

ESE 80 Days Study Plan

Monthly Current Affairs

Quarterly Current Affairs (Jan 2021 – March 2021)



JANUARY -2021

Banking & Financial Awareness

- 1. IDBI Bank** has sold 23% of its stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company Limited (IFLI) to Ageas Insurance International NV for a consideration of Rs 507 crore.

Note: IFLI is a three-way joint venture of IDBI Bank, Belgium's Ageas and Federal Bank. On purchasing the stake, Ageas Insurance International NV will hold 49% stake in IFLI earlier from 26%. While IDBI Bank's stake in IFLI will be reduced to 25% from 48%. Federal Bank continues to hold 26 per cent stake in IFLI.
- 2.** The RoDTEP scheme has replaced the popular Merchandise Exports from India Scheme from January 1, 2021.

Note: As per the finance ministry the benefit of Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme will be extended to all export goods from January 1, 2021. Under the scheme, the embedded central, state and local duties or taxes will get refunded and credited in an exporter's ledger account with customs.
- 3.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a fine of rupees Rs 25 crore on Indian company **Reliance Industries Ltd.** for carrying out manipulative trade.

Note: Two more entities, Navi Mumbai SEZ Pvt Ltd and Mumbai SEZ Ltd have been fined Rs 20 crore and Rs 10 crore, respectively. The fine was imposed on Reliance India Limited because the company violated the Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices (PFUTP).
- 4.** International card payment service RuPay partnered with **RBL Bank** to launch an innovative payment solution for Indian merchants "RuPay PoS" in association with PayNearby.

Note: The announcement for the same was made by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). This collaboration will transform smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for the retailers enabling the latter to accept contactless payments of up to Rs 5,000 through a simple tap and pay mechanism on his Near Field Communication (NFC) enabled mobile phones.
- 5. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** has launched health insurance coverage under Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) Social, Endeavour for Health, and Telemedicine (SEHAT) in association with Jammu & Kashmir Government.

Note: This extended scheme was launched by Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi. The scheme will provide universal health insurance cover to all the citizens of J&K, thus ensuring financial security during any medical emergency. This is the first time in India that any scheme is implemented to such huge masses. The scheme will operate on insurance mode in convergence with PM-JAY.

6. To recapitalize, the central government has issued Rs 5,500 crore in zero-coupon bonds -- **Punjab and Sindh Bank.**
Note: This move of capital infusion was approved by the Ministry of Finance on November 10, 2020. It should be noted that the Zero-coupon bonds are debt security that does not pay interest but instead trades at a deep discount, rendering a profit at maturity, when the bond is redeemed for its full-face value.
7. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an advisory council to manage Under chairmanship of **BP Kanungo**, the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme, aimed at encouraging deployment of more digital payments infrastructure across tier-3 to tier-6 centres.
Note: The fund will be used to subsidize banks and non-banks for deploying payment infrastructure, which will be contingent upon specific targets being achieved. The central bank has also constituted an advisory council under the chairmanship of B.P. Kanungo, a deputy governor, to manage the fund. The PIDF will be operational for three years from 1 January 2021, and may be extended for two more years based on progress.
8. Government of India has signed a loan agreement with **New Development Bank**, worth USD 646 million for two road projects in Andhra Pradesh.
Note: The first project is Andhra Pradesh Roads and Bridges Reconstruction Project comprising widening of 1,600 kilometre of State Highways to double lane and reconstructing dilapidated bridges on the State Highway network. The second project is Andhra Pradesh Mandal Connectivity and Rural Connectivity Improvement Project comprising widening of 1,400 kilometre of district roads to double lane and reconstructing dilapidated bridges on the district road network.
9. **Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank** has become the first urban co-operative bank (UCB) in India to receive a licence from RBI to operate as a Small Finance Bank (SFB).
Note: The RBI had given an 18-month timeline to commence business. SMCB received the commercial banking license from banking regulator Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 06, 2021, to transition to an SFB, under the voluntary transition scheme. The Shivalik Small Finance Bank (SSFB) will start its banking operations from April 2021.
10. **Tata Power** has partnered with **Small Industries Development Bank of India** (SIDBI) to provide easy financing scheme for MSME customers in rooftop solar segment.
Note: Tata Power and SIDBI have joined hands to design a solar financing solution to help MSME players with financial aid without any collateral at an interest of less than 10 per cent. The scheme will also be complimented with a sanction time of seven days and disbursement of money in four days.
11. **SBI Mutual Fund** has acquired an additional 86,993 shares in CSB Bank Ltd which consequently raised its stake in the bank to 5.01% from 4.96% earlier.
Note: The acquisition was made through open market purchase. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given approval to SBI funds management to acquire stake up to 10 % of the paid-

up capital of the CSB Bank through various schemes of 'SBI Mutual Fund.' This approval is valid for one year till July 21, 2021.

- 12. Bandhan Bank** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Army for 'Shaurya' salary account.

Note: The serving personnel of Indian Army will be provided the services of the account through the Bank's network of banking outlets. It is a zero-balance salary account with 6% interest on balance above Rs.1 lakh.

- 13. Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh** became the 1st Group of States to complete three out of the Four citizen schemes stipulated by Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance viz. One Nation One Ration Card Reforms, Ease of Doing Business Reforms, & Urban Local Bodies Reforms.

Note: As they have completed the reforms, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance will provide them an additional Financial Assistance of INR 1004 Crore under the newly launched "Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure" scheme. The 4 reforms are One Nation One Ration Card, Ease of doing Business Reform, Urban Local Body/Utility Reform & Power Sector Reform.

- 14.** The Reserve Bank of India announced the operationalization of the Payment Investment Development Fund (PIDF) with an initial corpus of **Rs 345 crore.**

Note: The objective of PIDF is to increase the number of acceptance devices multi-fold in the country. The Scheme is expected to benefit the acquiring banks / non-banks and merchants by lowering overall acceptance infrastructure cost.

- 15.** As per the first Advance Estimates (AE) of GDP for the year 2020-21 released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will shrink by **7.7%** in the financial year ending March 2021.

Note: The real GDP at 2011-12 prices in 2020-21 has been estimated to contract by 7.7 per cent and nominal GDP at current prices by 4.2 per cent. That's steeper than a 7.5% drop forecast by the Reserve Bank of India, as well as economists surveyed by Bloomberg and other agencies.

- 16.** PhonePe in partnership with **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** launched Term Life Insurance plans on its platform.

Note: This policy can be availed by PhonePe users instantly on PhonePe app through an all digital process without the need of any health check-ups and paperwork. This plan enables PhonePe users to protect their families from financial turmoil in case of an untimely demise of them.

- 17. Bank of Baroda** has signed an MoU with the SIDBI to enable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) customers of the bank to apply online for one-time restructuring (OTR).

Note: With this, the eligible MSME entities can get credit exposure up to Rs 25 crore. The restructuring of the borrower account will be implemented by March 31, 2021. The MSME

Customer can now access the web-based portal, 'Asset Restructuring Module for MSMEs (ARM-MSME)'.

- 18.** Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Finance Corporation (JKIDFC) has partnered with **Universal Sompo General Insurance Company Limited** to initiate comprehensive insurance covers for the customers of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.
- Note:** Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Finance Corporation operates in the entire territory of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. It plays a pioneering role in boosting industrial climate in the State by providing financial assistance to various Small and Medium Enterprises besides others.
- 19.** Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) has signed an MoU with **NHPC Limited** for providing its technical expertise in developing renewable energy projects.
- Note:** Under the MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and conservation projects for NHPC. IREDA will assist NHPC in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next five years. IREDA is under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- 20.** **State Bank of India** in association with Indian Oil Corporation launched a co-branded contactless Rupay debit card.
- Note:** On spent of Rs 200 at IndianOil fuel station, every time customer will get 6 reward points and loyalty points worth 0.75% against the purchase of fuel. The initiative will promote digital payments and is in alignment with the Government's vision of a Digital India. The card was launched by Dinesh Kumar Khara, chairman, SBI and Shrikant Madhav Vaidya, chairman, IndianOil.
- 21.** **Central Bank of India** has signed an MoU with NABFOUNDATION to provide working capital to all self-help groups (SHGs) which have an account with it and undertake the 'My Pad My Right' project.
- Note:** Central Bank of India (CBoI) and NABFOUNDATION signed an MoU to provide working capital to all self-help groups (SHGs) which have an account with it and undertake the 'My Pad My Right' project. NABFOUNDATION is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD. This cheap, collateral-free credit will support rural women needed to take up manufacturing on a regular basis.
- 22.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) gave approval to the acquisition of 100% shareholding of Columbia Asia Hospitals Private Limited (CAHPL) by Hospital Group **Manipal Hospitals**.
- Note:** After this acquisition MHEPL will become India's 2nd largest healthcare chain, after Apollo Hospitals. In regard to the acquisition MHEPL has entered into a share purchase agreement with CAHPL in November 2020.
- 23.** India's seventh Trade Policy Review (TPR), a comprehensive report issued by the WTO Secretariat which acknowledged India's strong economic growth at **7.4%** during in the last five years from 2015-20.

Note: India's official delegation for the TPR is headed by the Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan. During the TPR, a comprehensive report issued by the WTO Secretariat which acknowledged India's strong economic growth at 7.4% during in the last five years i.e. 2015-20.

- 24.** India's rank in the 3rd edition of Digital Evolution Scorecard 2020 developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard -- **4th**.

Note: It should be noted that India doubled its mobile internet connectivity in the last four years It will add 350 million smartphones by 2023. The scorecard was published in the Harvard Business Review in December 2020. In Digital Evolution-State Category, Singapore Topped followed by United States, Hong Kong. India ranked at 61st position

- 25.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of cooperative bank **Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd.**

Note: The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS), Maharashtra has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. The RBI said the bank has failed to comply with the requirements and continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors.

- 26.** **Flipkart** has collaborated with NITI Aayog to launch the updated Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).

Note: The revamped platform has multiple regional language support, allows interaction with women, fellow women entrepreneurs and mentors to communicate and also has a Question and Answer Portal. The community on WEP platform will connect women entrepreneurs who seek clarification on GST, funding, effects of the pandemic & progression of already established businesses.

- 27.** Under chairmanship of **Jayant Kumar Dash RBI** has constituted a working group on digital lending to study all aspects of digital lending activities in the regulated financial sector as well as by unregulated players.

Note: This is to ensure that an appropriate regulatory approach is put in place. The working group consists of both internal and external members. The internal members include Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI (Chairman); Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Chief General Manager in-charge, Department of Supervision, RBI; S.P. Vasudevan, Chief General Manager, Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, RBI; and Manoranjan Mishra, Chief General Manager, Department of Regulation, RBI (Member Secretary). The external members are Vikram Mehta, co-founder, Monexo Fintech; and Rahul Sasi, cyber security expert and founder of CloudSEK.

- 28.** Government of India has decided to sale **10%** of its stake in the Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) through an offer for sale (OFS), which could fetch over Rs 2,600 crore for the exchequer.

Note: The government, which held 75 per cent stake in SAIL as of September quarter, will divest 5 per cent equity stake in the company with a 5 per cent greenshoe option, an option to

sell further equity in case of over-subscription. The government had last sold 5 per cent stake in the state-owned steel maker in December 2014.

- 29. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** has completed five years of its operation on January 2021.

Note: PMFBY was launched on January 13, 2016 with an aim to provide a comprehensive risk solution at the lowest uniform premium across the country for farmers. So far, 29 crore farmers have insured their crops under the scheme and about 5.5 crores new farmers are getting registered every year. The government has disbursed claims worth Rs 90,000 crore in the last five years.

- 30.** The UBS Investment Bank has projected that the Indian Economy will shrink by **7.5** per cent in the 2020-21.

Note: Swiss brokerage major UBS Investment Bank has projected the Indian economy to contract 7.5 per cent in the current fiscal FY21, ending March 2021. UBS further expects the economy to rebound at 11.5 per cent in FY22. For the FY23, GDP growth is expected to stabilise at 6 per cent.

- 31.** The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on foreign bank **Deutsche Bank AG** for non-compliance.

Note: The bank did not comply with "certain provisions of directions contained in the 'Reserve Bank of India (Interest Rate on Deposits) Directions, 2016'. The penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in the RBI under the provisions of Section 47 A (1) (c), read with Section 46 (4) (i) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

- 32.** According to Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India, banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to **13.5%** by September 2021.

Note: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Financial Stability Report (FSR) of December 2020 has stated that banks' gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) may rise sharply to 13.5 per cent by September 2021, and escalate to 14.8 per cent, nearly double the 7.5 per cent in the same period of 2019-20, under the severe stress scenario. And banks will have to brace for a rollback of regulatory forbearance that was announced in the wake of the pandemic and enhance their capital positions.

- 33.** Mahindra Lifespace Developers has signed an MoU with **State Bank of India (SBI)** to speed up the home loan approvals as well as offer special discounts to customers and employees of both the companies.

Note: Mahindra Lifespace and SBI have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to enable an improved and more seamless experience for homebuyers across India. It provides various co-promotional activities and outreach initiatives, customers and employees of SBI and Mahindra Lifespaces. Homebuyers will benefit by saving on expenses incurred on obtaining Title Investigation Report (TIR) and valuation for approved projects.

- 34.** Electric car maker Tesla has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary in India city **Bengaluru**.

Note: It has registered with the Registrar of Companies in Bengaluru, Karnataka as 'Tesla India Motors and Energy Private Limited'. It is also in the process of setting up a manufacturing plant at Dharwad, Karnataka for producing electric vehicles in India. It has registered itself as a private company with an authorised capital of Rs 15 lakh.

35. Apple company find the top position in the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world.

Note: Apple tops in the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world with a value of 2.1 Trillion USD followed by Microsoft with a value of 1.640 Trillion and Amazon with a value of 1.610 Trillion and Alphabet with 1.2 trillion USD. The list was released by Hurun in association with China luxury tea brand Empereur. 2020 Hurun Global 500 list – a list of 500 most valuable companies across the globe, of Hurun Research features a total of 11 Indian companies

36. Indian IT company **Tech Mahindra** is set to acquire 100% share of Hong Kong based Payments Technology Service Ltd (PTSL) a subsidiary of Fidelity Information Services (FIS).

Note: In regard to this acquisition, Tech Mahindra had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with FIS. The acquisition will give Tech Mahindra access to Internet Protocol(IP) and licenses for two products – Open Payment Framework (OPF) and Multi-Bank System (MBS). With this agreement, Tech Mahindra has planned to expand its BFSI (banking, financial services and insurance) footprint globally. In support of this strategy, Tech Mahindra will also build a state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Chennai, India.

37. India Post Payments Bank has collaborated with the leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, Financial Software and Systems (FSS) to promote Financial Inclusion in underserved and unbanked part of India.

Note: To attain this purpose, IPPB will use FSS' Aadhaar Enabled Payment System(AePS). The IPPB Partnership with FSS' AePS solution combines the low-cost structure of a branchless business model, digital distribution, and micro-targeting that lowers acquisition costs & reaches all customers in rural area. After this collaboration, IPPB bank has become the single-largest platform in India for providing interoperable banking services to customers of any bank.

38. Yes Bank has launched 'Wellness and Wellness Plus' credit card in partnership with Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited.

Note: As consumers face new realities of home-schooling of children, working from home, and lack of physical contact with loved ones and colleagues, this is an innovative step to encourage and promote self-care, mental and physical well-being. Consumers can now enjoy the bouquet of complimentary health benefits by simply registering on the Aditya Birla Multiply App.

39. ICICI Bank has partnered with Niyo, a new age fintech, to issue prepaid cards to workers of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Note: MSMEs will now be able to get 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' powered by Visa, for their blue-collar workers, who are mostly under-banked. With this, MSMEs can upload the

salaries of their workers on the card, which the workers can then utilise as per their need in a seamless manner. The 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' allows an individual to receive funds up to ₹1 lakh into the card account.

- 40.** The ADB has partnered with **European Investment Bank** to initiate a Clean and Sustainable Ocean Partnership to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the climate goals as advised in the Paris Agreement.

Note: In this regard, both entities will support the initiatives in Asia and the Pacific. This partnership will strengthen the capacity of both entities to support high-impact projects. They will also develop joint technical assistance programs and advisory support to help their partners in achieving SDGs of blue economy.

- 41.** As per the Reserve Bank of India the State Bank of India, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs) which are 'too big to fail'. The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in **2014**.

Note: SIBs are subjected to higher levels of supervision so as to prevent disruption in financial services in the event of any failure. The Reserve Bank had issued the framework for dealing with D-SIBs in July 2014. The D-SIB framework requires the central to disclose the names of banks designated as D-SIBs starting from 2015 and place these lenders in appropriate buckets depending upon their Systemic Importance Scores (SISs).

- 42.** **Adani Group** has signed a concession agreement with state-owned **Airports Authority of India** (AAI) for the operation, development and management of airports at Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram.

Note: According to terms and conditions specified in the concession agreement, the Adani Group will have to take over the airports within six months. The concessionaire will manage, develop and operate the airports for 50 years. The Gautam Adani-led Adani Enterprises had in February 2019 emerged as the highest bidders for AAI-operated airports in Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Lucknow, which were put up for privatization under the public private partnership (PPP) model.

- 43.** **Mastercard** has launched the Digital Acceleration for Small Businesses microsite across most of its Asia Pacific websites.

Note: The one-stop resource site provides information and resources for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to digitize and operate their business more efficiently. Mastercard has partnered with Wix and Zoho to enhance the resources for SMEs.

- 44.** **ICICI Bank** has launched 'InstaFX' App for Forex Partners to help customers of any bank to obtain Forex Prepaid Card.

Note: Called 'InstaFX', the app enables the authorised money changers, who are partners of the Bank, to complete the KYC verification and validation of customers digitally and on a real-time basis. This facility significantly improves customer convenience as the 'ICICI Bank Forex

Prepaid Card' gets activated swiftly within a few hours, as against the industry practice of up to two-days.

- 45. Standard Chartered Bank** has entered a co-lending arrangement with IIFL Home Finance Ltd to extend credit to MSME loans.

Note: Under this partnership, IIFL Home Finance and the Standard Chartered Bank will co-originate these loans and the IIFL Home Finance will service the customers through the entire loan life-cycle including sourcing, documentation, collection and loan servicing. Definitive agreements for the said co-lending arrangement had been executed between the IIFL Home Finance and Standard Chartered Bank on 16 January 2021.

- 46. Axis Bank** has launched 'AURA', a credit card with health and wellness benefits at an affordable price for its individual users.

Note: The features of the card is powered by Poshvine , Decathlon, Practo, Fitternity, IndushealthPlus, 1MG etc. The aim of the card is to provide complete health and wellness solutions to its users. Cardholders will can get discount on annual medical checkup through IndushealthPlus.

- 47. Paytm Payments Bank** has partnered with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SFB) Ltd to enable its account holders to avail Fixed Deposit (FD) services.

Note: The payments bank has already been offering fixed deposits service in collaboration with IndusInd Bank with a minimum investment of Rs. 100. With the partnership with Suryoday SFB the Paytm Payments Bank has become the 1st payments bank in India to launch the multi-partner FD service.

- 48.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has given approval to the deal between Future Group and **Reliance retail Ltd**, where Future group will sell its retail, wholesale, logistics and warehouse businesses to Reliance Retail for Rs 24,713 crore.

Note: This deal was earlier approved by Competition Commission of India(CCI). This acquisition is part of the scheme in which Future Group is merging certain companies carrying on the above said businesses into Future Enterprises Limited (FEL). The retail & wholesale undertaking will be transferred to Reliance Retail and the Fashion Lifestyle Limited (RRFLL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of RRVL.

- 49. Airtel Payments Bank** has launched 'Safe Pay' a safe way to pay digitally to protect Airtel customers from the growing incidents of online payment frauds.

Note: With 'Airtel Safe Pay', Airtel customers making UPI or net banking-based payments through Airtel Payments Bank, no longer have to worry about money flowing out of their accounts without their explicit consent. An India-First innovation, 'Airtel Safe Pay' leverages Airtel's 'telco exclusive' strength of network intelligence to provide an additional layer of payment validation, compared to the industry norm of two-factor authentication.

- 50.** As per the latest World Economic Outlook released by International Monetary Fund (IMF) the Indian Economy will grow by **11.5 per cent** in the FY 2021-22.

Note: India is the only major economy forecast to grow in double digits next year and forecast to follow that up with the highest 6.8% rise in the FY23 fiscal. The latest forecast for India's FY22 gross domestic product (GDP) marks an upward revision from the 8.8% growth the IMF had estimated in its last assessment in October.

- 51.** As per the 'World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021', produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), India's economy is projected to grow at **7.3 per cent** in 2021.

Note: The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021, produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), said the world economy was hit by a once-in-a-century crisis a Great Disruption unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The global economy shrank by 4.3 per cent last year, over two-and-a-half times more than during the global financial crisis of 2009. The modest recovery of 4.7 per cent expected in 2021 would barely offset the losses of 2020.

- 52.** Global financial services major HSBC has inaugurated its International Banking Unit (IBU) branch in **Gujarat**.

Note: HSBC is one of the earliest global financial institutions setting up a branch at India's GIFT City and was the first bank to get a licence from the newly set up International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), said a release by the company. HSBC's IBU branch at Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City) will be operational for customer transactions with effect from January 27.

- 53.** India government has signed a MoU with **International Energy Agency (IEA)** a strategic partnership agreement to strengthen cooperation in global energy security, stability and sustainability.

Note: This partnership will lead to an extensive exchange of knowledge and would be a stepping stone towards India becoming a full member of IEA. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Power Secretary Sanjiv Nandan Sahai and IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol.

- 54.** **Accenture** has ranked first most-valued IT services brand globally, according to a report by Brand Finance.

Note: According to a report by Brand Finance, Accenture retained the title of world's most valuable and strongest IT services brand with a record brand value of \$26 billion, while IBM continued at the second place with brand value of \$16.1 billion

- 55.** According to a report by Brand Finance, Indian IT firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) ranked at **Third** place.

Note: Four Indian IT services companies -- TCS, Infosys, HCL and Wipro -- secured spots in the top-10 global tally. TCS has celebrated strong revenue growth as demand grows for its core transformation services and through winning deals - worth over \$6.8 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020 alone.

- 56.** In accordance with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, overseas investment by domestic firms fell by over **42%**.
Note: Of the total FDI investment, USD 775.41 million was in the form of equity infusion, USD 382.91 million was in the form of loan, and USD 287.63 million was in the form of issuance of guarantee. In November 2020, the total outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) was also trimmed by 27% to USD 1.06 billion as compared to October 2020.
- 57. Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched Krishi Sakha App, a one-stop-shop for Indian farmers that offers them relevant information to cater their daily farming needs.
Note: The farmers through this app will also have access to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) portal for crop insurance related information. The aim of it is to empower farmers and educate them to enhance their farming knowledge and productivity.
- 58.** As per the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)'s recent Economic Outlook Survey, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to contract by **8 per cent**.
Note: The survey projected the Fiscal deficit for 2020-21 at 5%. It also expects the Indian economy will perform better and have a median GDP growth rate of 9.6% for the financial year 2021-22, with a minimum growth and maximum growth at 7.5% and 12.5% respectively.
- 59.** The government has approved closure of which loss-making state-owned firm **Scooters India Limited**.
Note: In a BSE filing, Scooters India said the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises has communicated that the competent authority has approved the closure. It has also cleared seeking a loan (with interest) of ₹ 65.12 crore required for the closure from the Government of India. The Scooters India brand name shall be sold separately as the company holds famous brands such as Lambretta, Vijai Super, Vikram and Lambro.
- 60.** According to the report titled "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021" by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India in FY 2020-21 is estimated to contract by **9.6 per cent**.
Note: This projection is highest among major economies of the world. On the global front, the economy is contracted by 4.3% (-4.3%) in 2020 but it projected a recovery of 4.7% in 2021. Earlier, International Labour Organization (ILO) also released its 7th edition of report title "ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work" which states that in 2020, the world faced a job loss of 255 million jobs where South Asia accounted for 80 million.
- 61.** According to the Futures Industry Association (FIA), which stock exchange remained the world's largest derivatives exchange for the second consecutive year in 2020 in terms of number of contracts traded **National Stock Exchange of India**.
Note: In addition, the bourse has been ranked fourth in the world in cash equities by number of trades by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) for calendar year 2020. In the capital market segment, NSE has listed T-bills (Treasury Bills) and SDLs (State Development Loans)

facilitating investors to transact in these securities, in addition to the existing dated Government Securities (G-sec) available for trading.

Obituaries

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

- 8.** Turlapati Kutumba Rao passed away recently, he was a veteran **Journalist**.
Note: Mr. Rao had the distinction of being a personal secretary to Tanguturi Prakasam, the first Chief Minister of Andhra State. A native of Vijayawada, Mr. Rao had worked as editor and editorial writer of Telugu newspaper Andhra Jyothi for close to three-and-a-half decades. He won laurels for translating into Telugu the speeches of many national leaders and stalwarts.
- 9.** Renowned journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Neil Sheehan passed away recently was a citizen of **USA**.
Note: His account of the Vietnam War, A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam, took him 15 years to write. The 1988 book won the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction. Sheehan served as a war correspondent for United Press International and then the Times in the early days of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War in the 1960s.
- 10.** Veteran politician and former chief minister of **Gujarat** Madhavsinh Solanki passed away recently.
Note: Born on July 30, 1927, the nonagenarian leader was the chief minister of Gujarat four times and also Union external affairs minister. Under his leadership, the Congress rode to power in the Gujarat assembly in 1985, winning 149 of the 182 seats -- an electoral feat that has not been matched so far. Solanki, Congress stalwart had left active politics since last two decades as he was pursuing his passion for reading and writing.
- 11.** Famous Indian-American Ved Prakash Mehta passed away recently, he was a veteran **Novelist**.
Note: The New Yorker magazine, where he had been a staff writer for 33 years, reported that he had died on Saturday. Mehta provided the first introduction to India for many contemporary Americans through his popular books and articles that ranged from the autobiographical to the political and historic.
- 12.** Renowned personality Prof Shashikumar Madhusudan (M.) Chitre, passed away, he was a famous **Astrophysicist**.
Note: He is the recipient of Padma Bhushan. He was born on May 7, 1936 in India. He retired as a senior professor from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, in 2001. He served as the visiting professor of many universities across the world namely, University of Columbia, University of Virginia among others.
- 13.** Renowned personality Sheldon Adelson passed away recently, he was associated with **Casino**.
Note: Adelson, whose net worth was estimated by Forbes to be around \$33 billion, had been among the most-watched donors supporting President Trump's 2020 reelection effort. He was a staunch supporter of Israel.
- 14.** Renowned personality D Prakash Rao passed away recently, he was a veteran **Social Activist**.
Note: He was basically a tea seller based in Cuttack, who spent his entire earning to educate slum children, through the school 'Asha O Ashwasana', which he started in 2000. He was conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2019 for his contribution towards boosting

the value of education among slum kids in Cuttack. Apart from this, Rao was also a well-known blood donor.

- 15.** Renowned personality Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passed away recently, he was a veteran **Classical Musician.**

Note: Born on March 3, 1931 in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh, Khan was the eldest son in a family of four brothers and three sisters. His father, Ustad Waris Hussain Khan was the son of celebrated musician Ustad Murred Baksh, while his mother, Sabri Begum, was the daughter of Ustad Inayat Husain Khan, credited as the founder of the Rampur-Sahaswan gharana of music. Khan got his basic classical music training from his father and later studied music under his cousin, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan.

- 16.** Renowned personality Dr V Shanta passed away, she was a famous **Oncologist.**

Note: Dr V Shanta was known for her work on cancer care and for building the Cancer Institute with her mentor. The institute is known for providing state-of-the-art health care to all patients, irrespective of their economic condition. Dr V Shanta's work won several awards, including the Magsaysay Award, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Vibhushan. Dr Shanta was active till her hospitalisation.

- 17.** Co-founder of Precision Automation and Robotics India (PARI) **Mangesh Kale** passed away recently.

Note: Kale had set up the company along with Ranjit Date in 1990. PARI, which is a leading provider of turnkey solutions in industrial and robotic automation was sold to Wipro Infrastructure for an undisclosed sum in December 2020. Anand Deshpande, founder of Persistent Systems, another Pune-headquartered firm tweeted saying this was a great personal loss.

- 18.** Renowned personality Kamal Morarka has passed away recently he was a veteran **Industrialist and Union Minister.**

Note: The 74-year-old leader, a businessman who was also a former BCCI vice president. He was incumbent president of Samajwadi Janata Party (Chandra Shekhar). He was elected to **Rajya Sabha in 1988.**

- 19.** Renowned politician Mata Prasad passed away recently, he was former governor of **Arunachal Pradesh.**

Note: Former Arunachal Governor Mata Prasad has passed away at the age of 95. He served as minister in the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh in 1988- 89 and appointed as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in 1993.

