rd position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
 5. United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF) has signed a long term agreement with **Serum Institute of India (SII)** for the supply of AstraZeneca/Oxford and the Novavax vaccines. **Note:** India is one of the world's biggest drugmakers, and an increasing number of countries have already approached it for procuring the coronavirus vaccines. While Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield is being manufactured by Pune-based Serum Institute, and the Novavax is being produced by US-based Novavax Inc.
 6. **United Arab Emirates** has launched its Mars Mission "Hope" probe, which is expected to reach Mars' orbit on February 9, 2021. **Note:** The United Arab Emirates, China and the United States all launched projects to Mars last July, taking advantage of a period when the Earth and Mars are nearest. If successful, the wealthy Gulf state will become the fifth nation to ever reach Mars.
 7. China has decided to set up a new information platform to allow the public to track the emissions of polluting enterprises and help authorities prosecute those that break the rules or try to "evade supervision." **Note:** A total of 2.36 million companies, industrial facilities and institutions in China are legally obliged to obtain permits to emit pollutants like sulphur dioxide or wastewater. According to the environment ministry, the new information platform will allow authorities and members of the public to monitor real-time emission levels and check historical data in order to determine whether rules are being breached. It is set to come into effect on March 1.
 8. As per report by UNWTO, 2020 was the worst year recorded for global tourism, during which the international arrivals dropped by **74 percent**. **Note:** Destinations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year, due to an unprecedented fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions. This compares with the 4% decline recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis. According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, the collapse in international travel represents an estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues - more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis.
 9. **Redefining our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All** is the theme of the 20th edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event, the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021. **Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021. The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) annual flagship event.
 10. China has released new anti-monopoly guidelines that target internet platforms, a move tightening the existing restrictions faced by the country's top tech companies. **Note:** The new rules formalise an earlier anti-monopoly draft law released in November, and clarify a series of monopolistic practices that regulators can crack down on. The rules, issued by the market regulator, bar companies from a range of behaviour, including forcing merchants to choose between the country's top internet players, a long-time practice in the market.
 11. With Afghanistan, India has signed an agreement to build the Shahtoot Dam. **Note:** In a virtual summit, external affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Afghan counterpart Mohammed Haneef Atmar signed the MoU in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani. The Shahtoot dam is to be constructed on the Kabul river basin, one of the five river basins of Afghanistan.
 12. Space agency SpaceX announced to launch the world's first 'all-civilian' mission to space named as Inspiration4. **Note:** SpaceX announced its plan for the World's first all civilian mission to space, the mission is named

Inspiration4 in recognition of the 4-person crew to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The mission commanded by Jared Isaacman, a 37-year-old entrepreneur the founder and CEO of Shift4 Payments and accomplished pilot will be launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

- 13. South Korea** has announced to set up world's largest offshore wind farm by 2030.

Note: This is a major component of President Moon Jae-in's vision of a Korean Green New Deal that would both create jobs and make the country carbon neutral by 2050. The farm will have a maximum capacity of 8.2 GW.

- 14.** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has selected SpaceX to launch its SPHEREx Mission.

Note: Elon Musk's SpaceX wins contract to launch NASA's astrophysics mission. Washington, NASA has selected tech billionaire Elon Musk's private aerospace company SpaceX to provide launch services for an astrophysics mission to survey the sky in the near-infrared light.

- 15. Turkey** unveiled an ambitious 10-year space program for his country that includes missions to the moon, sending astronauts into space and developing internationally viable satellite systems.

Note: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan unveiled an ambitious 10-year space program for his country that includes missions to the moon, sending Turkish astronauts into space and developing internationally viable satellite systems. Erdogan announced the program, seen as part of his vision for placing Turkey in expanded regional and global role, during a live televised event laced with special effects.

- 16. Pakistan** conducted military exercise 'Jidar-ul-Hadeed'.

Note: The exercise, code-named 'Jidar-ul-Hadeed', began on January 28 and is scheduled to conclude on February 28. Troops from the Karachi Corps will be practising tactical drills and procedures as part of the exercise.

- 17.** The Joint Conference of the 11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit was held in **New Delhi**.

Note: Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted the increase in LPG coverage from 56 per cent to nearly 99.5 per cent in less than seven years. He also mentioned that to reduce vehicular pollution, the country leapfrogged from BS-4 to BS-6 emission standards from April 2020.

- 18. Bellatrix Aerospace** is developing a vehicle with capabilities to act as a 'Space Taxi' for small satellites.

Note: Bellatrix Aerospace, which is creating a vehicle that will work as "taxi in space", will launch on the Vikram rocket of Skyroot Aerospace. Bellatrix's space vehicle is expected to launch to the lower orbit of the earth in 2023. Its "taxi in space" will offer ridesharing for small satellites and drop each one of the passengers to their intended slots in space.

- 19.** The parliament of **France** has passed an anti-radicalism bill.

Note: The bill would strengthen oversight of mosques, schools and sports clubs to safeguard France from radical Islamists. It is a part of the broader French efforts that it initiated with the aim of fighting extremism. To accommodate changes, the bill adjusts France's 1905 law guaranteeing separation of church and state.

- 20. Saudi Arabia** has recently announced that women can be employed in armed forces.

Note: Saudi Arabian women can be employed as soldiers, lance corporals, corporals, sergeants, and staff sergeants. The government has also added some additional criteria for female applicants. This move aims to increase the rights of women in the country.

- 21.** India has signed 50 million dollar Defence line of Credit agreement with **Maldives**.

Note: The credit line agreement for defence projects was signed between the Finance Ministry of Maldives and the Export-Import Bank of India to boost the maritime capabilities of the strategically vital Indian Ocean island nation.

- 22.** Uttar Pradesh is all set to export 20 tonnes of Buddha Rice, popularly known as "Kala Namak" Rice to **Singapore**.

Note: This move is a major boost to the farm exports from the state. 'Kala Namak' is one of the finest varieties of aromatic rice in India. The consignment will be sent to Singapore from Siddharth Nagar by the end of March this year.

- 23. India** hosted a workshop on COVID-19 Management: Experience, Good Practices and Way Forward'.

Note: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Seychelles and Sri Lanka participated in the workshop. All countries including Pakistan supported Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposals at the workshop.

- 24. USA** has officially rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement.

Note: Though technically the US remained outside the Agreement only for over three months after its formal exit from the deal in November last year, the country under Donald Trump administration kept itself away from the international accord in terms of federal climate



- action for four years even as sub-national players were doing their bit for a cleaner future.
- 25. India** has signed a landmark Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) **with Mauritius**.
Note: This agreement is India's first-such agreement with an African country. The CECPA will encourage Indian entrepreneurs to invest both in Mauritius and across the region, thus helping the ambition of the country to become a strategic regional economic hub and a centre of excellence.
- 26. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** has signed an MoU with Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO), New Delhi for promoting research in the domestic power sector.
Note: The entities will work towards addressing the challenges of the Power Sector. The aim of the MoU is to enhance the interaction between the industry-research bodies for knowledge sharing and capacity building through collaboration and to encourage research on issues related to the Indian power sector.
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- 29. India** hosted the Meeting of BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies.
Note: Tarun Bajaj, Secretary Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Dr. Michael Patra, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India. Other participants included BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies of Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa. India assumed the BRICS Chairship in 2021, at a time when BRICS is celebrating its 15th anniversary.
- 30. China** becomes the top trade partner of India in 2020 surpassing USA.
Note: Two-way trade between the longstanding economic and strategic rivals stood at \$77.7 billion last year, according to provisional data from India's commerce ministry. Although that was lower than the previous year's \$85.5 billion total, it was enough to make China the largest commercial partner displacing the U.S. — bilateral trade with whom came in at \$75.9 billion amid muted demand for goods in the middle of a pandemic.
- 31. Ghana** became the first country to receive a batch of free anti-coronavirus vaccine doses through the COVAX initiative.
Note: The World Health Organization (WHO), which leads COVAX together with Gavi the Vaccine Alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, said the shipment of 600,000 AstraZeneca doses was the first step in immunizing the West African nation of 30 million.
- 32. The Parliament of Australia** passed the landmark legislation called the "News Media and Digital Platforms Mandatory Bargaining Code" which mandates the global digital platforms to pay for publishing the Australian news content on their respective platforms.
Note: The law easily passed after Facebook and Google, the main targets of the legislation, reached agreements to pay Australian news organisations to avoid being subjected to tough mandatory bargaining rules under the regulation. The legislation mainly targets Facebook and Google. The law easily passed the tech giants (Facebook and Google) signed agreements with the government to pay Australian news organisations.
- 33. UNWFP** has released its report titled "The State of School Feeding Worldwide".
Note: As per the report, the COVID-19 pandemic risks have reversed the efforts that were made worldwide in a decade to provide nutritious food to the most vulnerable children across the globe. The report highlights that, one in two school children that would count as around 388 million children worldwide received the school meals when the pandemic was at its peak. This accounts for the highest number in history. When the pandemic was at its peak around April 2020, 199 countries had closed their schools. Because of which, 370 million children were suddenly deprived of nutritious meal of the day.
- 34. Australia** has been named as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
Note: The IOC's future host commission recommended that the body enters "targeted dialogue" with Brisbane bid organisers and the Australian Olympic Committee. The state of Queensland had hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games and Brisbane was praised for its high percentage of existing venues, a good

masterplan, experience in organising major events and its favourable weather.

35. Space agency of USA successfully landed its 5th rover "Perseverance" on Mars.

Note: It touched down the surface of Mars after successfully overcoming a risky landing phase known as the seven minutes of terror. The six-wheeled vehicle will now spend at least the next two years drilling into the local rocks, looking for evidence of past life.

