



# Monthly Current Affairs

## January 2021

### English

## Monthly Current Affair Digest: January 2021

### Important News: State

#### Floating solar project at Omkareshwar to begin power generation by 2022-23

- The world's largest floating 600 MW solar energy project to be constructed at Omkareshwar dam on Narmada River in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh will begin power generation by year 2022-23.
- The International Finance Corporation, World Bank and Power Grid have granted in-principle consent for providing aid for the said project development.
- Electricity will be produced in about 2000-hectare water area by installing solar panels in the dam.

#### 4th edition of Cherry Blossom Festival

- The 4th edition of the Cherry Blossom Festival, Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur was virtually inaugurated by Chief Minister N Biren Singh.
- It was jointly organized by the Department of Tourism and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Shillong in association with the Organizing Committee Flower Festival, Mao.
- **Note:** Manipur has been celebrating this festival every year since 2017.
- The International Cherry Blossom Festival which is celebrated in Shillong was cancelled too for the global pandemic. Japan is renowned for its Cherry Blossom Festival too.

#### Arunachal Pradesh can become India's prime producer of Vanadium

- In an exploration being carried out by the Geological Survey of India, the eastern Himalayan State has been placed on the vanadium map and geologists are confident of finding a deposit soon.
- **About Vanadium:** In its pure form, it is a grey, soft and ductile element primarily derived from mined iron ore, steel slag, and phyllites. It is a high-value metal that has been used in strengthening steel and titanium.
- **Note:** The largest deposits of Vanadium are in China, followed by South Africa and Russia.

#### India's first Fire Park comes up in Odisha

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated in Bhubaneswar the 'Fire Park', a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures.
- He also launched a dynamic online portal, 'AgnishamaSeva' of Odisha Fire Service.
- Demonstrations on use of first aid fire-fighting equipment, rescue and disaster operations, visit to exhibition hall, screening of films and distribution of leaflets on fire safety will be part of the activities.

### **Prime Minister releases financial assistance to over 6 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh under PMAY-G**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released financial assistance of around Rs 2,691 crores to 6.1 lakh beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) scheme.
- **Note: Prime Minister** had given the clarion call of "Housing for All by 2022", for which a flagship programme of **PMAY-G** was launched on November 20, 2016.
- So far 1.26 crore houses have already been built across the country under the PMAY-G.
- The beneficiaries of PMAY-G, in addition to the unit assistance, are also provided support of unskilled labour wages under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and assistance of Rs. 12,000 for construction of toilets through Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G).
- **Facts about Uttar Pradesh:**  
**Governor:** Anandiben Patel  
**Chief Minister:** Yogi Adityanath  
**Capital:** Lucknow

### **Prime Minister appointed chairman of Somnath Temple Trust**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was appointed the new chairman of the trust which manages the world famous Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan town in Gujarat's Gir-Somnath district.
- After former PM Morarji Desai, Narendra Modi is the second Prime Minister who has been appointed the chairman of the temple trust. As per trust records, PM Modi has become the eighth chairman of the trust.
- **Note:** 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. Patel had served as the chairman for 16 years (2004-2020).

### **India's first air taxi service starts from Chandigarh.**

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated air taxi services from Chandigarh to Hisar under the UDAN scheme of the Central Government.
- For the first time in the country, a small aircraft in the form of an air taxi is being used for services.
- The air taxi service will be operated by AirTaxi India which was granted the Scheduled Commuter Airline Permit by the Indian aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in December 2020.

### **India's first Labour Movement museum to come up in Kerala**

- The country's first Labour Movement Museum, showcasing the history of world labour movement, would be launched in Kerala's houseboat tourism hub, Alappuzha.
- The New Model Cooperative Society Limited, previously run by the Bombay Company, has been converted into the Labour Movement Museum.

- It is being built as part of the Alappuzha Heritage Tourism project.
- **Facts about Kerala:** Kerala has the highest literacy rate in the country.  
**Capital:** Thiruvananthapuram  
**Chief Minister:** Pinarayi Vijayan  
**Governor:** Arif Mohammad Khan

### **Madhya Pradesh becomes first State to give power subsidy to farmers through DBT**

- Madhya Pradesh has become the first State to give electricity subsidy through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme. With this, it has fulfilled a power reform condition as proposed by the Centre and thus eligible for additional borrowing.
- Successful implementation of the reform has made the State eligible to mobilise additional financial resources equivalent to 0.15 percent of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
- The Department of Expenditure has granted permission to the State to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs. 1,423 crore through Open Market Borrowings.
- **Note:** Recently, the historical fort cities of **Gwalior and Orchha** in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the **list of UNESCO's world heritage cities** under its urban landscape city programme.

### **1st small-scale LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at Hazira, Gujarat**

- Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at its LNG terminal at Hazira in Gujarat.
- This will now augment Shell's natural gas supply offerings in India to include supply of LNG via trucks.
- **Note:** The Government of India is promoting natural gas through various policy and regulatory reforms towards making India- a gas-based economy by increasing the share of gas in India's primary energy mix to 15 per cent.

### **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (Bagayat Vikas Mission)**

- The aim of this mission is to double the income of farmers involved in medicinal and horticulture farming.
- The government has included Kutch, Surendranagar, Patan, Sabarkantha and Banaskantha districts in the first phase.
- **Under this mission**, a tax on land conversion will be waived off. Lease amount applicable will be Rs 100 to Rs 500 per year per acre during 6th to 30th year. Lease holders will be able to set up solar panel, windmills to generate energy for their own use, but will not be allowed to sell it.
- **Note:** Chief Minister of Gujarat also announced that the state government has decided to rename dragon fruit as '**Kamalam**'. This fruit is largely grown in Kutch, Navsari and different parts of Saurashtra.

### **Maharashtra government renamed Nagpur's Gorewada International Zoo as Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park**

- The zoological park will come up on nearly 2,000 hectares forest land. It also said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate the Indian safari at the zoo on January 26.
- **Note:** Aiming to protect forests and promote tourism, Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), had announced the setting up of the 'international-standard' bio park in August 2019. The task was entrusted to the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd.

### **Home Minister Amit Shah attends first BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) Accord Day celebration at Kokrajhar in Assam**

- **Note:** The BTR accord was signed on January 27, 2020 in New Delhi.
- **Facts about Bodoland Territorial Region:** The Bodoland Territorial Region is an autonomous region in Assam, Northeast India.  
**Government body:** Bodoland Territorial Council  
**Districts:** 4  
**Established:** 9 February 2003  
**Headquarters:** Kokrajhar
- Union Home Minister also launched the **Ayushman CAPF** scheme in Guwahati for about 28 lakh central arms forces and their families in all the states where Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is in operation.