- 20.** Renowned personality Unnikrishnan Namboothiri has passed recently, he was veteran **Actor.**

Note: The actor, who had charmed viewers with his benevolent grandfather roles, died a day after it was reported that he had recovered from COVID-19. The actor had started his career in the 1990s when he was well over 70 years of age. But his performances have seeped into

the psyche of cinema lovers. Some of his notable works are Kaliyattam, Kalyana Raman, Madhuranombarakattu, Pokkiri Raja and Rappakal.

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

Important Days

- 1.** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) observed the 63rd Foundation Day on **1st January, 2021**.
Note: DRDO was established in 1958 with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in the Defence sector. At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for Indian Armed Forces.
- 2.** World Braille Day is observed globally every year on **4th January**.
Note: The day is celebrated to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people. The day is marked remembering the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille – for people with visual disabilities. Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in the town of Coupvray in northern France.
- 3.** The World Day of War Orphans is observed every year on **6th January**.

Note: The day aims to raise awareness about children who have been orphaned due to wars. The objective of the day is to spread awareness about the predicament of war orphans and highlight the emotional, social, and physical challenges they face while growing up.

4. The theme of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention to be organized on 9th January 2021 -- **Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat.**

Note: Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention is the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs and provides an important platform to engage and connect with the overseas Indians. In view of the sentiments of our vibrant diaspora community, the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, is being organized on 9th January 2021, despite the ongoing Covid pandemic.

5. The World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on **10th January.**

Note: The day was observed as on this day in 1975, India's former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi inaugurated the first World Hindi Conference. The basic aim of observing this day is to promote the Hindi language worldwide.

6. The theme of 'National Youth Day 2021' observed every year on 12th January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda -- **'YUVAAH – Utsah Naye Bharat Ka'.**

Note: National Youth Day is celebrated in India every year on 12 January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The day was declared by the Government of India in 1984 while the event was first celebrated in 1985. The main aim behind this is to make sure that the students across the country can be encouraged to learn about the life, the ideas and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and apply them in their lives.

7. In India, the Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each year on **14 January.**

Note: In India, the Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each year on 14 January since 2017 to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice of our veterans in the service of the nation. The day was initially called Armistice Day. 2021 marks the 5th Armed Forces Veterans Day.

8. Ministry of Transport and Highways has decided to observe Road Safety Month from **18 January to 17 February 2021.**

Note: During this period, various nation-wide activities have been planned to be conducted throughout the country in association with the state governments/ UT administrations, OEMs and other stakeholders. The month-long event will see awards being given to best performance in road safety to a state as well as Swacchta Award, road safety activities by NHIDCL (National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited), HOAI (Highway Operator Association of India), NHAI among others.

9. The Army Day in India is celebrated every year on **15th January**

Note: India is celebrating its 73rd Army Day on 15 January 2021. On 15 January, 1949, then Lieutenant General KM Cariappa took over as Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.

- 10.** The theme of the 'Swachhata Pakhwada' organized by the 'National Cadet Corps, NCC at India Gate, New Delhi -- '**Clean India, Green India, Yeh Hai Mera Dream India**'.
Note: The event was inaugurated by Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar. The theme of this Swachhata Pakhwada is 'Clean India, Green India, Yeh Hai Mera Dream India'. During the Swachhata Pakhwada the NCC cadets will keep Rajpath clean for the Republic Day Parade - 2021 by spreading awareness through displaying banners, distribution of pamphlets and showcasing Swachhata through Nukkad Nataks.
- 11.** The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** Raising Day celebrated every year on -- **19th January**.
Note: The NDRF came into existence on January 19, 2006. The specialised task force has been constituted for "special response to a threatening disaster situation or a disaster." National Disaster Management Authority is the parent body of the NDRF. Located at 12 different locations in the country, there are 12 NDRF battalions.
- 12.** The government of India has decided to celebrate 'Parakram Diwas' every year on which date the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose -- **23rd January**.
Note: The Day will be mark to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation. The Government of India has decided to celebrate the 125th birth anniversary year of Netaji beginning from January 2021 in befitting manner at national and international level.
- 13.** National Girl Child Day in India is celebrated every year on **24th January**.
Note: National Girl Child day 2021 is being celebrated across the country with the objective of raising awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR).The celebrations will also mark the anniversary of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme.
- 14.** International Day of Education is observed every year on **24th January**.
Note: Every year, International Education Day is celebrated with a unique theme. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's theme for International Education Day is "Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation."
- 15.** The National Voters Day is observed every year on **25th January**.
Note: The Election Commission was founded in 1950 on this day. The occasion was first celebrated in 2011.This year's theme is "Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed". One focus this year is highlighting the EC's feat of running elections safely during the pandemic.
- 16.** National Tourism Day is observed every year on **25th January** in India.
Note: It is not known when exactly this day came about. However, in 1948, a Tourist Traffic Committee was formed to promote tourism. The first regional offices of the same were established in Delhi and Mumbai. Three years later, in 1951, more offices were added in Kolkata and Chennai.
- 17.** International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on **26th January**.

Note: It is the day designated to honour the custom officials and agencies for their function in taking care of the flow of goods across the world borders. 2021 will witness the theme of "Customs bolstering recovery, renewal and resilience" which will focus on the endeavours of customs to emerge from the pandemic crisis and help people.

- 18.** 'Data Privacy Day' is observed every year on **28th January** to create awareness and promote privacy and data protection.

Note: The main motto is to enhance awareness among businesses and users about protecting the privacy of their personal information online. Recently there has been a hue and cry from different sections of people when WhatsApp has announced data transfer of its users to its parent organisation the Facebook.

- 19.** Every year, Martyrs' Day is observed on **30th January**.

Note: The day is marked the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, known as the father of the nation, across the country. Martyrs' Day or 'Shaheed Diwas' aims to pay tribute to the freedom fighters who lost their lives fighting for the freedom, welfare and progress of our nation.

New Appointments

- 1. P Ravi Kumar** has been appointed as the 38th Chief Secretary of Karnataka.

Note: P Ravi Kumar will hold this post until May 2022, i.e., till he attains the age of 60. Prior to his appointment, P Ravi Kumar was the Additional Chief Secretary(ACS) of Karnataka govt and was ACS of Karnataka CM, BS Yediyurappa. T.M. Vijay Bhaskar, a 1981-batch IAS officer was appointed as CS of Karnataka govt in 2018.

- 2. Suneet Sharma** has been appointed as the New Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Railway Board under the Ministry of Railways.

Note: He takes over the charge from the incumbent VK Yadav upon the completion of his term as the Chairman and CEO of the board on 31st December 2020. Previously Suneet Sharma served as the General Manager of the Eastern Railway. He is also appointed as the ex-officio Principal Secretary to the Government of India.

- 3. Umesh Sinha** has been appointed as the deputy election commissioner in the Election Commission of India.

Note: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved extension in the term of reemployment of Sinha as deputy election commissioner on contract basis for a period of six months beyond December 31, 2020. Sinha is a part of a committee set up by the Election Commission to look into the issue of revising the election expenditure of candidates during campaigning.

- 4. Soma Mondal** has taken over as first-ever woman head of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).

Note: Before joining SAIL as a Director, Mondal was the Director (Commercial) at fellow Central public sector enterprise, National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO). In a company statement, Mondal said that the first target is to improve the financial performance of SAIL.

5. **Nancy Pelosi** has been elected as the speaker of US House of Representatives for the 117th Congress.

Note: The House voted 216-209 to reinstate Pelosi, after Democrats lost 11 seats in the November elections to command a narrower 222-212 majority. Five Democrats chose not to support her - two voted for Democratic lawmakers who were not running, while three others simply voted "present."

6. **Major General Gautam Chauhan** has been appointed as the first Additional Director General-ADG (Human Rights-HR) in the newly created Human Rights cell in the Indian Army.

Note: He will function under the Indian Army Vice Chief Lieutenant General SK Saini. This is the 1st time, Indian army has appointed a major general rank officer to examine the human rights issue and suggest means to better the track record of the force. This appointment is part of the ongoing restructuring of Indian Army headquarters.

7. **Ram Vinay Shahi** will head the high-level group named "South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE)" for the development of South Asia energy security architecture set up by the Government of India.

Note: It has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)-run think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). The development of South Asia-focused energy security architecture is on the lines of India's neighbourhood-first policy under which Cross-border energy trade is a key part. The energy architect by India includes cross-border electricity trade, supplying petroleum products and setting up liquefied natural gas terminals.

8. **Karan Bajwa** has been appointed as the leader of Google Cloud for Asia-Pacific region.

Note: Presently, Bajwa leads Google Cloud in India. He will lead all regional revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud, including on Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and Google Workspace.

9. According to the **Global Economic Prospects** (GEP-January 2021) report released by the World Bank (WB), India is expected to grow at **5.4%** in the Financial Year (FY) 2021-22.

Note: Global Economy is expected to expand by 4% in 2021. The major causes of India's contraction are sharp declines in household spending & private investment. The report also states that Vaccine Deployment & Investments as the need to sustain the Global recovery.

10. **Ashish Pethe** has been appointed as the chairman of the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC).

Note: Pethe has been closely associated with GJC and was the Zonal Chairman West, which he will continue even after this new position.

11. **Sanjay Kapoor** has been appointed as the president of the All India Chess Federation (AICF).

Note: Kapoor, representing Uttar Pradesh Chess Association, defeated incumbent P R Venketrama Raja in a close contest. Kapoor received 33 votes as against 31 of Raja. Naresh Sharma, belonging to the Chauhan faction, was elected as treasurer, beating Kishore Bandekar 34-30. The AICF has been split into two factions, one led by Raja and the other by Chauhan.

12. Hima Kohli has been appointed as the first woman chief justice of Telangana High Court.

Note: She is the first woman chief justice of the state. She came here from Delhi high court. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan administered the oath of office to her. Justice Hima Kohli got enrolled as an Advocate with the Bar Council of Delhi. She was appointed as an Additional Judge of the High Court of Delhi on 29 May, 2006.

13. Raj Iyer has been appointed as the first Chief Information Officer of the US Army, after the Pentagon created the position in July 2020.

Note: One of the highest-ranking Indian-American civilians in the US Department of Defense, Raj Iyer, who holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering, serves as the principal advisor to the Secretary of the Army and directs representation of the secretary in matters relating to information management/information technology (IT). Equivalent in rank to a three-star General, Raj Iyer will supervise an annual budget of USD 16 billion for the US Army's IT operations.

14. Rabi Narayan Mishra has been appointed as full-time Director of the College of Supervisors (CoS), which was set up by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to further broaden and strengthen the supervisory skills among RBI's regulatory and supervisory staff.

Note: The College of Supervisors (CoS) has now been fully operationalized for effective supervision of the regulated entities. It was set up by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in May 2020 to further broaden and strengthen the supervisory skills among RBI's regulatory and supervisory staff at entry level and on a continuous basis.

15. Sabrina Singh has been appointed as Deputy Press Secretary to the Vice President in the White House.

Note: Singh was Press Secretary to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on the Biden-Harris campaign. Prior to her role on the campaign, Singh served as senior spokesperson for Mike Bloomberg's presidential campaign and National Press Secretary for Cory Booker's presidential campaign.

16. RS Sharma has been appointed as the head of a 10-member empowered committee for administration of COVID-19 vaccine by the Government of India.

Note: The members of the committee comprises senior officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The committee can invite distinguished persons when there is a need to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine through Co-WIN app.

17. Jai Shah has been named as the official representative of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Board meetings.

Note: Shah is the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). He will replace BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, who was currently representing India at the ICC Board, but he suffered a heart condition recently and had to be admitted to hospital where he underwent primary angioplasty.

18. Japarov Sadyr Nurgojoevich was elected as the president of **Kyrgyzstan**.

Note: He served as the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan till 14th November 2020 after which his official powers in office are suspended due to the pending results of the January 2021 presidential election. He served as the acting president of the country after the resignation of Sooronbay Jeenbekov. After his resignation, Talant Mamytov, speaker of Kyrgyzstan's Parliament became the acting president of the country.

19. Samantha Power has been nominated as the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) by US President-elect Joe Biden.

Note: If confirmed by the Senate, Power, 50, will head the agency which oversees US foreign humanitarian and development aid, Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday. Biden also announced that he is elevating the position to the National Security Council within the White House.

20. Nazhat Shameem Khan has been elected as president of UN Human Rights Council in an unprecedented secret ballot, She is an ambassador of **Fiji** to the UN body.

Note: The island nation's ambassador in Geneva, Nazhat Shameem Khan, beat off competition from Bahrain and Uzbekistan to lead the only intergovernmental global body to promote and protect human rights worldwide. Khan, who served as the council's vice president in 2020 and is considered a rights champion, won with 29 out of 47 votes. Bahrain's ambassador and his Uzbek counterpart received 14 and four votes, respectively.

21. Sandeep Aggarwal has been appointed as the chairman of Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC).

Note: Aggarwal, the **Managing Director** and Promoter of Delhi-based Paramount Communications, will take over from Shyamal Ghosh. TEPC is an independent body set up by the government to promote and develop the export of telecom equipment and services. Aggarwal is also the Chief Mentor of PHDCCI's Telecom Committee, besides being the Chairman of Telecom Equipment Manufacturers Association (TEMA) and President of Railway Cable Development Association.

22. Narendra Modi has been appointed as the Chairman of the Somnath Temple Trust.

Note: He becomes the second Prime Minister who has been appointed the chairman of the temple trust after former PM Morarji Desai. As per trust records, PM Modi has become the eighth chairman of the trust. The post of the Somnath Trust's chairman fell vacant after the death of the incumbent, former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel, in October last year.

23. Kiren Rijju has been assigned the additional charge of the Ministry of AYUSH during the hospitalization and treatment of AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik following a road accident.

Note: The move was necessitated as Shripad Yesso Naik, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Goa. Mr Naik, 68, was admitted to the hospital on January 12 after he met with an accident while on his way back to Goa from Karnataka.

- 24. Vishwavir Ahuja** has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the RBL Bank for three years.

Note: The bank has recommended this re-appointment to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for approval. He has been the MD & CEO of RBL bank since June 30, 2010. Earlier to joining RBL Bank in July 2010, he was the MD & CEO of Bank of America, India from 2001 to 2009.

- 25.** Sanjeev Kumar has been appointed as the new Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL).

Note: According to an order from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Kumar has been appointed to the post for a period of five years from the date of assumption of the charge of the post, or till the age of superannuation, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He is currently serving as Director (Technical) in Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL).

- 26. Siddhartha Mohanty** has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of India's largest insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).

Note: Currently, he is serving as the managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of LIC Housing Finance. He will serve as the MD of LIC till his superannuation on June 30, 2023. Mohanty will be replacing TC Suseel Kumar, who is set to retire on January 31, 2021.

- 27. Jayati Ghosh** has been appointed to the **20-members High-Level Advisory Board of United Nations** that will provide recommendations for the U.N. Secretary-General to respond to the current and future socio-economic challenges in the post-COVID-19 world.

Note: Ghosh, 65, is a professor of economics at University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has taught economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University for nearly 35 years and has authored several books. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) announced that the 20 "prominent personalities, globally renowned for their intellectual leadership in economic and social fields, will form the second United Nations High-level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Economic and Social Affairs."

- 28. Justice Gita Mittal** has been appointed as the new chairperson of Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC).

Note: Justice Mittal succeeds former Supreme Court Judge, Justice Vikramajit Sen, whose tenure as BCCC chairperson has ended. Having served as the first woman Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, she is also the first woman chairperson of BCCC.

- 29.** J K Shivan has been appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of **Dhanlaxmi Bank**.

Note: It may be recalled that the shareholders of the Kerala-based had voted against MD & CEO Sunil Gurbaxani On September 30, 2020. Then, in December that year, the lender appointed Shivan as the new MD & CEO. However, the banking regulator, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), had asked the Dhanlaxmi Bank Board to get shareholders' approval before appointing J K Shivan as the next chief of the bank.

30. Treasury secretary of USA - Janet Yellen.

Note: Yellen steps into the role with some advantages: She is well known and well respected among lawmakers of both parties, and she has experience with enormous economic challenges. The 74-year-old previously broke barriers as the first female Fed chief.

31. Antony Blinken has been sworn in as the new U.S. Secretary of State.

Note: Blinken will become America's top diplomat as the world confronts a confluence of threats: the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and a great-power competition that increasingly pits the United States against China on trade, technology and other issues. Blinken will be charged with unraveling much of President Donald Trump's foreign policy, which made even some of his most ardent Republican supporters squeamish.

32. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has been re-elected as the president of **Portugal**.

Note: He belongs to Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata-PSD). He was elected as the president for 1st term in 2016. He was one of the founders of the People's Democratic Party, later the Social Democratic Party, and was party leader from 31 March 1996 to 27 May 1999.

33. Swaminathan Janakiraman has been appointed as the new Managing Director of State Bank of India (SBI) for a period of 3 years.

Note: Swaminathan Janakiraman was serving as the deputy MD(finance) of SBI. Ashwini Kumar Tewari was serving as MD and Chief Executive Officer(CEO)of SBI Card, a subsidiary of SBI. The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) in October 2020 recommended their names for post of MD at SBI.

34. Kaja Kallas has been appointed as the first female Prime Minister of **Estonia**.

Note: She succeeds Jüri Ratas. She is the leader of the Reform party. The 15-member Cabinet of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas is a coalition of 2 parties namely, Reform Party & Centre Party.

35. Thomas Bach re-elected second term as President of **International Olympic Committee**.

Note: Mr Bach, a 66-year-old German lawyer, is set to be confirmed for a second and final four-year term at an IOC session in March in Athens. Bach was initially elected for an eight-year term as Olympic chief in September 2013, taking over from Belgian Jacques Rogge. If re-elected, Bach's term will end in 2025, a year after the Paris Olympics.

Important News – India

1. V. Muraleedharan has launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and Mobile application to connect with 3.12 Crore Indian Diaspora across the world.

Note: The portal web interface will be used by Indian Missions whereas the mobile app will be used by diaspora & Indian nationals. The portal will be used by MEA for sharing information on Visa, Passport & other activities like consular services, conducting surveys and news about events organised by missions. It will also connect the Indian diaspora community to connect them to new & existing Government schemes.

2. National Metrology Conclave 2020 was organized in **New Delhi**.

Note: The theme of the conclave is 'Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurated the conclave.

3. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' laid the foundation stone of the buildings for School of Engineering and Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management and Entrepreneurship in **Jawaharlal Nehru University**.

Note: Pokhriyal expressed his delight at the naming the School of Management after late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was not only a visionary Prime Minister of India, but an inspiring author too.

4. **Hubbali, Karnataka** railway station is set to get the "world's longest railway platform" of 1500 plus meters' length and 10 meters width.

Note: The construction of the platform is done with an expenditure of Rs. 90 core for remodeling of wards, building work, signalling, third entrance construction, electrical and other related works. This project is a part of doubling between Hubbali and Bengaluru which is underway since November 2019.

5. 4th Global Ayurveda Festival 2021(GAF2021) will be organized in **Kerala**.

Note: The event, which showcases Ayurveda as a global treatment programme, will serve as a meeting place for those working towards this goal around the world. The festival, which was scheduled to be held in Angamaly from May 16 to 20 last year was postponed due to COVID-19.

6. Under chairmanship of **R P Tiwari** the University Grants Commission has set up a 7-member committee to look at the possibility and review the feasibility of holding the Common Entrance Test at undergraduate level from the next academic year in central universities.

Note: The committee is headed by Raghavendra P Tiwari, Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Punjab. If CET is implemented, the National Testing Agency(NTA) will be responsible to conduct this test and a common exam for a discipline at least twice a year for admission to Central universities.

7. 1.9 Km long Feni Bridge also known as Maitree Setu will connect which **Tripura** state with Bangladesh scheduled to be operational soon.

Note: It provides access to the Chittagong seaport and is all set to be opened in a few months. Its construction was started in 2017 but it got delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic. The bridge has been taken over by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation

Limited (NHIDCL), the project execution authority which will recheck the safety standard of the work.

8. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation for **six** Light House Projects (LHPs).
Note: These will be developed as a part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India) initiative under which 1,000 houses at each location are to be constructed in a year (12 months), using six distinct technologies. GHTC-India aims to adopt innovative technologies in the housing construction sector.
9. The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India** (FSSAI) has capped the amount of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to **3%** for 2021.
Note: The country's food regulatory body notified the amendment on December 29, more than a year after it issued a draft on the subject for consultation with stakeholders. The revised regulation applies to edible refined oils, vanaspati (partially hydrogenated oils), margarine, bakery shortenings, and other mediums of cooking such as vegetable fat spreads and mixed fat spreads. Trans fats are associated with increased risk of heart attacks and death from coronary heart disease.
10. The five day long 'National Folk Dance Festival' 2020 was held in **Jammu**.
Note: A 5 day long 'National Folk Dance Festival' was held in Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory-JKUT) from December 26, 2020. It was organised by the North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala (Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India) jointly with Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages.
11. The DRDO has signed an MoU with **Maha Metro** Rail Corporation to render technical support to implement the advanced biodigester Mk II technology to treat human waste in Metro Rail Network.
Note: The MoU was signed by Dr DK Dubey, Director DRDE, Gwalior and Atul Gadgil, Director, Maha-Metro Rail Corporation Limited, Pune, as per an official release. DRDO's biodigester is an indigenous, green and cost-effective technology, with a rare distinction of having one of the largest numbers of DRDO-licences (ToT holders).
12. Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', virtually laid foundation stone for India's first Test bed for Autonomous Navigation Systems in **IIT Hyderabad**.
Note: Department of Science & Technology, Government of India sanctioned INR 135 Crore to IIT Hyderabad under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to establish 'TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad'. An area of 2 acres of land has been allocated in IIT Hyderabad campus for the setting up of a hub. 'TiHAN Foundation' was incorporated as a Section-8 company by the institute in June 2020.
13. India flagged off the 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (40-ISEA) from **Mormugao Port, Goa**.
Note: The Expedition will have 43 members and the chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasilii Golovnin will take the team to Antarctica. On return, the vessel will bring back the members of

the 39th Expedition. The Ministry of Earth Science launched the expedition. National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research (NCPOR), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is the implementation agency of the Indian Antarctic Programme.

- 14.** Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Inaugurated India's 1st of its kind Migrant Worker Cell at **Surat, Gujarat.**

Note: An initiative of Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) it aims to help Migrants from Odia & other parts of the country working in different industries of Surat. The cell will be based at iLab, Udhna, Surat and has been created under the 'National Urban Livelihood Mission Scheme'.

- 15.** The Khadi and Village Industries Commission signed an MoU with **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** to supply of 1,72,000 cotton durries every year.

Note: The agreement has been signed for one year which will be renewed thereafter. The development comes after Home Minister Amit Shah gave instructions to the paramilitary forces to encourage local products to support the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. The cotton durries will be produced by Khadi artisans in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

- 16.** In collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA) **Central University of Punjab, Bathinda** has organized the Virtual International Akhand Conference 'EDUCON 2020', inaugurated by the Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

Note: This two-day International Conference is being organized by Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA). The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 is "Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace".

- 17.** The government of India has formulated a New Industrial Development Scheme for Union Territories **Jammu and Kashmir.**

Note: The government of India has formulated a New Industrial Development Scheme for Jammu & Kashmir (J&K IDS, 2021) as the Central Sector Scheme for the Development of Industries in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The main purpose of the scheme is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio-economic development of the area.

- 18.** Under chairmanship of **G Kishan Reddy** the Union Government has decided to form a committee to find a solution to issues associated with preservation of Ladakh's land, culture and language.

Note: A 10-member delegation from Ladakh met Home Minister Amit Shah Wednesday. The delegation is learnt to have expressed concern over threat to the region's unique culture, language and demography due to recent changes brought about by the Centre to the status of the region. The delegation included former MPs Thiksay Rinpoche and Thupstan Chhewang, former BJP minister Chering Dorjay, Leh chief executive councillor Tashi Gyalson and sitting BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal.

- 19.** The Central government has sanctioned Rs 37.87 crore for the facelift of Parshuram Kund pilgrimage site located in **Arunachal Pradesh.**

Note: Parshuram Kund is one of the most sacred places in the country which is visited by a large number of pilgrims throughout the year and thousands of people take a holy dip in the Lohit river during Makar Sankranti. It is expected to boost the livelihood of the locals & socio-economic development of the area.

- 20.** The theme of Virtual International Akhand Conference 'EDUCON 2020' -- **Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace.**

Note: The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 was Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace. This two-day International Conference is being organized by Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA).

- 21.** **Ajit Doval** represented India in the Annual India and France Strategic Dialogue 2021 to discuss regional and global issues.

Note: The key focus areas of discussions were Covid-19 vaccines, cooperation within the Indo-Pacific area, nuclear, space, maritime safety, environment, digital economy, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity and defence sectors. The last edition of the Strategic Dialogue was held in February 2020 in Paris, France. It is held with the two countries as alternating as hosts.

- 22.** Public sector company **Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to establish Clean & Energy Efficient Interventions at NHAI Establishments.

Note: EESL will set up Solar Power Projects, energy efficient LED lighting and EV Charging stations at NHAI establishments. The MoU was signed in the presence of Rajeev Sharma, Chairman, EESL & RK Pandey, Member-Projects, NHAI.

- 23.** **Amit Shah** has launched the 'Single Window Clearance System' for coal mines.

Note: The platform is expected to ease the process of obtaining clearances for the smooth operationalisation of coal mines. It will help in reducing the time taken to grant approvals in the sector. The Unified platform will reduce the need for companies to approach different for operationalisation of coal mines, which is the main cause for delay.

- 24.** India's rank in the Henley Passport Index 2021 released by Henley & Partners, based on the exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) -- **85th**.

Note: Last year, India held 84th position. Indian passport got a score of 58, which means Indian passport holders get to visit 58 countries without prior visa. India shared the rank with Tajikistan. Japan, once again topped the list with a visa-free score of 191. The nation has been holding the position for three consecutive years, either solely or jointly, with Singapore. This year, Singapore sits at the second position with 190 countries.

- 25.** Bharti Airtel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC).**

for the digital transformation of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in order to achieve the goal of "Atma Nirbhar Bharat".

Note: With this MSMEs will be served with business automation and connectivity needs viz. data/voice connectivity, marketing solutions, cloud security and collaboration. Under this assistance, NSIC aggregates services of various technology providers as per the needs of MSME.

26. India's rank in the Arton Capital Passport Index 2021 -- **61st**.

Note: Sweden, Finland and Spain all ranked second, with a mobility score of 133. While all the passport holders of all the three countries require visas for 65 countries, the Swedish passport holders can go to 99 countries without requiring a visa, and to 34 countries on a visa-on-arrival arrangement. Passports of Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and New Zealand ranked at the third place, with all the countries having a mobility score of 132, requiring a visa for 66 countries.

27. Subhash Chandra Khuntia will head the 'Health Insurance Advisory Committee' set up by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) to examine the availability of health insurance products in the country.

Note: The expert committee will be headed by IRDAI Chairperson, Subhash Chandra Khuntia and will have a Member (Non-Life) as the vice-chairperson. The committee, which has a term of one year.

28. Under **Preeti Pant** chairmanship the Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a committee to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey-5.

Note: The Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a technical expert group to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey-5 and "recommend programmatic and policy interventions to improve" indicators pertaining to malnutrition, stunting, anaemia, and C-section. The committee is chaired by Joint Secretary Preeti Pant and includes experts from medicine and nutrition. There are also State programme officers from Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

29. Apur Sansar was the inaugural film of Kolkata International Film Festival 2021.

Note: Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, the brand ambassador of West Bengal virtually attended the inaugural ceremony from Mumbai. As a part of the 26th KIFF, 81 full length movies and 50 short films and documentaries from more than 45 countries will be screened at 8 venues which include the state run halls, Nandan, Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta Information centre, Sisir Mancha and others. "Apur Sansar" by Satyajit Ray was screened as the inaugural film.

30. India's rank in the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world -- **10th**.

Note: The total value of these 11 companies grew 14 per cent and has been pegged at \$805 billion or nearly a third of the Indian GDP. All these companies in the list of non-state enterprises have gained in value during 2020, which was hit by the pandemic, barring tobacco major ITC and second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank, as per the Hurun Global 500 report.