Honor & Awards

- The word **Aatmanirbharta** has been named as the Hindi word of the year 2020 by Oxford Languages.
Note: The word was chosen by an advisory panel of language experts Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell. The Oxford Hindi word of the year is a word or expression that is chosen to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.
- Rishabh Pant** has been named as ICC Men's Player of the Month award for January 2021.
Note: The International Cricket Council announced the nominees for the inaugural Player of the Month Awards which will "recognise and celebrate the best performances from both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year".
- Australian cricketer **Merv Hughes** who has been inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame.
Note: Australian cricket board has described him as the larrikin who demolished batting line-ups all over the world. He played 53 Tests and 33 ODIs for Australia in a career spanning from 1985 to 1994, during which he captured 212 Test wickets at an average of 28.38 and 38 ODI wicket. He became selector for Australian cricket team in 2005.
- Ayesha Aziz** has become the youngest female pilot of India.
Note: In the year 2011, Aziz became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 and underwent training to fly a MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase the following year. She later graduated in aviation from the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) and obtained a commercial license in 2017.
- AR Rahman** conferred with the 4th edition of Alert Being Awards 2020 by NGO 'ALERT' for Good Samaritan work.
Note: Apart from him, social activist Saidapet Hari Krishnan and 13 other people were also awarded. 156 nominations from 15 States and 35 districts across India were received for the awards, out of which 14 real-life heroes (individuals and organisations) who saved lives in 2020 were selected for the awards.
- Indian documentary **Writing with Fire** has won the audience award in the World Cinema Documentary category at the Sundance Film Festival 2021.
Note: The festival, which started from January 28 and will close on February 3, is presented by Sundance Organisation, a nonprofit that discovers and supports independent artists, and introduces audiences to their work. "Writing with Fire", which also marks the feature debut of directors Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh, follows this ambitious group of Dalit women -- led by their chief reporter, Meera -- as the team switches from print to digital in order to stay relevant.
- Pawan Munjal** has been conferred with the Business Leader of the Year at The Economic Times Award for Corporate Excellence 2020.
Note: The Jury for the awards was led by Sundar Pichai, the chief executive officer of Alphabet Inc and its subsidiary Google. Shaktikanta Das, governor of the Reserve Bank of India, was the jury's choice for Business Reformer of the Year.
- Aditya Puri** is the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award at The Economic Times Award for Corporate Excellence 2020.
Note: After more than a quarter century at HDFC Bank, he left a bank worth Rs 7.73 lakh crore with a balance-sheet size of Rs 16 lakh crore and net bad loans of a minuscule 0.17%. The Jury for the awards was led by Sundar Pichai, the chief executive officer of Alphabet Inc and its subsidiary Google.
- Steve Smith** has won the Allan Border Medal for the period 2020-21.
Note: The Allan Border Medal recognises the most outstanding male Australian cricketer of the past season as voted by his peers, the media and umpires. Apart from this, Beth Mooney bagged Belinda Clarke Award, the top honour for a female player at the Australian Cricket Awards.
- Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL)** airport has won the global recognition from the Airports Council International World's 'Voice of the Customer' award.
Note: The 'Voice of the Customer' initiative by the Airports Council International World recognises airports that continued to prioritise their customers and

remained committed to ensuring that their voice was heard during the novel coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

11. Indian Activist **Chandra Shekhar Aazad** has been featured in the “2021 TIME100 Next”, the TIME magazine’s annual list of 100 “emerging leaders’ .
Note: Vijaya Gadde (Twitter’s lawyer), Rishi Sunak (UK FM), Apoorva Mehta (Instacart CEO) Shikha Gupta (ED Get Us PPE) are featured in the list. Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad is also on the list. The 2021 TIME100 Next is an expansion of TIME’s flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world.
12. Indian-American scientist **Swati Mohan** led the guidance, navigation, and control operations of NASA’s Mars 2020 mission.
Note: Raised in Northern Virginia and Washington DC metro area, she completed her bachelor’s degree from Cornell University in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, and her M.S. and Ph.D from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Aeronautics/Astronautics. NASA’s science rover Perseverance landed on the MARS on February 18, 2021.
13. **Akshay Kumar** has been conferred with best actor male award at Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival awards 2021.
Note: The award season 2021 continues as Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards honoured the best in film, television, music and the new addition, OTT. Akshay Kumar was declared best actor (male) in the horror-comedy Laxmii, which was a remake of hit Tamil film Kanchana (2011).

14. **Deepika Padukone** has been conferred with best actor female award at Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival awards 2021.
Note: The award season 2021 continues as Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards honoured the best in film, television, music and the new addition, OTT. Deepika won the best actor (female) award for her performance in Meghna Gulzar’s Chhapaak that told the story of acid attack survivor Laxmi Aggarwal.
15. **Narendra Modi** has been chosen for CERAWEEK Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award 2021 for in recognition of his commitment to sustainability in the energy and the environment.
Note: CERAWEEK by IHS Markit--the world’s preeminent energy conference--will be held virtually March 1-5. 2021 marks the 39th edition of the conference and is the first time that it will be an all-virtual event. Prime Minister Modi will participate in a special plenary with Daniel Yergin, vice chairman of IHS Markit and conference chair on March 5.
16. **Bharat Biotech** has been conferred with the Genome Valley Excellence Award for the year 2021 during the BioAsia 2021.
Note: A prestigious award, it is an integral part of BioAsia, the biotechnology and Life Sciences conference Telangana government organises every year. Bharat Biotech is being presented the Genome Valley Excellence Award for 2021 for its “breakthrough, pioneering research, development and commercialisation of vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin.

Sports News

1. **Denmark** has won the second successive men’s world handball title.
Note: Olympic champions Denmark had defeated Norway to lift the 2019 trophy on home ground. While Hansen grabbed the scoring headlines, the Danes were equally indebted to Landin who made 15 saves.
2. **Jorden van Foreest** won the Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2021.
Note: The 21-year-old grandmaster defeated his compatriot GM Anish Giri in a dramatic playoff after both had finished on 8.5/13. Meanwhile, it was a massive disappointment for Giri and his fans. The Dutch number-one seemed destined to finally win his first major tournament in which GM Magnus Carlsen participated, but instead he lost his second playoff in Wijk aan Zee, after the one in 2018 against Carlsen.
3. **Kuwait** organized first-ever Asian Online Shooting Championship 2021.
Note: The Indian shooting contingent has topped the medals tally in the tournament. The 24-member Indian contingent has won total 11 medals, which included four gold medals, two silver and five bronze medals. 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries took part in the competition.
4. Indian shooter **Saurabh Chaudhary** who won the gold medal in first ever ‘Asian Online Shooting Championship 2021’ in men’s 10m air pistol event.
Note: On the first day of competition, Saurabh Chaudhary had won gold in the men’s 10m air pistol, and Manu Bhaker won bronze in women’s 10m air pistol. India’s 24-member shooting contingent also

- topped the medals tally winning four gold medals, two silver and five bronze medals
5. Indian shooter **Divyansh Singh Panwar** won the gold medal in first ever 'Asian Online Shooting Championship 2021' in men's 10m air rifle event.
Note: India's 24-member shooting contingent also topped the medals tally winning four gold medals, two silver and five bronze medals. On the second day of the competition, world number one Divyansh shot an impressive 632.4 to strike gold.
 6. Tamil Nadu team won the T20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy 2021.
Note: The 12th edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy was held at Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad. The Tamil Nadu team was led by Dinesh Karthik
 7. **Russia** has won the ATP Cup Title 2021 held at Melbourne, Australia.
Note: Russia's two-headed monster of Medvedev and Rublev dominated throughout the week, winning all eight singles matches they played against some of the best players in the world. They combined to lose just two sets to lead their country to glory at Melbourne Park.
 8. **Ishant Sharma** became the sixth Indian bowler to take 300 wickets in Test cricket in his 98th test against England at Chennai.
Note: Indian fast bowler Ishant Sharma became the sixth Indian bowler to take 300 wickets in Test cricket in his 98th test against England at Chennai. Anil Kumble (619), Kapil Dev (434), Ravichandran Ashwin (377), Harbhajan Singh (417) and Zaheer Khan (311) are other Indian bowlers to take more than 300 wickets in tests.
 9. Asian Games gold medalist athlete Hima Das has been appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police by **Assam**.
Note: Assam government has appointed World Championship sprinter Hima Das as a Deputy Superintendent of Police in the state and medal winners in Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games will be appointed as Class- I officers.
 10. Priyanka Goswami is associated with **Racewalking** who set a new National record and qualified for Tokyo Olympics and for the World Athletics Championship.
Note: Priyanka Goswami, 25, shattered the national record in the 20-km walk at the 8th open national and 4th international race walking championship in Ranchi on Saturday with a timing of 1:28:45. And she qualified for Tokyo Olympics and for the World Athletics Championship
 11. Naman Ojha is associated with **Cricket** sports, announced his retirement recently.
Note: He has represented India in all three formats and holds the record for the most dismissals (351) by a wicketkeeper in Ranji Trophy. He made his international debut against Zimbabwe during India's 2010 tour of Zimbabwe. He represented India in a Test match against Sri Lanka held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2015 and became the first test cricketer from Madhya Pradesh since Rajesh Chauhan.
 12. Indian Premier League team of Punjab, the Kings XI Punjab has been renamed as **Punjab Kings**.
Note: Punjab Kings have played in all 13 seasons of the IPL thus far, but they are yet to win a title. The next IPL (Indian Premier League) is set to start in the second week of April 2021. The franchise is jointly owned by Mohit Burman, Ness Wadia, Preity Zinta and Karan Paul.
 13. **Novak Djokovic** has won the Australian Open Men's Singles title 2021.
Note: This victory takes Djokovic's grand slam singles tally to 18 - just two behind Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Both Nadal and Federer are tied at the top with 20 Slams so far.
 14. Indian women tennis player **Anikta Raina** has won maiden women's double title in Phillip Island Trophy with Russian partner Kamilla Rakhimova.
Note: The Anikta-Kamilla pair beat Russia's Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6 6-4 10-7 in the final. The win will propel the 28-year-old Anikta to top-100 in the WTA rankings in doubles. She will be the second Indian woman player to be in top-100 after Sania Mirza.
 15. Indian Table Tennis player women's singles titles in the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship -- **Manika Batra**
Note: Commonwealth Games gold medallist Manika, representing Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB), had won her maiden title in 2015 at Hyderabad. She ranked 63rd in the world ranking. 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship was held in Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula.
 16. 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship was held in **Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula**.
Note: Commonwealth Games gold medallist Manika, representing Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB), had won her maiden title in 2015 at Hyderabad. She ranked 63rd in the world ranking. 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship was held in Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula.
 17. **Naomi Osaka** has won the women's singles title in the Australian Open 2021.
Note: She defeated American Jennifer Brady in the final held in Melbourne, Australia. It was Naomi's fourth

Grand Slam title. Osaka has now won two Australian Open titles after also triumphing at Melbourne Park in 2019.

- 18. Ladakh Scouts Regiment Centre** team lifted the first Ice Hockey cup 2021 in Leh.
Note: Ladakh Scouts Regiment Centre (LSRC. Men's and Kharu women have lifted the 1st Lieutenant Governor Ice Hockey Cup in their respective sections, in Leh.
- 19. Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka** has won the Women's doubles title of Australian open 2021.
Note: Aryna Sabalenka and her partner, Elise Mertens, won the Australian Open women's doubles final, 6-2, 6-3, over Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova on Friday afternoon at Rod Laver Arena. The win will move Sabalenka to the No. 1 ranking in doubles for the first time, with Mertens close behind at No. 2.
- 20.** Rajeev Ram has won Australian open mixed double event with Barbora Krejčíková of Czech Republic.
Note: The sixth seeds dominated from start to finish and did not drop serve in the match as they cruised to a 6-1, 6-4 victory in 59 minutes at the Rod Laver Arena, bringing the surprise run of the hometown pair to an end. It marks Krejčíková's third straight mixed doubles title at Melbourne Park after she triumphed with Ram in 2019 and Nikola Pietrangeli last year, capping a successful fortnight for the Czech, who also reached the women's doubles final with compatriot Katerina Siniakova, losing to Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka.
- 21.** Jasmine Harrison has become the youngest woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Note: The 21-year-old from Thirsk, North Yorkshire in the UK, achieved the feat by finishing top in the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, organized by Atlantic Campaigns. Harrison, who is a swim instructor and bartender by profession, travelled 3,000 miles (4,828km) across the Atlantic Ocean in 70 days, 3 hours and 48 minutes.