### **Ministry of Tribal Affairs virtually launches "Shramshakti" Digital Data Solution for Migrant Workers**

- The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda launched "ShramShakti", a National Migration Support Portal at a programme held at Panjim, Goa.
- It would effectively help in the smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers.
- He also launched a **tribal migration cell, a tribal museum at Goa** and "**ShramSaathi**", a training manual for migrant workers.
- **Note:** The Chief Minister of Goa, Pramod Sawant informed that **Goa is going to be the first destination state of India to set up a dedicated migration cell** to address diverse issues of migrant workers.

### **India's longest road arch bridge in Meghalaya**

- Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma inaugurated India's longest road arch bridge, the Wahrew Bridge at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district.
- The bridge connects Bholaganj and Sohbar to Nongjri in East Khasi Hills, bordering Bangladesh.
- **Note:** The funds for the construction of the bridge were sanctioned from the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources of the Union ministry of development of Northeastern region (DoNER).

### **24th “Hunar Haat” at Avadh Shilpgram, Lucknow (UP)**

- The Ministry of Minority Affairs is organising the 24<sup>th</sup> “Hunar Haat” at Avadh Shilpgram, Lucknow (UP) from 22<sup>nd</sup> January to 04<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 with the theme of “Vocal for Local”.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Shri Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the “Hunar Haat” on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2021.
- **Note:** In the coming days, “Hunar Haat” will be organised at Mysore, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Indore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Ranchi, Kota, Surat/Ahmedabad, Kochi, Puducherry and other places.

### **Gujarat inks pact with Adani Ports for India’s largest multi-modal logistics park**

- The Gujarat Government inked an agreement with India’s largest ports operator, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ), to set up India’s largest multi-modal logistics park.
- The park, which will be spread across 1,450 acres at Virochan Nagar near Sanand automobile hub, will attract investments worth ₹50,000 crore in the logistics and transport space.
- This park will be directly connected with the Dedicated Freight Corridor and all major ports. The park will have a dedicated Air Cargo Complex.
- **Facts of about Gujarat:**  
**Capital:** Gandhinagar  
**Governor:** Acharya Devvrat  
**Chief Minister:** Vijay Rupani

### **Haridwar teen Shrishti Goswami becomes Uttarakhand CM for one day**

- To mark the National Girl Child Day (24 January), Haridwar teenager Shrishti Goswami took charge as the chief minister of Uttarakhand for one day.
- 19-year-old Goswami, a student of BSc Agriculture, lives in Daulatpur village of the district.
- The one-day chief minister had administered from Gairsain, the summer capital of the state.
- **Note:** She had in 2018 become the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Bal Vidhan Sabha. In 2019, she went to Thailand to take part in Girls’ International Leadership.

### **Madhya Pradesh CM launches 'PANKH Abhiyan'**

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the 'PANKH Abhiyan' under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme in order to aid in empowerment and growth of the girl child on the occasion of National Girl Child Day (24 January).
- **PANKH:** '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.
- **Facts about Madhya Pradesh:** Recently, UNESCO has allotted Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh ‘Biosphere Reserve’ status.

### **Uttar Pradesh becomes the first state in the country with two airstrips on expressways**

- One airstrip is on Lucknow-Agra Expressway while the other is near Kurebhar on Purvanchal Expressway (3,300-metre-long airstrip).
- Airstrips on expressways are designed to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.
- **Facts about Uttar Pradesh:** Recently, 'Udyam Sarathi' app was launched on UP Diwas by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to promote entrepreneurship among youth and help them explore new opportunities for self-employment.

### **Maharashtra launches 'Jail Tourism' initiative from Pune's Yerawada Jail**

- The Prison Department of Maharashtra launched its jail tourism initiative starting with more than 150-year-old Yerawada Central Prison in Pune.
- **About Yerawada Jail:** It is the largest jail in Maharashtra and one of the largest maximum security prisons in the country. Several freedom fighters including Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak were imprisoned at Yerawada jail. Poona Pact between Gandhi and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar was signed here.

### **Meghalaya selected for Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections**

- The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya was selected for a Special Award for Information Technology applications in Elections by the Election Commission of India (ECI), in the National Best Electoral Practices Awards-2020.
- **Facts about Meghalaya:**  
**Capital:** Shillong  
**Governor:** Satya Pal Malik  
**Chief Minister:** Conrad Sangma

## **Important News: India**

### **PM delivers inaugural address at National Metrology Conclave**

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered inaugural address at the National Metrology Conclave 2021.
- The theme of the conclave is 'Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation'.
- He dedicated 'National Atomic Timescale' and 'Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya Pranali' to the Nation and laid the Foundation Stone of 'National Environmental Standards Laboratory'.
- The Conclave was organised by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), New Delhi, on its 75th year of inception.
- **Note:** Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya would help the industry to make quality products in sectors like Heavy metals, Pesticides, Pharma and Textiles by drafting a 'Certified Reference Material System'.

### **MEA launches ‘Global Pravasi Rishta Portal’ and mobile app**

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and app in order to connect with nearly 3.12 crore Indians across the world.
- The app aims at creating a three-way communication between the Indian missions, ministry and the Indian diaspora.
- The app will be used by the Indian nationals and diaspora, while the portal will be used by the Indian missions.

### **Indian Railways completes 180 Kmph speed trail run of Vistadome Tourist Coach**

- The vistadome tourist coaches are European-style coaches, with technologically advanced features for improving passenger's comfort and offer a panoramic view during the train journey. These vistadome coaches mostly operate in mountain railways.
- The coach has been manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.
- **Note:** Earlier, the first vistadome Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coach for the broad gauge (BG) lines was cleared for the 180 km per hour oscillation trial.

### **Union home minister Amit Shah inaugurates “National Police K-9 Journal.”**

- The publication of the Police K9 Journal is another step in creating an ecosystem in the country to train and learn on augmenting this vital resource.
- This is a unique initiative which will further enrich the subjects related to Police Service Canine (K-9) (PSK) teams in the country.
- **Note:** A special ‘Police K9 Cell’ was established in November 2019 under the Police Modernisation Division of the ministry of home affairs with the mandate of ‘Mainstreaming and Augmentation of Police Service K9s in the country’.

### **PM inaugurates 450 km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 450-km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline at a cost of Rs 3,000 crore built by GAIL (India) Ltd. marks an important milestone towards the creation of “One Nation One Gas Grid”.
- The pipeline will carry natural gas from Kochi in Kerala through Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod districts to Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka.
- **Note:** Natural gas pipeline network will be doubled in 5-6 years and CNG stations will be raised to 10,000 from current 1,500.