- 31. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** has launched a month-long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about green and clean energy.
Note: The pan-India campaign will focus on the adoption of cleaner fuels. They include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive biofuels and increased use of electric vehicles.
- 32. Prarambh:** Startup India International Summit 2021 was held in **New Delhi**.
Note: The Summit is being organizing by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, M/o Commerce & Industry, as a follow up of the announcement made by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the 4th BIM. 6STEC Summit held in Kathmandu in August, 2018. Declaring the Summit open, the Minister of Railways, Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food and Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal said that the Summit is a demonstration of neighbourhood first policy which will booster partnership among the member countries.
- 33. Rajnath Singh** unveiled India's first indigenously designed and developed 'Driverless Metro Car' manufactured by Bharat Earth Movers Limited.
Note: The 'Driverless Metro Car' are being manufactured by BEML for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) MRS1 project. The project needs 576 cars which will be supplied by January 2024. In this regard, BEML recently opened its Depot office at Charkop Metro Depot, MMRDA, Mumbai for commissioning, testing and round-the- clock services for Driverless Metro cars.
- 34. Total outlay of the Third Phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0) 2020-21** aims to provide training to around 8 Lakh candidates -- **948.90 crore**.
Note: The PMKVY 3.0 has been designed based on the learnings from the previous 2 editions PMKVY 1.0 (2015-16) & PMKVY 2.0 (2016-2020). PMKVY 3.0 aims to provide training to around 8 Lakh candidates during the period of 2020-21 with an outlay of INR 948.90 Crore. It will be implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and will focus on demand-driven skill development, digital technology & Industry 4.0 skills.
- 35. According to a report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), India Collected 10%** of e-waste generated in 2018-19.
Note: In 2017-18, India generated 7, 08, 445 Tonnes of which only 3.5% was collected. Further the amount of e-waste generated increased by 32% to 1, 014, 961 tonnes in 2019-20. In September, 2020, CPCB had issued show-cause notices to 186 producers for not meeting collection targets for 2018-19.
- 36. Ministry of Panchayati Raj** has received the SKOCH Challenger Award under "Transparency in Governance" category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms.
Note: Ministry of Panchayati Raj received the SKOCH Challenger Award conferred under "Transparency in Governance" category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms leading to outcome-based performance improvement, better transparency and strengthening

of the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country. The SKOCH Challenger Award for best performance in the area of Transparency in Governance was given virtually during the 70th SKOCH Summit.

- 37.** The Indian Farm Forestry Development Co-operative Ltd (IFFDC) entered into an MoU with **TRIFED** entity to work together for tribal livelihood generation.

Note: The two organizations have agreed to partner with each other to organise training programmes for tribal artisans in the area of entrepreneurship skill and business development. They will also collaborate further to identify and implement Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and tribal development efforts.

- 38.** **NITI Aayog** releases the India Innovation Index on the line Global Innovation Index.

Note: The India Innovation Index-2020 seeks to rank the States and Union Territories based on their relative performance of supporting innovation and to empower them to improve their innovation policies by highlighting their strengths and weaknesses. The ranking methodology is designed in a way that states can draw lessons from the national leaders in innovation. The States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States, and nine City States and Union Territories, for effectively comparing their performance. The States and Union Territories have been ranked on two broad categories: outcome and governance

- 39.** India's rank in the "Global Firepower Index 2021" that ranks the countries based on their potential military strength -- **4th**.

Note: Each country is evaluated on a multitude of factors related to a prolonged offensive or defensive military campaign. USA topped the Index with 904 attack helicopters and eleven aircraft carriers and sixty-eight submarines and 40,000 armoured fighting vehicles. USA was followed by Russia with 189 fighter aircrafts and 538 attack helicopters. China ranked at third place with 1,200 combat aircrafts and 327 attack helicopters and seventy-nine submarines.

- 40.** **Jaya Jaitley** was the chairman of the **10-member** task force set up by the Union Govt to evaluate the marriageable age of girls which has submitted its recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office and the Women and Child Development Ministry.

Note: The Committee has sent its recommendations to the Prime Minister's Office and the Women and Child Development Ministry. The committee was tasked with examining the correlation of age of marriage and motherhood with health, medical well-being and nutritional status of mother and neonate/infant/child, during pregnancy, birth and thereafter, key parameters like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), Child Sex Ratio (CSR) etc.

- 41.** In collaboration with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) will establish a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country.

Note: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) will establish a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country, to accelerate quantum computing-led research and development (R&D) and enable new scientific discoveries. The MeitY Quantum Computing Applications Lab will provide quantum computing as a service to government ministries and departments, researchers, scientists, academia, and developers, to enable advances in areas such as manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and aerospace engineering.

42. The Global Risk Report is published by **World Economic Forum(WEF)**.

Note: The findings of the report are based on the Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS) undertaken by over 650 members of WEF's diverse leadership communities. The Report is prepared with Strategic Partners, Marsh McLennan in Partnership with SK Group and Zurich Insurance Group. The report is being released before WEF's upcoming virtual Davos Agenda scheduled to be held between January 25-29, 2021.

43. The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) signed an MoU with **DRDO** to boost collaboration in the field of technical exchange & cooperation on sustainable Geo-hazard management.

Note: This initiative will ensure safety of road users on NHs in the country against the adverse effects of landslides and other natural calamities.

44. The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the new Joint Venture Company (JVC) for an investment of Rs.5281.94 crore in Ratle Hydro Electric Project (850 MW). It is located **Chenab** river.

Note: The project is located on river Chenab, in Kishtwar district of Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).It will be commissioned within 60 months.The life cycle of the project will be 40 years.

45. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed an agreement with **Himachal Pradesh** state to improve telecom connectivity in the remote & hilly areas of the state.

Note: POWERGRID has created about 67, 500 kms of Optical Fiber Communication (OFC) network which connects over 1000 plus locations across India. POWERGRID's OFC network covers all major towns & cities of India including the hilly & difficult terrains of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) & North Eastern Region.

46. According to the **Global Climate Risk Index 2021**, India is at **Seventh** position among the most-affected countries by the devastating impact of climate change globally in 2019.

Note: As per the the report by Germanwatch, a Bonn-based environmental organization, India was preceded by Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Bahamas, Japan, Malawi and Afghanistan in the list of countries most affected by the impacts of extreme weather events in 2019.Between 2000 and 2019, over 475,000 people lost their lives as a direct result of more than 11,000 extreme

weather events globally and losses amounted to around US \$2.56 trillion (in purchasing power parities).

- 47. Om Birla** inaugurated the 'Bharat Parv 2021', a virtual national festival showcasing the country's diverse culture, cuisines and handicrafts.

Note: Minister of State (Independent charge) for Tourism and Culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel was also present on this occasion. The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with other central Ministries is organizing this year a virtual 'Bharat Parv' event from 26th to 31st January 2021, showcasing the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

- 48.** For the first time, a 122-member tri-service contingent of **Bangladesh** country participated in Republic Day Parade 2021.

Note: The 122-member contingent of the Bangladesh Armed Forces comprising soldiers of the Bangladesh Army, sailors of the Bangladesh Navy, and air warriors of the Bangladesh Air Force was led by the contingent Commander Lieutenant Colonel Abu Mohammed Shahnoor Shawon and his deputies, Lieutenant Farhan Ishraq and Flight Lieutenant Sibat Rahman. All the three services of the Bangladesh Armed Forces had played a key role in securing independence for their country in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971

- 49. Akshay Kumar** has launched the mobile action game Fearless and United Guards (FAU-G) on the occasion of the 72nd Republic Day.

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

- 50.** The Textiles Committee of the Ministry of Textiles has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Nissenken Quality Evaluation Centre of **Japan** country to boost export of Textile and Apparel in that country.

Note: The MoU signing ceremony was held through video conferencing which was presided over by Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani and State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan Yasumasa Nagasaka. The main objective of the MoU is to provide required support to textile's trade and industry for ensuring quality as per the requirement of Japanese buyers.

- 51.** India's rank out of 98 countries in the COVID-19 performance index published by the Australian think-tank, Lowy Institute -- **86th rank.**

Note: In the index India ranked 86 out of 98 countries, while the United States placed 94 and Brazil at the bottom of the index. Sri Lanka was the best faring nation in South Asia, ranking 10, while the Maldives was at 25, Pakistan at 69, Nepal at 70, and Bangladesh at 84. The think-tank said China was not included "due to a lack of publicly available data on testing".

- 52.** India's rank among 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) – 2020 released by the Transparency International -- **86th.**

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

- 53. Madhya Pradesh** state has launched 'PANKH Abhiyan' for girl child on the occasion of National Girl Child Day 2021.

Note: Wherein 'P' stands for protection, 'A' for awareness of their rights, 'N' for nutrition, 'K' for knowledge and 'H' for health. The abhiyan will go on for a year. The National Girl Child Day is celebrated every year since 2008 to spread awareness about the inequalities and atrocities girls have to face in our patriarchal society.

- 54.** The 15th edition of Toshali National Crafts Mela inaugurated **in Bhubaneswar.**

Note: Artisans showcased various handicrafts including lanterns, carpets among other decorative items. Several women were seen shopping several necklaces, hair-bands, rings and other artificial jewellery items.

- 55. FICCI** has organized the 7th edition of 'MASCRADE 2021-- Movement against Smuggled and Counterfeit Trade'.

Note: The aim of MASCRADE 2021 is to foster a healthy discussion on newer and practical strategies to mitigate the challenges of counterfeiting and smuggling, especially in a post-COVID era.

Important News – State

- 1. Punjab** government has launched a mobile application 'DigiNest' that will enable people to have digital access to the directory of state govt.

Note: Punjab CM, Captain Amarinder Singh virtually launched a mobile application 'DigiNest' that will enable people to have digital access to the directory of state govt. In addition to this, he also launched an online Punjab Advertisement Release Order System. This will bring transparency and efficiency in the entire process of releasing State Government's advertisements and payments to media houses.

- 2. Jharkhand** government has launched state's own crop relief scheme 'Kisan Fasal Rahat Yojana' which will replace Government of India's crop insurance scheme Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).

Note: The new scheme is a compensation scheme which will provide security cover to farmers of Jharkhand in cases of crop damage due to natural hazards. Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Co-operative, Jharkhand will be the implementing agency of the scheme. The main objectives of the scheme are – Food Safety, Crop Diversification, rapid development in Agriculture & paving way for competition.

3. **Delhi** government and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan have signed an agreement with Oakridge Energy to solarise schools in the state.

Note: The project will be developed by Oakridge and subsidised under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy's (MNRE) capital subsidy scheme for Government Buildings. The installation of solar plants will help in making institutions energy independent, reduce their electricity bills and generate additional income through sale of surplus power. Oakridge has set a target to solarise 1, 000 schools & educational institutions by 2022.

4. The TRIFED has signed a memorandum of understanding with Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to setup TRIFOOD parks in **Madhya Pradesh**.

Note: In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged between the two organisations to work together for setting up of TRIFOOD Parks in 5 districts in Madhya Pradesh. The two organisations will work together by undertaking various initiatives all aimed at improving the livelihood of tribal people and implementation of the Van DhanYojana through the mobilization of Self Help Groups (SHGs) / VanDhanVikas Kendra (VDVKs) / VPCs / TRIFOOD Parks.

5. **Delhi** government has set up a Tamil academy to promote the South Indian language and culture in the state.

Note: It also appointed former municipal councillor and member of the Delhi Tamil Sangam N. Raja as vice-chairman of the academy. It is diversity that forms Delhi's vibrant and cosmopolitan culture as people from all parts of the country come to settle in the Capital for work.

6. **Uttar Pradesh** won the "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Awards-2019" in the Best Performing State category.

Note: The PMAY(U) awards were instituted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2019. Uttar Pradesh (UP) won the award in the best performing state followed by Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Andhra Pradesh (AP).

7. **Madhya Pradesh** government has rolled out a 'Launch Pad Scheme' to provide such a platform to the youth, through which they will be able to become self-reliant by continuing their education and training.

Note: The objective of this scheme of the Women and Child Development Department is to provide such a platform to these youth, through which they will be able to become self-reliant by continuing their education and training. Under the launch pad scheme, 52 districts of the state have been divided into 5 clusters. Five divisional headquarters are being started in Indore, Sagar, Gwalior, Jabalpur and Bhopal.

8. **Uttar Pradesh** government has launched 'Kisan Kalyan Mission' for farmer welfare and to double the farmers income of the state.

Note: Uttar Pradesh government has launched a special program named as Kisan Kalyan Mission for farmer welfare and to double the farmers income of the state. Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath will launch the Kishan Kalyan Mission from Sarojininagar development block of state capital Lucknow.

9. The World's Largest Floating Solar Energy Project (600 MW) is being built in **Madhya Pradesh** that is set to begin power generation by the year 2022-23.
Note: The production of electricity will be in about 2000- hectare water areas and the Floating panels will be installed in the backwaters of Omkareshwar dam. Estimated Investment of the project stands at INR 3, 000 Crore. International Finance Corporation, World Bank & Power Grid have granted consent to provide funds for the development of the project.
10. **Punjab** government has launched E-Daakhil portal to streamline grievances redressal system.
Note: The E-Daakhil has been developed under the new Consumer Protection Act 2019 envisages aass
11. **Kerala** government has waive entertainment tax and reduce the fixed charges on electricity during the post-COVID-19 outbreak period for Cinemas to help the film industries in the state.
Note: In 2019, the Kerala government had issued an order allowing local self-governing institutions to collect entertainment tax from cinema halls upto 8.5% from the sale of movie tickets. The order was issued in order to compensate for the loss of revenue incurred by the state due to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
12. An annual Cherry Blossom Mao Festival was celebrated in **Manipur**.
Note: The Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur is known for Cherry Blossom, a plant which is popularly known as Sakura in Japan. It was jointly organised by the Department of Tourism and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Shillong in association with the Organising Committee Flower Festival, Mao.
13. **Punjab** government has approved the 'One Time Settlement (OTS) Scheme for Recovery of Outstanding Dues – 2021' for Traders to clear their Pending Arrears.
Note: The OTS will help Traders to settle their Pending arrears under the Punjab Value Added Tax Act, 2005 & Central Sales Tax Act, 1956. It will cost around INR 121.06 Crore to the Punjab Government. Will benefit Small & Medium Business Dealers/Traders who suffered due to COVID-19. Dealers who have filed assessments upto December 31, 2020 can apply under the scheme till April 30, 2021
14. **Jammu & Kashmir** signed an MoU with the North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council to promote Bamboo Cultivation and related entrepreneurship in the region.
Note: The North East Cane and Bamboo Development Council (NECBDC) will provide technical guidance in cultivating various species of Bamboo in the region. This will promote development of Bamboo based industries in Jammu & Kashmir leading to exports of bamboo based products. The MoU was in line with the Prime Minister's vision to encourage tree plantation on farm land "Har Medh Par Ped" mission.
15. India's first 'Fire Park' was inaugurated in **Odisha** and also a virtual platform 'Agnishama Seva' has been launched.

Note: On that occasion CM Patnaik also launched the virtual platform 'Agnishama Seva' to provide through which 16 fire related services can be availed. The Fire Park is a first of its kind initiative to provide awareness on fire safety measures, mainly focusing on School and College students. It is located under the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.

- 16.** India's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, will be launched in **Kerala**.

Note: The museum will feature a huge repository of documents and exhibits that shaped the labour movements across the continents and impacted Alappuzha, the cradle of the labour movement in the country, in particular and Kerala in general. Located alongside the Port and Coir museums displaying the town's rich maritime heritage, the Labour Movement Museum, the first such window in the country on the class struggle and spirited fight of workers, is part of a larger project that will also be of tourist appeal.

- 17.** The **Madhya Pradesh state government** has signed a memorandum of understanding with **Kerala** to for replicating the latter's pioneering Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative.

Note: The States signed a joint declaration under which Kerala will extend a series of services under a 16-point programme. The MoU was exchanged by Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran and his Madhya Pradesh counterpart Usha Thakur. As part of the agreement, Kerala will provide a series of services under a 16-point programme.

- 18.** **Haryana** state government has inaugurated India's 1st air taxi service under Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) of Govt of India.

Note: As part of the inauguration, Haryana CM flagged off the 1st flight from Chandigarh under the scheme. It is the 1st time in India a small aircraft is being used for services in form of an air taxi. The airline Aviation Connectivity & Infrastructure Developers Pvt. Ltd (Air Taxi) will operate the air taxi services and has become the 1st startup airline of India to assist India with this service.

- 19.** Mahananda wildlife sanctuary located in **West Bengal** state where the First Mahananda Bird Festival will be organized in February 2021.

Note: The Darjeeling Wildlife Division will be organising the 1st Mahananda Bird Festival from February 20 to 23. The participants will be taken to the popular birding spots such as Rongdong and Latpanchor, besides other birding trails within the forests. Visitors will be able to witness the diverse landscapes of rivers, plains, forests and hills during the festival.

- 20.** A geographical indication (GI) tag has been sought for one of the costliest mushrooms in the world that grows in **Jammu and Kashmir**.

Note: Locally called Gucchi, or Morel, the mushroom, priced at over ₹20,000 a kg, is a forest produce collected by local farmers and tribals. Last June, saffron from the State had been granted a GI tag. The GI tag application for Gucchi mushroom was filed at the Geographical

Indication Registry recently by Jammu-based NGO Border World Foundation and facilitated by the Director of Agriculture, J&K.

- 21. Uttarakhand** government has announced to increase the number of days under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from 100 to 150.

Note: government will increase the number of working days from 100 to 150 under MGNREGA and the entire cost will be borne by the state government. This decision was taken during a meeting of the State Employment Guarantee Council.

NREGA was first proposed in 1991 by former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao. Passed in Parliament in 2008, it aims to provide 100 days of wage employment to enhance livelihood security in rural areas.

- 22. Karnataka** state finds the top position in the India Innovation Index 2020 released by the NITI Aayog.

Note: In the India Innovation Index-2020, the States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and nine Union Territories and Small States for effectively comparing their performance.

In the 2020 ranking, Karnataka retained its first position in the Major States category. Maharashtra moved one position higher and stood at 2nd spot while Tamil Nadu slid to 3rd position.

- 23.** Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE Hub) of Telangana Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 'I-Hub' (Independent Hub) of **Gujarat** state to enable & support startups by women to raise capital in various focus sectors.

Note: The partnership will not only benefit women entrepreneurs from Telangana & Gujarat but also others from all over India. WE Hub is India's 1st state-led Incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs, it was established in 2017. The MoU was signed by Jayesh Ranjan, Telangana IT & Industry Principal Secretary & Anju Sharma, Gujarat Higher and Technical Education Principal Secretary.

- 24. Madhya Pradesh** became the first state to give electricity subsidy through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Note: With this, it has fulfilled a power reform condition as proposed by the Centre and thus eligible for additional borrowing. The scheme has been implemented in Vidisha district of the State, where electricity is being supplied through the MP Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitaran Co Ltd with effect from December 2020. Under the scheme, an amount of ₹32.07 crore was transferred to the bank accounts of 60,081 beneficiaries in December.

- 25.** The BSE has signed an MoU with **Maharashtra** to create awareness about the benefits of listing among Small & Medium scale Enterprises of the state.

Note: In this regard, BSE has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government of Maharashtra. This MoU will help the micro, small and medium industries in the

state to get registered in the capital market and raise capital from the public capital market. BSE will also provide technical support to all the MSME industries in Maharashtra.

- 26. Gujarat** government has announced for the for the formation of 'Mukhyamantri Bagayat Vikas Mission' to accelerate agriculture, horticulture and promote farming of herbal plants.

Note: The aim is to accelerate agriculture, horticulture and promote farming of herbal plants. It will also create employment opportunities through an increase in the export of such products. Under this mission, the waste land of the government (around 20000 hectare) will be given on 30-year lease for farming of horticulture and medicinal crops.

- 27.** The NASSCOM has partnered with **Telangana** state's Artificial Intelligence Mission to launch an Innovation Factory to identify and promote innovative artificial intelligence solutions to address challenges in agricultural sector.

Note: They have announced an 'innovation challenge' for start-ups, inviting ideas that can make the lives of farmers easier by helping them increase incomes. The winner will get a chance to win a prize money of ₹1 lakh, while the runner-up will get ₹50,000.

- 28. Karnataka** government has launched 'Avalokana software' a transparent e-governance tool.

Note: The software provides focused eye view on Sustainable Development goals, Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, Tribal Sub-plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The Chief Minister issued directions today to the Deputy Commissioners of each district to the data in the software at regular intervals.

- 29. Uttar Pradesh** government has launched 'Udyam Sarathi' app to help youth to explore self-employment opportunities.

Note: On the occasion of 71st foundation day of Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched 'Udyam Sarathi' app to help youth to explore self-employment opportunities. As per the government statement, this application will provide all information related to self-employment and the job industry at one click.

- 30. Uttar Pradesh** government has launched ambitious 'Abhyudaya', state-wide, free coaching facility programme.

Note: Named 'Abhyudaya', the free coaching facility will start from upcoming Basant Panchmi, the day of worship to the goddess of learning, Saraswati. From the day of Basant Panchami, 'Abhyudaya', the free coaching facility for students of the state appearing in various competitive examinations will commence.

- 31. Maharashtra** government announced to start 'Jail Tourism Initiative'.

Note: Home minister Anil Deshmukh announced the jail tourism initiative. Of the 60 prisons in the state, Thane, Aurangabad, Ratnagiri, Dhule, Nashik, Chandrapur, Byculla women's jail and others, are of historical importance. Based on a proposal initiated by the state prisons department, the state government has decided to launch jail tourism at Yerawada.

- 32. Rajasthan** government has launched new School of Public Health to make policy intervention for building public health capacity and skills and bridge gaps between education and practices in the state.
- Note:** Named after Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) chairperson S.D. Gupta, the school will provide technical support to health systems and render help to the State government in harnessing new technologies. IIHMR Dean (Research) D.K. Mangal said on Tuesday that the SPH has taken up a study on non-communicable diseases, climate change and antimicrobial resistance as its first project to identify priority areas in public healthcare.
- 33. Karnataka** government has launched a 1st of its kind initiative in India where, beneficiaries of old-age pensions will be automatically selected using the Navodaya app and their pension amount will be paid through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.
- Note:** This model was piloted in Udupi and Ballari districts of the state. Navodaya app is developed in accordance with the National Education Policy guidelines. The aim of the initiative is to enable beneficiaries to get the pension without the need of middlemen.
- 34.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi released financial assistance of Rs 2,691 crore to 6.1 lakh beneficiaries in **Uttar Pradesh** state under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.
- Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi released financial assistance of ₹2,691 crore to 6.1 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G). Modi released the assistance via video conference.
- 35. Andhra Pradesh** was the 1st state to launch door-delivery of rations under the Public Distribution System (PDS).
- Note:** Fine quality of rice will be distributed right at the door-steps of the cardholders across the state from February 1. The move is expected to give huge relief particularly to the elderly people and differently abled as they need to wait for longer hours in the queue lines at the ration shop.
- 36. Punjab** Government signed an MoU with International Digital Health & Artificial Intelligence Research Collaborative (I-DAIR) in Geneva, Switzerland to develop and deploy digital technologies in the health sector.
- Note:** The MoU was signed by Punjab's Additional Chief Secretary (governance reforms) Anirudh Tewari. Under this MoU, I-DAIR will work on the projects related to data interoperability, real-time epidemiology and benchmarking of digital health solutions. Both state government and I-DAIR will promote synergy across communities of practice which will support the digital health work in the state.

Important News – World

- 1.** The Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO) has named 4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites from **China, Japan and South Korea** as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems.

Note: The Pu'er Tea Agroecosystem in Yunnan is the world's largest area of tea forest plantations established by village ancestors thousands of years ago. The Fuzhou Jasmine and Tea Culture System developed over more than 2000 years is rich in biodiversity. GIAHS is an initiative started by FAO in 2002 for the identification & conservation of traditional agricultural systems all over the world. These sites also represent models of sustainable agriculture production

2. **Japan** is developing wooden satellites to reduce the space debris.

Note: The partnership will begin experimenting with different types of wood in extreme environments on Earth. Wooden satellites would burn up without releasing harmful substances into the atmosphere or raining debris on the ground when they plunge back to Earth.

3. **China** has deployed a fleet of underwater drones called Sea Wing Glider in the Indian Ocean region.

Note: These sea gliders, which the Chinese are deploying "en masse", are a type of Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle (UUV) which were launched in mid-December 2019. According to the defence expert, reports from December last year suggested that 14 would be employed in the Indian Ocean mission but only 12 were used.

4. **USA** Parliament has passed the "Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act" which will expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women to receive higher education.

Note: Passed by the House of Representatives in March 2020, the bill was passed by the United States Senate by a voice vote on January 1. The bill now heads to the White House for US President Donald Trump to sign into law. The bill requires the US Agency for International Development to award at least 50 per cent of scholarships under a Pakistan-based higher education scholarship programme to Pakistani women, from 2020 to 2022, across a range of academic disciplines and in with existing eligibility criteria.

5. **India** will co-chair the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP), a regional forum to conserve wildlife habitats for three years.

Note: India will replace South Korea which held this position for three years till November, 2020. Notably APAP is chaired by IUCN Asia and co-chaired by an APAP country member. India got this opportunity after successfully increasing the population of wild animals such as tigers, lions and leopards through protecting their habitats.

6. **Pakistan** has successfully test launched Fatah-1, the indigenously developed guided multi-launch rocket system.

Note: The rocket system is capable of delivering a conventional warhead up to a range of 140 kilometres. The weapon system will give Pakistan Army the capability of precision target engagement deep in enemy territory.

7. **Japan** has decided to assist India by providing a loan of up to INR 2,129 Crore for its efforts to mitigate socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.

Note: The Exchange of Notes for the COVID-19 Crisis Response Support Loan for Social Protection were signed by SUZUKI Satoshi, Ambassador of Japan to India and Dr C. S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs. This yen loan is the latest addition to Japan's supports to India in its fight against COVID-19.

- 8. Bangladesh** will be the Country in Focus for the 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) to be held in Goa from 16th to 24th January.

Note: According to an official release by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), the Country in Focus is a special segment that recognizes the cinematic excellence and contributions of a particular country. In addition, the 51st Edition of IFFI has announced a line-up of programmes that will be showcased on the OTT platform during the festival.

- 9. France** has organised the fourth 'One Planet Summit', through videoconferencing, which aimed at protecting the world's biodiversity.

Note: The Summit was organised in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank. The theme of the Summit was "Let's act together for nature!" It was inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, French President Emmanuel Macron, and President of the World Bank Group David Malpass.

- 10. Germany** topped in the Arton Capital Passport Index 2021.

Note: Sweden, Finland and Spain all ranked second, with a mobility score of 133. While all the passport holders of all the three countries require visas for 65 countries, the Swedish passport holders can go to 99 countries without requiring a visa, and to 34 countries on a visa-on-arrival arrangement. Passports of Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and New Zealand ranked at the third place, with all the countries having a mobility score of 132, requiring a visa for 66 countries.

- 11.** The National Institute of Oceanography and National Geophysical Research Institute virtually signed an MoU with **Russia** country in the field of Marine Sciences and Technology.

Note: The POI is the largest research institution in the Far Eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences comprising 31 research units equipped with modern scale devices. Whereas, CSIR-NIO and CSIR-NGRI, the constituent research laboratories of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) are world renowned Institutes in the fields of Oceanography and Earth Sciences respectively.

- 12.** India has signed an MoU with **Japan** to enhance cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technology & standardization of 5G.

Note: The MoU was signed by Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Takeda Ryota. It was exchanged through a video conference today.

The Department of Telecom and Japan's Ministry of Communications will enhance mutual cooperation in the field of 5G technologies, telecom security, submarine optical fiber cable system to islands of India, spectrum management, smart cities, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, disaster management and public safety etc.

- 13.** According to the 'International Migration 2020' report released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) of **India** had the world's largest transnational community in 2020.
Note: The United Arab Emirates (3.5 Million), the United States of America (2.7 Million) and Saudi Arabia (2.5 Million) host the largest numbers of migrants from India. At the Global level, the number of International Migrants living outside their country of birth reached 281 Million in 2020. International Migrants represent about 3.6% of the World's population.
- 14.** India has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with **Japan** on a basic partnership framework for operation of the 'specified skilled worker' (SSW) system.
Note: SSW is a new status of residence created in Japan in April, 2019, to accept foreign nationals who have a certain level of expertise and skill. Indian nationals with certain professional and language skills will be eligible to work under the SSW system. There are 14 specified industry fields that fall under SSW and workers and professionals in those sectors could be eligible.
- 15.** Mountaineers of **Nepal** makes history by becoming the first to scale in winter the world's second highest mountain K2.
Note: considered as the world's most dangerous and challenging peak located in Gilgit-Baltistan side of Karakoram range. The achievement was the result of a collaborative effort between the climbers affiliated with multiple teams: one led by Nirmal Purja and the other by Mingma Gyalje Sherpa. It was the only one among 8,000-meter high peaks that was never scaled in winter.
- 16.** **United Kingdom** unveiled new laws to protect England's cultural and historic heritage in the form of statues and monuments.
Note: This was done to ensure that they are not removed at a whim. The move comes in the wake of Black Lives Matter protests in the country last year targeting several historic monuments, including with graffiti on Mahatma Gandhi's statue in Parliament Square in London.
- 17.** **China** overtook the USA as world's top destination for new foreign direct investment last year.
Note: New investments by overseas businesses into the U.S., which for decades held the No. 1 spot, fell 49% in 2020, according to U.N. figures released Sunday, as the country struggled to curb the spread of the new coronavirus and economic output slumped. China, long ranked No. 2, saw direct investments by foreign companies climb 4%.
- 18.** **The Netherlands** hosted the online international Climate Adaptation Summit 2021.
Note: CAS Online build on the advances of the UN Climate Action Summit by showcasing pioneering solutions to the climate emergency, and sustaining momentum through to UNFCCC's COP26 in Glasgow in 2021. As the world recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAS will deliver action and inspire change to help societies build back better. It was aimed to help realize the transitions required for a climate-resilient world.