- 22. Odisha** state will host the Indian Women's League (IWL).
Note: The dates will be announced later. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, Indian football has been trying to restart on-field sporting action. It all started with the I-League qualifiers, followed by the Indian Super League (ISL) and the I-League. ISL and I-League are currently being played.
- 23.** Indian Boxer **Deepak Kumar has** won the silver medal at the 72nd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.
Note: He lost the final against Bulgaria's Daniel Asenov in the men's flyweight. The result may not be in favour of DeepakKumar but the Indian boxer surely won the hearts with his attacking game.
- 24. Vinesh Phogat has** won the gold medal at the Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial tournament.
Note: She defeated 2017 world champion Vanesa Kaladzinskaya. Up against the world number seven Belarusian, it was not an easy bout for the world number three Indian as the two grapplers kept testing each other with consistent attacks in the sea-saw battle in which Vinesh prevailed.

Books and Authors

- 1. Seth Rogen** has authored the book titled "Yearbook".
Note: The hardcover and digital format of the book will be published by Crown Publishing Group and the audio edition of the book will be released by Penguin Random House Audio. The "Yearbook" is a collection of true stories and funny essays of Seth Rogen that speaks about his grandparents, about him from doing standup comedy during his teenage and Jewish summer camp.
- 2. Dalai Lama** has authored the book titled "The Little Book of Encouragement".
Note: The book edited by Renuka Singh is published by Penguin Random House is set to be released. The book is a compilation of Dalai Lama's quotes and ideas to deal with the new realities of the post pandemic world along with how to combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change and his views on Tibet.
- 3. Pavan C. Lall** has authored the book titled the book titled 'Yes Man: The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor'.
Note: Yes Man is the story of Rana Kapoor, and his Icarus-like flight that eventually led to the Yes Bank crisis. In this hard-hitting book, Pavan C. Lall details not only Rana Kapoor's journey, but also asks tough questions about the banking system, its regulators and even the business environment that led to a point of no return for Yes Bank.
- 4. Jhumpa Lahiri** has authored the novel titled "Whereabouts".
Note: The book is published by Penguin Random House India is about a woman protagonist and her journey through life. The book will be released in April. The novel Whereabout was written in Italian and translated into English by Jhumpa Lahiri. The book portrays the

story of the life of a woman whose life transforms with the change in her perspective.

5. **Vineet Bajpai** has authored the novel titled '1857 – The Sword of Mastaan'.

Note: It is part two of the Mastaan Trilogy. The first part of the trilogy, Mastaan – The Fallen Patriot of Delhi, was released in October 2019. It is author's 5th fiction novel and 8th book overall. The Hindi editions will also be published by TreeShade Books.

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8. **Hunter Biden** has authored the book titled "Beautiful Things".

Note: The book is called "Beautiful Things" and will center on the younger Biden's well publicized struggles with substance abuse, according to Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. Acquired in the fall of 2019, "Beautiful Things" was kept under wraps even as Biden's business dealings became a fixation of then-President Donald Trump and others during the election and his finances a matter of investigation by the Justice Department.

9. **Sangeet Paul Choudhary** has authored the book titled 'Platform Scale: For A Post-Pandemic World'.

Note: The first edition of 'Platform Scale' was published in 2015. It explains about the importance of inner workings of platform business models and their ability to scale rapidly.

10. **Mohammad Hamid Ansari** has authored the book titled 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'.

Note: He served as the ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. He was the high commissioner to Australia and was also the permanent representative to the United Nations in New York.

11. **RP Gupta** has authored the book titled "Turn Around India: 2020 – Surmounting Past Legacy".

Note: The book explains the economic history of India which enables it to identify the strengths and weaknesses and helps to take the required corrective actions. This is an intimate narrative of the experiences and journey of RP Gupta towards achieving success through hard work and determination.

12. **Andre De Grasse** has authored the book titled 'Race With Me!'.

Note: Titled 'Race With Me!', the motivational book is expected to be out in July 2021. In the book, he shares how he overcomes adversity and stays motivated.

13. **Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari** has authored the book titled "Mapping Love".

Note: The book is published by Rupa Publications. Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari debuted as a director with the film "Nil Battey Sannata" in 2016 which was remade in Tamil as "Amma Kanakku".

14. The book titled 'Starstruck: Confessions of a TV executive' is a memoir of Television Executive **Peter Mukerjea**.

Note: The book is presented as a recollection of his experiences in the satellite television industry in India and the changes it has gone through over the years. Mukerjea is the former chief executive of Star India

15. **Priyanka Chopra Jonas** has authored the book titled "Unfinished: A Memoir".

Note: The end result is a book, published by the Michael Joseph imprint, which covers her dual-continent 20-year-long career as an actor and producer and her work as a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador.

16. **Arun Karmarkar** has authored of the book titled 'Tipane Kashmirchi' that features the researched facts about Jammu and Kashmir.

Note: Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir released the book titled "Tipane Kashmirchi (Notes on Kashmir), untold stories" authored by Arun Karmarkar. The book features the researched facts about Jammu and Kashmir.

17. **Meghna Pant** has authored the book titled "The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News".

Note: The book will be released in April 2021, and soon be seen as a major motion picture under the title Badnam Ladoo. The book is about a small-town woman, Ladoo, who scandalizes her conservative family when she decides to use a sperm donor to have a baby while continuing to look for Mr Right.

18. **Irwin Allan Sealy** has authored the book titled, 'ASOCA: A Sutra', a memoir of Ashoka The Great.

Note: The book is to be published by Penguin Random House's Viking imprint and will be released in July 2021. Penguin had published the 30th anniversary



- edition of his debut novel 'The Trotter-Nama'. He is an Indian emperor of the Maurya Dynasty who ruled almost all of the Indian subcontinent.
- 19. Arun Kumar** has authored the book titled, 'Indian Economy's Greatest Crisis: Impact of Coronavirus and the Road Ahead'.
Note: The book is published by Penguin Random House. He is a veteran Indian economist. Currently, he is the Malcolm S. Adiseshiah chair professor at the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.
- 20. Ashis Ghatak** has authored the book titled "Louiz Banks: A Symphony of Love" which is a biography of Louis Banks, the Godfather of Indian Jazz.
Note: The book published by Rupa Publications was released on 11th February 2021, the 80th Birthday of Louiz Banks.
 The book of 15 chapters each named after a song by Banks provides a detailed narrative about the life incidents and experiences of Louiz Banks.
- 21. Air Marshal Bharat Kumar** has authored the book titled "The Epic Battle of Longewala" released by Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria.
Note: The book aims to document the stories of valour and pass it to the next generation. This book will provide a better understanding about the battle of longewala to the present and future generation.
- 22. A.K. Rajan** has authored the book titled "Agriculture Acts 2020".
Note: The book is about the three controversial Central farm laws, which resulted in a months-long massive protest by farmers in New Delhi. It has shown how the laws hit at the federal structure of India.
- 23. Karan Puri** has authored the book titled, '#METOO'.
Note: Author's 1st fiction novel is 'Shit Happens – A desi boy in America'. This book was a best seller and also as mentioned in India Today Top 20 books in 2012. The book highlights the strength of human beings who have lived through the trauma of sexual violence.
- 24. Snigdha Poonam** is the author of the book titled 'India: A Scamster Born Every Minute'.
Note: Penguin Random House India acquired the book from the leading international literary agency, The Wylie Agency. It will be released under Penguin's Viking imprint in 2022. The book provides insight about the subculture of scams, cons and frauds in India. It proposes to navigate the sociocultural landscape of India and maps the evolution of corruption in India.
- 25. Madhavi S Mahadevan** has authored the novel titled 'Bride of the Forest: The Untold Story of Yayati's Daughter'.
Note: The book is published by Speaking Tiger Publishing Private Limited. The book features the stories of the little known women in the epis who suffered various systemic atrocities of that period. The book is about a girl, Drishadvati, whose fertility was bartered in exchange for rare horses.
- 26. Amit shah** has released the book "Rashtra Pratham-82 Varsha ki swarnim Gathas".
Note: Home Minister Amit Shah today released a book 'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha' in New Delhi. The book chronicles the glorious history of CRPF since its raising in 1939 and it has detailed and thoroughly researched account of CRPF's journey, challenges, successes, and sacrifices.

Science and Defence

- 1. bluShift Aerospace** has launched 'Stardust 1.0', the World's 1st Commercial Rocket launch powered by Biofuel.
Note: The solid biofuels used in the launch is non-toxic, Carbon Neutral & can be sourced from America. It uses Nitrous Oxide bubbled with Oxygen as an oxidizer. bluShift Aerospace's Rocket Engine is a hybrid of solid and liquid propellant called 'Modular Adaptable Rocket Engine for Vehicle Launch (MAREVL)'.
- 2.** The 16th edition of Indo-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 2021' will be held in **Rajasthan**.
Note: The exercise near the India-Pakistan border aims at enhancing cooperation and interoperability between the two armies and will focus on counter-terrorism operations under the United Nations mandate. The exercise is being held in India also assumes significance in the backdrop of recent developments on northern borders, and conveys the strategic posture of the two nations as well as enhanced upward trajectory in Indo-US relations.
- 3.** Union defence minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the 13th edition of the Aero India show at Air Force station in Yelahanka, Bengaluru. The Aero Show 2021 has been billed as **Runway to a Billion Opportunities**".

Note: The event was unique in ways more than one and it is billed as the 'Runway to a Billion opportunities'. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the air show, Aero India 2021 was a hybrid show, which means delegates presented either physically or virtually. The three-day event has focused on India's indigenous defence sector capabilities.