### **PM dedicates to nation new Section of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor and flags off world's first Double Stack Long Haul Container Train**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the 306-Kilometre long New Rewari-New Madar Section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor. He also flagged off the world's first Double Stack Long Haul 1.5 Kilometre long Container Train hauled by electric traction from New Ateli -New Kishangarh.

### **Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog to hold online exam on cow science**

- Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA) has announced that it will hold a countrywide online examination on ‘gau vigyan’ (cow science) on February 25.
- This is the first-ever exam of this kind-‘Kamdhenu Gau Vigyan Prachar Prasara Examination’. This exam will be held annually.
- **Note: RKA** comes under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying. It was set up by the Centre in February 2019, and is aimed at “protection and development of cows”.

### **Government of India’s UJALA and SLNP completes six years of Illuminating India efficiently**

- Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on January 5, 2015, the Government of India’s zero subsidy Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) and Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) marks their sixth anniversary.
- Both the programmes are being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under the Ministry of Power, Government of India since their inception.
- **Note:** EESL has an ambitious plan in the SLNP portfolio for next 4-5 years where it intends to bring investment to the tune of INR 8,000 crores by 2024 by covering the entire rural India. It is expected that more than 30 million LED streetlights would be retrofitted/installed by EESL.

### **National Youth Parliament Festival 2021**

- The Finals of National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) 2021 was held in the Central Hall of Parliament.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Valedictory Function of National Youth Parliament Festival 2021.
- The objective of the National Youth Parliament Festival is to hear the voice of youth between 18 and less than 25 years of age, who will join various careers in coming years, including public services.
- The 2nd National Youth Parliament Festival 2021 was launched on 23rd of December 2020 across the country at district, state and national level.
- **Note:** The first NYPF 2019 was organised from 12 January to 27 February 2019 at District, State and National level.

### **51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**

- From 16 January to 24 January, 2021, the 51st Edition of the International Film Festival of India is going to be held in Goa.
- On 11 January, 2021, the International Film Festival of India announced this edition's Country in Focus. **For the 51st IFFI, the Country in Focus is Bangladesh.**
- **About International Film Festival of India:** It was founded in 1952. It is conducted jointly by the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and the state Government of Goa.

### **Suriname's Indian-origin President to be Chief Guest at Republic Day 2021**

- Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Indian-origin President of Suriname, will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade on January 26, 2021.
- **Note:** The Suriname President was earlier the Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, which was conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- India had initially invited UK PM Boris Johnson to be the Republic Day Chief Guest but the British PM later decided to cancel his visit due to the escalating COVID-19 situation in the United Kingdom.

### **The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the three farm laws and set up a committee**

- The court formed a four-member committee of experts to listen to the grievances of the farmers on the farm laws and the views of the government and make recommendations.
- The committee will comprise agricultural economist Ashok Gulati, Pramod Kumar Joshi, Director South Asia International Food Policy Research Institute, Anil Ghanwat of the Sethkari Sangathan and B S Mann of the Bharatiya Kisan Union.
- **The laws whose implementation has been suspended are-** (i) The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (ii) Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 (iii) Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020

### **Heritage Conservation Committee approves construction of new parliament building**

- A few days ago, the Supreme Court cleared the decks for the ambitious Central Vista Project, which covers a three-km stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate in Lutyens' Delhi, by upholding the environmental clearance and the notification for change in land use.
- Additional secretary of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry is the chairman of the Heritage Conservation Committee.
- **Note:** The Central Vista revamp, announced in September, 2019 envisages a new triangular Parliament building, with a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs that is to be constructed by August, 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day. The common Central Secretariat is likely to be built by 2024 under the project.

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi flags off eight trains connecting different regions of the country to Kevadiya in Gujarat**

- This was the first time in the history of Railways that trains have been flagged off for the same destinations from different corners of the country.
- The new connectivity between Kevadiya and Chennai, Varanasi, Rewa, Dadar and Delhi along with MEMU service between Kevadiya and Pratapnagar and

broad gauging of Dabhoi-Chandod and new Line between Chandod- Kevadiya will script a new chapter in the development of Kevadiya.

- **Note:** Kevadiya Station is India's first railway station to start with green building certification.
- The Statue of Unity, situated near Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district, is the world's tallest statue.

### **3rd phase of PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) launched**

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of PMKVY was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 600 districts across the country.
- Skill India Mission-PMKVY 3.0 envisages training of eight lakh candidates over a scheme period of 2020-2021 with an outlay of Rs 949 crore.
- **Note:** The government had launched the PMKVY scheme in 2015 to mobilize youth to take up skill training with the aim of increasing productivity and aligning the training and certification to the needs of the country. The scheme was revamped as PMKVY -2 in 2016 with an aim to train one crore youth by the year 2020.

### **First National Road Safety Month 2021**

- The first-ever National Road Safety Month (January 18-February 17) was inaugurated by Union Minister for Defence Shri Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari to build awareness about road safety and reduce road accidents in India.
- The theme is "Sadak Suraksha- Jeevan Raksha".
- **Note:** During the last few years, a road safety week was being organised, but considering the importance of the issue, a month-long programme has been made this year.
- As per a recent report, around 400 people die every day in India due to road accidents. India tops in the number of road accident deaths across the 195 countries.

### **Ministry of Railways approves the naming of Train No. 12311/12312 Howrah-Kalka Mail as "Netaji Express"**

- Howrah -Kalka Mail is a very popular and one of the oldest trains of Indian Railways. The Howrah-Kalka Mail is running between Howrah (Eastern Railway) and Kalka (Northern Railway) via Delhi.

### **IIT Roorkee collaborates with MoRTH to focus on teaching & training for Development of Highway Infrastructure**

- Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee has collaborated with the Minister of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) to focus on research and development, teaching & training for the Development of Highway Infrastructure.
- This collaboration of MoRTH with IIT-Roorkee will strengthen R&D activities in the Road Sector and the Chair professor is expected to provide leadership in

conducting and coordinating research, development, and teaching in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.

### **Bharat Parv 2021 to be inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla on 26th January 2021**

- The annual event Bharat Parv is being organised on a virtual platform from 26<sup>th</sup>Jan to 31<sup>st</sup>Jan 2021 wherein themed pavilions of multiple States & UTs will showcase their tourism destinations, cuisine, handicraft and other features.
- **Note:** Ministry of Tourism, Government of India organizes Bharat Parv every year since 2016 in front of the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Republic Day Celebrations from 26th to 31st January.