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

Honor & Awards

- 1. Department of Post** has won the gold icon award in the category, 'Excellence in Digital Governance Ministry/Department (Central)' in the 6th Digital India Awards (DIA) 2020.
Note: President of India, Ram Nath Kovind conferred 6th Digital India Awards (DIA) 2020 through video conferencing in a virtual awards ceremony. 24 digital governance initiatives/products by Government entities under 7 categories received Digital India Awards 2020. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) organized the awards online. The Department of Post won the gold icon award in the category, 'Excellence in Digital Governance Ministry/Department (Central)' for implementing an IT application in the land registration system in India, named as a National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS).
- 2. India's richest man Mukesh Ambani**, the chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries limited (RIL) dropped down to **12th** position in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021.
Note: The net worth of Ambani dropped from 90 billion USD (around Rs. 6.62 lakh crore) (in early 2020) to 76.7 billion USD (around Rs. 5.6 lakh crore). The drop in the net worth of Mukesh Ambani was due to the correction in the shares of RIL which has fallen to Rs.1995.50 on 30th December 2020, which is 16% from its all-time high of Rs.2369.35. Zhong Shanshan, referred to as "Lone Wolf", has replaced Ambani as Asia's richest person, he is one of the fastest in the history to achieve the feat.
- 3. Elon Musk has** become the world's richest person according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index surpassing Amazon's Jeff Bezos.
Note: Musk had a net worth of more than \$188.5 billion, \$1.5 billion more than Bezos\$1.5 billion more than Bezos.Mukesh Ambani is now 13th richest in the world. Zhong Shanshan, chairman of Chinese bottled-water company Nongfu Spring, become Asia's richest person and 6th richest person in the world.
- 4. Medical Institution JIPMER** was awarded the second prize under the Kayakalp Awards scheme in category 'Group A' Central government health facilities.
Note: These awards are meant for health facilities with the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene and are given annually by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. Union Minister for Health Harsh Vardhan, along with Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey, presented the awards via video conferencing.
- 5. Medical Institutions AIIMS, Bhubneswar** has received the best central government hospital under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness for the third consecutive time.
Note: The Rairangpur Sub Divisional Hospital of Mayurbhanj district was felicitated as the best Sub-divisional hospital community health centre category.Rani Durgavati Hospital received the award for the fourth time consecutively.

- 6. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** has been honoured by the Hindi Writers Guild, Canada for his literary work.
Note: Nishank was conferred with the "Sahitya Gaurav Samman" in the presence of the Governor through a virtual programme. India's High Commissioner in Canada Ajay Bisaria was also present on the occasion.
- 7. Bilkis dadi** has been conferred with Quaide Milleth Awards 2021.
Note: Dadi was the face of the Shaheen Bagh anti-CAA protests. Both were awarded for Probity in Political and Public Life at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi. The award consists of a shawl, citation and cash of ₹2.5 lakh.
- 8. Azim Premji** has been chosen for 'Press Club Person of the Year' given by the Press Club of Bangalore.
Note: The founder chairman of Narayana Health Dr Devi Prasad Shetty and actor-Director Sudeep Sanjeev have been selected for the 'Press Club Special Award.' Besides them 25 senior journalists have been selected for the 'Press Club Annual Awards'. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa will facilitate the awardees at a function scheduled for the third week of February.
- 9. Biswajit Chatterjee** has been conferred with 'Indian Personality of the Year' at International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
Note: The Award has been announced at the opening ceremony of the festival, by Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Shri Prakash Javadekar. Biswajit Chatterjee is known for his roles of Kumar Vijay Singh in Bees Saal Baad, Raja Amit Kumar Singh in Kohra, Ashok in April Fool, Ramesh Kumar in Mere Sanam, Jeevan in Night In London, Shekhar in Do Kaliyaan and Vicky in Kismat.
- 10. Shyam Srinivasan** has been named as the Business Standard Banker of the year for 2019-20.
Note: Shyam Srinivasan, managing director and chief executive officer (CEO) of Federal Bank has been named as Business Standard Banker of the Year for 2019-20 for his bank's consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed large stress on asset quality, registered losses, or even invited regulatory actions. The unanimous decision was taken by a high-profile jury of five, chaired by former Reserve Bank of India deputy governor S S Mundra.
- 11. Bhawana Kanth** became the 1st woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade.
Note: She was a part of the Indian Air Force's tableau in the 2021 Republic Day Parade that will showcase mock-ups of the light combat helicopter, light combat aircraft, and the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane.
- 12. Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS)** has been conferred with the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2021 award for their contribution in disaster management.
Note: The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of ₹51 lakh and a certificate in case of

an institution and ₹five lakh and a certificate in case of an individual. The award is given to recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of disaster management by the central government.

- 13.** Nikhil Srivastava from India has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others. The prize was given to him in **Mathematics** field.

Note: Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, Adam Marcus, the Ecole polytechnique federale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize, the National Academy of Sciences said in the statement. The prize consists of a medal and USD 100,000.

- 14.** **Rajendra Kumar Bhandari** has been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for excellent work in Disaster Management.

Note: Union Home Ministry announced the award every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an institution and five lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an individual. Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society, SEEDS has done commendable work in building community resilience to disasters.

Sports News

- 1.** **Claire Polosak** became the first female umpire to officiate in a men's Test match.

Note: The 32-year-old already holds the distinction of being the first woman to officiate (as an on-field umpire) in a men's ODI match. Polosak had umpired in ICC's World Cricket League Division 2 final match between Namibia and Oman in 2019. In Sydney though, Polosak will officiate as a fourth umpire.

- 2.** **Abhishek Yadav** has been appointed as the first deputy general secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF) after the sports body decided to create a new post in its hierarchy.

Note: The 40-year-old former international, who has played with the likes of Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chhetri, Mahesh Gawli and Climax Lawrence, has been serving as national team's director since January 2018. He was the member of AIFF and has been serving as national team's director since January 2018.

- 3.** Indian athlete who has secured fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021 -- **Jigmet Dolma**.

Note: Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police. Two more women runners from India and a total of 8 athletes participated in the marathon. In the marathon, Hicham Lakohi of Morocco came first in the elite competition of the marathon in men's category while Angela Jim Asunde from Kenya won the women's category in the same event. The marathon was organized to commemorate the return of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Pakistan jail to Bangladesh in 1972.

4. **Carolina Marin** has won the women's singles title at the Thailand Open Super 1000 badminton tournament held in Bangkok.
Note: Marin, 27, beat Chinese Taipei's top seed Tai Tzu Ying in straight games in an ominous display of form as she prepares to defend her Olympic title later in the year in Tokyo. Tai was limited to a single digit score in the first game and while she fought hard in the second, Marin ended up winning the match 21-9, 21-16.
5. **Viktor Axelsen** has won the men's singles title at the Thailand Open Super 1000 badminton tournament held in Bangkok.
Note: Axelsen, meanwhile, recorded his second consecutive tournament win with a 21-14, 21-14 win over Hong Kong's Angus Ng Ka Long. Axelsen had earlier won the All England Open Championship in March. Indonesia's Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu beat Thailand's Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai 21-15, 21-12 to win the women's doubles final.
6. **India** will host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022.
Note: The tournament will feature 12 teams, expanded from eight in the previous edition, comprising three groups of four with a minimum of 25 matches being played over 18 days. Eight teams will qualify for the newly-introduced quarterfinals. The event will also serve as a qualification tournament for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, which will see a record five Asian teams seal their spots to join co-host Australia for the newly-expanded 32-team global showpiece.
7. **Indo-Tibetan Border Police** team won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI)'s 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy held at Gulmarg.
Note: The match was held at Gulmarg Ice Rink. Teams from Delhi, Maharashtra, Indian Army also participated in the tournament, said ITBP. Top teams of Ice Hockey in India participated in the Championship organized from January 16 to 22, 2021.
8. **Ajinkya Rahane** has become the first recipient of the iconic Mullagh Medal.
Note: He is the first recipient of the iconic medal which is named after former Australian skipper and cricket Johnny Mullagh. Rahane scored 112 runs in the first innings and helped India reach a total of 326 runs in the first innings.

Books and Authors

1. **K S Vijayanath** has authored the book titled "Sabarimala Vijnaanakosham" released by Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala.
Note: Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala released the book titled "**Sabarimala Vijnaanakosham**" authored by K S Vijayanath at Raj Bhavan, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He presented the **first copy** of "Sabarimala Vijnaanakosham" to **S Sreejith**, Inspector General of Police (Crime Branch) Kerala. He also presented the Limca Book of World Records certificate

to Swami Maheswarananda who erected a 111 feet Shiv Linga Sthoopa at Maheswaram Sri Siva parvathi Temple in Chenkal, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

2. **R Kaushik** has authored the book titled 'India's 71-Year Test: The Journey to Triumph in Australia.

Note: The book, a Bradman Museum initiative, is authored by senior cricket scribe R. Kaushik, and it chronicles a rivalry that has given a fillip to Test cricket. In his foreword to the book, Shastri wrote: "Australians hate losing, and it's a thought process entertained not just by the 11 on the field, but the whole nation, the fans and the media. When a team tours Australia, there is a combined assault like no other."

3. **K S Vijayanath** has authored the book titled "Sabarimala Vijaanakosham" released by Arif Mohammed Khan, Governor of Kerala.

Note: He presented the first copy of "Sabarimala Vijaanakosham" to S Sreejith, Inspector General of Police (Crime Branch) Kerala. He also presented the Limca Book of World Records certificate to Swami Maheswarananda who erected a 111 feet Shiv Linga Sthoopa at Maheswaram Sri Siva parvathi Temple in Chenkal, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

4. **R Giridharan** has authored the book titled 'Right Under Your Nose'.

Note: This is his debut Book. The book is published by Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. The book portrays how Superintendent Vijay along with his trusted aide Dalvi, and Journalist Padmini spots the murderer who killed a woman and a team of scientists. Their skills are pitted by a genius who eliminates all possible lead, right under their nose. The story is set in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

5. **Konsam Himalay Singh** has authored the book titled 'Making of a General – A Himalayan Echo'.

Note: The book was released by Dr Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur through a virtual mode at Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan, Imphal, Manipur. It is a memoir of Lt Gen (Dr) Konsam Himalay Singh who discovered his journey from a small village in Manipur to becoming the 1st Lieutenant general (Three Star General of the Indian Army) from North East India.

6. **Romila Thapar** has authored the book titled 'Gazing Eastwards: Of Buddhist Monks and Revolutionaries in China, 1957.

Note: The book is published by Seagull Books London Ltd. She declined the Padma Bhushan award in 1992 and 2005. The book accounts a few months that Romila Thapar spent in China in 1957 along with Sri Lankan art historian Anil de Silva, where she worked at two cave sites, namely Maijishan in north China and Dunhuang on the edge of the Gobi desert in Northwest China

7. **S Y Quraishi** has authored the book titled "The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India".

Note: The book will hit the stands on February 15, 2021. It has been published by HarperCollins India. The book evaluates India's demographics from a religious perspective and seeks to

demolish two basic myths that 'Islam is against family planning' and "Muslim rate of growth" is linked to capture political power.

- 8. Vidhu Vinod Chopra** has authored the book titled 'Unscripted: Conversations on Life and Cinema'.

Note: The book is scheduled to be released on January 25. The book gives a glance into the mind, method and madness of Vidhu Vinod Chopra, one of contemporary Hindi cinema's best filmmakers. In this book, Vidhu Vinod Chopra speaks to his long-time collaborator and scriptwriter Abhijat Joshi about his journey.

- 9. Waman Subha Prabhu** has authored the book titled 'Manohar Parrikar -Off the Record'.

Note: The book has been written by senior journalist Waman Subha Prabhu. The book 'Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record' is a collection of memories of Mr Prabhu who happened to be with late Parrikar during the journey of his life. In the book the author has endeavored to narrate multi-faceted personality of late Manohar Parrikar.

- 10. Ram Sewak Sharma** has authored the book titled "The Making of Aadhaar: World's Largest Identity Platform".

Note: Sharma begins by summing up his experiences during various bureaucratic postings in Jharkhand, ranging from streamlining personnel records and digitising public grievances to managing election logistics — all using innovative digital means. The learnings from these episodes proved to be the building blocks of the Aadhaar project.

- 11.** The Maharashtra government has renamed Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur after **Balasaheb Thackeray**.

Note: The zoological park will come up on nearly 2,000 hectares forest land. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate the Indian safari at the zoo on January 26. Three special 40-seat capacity vehicles and an online ticket booking facility will be made available to the people as soon after the Indian safari is inaugurated.

- 12. Mohamed Zeeshan** has authored the book titled 'Flying Blind: India's Quest for Global Leadership'.

Note: The book is published by Penguin Random House. The book describes the difficulties that stand as an obstacle to the current India's foreign policy, each of which have led to many instabilities in the foreign policy practice, which in turn has affected India's interests. It tries to explain why the ordinary Indian citizen should care about foreign policy and how a more proactive foreign policy can deliver economic growth at home.

- 13. Fareed Zakaria** has authored the book titled "Ten Lessons for a Post-Pandemic World".

Note: The book published by Penguin book speaks about the nature of the post pandemic world and the social, political, technological and economical effects that may take years to develop. The book with 10 lessons includes the acceleration of natural and biological risk, datedness of the political categories, the rise of digital life, globalization and the developing world order split between US and China.

- 14. Gautam Chikermane** has authored the book titled "India 2030: The Rise of a Rajasic Nation".
Note: The book features 20 themes on various fields ranging from education to healthcare, science, energy, politics and foreign policy, that predicts the evolution of India in this decade. The book showcases the numerous aspects of the future that will result in India becoming the world's 3rd largest economy and regional power. This book will act as a roadmap for policymakers and guide for scholars.
- 15. Dr. Abhishek Singhvi & Prof. Khagesh Gautam** has authored the book titled "The Law of Emergency Powers: Comparative Common Law Perspectives".
Note: It presents a detailed study on legal and constitutional provisions of Emergency powers under Article 356. It also includes detailed discussions on Martial law, wartime & peacetime invocations, Constitutional & statutory law. The book also compares the emergency powers of India, USA & UK.
- 16. Audrey Truschke** authored the book titled "The Language of History: Sanskrit Narratives of Muslim Pasts".
Note: Published by Penguin India, the book, The Language of History: Sanskrit Narratives of Muslim Pasts, seeks to collect, analyse, and theorize Sanskrit histories of Muslim-led and, later, as Muslims became an integral part of Indian cultural and political worlds, Indo-Muslim rule as a body of historical materials.

Science and Defence

- 1.** Indian Aerospace company **Skyroot Aerospace** has successfully test fired a solid propulsion rocket engine named 'Kalam-5' from a Private Test Facility at Nagpur, Maharashtra.
Note: Skyroot Aerospace, an Indian Space Startup successfully test fired a solid propulsion rocket engine named 'Kalam-5' from a Private Test Facility at Nagpur, Maharashtra. It is the 1st Private company of India to successfully design, develop & test a full solid-fueled rocket stage. It will now be used for propulsion of their maiden rocket 'Vikram-1' which is expected to be launched in December, 2021 with the help of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). 'Kalam-5' is the 1st of 5 Kalam series of solid rocket motors, the other four rocket motors are expected to be tested in 2021.
- 2.** The Ministry Defence has signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited** for procurement of 10 Lynx U2, a Naval Gun Fire Control System.
Note: The Lynx system has been designed and developed indigenously that will further the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The LYNX U2 GFCS is a Naval Gun Fire Control System designed to acquire, track and engage targets amidst sea clutter.
- 3.** India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container of which successful maiden test trial was conducted recently -- **SAHAYAK-NG.**

Note: The trial was conducted by the Indian Navy to enhance its operational logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering stores to ships that are deployed more than 2000 kilometers from the coast. Two DRDO laboratories--Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam and Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra-- were involved in the development of the SAHAYAK-NG container along with the industry partner M/s Avantel for GPS integration.

4. The Indian Army has signed an agreement with **Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL)** to procure the 12 high-performance patrol boats to boost its surveillance of Pangong Lake in eastern Ladakh.

Note: The construction will be done at GSL, Goa under the program Atma Nirbhar Bharat and only a few crafts will be in the world for such specialized operations. India started its surveillance of the lake after the violent clash began in early May between India and China.

5. **Bharat Electronics Limited** has signed a contract with Indian Navy in New Delhi to supply 20 Indigenously developed Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation Dazzlers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Note: Through this collaboration, Isro will facilitate coaching and mentoring of students in advanced 21st-century cutting-edge technologies, including those related to space. Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog have established over 7,000 ATIs across the country so far, enabling more than three million students between classes six to 12 acquire a problem solving, tinkering and innovative mindset.
- 10.** **Bharat Dynamics Limited** has signed an agreement with European defence company Thales to manufacture STARStreak Air Defence System in India.

Note: The Teaming Agreement was signed at a virtual ceremony held on 13 January 2021. BDL will become a part of the STARStreak global supply chain, providing the opportunity for export of the system to existing and future STARStreak Air Defence customers, including the UK Armed Forces through this agreement. BDL, as a part of its Global Outreach, is endeavouring to forge alliance with foreign companies to take the "Make in India" mission further.
- 11.** Motor Bikes ambulances that have been created on 350cc Royal Enfield Classic bikes by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS)-- **Rakshita**.

Note: It was developed by DRDO lab Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), New Delhi. It is a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle. The customised 'Rakshita' ambulances have been created on 350cc Royal Enfield Classic bikes. Rakshita is fitted with a customized reclining Casualty Evacuation Seat (CES).
- 12.** Joint military exercise 'Ex-Desert Knight 21' is to be conducted between India and **France**.

Note: It is expected to see Rafale jets of the two countries engaging in complex maneuvers to enhance operational coordination. The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure and share best practices towards enhancing combat capability. Both the air forces will deploy frontline fighter jets as well as transport, and tanker aircraft in the exercise.
- 13.** The Union Government has decided to export **Akash** missile to friendly foreign countries.

Note: The decision to export the missile systems was taken at a Cabinet meeting presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Akash missile systems have over 96 per cent indigenous components and the weapon can hit targets at a range of 25km.
- 14.** A Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) successfully test fired from **Hawk-I** aircraft for the first time by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Note: It is the first smart weapon to be fired from an Indian Hawk Mk132 trainer aircraft. The company-owned Hawk-I platform is being extensively used for certification of systems and weapons developed indigenously by DRDO and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research labs.
- 15.** **Indian Army** has signed an MoU with Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers to provide further impetus to indigenisation under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

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

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

Note: The exercise involved participation of Naval ships, amphibious troops of the Army and different types of aircraft from the Air force. The exercise was aimed at validating India's capabilities to safeguard the territorial integrity of its island territories. It also sought to enhance operational synergy and joint warfighting capabilities amongst the three Services.

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

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

February-2021

Banking & Financial Awareness

- 62.** 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.

- 63.** **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.

- 64.** 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.

- 65.** 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.

- 66.** **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.

- 67.** 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.

- 68.** **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.

- 69.** 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.

- 70.** 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.

- 71.** 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.

- 72.** 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.

- 73.** 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.

- 74. 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.

- 75. 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.

- 76.** 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 %.
- 77.** **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.
- 78.** **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.
- 79.** 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.
- 80.** **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.
- 81.** **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.

- 82.** 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.
- 83.** 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.
- 84.** 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.
- 85.** 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.
- 86.** **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.
- 87.** **New Development Bank** has committed to invest USD 100 Million into the NIIF 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.
- 88.** **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.

- 89.** 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.

- 90.** 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

- 91.** 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.

- 92. 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.

- 93. 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.

- 94.** Indian company **Recykai** 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.

- 95.** 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.
- 96.** 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.
- 97.** 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.
- 98.** **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)
- 99.** 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).
- 100.** 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.

101. 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.

102. 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.

103. 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.

104. 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).

105. 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.

106. 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.

107. 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.

108. 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.

109. 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%.

110. 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.

111. 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.

112. 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.

113. 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.

114. 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.

- 115. 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.
- 116.** 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.
- 117.** 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
- 118. 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.
- 119. 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.
- 120.** 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.

121. 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.

122. 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.

123. 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.

124. 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.

125. 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.

126. 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.

127. 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.

- 128.** 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.

- 129.** 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

- 25.** 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.

- 26.** Hilton Valentine, the founding guitarist of the rock and roll band 'The Animals' passed away recently, he belonged 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 Heppners 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.

- 27.** 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.

- 28.** 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 Mukerjea.

- 29.** 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.

- 30.** Renowned personality Bansi Kaul passed away recently, he was a prominent **Theater Director**.

Note: Bansi 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.

- 31.** 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.

- 32.** 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.

- 33.** 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.

- 34.** 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.

- 35.** 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.

- 36.** 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.

- 37.** 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.

- 38.** 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'.

- 39.** 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.

- 40.** 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

- 20.** 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.
- 21.** 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.
- 22.** 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'.
- 23.** **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.
- 24.** 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)
- 25.** 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.
- 26.** 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.

27. 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.

28. 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'.

29. 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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. 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".

34. 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.

35. 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.

- 36.** 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".

- 37.** 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.

- 38.** 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.

- 39.** 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.

- 40.** 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**'.

- 41.** 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'.

- 42.** 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

- 36. 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.
- 37. 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.
- 38. 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.
- 39. 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.
- 40. 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.
- 41. 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.

- 42. 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.
- 43. 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.
- 44. 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.
- 45. 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.
- 46. 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.
- 47. 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.
- 48. 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.

- 49. 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.
- 50. 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.
- 51. 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.
- 52. 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.
- 53. 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.
- 54. 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.
- 55. 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.

- 56. 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 Tegegnework Gettu.
- 57. 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.
- 58. 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.
- 59. 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.
- 60.** 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.
- 61. 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.
- 62.** 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.

- 63. 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.
- 64.** 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.
- 65. 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.
- 66.** 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).
- 67. 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.
- 68. 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.
- 69. 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.

70. 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.

Important News – India

56. 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.

57. 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.

58. 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 (NCSCM), Chennai.

59. 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.

60. 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.

- 61. 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.

- 62. 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

- 63. 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.

- 64. 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.

- 65. 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.

- 66. 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).

- 67.** 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.
- 68. 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.
- 69.** 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.
- 70.** 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.
- 71.** 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.
- 72. 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).

- 73.** 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.

- 74.** 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.

- 75.** 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.

- 76.** 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.

- 77.** 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 minimise 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.

- 78.** 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'.

79. 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.

80. 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.

81. 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.

82. 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.

83. 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.

84. 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.

- 85. 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.
- 86.** 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.
- 87.** 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.
- 88.** 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.
- 89.** 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.
- 90.** 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.
- 91.** 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.

- 92.** 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.

- 93. 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.

- 94.** The Annual Convention of Association of Domestic Tour Operators (ADTOI) was held in **Kevadia, 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.

- 95. Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad and** Essar Oil and Gas Exploration and Production Ltd (EOGEPL) 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.

- 96.** 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.

- 97. 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.
- 98.** 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.
- 99. 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.
- 100. 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.
- 101.** 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.
- 102.** 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.
- 103.** 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.

- 104.** 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).

- 105. 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

- 106. 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.

- 107.** 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.

- 108. 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.

- 109.** 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'.

- 110.** 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.

- 111. 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.

- 112.** 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.

- 113.** 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.

- 114.** 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).

115. 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.

116. 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.

117. 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.

118. 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.

119. 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

37. 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.

- 38. 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 Jeewan 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.

- 39.** 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.

- 40. 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.

- 41.** 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.

- 42.** 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.

- 43.** 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.

- 44.** 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.

- 45. 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

- 46.** 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.

- 47. 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.

- 48.** 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.

- 49.** 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.

- 50. 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.

- 51. 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.

- 52. 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.

- 53.** 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.

- 54. 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.

- 55. 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).

- 56.** 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.
- 57. 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.
- 58. 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.
- 59.** 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.
- 60.** 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.
- 61.** 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.
- 62.** 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.

- 63. 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.
- 64.** 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.
- 65.** 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.
- 66. 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.
- 67. 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.
- 68.** 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.
- 69. 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.

- 70. 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.

- 71.** 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.

- 72.** 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

- 25.** 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.

- 26.** 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.

- 27.** 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.

- 28.** 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).

- 29.** 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.

- 30.** **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.

- 31.** 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.

- 32.** 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.

- 33. 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.
- 34.** 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.
- 35.** 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.
- 36.** 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.
- 37. 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.
- 38.** 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.
- 39. 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.

40. 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.

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. 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.

44. 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.

45. 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.

46. Uttar Pradesh is all set to export 20 tonees 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.

- 47. 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.
- 48. 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.
- 49.** 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.
- 50. 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.
- 51. India** hosted a workshop on COVID-19 Management: Experience, Good Practices and Way Forward’.
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- 53. 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.

- 54. 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.
- 55. 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.
- 56.** 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.
- 57. 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.
- 58. 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.
- 59.** 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

- 15.** 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.
- 16.** **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".
- 17.** 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.
- 18.** **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.
- 19.** **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.
- 20.** 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.

- 21. 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.

- 22. 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.

- 23. 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.

- 24. 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.

- 25. 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.

- 26. 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.

- 27. 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).

- 28. 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.

- 29. 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.

- 30. 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

- 9. 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.

- 10. 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.

- 11. 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.

- 12.** 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

- 13.** 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.

- 14.** 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

- 15.** **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.

- 16.** **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.

- 17.** 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.

- 18.** 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

- 19.** 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.
- 20.** 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.
- 21.** **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.
- 22.** 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.
- 23.** 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.
- 24.** 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship was held in **Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula**.
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- 25.** **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.
- 26.** **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.

- 27. 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 Krejckikova 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.
- 28. Rajeev Ram** has won Australian open mixed double event with Barbora Krejckikova 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 Krejckikova's third straight mixed doubles title at Melbourne Park after she triumphed with Ram in 2019 and Nikola Mektic 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.
- 29. 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.
- 30. 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.
- 31. 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.
- 32. 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

- 17. 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.

- 18. 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.

- 19. 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.

- 20. 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.

- 21. 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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- 24. 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.

- 25. 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.

- 26. 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.

- 27. 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.

- 28. 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.

- 29. 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".

- 30.** 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

- 31. 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.

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

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

- 33. 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.

- 34. 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.

- 35. 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.

- 36. 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.

- 37. 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.

- 38. 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.

- 39. 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.

- 40. 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.

- 41. 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.

- 42. 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

- 18. 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)'.

- 19.** 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.

- 20.** 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.

- 21.** 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.

- 22.** Bharat Dynamics Limited 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.

- 23.** 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.

- 24.** 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.

- 25.** 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.

- 26.** 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.

27. 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.

28. 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.

29. '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.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. Which country successfully test fired anti tank guided missile “Helena” and “Dhruvastra” recently _____ **India.**

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.

35. 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.

36. 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).

37. 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).

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Banking & Financial Awareness

130. Indian Overseas Bank has signed a corporate agency agreement with the SBI General Insurance to retail its insurance products to the customers of the bank.

Note: IOB has signed a Bancassurance for the distribution of the non-life offerings with SBI General Insurance to offer a wide range of general insurance solutions and innovative products to the customers of the bank. This partnership will improve the reach of insurance products in urban, tier II and III markets. This will also create awareness to the customers about the personal lines of insurance.

131. Aditya Birla Health Insurance has announced India's first initiatives of upto 100% health insurance premium returns under the new version of its Flagship product 'Activ Health Policy'.

Note: With this ABHICL became the only insurance company to offer up to 100% premium returns(HealthReturn™), offers upto 100% reload of sum insured through its upgraded Activ Health Policy. 'Activ Health' is Asia's first plan to offer mental illness counselling coverage and Industries first to cover unlimited homeopathy telemedicine.

132. The government of India has decided to infuse **Rs. 1,500 crores** 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.