4. Defence minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) second Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas production line in **Bengaluru**.
Note: The deal to be signed in the next few days with HAL would strengthen the Indian Air Force's fleet of homegrown fighter jet 'LCA-Tejas' and overall combat capability. Last month, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had approved the largest indigenous defence procurement deal worth about Rs 48,000 crores to buy 83 LCA Tejas Mark1A fighter jets.
5. Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) has signed an MoU with Rafael Advanced Defense Systems for joint induction of an anti-torpedo defence system called 'SHADE' for the Indian Navy. Rafael is a defence tech company of **Israel**.
Note: It was founded as Israel's National R&D Defense Laboratory for the development of weapons and military technology within the Israeli Ministry of Defense; in 2002 it was incorporated as a limited company.
6. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed an MoU with **Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI)** for development and production of composite raw materials that are used in manufacturing of aircrafts and are currently being imported.
Note: This is the first time that such an MoU has been signed for composite raw materials. Composites raw materials, mainly in the form of prepregs used in platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) are currently imported.
7. SpearUAV, developers and suppliers of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) solutions for defence and Homeland Security applications has signed an MoU with Paras Aerospace to introduce encapsulated Ninox 40 system to the Indian market. SpearUAV belong to **Israel**.
Note: Specifically designed for single-user operation, the Ninox 40 is a micro-tactical, cost-effective drone system, featuring an encapsulated drone and control unit. Weighing under 250g -- within regulatory limitations -- it is lightweight enough to be incorporated into the soldier's vest and carried on-person during combat.
8. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Aerospace Laboratory has signed an MoU with **BEML Limited** for development of two-seater trainer aircraft through technology transfer.
Note: The Two entities will also undertake Joint Development in areas of advanced composites and autoclaves, mini-unmanned aerial vehicles, design & analysis of aircraft structure & systems. The MoU was exchanged between A K Srivastav, Director Defence and Aerospace, BEML & R Venkatesh, Director, Business Development of NAL.
9. The 6th India-Russia Military Industrial Conference (IRMIC) was held in **Kolkata, West Bengal**, where BEL entered into an Offset Contract under invest in kind with Rosoboronexport, a Joint Stock Company (JSC) in Russia.
Note: The MoU was signed at the 6th India-Russia Military Industrial Conference, held in Bengaluru. Setting up of industrial facilities under the contract for manufacture of aviation hoses is fully consistent with the government's 'Make in India' programme.
10. 16th edition of 'Yudh Abhyas', the joint military exercise of India and the United States was held in Rajasthan.
Note: The Indian side is represented by the 11th Battalion of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, part of the South Western Command while U.S. Army delegation will be represented by the troops of 2nd battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment of 1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team along with respective brigade headquarters.
11. Indian Navy has signed an MoU with **IIT Delhi** for research in the underwater domain of Naval Electronic Systems.
Note: Research conducted at IIT Delhi has played a key role in the technological advancements of the Indian Navy. Indian Navy, in accordance with 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', aims to develop major technology driven projects through IIT Delhi.
12. 'Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX 21)', is the Biennial Largest War Game of **Indian Navy**.
Note: The exercise started in early January 2021 and is expected to end by the Third Week of February, 2021. The main objective of the exercise is to validate the Navy's Offensive-Defence capabilities, safeguarding national interests in the Maritime domain and promoting stability and peace in the IOR.
13. The headquarter of the CIFT located in **Kochi**.
Note: ADDS, promulgated by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, will set up a criterion for basic design aspects for the construction of DSFVs. Notably, the vessels constructed in compliance with ASDDS will attract a subsidy under the PMMSY scheme.
14. The Ministry of Defence has inked a pact with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** to procure a software-defined radio tactical (SDR-Tac) ship-borne system.

Note: The procurement of SDR-Tac (software-defined radio tactical) "will bring strategic depth to the armed forces". The SDR-Tac is a four channel multi-mode, multi-band, 19-inch rack mountable, ship-borne software defined radio system.

15. Name the army version of Nag anti-tank guided missile of which user trial has been carried out successfully _____

Helina.

Note:

- 'Helina' is the Army version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile while 'Dhruvastra' is the Airforce version of the Missile.
- The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by DRDO.
- The Helina is a third-generation fire and forgets the class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the ALH.

16. In February 2021, Indian navy conducted Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the navy of which country in the Arabian Sea _____ **Indonesia.**

Note:

- The aim of the exercise is to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation.
- The Indian Navy participated in maritime exercises in the last few months with a number of countries, including Japan, Russia, Australia and the US.

17. Which country successfully test fired anti tank guided missile "Helena" and "Dhruvastra" recently _____ **India.**

Note:

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- The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by DRDO.
- The Helina is a third-generation fire and forgets the class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the ALH.

18. Scientist from which IIT developed washable adhesive and related products _____ **IIT Kanpur.**

Note:

- The mat is a low-cost one and remains washable and usable over many cycles.
- The adhesive associated makes use of nanoscopic pyramidal bumps on its surface to attract dust particles towards it, thereby cleaning the sole of our shoes when we step on it.
- When the adhesive gets completely covered with particulate matter, it is washed in a way that we wash our clothes.

19. Amazonia-1 is a satellite of which country that was launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) through its PSLV-C51 along with 18 payloads _____ **Brazil.**

Note:

- It was launched as per the tentative scheduled at 10:24 AM.
- The 637-kg Amazonia-1 is the first Brazilian satellite to be launched from India.
- Amazonia-1 is the optical earth observation satellite of the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

20. Which country successfully test fired anti-tank guided missile "Helena" and "Dhruvastra" recently _____ **India.**

Note:

- Helena is the Army version and Dhruvastra is the Air Force version of the ALH.

The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Banking & Financial Awareness

1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Shivam Sahakari Bank Ltd based in **Maharashtra.**

Note: Following the cancellation of its license, the bank will stop to carry on the banking business, which includes accepting and repaying deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation (BR) Act, 1949, with effect from the close of business on January 29, 2021. The bank can start the liquidation proceeding, with the cancellation of the license.

2. **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** has set up an 'Innovation Sandbox' web portal, a workflow based platform that enables FinTech firms and individuals to do offline testing of their applications.

Note: It is a testing environment that enables FinTech firms and individuals to do offline testing of their applications. The innovation sandbox is set up as per the guidelines of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The aim of the portal is to create an ecosystem which promotes innovation in the securities market.

3. As per the 'Brand Finance Global 500 2021 Ranking, Indian firm **Reliance Jio** has emerged as the fifth strongest brand in the globe.
Note: The Reliance Industries subsidiary had a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91.7 out of 100. The list is topped by WeChat with a BSI score of 95.4 followed by Ferrari with 93.9 BSI score. Russian bank Sber is spotted in 3rd rank with 92.0 BSI score followed by Coca-Cola with 91.7 BSI score.
4. The Reserve bank of India has appointed an external IT firm for carrying out a special audit of IT infrastructure of **HDFC Bank**.
Note: RBI has appointed an external professional IT firm for carrying out a special audit of the entire IT infrastructure of the bank under Section 30 (1-B) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949..., at the cost of the Bank under Section 30 (1-C) of the Act. The bank shall accordingly extend its cooperation to the external professional IT firm so appointed by RBI for conducting the special IT audit as above.
5. **Punjab National Bank** has decided to restrict its customers from withdrawing money from non-EMV automated teller machines (ATMs) with effect from 01 February 2021.
Note: This restriction will apply to both, financial and non-financial transactions. To overcome this, PNB will introduce OTP based systems for withdrawing cash. PNB has also decided to replace the old IFSC and MICR codes. This means that the old codes will not work after March 31, 2021.
6. Neo banking startup StashFin has partnered with **SBM Bank India** to launch their co-branded contactless prepaid cards.
Note: Designed through collaboration, these prepaid cards will boost access to credit for underbanked consumers. With this launch, the innovation and technology-led business partnership is set to bridge the growing credit gap in India. The Visa powered card comes with a contactless EMV chip, offering the cardholders 24x7 access to funds.
7. **Ford Motor Co** has partnered with Alphabet Inc's Google to cooperate in software, artificial intelligence and cloud computing, developing new consumer services.
Note: The partnership will be applicable for 6 years and will incorporate the Android operating system of the Google into Ford and Lincoln vehicles in 2023. Ford's customer will get built-in Google apps, including its map and voice technology, Google AI to improve efficiency of vehicle development.
8. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unveiled the risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for select non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) with an asset size of over **Rs 5,000 crore**.
Note: As per the regulator, all the deposit-taking non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and the ones with an asset size of over Rs 5,000 crore will have to migrate to the new system. Currently, all the entities supervised by the RBI have their own approaches on internal audit, resulting in certain inconsistencies, risks and gaps in the system.
9. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unveiled the risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for urban co-operatives banks (UCBs) with assets size of over **Rs 500 crore**.
Note: As per the regulator, the Urban Co-operatives Banks (UCBs) with assets of over Rs 500 crore will have to migrate to the new system. Currently, all the entities supervised by the RBI have their own approaches on internal audit, resulting in certain inconsistencies, risks and gaps in the system.
10. As per the data revealed by the Reserve Bank of India, almost **Rs 62,000 crore** loans of top 100 wilful defaulters have been written off by the banks as of March 2020.
Note: Data the Reserve Bank of India shared with Right to Information Act activist Biswanath Goswami showed that Mehul Choksi-owned Gitanjali Gems was the top wilful defaulter, accounting for Rs 5,071 crore of non-performing assets (NPA). Banks wrote off Rs 622 crore of the firm's loans.
11. As per the revised the objective and eligibility criteria of innovation sandbox by the Securities and Exchange Board of India, an applicant can move from Stage-I to Stage-II only after a minimum period of **60 Days**.
Note: In order to encourage innovation and boost participation, markets regulator SEBI revised the objective and eligibility criteria of its innovation sandbox with graded entry norms. As the revised guidelines, an applicant if completed a minimum 60 days in the Stage-I of Innovation Sandbox testing will be eligible to enter into stage 2 of the testing.
12. Federal Bank Ltd launched 'FedFirst', a special savings account for **Children**.
Note: The account helps children develop healthy saving and spending habits, thereby giving them the freedom to save, spend and earn. The account is designed to enable children to learn the importance of money management. The account comes with unique features and offers. The account holder is provided with a FedFirst contactless Debit Card with a daily cash withdrawal limit of ₹2,500 and POS/e-com limit of