### **Republic Day parade: Uttar Pradesh wins best tableau award**

- Uttar Pradesh was adjudged the best tableau among the 32 tableaux that participated in the Republic Day Parade this year.
- The tableau of Uttar Pradesh was based on the theme Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh.
- The tableau of Tripura was adjudged the second best followed by Uttarakhand's at third.

## **Important News: World**

### **India begins its two-year tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on January 1, 2021**

- In 2021, India, Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico join non-permanent members Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam and the five permanent members China, France, Russia, UK and the US in the Council.
- It will be India's 8<sup>th</sup> term.
- India will be UNSC President in August 2021 and will preside over the Council again for a month in 2022.

### **Denmark's Oscar nominee 'Another Round' to be opening movie at 51st IFFI in Goa**

- The 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held in Goa from 16 to 24 January. The ceremony will begin with Thomas Winterberg's film Another Round.
- **Note:** The International Jury for 51st edition of International Film Festival of India has been announced with eminent filmmakers from across the world. **Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar** has been named as the Chairman of the jury. The other jury members are Prasanna Vithanage of Sri Lanka, Abu Bakr Shawky of Austria, Priyadarshan of India and Rubaiyat Hossain of Bangladesh.

### **Japan to join Five Eyes alliance**

- **Note:** The **Five Eyes** is an **alliance of five major nations** including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.
- The US and the UK formed a secret treaty known as the 'BRUSA Agreement' in May 1943 for cooperation in intelligence sharing.
- This agreement was later formalized as the 'UKUSA Agreement' in 1946. The Five Eyes was an outcome of the UKUSA Agreement.

### **US Congress passes "Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act" for Pakistani women**

- The US Congress has passed the "Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act" which will expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women to receive higher education under a merit and needs-based programme.
- 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.
- **Note:** On October 10, 2014, Malala shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi for her "struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education".

### **Japan to launch the first wood-based satellite by 2023**

- Japan's Sumitomo Forestry firm and Kyoto University goals to launch the world's first wood-based space satellite to fight the drawback of space junk.
- **Note:** According to the European Space Agency (ESA) statistical model, there are greater than 130 million items of anthropogenic space debris due to human actions. The debris can journey at a pace of greater than 22,300 mph and may affect different satellites.

### **Cabinet approves signing of Memorandum of Cooperation between India and Japan on Partnership in "Specified Skilled Worker"**

- The present Memorandum of Cooperation would set an institutional mechanism for partnership and cooperation between India and Japan on sending and accepting skilled Indian workers, who have qualified the required skill and Japanese language test, to work in fourteen specified sectors in Japan.
- These Indian workers would be granted a new status of residence of "Specified Skilled Worker" by the Government of Japan.

### **India to chair 3 important committees of United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**

- India began its eighth term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on January 4, 2021.
- The 3 key subsidiary bodies of UNSC are **Taliban Sanctions Committee** (also called the 1988 Sanctions Committee), **Counter Terrorism Committee** (for 2022) and **Libya Sanctions Committee**.

### **India and Japan Sign MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of ICT (Information and Communications Technology)**

- MoU was signed by Union Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Japanese Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications Takeda Ryota.
- Department of Telecom, Government of India and Ministry of Communications, Government of Japan 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.

### **Donald Trump becomes first US President to be impeached twice**

- Donald Trump became the first US president in history to be impeached twice when the House of Representatives voted to charge him with inciting mob attack on Congress.
- The second impeachment of Donald Trump occurred on January 13, 2021, one week before his term was due to expire.
- He has been previously impeached in December 2019 for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

### **Uganda's President Museveni wins sixth term**

- Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has scored a decisive election victory to win a sixth term.
- The 76-year-old Museveni has been in power since 1986 and is one of Africa's longest-serving leaders.
- **Facts about Uganda:** Country in East Africa  
**Capital:** Kampala  
**Currency:** Ugandan shilling

### **Russia withdraws from Open Skies Treaty**

- Russia announced that it was leaving the Open Skies Treaty (OST), an accord between over 30 countries that allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states.
- In November 2020, the United States left the OST.
- **Facts about Open Skies Treaty:** It establishes a program of unarmed aerial surveillance flights over the entire territory of its participants. It entered into force on January 1, 2002.

### **Iran, six other nations lose right to vote in UNGA**

- Iran and six other nations lost their right to vote in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) because they have not paid their dues.
- The other countries losing their UNGA voting rights are Niger, Libya, the Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.
- Three more countries - Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia - will be allowed to continue to vote despite missing dues payments, because they sufficiently demonstrated that they are incapable of paying.

- **Note: Under Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations**, a Member State in arrears in the payment of its dues in an amount that equals or exceeds the contributions due for two preceding years can lose its vote in the General Assembly.

### **United Nations Human Rights Office urges release of Bhima Koregaon Activists**

- The UN Human Rights office has expressed serious concern about the detention of human rights defenders in India, including those arrested in the controversial Bhima Koregaon case, and has urged the Indian authorities to release the detainees “at the very least on bail”.
- **Note: 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence** refers to violence during an annual celebratory gathering on 1 January 2018 at Bhima Koregaon to mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Bhima Koregaon.
- A small village in Pune district of Maharashtra, Bhima-Koregaon is associated with an important phase of Maratha history. On January 1, 1818, a Dalit-dominated British Army had defeated a Peshwa army, led by Peshwa Bajirao II, in Koregaon.

### **First-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons enters into force**

- The first-ever treaty to ban nuclear weapons (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons-TPNW) entered into force, hailed as a historic step to rid the world of its deadliest weapons but strongly opposed by the world's nuclear-armed nations.
- When the treaty was approved by the U.N. General Assembly in July 2017, more than 120 approved it. But none of the nine countries known or believed to possess nuclear weapons - the United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel - supported it and neither did the 30-nation NATO alliance.
- The treaty received its 50th ratification on 24 October 2020 and came into effect from 22 January 2021.

### **Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has won a second term as Portugal's president**

- The 72-year-old former leader of the Social Democratic Party won 61 percent of the vote.
- **Facts about Portugal:** Portugal is a southern European country on the Iberian Peninsula, bordering Spain.
- **Capital:** Lisbon
- **Currency:** Euro

### **UN report on Ageing Dams**

- Ageing Dams in India, US, other nations pose growing threat according to UN report.
- The report, titled '**Ageing water infrastructure: An emerging global risk**' and compiled by United Nations University's Canadian-based Institute for Water,

Environment and Health, says most of the 58,700 large dams worldwide were constructed between 1930 and 1970 with a design life of 50 to 100 years.