133. 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: 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.

134. As per the new guidelines for Housing Finance Companies released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), by **1st Dec 2025** all HFCs irrespective of their asset size will have to maintain 100% liquidity coverage ratio (LCR).

Note: 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.

135. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has eased the listing norms for large companies by enabling them to divest a minimum **5** per cent in the Initial public offering (IPO).

Note: The minimum public float for large firms with post-issue market capital exceeding Rs 1 trillion is reduced from 10% of post-issue market capital (existing provision) to Rs 10,000

crore. In addition to this, there will be 5% of the incremental amount beyond Rs 1 trillion. A company with a post-issue market cap of Rs 2 trillion will have to divest a minimum of 7.5%, instead of 10%.

136. State Bank of India, Ministry of MSMEs and the World Bank is planning to launch a \$100-million (\$1 billion) credit guarantee scheme to boost India's rooftop solar programme.

Note: This scheme will enable micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and those firms which do not meet the lending criteria of banks and other financial institutions to avail concessional debt financing for setting up rooftop solar units. WB credit guarantee scheme will be provided as a Green finance i.e. financing for sustainable climate.

137. Telangana Grameena Bank and Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank became India's 1st RRBs to launch Digital Savings Account opening facility through Video-Know Your Customer (KYC) facility. These banks are sponsored by **State Bank of India**.

138. Cashfree has partnered with PayPal to enable International payments for its merchants.

Note: It will enable businesses using Cashfree's payment gateway to show prices of all products in 28 + currencies. It will enable Businesses to add a PayPal Express Checkout option to their order pages and accept payments from users across 200 markets.

139. Wipro has joined the "Partnering for Racial Justice in Business initiative" launched by WEF that will help in promoting a culture of inclusion, diversity, justice and equity for the people coming from different racial backgrounds at the workplace.

Note: The initiative is aimed towards driving action and accountability for companies to confront racism at a systemic level, set new global standards for racial justice in business and accomplish necessary policy changes for inclusion and advancement of professionals with under-represented racial and ethnic identities.

140. The Arya Collateral Warehousing Services Pvt. Ltd. (Arya) has partnered with **Canara Bank** to offer collateral management and warehousing services to support the farmers with effective market linkage.

Note: Arya will support the farmers and FPOs to get financial assistance against their agricultural produce stored in warehouses managed by Arya. Through the 450 FPO's that work with Arya, Canara Bank will leverage the reach of Arya to more than 350000 farmers.

141. State Bank of India has joined 'Liink', a peer-to-peer Blockchain-based data network of US based Investment Banking Company JPMorgan chase.

Note: The partnership will help SBI to reduce transaction costs, speed up Consumer transactions (including International transactions). SBI became the 1st bank in India to go live on the blockchain-based payment network of JPMorgan.

142. National Stock Exchange signed an MoU with the SIDBI for cooperation in the various MSMEs initiatives.

Note: The various initiatives of the NSE and SIDBI for the betterment of MSME and the cooperation between them will impact the development of the MSMEs and increase the reach

of these programs. The major MSME initiatives to solve the working capital problems faced by small businesses were SME Exchange, NSE Emerge and TreDs platform of Receivable Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL).

- 143. Kotak Mahindra Bank** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army for salary accounts of Indian army personnel.

Note: Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank will handle the salary account of the Indian army personnel, the bank said. The bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army here for salary account.

- 144. Rs 7,000 crore** is the initial capital likely to put in the in the proposed bad bank that aims to help extract funds stuck in non-performing loans by nine banks and 2 NBFCs including SBI, PNB, and Bank of Baroda.

Note: The entities include PSBs like State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, Union Bank of India, Bank of India. Other than these, private sector lenders ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, IDBI bank are also a part of the combine. Meanwhile, the non-bank entities include state-owned financiers of power projects- Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC).

- 145.** To support women entrepreneurs, **HDFC Bank** has announced the launch of mentoring programme 'SmartUp Unnati'.

Note: Under this, senior women leaders from HDFC Bank with expertise spanning domains will mentor women entrepreneurs in helping them achieve their goals over the next one year. This programme is available only to exist customers. 'SmartUp Unnati' will initially target more than 3,000 women entrepreneurs associated with the bank's SmartUp programme.

- 146. 121st** is India's rank Globally in the latest Economic Freedom Index 2021 published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation.

Note: Globally, the Foundation rates India's economy as the 121st freest. Although its overall score is unchanged, improvements were made in business freedom. This was offset by declines in judicial effectiveness and other scores.

- 147.** Technology company Google has launched a new web platform 'Women Will' that will support one million rural women entrepreneurs in India to help them pursue their ambitions and improve their livelihoods.

Note: Google will implement this through the 'Women Will' web platform launched at the virtual Google for India event on 8 March, International Women's Day. Available in English and Hindi, the Women Will platform is designed for women aspiring to explore entrepreneurship.

- 148.** The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has collaborated with **SahiPay** to promote nano-entrepreneurship amongst youth in the financial services sector.

Note: As a part of collaboration, candidates will be provided access to free digital skilling on 'Online Entrepreneurship Program' through NSDC's eSkill India portal. It will provide youth an opportunity to explore self-employment for sustainable livelihood.

149. Indian Oil Corporation has signed an MoU with Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO) to develop Paradip Plastic Park.

Note: Keeping the enterprise and employment generation potential of the plastic sector in mind, Government of India has initiated the cluster development of the Industry through its Plastic Park scheme. Currently, six such parks have been approved by the Government of India, with Paradip Plastic Park being one of them.

150. NITI Aayog has organized a national-level virtual workshop on asset monetization along with the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).

Note: The workshop elaborated on the strategic context of core and non-core asset monetization, along with detailed discussions on the need for and modality of such monetization by public sector entities, and the experiences of public and private sector entities in the space. The workshop discussed the various benefits and pre-requisites of leveraging private sector participation for monetization.

151. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has launched "Garima Saving Accounts", a women Saving Account to provide the financial needs of women.

Note: The account offers various customised benefits for women which includes a maximum of 7% rate of interest on savings account. Free Cash Deposit of up to Rs.5 lakhs per month or 8 transactions, whichever is earlier at any Ujjivan SFB branch.

152. Karnataka Vikas Grameen Bank (KVGB) has launched the 'Vikas Asha' Loan Scheme, under which the bank will distribute loans of up to INR 10 Lakhs to Women Entrepreneurs.

Note: The scheme is exclusively for women to meet their business-related needs, for purchasing machinery/equipment/vehicle. It shall also be utilized for meeting the working capital requirements under Micro and Small Enterprises including retail trade.

153. AckoDrive, an online car sales platform, a product of ACKO Technologies and Services Private Limited partnered with **IDFC FIRST Bank** to issue free FASTags.

Note: The AckoDrive issues FASTags over the digital platform without issuance fee, paperwork or security deposit. The AckoDrive FASTags can be purchased by any private car owner by providing the personal information and vehicle details and initial wallet money of Rs.100 to recharge the FASTag.

154. As per the interim Economic Outlook published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) the Indian economy will grow at **12.6%** in Financial Year 2022.

Note: That would enable India to retain its earlier tag of the fastest growing large economy in the world. It, however, pegged economic growth rate to come down to 5.4 per cent in 2022-23, which would be higher by 0.6 percentage points than its earlier estimates. That year, India would share its fastest-growing large economy tag with Indonesia, according to the OECD.

155. IDBI Bank has been removed from the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework, by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), after almost four years.

Note: The RBI had placed IDBI Bank under the framework in May 2017, after it had breached the thresholds for capital adequacy, asset quality (net NPAs were over 13% in March 2017), return on assets and leverage ratio. It was noted as per published results for the quarter ended December 31, the bank was not in breach of the PCA parameters on regulatory capital, net NPA and leverage ratio. The LIC-owned IDBI Bank had reported a standalone net profit of ₹378 crore for the December quarter.

- 156.** Magicbricks Realty Services limited has partnered with Razorpay and **HDFC Bank** to create a secure online solution "Pay Rent" feature for rent payments through credit cards.

Note: The online solution is created with a focus on the 10 million rental residential household market. The estimated market size of the payment of rent through credit card is around Rs.3000 crore.

- 157. DBS Bank** has partnered with TRRAIN to support the youth from low income households, pandemic affected, and persons with disabilities through skill training and employment opportunities.

Note: It is a part of the initiative 'DBS Stronger Together Fund'. The partnership will lead to one-year-long, Pan-India program which is a combination of classroom and online training sessions.

- 158.** Aquaconnect partnered with **Bank of Baroda** to provide credit access to 1.6 million aquaculture farmers under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme.

Note: In this regard, M V Murali Krishna, General Manager and Head of Rural and Agri Banking Department of Bank of Baroda signed the MoU along with Arpan Bhalerao, Chief Growth Officer, Aquaconnect. Kisan Credit Card was introduced in August 1998 and created by NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development)

- 159.** Government has mandated Electronic-invoicing (e-invoicing) under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime for business entities with a turnover of **INR 50 Crore & more.**

Note: It is the 3rd Phase of mandatory e-invoicing under the GST regime. The 1st phase of e-invoicing covered business entities with INR 500 Crore turnover & the 2nd phase covered entities with INR 100 Crore. E-invoicing is mandatory under Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Rules, 2017.

- 160.** e-Commerce & financial Service provider **Paytm** has launched "Smart PoS" a new application for accepting contactless payments through smartphones and also launched the second version of its Internet of Things (IoT) based instant voice confirmation device, "Soundbox 2.0".

Note: Paytm also launched the second version of its Internet of Things (IoT) based instant voice confirmation device, "Soundbox 2.0". The Smart PoS app is supported by "Paytm for Business" (P4B) app for managing seamless transactions.

- 161. Karur Vysya Bank** has entered into a co-lending business partnership with Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited to make new customers all over India with technology from Nucleus Software.

Note: The aim of the co-lending is lower the cost of capital and open new markets by enabling new loans at finer rates using technology to enable seamless integration with multiple partner banks. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced this scheme, under which banks will be permitted to co-lend with all registered NBFCs (including HFCs) based on a prior agreement.

162. Axis Bank became India's first bank to launch its own wearable payment device named 'Wear 'N' Pay', to make contactless transactions.

Note: Axis Bank partnered with Thales and Tappy Technologies to design and create these products and they are available on the Mastercard platform. The wearables are embedded with a Flexi-chip which is directly linked with the customer's bank account and can be used like a regular debit card.

163. State Bank of India topped the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) Digital Payment Scorecard for 3 consecutive months.

Note: The scorecard tracks the performance of the commercial banks on various digital parameters. SBI topped the list by recording the highest UPI transaction volume of around 64 crore with a user base of 13.5 crores.

164. As per the new guidelines of the Securities and Exchange Board of India **10%** is the investment limit for Mutual Funds in debt instruments with special features such as additional tier-I.

Note: Mutual fund will not invest over 10 per cent of its NAV of the debt portfolio of the scheme in instruments with special features and not more than 5 per cent of its NAV of the debt portfolio in instruments issued by a single issuer. Banning close-ended schemes from investing in perpetual bonds, SEBI said the maturity of all perpetual bonds will be treated as 100 years from the date of issuance for the purpose of valuation.

165. TATA Motors has launched a holistic programme that supports new parents in their exciting journey both as a parent and also as a valued employee, titled as 'Wheels of Love'.

Note: It will promote a progressive culture of care, inclusion and sensitization within the organization across levels. It is also presented in the form of a specially curated book with focus on growing family and career goals of employee. Other aspects: Announcing pregnancy, Dedicated Counselling Sessions

166. Cabinet has approved amendment to Insurance Act, 1938 to increase the permissible foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in insurance sector to **74%**.

Note: Currently, FDI limit in the life and general insurance is 49% with ownership and management control with Indian. It will allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards, and also provide insurance companies with committed funds to improve the penetration of insurance. Govt hiked FDI cap from 26% to 49% in 2015.

167. As per the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) data, India's position is **4th** in terms of Foreign exchange (Forex) reserves holder -

Note: India's foreign currency holdings fell by \$4.3 billion to \$580.3 billion and Russia's forex holdings were \$580.1 billion. As of March 2021, International Monetary Fund (IMF) table, China

has the largest reserves, followed by Japan, Switzerland, India, and Russia. Foreign exchange reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank (RBI) in foreign currencies, which can include foreign currencies, bonds, treasury bills, and other government securities.

- 168.** The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on **State Bank of India** for contravention of norms, including specific directions to the lender on remuneration to its employees in the form of commission.

Note: The penalty has been imposed for contravention of certain sections of Banking Regulation Act and its specific directions of RBI issued to the bank on payment of remuneration to employees in the form of commission.

- 169.** Telecom equipment maker **Nokia** has partnered with **Microsoft, Amazon web services** and Google to develop new cloud-based 5G radio solutions with its radio access network (RNA) technology.

Note: The goal of the partnerships is to develop new business cases, the company. RAN is the part of a mobile telecommunication system. This system implements a radio access technology.

- 170.** The **Reserve Bank of India** has asked all the banks in India to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) under respective grids in all its branches by **September 30, 2021.**

Note: About 18,000 bank branches are still outside any formal clearing arrangement hence, it is proposed to bring all such branches under the CTS image-based clearing mechanism by September 2021. On February 5, 2021, RBI had announced Pan-India coverage of CTS by bringing all branches of banks in the country under an image-based CTS clearing mechanism.

- 171.** **ReNew Power** has become the India's second renewable energy company has been named the Global Lighthouse Company by World Economic Forum (WEF).

Note: WEF Global Lighthouse Network recognizes companies using new technologies to achieve environmentally sustainable, community-supportive, profitable growth. ReNew's Hubli facility was specifically nominated as a Global Lighthouse for its ground-breaking work in the development and deployment of advanced analytics and machine learning solutions to increase the yield of ReNew's wind and solar assets.

- 172.** **Punjab National Bank Punjab National Bank** has incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary which will deal with the banks' non-financial support services related to its credit card business.

Note: The authorised capital of the company is Rs 25 crore, which is divided into 25 million shares of Rs 10 each, and the paid-up capital is Rs 15 crore. It is important to note that among public sector banks, State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, has a separate arm for its card business -- SBI Cards and Payment Services.

- 173.** **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** and Israeli battery developer Phinergy formalised a joint venture to manufacture ultra-lightweight metal-air batteries for electric vehicles (EVs).

Note: The equal joint venture will replace lithium with aluminum to make batteries that will charge faster and give a longer run. This will "help overcome most of the challenges facing EVs including range anxiety.

174. State Bank of India and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has signed first Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) linked External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) deal with by replacing the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR).

Note: The SOFR linked ECB deal is for about \$100 million with a maturity of 5 years. This deal made by SBI & IOCL is the first SOFR linked ECB deal in India. It will facilitate other firms in India to take this as a reference to make a transition from Libor to Alternate Reference Rates (ARR) linked ECB.

175. Power Trading Corporation of India Limited has signed an initial pact with the National Productivity Council (NPC) to explore the business opportunities in consultancy services.

Note: Under this pact, both NPC and PTC have agreed to jointly explore and develop business opportunities for consultancy/project management services in the areas of energy efficiency, renewable energy, productivity enhancements, quality assurances, optimization of technology, and others within India and overseas.

176. Tech Mahindra has announced to acquire a 70 % stake in Ireland-based **Perigord Asset Holdings Ltd** for around Rs 182 crore and plans to buy the remaining 30% shareholding over a period of 4 years.

Note: It is intended to help in augmenting its expertise in the domains of global pharmaceutical, and HLS (Healthcare and Lifesciences). It is a part of Tech Mahindra's long-term growth plan which is to make a presence across key markets in Ireland, Germany, the USA, and India with enhanced global delivery

177. Government's think tank **NITI Aayog** has **six** public sector banks including state bank of India out of the privatization plan.

Note: The other five PSBs are Punjab National Bank, Union Bank, Canara Bank, Indian Bank, Bank of Baroda. The government will soon take a call on the two banks and one general insurer that will be taken up for privatization in the next fiscal year. The NITI Aayog's recommendation to exclude these is in line with the thinking within the finance ministry that is keen on expeditious integration of systems at these banks, the publication mentioned.

178. NPCI. has launched 'UPI-Help'.

Note: The 'UPI-Help' will help in the grievance redressal mechanism for BHIM app users. With this application, users will be able to check the status of the pending transactions, raise complaints against transactions that are not processed if the money has not reached the other end and raise complaints against merchant transactions.

179. Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd has executed the world's first green hedging transaction, with a second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework.

Note: Both the firms are working together to develop a green hedge framework to support the implementation of Continuum's green bond framework. External reviewer, Cicero Green, has issued the second party opinion on the green bond and the green hedge frameworks.

- 180.** International Air Transport Association (IATA) has partnered with **Standard Chartered Bank** for providing 'EasyPay' services 'pay as you go' to travel agents in India which will replace the traditional billing and settlement system.

Note: The new system is aimed at increasing the digitisation of payments that will result in improving cash flows for the aviation industry and for the travel agents. In the earlier system, the agents would receive credit for tickets. As one of IATA's EasyPay service providers in India, Stanchart said it will provide greater payment flexibility to travel agents.

- 181.** **Asian Development Bank** has raised over USD 307 Million from the first Panda bond issue in more than a decade.

Note: It is the first borrowing of ADB from a CNY10 billion program approved by regulator National Association of Financial Market Institutional Investors in June 2020. It will support ADB for its development project in china during its 5-year country partnership strategy.

- 182.** **Union bank of India** has partnered with SMC Global Securities to provide online trading services to the bank's customers.

Note: Customers can trade using the portal www.smctradeonline.com apart from desktop and mobile applications. SMC has a presence in more than 550 cities which can service the lender's 9,500 branches.

- 183.** According to UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Indian economy is estimated to contract by **6.9%** in FY 2020-21.

Note: However, it forecasted to record a "stronger recovery" in 2021 and grow by 5 per cent in FY 2021-22. The September 2020 report by UNCTAD had said that India's economy was forecast to contract by 5.9 per cent in 2020 and recover to 3.9 per cent in 2021.

- 184.** **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** has released a publication titled "Handbook on Ethics for Insolvency Professionals: Ethical and Regulatory Framework", a practical guide for insolvency professionals (IPs) for discharging their duties ethically in association with British High Commission.

Note: Dr. Navrang Saini, Whole Time Member, IBBI released the handbook in the presence of Ms. Natalie Toms, Chief Economist and Counsellor, British High Commission. The launch was followed by the webinar on "Pre-Pack Insolvency Resolution Process: Report of the Sub-Committee of the ILC". It is based on inputs on the best practices followed by insolvency practitioners in the UK.

- 185.** The **Competition Commission of India** (CCI) approved the acquisition of **51%** of the equity share capital of North Eastern Electricity Supply Company of Odisha (NESCO Utility) by The Tata Power Company Limited (TPCL).

Note: The proposed acquisition is in accordance with the competitive bidding process initiated by the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission ("OERC") under Section 20 of the Electricity Act, 2003. TPCL which is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra was incorporated on 18th September 1919, a public listed company that is primarily engaged in the business of power generation, transmission, and distribution. It is a part of the Tata group.

- 186.** The Power Grid Corporation of India has signed an agreement with Jaiprakash Power Ventures (JPVL) for the acquisition of **74%** stake of JPVL in Jaypee PowerGrid (JPL).

Note: Powergrid has already owned a 26% stake in JPVL and now through this acquisition, it became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Power Grid. JPL has developed a 214-kilometer-long EHV power transmission project to evacuate power from the Karcham-Wangtoo project in Himachal Pradesh.

- 187.** Under chairmanship of **Shyamala Gopinath** the Reserve Bank of India has announced the setting up of a standing external advisory committee (SEAC) to evaluate applications for universal banks and small finance banks.

Note: The five-member committee will be headed by former deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath. The SEAC which will have a tenure of three years, and will screen applications for universal and small finance banks after the regulator first vets the proposal.

- 188.** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has hiked the maximum cover under the standard health insurance plan – Arogya Sanjeevani Policy – from Rs 5 lakh to **Rs 10 lakh**.

Note: Insurers can offer the revised sum insured with effect from 1 May, 2021 or earlier. IRDAI made it compulsory for insurers to offer a sum insured of up to ₹10 lakhs, starting from ₹50,000 and in multiples of ₹50,000.

- 189.** As per the relaxed norms of for valuing perpetual bonds by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) **10 years** would be the maturity period until March 31, 2022.

Note: The norms, which had sought to value banks' deemed residual maturity of Basel III additional tier 1 (AT1) bonds as 100-year debt from April 1, were strongly opposed by the finance ministry. In a statement, the regulator said the maturity would be 10 years until March 31, 2022 and would be increased to 20 and 30 years over the subsequent six-month period.

- 190.** As per the revised estimate of Fitch Ratings **12.8%** will be the GDP growth rate of India in FY 2022.

Note: It anticipates the level of India's GDP to remain well below its pre-pandemic forecast trajectory. Fitch also expects GDP growth to ease to 5.8% in Fiscal Year 2023. India's recovery from the depths of the lockdown-induced recession in the second quarter of 2020 has been observed as swifter than expected.

- 191. ICICI Bank** becomes the first in the industry to launch an instant EMI (Equated Monthly Instalments) facility on its internet banking platform in partnering with BillDesk and Razorpay.

Note: Called 'EMI @ Internet Banking', the facility aims to offer increased affordability to millions of pre-approved customers, as it enables them to convert their high-value transactions up to ₹5 lakh into easy monthly instalments. It also brings in enhanced customer experience as customers get the benefit of EMIs instantly and in a fully digital manner.

192. Adani Ports and Special Economic Zones (APSEZ) Ltd, a subsidiary of the diversified Adani Group acquired **58.1%** of stack in Gangavaram Port Limited (GPL) belongs to DVS Raju & Family.

Note: Adani port made an agreement to acquire 89.6% of GPL i.e. (31.5% from Warburg Pincus and 58.1% from DVS Raju & Family). As per the agreement it acquired the 31.5% stake from Warburg Pincus on March 17, 2021.

193. The age bracket of **21 – 38 Years** for the 'IOB Trendy', a savings account customised for the growing millennial population launched by the Indian Overseas Bank (IOB).

Note: Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) launched 'IOB Trendy', a savings account customised for the growing millennial population in the country by keeping their banking preferences in mind. The account may be self or jointly operated. In case of a joint account, the primary holder has to be a millennial at the time of account opening.

194. ESAF Small Finance Bank had been awarded 'Great place to work' certification by the Great place to Work Institute.

Note: The certification is the result of an employee survey conducted by the third-party global authority on recognising high-trust and performance culture at workplaces. This recognition acknowledges the bank's commitment and credibility amongst its employees.

195. HDFC Bank has been adjudged as the 'India's Best Bank for SMEs' at the Asiamoney Best Bank Awards 2021.

Note: HDFC Bank's transformation of its micro, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) business over the past few years makes it a worthy winner of this award. The Annual Best Banks survey of the financial magazine based in Hong Kong, aims to identify which banks in each market have excelled across a range of core banking activities over the past 12 months.

196. Public Sector Undertaking **NTPC** has been conferred with the 'Role Model' Award at the 11th Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) National HR Excellence Award 2020-21.

Note: NTPC is the only PSU to have received this prestigious award. The award was presented at the virtual conference "Learn from the Achievers".

197. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and Union Bank of India have launched a co-branded contactless RuPay credit card.

Note: This card is a contactless "Tap & Go" card and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC). While using this card at HPCL retail outlets, the cardholder will get Cashback/Rewards along with the waiver of fuel surcharge provided by the Bank.

198. FICCI has signed an MoU with the IFSCA to establish a framework for collaboration and co-operation for the development of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City ('GIFT') IFSC.

Note: The MoU will lead to future collaborations and cooperation between IFSCA and FICCI for the development of a world-class FinTech Hub in GIFT IFSC. FICCI will also assist IFSCA in the development of FinTech Accelerator programmes in GIFT IFSC among the other cooperation areas.

199. Tata Motors signed a three-year MoU with **State Bank of India** to offer financial assistance to the customers looking to purchase its small and light commercial vehicles.

Note: According to the automaker, the partnership will not only create employment but also generate more demand for its BS6 range of vehicles. Tata Motors claimed that the collaboration with SBI will allow its CV customers to avail loans in a hassle-free manner as well as access the bank's unique technology-laden offerings.

200. Edelweiss Infrastructure Yield Plus (EIYP) has acquired a 74% stake in Engie Group's Solar Energy Assets in India.

Note: The Engie Group has 813 MW of operational solar assets in the country, and it plans to add up to 2 GW more over next couple of years, which once commissioned will be acquired by the EIYP. EIYP is the largest yield-focused infrastructure AIF (alternative investment fund) in the country today.

201. Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Our Food Pvt. Ltd., Visakhapatnam to help farmers set up cost effective processing units.

Note: In a bid to help farmers set up cost effective processing units, the Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Our Food Pvt. Ltd., Visakhapatnam. According to the MOU signed recently, the vendor will ensure supply, delivery and installation of high quality, standardised and branded equipment/machinery as per the requirement of the farmer/farmer franchisee, and also purchase of processed products. The vendors also ensure regular recovery towards such loan accounts and also support the bank in end utilisation of the loan.

Obituaries

41. Veteran parliamentarian Nand Kumar Singh Chauhan passed away recently, he was Lok Sabha MP from **BJP**.

Note: He was suffering from COVID-19 and was airlifted to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram last month in a serious condition. The leader started his political career in 1978 from the Shahpur Municipal Council and was later elected as member of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly. He was an MLA from 1985 to 1996.

42. Social Activist Vernon Jordan passed away recently.

Note: Vernon Jordan, who grew up in the segregated South to become an influential leader in the American civil rights movement, Washington politics and Wall Street passed away at age

85. Jordan, who in 1980 was badly wounded by a white supremacist sniper in Indiana, died Monday night, according to the statement, journalist Andrew Ross Sorkin.

- 43.** N.S. Lakshminarayana Bhatta passed away recently, he was a veteran poet of **Kannada** language.

Note: Well-known Kannada poet, critic and translator N.S. Lakshminarayana Bhatta passed away in Bengaluru. The poet, many of whose bhavageetes (lyrical poems) were set to tune and popularised through cassettes in the 80s, was ailing for sometime. He is survived by his wife and two children. Born in 1936 in Shivamogga district, he was a prolific writer, publishing several collections of poems besides critical works and translations. He taught Kannada literature in Bengaluru university until he retired. Some of his best known songs are Thaye ninna madilali, Marege ninthu kayuthiruva karulu yaavudu, Baare nanna Deepika among others.

- 44.** Renowned personality billionaire Olivier Dassault passed away recently, he belongs to **France**.

Note: The Dassault Aviation group has been a leading French plane manufacturer for the last 70 years and is behind the Falcon private jet, the Mirage warplane, and most recently the state-of-the-art Rafale fighter. Forbes magazine estimated that Olivier Dassault was the 361st most wealthy person on the planet in 2020, with a fortune estimated at around five billion euros (\$6 billion) -- around the same as his three siblings.

- 45.** Renowned personality Anshuman Singh passed away recently, he was former governor of **Rajasthan**.

Note: He passed away due to COVID-19 related pneumonia. He was born in 1935 in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. Anshuman Singh served as the Governor of Rajasthan from 16th January 1999 to May 2003.

- 46.** Renowned personality Marvelous Marvin Hagler passed away recently, he was a veteran **middleweight champion**.

Note: He is an American dominated middleweight champion from 1979 until his controversial defeat by Sugar Ray Leonard in April 1987. He fought 67 times during his 14-year professional career and won 62 out of them.

- 47.** Renowned personality M.G. George passed away recently he was chairman of **Muthoot Group**.

Note: He was the third generation from his family to become the chairman of the Muthoot Group. He was also the Chairman of the FICCI Kerala State Council. He was the trustee of the Indian Orthodox Church and was also a member of the National Executive Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

- 48.** Padma Bhushan recipient and veteran artist Laxman Pai passed away recently, he belongs to **Goa**.

Note: The renowned painter was born in Goa in 1926, he is well known for his contemporary paintings he is also the former principal of the Goa College of Art. He received the third highest civilian honour of Padma Bhushan award in 2018.

- 49.** Padma Shri Chemacheri Kunhiraman Nari passed away recently, he was a performer of **Kathakali** classical dance.

Note: He founded the Bharatiya Natyyakalayalam, the first school of dance in North Kerala in 1945 and in 1983 he established Cheliya Kathakali Vidyalayam in Kozhikode. He has won several honours for his contribution to the art form of Kathakali, which includes, Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Award in 1979, Kerala Kalamandalam award in 2001, Kala Ratna award in 2009, Mayilpeeli award and Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore award.

- 50.** Renowned personality GV Ramakrishna passed away recently, he was former chairman/head of **SEBI**.