- ₹10,000, in addition to free online facilities including access to internet banking, mobile alerts and e-mail alerts.
- 13. Bharti AXA General Insurance** general insurance company has launched 'Salute to Caregivers – Ek Naya Nazariya Campaign' to support the cancer survivors in the battle against cancer.
Note: To commemorate the World Cancer Day 2021, Bharti AXA General Insurance has collaborated with poetess Priya Malik, who wrote a poem on the Campaign & she also expressed her experience as a caregiver.
- 14. ICICI Bank** in India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MUFG Bank of Japan for collaboration towards catering to the banking requirements of Japanese corporates present in India.
Note: The MoU establishes a framework of partnership between the banks across various domains including trade, investment, treasury, corporate and retail banking. It also paves way for the two banks to combine their individual strengths and cater holistically to the banking requirements of Japanese corporations operating in India.
- 15.** The Reserve Bank of India in its 5th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) review projected India's gross domestic Product (GDP) growth at **10.5** per cent for the FY2021-22.
Note: The projection of Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation has been revised to 5.2% for the Q4FY21, 5.2 % to 5.0 % in H1FY22 and declined to 4.3% by Q3FY22. The MPC has given the mandate to maintain annual inflation at 4% until March 31, 2021 with an upper tolerance of 6% and lower tolerance of 2% i.e. within a band of +/- 2 %.
- 16. Rs 1 lakh crore** is total amount to be provided to various sectors and banks under Targeted Long Term Repo Operations (TLTRO) scheme.
Note: The sectors which could benefit from this move include construction, real estate, and microfinance. RBI will provide these funds under on-tap targeted long-term repo operations (TLTRO) at a floating rate linked to the policy rate for up to three years. At present, the repo rate is 4 percent. LTRO lets banks borrow one to three-year funds from the central bank at the repo rate, by providing government securities with similar or higher tenure as collateral.
- 17. Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched 'Salute to Caregivers – Ek Naya Nazariya Campaign' to support the cancer survivors in the battle against cancer.
Note: To commemorate the World Cancer Day 2021, Bharti AXA General Insurance has collaborated with poetess Priya Malik, who wrote a poem on the Campaign & she also expressed her experience as a caregiver.
- 18.** Parivartan is a corporate social responsibility (CSR) brand of **HDFC Bank** under which it has invited applications from start-ups and solo entrepreneurs for its SmartUp grants.
Note: The initiative is aimed at finding and deploying long-term, sustainable solutions at scale, to address social issues and contribute to the economic and social development of the country. The bank will be focusing on start-ups in the education (edtech) and skill development sector this year for the grant.
- 19. Rs 6865 crore** is the budgetary provision for the new Central Sector Scheme titled "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)" launched with a clear strategy and committed resources to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs.
Note: The goal is to achieve doubling of export by 2022. However, more than 86% of farmers in the country are small and marginal. For this, Aggregation of small, marginal and landless farmers into FPOs will help enhance economic strength & market linkages of farmers for enhancing their income.
- 20. Bank of Maharashtra** has entered into a co-lending agreement with the Pune-based non-banking financial company LoanTap Credit Products, for MSME loans.
Note: Under the co-lending model, the bank will have an exposure of up to 80 per cent while the rest will be borne by the LoanTap. Co-lending is the system introduced by RBI in the wake of the liquidity crisis at non-banking finance companies to enhance the credit flow to the unserved and underserved sector and make available funds to the ultimate beneficiary at an affordable cost.
- 21.** The digital payment platform PhonePe has partnered with **Axis Bank** on UPI multi-bank model giving its users the option to create and use multiple UPI IDs banks "@axl" handle.
Note: It will enable the PhonePe users to create and use multiple UPI IDs with Axis Bank's "@axl" handle. Until now, the PhonePe's key banking partner was Yes Bank.
- 22.** The RBI has permitted the Indian individual to make remittances to IFSCs established here under the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) per year for travel, education and medical care as well as for the purchase of shares **\$250,000**.
Note: Till now, only global participants were allowed to invest in funds set up in Indian IFSCs. The move is likely to benefit retail investors, and high net-worth individuals (HNIs). Under the LRS, an Indian individual

- can send up to \$250,000 per year overseas for travel, education and medical care as well as for the purchase of shares.
23. Meghalaya Police has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **State Bank of India** for implementation of e-Challan in the jurisdiction of Shillong Traffic Police (STP).
Note: The e-Challan system has been integrated with VAHAN & SARATHI, which are the flagship applications of MoRTH (Ministry of Road Transport & Highways). The Integration with VAHAN & SARATHI will help traffic officials in gathering the information of traffic violations such as Vehicle & Driver's details.
 24. The Central Government is all set to sell **20 per cent** stake in National Fertilizers Ltd (NFL) out of its shareholding of 74.71% through an Offer For Sale (OFS) method of shares.
Note: To initiate the sale process, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has invited tenders from merchant banks. It should be noted that NFL is the second largest producer of Urea in the country with a share of about 15% of total Urea production in the country.
 25. **NVIDIA** has announced a definitive agreement with SoftBank Group Corp. (SBG) under which will acquire Arm Limited from SBG and the SoftBank Vision Fund.
Note: Under the deal, NVIDIA will pay Softbank USD 21.5 billion in common stock and USD 12 billion in cash, USD 2 billion of which will be payable at signing. Another USD 5 billion in cash or stock may also be given to Softbank, depending on Arm's performance.
 26. **New Development Bank** has committed to invest USD 100 Million into the NIF Fund of Funds (FoF).
Note: This is the NDB's 1st Equity Investment into India & the 1st ever Investment in an FoF. With this investment, FoF has secured USD 800 Million in commitments. The other investors in FoF apart from NDB are Government of India, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Asian Development Bank.
 27. **Punjab National Bank** has signed a First-of-its-kind Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) for providing up to INR 2 Crore Loan to Indian Oil dealers.
Note: Under the scheme Dealers can avail loan of upto INR 2 Crore at lower interest rates, nil margin and with minimum or Zero Collateral requirements. Collateral Security will not be asked to Individuals who are having dealerships with IndianOil for 5 years or more.
 28. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has signed a First-of-its-kind an MoU with IOCL for providing up to INR 2 Crore Loan to dealers of the company through the PNB e-Dealer scheme.
Note: Under the scheme Dealers can avail loan of upto INR 2 Crore at lower interest rates, nil margin and with minimum or Zero Collateral requirements. Collateral Security will not be asked to Individuals who are having dealerships with IndianOil for 5 years or more.
 29. India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) Ltd estimated that India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will grow at **10.4%** in FY22.
Note: Earlier, Ind-Ra had projected the GDP for FY 21 as -7.8%. The full recovery will be visible in FY23. The government final consumption expenditure is expected to grow at 10.1% in FY22, while private final consumption expenditure is expected to grow at 11.2% in FY22
 30. HDFC Bank has joined hands with CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd to provide EMI Collection Services.
Note: CSC is a Special Purpose Vehicle under MeitY. The bank's new initiative is aimed at making payments convenient for customers, who can now visit their nearest CSC, to deposit overdue. With EMI Collection facility, customers need not visit bank branches.
 31. **Equitas Small Finance Bank** has partnered with Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Limited (MSRDC) and Ocean Highway Facilities and Solutions Pvt Ltd. to launch India's first FASTag powered truck terminal at Khalapur, Maharashtra.
Note: Equitas Small Finance Bank (Equitas SFB) has partnered with Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation Limited (MSRDC) and Ocean Highway Facilities and Solutions Pvt Ltd for launching country's first FASTag powered truck terminal at Khalapur, Maharashtra on the Yashwantrao Chavan Mumbai - Pune Expressway.
 32. **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company** has launched a new goal based savings product - 'Guaranteed Income for Tomorrow' (GIFT), which provides guaranteed income to policyholders to help them achieve their long-term financial goals.
Note: This non-participating savings product can enable customers to eliminate the uncertainty of future income streams to a large extent. The life cover provides financial security to the family, which is essential for a robust financial plan.
 33. Indian company **Recykal** that has been selected as the first member from India for The Circulars Accelerator Program 2021.
Note: The Circulars Accelerator, led by Accenture, in partnership with Anglo American, Ecolab and Schneider Electric, and in collaboration with UpLink and the World

- Economic Forum, will connect industry leaders with 17 ground-breaking circular economy entrepreneurs to scale up disruptive, cross-sector value-chain innovation at an unprecedented pace.
- 34.** The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) has signed an MoU with **India Post Payments Bank** to facilitate opening of bank accounts for construction workers.
Note: This MoU will ensure accessible financial services for construction workers along with financial literacy and digital inclusion. The aim of the pact is to cover around 10 lakh workers in a year from around current 3 crore workers engaged in construction activities across real estate projects.
- 35.** Under chairmanship of **N S Vishwanathan Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has constituted an eight-member expert panel to draw up a regulatory road map for urban co-operative banks (UCBs) and study the sector's consolidation prospects.
Note: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said it has constituted an eight-member expert panel to draw up a regulatory road map for urban co-operative banks (UCBs) and study the sector's consolidation prospects. Among the terms of reference of this committee will be to suggest effective measures for faster rehabilitation and resolution of UCBs. It has been tasked to look into regulatory measures that the central bank has taken with respect to UCBs and evaluate the impact it has had over a period of five years.
- 36.** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide Rs 100 crore loan to **Medanta Hospitals** chain for healthcare services and medical equipment to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.
Note: The project will support the purchase of personal protective equipment, basic hygiene products, and patient care equipment such as ventilators and beds. It will also support staff training programmes on infection prevention and control. The funding complements ADB's sovereign support to India, including a USD 1.5 billion loan approved in April last year for COVID-19 containment and prevention, and social protection for poor and economically vulnerable communities such as women.
- 37.** **Kerala Financial Corporation** becomes the first government financial institution to launch its own debit card.
Note: This 5 year Rupay platinum card will be co-branded in association with public sector banks. The card will be issued in accordance with the guidelines of Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- 38.** Mastercard has joined hands with payment gateway **Razorpay** to empower Indian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups especially in tier 2 and 3 cities.
Note: Mastercard and Razorpay have joined hands to empower Indian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups especially in tier 2 and 3 cities in digitising their operations, maintaining business continuity in the challenging environment, and preparing them for cashless future. It should be noted that Razorpay is India's youngest unicorn (Company valuation exceeds \$1 billion).
- 39.** According to Nomura what will be the India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate Financial Year 2021-22 -- **13.5%**.
Note: The real GDP to contract by 6.7% in FY21 and grow by 13.5% in FY22. Year-on-year GDP growth projected at 1.5% in Q4FY20 (from -7.5% in Q3) and 2.1% in Q1F21.
- 40.** **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** will carry out the first Geothermal Field Development Project in India that will be established in Puga, Ladakh.
Note: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by the ONGC Energy Centre (OEC) with Ladakh and the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. This MoU, which was signed in the presence of Ladakh Lieutenant Governor, is the first step towards creating a Carbon Neutral Ladakh, a clarion call given by Prime Minister of India on Independence Day 2020.
- 41.** The central government has decided to privatize four public sector banks.
Note: The two laws to be amended are Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980. The four banks to be privatize are Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and the Central Bank of India.
- 42.** The startup Pi Beam has launched the electric two-wheeler called 'PiMO'. The Pi Beam is incubated by **IIT Madras**.
Note: Pi Beam's new Electric Two-Wheeler can charge faster than a smartphone. Riding PiMo does not require a license or registration. Priced at Rs. 30, 000 it is economical and eliminates fuel costs.
- 43.** The Budget outlay for the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for telecommunications (telecom) and networking products, launched by government of India, over five years -- **Rs 12,195 crore**.
Note: Under the PLI scheme, Telecom manufacturing will be boosted in order to enhance the production of more than Rs 2.4 lakh crore. The scheme also has higher