- In India, there are over 1,115 large dams that will be roughly 50 years old in 2025, more than 4,250 large dams in the country will be over 50 years old in 2050 and 64 large dams will be more than 150 years old in 2050.
- The report said that approximately 3.5 million people are at risk if India's Mullaperiyar dam in Kerala, built over 100 years ago, "were to fail".
- **Note:** The report said that 32,716 large dams (55% of the world's total) are found in just four Asian countries: China, India, Japan, and South Korea - a majority of which will reach the 50-year threshold relatively soon.

### India pledges \$150,000 for UN peacebuilding

- TS Tirumurti, permanent representative of India to the United Nations announced a pledge of USD 150,000 to activities of the UN fund for 2021.
- UN Secretary General António Guterres expressed that he was grateful to the countries that committed to provide over \$439 million in support of the UN's work toward peacebuilding & conflict prevention through the UN Peacebuilding Fund.
- As a part of its 2020-24 strategy, the Peacebuilding Fund has put forth a comprehensive scenario covering a horizon of five years. The Fund requires 1.5 billion dollars for 2020-2024.

## Economy

### 'Toycathon 2021' to promote manufacturing of indigenous toys

- Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani launched a virtual toy hackathon 'Toycathon 2021'.
- The ToyCathon2021 is being organised to create awareness among school students about the rich cultural heritage of our country.
- **Note:** The toys market is Rs 7 lakh crores in the world. In our country, 80 per cent of toys are imported.

### IRDAI to launch standard home insurance policy- Bharat Griha Raksha

- Bharat Griha Raksha is an effective home insurance policy that offers coverage against a wide range of perils, like fire, natural catastrophes, impact damage of any kind, riot, strike, malicious damages, acts of terrorism, and bursting and overflowing of water tanks etc.
- **Note:** The IRDAI (The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) had issued guidelines on 4 January, announcing that the Standard Fire and Special Perils (SFSP) Policy provided for in the erstwhile All India Fire Tariff (AIFT) 2001 will be replaced by the following standard products that shall be mandatorily offered by all general insurers from 1 April.

**Union Minister for Railways Piyush Goyal launched Indian Railways' Freight Business Development Portal as the one-stop solution for all the needs of freight customers.**

- The new portal will be a game-changer in ensuring ease of doing business with Railways as it aims to bring more transparency and professional support.
- The portal will ensure that all operations stay customer-centric, reduce the costs for logistics providers, provide an online tracking facility for suppliers, and also simplify the process of goods transportation.

**RBI cancels the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra with effect from the close of business on January 11, 2021.
- Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra is prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' which includes acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 with immediate effect.

**First time in history, Union Budget 2021 to be paperless**

- Union Budget 2021, slated to be presented on February 1, is going to be completely paperless in the wake of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- The Budget papers - the Union Budget and Economic Survey - will not get printed, soft copies will be provided.

**"New Foreign Trade Policy 2021-2026" to be rolled out from April**

- Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that India's new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2021-2026, under formulation, will come into effect from April 1, 2021, for five years and will strive to make the country a leader in international trade.
- **Note:** District Export Hubs Initiative will be an important part of the new FTP.

**Tesla incorporates fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru for its electric vehicles**

- US-based Electric car maker, Tesla has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru as a first step to set up an R&D unit and a manufacturing plant for its electric vehicles in the country.
- Tesla has registered its 100 percent subsidiary, as - Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd, according to disclosures with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

**Reserve Bank of India has set up a working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated and unregulated players**

- The group will suggest steps to regulate digital lending including online lending platform and mobile lending.

- The six-member panel comprising four RBI internal and two external members is expected to submit its report within three months. Jayant Kumar Dash, Executive Director, RBI will be chairman of the group.

### **Flipkart, NITI Aayog collaborate to enhance Women Entrepreneurship Platform**

- In an effort to enhance community experience for women entrepreneurs in India, e-commerce marketplace Flipkart and NITI Aayog have come together to launch the revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).
- **Note:** The idea of the platform was first mooted by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant who announced the setting-up of a Women Entrepreneurship Platform at 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit held in Hyderabad during 2017, with an overarching theme of 'Women First, Prosperity for All.'

### **RBI proposes 4-tier structure for tighter regulation of NBFCs**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a tighter regulatory framework for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) by creating a four-tier structure with a progressive increase in intensity of regulation.
- The regulatory and supervisory framework of NBFCs should be based on a four-layered structure: NBFC-Base Layer, NBFC-Middle Layer, NBFC-Upper Layer, NBFC-Top Layer.
- **Note: Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC)** is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 engaged in the business of loans and advances.
- **Facts about RBI:**  
**Headquarters:** Mumbai  
**Established:** 1 April 1935  
**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das (25<sup>th</sup> Governor)

### **Cabinet approved Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Copra for 2021 season**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of copra for the 2021 season.
- The MSP for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of milling copra has been increased, by Rs.375/-, to Rs. 10335/- per quintal for 2021 season from Rs. 9960/- per quintal in 2020.
- The MSP for ball copra has been increased, by Rs.300/-, to Rs. 10,600/- per quintal for 2021 season from Rs. 10300/- per quintal in 2020.
- The approval is based on recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- **Note:** India is number one in production and productivity of copra in the World. It is mainly grown in the 12 coastal states.

**India: Total FDI inflow of US\$ 58.37 billion received during April to November, 2020**

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a major driver of economic growth and an important source of non-debt finance for the economic development of India.
- India received a total FDI inflow of US\$ 58.37 billion during April to November, 2020. It is the highest ever for the first 8 months of a financial year and 22% higher as compared to the first 8 months of 2019-20 (US\$ 47.67 billion).
- **Note: UN report:** FDI inflows into India jump by 13% to \$57 billion in 2020.
- The report said China became the largest recipient of FDI, attracting an estimated \$163 billion in inflows, followed by the US with \$134 billion.

### **Indian economy to report narrow contraction of 8% in FY21, 11.5% GDP growth in FY22: IMF**

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on January 26, 2021 revised its gross domestic product (GDP) projections upward for the current fiscal year and FY 2022 in its forecast update submitted to the World Economic Outlook report.
- The IMF has predicted India's economy to **contract narrowly by 8 percent** in the current financial year in comparison to the earlier **projected contraction of 10.3 percent**.
- India is predicted to **grow by 11.5% in 2021-22** and 6.8% in 2022-23.
- The IMF has projected the world economy to contract by 3.5 percent in 2020. The global economy is projected to grow 5.5% in 2021 and 4.2% in 2022.
- **Note: FICCI** survey forecasts 8% GDP contraction in FY21.
- Indian economy may grow at 7.3% in the calendar year 2021 by the **United Nations**.