Note: Born in 1930 in Bengaluru, he started his career as a biochemist and then opted for civil services in 1952. Known for his stellar administrative performance, Ramakrishna was appointed as the chairman Sebi in 1990 when it lacked legal status. Among his many works, he was known for strongly advocating to ban the badla stock trading system in 1994. He headed SEBI till that year and then became the first chairman of the Disinvestment Commission in 1996.

- 51.** Renowned personality Sagar Sarhadi passed away recently he was a veteran **Screen Writer**.

Note: Sarhadi began his career writing Urdu short stories and became an Urdu playwright. Filmmaker Yash Chopra's 1976 film 'Kabhi Kabhie', starring Amitabh Bachchan and Raakhee, opened the gates to his Bollywood career. The writer collaborated with Chopra for screenplays in acclaimed films like 'Silsila' (1981) and Sridevi and Rishi Kapoor-starrer "Chandni", for which he wrote the dialogues.

- 52.** Renowned personality Anil Dharker passed away recently, he was veteran **Journalist**.

Note: He was in his mid-70s, was the editor of several publications including Mid-Day and The Independent and played a vital role in opening the Akashwani Auditorium in south Mumbai as an art movie theatre. Dharker had been the editor of a variety of publications, starting with 'Debonair', 'Mid-Day'; 'The Independent' and 'The Illustrated Weekly of India'.

- 53.** Renowned personality KC Chakrabarty passed away recently, he was former **Deputy Governor of RBI**.

Note: He was the deputy governor of the central bank between 15 June 2009 and 25 April 2014 when he demitted office three months before his term was to end. Prior to the stint, he had served as the chairman and managing director (CMD) of Punjab National Bank (2007-2009), and CMD of Indian Bank (2005-2007).

- 54.** Renowned personality Anil Dharker passed away recently He was veteran **Journalist and Author**.

Note: Anil Dharker was one of India's best known editors and a tireless supporter of the arts. During his lifetime, Dharker had donned many hats and was the lifeline behind the popular literary festival, Tata Literature Live. Anil Dharker worked as an editor across several publications, of different genres, starting with the Debonair, then Mid-day, The Independent, and the Illustrated Weekly of India.

- 55.** Nawal Saadawi, a renowned feminist, psychiatrist and novelist passed away recently he was belonged to **Egypt**.
Note: Nawal Saadawi, a renowned Egyptian feminist, psychiatrist and novelist, whose writings have stirred controversy for decades in an overwhelmingly conservative society passed away. She was a fierce advocate of women rights in Egypt and the Arab world. In 2020, Time Magazine named her on their 100 Women of the Year list.
- 56.** Renowned personality Laxmipriya Mohapatra passed away recently, she was veteran **Odissi dancer**.
Note: Noted Odissi dancer **Laxmipriya Mohapatra**, the wife of legendary classical dancer Kelucharan Mohapatra, passed away. She started her dancing career at the **Annapurna Theatre in Puri in 1947**. She has also acted in four Odia movies.
- 57.** Renowned personality Adam Zagajewski passed away recently, he was veteran **Polish poet**.
Note: Renowned Polish poet Adam Zagajewski has passed away. He was a leading figure in Poland's New Wave or Generation '68, a literary movement of the late 1960s that called for a simple language to relate directly to reality.
- 58.** Renowned personality KC Chakrabarty passed away recently, he was former **Deputy Governor, RBI**.
Note: Former Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor, KC Chakrabarty passed away. He was the deputy governor of the central bank between 15 June 2009 and 25 April 2014 when he demitted office three months before his term was to end.
- 59.** Mmilitary hero who led an infantry division to a legendary victory in the 1971 India-Pakistan War who passed away recently -- **Walter Anthony Gustavo 'WAG' Pinto**.
Note: Lieutenant General, Walter Anthony Gustavo 'WAG' Pinto (Retd), a military hero who led an infantry division to a legendary victory in the 1971 India-Pakistan War has passed away at the age of 97. He led the 54 Infantry Division in the Battle of Basantar in the war that gave birth to Bangladesh, leading his troops from the front with the motto he coined "bash on regardless".

Important Days

- 43.** Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated every year on **1st March**.
Note: Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated to promote and celebrate everyone's right, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, etc. Zero Discrimination Day aims to raise the voice for the right to live life with dignity, despite one's choices, beliefs, profession, education, disability or even illness. The theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2021: "End Inequalities".
- 44.** 45th Civil Accounts Day was celebrated on **1st March**.

Note: The Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) observes the "Civil Accounts Day" every year on March 01, 2021, since its inception in 1976. The year 2021 marks the 45th Civil Accounts Day celebrations. ICAS is one of the Civil Services of India, under the Department of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance.

- 45.** World Hearing Day is celebrated every year on **3rd March** by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Note: The theme of World Hearing Day 2021 is **Hearing care for ALL!: Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate**. World Hearing Day 2021 will mark the launch of the first-ever **World Report on Hearing**.

- 46.** World Wildlife Day is observed globally every year on **3rd March**.

Note: World Wildlife Day also raise awareness about the benefits that the conservation of wild fauna and flora provides to people living on earth. The day also reminds us of the need to fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species causing various wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.

- 47.** **Sadak Suraksha** is the theme of the National Safety Day 2021.

Note: The National Safety Day (NSD) is celebrated every year on 4 March by the National Safety Council (NSC) of India. In 2021, we are observing the 50th National Safety Day. The purpose of the day Purpose is to instil a sense of safety awareness among people by providing them with safety, health and environment-related support services.

- 48.** National Security Day (Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas) is celebrated every year on **4th March**.

Note: The day aims to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security, who sacrifice their life in maintaining the peace and security of the people of the country. 4 March also marks the day when the National Security Council (NSC) of India was established, in 1966 by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India. The first National Security Day (NSD) was held in 1972.

- 49.** "**Jan Aushadhi -- Seva Bhi, Rozgar Bhi**" was the theme of the Janaushadhi Week celebrated from March 1st to March 7th, 2021 to create more awareness about "Janaushadhi".

Note: On the occasion of Jan Aushadhi Divas 2021 Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the 7,500th Janaushadhi Kendra at NEIGRIHMS in Shillong. The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana aims to provide quality medicines at an affordable price.

- 50.** **#ChooseToChallenge** is the theme of the International Women's Day 2021 which is observed every year on 8th March.

Note: Every year, Women's Day is observed to celebrate the spirit of women every year on 8th March. The first-ever Women's Day was organised in 1911 by the early 20th century Marxist from Germany Clara Zetkin, who was born in Germany's Wiederau. Two years later, in 1913, the date was changed to March 8, and it continues to be celebrated as such every year.

- 51.** Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) celebrated its 52nd Raising Day on **March 10**.

Note: CISF or Central Industrial Security Forces was instituted in the year 1969 with a motto to provide integrated protection to the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). Keeping into consideration the evolving demands of the dynamic nature of security, the force has been re-oriented and updated.

52. National Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) Day is observed every year on **March 10.**

Note: The aim of the day is to raise awareness about the link between maternal health and diabetes nationwide, and inviting pregnant women to hospitals and clinics for free screening.

53. World Kidney Day (WKD) is celebrated every year on **second Thursday of March (11th March 2021).**

Note: It is the global awareness campaign to raise awareness of the importance of kidneys to our health and to reduce the impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems worldwide. This year theme is 'Living Well with Kidney Disease'. This year's theme aims to focus on the measures that can be taken to live a fulfilling life with kidney disease.

54. International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is observed every year on **March 14.**

Note: Theme for 2021 IDM: 'Mathematics for a Better World'. The day was initiated by International Mathematical Union (IMU) to celebrate the importance of mathematics and its essential role in everyone's life.

55. Ministry of Women and Child Development has celebrated Poshan Pakhwada from **16th to 31st March, 2021.**

Note: Addressing nutritional challenges through Food Forestry and organizing Poshan Panchayats are the key focus areas for Poshan Pakhwada 2021. To address nutritional challenges, distribution of 4 saplings of nutrition rich plants per Anganwadi Centre (AWC) in the Aspirational Districts will be done under the supervision of local panchayat and DM/DC by National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH.

56. The National Vaccination Day, also known as National Immunization Day is observed every year on **16th March.**

Note: The National Vaccination day 2020 aims to eradicate both polio and the COVID-19. The day was first observed on 16th March 1995, the day on which the Pulse Polio Immunisation Programme became operational.

57. International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is annually observed across the globe on **14th March.**

Note: The day is observed to celebrate the beauty and importance of mathematics and its essential role in everyone's life. The day also marks the birth anniversary of renowned mathematician and physicist Albert Einstein and death anniversary of theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking. The theme of the International Day of Mathematics 2021 is "Mathematics for a Better World".

58. The International Day of Action for Rivers is annually observed across the globe on **14th March.**

Note: 14th March 2021 marks the **24th edition** of the International Day of Action for Rivers. The theme of International Day of Action for Rivers **2021** is "**Rights of Rivers**".

- 59.** World Consumer Rights Day is annually celebrated across the globe on **15th March**.
Note: The world Consumer Rights day is coordinated by **Consumers International**, the membership organisation for consumer groups across the globe. The theme of World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is **"Tackling Plastic Pollution"**.
- 60.** The World Sleep Day is observed annually on **19th March**.
Note: The world Sleep day is annually organised by the World Sleep Day Committee of the World Sleep Society. The World Sleep Day 2021 is co-chaired by Lourdes DelRosso, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Associate Sleep Medicine Fellowship Director at University of Washington and Professor Fang Han, MD of The Sleep Center, Peking University People's Hospital in Beijing, China.
- 61.** United Nations International Happiness Day is celebrated every year on **20th March**.
Note: It is a global event designated by the United Nations. The theme of the 2021 International Day of Happiness campaign is 'Keep Calm. Stay Wise. Be Kind'. The First International Day of Happiness was celebrated on 20th March 2013. International Day of Happiness is a day to value our happiness and make people happy.
- 62.** World Sparrow Day is observed every year on **20th March**.
Note: World Sparrow Day is annually observed across the world on **20th March** to create awareness and to bring attention to the significance and importance of conservation and protection of the sparrows and other such birds. The first world sparrow day was observed on **20th March 2010**. The theme of World Sparrow Day is **"I Love Sparrows"**.
- 63.** World Oral Health Day is celebrated every year on **20th March**.
Note: The day is observed across the globe on **20th March** to promote the importance of oral health and to reduce the problems of oral diseases that affect the individuals, health system and economy. The theme of World Oral Health Day 2021 is **"Be Proud of your Mouth"** and this theme will be followed in 2022 and 2023.
- 64.** International Day of Forest is celebrated every year on **21st March**.
Note: The United Nations observes March 21 as the International Day of Forests, commemorating the green cover around the world and reiterating its importance. The theme of the International Day of Forests for 2021 is "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being".
- 65.** The theme of the World Tuberculosis Day 2021 -- **The Clock is Ticking**.
Note: March 24 marks the day when Robert Koch discovered Mycobacterium tuberculosis in 1882 that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease. Theme 2021: 'The Clock is Ticking'
- 66.** The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on **21 March**.
Note: This year theme is **"Youth standing up against racism"**. It engages the public through #FightRacism, which aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-

discrimination and calls on each and every one of us to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes.

- 67.** Every year on **23rd March** Martyrs Day (Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day) is observed to pay tribute on the death anniversary of the freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru.

Note: It was on March 23 in 1931, in Lahore (Pakistan), that these three were hanged to death for assassinating John Saunders, a British police officer in 1928. They had mistaken him for British police superintendent James Scott, who had ordered lathi-charge, which eventually led to the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.

- 68.** The World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on **23rd March**.

Note: The day is to commemorate the date of the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization in 23 March 1950. The day also highlights the contribution that the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services make to the safety and well-being of society.

- 69.** World Theatre Day is observed globally every year on **27th March**.

Note: World Theatre Day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI), France. It is celebrated annually on the 27th March by ITI Centres and the international theatre community.

- 70.** International Transgender Day of Visibility observed globally every year on **31st March**.

Note: The day is dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as a celebration of their contributions to society.

New Appointments

- 71.** Indian Economist **Ligia Noronha** has been appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Note: Ms Noronha will succeed fellow Indian and development economist Satya Tripathi to whom Secretary-General Guterres is "grateful for his leadership and dedicated service during his tenure. She has worked since 2014 as Director of UNEP's Economy Division based in Nairobi, leading UNEP's work on climate mitigation and energy transitions; on inclusive green economies, sustainable consumption and production, as well as on trade and sustainable finance, and the nexus of environment, pollution and health.

- 72.** **Woochong Um** has been appointed as the Managing Director General of Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Note: He will assume office immediately and report to ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa. Um will support Asakawa to institute bank-wide coherence on key initiatives and issues. He will play a key role in enhancing ADB's internal and external communications across all activities that involve operations, knowledge, fund-raising and institutional reforms.

- 73. Rohit Sharma** has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Limited.
- Note:** Sharma will be the official face of the brand as part of its 360 degree communication. Glenmark said Candid Powder brand is a market leader in its category, with a market share of 64 per cent in the medicated powder category.
- 74. Naureen Hassan** has been appointed as first Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank.
- Note:** The Indian-origin veteran of the financial services industry has been appointed by the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as the first vice president and chief operating officer, effective from 15 March. The appointment was approved by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.
- 75. G R Chintala** has been appointed as Chairman of Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA).
- Note:** Chintala is succeeding Bank of Ceylon CEO DPK Gunasekera in office. It is an international organisation, which does a lot of information exchange, takes capacity building initiatives, and creates new institutions.
- 76. Pallav Mohapatra** has been appointed as the chief of Asset Reconstruction Co India Ltd (ARCIL).
- Note:** Mohapatra, a former State Bank of India (SBI) executive retired as Central Bank CEO at the end of February. The government has waived his mandatory one year cooling off period. Founded in 2002, Arcil is India's oldest asst reconstruction company. It currently manages assets of Rs. 12,000 crore. Its total employees are 230.
- 77. Girish Chandra Murmu** has been appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations.
- Note:** Currently, the panel consists of countries including India, Germany, Chile, China, the United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia. As the chairman, India's CAG plays a key role in achieving the panel's objective of greater degree of collaboration and coordination among members and exchange of information on audit methods and findings.
- 78. Tirath Singh Rawat** was sworn-in as the chief minister of Uttarakhand.
- Note:** Tirath Singh Rawat, Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal and a former state BJP chief, was administered oath of office by Governor Baby Rani Maurya at the Raj Bhavan. Rawat was 'unanimously' chosen as the CM of Uttarakhand following a BJP legislature party meet.
- 79. G P Samanta** has been appointed as the new Chief Statistician of India for a period of two years.
- Note:** Samanta was till now an adviser in the RBI's Department Of Statistics and Information Management. Samanta is India's fourth CSI.

- 80. Thomas Bach** has been appointed as the President of International Olympic Committee (IOC) until 2025.
Note: His current term as the President of IOC will finish on the closing day of the Tokyo Olympic Games on 8th August 2021 and his second term as the President will start on 9th August 2021 and will conclude in 2025. He was the only candidate of the IOC presidential election which was held during the 137th IOC session held in Athens.
- 81. Deepak Mishra** has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).
Note: He will take over from Rajat Kathuria who has been the director & chief executive of ICRIER since 1st September, 2012. Mishra has held various positions at the World Bank, including co-director of the World Development Report 2016 (Digital Dividends), Country Economist for Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sudan and Vietnam.
- 82. Kuldiep Singh** has been appointed as the new Director General (DG) of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
Note: Mr. Singh is currently Special DG of CRPF where the post of DG is vacant following superannuation of A.P. Maheshwari on February 28th. Mr Singh is a 1986 batch officer of West Bengal cadre.
- 83. M.A. Ganapathy** has been appointed as the new Director General (DG) of National Security Guard (NSG).
Note: His appointment is up to February 29, 2024. The post of DG, NSG has been vacant since last October when the then DG A.K. Singh retired.
- 84. Dr. Harsh Vardhan** has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board.
Note: He was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by 2025. Dr Harsh Vardhan will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year. The Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB.
- 85. H K Mittal** has been appointed as the chairman of the committee constituted by the Government of India (GoI) which will be responsible for the overall execution and monitoring of the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme.
Note: The committee will evaluate and select incubators for allotment of funds under the scheme, monitor progress and take all necessary measures for efficient utilisation of funds towards fulfilment of objectives of the scheme. The committee, it said, would be chaired by H K Mittal from the Department of Science and Technology.
- 86. Cricketer Ajinkya Rahane** has been appointed as the brand ambassador of NeoGrowth Credit Pvt. Ltd.
Note: Rahane will feature in a campaign slated to be released in the first week of April, which will talk about the ease of procuring loans through NeoGrowth for small businesses. The

campaign "Keeping it simple" will show the day-to-day struggles of small businesses while scaling up and how NeoGrowth can help them overcome it.

- 87. Samia Suluhu Hassan** was sworn in as first female president of **Tanzania**.
Note: She took the oath of the office after the sudden death of John Magufuli from an illness shrouded in mystery. The 61-year-old took the oath of office in Dar es Salaam before inspecting troops at a military parade and receiving a cannon salute.
- 88. Rajiv Kumar** has been appointed as the chairman of the high-level taskforce set up by the government of India to lay a roadmap for enforcement of contracts.
Note: The task force for enforcement of contracts will give its recommendation for a policy framework for enforcement of contracts and the task force on conciliation mechanism will give its recommendation for an effective conciliation mechanism.
- 89. Amitabh Kant** has been appointed as the chairman of the high-level taskforce set up by the government of India to lay down a roadmap for conciliation mechanism.
Note: It is to facilitate speedy resolution of contractual disputes between government entities and private investors contractors inter alia to augment ease of doing business. This task force will include DPIIT secretary, DEA secretary, secretary of department of legal affairs, chairman & CEO, Railway Board, secretary, MoRTH, secretary, civil aviation, secretary, power, secretary, MNRE and chairman, NHAI. This task force will submit its report within three months of its constitution.
- 90. Sanjeev Kumar** has been appointed as the Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
Note: IAS Sanjeev Kumar has appointed as Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Kumar is a 1993-batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment.
- 91. Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) Vijay Raghavan's** term has been extended by one year.
Note: He was appointed PSA in 2018 after retiring as Secretary of, Department of Biotechnology. His contract ends on April 2 but has now been extended until April 2022.
- 92. Justice N V Ramana** has been recommend as the next chief justice of India by the incumbent Chief Justice of India S A Bobde.
Note: CJI Bobde handed over a copy of the letter of recommendation to his successor Justice Ramana after sending it to the Centre. CJI Bobde appears to have dismissed the complaint filed by Andhra Pradesh CM Y S Jagan Reddy against Justice Ramana before sending the recommendation letter to the Centre for Justice Ramana's appointment as the 48th CJI on April 24.
- 93. Indian Doctor Vivek Murthy** has been appointed as the Surgeon General under US President Biden's administration.

Note: The 43-year-old Dr Murthy would occupy the position of America's Surgeon General for the second time. Prior to this, Dr Murthy was appointed as surgeon general under the Obama administration in 2011 but was fired by former President Trump in 2017.

- 94.** Director General UNESCO **Audrey Azoulay and** Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank held a virtual meeting.

Note: Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank held a virtual meeting with Director General UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay in New Delhi. They discussed key issues of mutual importance including National Education Policy, India's response to COVID Pandemic especially in the education sector.

- 95.** **Saurbah Garg** has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

Note: Senior bureaucrat Saurbah Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) as part of a bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Garg as the CEO, UIDAI in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.

- 96.** **Atish Chandra** has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India.

Note: Atish Chandra will be Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary, the order said. Chandra, a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, is currently Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.

- 97.** **Soma Mondal** has been elected as the new chairperson of the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE).

Note: Mondal will have a two-year term starting April; she took charge of SAIL on January 1, 2021. SCOPE is an apex professional organization representing the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

- 98.** **Anish Shah** has been appointed as the Managing Director(MD) and Chief Executive Officer(CEO) of Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd (M&M).

Note: He takes over from Pawan Goenka who will retire as the MD and CEO, and member of the Board of Directors of M&M on 2nd April 2021. Anish Shah is currently serving as the deputy managing director and Chief Financial Officer(CFO) of the company.

Important News – India

- 120.** Sugamya Bharat App has been launched by **Ministry of Social justice and Empowerment.**

Note: Sugamya Bharat APP — a Crowdsourcing Mobile Application is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign i.e. built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India. The app provides for five main

features, 4 of which are directly related to enhancing accessibility, while the fifth is a special feature meant only for Divyangjan for COVID related issues.

121. In association with **IIT Bombay** the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is to form a Centre of Excellence in gaming and other related areas.

Note: Addressing the opening ceremony of virtual exhibition and prize announcement of Khel Khel Mein through video conference yesterday, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, IIT will start the courses from this year itself.

122. Ministry of External Affairs has convened the 5th Asia Economic Dialogue (AED) 2021 in association with India and Pune International Centre (PIC) on the theme "Post Covid-19 Global Trade and Finance Dynamics.

Note: Its inaugural session was addressed by Union Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, MEA on "Resilient Global Growth in a Post-Pandemic World". The dialogue saw the discussions between COVID-19's impact on trade and finance, on the world and on Asia as well as strategies to deal with this impact.

123. Union government has invested Rs. 400 crores in Goa to create India's first Fisheries Hub under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

Note: Out of this, Rs 41.47 crore has been already approved under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)". Goa has the potential to become the fisheries hub of the country. On basis of the discussions with the State Government, it has been decided to develop 30 new landing centres for fisheries as well as for tourism purposes.

124. Narendra Modi is the chairman of the reconstituted governing council of the National Institution for Transforming India or NITI Aayog.

Note: According to a notification of the Cabinet Secretariat, chief ministers of all states and those of the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Puducherry are full time members of the council. The Lieutenant Governors of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, and the administrators of Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep will be special invitees of governing council.

125. NASSCOM has launched an 'AI Gamechangers' program to promote artificial intelligence (AI)-led innovation in the country.

Note: Microsoft is the innovation partner for the program. As part of the 'AI for India' mission, the program seeks to recognize impactful and scalable AI-based innovation in the country. Nasscom and Microsoft will work closely to develop and promote the AI Gamechangers program, built on a shared commitment towards accelerating the adoption of AI across key sectors.

126. Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of 'Maritime India Summit 2021'.

Note: Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the second edition of the summit via video conferencing. Prime Minister also launched e-book of maritime vision 2030, which is aiming to make the Indian maritime industry at par with the top global benchmark in the next 10 years.

- 127.** The International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium on Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins was held in **New Delhi**.
Note: Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat was the Chief Guest of the Event. The event acts as a forum to share expertise on latest technologies in Dam construction, dam safety measure etc. Advanced technologies can be implemented in Dams to generate clean and cost effective energy, thereby ensuring India's commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement.
- 128.** The seven-days International Yoga Festival was held in **Rishikesh**.
Note: Nearly 400 yoga enthusiasts participated in the event. Festival was inaugurated by Agriculture Minister Subodh Uniyal, head of Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad (ABAP) Narendra Giri and Patanjali Yogpeeth chairman Acharya Balakrishna.
- 129.** According to the 'Ease of Living Index 2020' released by the Government of India (GoI) **Bengaluru** has been adjudged as the most liveable city in India among million-plus population category.
Note: Of the 49 cities ranked on livability index in the million-plus population category, Delhi ranks 13th. At the bottom of the list are Amritsar, Guwahati, Bareilly, Dhanbad and Srinagar.
- 130.** According to the 'Ease of Living Index 2020' released by the Government of India (GoI) Shimla city has been adjudged as the most liveable city in India the category of cities with population of less than million.
Note: According to the the 'Ease of Living Index 2020' released by the Government of India (GoI), Shimla topped the category of cities with population of less than million. It is followed by Bhubaneswar, Silvassa, Kakinada and Salem. At the bottom of the list of 62 cities are Aligarh, Rampur, Namchi, Satna and Muzaffarpur.
- 131.** According to the 'Municipal Performance Index Report released by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, **Indore** city's civic body has emerged as the best performing municipality among all million-plus municipalities.
Note: The Municipal Performance Index report ranking 114 civic bodies was released by the Union housing and urban affairs minister. The ranking has been done on parameters of service delivery, planning, financial systems, and governance practices.
- 132.** **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Railway Station** becomes the first railway station in Maharashtra to be awarded with Gold certification as per CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) ratings.
Note: Central Railway has implemented various green initiatives across its zone, with plantation creating green areas, installation of solar panels, etc. IGBC ratings gives impetus to the national priorities like energy efficiency, water conservation, etc.
- 133.** With **Ministry of Agriculture** the Central Silk Board has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on a convergence model for the implementation of Agroforestry in the silk sector under the ongoing Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme.

Note: The signing of this MoU aims to incentivize the farmers to take up sericulture based Agroforestry models thereby contributing to the Make in India and Make for the World vision of the Prime Minister.

134. As on 26.02.2021, **more than 81** percent accounts with an amount of Rs. 20,749 crores have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under Stand Up India Scheme.

Note: Stand Up India Scheme was launched on 5 April 2016 to promote entrepreneurship at grass root level for economic empowerment and job creation. This scheme seeks to leverage the institutional credit structure to reach out to the underserved sector of people such as Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Women Entrepreneurs so as to enable them to participate in the economic growth of nation.

135. As on 26.02.2021, **about 68** percent of accounts with an amount of Rs. 6.36 lakh crore have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under MUDRA scheme since inception.

Note: PMMY was launched on April 8, 2015 for providing loans up to 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY. These loans are given by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.

136. Maitri Setu has been built over **Feni river** that connects Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

Note: The name 'Maitri Setu' symbolizes growing bilateral relations and friendly ties between India and Bangladesh. The construction was taken up by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd at a project cost of Rs. 133 Crores.

137. 7500 Janaushadhi Kendra have been open as on 7th March 2021 under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana.

Note: The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana aims to provide quality medicines at an affordable price. From 86 centres in 2014, the number of stores under the scheme has grown to 7,500, covering all districts of the country.

138. 26th is India's rank among 40 Asia-Pacific countries in the Economic Freedom Index 2021 published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation.

Note: In the 2021 Index, India came in around the middle of the pack among Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26th out of 40 countries, scoring 56.5 points. Globally, the Foundation rates India's economy as the 121st freest.

139. 71st is India's rank in the 'UNCTAD B2C E-COMMERCE INDEX 2020- Spotlight on Latin America and the Caribbean'.

Note: The index measures an economy's preparedness to support online shopping where B2C stands for Business to Consumer. UNCTAD is an acronym for United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The index has been topped by Switzerland for the first time which has surpassed The Netherlands. Notably 97% of the Swiss population used the internet in 2019.

- 140. 'Engaging Minds: Empowering Medicine'** is the theme for the 76th Annual Conference of Association of Physicians of India (API).
- Note:** It was addressed by Union Minister of State (IC) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh. While addressing he mentioned the contribution of Physicians to the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign.
- 141.** International Conference on Multifunctional Electronic Materials & Processing (MEMP 2021) was held in Pune.
- Note:** MEMP-2021 provided an opportunity to scientists, researchers, academicians and young students to interact with eminent scientists/technologists working in the field of multifunctional electronic materials for various applications & their processing for making devices.
- 142.** REC Ltd and Power Finance Corporation (PFC) signed an agreement with **Bhutan** for the financing of 600- megawatt (MW) Trashiyangtse Hydroelectric Project.
- Note:** KHEL is a 50:50 joint venture between SJVN India and Druk Green Power Corporation (Bhutan) set up for developing the 600-MW Kholongchhu hydroelectric project in the eastern Bhutan. REC Ltd along with PFC has signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Ltd for financing of 600-MW hydroelectric project at Trashiyangtse, Bhutan.
- 143. Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT)** has launched a vendor onboarding mobile app for its upcoming e-commerce portal 'Bharat e Market'.
- Note:** The app will enable businesses and service providers to register on the portal and create their own "e-dukaan". Its 'purely Indian' Bharat e Market portal will comply with all the rules and regulations of the country.
- 144. Mera Ration** mobile app launched by the Department of Food & Public Distribution, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution under the 'One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)' plan.
- Note:** The mobile app has been developed by the Department of Food & Public Distribution along with the National Informatics Centre (NIC). Beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), with a focus on Migrant workers, Fair Price Shop (FPS) dealers & other relevant stakeholders.
- 145.** With **Japan Railway Track Consultant Co. Limited (JRTC)**, the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Track works for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR).
- Note:** Under the agreement, JRTC will provide design & drawing of major High-Speed Rail (HSR) track components like RC Track bed, track slab arrangement & Continuous Welded Rail (CWR) forces. It will strengthen the 'Make in India' initiative & ensure the transfer of technology from the Japanese high-speed rail system to India.