- proposed incentives for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- 44. Mallikarjun Kharge** has been accorded as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha with effect from 16th February 2021.
Note: Kharge was named Congress leader in the House to succeed Ghulam Nabi Azad whose term has ended. Kharge, a former union minister, had earlier been Congress leader in the Lok Sabha.
- 45.** The central government has allocated **Rs. 16000 crores** for FY 2021-22 for its crop insurance program, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
Note: This is a budgetary increase of around ₹305 crore as against the previous fiscal year 2020-21. The scheme extends coverage for the entire cropping cycle from pre-sowing to post-harvest including coverage for losses arising out of prevented sowing and mid-season adversities.
- 46.** The theme of RBI's Financial Literacy Week (FLW) – 2021 that was celebrated from February 8 to 12 -- **Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institution.**
Note: The theme selected for current year FLW is 'Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions' which will be observed from February 8-12, 2021. This theme is one of the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education 2020-2025.
- 47. Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched an innovative insurance plan, "Health AdvantEDGE", to cater the pre- and post-hospitalization needs of its customers.
Note: Bharti AXA Health AdvantEDGE is also one of the few healthcare products that offer comprehensive wellness benefits as a key differentiator in the domestic health insurance market. It is specially designed to support the healthcare and wellness needs of customers.
- 48.** According to the Ecowrap report of the **State Bank of India (SBI)** the Indian GDP will contract by **7%** in the FY 2020-21.
Note: Ecowrap report of the State Bank of India (SBI) has estimated that India's Gross domestic Product (GDP) for FY 21 will contract by 7% (-7%) from -7.4% projected earlier. The GDP growth in FY22 will remain at 11%.
- 49.** The central government to infuse into Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank) in FY 2021-22 -- **Rs 1,500 crore.**
Note: This amount is Rs 200 crore higher than the amount (Rs 1,300 crore) earmarked by the government to be infused in the bank in FY 21. The government had
- doubled the authorised capital of the bank from Rs 10,000 crore to Rs 20,000 crore in 2019.
- 50. Piramal Capital and Housing Finance Limited** get the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) nod to acquire Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL).
Note: The resolution plan is to revive the debt-ridden DHFL. This approval paves way for Piramal group to acquire DHFL. After RBI's Approval, Piramal Group has to seek approval from The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to acquire DHFL.
- 51. Tata Group** has signed a deal to acquire 68% stake in BigBasket for about Rs 9,500 crore.
Note: Post acquisition, the enterprise value of BigBasket becomes more than Rs 13,500 crore. Tata Communications has partnered with Google Cloud in India to drive cloud adoption and transform Indian businesses.
- 52.** The name of outward forex remittance service rolled out by Kotak Mahindra Bank on its mobile banking app - **- Kotak Remit.**
Note: This service will allow the customers to directly send money to their loved ones living abroad from their phones. The bank has rolled out this feature on the Kotak Mobile Banking App. In order to use this service, the customers will not have to perform any physical documentation work for up to amount of \$25,000.
- 53. Indian Bank** has signed an MOU with Society for Innovation and Development (SID) for extending exclusive credit facility to Start-ups and MSMEs.
Note: SID an initiative of the IISc for extending exclusive credit facility to Start-ups and MSMEs. The Bank will extend loans of up to Rs 50 crore to these start-ups for their working capital requirements.
- 54. Bank of Maharashtra** has entered into a strategic partnership with Vayana Network to offer financial support to the MSMEs.
Note: Under the MoU, BoM will provide short term credit to meet funding requirements of dealers of corporates via "Mahabank Channel Financing Scheme". The Vayana Network will provide its Supply Chain Financing solutions (SCF) to the bank supported by Vayana's technology and service expertise.
- 55.** As per S&P global ratings, **India** will be the fastest growing emerging market economies with 10% growth in next fiscal.
Note: Explanation: S&P Global Ratings has said that India will be one of the fastest growing emerging market economies with a 10 per cent growth in the next fiscal.

- 56. Union Government** has signed a loan agreement with **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank** for \$304 million Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project to improve reliability, capacity and security of the power transmission network in the State of Assam.
Note: The project aims to strengthen Assam's electricity transmission system by constructing 10 transmission substations and laying transmission lines with the associated infrastructure. The project will also upgrade 15 existing substations, and transmission lines and existing ground wire to optical power ground wire and provide technical assistance to support project implementation
- 57. Union Bank of India** has been adjudged as the "Best Service Provider" in Human Resources and also the best institution for "Excellence in Learning & Development" at 29th Global HRD Congress awards.
Note: Shri Kalyan Kumar, Chief General Manager, HR was named as "Chief Human Resources Officer of the Year". Shri Vinayak V Tembhurne, General Manager, HR, received the coveted award on his behalf. Global HRD Congress Awards are given to institutions annually for the best HR practices under different categories.
- 58. State Bank of Sikkim** has been brought under Reserve Bank of India's regulatory preview.
Note: The bank, established five years before Sikkim acceded to India in 1973, provides treasury operations for the state government. It only operates within Sikkim and is wholly-owned by the state government. The bank currently has 42 branch offices and operates three revenue counters for government works.
- 59. Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs)** in India need to plan for an effective IBOR transition, as majority of LIBOR rates are likely to be phased out by the end of 2021.
Note: Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) in India need to plan for an effective Inter Bank Offered Rate (IBOR) transition, as majority of LIBOR rates are likely to be phased out by the end of 2021. London Inter Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is one of the most common series of benchmark rates referenced by contracts measured in trillions of dollars across global currencies.
- 60. The total outlay of the new central sector scheme** has been launched for industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir -- **Rs 28,400 crore**.
Note: The scheme is approved with a total outlay of 28 thousand 400 crore rupees. It will be effective from 1st April this year and will remain in force up to 31st March 2037. The main purpose of the scheme is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio-economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 61. As per RBI data, India forex reserves were down by USD249 million to **USD 583.697 million**.**
Note: In the previous week, the reserves had declined by USD 6.24 billion to stand at USD 583.945 billion. It had touched a record high of USD 590.185 billion in the week ended January 29, 2021. In the reporting week, the decrease in reserves was mainly due to a fall in the foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.
- 62. Fino Payments Bank** has been granted the scheduled commercial bank status by Reserve Bank of India by including it to the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
Note: The scheduled commercial bank status allows Fino Payments Bank to enhance its banking position in the treasury and participation in LAF (Liquidity Facility) window, as per the RBI. It also helps the bank strengthen its business proposition on liabilities generation.
- 63. Indian Institute of Technology, Madras** incubated dairy-tech startup, Stellapps signed an MoU with payments bank **India Pots Payments Bank** to digitize the dairy milk procurement value chain and improve banking facilities at milk collection centres.
Note: The objective of the MoU is to expand access to a range of financial services for millions of unbanked and underbanked dairy farmers. Stellapps is the first of its kind startup in India working towards the digitization of the dairy supply chain.
- 64. ICICI Bank** in partnership with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) launched 'Namma Chennai Smart Card'.
Note: The Rupay powered co-branded, contactless prepaid card was unveiled by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (CM) Edappadi K. Palaniswami. The aim of the card is to enable residents of Chennai, Tamil Nadu to make seamless payments for various services within the city. The new proposition is a step towards transforming Chennai into a Smart City.
- 65. Asian Development Bank will provide Rs 100 crore** to Gurgaon-based hospital chain Medanta, to fight Covid-19 pandemic.
Note: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide ₹100 crore loan to hospital chain Medanta for healthcare services and medical equipment to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will support the purchase of personal protective equipment, basic hygiene products, and patient care equipment such as

- ventilators and beds. It will also support staff training programmes on infection prevention and control.
- 66.** As per S&P global ratings, **India** will be the fastest growing emerging market economies with 10% growth in next fiscal.
Note: S&P Global Ratings has said that India will be one of the fastest growing emerging market economies with a 10 per cent growth in the next fiscal. S&P Director, Sovereign & International Public Finance Ratings, Andrew Wood said this while speaking in a webinar on India outlook for 2021.
- 67.** The government of India has decided to infuse **Rs. 1,500 crore** into state-owned Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) in the next financial year.
Note: The amount is Rs 200 crore higher than the provision made by the government for the current fiscal. The government has earmarked Rs 1,300 crore capital infusion for the bank. The (Rs 1,500 crore) provision is for Exim Bank as equity support/ subscription to increase the paid up capital of the bank to the level of its authorised capital.

- 68.** The Reserve Bank of India came out with a slew of directions related to maintenance of liquidity coverage ratio, risk management, asset classification and loan-to-value ratio, among others, for **Housing Finance Companies**.
Note: The Reserve Bank of India came out with a slew of directions related to maintenance of liquidity coverage ratio, risk management, asset classification and loan-to-value ratio, among others, for housing finance companies. These directions, which shall come into force with an immediate effect and it will be applicable to all the housing finance companies registered under section 29A of the National Housing Bank Act 1987. HFCs are mandated to maintain a liquidity buffer in terms of liquidity coverage ratio (LCR). This will help to have sufficient high-quality liquid asset (HQLA) to survive an acute liquidity stress scenario lasting for 30 days. Therefore, the non-deposit taking HFCs with an asset size of Rs 10,000 crore and above, and all deposit-taking HFCs irrespective of their asset size will have to maintain a minimum LCR of 50% by 1st Dec 2021 and to 100% by 1st Dec 2025.