## **Awards and Honors**

### **Pt. Satish Vyas conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman 2020**

- Madhya Pradesh recently hosted Tansen Music Festival in the city of Gwalior. In the inaugural ceremony renowned santoor player Pt. Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman.
- Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.
- Tansen Samaroh is organized jointly by Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy and Department of Culture, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh.

### **Indian Railways bags 13 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2020'**

- Indian Railway has bagged 13 awards in three prestigious categories of National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) for the year 2020, organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.
- Some important awards are: In the transport category', Western Railway has been awarded the First Prize.

- In the Building Category, Divisional Railway Manager's offices at Bhavnagar have won the first prize.
- In Railway workshops subcategory, Diesel Loco Shed, South Central Railway, Vijayawada has bagged the First prize.

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and family Welfare inaugurated the 5th National Kayakalp Awards**

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India launched a National Initiative 'Kayakalp' on 15th May 2015 to ensure hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India.
- Some Important awards are: **AIIMS (All India Institutes of Medical Sciences) Bhubaneswar** has been adjudged as the best central government hospital under B category for cleanliness for third consecutive year. It had earlier received the award in 2018 as well as in 2019 for becoming the second cleanest hospital among category B hospitals.
- **JIPMER (Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research)** has been awarded the second prize for the year 2019-20. The award was for the category Group A Central government health facilities. JIPMER had bagged the second place in 2018-19 and third place in 2017-18.

### **Shri Amresh Kumar Chaudhary has been awarded prestigious "Chief of Army Staff Commendation."**

- Shri Amresh Kumar Chaudhary has been awarded prestigious "Chief of Army Staff Commendation" for his outstanding contribution to Armed Forces during critical period of Covid19 pandemic and its various operations.
- He is currently working as Chief Controller in Mil Rail.
- **About Mil Rail:** Mil Rail is responsible for overall coordination, strategic planning & execution of Railway Logistics support to Defence forces during peace & emergency situations.

### **The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) received the coveted "SKOCH Challenger Award"- "Best Performance in e-Governance" for its various initiatives taken during last year**

- The Ministry also received **3 Gold Awards** for its initiatives namely "Eco-Rehabilitation of tribal villages through Innovative design in water management using Ice-stupa", Swasthya: Tribal Health and Nutritional Portal and the Performance Dashboard "Empowering Tribals Transforming India".
- SKOCH Challenger Award conferred to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) under "Transparency in Governance" category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms.
- **Note:** The SKOCH Challenger Award was given virtually during the 70<sup>th</sup> SKOCH Summit (SKOCH Public Policy Forum).

### **Indian Mathematician Nikhil Srivastava named joint winner of Michael and Sheila Held Prize**

- Nikhil Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, Adam Marcus, EPFL and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize.
- **Note: Michael and Sheila Held Prize** is presented annually and honours outstanding, innovative, creative, and influential research in the areas of combinatorial and discrete optimisation, or related parts of computer science, such as the design and analysis of algorithms and complexity theory.
- It was established in 2017 by the bequest of Michael and Sheila Held.

### **Coal India arms NCL, CCL and WCL get the Coal Minister's Award 2020**

- Union Minister of Coal & Mines Shri Pralhad Joshi presented "Coal Minister's Award" to three coal companies of Coal India Ltd. - Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL), Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) and Western Coalfields Ltd (WCL).
- Shri Joshi also launched '**Project Passion**'—the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) of Coal India Ltd (CIL) which will help improve business performance and growth of the company with enhanced data integrity.
- The Minister inaugurated a **new Coal Handling Plant (CHP)** at Krishnashila Coal Project of NCL.

### **Padma Awards 2021**

- Padma Awards, the highest civilian award, which were instituted in 1954, is announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day.
- This year the President has approved conferment of 119 Padma Awards. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri Awards. 29 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 16 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender awardee.
- **7 persons will get Padma Vibhushan-** They include former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, sculptor Sudarshan Sahoo, Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Eminent Singer S P Balasubramaniam (Posthumous), Dr. Belle Monappa Hegde (Medicine), Narinder Singh Kapany (Posthumous) from United States of America and B. B. Lal (Archaeology).
- **10 persons will get Padma Bhushan-** They include former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Singer K S Chithra, prominent poet Chandrashekhara Kambara and retired Civil Servant Nripendra Misra. Former Gujarat Chief Minister late Keshubhai Patel, Former Assam Chief Minister late Tarun Gogoi and Former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan will be honoured with Padma Bhushan posthumously.
- **102 persons will get Padma Shri-** They include Social Worker Sindutai Sapkal, Musician Bombay Jayashri, British film director Peter Brook and Greek Indologist Nicholas Kazanas. Former Governor of Goa late Mridula Sinha, Spanish-Indian Jesuit priest and author late Father Vallés will be given the award posthumously.

- **Note: Maha Vir Chakra Award:** Colonel B Santosh Babu, the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment, who lost his life during the Galwan Valley clash last year, will be posthumously awarded with Maha Vir Chakra.

### **Danish World War II drama 'Into the Darkness' bags Golden Peacock Award at 51st IFFI**

- The epic World War II film 'Into the Darkness' (De forbandede år) which portrays the story of a Danish electronics factory owner who is forced to produce for the occupying Nazi forces, has won the coveted Golden Peacock Award at the just-concluded 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). It is directed by Anders Refn.

### **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar- 2021**

- 32 children have been awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2021.
- **About Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar:** It, formerly known as the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement, is India's Highest Civilian Honour bestowed upon exceptional achievers under the age of 18.
- The award was instituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in 1996 to recognize children with exceptional abilities and outstanding status in various fields such as arts, culture, design, innovation, research, sports, social service and bravery.

### **ICC announces introduction of 'ICC Player of the Month' awards**

- The award will recognise and celebrate the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket.
- An independent ICC Voting Academy comprising former players, broadcasters, and journalists from around the world, will team up with fans to vote for the ICC Men's Player of the Month and ICC Women's Player of the Month.
- **Facts about ICC (International Cricket Council):**  
**Chairperson:** Greg Barclay  
**CEO:** Manu Sawhney  
**Headquarters:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates

## **Defense**

### **Maiden flight trial of SAHAYAK-NG, Air Droppable Container**

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of 'SAHAYAK-NG' India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container from IL 38SD aircraft (Indian Navy) off the coast of Goa.
- The trial was conducted by Indian Navy to enhance its operational logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering stores to ships.
- Two DRDO laboratories i.e. NSTL, Visakhapatnam and ADRDE, Agra were involved in the development of SAHAYAK-NG container along the industry partner M/s Avantel for GPS integration.

- **Note:** SAHAYAK-NG is an advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I.