- 146.** According to PwC's (PricewaterhouseCoopers) 24th Annual Global CEO Survey, India emerged as the **5th** most attractive growth destination in the world.
Note: The USA emerged as the Number one market favoured by CEOs over the next 1 year followed by China, Germany. The survey covered 5, 050 CEOs in 100 Countries & Territories including India. Japan took the 6th position overtaking Australia.
- 147. Prahlad Singh Patel** will chair the advisory committee to chalk out a plan for studying the mythical Sarasvati river.
Note: The ASI had first set up the committee on December 28, 2017 for a period of two years. The committee would continue to be chaired by the Culture Minister and include officials from the Culture, Tourism, Water Resources, Environment and Forest, Housing and Urban Affairs Ministries; representatives of the Indian Space Research Organisation; officials from the governments of Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan; and an ASI official.
- 148. Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru** has launched India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.
Note: The 2 lakh square feet built to suit facility terminal will be operated by Express Industry Council of India. It has a dedicated space for customs offices with direct access to both Landside and Airside wing
- 149.** 4th Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF) was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi in **Kozhikode, Kerala.**
Note: It has been organized from 12 to 19 March 202. GAF is the largest Ayurvedic event ever held anywhere across the world and witness the largest gathering of experts, stakeholders, and business explorers from Ayurveda. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) is the festival and industry partner.
- 150.** India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers has been launched in **Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru.**
Note: The 2 lakh square feet built to suit facility terminal will be operated by Express Industry Council of India. It has a dedicated space for customs offices with direct access to both Landside and Airside wing. It will enable ease of doing business and reduce transaction time and cost for the shipper.
- 151.** India's first centralised air-conditioned (AC) railway terminal has been built in **Bengaluru.**
Note: It is named after 'Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya', one of the foremost civil engineers, and set to become operational soon. It has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 314 crore. Byappanahalli terminal is the 3rd coach terminal and is equipped with all the modern facilities and is aimed to offer an airport-like aura to the passengers.
- 152.** 4th Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF) was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi in **Kozhikode, Kerala.**

Note: It has been organized from 12 to 19 March 2021. GAF is the largest Ayurvedic event ever held anywhere across the world and witness the largest gathering of experts, stakeholders, and business explorers from Ayurveda.

153. According to the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, **22** cities from India are among the 30 most polluted cities in the world.

Note: Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally. The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15 per cent from 2019 to 2020. Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.

154. According to the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', prepared by Swiss organisation, **Ghaziabad** is the second most polluted city in the world.

Note: Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally. The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15 per cent from 2019 to 2020.

155. Delhi's rank in the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', prepared by Swiss organisation, among the among the 30 most polluted cities in the world -- **10th**.

Note: Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally. The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15 per cent from 2019 to 2020. Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.

156. Aster Digital Health Incubator (ADHI), a unit of Aster DM Healthcare Group will also support AIM's initiatives such as Atal Incubation Centers (AICs), Established Incubation Centres (EICs), Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) & Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs). Aster will provide access to Aster Clinical Simulation Lab, Aster Federated Learning Data bank for Artificial Intelligence (AI) healthcare research, ADHI, Aster Digital Health Centre of Excellence, and other facilities to startups under various AIM initiatives.

157. Prime minister Narendra Modi held a virtual summit with his counterpart Sana Marin, **Finland**.

Note: India & Finland had announced a new partnership in the fields of ICT, Mobile Technology, Digital Education clean energy investment and evolution of 6G. Both sides noted that Digital Domain was one of the promising sectors for an intensive India-Finland partnership.

158. NITI Aayog has partnered with **Amazon Web Services** to train students on the fundamentals of cloud computing through Atal Tinkering Labs.

Note: A statement of intent (SoI) was signed between Niti Aayog and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited (AISPL), which undertakes the resale and marketing of AWS Cloud services in India, to roll out the project. The education and tools will establish a strong foundation in cloud computing for students of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) across India, while the support of AWS EdStart for startups will accelerate their productisation and potential commercialization.

159. India's rank in the UN World Happiness Report 2021 released by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network -- **139th**.

Note: Finland was once again crowned as the world's happiest country. In 2019, India was ranked 140th. Denmark ranked 2nd, followed by Switzerland, Iceland and the Netherlands. Afghanistan was classed as the world's unhappiest nation this year.

160. Energy Efficiency Services Ltd has unveiled the GRAM UJALA programme under which high-quality energy-efficient LED bulbs will be given for Rs 10 per piece in certain villages of five states in the first phase.

Note: Under the programme, high-quality energy-efficient LED bulbs will be given for Rs 10 per piece in certain villages of five states in the first phase. The programme will be financed entirely through carbon credits and will be the first such programme in India.

161. Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd function under administrative control of **Ministry of Information and Labour Bureau** has inked an agreement for providing technical and manpower support for conducting all India surveys, including on migrant workers.

Note: The surveys to be undertaken by the Bureau will be integrated with the technology provided by the BECIL. It will substantially reduce the time taken for completion of surveys by at least 30-40% BECIL is an enterprise under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

162. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign on World Water Day 2021 for rain water harvesting, the campaign will be implemented from **March 22 to November 30.**

Note: The 'Catch the Rain' campaign will be undertaken across the country, in both rural and urban areas. It will be implemented from March 22 to November 30 - the pre-monsoon and monsoon period in the country. The campaign aims to take water conservation at grass-root level through people's participation. It is intended to nudge all stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata, to ensure proper storage of rainwater.

163. E-Tendering Portal **PRANIT** established by the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a central PSU under Ministry of Power.

Note: It has been certified by Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India. With this, POWERGRID is now the only organization in India to have an eProcurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency as stipulated by STQC.

164. Union Minister of Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has virtually inaugurated the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak in **New Delhi.**

Note: The inauguration took place on the occasion of a programme organised by the University of Delhi on 'Shaheed Diwas' or Martyrs Day (March 23, 2021) to pay homage and commemorate 90 years of martyrdom of our freedom fighters - Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru. It will remain open to students and the university community to inculcate values of freedom and sacrifice.

- 165.** According to the report by 'India: Transforming to a net-zero emissions energy system' released by TERI and Shell, the Net Zero emissions in energy system in India is achievable by **2050**.
Note: According to the report by 'India: Transforming to a net-zero emissions energy system' released by TERI (The Energy & Resources Institute) & Shell (otherwise known as Royal Dutch Shell plc), the Net Zero emissions in energy system in India is achievable by 2050. The report is one of the first assessments of the challenges that India would face if India were to move towards Net-zero emissions energy system.
- 166.** Applied Materials India, the local subsidiary of US materials engineering company Applied Materials Inc., has signed a research and development (R&D) pact with **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**.
Note: This pact is a part of the Industry Affiliate Program of the Centre for Nanoscience and Engineering (CeNSE). IISc Bengaluru and Applied Materials India will work closely with CeNSE to explore new applications and solutions in the field of advanced materials
- 167.** **Sanjay Dhotre** represented India at the 'World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021' which is one of the world's largest annual gatherings of the 'ICT for development' communities.
Note: The Minister highlighted the policies and programs undertaken by his Ministry such as, Arogya Setu platform is used to monitor and alert the health status of citizens.
- 168.** **Piyush Goyal** will chair the Empowerment Committee to discuss and enhance manufacturing of products in High technology areas in India constituted by the Government of India.
Note: The 10-member committee will be headed by the Minister of Commerce and Industry. The committee will be serviced by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Objective of the committee is to facilitate investments and promote manufacturing in technology-intensive sectors including semiconductors.
- 169.** India's rank in the among 53 global economies on the latest annual edition of the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index released by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) -- **40th**.
Note: The Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights in 53 global economies from patent and copyright policies to commercialization of IP assets and ratification of international treaties. The overall global IP environment improved in 2020, with positive score increasing in 32 of the 53 economies measured by the IP Index.
- 170.** "Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park" has been inaugurated in **New Delhi**.
Note: Friendship Park has been built to commemorate contribution of Indian peacekeepers in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. India-South Korea relations have strengthened in recent years with the convergence of Act East Policy (AEP) of India and New Southern Policy (NSP) of South Korea.
- 171.** The theme of the 7th Annual Summit of 'NATHEALTH' organized by NATHEALTH – Healthcare Federation of India -- '**Indian Health System Expansion in Post-COVID Era**'.

Note: Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan virtually addressed the 7th Annual Summit of 'NATHEALTH' organized by NATHEALTH – Healthcare Federation of India which was held between March 25-26, 2021 in a virtual format. It was allocated INR 2, 23, 846 Crore in the 2021-22 Budget, an increase of 137% over the previous year.

- 172.** Minister of State for Tourism and Culture, Prahlad Singh Patel, and Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh jointly inaugurated the 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre' in **Khajuraho.**

Note: The Tourism Ministry also launched the "MICE Roadshow Meet in India" at the Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho. It is an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism to promote India's Iconic tourist spots into World class destinations for conducting MICE events.

- 173.** The first Airport in South India to have a fully operational parallel runway -- **Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru.**

Note: While the Southern runway is equipped with a CAT III B System that provides precision landing facility by improving runway visibility. Due to reduced passenger traffic caused by the pandemic, it was decided not to implement the CAT III B system in the Northern runway.

Important News – State

- 73.** **Haryana** state government has launched "Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana" aimed at uplifting 1 lakh BPL families of the state.

Note: One of the 4 scheme is Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana. The first phase of the scheme to begin on April 1, 2021. The Scheme is aimed at uplifting 1 lakh BPL families of Haryana; these families will be selected through the Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) portal.

- 74.** **Haryana** state government has launched Dr BR Ambedkar Awas Navinikarn Yojana.

Note: The Schemes are aimed at satisfying the needs of the people under Below Poverty line (BPL). He also highlighted the state's initiatives to increase income of BPL families by at least Rs. 8000 to Rs. 9000/month.

- 75.** New Science Centre has been inaugurated in **Udaipur** city of Tripura.

Note: The Udaipur Science Centre has been developed at a cost of Rs 6 crore funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Tripura Government and with this; National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) has now set-up science centres in all the north eastern states.

- 76.** **Haryana** state government has approved a bill that reserves 75 percent of the private sector jobs with gross salary upto ₹ 50,000 per month for the people of the state.

Note: The bill, tabled by Mr Chautala last year, makes it mandatory for the private sector companies to reserve 75 percent of jobs with salary upto ₹ 50,000 per month for natives of Haryana. It also contains a clause companies can invoke if suitable local candidates cannot be

found. In such cases they may hire from outside so long as they inform the government of such a step.

- 77.** The International Business Machines (IBM) India partnered with which state government to provide free online courses to students, Job seekers & Entrepreneurs of the state **Goa**.
Note: This initiative is aimed at upskilling 10,000 youths across 10 institutions in 1 year through IBM SkillBuild Program. Personalised coaching and experimental learning module is provided on Information & Communication Technology (ITC). The program has over 1lakh beneficiaries in Indian in 2021 alone.
- 78.** **Karnataka** state has launched India's maiden Engineering Research & Development (ERD) policy to raise R&D contribution to 45% in 5 year.
Note: This policy has the potential to create over 50,000 jobs in ERD space. According to Nasscom, ER&D has the potential to become \$100-billion industry. New policy has identified 5 key focus sectors: aerospace and defence; auto, auto components and EV; biotechnology, pharma, medical devices; semiconductors, telecom; software products.
- 79.** The President of India Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for the conservation works of Singorgarh Fort which is located in **Madhya Pradesh**.
Note: The President also inaugurated the newly carved Jabalpur Circle of Archaeological Survey of India. He also addressed the State Level Tribal Conference at Singrampur village in Damoh. The program was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and the Tribal Affairs Department of Madhya Pradesh.
- 80.** India's first Forest Healing centre was inaugurated in **Uttarakhand**.
Note: It was developed by the Research Wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department in an area of around 13 acres. The centre is based on the concept of healing and revitalizing the overall health and well being of people by bringing them into direct contact with nature.
- 81.** A centre of excellence for the dairy sector will be set up in Rajasthan in collaboration with Denmark.
Note: Denmark Ambassador Freddy Svane discussed the idea at a meeting with chief minister Ashok Gehlot. The possibilities of Denmark's cooperation in the field of water conservation and purification were also discussed in the meeting.
- 82.** Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel (AMNS) going to set up an integrated steel plant in **Odisha**.
Note: In a major boost to Odisha's industrial landscape, the ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Limited (AMNS India) signed an MoU with the state government to set up a 12 mtpa integrated steel complex in Kendrapada district with an investment of Rs 50,000 crore. The deal was signed here in presence of chief minister Naveen Patnaik and executive chairman of ArcelorMittal LN Mittal.
- 83.** Odisha state government has announced the setting up of District Investment Promotion Agencies (DIPAs) in its 30 districts to promote and facilitate investment across the State.

Note: According to the Industries Department, DIPA, in each of the 30 districts across the state, shall operate under the leadership of the respective District Collector with other senior district officials including SPs, DFOs and line Department officials being constituent members. The District Collector shall be supported by a team of professionals for investment facilitation, project monitoring and promoting local entrepreneurship.

- 84. Andhra Pradesh** become the first state of India to incorporate the Gender Budget in its annual budget of the fiscal year 2021 to 2022 with an aim to provide better service to women.

Note: International women's day, Andhra Pradesh (AP) Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy announced that the state would become the first state of India to incorporate the Gender Budget in its annual budget of the fiscal year 2021 to 2022 with an aim to provide better service to women.

- 85.** Arjuna Sahayak Irrigation Project is being built in **Uttar Pradesh**.

Note: With an outlay of Rs 2,600 crore the irrigation project is scheduled for complete in one or two months. The Arjuna Sahayak irrigation project on the river Dhasan will offer irrigation facilities to 1.5 lakh farmers of as many as 168 UP villages of Hamirpur, Banda and Mahoba.

- 86.** India's Largest Floating Solar Power Plant of 100 MegaWatt (MW) capacity being constructed in **Telangana**.

Note: The solar project is commissioned by the energy conglomerate National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC). The solar project which is estimated to cost around Rs 423 cr will have 4.5 lakh photovoltaic panels. The solar panels will cover 450-acre area of the reservoir and can be expanded in the future.

- 87.** 'WE Hub' is an initiative of **Telangana** that has partnered with Australian government to launch "UPSurge" a 12-week pre-incubation program conducted across India.

Note: The program is targeted towards Women Entrepreneurs to minimise financial risk while selling novel products & achieve financial independence. Australia is the first International Partner of WE Hub, when they jointly launched the "Community Slate" program that was concluded in 2020.

- 88.** Uttarakhand Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) signed an MoU with **IBM** to improve the education standards among the female children of the state.

Note: The collaboration, 'IBM STEM for Girls' program, will be introduced in 130 secondary and higher secondary schools across five districts in the state. The five districts are Dehradun, Pauri, Haridwar, Almora and Udham Singh Nagar. The program will advance the skills and careers of close to 25,600 students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) fields.

- 89. Maharashtra** state government has launched "Maha Samruddhi Mahila Sashaktikaran scheme" to empower the women in rural areas.

Note: The scheme commenced on 8th March 2021, the International women's Day 2021. The aim of the scheme is to promote the listing of wife's name along with husbands' names on the 7/12 extract and to promote the inclusion of wife's name on house property documents.

90. Haryana state has won the 69 Men's National volleyball championships held in KIIT University, Bhubaneswar.

Note: Haryana men has won the 69 National volleyball championships at the KIIT University, Bhubaneswar. Haryana men defeated Assam. Tamil Nadu, the men's defending champion, had lost to Haryana in the quarterfinal.

91. Uttara Pradesh government has launched a three-day-long 'Kalanamak rice festival' under one district – one product scheme of the state government.

Note: To promote the production, processing, packaging, and branding of Kalanamak Rice, the UP Government has declared the rice as the One District One Product (ODOP) of Siddharth Nagar in 2018. It is one of the finest varieties of aromatic rice that are grown in India, Kalanamak is also called Buddha Rice.

92. Maharashtra state ranked first in the state wise distribution of High Net-worth Individual (HNI) households in accordance with 'Wealth Report 2020' released by Hurun India.

Note: Based on the report there are 4.12 lakh dollar-millionaire households / affluent households in India with a networth of at least Rs 7 crore. Maharashtra is the highest Gross/Net State Domestic Product (GSDP) Generating state in India with growth rate of about 13.16% and it is contributing around 16 % of national GDP

93. 850 MW Ratle Hydro-Electric Project (HEP) is being built in **Jammu and Kashmir**.

Note: The authorised capital of the JVC is Rs 1,600 crore with initial paid-up capital of Rs 100 crore. Out of the paid-up capital, J&K State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDCL) will contribute Rs 49 crore as initial equity. The MoU to execute the project was signed between the Government of J&K, JKSPDCL and NHPC on 3rd January 2021.

94. Rajasthan state government announced to launch Universal Health Scheme (UHS) called "Mukhya Mantri Chiranjeevi Yojana.

Note: The scheme will be launched on May 1, 2021. In his budget speech Gehlot had announced UHS with Rs 3,500 crore in the upcoming financial year wherein cashless health services up to Rs 5 lakh will be provided to all families in the state.

95. Madhya Pradesh government has launched the 'Mission Gramodaya' under which housing facilities will be provided in rural areas along with basic and fundamental infrastructure.

Note: The mission was launched by the Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Under the Gramodaya mission, besides providing housing facilities in rural areas, basic and fundamental infrastructure will also be expanded.

96. Jharkhand government has launched the SAAMAR (Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anemia Reduction) campaign to fight with malnutrition.

Note: Aim of the campaign is to identify anaemic women and malnourished children and converge various departments to effectively deal with the problem in a state. The state govt. runs various schemes under Child Development Schemes, National Nutrition Mission among others to deal with the situation.

- 97. Andhra Pradesh** government has launched India's first govt-run ambulance network for animals.

Note: The Animal Husbandry Department has been further directed to set up one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at every assembly constituency. These mobile ambulances shall provide veterinary first aid services along with spot diagnosis and attending to emergency cases.

- 98. Karnataka** government has signed an MoU with ITC to execute a Watershed Programme covering over one million acres in the southern state.

Note: The MoU was signed under the ITC's Social Investments programme "Mission Sunehra Kal" & the Karnataka Watershed Development Department. With regard to this MoU, 100 Watershed had set up. The agreement was a part of the Karnataka government's 'Watershed development for drought proofing' programme & it is a part of ITCs Sustainability 2.0 agenda.

- 99.** The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) signed an MoU with **Arunachal Pradesh** state to Implement MSP for MFP Scheme & Van Dhan Vikas Yojana.

Note: The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the state of Arunachal Pradesh for implementing its flagship program, "Mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & development of value chain for MFP" scheme and Van Dhan Yojana.

- 100. Manipur** state has been emerged as the Champion State for Van Dhan Vikas Yojana.

Note: Van Dhan Yojana was launched in October 2019 in Manipur, with the successful establishment of 100 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in the state. This constitutes 1500 self-help groups for marketing & providing value-addition to the tribal, minor forest produces.

- 101.** Kurnool Airport in **Andhra Pradesh** has been inaugurated by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Civil Aviation, Hardeep Singh Puri.

Note: The flight operations at Kurnool airport will begin on 28 March 2021. This airport has been developed under the Regional Connectivity Scheme, Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN). Kurnool airport will bring the region closer to major hubs in South India by providing direct flight operations to Bangalore, Vishakhapatnam and Chennai.

- 102.** The Shigmo is a spring festival celebrated in **Goa**.

Note: Goa has announced that this year no Shigmo spring festival parades will be held due to sudden hike in COVID-19 infections. Shigmo is the biggest spring festival in Goa and was scheduled to take place in the first week of April. The decision to cancel the festival was to

prevent the further increase in the COVID-19 numbers, informed Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said in the Goa Assembly.

103. Uttar Pradesh government has organized a 'Banana Festival' to make Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan for a self-reliant India.

Note: The main goal of organizing this festival is to make Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan for a self-reliant India. Banana made products from Kushinagar are included in One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.

104. India's 1st State to have 2 Green Energy Efficient towns -- **Bihar.**

Note: To implement the project, the state government of Bihar will construct 500 MW solar energy plants at Lakhisarai & Bhagalpur. After Rajgir & BodhGaya, many important government offices in Patna like the Governor house, High Court, Museum & Vidhyut Bhawan would also run on green energy supplied by SECI.

Important News – World

1. Russia has successfully launched its first ever Arctic-monitoring satellite that will monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.

Note: A Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket with the "Arktika-M" satellite on board blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The Arktika-M spacecraft was delivered to the orbit at 12.14 PM. The Arktika-M will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean.

2. The Swedish automaker, Volvo has announced that it will make only electric vehicles by **2030.**

Note: The automaker phasing out the production of all cars with internal combustion engines — including hybrids. Volvo's announcement follows General Motors' pledge earlier this year to make only battery-powered vehicles by 2035.

3. To African country **Madagascar** and India has sent a consignment of 1,000 metric tonnes of rice and 100,000 hydroxychloroquine as humanitarian assistance.

Note: The prompt Indian assistance to the Madagascar government was conveyed by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a phone conversation with Madagascar's Foreign Minister Tehindrazanarivelo Djacoba A S Oliva.

4. Denmark is the partner country of the second edition of 'Maritime India Summit 2021'.

Note: Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the second edition of the summit via video conferencing. Prime Minister also launched e-book of maritime vision 2030, which is aiming to make the Indian maritime industry at par with the top global benchmark in the next 10 years.

5. India has signed an agreement for cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sectors with **Fiji.**

Note: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Agriculture of Indian

government and Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Fiji in this regard. The MoU between India and Fiji provides for cooperation in various areas including promotion of joint ventures between private sectors of both countries.

- 6. Australia** is building world's first platypus sanctuary to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change.

Note: The Taronga Conservation Society Australia and the New South Wales State government would build the specialist facility, mostly ponds and burrows for the semi-aquatic creatures, at a zoo 391 km (243 miles) from Sydney, by 2022, which could house up to 65 platypuses.

- 7. India and Norway** have agreed to collaborate in the area of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the Oceanic space for the next 5 years.

Note: National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Chennai will be preparing the MSP framework for Puducherry & Lakshadweep in the initial phase of the project. The framework of these 2 environmentally critical areas (Pondicherry & Lakshadweep) will be replicated to other coastal regions of India. The 2 places have been chosen due to their potential to Flourish in multiple sectors such as Industries, Fisheries & Tourism.

- 8. India** described **Sri Lanka** as the "Priority One" partner in the defence sphere.

Note: The SLAF is celebrating its 70th Anniversary on March 2 and to commemorate the historical event, a Fly Past and an Aerobatic Display is being organised for the first time in the country at a grand scale.

- 9. The 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice** was held in **Kyoto, Japan.**

Note: This year, the event was held in a hybrid format. Key issues related to criminal justice, strategies for crime prevention and international cooperation in promoting the rule of law and preventing all forms of crime are expected to be discussed. This is the first time that Japan is hosted the congress since 1970.

- 11. Singapore** ranked first in the latest Economic Freedom Index 2021 published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation.

Note: Globally, the Foundation rates India's economy as the 121st freest. Although its overall score is unchanged, improvements were made in business freedom. This was offset by declines in judicial effectiveness and other scores.

- 12. Switzerland** has banned full facial coverings including the niqab and burqa in almost all public places.

Note: As many as 51.21 per cent of voters voted in support of the controversial proposal in the referendum. The approval by voters means that facial covering will be banned in all publicly accessible places, including on the streets, in public offices, on public transport, in restaurants, shops and in the countryside.

- 13. India** ranked at top among developing countries in the new country-readiness index 2021 released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its 'Technology and Innovation Report 2021'.

Note: The index ranked India at 43 while the estimated one based on per capita income was 108. This meant that India over performed other countries by 65 ranking positions. India was followed by the Philippines, which over performed by 57 ranking positions.

- 14. Denmark** is going to set up a Center of Excellence for the dairy sector in Rajasthan.

Note: Denmark Ambassador Freddy Svane discussed the idea at a meeting with chief minister Ashok Gehlot. The possibilities of Denmark's cooperation in the field of water conservation and purification were also discussed in the meeting.

- 15. France** has launched its first military exercise in space in March 2021 to evaluate its ability to defend its satellites and other defense equipment from an attack.

Note: This is the first for the French army and even a first in Europe. The exercise, codenamed "AsterX" in memory of the first French satellite from 1965, will be based on 18 simulated events in an operations room. During the drill, the French military will monitor a potentially dangerous space object as well as a threat to its own satellite from another foreign power possessing a considerable space force.

- 16. Sri Lanka** has received ten state-of-the-art railway passenger coaches from India as part of the supply of 160 coaches by the Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES).

Note: This supply of coaches to Sri Lankan Railways by RITES is being financed through an Indian Line of Credit. Recently, Sri Lanka approved the development of the West Container Terminal (WCT) after it unilaterally cancelled Indian and Japanese participation in the development of the East Container Terminal at Colombo.

- 17.** Russia has agreed to jointly build a research station on or around the moon, setting the stage for a new space race with **China**.

Note: The United States and the Soviet Union, followed by its successor state, Russia, have long dominated space exploration, putting the first astronauts in space and on the moon and later collaborating on the International Space Station that has been in orbit for two decades.

- 18. Japan** has developed world's most powerful supercomputer 'Fugaku'.

Note: Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN and Fujitsu began development six years ago with an aim to make the device core of Japan's computing infrastructure. Now, as Fugaku is fully open and available for shared use, Japan's Research Organization for Information Science and Technology (RIST) has selected 74 projects that will use the supercomputer in FY2021.

- 19.** According to Jones Lang LaSalle's Human Performance Indicator (HPI) Index, **India** ranked highest in workplace satisfaction at 98 percent.

Note: As per the report, India leads other Asia-Pacific (APAC) countries with 81 per cent of high performers practising flexible working, including flexible hours and work-from-home. The Key Factors impacting workplace satisfaction in high performers are wider range of sophisticated workplaces and technologies.

- 20. USA** becomes India's 2nd Biggest Oil Supplier in February 2021.

Note: India's imports from America increased to 48% to a record 545, 300 BPD in February, 2021 accounting for 14% of India's overall imports last month. Saudi Arabia slipped to No.4 Position for the 1st time since January 2006. Nigeria rose to 3rd Position and UAE slipped to 5th Position.

21. Xinjiang is the world's most polluted city, as per the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', prepared by Swiss organisation, among the among the 30 most polluted cities in the world.

Note: Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally. The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15 per cent from 2019 to 2020. Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.

22. World Energy Transitions Outlook report was published by **International Renewable Energy Agency**.

Note: Previewed at the virtual Berlin Energy Transition Dialogue (BETD 2021) the report proposes energy transition solutions for the narrow pathway available to contain the rise of temperature to 1.5°C and halt global warming.

23. Italy has joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) after signing the amended ISA Framework Agreement.

Note: The new ISA Framework Agreement came into force on January 8, 2021. Under the new amended framework, the membership of ISA is open to all member states of the United Nations. Previously, it was open to countries that were partially or entirely located within the Tropics.

24. At present, **73** countries have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement.

Note: Under the new amended framework, the membership of ISA is open to all member states of the United Nations. Previously, it was open to countries that were partially or entirely located within the Tropics. The signed copies of the agreement were received by an additional secretary (ER) as representative of MEA. MEA is the depositary of the ISA Framework Agreement. It is an alliance of over 121 countries.

25. Accepting India's invitation, the European Union (EU) has officially on-boarded as a member of the CDRI.

Note: Launched in 2019 by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi at the UN Climate Change Summit, the CDRI is an international collaborative platform involving the public and private sector, aiming to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.

26. Finland ranked first in the UN World Happiness Report 2021 released by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Note: UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network released the World Happiness Report 2021. Denmark ranked 2nd, followed by Switzerland, Iceland and the Netherlands. The ranking is based on GDP per person, healthy life expectancy and the opinions of residents.

- 27. Afghanistan** ranked as unhappiest country in the UN World Happiness Report 2021 released by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
Note: UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network released the World Happiness Report 2021. Finland was once again crowned as the world's happiest country. India has been ranked 139 out of 149 countries. In 2019, India was ranked 140th.
- 28. Japan and India** have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoU) to achieve water security, improved irrigation facility and sustainability in water resources development.
Note: The MoU was signed between Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India and Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan in the field of Water Resources.
- 29. Thirty-eight** foreign satellites have been launched by Russia for 18 countries from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
Note: The Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket with the Fregat upper stage and 38 spacecraft from 18 countries took off from the Baikonur cosmodrome. Soyuz rocket successfully placed into orbit the 38 satellites from more than a dozen countries, including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil.
- 30.** India's Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has signed an MoU with **Afghanistan** to share experience and expertise in the area of recruitment, books, manuals and other documents.
Note: It will strengthen the relationship between IARCSC and UPSC. The MoU will facilitate sharing of experience and expertise in the area of recruitment, books, manuals and other documents which are not of a confidential nature and Information Technology (IT) for the preparation of written examinations and holding of Computer Based Recruitment Tests and Online Examinations.
- 31.** The title of the United Nations World Water Development Report 2021 -- **Valuing Water**.
Note: The World population is set to increase to 9 Billion by 2040, but the projected reservoir volume is stabilising around 7, 000 billion cubic metre. This report published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on behalf of UN-Water.
- 32.** World's first ship tunnel is being built in **Norway**.
Note: First announced a few years ago by the Norwegian Coastal Administration, this mile-long, 118-feet-wide tunnel will burrow through the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway. Building this engineering marvel will cost somewhere in the region of 2.8 billion Norwegian kroner (\$330 million) and take between three to four years, with construction due to commence in 2022.
- 33.** Sri Lanka has signed about USD 1,5 billion currency swap deal with **China**.
Note: The agreement signed between the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the People's Bank of China is valid for three years. China remains Sri Lanka's largest source of imports. In 2020, imports from China amounted to USD 3.6 billion, or just over 22 per cent of Sri Lanka's imports.