Obituaries

- Nobel laureates Paul J. Crutzen passed away recently, he received the prize in **Chemistry**.
Note: He won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995, jointly with Mario J. Molina and F. Sherwood Rowland, for their work in atmospheric chemistry, particularly concerning the formation and decomposition of ozone. He was known for his work on the ozone layer and climate change and for popularizing the term 'Anthropocene' to describe a proposed new era when human actions have a drastic effect on the Earth.
- Hilton Valentine, the founding guitarist of the rock and roll band 'The Animals' passed away recently, he held belongs to **England**.
Note: Valentine took up the guitar at 13 in his hometown of North Shields in northeast England, subsequently getting involved in the skiffle craze — a kind of fusion of American folk, country, jazz and blues — that was sweeping the U.K. His skiffle band The Heppers evolved into The Wildcats, a rock and roll band that became popular across the north of England, partly because of Valentine's habit of rolling on the ground while playing his guitar.
- Veteran Army officer Captain Tom Moore, who raised a record breaking fund for Corona warriors passed away recently, he belongs to **England**.
Note: Moore struck a chord with locked-down Britain by walking around his garden with the help of a frame to raise 38.9 million pounds (\$53 million) for the National Health Service. His endeavour and wit spread joy amid the grim news of the coronavirus outbreak: Moore's message to the world was that the sun would shine again and that the clouds would clear.
- Renowned sportsperson and coach Akhtar Ali passed away recently, he was associated **Tennis** sports.
Note: Born on July 5, 1939, Akhtar made his mark in 1955 when he became the National junior champion and reached the junior Wimbledon semifinals. He represented India in eight Davis Cup ties against Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran, Mexico, Japan and Monaco between 1958 and 1964. He played alongside stalwarts like Ramanathan Krishnan, Naresh Kumar, Premjit Lall and Jaidip Mukerjee.
- Renowned sportsperson and Olympic gold medallist, Leon Spinks passed away recently, he was associated with **Boxing**.
Note: Leon Spinks, who won Olympic gold and then shocked the boxing world by beating Muhammad Ali to win the heavyweight title in only his eighth pro fight, has passed away recently. He was 67. Spinks beat Ali by decision in a 15-round fight in 1978 to win the title.
- Renowned personality Banshi Kaul passed away recently, he was a prominent **Theater Director**.
Note: Banshi Kaul was a Hindi theatre director and the founder of Rang Vidushak, a theatre group and theatre

- institute in Bhopal. He was awarded Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1995 and Padma Shri in 2014. He received Rashtriya Kalidas Samman for the year 2016–17.
7. Renowned personality George Shultz passed away at 100 recently, he was a veteran **Politician**.
Note: A man of broad experience and talents, Shultz achieved success in statesmanship, business and academia. Lawmakers praised him for opposing as sheer folly the sale of arms to Iran that were the cornerstone of the Iran-Contra scandal that marred Reagan's second term in office.
 8. Renowned personality Rajiv Kapoor passed away recently, he was a veteran **Actor**.
Note: He was the youngest son of the legendary Raj Kapoor, and the brother of Randhir Kapoor and Rishi Kapoor. The Ram Teri Ganga Maili actor suffered a heart attack at his residence in Chembur following which he was rushed to Inlaks Hospital.
 9. Christopher Plummer is the oldest Oscar-winning actor, who has passed away recently. He was from **Canada**.
Note: Oscar-winning actor Christopher Plummer, who rose to prominence for his critically-acclaimed film 'Sound of Music', has passed away. He was 91. The prolific and versatile Canadian-born actor is the oldest person to win Oscar award.
 10. 10-time tennis Grand Slam champion, Tony Trabert passed away recently, he belongs to **United States**.
Note: Trabert captured the 1953 US Open, the 1954 French Open and the 1955 US and French Opens and Wimbledon. Trabert served as the Hall of Fame's president from 2001 to 2011 and spent 30 years as a television analyst. He also served as an author and coach and captained the US Davis Cup team from 1976-1980, guiding the squad to titles in 1978 and 1979.
 11. Prominent sportsman Bruce Taylor who passed away recently, was associated with **Cricket**.
Note: Taylor played 30 tests for New Zealand, picking up 111 wickets and scoring 898 runs. He also scored New Zealand's fastest test century in a game against West Indies in 1969 before the record was broken by Daniel Vettori 36 years later.
 12. Former Chief Justice of Punjab & Haryana High Court Justice Mandagadde Rama Jois passed away recently was also served as the governor of **Jharkhand**.
Note: M Rama Jois served as the Chief Justice of Punjab & Haryana High Court. Justice Rama Jois associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was elected as the member of Rajya Sabha as a BJP representative.
 13. Renowned personality Satish Sharma passed away recently, he was a veteran **Politician**.
Note: Captain Satish Sharma was a professional commercial pilot with Air India. He served as the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas from 1993 to 1996 under the premiership of Narasimha Rao.
 14. Renowned personality Basant Kumar Mahapatra, passed away recently he was a veteran **Major General**.
Note: He had participated in major battles including the 1962 Indo-China war, and 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan war. Hailing from Bhubaneswar in Odisha, Mahapatra was commissioned into armoured corps (Tanks) of the Indian Army as a Combat Officer and was popularly known as 'Tank Man'.
 15. Renowned personality Rahul Khullar passed away recently, he was former chairman/head of **TRAI**.
Note: Khullar, a 1975-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, was appointed as TRAI chief in May 2012. He served at TRAI for three years. Before being appointed as TRAI chief, he was a secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Trade. He had topped MA Economics in 1974 from Delhi School of Economics and then taught briefly at Hansaraj College, Delhi University, before joining the IAS in 1975.
 16. Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri, who passed away recently was poet of **Malayalam** language.
Note: Namboothiri, one of the widely acclaimed poets of contemporary Malayalam literature, was awarded the Padma Shri in 2014. He is also a recipient of several literary honours, including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi award. His works are known for their blend of tradition and modernity. Some of his noted works are 'Swaathandhryathe- Kurich Oru Geetham', 'Bhoomigeethangal', 'India Enna Vikaram', 'Aparaajitha', 'Aranyakam', 'Pranayageethangal' and 'Ujjayiniyile Rappakalukal', among others.

Important Days

1. World Wetlands Day is observed every year on **2nd February**.
Note: On 2 February 1971, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance was signed at Ramsar in Iran. The day aims to raise awareness about the crucial

role played by wetlands for people and our planet. The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2021 is 'Wetlands and Water'. 2021 marks 50 years of the Convention on Wetlands.

2. International Day of Human Fraternity is observed every year on **4th February**.
Note: International Day of Human Fraternity aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance. It also aims to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity. This year International Day of Human Fraternity 2021 theme: A Pathway to the Future.
3. World Cancer Day is observed every year on **4th February**.
Note: The day is celebrated to raise awareness and education about cancer, and pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the disease. World Cancer Day 2019-21 theme: 'I Am And I Will'.
4. **No Time for Global Inaction, Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation** is the theme of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2021.
Note: International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on 6th February as part of the UN's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation.
5. International Epilepsy Day 2021 is celebrated on **8th February**.
Note: International Epilepsy Day celebrated each year on the 2nd Monday of February. World Epilepsy Day 2021 fall on February 8. The Day is a joint initiative by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)
6. National Deworming Day (NDD) is celebrated every year on **10th February**.
Note: The day aims at eradicating intestinal worms also referred to as Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH), among children within the age bracket of 1-19 years.
7. What is the theme of the World Pulses Day (WPD) 2021 observing every year on 10 February '**Nutritious Seeds for a Sustainable Future**'.
Note: World Pulses Day (WPD) is observed every year on 10 February to realize the importance of pulses in human life. UN General Assembly has decided to mark 10 February as World Pulses Day in 2018.
8. World Unani Day is observed every year on **11th February**.
Note: World Unani Day has observed every year on 11th February. This day is celebrated every year to mark the birth anniversary of great Unani scholar and social reformer Hakim Ajmal Khan.
9. The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed every year on **11th February**.
Note: The theme for the International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2021 is 'Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19'.
10. World Radio Day is observed every year on **13th February**.
Note: This year, the day's theme is 'New World, New Radio.' This was decided to keep in mind the services the medium provided during COVID-19.
11. National Women's Day of India is celebrated every year on **13th February**.
Note: To honor the contributions of Sarojini Naidu, February 13 is observed as National Women's Day of India. This year is the 142nd birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu. National Women's Day is observed to celebrate the social, cultural, political, and economic achievements of women.
12. When is Soil Health Card Day observed on **19th February**.
Note: 2021 marks the sixth year of the launch of the SHC Scheme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme on 19th February 2015 at Suratgarh in Rajasthan.
13. The World Pangolin Day observed every year on **3rd Saturday of February (20th Feb)**.
Note: It marks the 10th edition of the event. The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts. Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in Asia and Africa.
14. World Day of Social Justice is celebrated annually all over the world on **20 February**.
Note: The International Labour Organization unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization on 10 June 2008. This year theme of World Day of Social Justice is "A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy".
15. The International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is observed annually on **21st February** to raise awareness regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.
Note: The theme of the Day this year, "Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society". International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999.
16. World Thinking Day is celebrated every year on **22nd February**.
Note: The day is observed to think about fellow brothers and sisters around the world, address their

concerns and understand the true meaning of guiding. The theme for World Thinking Day 2021 is peacebuilding.

17. World Thinking Day is celebrated each year by the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts across the world on **22nd February**.
Note: The day is observed to think about fellow brothers and sisters around the world, address their concerns and understand the true meaning of guiding. This year's Thinking Day theme was "Stand together for Peace".
18. Central Excise Day is celebrated every year on **24th February**.
Note: The day is celebrated to honour the officers associated with CBEC and their services. This is done to encourage the officers to carry out their duties with utmost sincerity. The officers, every year perform checking of corruption in goods from the manufacturing sector.
19. World NGO Day is observed every year on **27th February**.
Note: The day celebrates the efforts of those social workers who have gone an extra mile to make the world a better place. The Day was officially recognised and declared by the 12 member countries (Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Norway and Sweden). It was marked for the first time by the UN, EU leaders and international organisations in 2014.
20. World NGO Day is celebrated every year globally on **27th February**.
Note: World NGO Day aims to inspire people to become more actively involved within NGOs (Charities, NPOs,

CSOs) and encourage a greater symbiosis between NGOs and both the public and private sector. The universal concept of World NGO Day is Celebrate, Commemorate and Collaborate the various NGOs around the world, and the people behind them.

21. In India, February 27th is celebrated as the **National Protein Day**.
Note: The day was launched by the 'Right to Protein', a national-level public health initiative on February 27, 2020. This year theme of National Protein Day is "Powering with Plant Protein". 2021 marks the second year for this nutritional awareness milestone in India by 'Right to Protein'.
22. National Science Day is celebrated all over India on **28th February**.
Note: On this day, Sir CV Raman had announced the discovery of the Raman Effect for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930. The government of India designated 28 February as National Science Day (NSD) in 1986. The theme for this year's National Science Day is 'Future of STI: Impact on Education Skills and Work'.
23. Rare Disease Day is observed every year on **last day of February (28th February, 2021)**.
Note: This year in 2021 it falls on February 28, 2021. The day is observed to raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families. Rare Disease Day was first launched by European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS) and its Council of National Alliances in 2008.