### **Myanmar Navy inducts Indian submarine INS Sindhuvir**

- Myanmar formally commissioned INS Sindhuvir into its Navy. India had delivered it to Myanmar in October 2020.
- The Myanmar Navy named the Indian ship UMS Minye Theinkhathu.
- It is the first submarine in the Myanmar Navy's arsenal. The former Soviet-era submarine was in operation in the Indian Navy since 1988.
- **Note:** India and Myanmar share a long 725-kilometre maritime boundary along the Bay of Bengal.

### **BEL signs contract with Indian Navy for Initial supply of indigenously developed Laser Dazzlers**

- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has signed a contract with Indian Navy for initially supply 20 Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation Dazzlers (Laser Dazzlers).
- The **Laser Dazzler** is used as a non-lethal method for warning and stopping suspicious vehicles/boats/aircrafts/UAVs/pirates etc. from approaching secured areas during both day and night.
- **Note:** Ministry of Defence has signed contract with Bharat Electronics Limited for procurement of 10 Lynx U2 Fire Control systems for frontline warships of Indian Navy under Buy (Indian) category.

### **Sea Vigil-21: Indian Navy starts second edition of coastal defence exercise**

- The second edition of the coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-21' has been started on January 12 and will continue till January 13, 2021.
- The exercise aims at assessing India's preparedness in the domain of coastal defence and maritime security.
- The exercise by the Indian Navy will be undertaken along the entire 7,516 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India.
- **Note:** The inaugural edition of the exercise was conducted in January 2019. This is a biennial exercise.

### **Cabinet approves Procurement of 83 Light Combat Aircrafts (LCA) 'Tejas' from HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) for Indian Air Force**

- The Cabinet has approved procurement of 73 LCA Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircrafts and 10 LCA Tejas Mk-1 Trainer aircrafts at the cost of Rs. 45,696 Crore along with Design and Development of Infrastructure sanctions worth Rs.1,202 Crore from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- It is the first "Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)" category procurement of combat aircrafts with an indigenous content of 50% which will progressively reach 60% by the end of the programme.

### **India's first indigenously developed 9mm Machine Pistol**

- India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by DRDO and Indian Army.
- The Machine Pistol fires the in-service 9mm ammunition and sports an upper receiver made from aircraft grade Aluminium and lower receiver from carbon fibre. 3D Printing process has been used in designing and prototyping of various parts including trigger components.
- The weapon is aptly named "Asmi" meaning "Pride", "Self-Respect" & "Hard Work".

### **DRDO hands over Motor Bike Ambulance Rakshita to CRPF**

- Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Delhi-based DRDO laboratory, handed over Rakshita, a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- The bike ambulance will help in overcoming the problems faced by Indian security forces and emergency health care providers.
- **Facts about DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation):** It is an agency under the Department of Defence Research and Development in the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India.

**Founded:** 1958

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman:** Dr G Satheesh Reddy

### **Five day Indo-French Air exercise 'Ex Desert Knight-21' begins in Jodhpur**

- Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force are conducting a bilateral Air exercise, Ex Desert Knight-21 in Jodhpur (20-24 January).
- The French side will participate with Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport, A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft. The Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft participating in the exercise will include Rafale, Mirage 2000, Sukhoi-30 MKI among other aircraft.
- **Note:** Defence exercises between India and France are **Garuda (Air), Varuna (Naval) and Shakti (Army)**

### **Successful flight test of Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW)**

- DRDO successfully conducted a captive and release trial of indigenously developed Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from Hawk-I of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) off the Odisha coast.
- SAAW is indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI) Hyderabad.
- This is 125 Kg class smart weapon, capable of engaging ground enemy airfield assets such as radars, bunkers, taxi tracks, and runways etc. up to a range of 100 kms.

### **Successful maiden test launch of Akash-NG Missile**

- DRDO conducted the successful maiden launch of Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.
- Akash-NG is a new generation Surface to Air Missile meant for use by Indian Air Force.
- The Akash-NG system has been developed with better deployability compared to other similar systems with canisterized launcher and much smaller ground system footprint. The test launch was carried out by a combined team of DRDO, BDL (Bharat Dynamics Limited) & BEL (Bharat Electronics) in the presence of the representatives of Indian Air force.

### **BSF launches operation ‘Sard Hawa’ at Rajasthan border**

- Border Security Force (BSF) on January 21 launched operation ‘Sard Hawa’ at the western international border of Rajasthan, under which vigil will be beefed-up to check the instances of infiltration due to the dense fog in the area.
- This operation will continue till January 27 with an aim that there is no intrusion.
- Significantly, BSF runs Operation "Garam Hawa" in summer season and operation "Sard Hawa" during the winter season as a routine exercise.
- **Facts about Border Security Force (BSF):** It is India's Primary border guarding organisation on its border with Pakistan and Bangladesh.

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 1 December 1965

**Director-General:** Rakesh Asthana

### **Joint Military Exercise in Andaman Sea**

- Towards enhancing joint operational readiness, Indian Armed Forces conducted a large-scale conjoint military training exercise “KAVACH” along with “AMPHEX-21” in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.
- The exercise was conducted under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) with participation of Eastern Naval Command (ENC) and Army Southern Command (SC) involving assets of Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard.

## **New Appointments**

### **ISRO chairman K Sivan gets one-year extension as Department of Space secretary**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of tenure of K Sivan, secretary, Department of Space and chairman, Space Commission, for a period of one-year beyond January 14, 2021, that is up to January 14, 2022.

### **Suneet Sharma appointed new chairman of Railway Board**

- The Central government appointed Suneet Sharma as new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Indian Railway Board (Ministry of Railways) and ex-officio Principal Secretary to Government of India.

- Sharma has replaced Vinod Kumar Yadav.

### **Umesh Sinha appointed Dy Election Commissioner**

- Umesh Sinha has been appointed as the deputy election commissioner in the Election Commission of India. Sinha, a 1986-batch IAS officer (retired) of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is at present the secretary-general in the commission.

### **Soma Mondal assumes charge as Chairman of SAIL**

- Smt. Soma Mondal has taken over as Chairman of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) w.e.f. 01.01.2021. She was the Director (Commercial) of SAIL prior to this.
- She is the first-ever women head of the body. She replaces Anil Kumar Chaudhary.

### **Pankaj Mithal takes oath as new chief justice of J&K and Ladakh high court**

- Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office to Justice Pankaj Mithal as the new chief justice of the common high court for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh in Jammu.

### **Alexander Ellis appointed new British high commissioner to India**

- Ellis has held several posts, including deputy national security adviser in the cabinet office, director-general in the department for exiting the European Union, and the British ambassador to Portugal.
- Ellis succeeds Philip Barton.