- 34.** The name of the huge cargo ship that was stuck near the southern end of the Suez Canal due to a mishap caused by bad weather -- **Ever Given**.

Note: This is causing a huge jam of vessels at either end of the vital international trade artery. The Suez Canal is an artificial sea-level waterway running north to south across the Isthmus of Suez in Egypt, to connect the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.

Honor & Awards

- 31. Vinka** received the Best Woman Boxer of the Tournament Award at the 30th Youth International Boxing Tournament 'Adriatic Pearl'.

Note: For her magnificent show, Vinka received the Best Woman Boxer of the Tournament award. With two medals in the men's category, the 19-member Indian team concluded its campaign with an overall second position (12 medals).

- 32.** According to Hurun Global Rich List 2021, Reliance Industries (RIL) chairman, **8th** is the rank of Mukesh Ambani as the richest person of the world.

Note: The List was topped by Elon Musk (CEO of Tesla), Jeff Bezos (CEO of Amazon) & Bernard Arnault (CEO of LVMH-Louis Vuitton). Hurun Global Rich List 2021 is the 10th Year of ranking. It ranked 3, 228 Billionaires from 2, 402 companies & 68 countries

- 33.** According to the 10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021 **Elon Musk** emerged as the richest person of the world.

Note: Tesla chief Elon Musk bagged the top spot with net worth \$197 billion. Jeff Bezos ranked second with \$189 billion net worth, followed by Bernard Arnault. Asia's richest person and Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani is ranked 8th. Total wealth of all billionaires across the globe surged 32% (\$3.5 trillion) in 2020.

- 34. Mohankrishna Bohara** has been declared as the winner of the 30th Bihari Puraskar for 2020 for his Hindi book of Criticism, titled Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya.

Note: Mohankrishna Bohara will be awarded 30th Bihari Puraskar for 2020 for his Hindi book of Criticism, titled Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya in New Delhi. His book was published in 2016. Bihari Puraskar: It carries an award money of two lakh 50 thousand rupees, a Citation and Plaque. It is one of the three literary awards instituted by K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991.

- 35. Koneru Humpy** has been adjudged as the BBC India Sportswoman of the Year award for 2020.

Note: The award was based on a public vote in which Humpy beat sprinter Dutee Chand, shooter Manu Bhaker, wrestler Vinesh Phogat and hockey captain Rani Rampal. Humpy won the World Rapid Chess Championship in December 2019 after a two-year maternity break. She then won the Cairns Cup in 2020.

- 36. Amitabh Bachchan** has been conferred with the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) Award 2021.

Note: The veteran actor will be the first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world's film heritage. Hollywood filmmakers and previous recipients of the FIAF Award — Martin Scorsese and Christopher Nolan — will present the award to Bachchan during a virtual showcase scheduled to take place on March 19.

- 37.** President Ram Nath Kovind presented a decorated with the emblem of the Indian Republic and a letter of appreciation to **Kiran Bedi**.

Note: Kiran Bedi was removed as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry on February 16 by the President of India and Tamilisai Soundararajan took additional charge as the Lieutenant Governor on February 18.

- 38.** Indian woman **Tamilisai Soundararajan** has been conferred with the Top 20 Global Women of Excellence Award for 2020 at a US event.

Note: She joined a league of extraordinary women achievers across the world chosen for the award, including US Vice President Kamala Harris. The award instituted by the US Congressional Multi Advisory Task Force led by Congressman Danny K. Davis, Representative of Illinois's 7th Congressional district, was presented during the 9th Congressional International Women's Day Gala at Naperville, Illinois.

- 39.** **63rd** edition of the annual Grammy Awards was held in 2021.

Note: The 2021 Grammy awards recognized the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year, between **September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020**. The award is presented by **The Recording Academy** to recognize achievements in the American music industry. **Beyonce** received the most nominations with nine, as well as the most awards with four.

- 40.** **Gowsalya Shanka** has been honoured with a nomination for the International Woman of Courage (IWOC) Award by the U.S. Consulate.

Note: Gowsalya Shankar is Tamil Nadu-based anti-caste activist and human rights defender. The IWOC Award Certificate of Nomination was handed over to her by U.S. Consul General in Chennai Judith Ravin at an event 'Courageous Women Inspire a Better World' held in the city.

- 41.** In **20** languages the annual Sahitya Akademi Awards 2021 is announced.

Note: Seven books of poetry, four of the novel, Five short stories, two plays, and one each of memoirs and epic poetry in 20 Indian languages. The awards for **Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani** will be announced later. Sahitya Akademi Award is a literary honour in India.

- 42.** **67th** edition of National Film Award announced this year (2021).

Note: The event is organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, which comes under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Director Priyadarshan's Malayalam war epic Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea, that is headlined by Mohanlal, won Best Feature Film. The best acting honours went to Manoj Bajapayee for Bhonsle, Dhanush for Tamil film Asuran, and Kangana Ranaut for two of her films: Panga and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi.

- 43. Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea** film has won the best feature film award at the 67th National Film Award ceremony.
- Note:** The best acting honours went to Manoj Bajapayee for Bhonsle, Dhanush for Tamil film Asuran, and Kangana Ranaut for two of her films: Panga and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi. Vijay Sethupathi (Super Deluxe) and Pallavi Joshi (The Tashkent Files) won the supporting actor awards, while director Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan was awarded for Bahattar Hoorain
- 44. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** has been conferred with the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020.
- Note:** The Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by government of India since 1995, the 125th birth anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all people regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex. The award carries an amount of Rs 1 crore, a citation, plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.
- 45. Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said** has been conferred with the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019.
- Note:** The Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by government of India since 1995, the 125th birth anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all people regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex. The award carries an amount of Rs 1 crore, a citation, plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.
- 46. Asha Bhosle** will be honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020.
- Note:** The award, instituted in 1996 by the State government to recognise distinguished work and achievements of eminent persons from the State, representing different walks of life, carries a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a citation. The first Maharashtra Bhushan awardee was Marathi writer P.L. Deshpande and the last winner of this award was historian Babasaheb Purandare who got it for the year 2015.
- 47. Sharad Pagare** will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman – 2020.
- Note:** The Vyas Samman, started in 1991, is given by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.
- 48. Harsh C. Mariwala** has won the won EY Entrepreneur of the year award 2020 and will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY).
- Note:** Mariwala, and will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY) on 10 June 2021. Awards were also announced for eight other categories with the winners representing both mature industries and young entrepreneurs from startups including Unicorns and a Decacorn.
- 49. Mahinder Giri** has won the prestigious International Ranger Award for his contribution towards forest conservation.

Note: He is the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious award. Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar has congratulated him for the award.

- 50.** The Parliament of **New Zealand** has passed a legislation that allows the mothers and their partners who have suffered a miscarriage or stillbirth the right of paid leave.

Note: New Zealand's parliament has passed legislation giving mothers and their partners the right to paid leave following a miscarriage or still birth, becoming only the second country in the world to do so. The bereavement allowance, passed unanimously in parliament late on Wednesday, gives employees three days leave when a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth without having to tap into sick leave.

Sports News

- 33.** **Kamilla Radhikova** partnered with Ankita Raina to win the WTA 250 Doubles title at Phillip Island Trophy Tennis Tournament.

Note: The pair beat Russia's Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6, 6-4, 10-7. This is Ankita's first title on the WTA tour. The win will help Ankita, 28, enter the top 100 of the WTA rankings in doubles with the live rankings currently showing her in the 94th position.

- 34.** **Virat Kohli** becomes the first cricketer to have 100 million followers on social media platform Instagram.

Note: The 32-year-old Kohli is also the first person in the Asia-Pacific region to achieve the feat. Kohli is also the fourth most followed sportsperson on Instagram. Portugal football star Cristiano Ronaldo tops the chart with 265 million followers, ahead of Argentina football captain and FC Barcelona legend Lionel Messi and Brazil's Neymar, who are second and third in the list with 186 million and 147 million followers respectively.

- 35.** Indian shuttler, **Malvika Bansod** has won the women's singles title in badminton at Uganda International Badminton Tournament 2021, held in Kampala.

Note: Varun beat his Indian counterpart Sankar Muthusamy by 21-18 16-21 21-17 to win men's singles final. Malvika won 17-21 25-23 21-10 over compatriot Anupama Upadhyaya in the women singles summit clash.

- 36.** Varun Kapur is associated with **Badminton**.

Note: Varun beat his Indian counterpart Sankar Muthusamy by 21-18 16-21 21-17 to win men's singles final. Malvika won 17-21 25-23 21-10 over compatriot Anupama Upadhyaya in the women singles summit clash.

- 37.** **Srinu Bugatha** won the sixth edition of the New Delhi Marathon in men's category.

Note: Bugatha clocked a personal best of 2 hours 14 minutes and 59 seconds which was shy of the 2 hours 11 minutes and 30 seconds that he was targeting to earn himself a run in the Tokyo Olympics. Uttarakhand's Nitendra Singh Rawat (2:18:54) and Army Sports Institute's Rashpal Singh (2:18:57) clinched the silver and bronze medal in the men's elite category.

- 38. Sudha Singh** won the sixth edition of the New Delhi Marathon in women's category.
Note: Sudha, who was aiming for a hat-trick of Olympic appearances, won the women's title with a timing of 2:43:41. That was, however, off the national record of 2:30.00 which would have earned her a ticket to Tokyo. Maharashtra's Jyoti Gawate (2:58:23) and Ladakh's Jigmet Dolma (3:04:52) clinched the silver and bronze medal, respectively among the women.
- 39.** Indian shuttler **PV Sindhu** won silver medal in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300 in Basel.
Note: She lost to World No. 3 Spaniard and reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin in the final of the women's singles event. The World Champion shuttler who has faced a lot of criticism lately for lacklustre performances in the last year had entered the semifinal stage of a BWF tournament after 19 months.
- 40.** Indian boxer **Manish Kaushik** won the gold medal in the Boxam International Tournament in Castellon, Spain.
Note: The 2018 Commonwealth Games silver medallist Kaushik, who returned into the ring for the first time after the Asian Olympic Qualifiers held in March last year, beat Denmark's Nikolai Terteryan with a split 3-2 decision in the men's 63kg summit bout. However, the World Championship bronze medallist Vikas Krishan went down fighting 4-1 against local favourite Ndiaye Sissokho to settle for a silver medal in the men's 69kg.
- 41.** Smartphone company, **Vivo** has back as the title sponsor of the Indian Premier League cricket tournament.
Note: The company, which competes with players like Xiaomi and Samsung in the Indian market, also stated that it will expand its portfolio of premium devices, and focus on new technologies like 5G. This year's edition of IPL will run from April 9 to May 30 across six venues -- Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi and Kolkata.
- 42.** The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has imposed a ban for 4 year on Madhavan R for violating the NADA's code on the usage of prohibited substances. He is associated with **Weightlifting**.
Note: The Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel (ADDP) has banned Madhavan R for 4 years. Madhavan R was tested positive for the prohibited substance Phentermine & Mephentermine. The athletes have an option to appeal against the ADDP's sanction to the higher panel Anti-Doping Appeals Panel (ADAP).
- 43.** The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup 2021 was held in **Cairo, Egypt**.
Note: The Shotgun tournament took place for disciplines of Trap Shooting & Skeet Shooting. The Indian Women's Trap Team trio of Kirti Gupta, Manisha Keer & Rajeshwari Kumari won the Silver medal in the event. They were defeated by Russia in the Final.
- 44. Virat Kohli** becomes the first cricketer to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International cricket.

Note: The India captain reached the milestone in his 87th match in the shortest format. Kohli's India teammate Rohit Sharma can also reach the landmark in the ongoing series between India and England.

- 45.** Bhavani Devi is associated with **Fencing** sport who becomes the first ever Indian to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Note: The sabre fencer secured a spot in the World Cup in Hungary after the hosts lost in the quarterfinals of the team event, allowing South Korea to progress to the semi-final. Bhavani Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method.

- 46. Mithali Raj** becomes the first Indian woman cricketer to complete 10,000 runs across all format.

Note: With this, she also became the 2nd largest woman scorer in international cricket. She achieved the feat with a boundary off Anne Bosch in 28th over of India's innings during the ongoing 3rd ODI against South Africa. She scored 663 runs in 10 Test matches with a best score of 214, while she has 6974 and 2364 runs from 212 ODIs and 89 T20 Internationals.

- 47.** According to announcement made by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) the Asian Boxing Championship will be held in **New Delhi**.

Note: This will be the 1st boxing tournament in Asia in 2021, acting towards evaluating boxers' readiness for the Olympic games. For the 1st time in the tournament's history both men & women fought in the same championship.

- 48.** Cricketer Gary Wilson announced retirement from International Cricket. He belongs to **Ireland**.

Note: Currently, he is all set to take over the role of Head Coach and Pathway Manager for North West Warriors. Gary Wilson made his International Debut in 2005 for Ireland, and represented the side 292 times. He is the 2nd Highest wicket-taker for Ireland with 160 catches & 33 stumping's. In his 16 yearlong cricketing career, he scored 5,959 runs for Ireland, with 1 century and 30 fifties.

- 49.** Kamalpreet Kaur associated with **Discus throw** sports who broke the 9 year old National record and qualified for Tokyo Olympics.

Note: The 25-year-old Kaur, who had also won gold in the 2019 edition of the championships, dramatically heaved the discus to 65.06m in her first throw to the surprise of the sizeable crowd at the NIS. She eclipsed the nine-year-old earlier national record of 64.76m which was in the name of Olympian and 2010 Commonwealth Games gold medallist Krishna Poonia.

- 50.** Cricketers Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt banned for 8 years from all form of cricket, by the International Cricket Council, the belongs to **UAE**.

Note: The banned for trying to fix matches during the T20 World Cup qualifiers in 2019. The ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal had found them guilty of breaching the Anti-Corruption Code in January 2021.

- 51. Virat Kohli has** become the first cricketer to score 3000 runs in Men's Twenty20 Internationals.

Note: Kohli's knock of 73 runs, which came off 49 balls, also helped India to level the five-match T20I series. He also became the third captain in international cricket to score 12000 runs as a captain. He joined legendary captains Ricky Ponting and Graeme Smith in the elite list.

- 52.** Indian sprinter who beat national record holder Dutee Chand to win women's 100m sprint final in the Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships in Patiala -- **S Dhanalakshmi**.
Note: The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu clocked 11.39 seconds to become the fastest woman of the championships. Odisha-based Dutee clocked 11.58 seconds to be placed in second place.
- 53.** Indian shooter **Yashaswini Deswal has** won the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10M Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup.
Note: Deswal accumulated 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal with 236.7 points. World number one shooter Divyansh Singh Panwar clinched the bronze medal in 10m Air Rifle (men's category) and opened India's medal account in the competition.
- 54.** The Sports Ministry has decided to extend the Khelo India scheme from 2021-22 to **2025-26**.
Note: The Sports Ministry has decided to extend the Khelo India scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The Ministry has furnished an Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) memorandum to the Ministry of Finance for extension/continuation of the Khelo India Scheme from 2021-22 to 2025- 26. An amount of Rs 657.71 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimate (B.E.) for the year 2021-22 under the Khelo India Scheme
- 55.** Indian shooter **Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar** has won the gold medal in the men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
Note: The 20-year-old became the youngest in history to win a shooting World Cup gold in the 3 Positions event. The two other Indian shooters in the final, Sanjeev Rajput finishing sixth and Niraj Kumar came at the last position.
- 56.** Indian contingent has won 15 Gold Medal in ISSF World Cup in the Trap events.
Note: Indian trio of Shreyasi Singh, Manisha Keer and Rajeshwari Kumari won the gold medal in women's Trap Team event. India outgunned the Kazakhstan trio 6-0 in the final. Men's Trap Team event: Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Lakshay beat the Slovakian team in the gold medal match to make it 30 medals for India in the shooting World Cup.
- 57.** **Lewis Hamilton has** won the 2021 Bahrain Grand Prix also known as Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2021.
Note: Red Bull Racing's driver Max Verstappen (Netherlands) finished 2nd in the race, while Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas (Finland) finished 3rd in the race. The victory was Hamilton's 96th Formula One Victory. The Bahrain Grand Prix is the inaugural GP of the 2021 Formula One World Championship.

Books and Authors

- 43. Anindya Dutta** has authored the book titled "Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis".
Note: Advantage India is a well-researched account of the journey of Indian tennis, with a special section on the Doubles game and on women's tennis in India. The book is published by Westland publications. The book provides the extensive history of Indian tennis on both men's and women's side.
- 44. Olga Tokarczuk** has authored the book titled 'The Lost Soul'.
Note: It is a story that beautifully weaves together the voice of the Nobel Prize-winning Polish novelist Olga Tokarczuk and the finely detailed pen-and-ink drawings of illustrator Joanna Concejo, who together create a parallel narrative universe full of secrets, evocative of another time. Here a man has forgotten what makes his heart feel full.
- 45. Evan Osnos** has authored the book titled "Joe Biden: American Dreamer" a biography of American President, Joe Biden.
Note: The author portrays President Joseph R. Biden Jr. as a man who has sustained a 50-year political career and became the President and a man who is marked with deep personal losses. The book captures the characters and features of the presidential election.
- 46. Susmita Mukherjee** has authored the book titled "Baanjh: Incomplete Lives of Complete Women".
Note: The book is a collection of 11 short stories that portray the lives of women from various social backgrounds. The book was published by Readomania Publishing. The book features the world of the women who are living in the excluded society to the women living in higher levels of society.
- 47. Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti** has authored the book titled "Essays on Srimanta Sankaradeva".
Note: "Essays on Srimanta Sankaradeva", the new book of **Dr Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti** highlights hitherto unexplored areas of Indian culture and philosophy. The author has written the essays on the lasting contributions of the medieval polymath Srimanta Sankaradeva.
- 48. A.S. Panneerselvan** has authored the book titled "Karunanidhi: A Life".
Note: The book tells the story of the man who became a metaphor for modern Tamil Nadu, where language, empowerment, self-respect, art, literary forms and films coalesced to lend a unique vibrancy to politics.
- 49. Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan** has authored the book titled "Prince with a Paintbrush: The Story of Raja Ravi Varma".
Note: Published under Westland's 'Red Panda' imprint, it aims to inspire young readers to learn about the famed artist and how he made his entry and mark in the art world. Srinivasan has earlier authored children's books like "Indi-Alphabet" and "How Many Lines in a Limerick?"
- 50. Indra Nooyi** has authored the book titled "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future".

Note: The book is set to be published by Portfolio books on September 28. The book will feature both the personal and professional life of Indra Nooyi. The book features the life of Indra Nooyi from her childhood in India to her life at Yale University as an immigrant to her life as a person of colour in the elite corporate world.

51. Jahnavi Barua has authored the novel titled "Undertow".

Note: The book was published by Penguin Viking. The book portrays the story of Loya, a 25-year-old who is on a journey to discover herself. Loya leaves her home in Bengaluru and sets off to Assam to study Asian elephants (*Elephas Maximus*) and to connect with her grandfather Torun Ram Goswami.

52. Usha Thakkar & Sandhya Mehta has authored the book titled "Gandhi in Bombay".

Note: The Indiatourism Mumbai, Regional Office of Ministry of Tourism in the Western Region organized an online book reading session of "Gandhi in Bombay" by the authors Dr.Usha Thakkar and Sandhya Mehta , as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India @ 75) is a series of events to be organised by the Government of India to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Usha Thakkar and Sandhya Mehta India's Independence

53. Dr. Deepak Ravindran has authored the book titled "The Pain-Free Mindset: 7 Steps to Taking Control and Overcoming Chronic Pain".

Note: The book was published by Vermillion, an imprint of Penguin. This is the first book by a medical physician in the UK in the past 15 years to provide an overview that new scientific advances in understanding the nervous system will support us in overcoming pain.

54. Arjun Subramaniam has authored the book titled "Full Spectrum: India's Wars 1972-2020".

Note: It is his second book and it explores the trials and tribulations, successes and failures of India's armed forces in the post-1971 period It is covering major operation that the armed forces have participated including insurgencies in the north-east, terrorism and proxy wars in Jammu and Kashmir, separatist violence in Punjab, the IPKF intervention in Sri Lanka.

55. Samir Soni has authored the book titled "My Experiments with Silence".

Note: Soni's book aims to be a personal account of his dialogues with himself during his growing-up years in Delhi, his stint at Wall Street and his time in Bollywood. The book will be published by OM Books International.

56. Neha Sinha has authored the book titled "Wild and Wilful: Tale of 15 Iconic Indian Species".

Note: The book is a collection of 15 essays each focused on an Indian species. Through this book Neha Sinha highlights the indicators of developed India can affect various ecologies and displaced wildlife even result in their extinction.

57. Daribha Lyndem has authored the book titled "Name Place Animal Things".

Note: The book is published by Zubaan Publishers Pvt. Ltd. The book features a young khasi woman who lives in the city of Shillong, Meghalaya in early 2000s. The book has interconnected

stories that move through age, lives and places and covers the breadth of childhood and moves into the awareness of adulthood.

- 58. Christina Lamb** is the co-author of the autobiographical book "I Am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban.

Note: It was co-written by Christina Lamb and published on 8 October 2013, by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in the UK and Little, Brown and Company in the US. The book details the early life of Yousafzai, the rise and fall of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and the assassination attempt made against Yousafzai, when she was aged 15, following her activism for female education.

Science and Defence

- 1. UAE** hosted the multinational Exercise Desert Flag-VI for the first time.

Note: The exercise is being held from March 3 to 21 at the Al-Dhafra airbase in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Exercise Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the UAE Air Force. The aim of the exercise is to provide operational exposure to the participating forces, while training them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment.

- 2. TRAI** has organized 'India Telecom 2021' – an Exclusive International Business Expo under Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAI).

Note: The main objective of the event is to provide opportunities to Indian telecom exporters to meet qualified overseas buyers. TEPC has created this platform to bring potential buyers from across the globe and quality telecom equipment manufacturers and ICT services solution providers from India under one roof to interact and finalize business deals.

- 3. Special forces of Turkmenistan** is being trained by Indian Army in "Combat Free Fall" to help them build their capabilities.

Note: The Indian Army shared the information of the training on Twitter and said it was building bonds of friendship with the Turkmenistani forces. Special Forces Training School Indian Army has commenced training of Turkmenistan Special Forces in Combat Free Fall as a precursor to a series of customised courses to follow and help build the capability of the Turkmenistan Special Forces

- 4. The second edition of the joint military exercise 'Dustlik' has been conducted between India and Uzbekistan.**

Note: The second edition of exercise Dustlik is aimed at carrying out joint counter-terror operations in a mountainous rural and urban scenario. Intelligence-based surgical operations, special forces tracking techniques, surveillance through a hi-tech command post, slithering operations from helicopters were some of the key elements of the exercise.

- 5. The second edition of the joint military exercise 'Dustlik' was convened between India and Uzbekistan in Uttarakhand.**

Note: The Indian Army was represented by 13 Kumaon known as the Rezang La battalion famous for its heroics in the battle of Rezang La in 1962 war with China. The first one took place in November 2019 near Tashkent in Uzbekistan.

6. With space agency **NASA** the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has completed development of a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission.

Note: NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation. "NISAR will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in our planet's surface less than a centimeter across".

7. indigenously developed Advanced Light Torpedo (TAL) **Shyena**, maiden flight trials of which was conducted successfully.

Note: This was the country's first such trial where the indigenous lightweight torpedo was fired from a fixed-wing aircraft. The lightweight torpedo was designed, developed, produced and inducted into services a decade ago and is used against underwater platforms as part of anti-submarine warfare (ASW).

8. Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) is joint Robotic Lunar mission of India and **Japan** that aims to send a lander and rover to the Moon's south pole in the year 2024.

Note: LUPEX is a robotic Lunar mission that aims to send a lander and rover to the Moon's south pole in the year 2024. The discussions took place in a virtual meeting between ISRO & JAXA. The Indian side was led by ISRO Chairman K Sivan while the Japan delegation was represented by Hiroshi Yamakawa, President of JAXA.

9. The name of the sounding rocket which was launched by ISRO in March 2021 to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics -- **RH-560**.

Note: RH-560 will study altitudinal variations in neutral winds and plasma dynamics. ISRO has developed series of sounding rockets known as 'Rohini series'. Among them RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560 are the important ones.

10. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has signed an MoU with **National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela** for setting up a Space Technology Incubation Centre (S-TIC).

Note: The MoU was signed after ISRO agreed to set up a Space Technology Incubation Centre(S-TIC) at NIT Rourkela. This collaboration with ISRO will open up new opportunities for research and development as well as space start-ups.

11. The researcher of which IIT **Bombay** built the 'Energy Swaraj Yatra' bus that runs on solar energy and has a complete work-cum-residential unit.

Note: An 'Energy Swaraj Yatra' bus has been built by Dr Chetan Singh Solanki, Prof. IIT Bombay. The bus runs on solar energy and has a complete work-cum-residential unit. Mr Solanki has been travelling on it to raise awareness about the use of solar power. The Energy Swaraj Yatra began in 2020 and will continue till 2030.

- 12.** 'Pabbi-Antiterror-2021' is a joint anti-terrorism exercise of **SCO** group of countries.
Note: The decision to hold the joint exercise "Pabbi-Antiterror-2021" was announced during the 36th meeting of the Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. At the meeting, representatives of the SCO member states also approved the draft program of cooperation for 2022-2024 to counter-terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- 13.** **USA, France, Belgium and Japan** countries are the participants in the Group Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise, a major naval exercise.
Note: The Group Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise will see ships from the four countries conduct drills in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman. Ships involved include the French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, as well as the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island.
- 14.** According to a study released by defence website 'Military Direct' has the strongest military force in the world -- **China**.
Note: The USA, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in 2nd place with 74 points, followed by Russia with 69, India at 61 and then France with 58. The UK just about makes the Top 10, coming in 9th place with a score of 43. China has the strongest military in the world, scoring 82 out of 100 points in the index.
- 15.** **Larson & Toubro Limited** built the Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) ICGS Vajra was commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) by General Bipin Rawat in Chennai.
Note: ICGS Vajra is the sixth vessel in the series of seven OPVs being built by L&T under a Ministry of Defence contract signed in the year 2015. Like the five OPVs in the series, ICGS Vajra was also delivered ahead of the contractual schedule.
- 16.** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has partnered with **Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST)** for futuristic research orbit -something similar to the JPL-Caltech model in the United States.
Note: The Bengaluru-headquartered space agency is striking a partnership with the IIST -- something similar to the JPL- Caltech model in the United States. JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) is federally funded by US space agency NASA and managed by Caltech (California Institute of Technology).
- 17.** According to Global Wind Report 2021 published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC), **93 gigawatt (GW)** wind energy capacity has been installed in 2020 which was the best year in history for the global wind industry .
Note: As per the report, 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 gigawatt (GW) of new capacity installed, which was a 53 per cent year-on-year increase. According to the report titled 'Global Wind Report 2021', at present there is 743 GW of wind power capacity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO2 globally – equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of South America.

18. The ordnance was collected from the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT) Industrial Estate in Gummidipoondi, Thiruvallur district, TN.

Note: Operation Thiruvallur was initiated by the Ministry of Defence on the request of Govt. of Tamil Nadu. Unexploded ordnance from a metal scrap dump were successfully neutralised by the Army Bomb Disposal Team.

19. IIT Delhi is setting up an atmospheric observatory to do research, track atmospheric problems like air pollution, and suggest solutions to mitigate pollution, erratic monsoon and extreme weather events associated with climate change.

Note: The Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi announced that it is setting up an atmospheric observatory to do research, track atmospheric problems like air pollution, and suggest solutions to mitigate pollution, erratic monsoon and extreme weather events associated with climate change. The observatory will be established in its research campus in Sonapat at a cost of ₹125 crore.