New Appointments

1. **RS Sharma** has been appointed as the new CEO of country's flagship public health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat, also called Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
Note: He would replace Indu Bhushan, who is serving as the Chief Executive of the Ayushman scheme since its inception in 2018. RS Sharma, a former chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), who would take charge of the NHA from February 1.
2. **Jay Shah** has been appointed as the new President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC).
Note: Shah replaces Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief Najmul Hasan Papon. He is the youngest person ever to be appointed to the office. The ACC is Asia's regional administrative body and it currently consists of 24 member associations. ACC is responsible for organizing the Asia Cup tournaments.
3. **Rama Mohan Rao Amara** has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SBI Cards.
Note: He succeeds Ashwini Kumar Tewari, who was appointed as one of the 4 Managing Directors (MDs) of State Bank of India (SBI). Prior to his appointment, Rama Mohan Rao Amara served as the Chief General Manager, SBI Bhopal Circle, where he managed two key states, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.
4. **C.P. Mohanty** assumed charge as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff after Lt. Gen. S.K. Saini who stepped down on January 31 upon superannuation.
Note: Lt. Gen. Mohanty was earlier serving as the Southern Army Commander. He was commissioned into

the Rajput Regiment on June 12, 1982. He has commanded a battalion on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and in the northeastern region. He has the unique distinction of commanding two brigades, first on the Line of Actual Control and later the multinational UN Brigade in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lt. Gen.

5. **Henry Moniz** has been appointed as the first-ever Chief Compliance Officer of social media platform Facebook Inc.

Note: He will join Facebook on February 8 to lead the company's global compliance team, to enhance its global compliance and risk management and promote the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct at the company.

6. **Bhavya Lal** has been appointed as the Acting Chief of Staff of the US space agency, NASA.

Note: Lal is an active member of the space technology and policy community, having chaired, co-chaired, or served on five high-impact National Academy of Science committees. She served two consecutive terms on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Advisory Committee on Commercial Remote Sensing and was an External Council member of NASA's Innovative Advanced Concepts Program and the Technology, Innovation and Engineering Advisory Committee of the NASA Advisory Council.

7. **Praveen Sinha** has been appointed as the acting chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to succeed Rishi Kumar Shukla who retired after a two-year fixed stint.

Note: This is the fourth time since 2014 that an acting director has been given charge to look after duties of the CBI chief. Earlier, Rakesh Asthana, then additional director, held the fort before Alok Verma was appointed as Director.

8. **Andrew R. Jassy** will take over as the New Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Amazon after Jeff Bezos who decided to quit the post by October 2021.

Note: Jeff Bezos will be taking up the role of executive chair of the Amazon's Board of Directors. He also stated that he would be focusing on the new products, early initiatives and Philanthropic giving through like Day 1 Fund and the Bezos Earth Fund; Blue Origin, his secretive space venture.

9. **SN Subrahmanyam** has been appointed as the chairman of the National Safety Council for a period of three years. Subrahmanyam will guide the National Safety Council which has a major role to play to ensure safety in workplaces under new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020).

The National Safety Council will be assisting Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes in re-writing the regulations governing OSH in the country which have not been updated for over 50 years.

10. **Michael Bloomberg** has been reappointed as a special envoy to engage governments and businesses in tackling the threat of global warming by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Note: Bloomberg is the founder and owner of Bloomberg LP, the parent company of Bloomberg News. He was previously appointed as the U.N. special envoy for climate action between March 2018 and November 2019.

11. **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** has been appointed as the first female Director General (DG) of World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Note: She would be the first woman as well as the first African nation to lead the organization. Okonjo-Iweala, the former finance minister of Nigeria, will succeed Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down in August 2020.

12. **Mario Draghi** has been named the new Prime Minister of Italy.

Note: He accepted the request of Sergio Mattarella, President of Italy, to form a new government. Mario Draghi will lead the unity government replacing the centre left coalition government of Former prime minister Giuseppe Conte.

13. **Marc Llistosella** has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Tata Motors Ltd.

Note: He served as the President and CEO of Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation between 2015-2018 and Head of Daimler Trucks in Asia. Prior to this, he served as the MD and CEO of Daimler India Commercial Vehicles Pvt Ltd between 2008-2014.

14. **Sridhar Vembu** has been appointed as the newly reconstituted National Security Advisory board (NSAB) headed by Ajit Doval.

Note: Vembu is currently working from his company's office in Tamil Nadu's Tenkasi district. The other members of the NSAB are former ISRO Chairman K Radhakrishnan, IIM Bangalore faculty Anshuman Tripathy and former ambassador to France and United Nations Arun K Singh.

15. **Ajay Mathur** has been elected as the next director general of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Note: Mathur succeeds Upendra Tripathy, who has served as director general since 2017. A coalition of 73 member countries, ISA, aims to mobilize over USD 1 trillion of investment into solar projects by 2030 through policy and regulatory support, capacity

- building, and by overcoming perceived investment barriers.
- 16. Preeti Sinha** has been appointed as the Executive Secretary of the UN Capital Development Fund.
Note: Sinha commenced her tenure as UNCDF Executive Secretary, the highest leadership rank in the institution. Established in 1966, the New York-headquartered organisation provides micro-finance access to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), with the mandate to unlock the full potential of public and private finance.
- 17. Rana Daggubati** has been appointed as the brand ambassador of CEAT Limited.
Note: CEAT has launched 'Puncture Safe' range of tyres in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Rana Daggubati, as part of an integrated marketing campaign in 5 southern states, will feature in the new ads for these tyres to be aired across TV and digital platforms.
- 18. Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge** as the Prime Minister of **Congo**.
Note: He belongs to the Future of Congo political party. He succeeds Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, who resigned on January 28, 2021 after a no-confidence vote in the parliament.
- 19. Kannada Actor Darshan** has been roped in as the 'Agriculture ambassador' of the Agriculture department of **Karnataka** state.
Note: Darshan agreed to the role of Agriculture ambassador without any remuneration. He will be promoting the programmes and schemes of the State's Agriculture department and foster hope among the farmers.
- 20. Karim Khan** has been appointed as the as chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
Note: Mr. Khan won a secret ballot against three other candidates to replace lead prosecutor Fatou Bensouda. The 123-member Hague-based court, which began work nearly 20 years ago, handles war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and crimes of aggression. British barrister Karim is best known for heading the United Nations' special investigative team looking into Islamic State crimes in Iraq.
- 21. Usha Rao Monari** has been appointed as the Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
Note: She succeeds Mourad Wahba of Egypt, who served as the acting associate administrator. He also serves as the UNDP Regional Director for Arab States. The previous Associate Administrator of UNDP was Tegegnetwork Gettu.
- 22. Seiko Hashimoto** has been appointed as the next President of Tokyo Olympic 2020 after resignation of former chief Yoshiro Mori.
Note: She is a seven time Olympian herself, having competed as a cyclist and a speed skater. Former chief Yoshiro Mori resigned following a backlash over sexist comments he made. The Summer Olympics will begin on 23 July, after already being postponed by a year due to the pandemic.
- 23. Ajay Malhotra** has become the first Indian to be elected as chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council.
Note: Malhotra has previously served as ambassador to Russia (2011 to 2013), Kuwait (2009 to 2011), Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York (from 2005 to 2009) and Romania (with concurrent accreditation to Moldova and Albania) from 2003 to 2005.
- 24. V Narayanaswamy** has resigned as the chief minister of Puducherry after failing to win the trust vote in the assembly.
Note: Speaker V.P. Sivakolunthu declared that V. Narayanasamy lost the trust motion. Earlier Narayanasamy was asked to prove his strength in the assembly by the Lt. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.
- 25. Name the Punjabi singer Viruss** has been roped in by the Reserve Bank of India to drive its public awareness campaigns on cyber frauds.
Note: The RBI has roped in Punjabi singer-rapper Viruss in its public awareness campaign. The campaign also includes Viruss' popular 2017 Indie hit 'Bam Bhole' that was recreated for Akshay Kumar-Kiara Advani starrer Laxmi.RBI's latest public directives on how one can and should protect themselves from cyber crimes and identity theft comes along with peppy rap music.
- 26. Vijay Sampla** has been appointed as the Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).
Note: He has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014 to 2019. NCSC is an Indian constitutional body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, that works for the socio-economic development of the scheduled castes and to prevent atrocities against them.
- 27. Indian social activist Anjali Bharadwaj** has been appointed for the newly instituted International Anti-Corruption Champions Award by the Joe Biden Administration.
Note: The 48-year-old Bhardwaj has served as an active member of the Right to Information Movement in India for over two decades. She is the founder of the Satark

Nagrik Sangathan (SNS), a citizens' group which promotes transparency and accountability in government and encourage the active participation of citizens.

- 28. Linda Thomas-Greenfield** has been appointed as the US ambassador to the United Nations.
Note: The Senate voted 78-20 to confirm Thomas-Greenfield for the Cabinet-level position. Greenfield is the eighth confirmed member of President Joe Biden's Cabinet. Linda Thomas-Greenfield is a US diplomat with vast experience in Africa. She is a three-decade veteran of the US State Department.
- 29. Irakli Garibashvili** has been appointed as the new prime minister of **Georgia**.
Note: He took office immediately after the vote. He was appointed as the PM following the resignation of former PM Giorgi Gakharia on 18th February 2021. He was elected as the head of the government with 89 votes in favor and 2 against.
- 30. A Sakthivel** has been elected as the president of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).
Note: He is the owner and Founder of Poppys Group of Companies of Tirupur, Tamil Nadu and is currently the Chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC). He succeeds Sharad Kumar (S K) Saraf, a Mumbai-based businessman.
- 31. Mohamed Bazoum** has been reelected as the President of **Niger**.
Note: Niger's electoral commission has declared the governing party candidate, Mohamed Bazoum, the winner of the country's presidential election runoff. Bazoum had secured 55.75 percent of the votes cast on February 21, beating former President Mahamane Ousmane who garnered 44.25 percent, Issaka Souana, chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI).

32. Natalia Vodianova has been appointed as the new Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency.

Note: She will empower women and girls by promoting sexual and rights of them and tackling the stigma and taboos that surround their bodies and health, including menstruation that lead to discrimination and exclusion. She has teamed up with UNFPA over the past 3 years to launch a series of "Let's Talk" events worldwide. This series have mobilised policy makers, civil society and the private sector to address shame, exclusion and discrimination, faced regularly by millions of women and girls.

33. Deepika Padukone has been roped in as the Global Brand Ambassador of Levis, a premium American denim brand.

Note: This strategic partnership highlights the increasing focus of Levis on women's category. Deepika became the first female celebrity to endorse the brand in India. As a part of this partnership, Deepika Padukone will work on the new campaign of levis which is focused on a new range of fashion fits from Levis.

34. Dushyant Chautala has been elected as the President of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI).

Note: He was unanimously elected during the 84th Annual meeting of TTFI at Panchkula, Haryana. He will hold the post for a period of 4 years. He is the youngest president of any National sports federations in India.

35. Sachin Tendulkar has been appointed as the brand ambassador of edtech platform Unacademy .

Note: According to the terms of the partnership, Tendulkar will serve as the brand ambassador for Unacademy and will also conduct a series of live interactive classes on the platform. The former cricketer has also invested in the company.

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