### **Former India striker Abhishek Yadav has been appointed as the first deputy general secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF)**

- Yadav has been serving as national team's director since January 2018.

### **Karan Bajwa to head Google Cloud in Asia Pacific**

- Google Cloud announced the elevation of Karan Bajwa as its new leader for the Asia Pacific. Presently, Bajwa leads Google Cloud in India.
- Bajwa succeeds Rick Harshman.

### **A K Goswami sworn in as Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court**

- Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan administered the oath of office to Justice Goswami.
- Justice Goswami was the Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court prior to his appointment as CJ of AP HC, in place of Justice J K Maheshwari, who was shifted to Sikkim.

### **The Union government has appointed R S Sharma, former TRAI chief, as the chairperson of an empowered committee for administration of Covid-19 vaccine**

- A ten member team has been constituted to be headed by Sharma. Top health ministry and UIDAI officials are part of the empowered committee.
- **Note:** He has also been included as a member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19 that was formed in August 2020 and is headed by Niti Aayog member, VK Paul.

### **US-India Business Council (USIBC) selected Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar Shaw as one of its vice-chairs**

- US Chamber of Commerce's USIBC announced three vice-chairs to its 2021 Global Board of Directors. The two other business executives joining Shaw as vice-chairs are Amway CEO Milind Pant and Edward Knight who is the vice-chair at Nasdaq.
- **Note:** The three new appointees will now work with USIBC President Nisha Biswal and the Council's policy directors.

### **Jayant Khobragade appointed India's next Ambassador to ASEAN Secretariat**

- Jayant N Khobragade, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta.
- Khobragade is currently serving as joint secretary at headquarters of the ministry in Delhi.
- **Facts about Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** It is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region, and India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dialogue partners.

**The 10 member countries of ASEAN** are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

**Headquarters:** Jakarta, Indonesia

**Founded:** 8 August 1967

### **Government appoints Siddhartha Mohanty as Managing Director (MD) of LIC from Feb 1**

- Mohanty will be replacing TC Suseel Kumar, who is set to retire on January 31, 2021.
- Presently Mohanty is the chief operating officer of LIC Housing Finance.
- **Facts about Life Insurance Corporation of India:**

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Chairperson:** M R Kumar

**Founder:** Government of India

**Founded:** 1 September 1956

### **Justice Gita Mittal appointed chairperson of BCCC**

- The Board of Directors of the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) has appointed Justice Gita Mittal, former chief justice of Jammu & Kashmir high court, as the new chairperson of Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC).

- Mittal will succeed former Supreme Court judge, Justice Vikramajit Sen, whose tenure as BCCC chairperson has ended.
- Justice Gita Mittal, who served as the first woman Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, is also the **first woman chairperson of BCCC**.

**About BCCC:** Founded in June 2011, BCCC is the independent self-regulatory body set up by the IBF to examine content-related complaints relating to all non-news and general entertainment channels in India.

## Science and Technology

### Prime Minister lays foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs)

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India) at six sites across six States. The programme seeks to build over 1,000 houses each in six cities in 12 months.
- The LHPs are being constructed at Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).

He also released a certification course on innovative construction technologies named NAVARITIH (New, Affordable, Validated, Research Innovation Technologies for Indian Housing).

### BARC develops eye cancer therapy for treatment of ocular tumours

- Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai develops eye cancer therapy in the form of the first indigenous Ruthenium 106 Plaque for treatment of Ocular Tumours.
- The handling of plaque is very convenient for the Surgeon and it has been acknowledged to be at par with the international standards.
- **Note:** Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) is developing Bullet Proof Jackets for security personnel and in the Agricultural sector, radiation techniques to extend shelf life of vegetable and food products are being applied.

### Indian Oil launches first remote monitoring system for oil refineries

- Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the country's largest fuel retailer, announced it has launched the country's first remote monitoring system for oil refineries' turbines.
- The project, located in Hyderabad, was inaugurated by oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
- The Remote Monitoring & Operation Centre for Tracking of Indian Oil's Refinery Gas Turbines was implemented by BHEL-GE Gas Turbine Services (BGGTS), a joint venture of BHEL and General Electric.
- This analysis will help in detection and diagnosis of emerging issues relating to gas turbines.

### **Skyroot Aerospace becomes first Indian company to test-fire solid-fueled rocket engine 'Kalam-5'**

- Indian Space startup, Skyroot Aerospace, has proven the crucial propulsion technology of their maiden rocket Vikram-1, with the latest test-firing of an engine. Vikram-1 rocket is powered by four engines - three solid-fuel stages and one Liquid-fuel stage that the firm has designed and developed.
- In August 2020, the company had tested its liquid-fueled engine and now has proven the technology of the solid-fueled engine (Kalam-5), by successfully test-firing a miniature version.
- Kalam-5 is the first of five Kalam series of solid rocket motors.

### **Education Minister lays foundation stone of IIT Hyderabad's TiHAN Foundation**

- Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has laid the foundation stone of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad's TiHAN Foundation.
- Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles at IIT Hyderabad, known as 'TiHAN Foundation' has been incorporated as a Section-8 company by the institute in June 2020.

### **DRDO Signs MoU with MAHA-METRO for implementation of Advanced Biodigester Mk-II Technology in Metro Rail Network**

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Government of India's premier research agency and Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation (MAHA -METRO), a joint venture company of the GoI and Government of Maharashtra are working together to conserve water and protect the environment by installing DRDO's eco-friendly biodigester units in its facilities.
- DRDO's biodigester is an indigenous, green and cost-effective technology, with a rare distinction of having one of the largest numbers of DRDO-licensees.
- **Note:** Indian Railways has already installed about 2.40 lakh biodigesters in its fleet of passenger coaches.

### **Khadi Prakritik Paint**

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari launched an innovative new paint – India's first cow dung paint - developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called "*Khadi Prakritik Paint*" is a first-of-its-kind product, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.
- It is available in two forms – distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint.
- **Note:** The project was conceptualized by Chairman KVIC in March 2020, and later developed by Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute, Jaipur (a KVIC unit).

### **ISRO to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs to promote education**

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will adopt one hundred Atal Tinkering Labs across the country to promote education in the field of Space Education and Space Technology related innovations for school students.
- To foster entrepreneurship and innovation, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog has established over seven thousand Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.

### **Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan dedicates coastal research vessel ‘Sagar Anveshika’ to Nation at Chennai Port Trust**

- Sagar Anveshika will enable scientists to conduct various oceanographic research missions.
- Marine scientists can travel six kilometers below the sea and stay for more than 16 hours and can conduct research activities.
- **Note:** NIOT (National Institute of Ocean Technology) already has Research Vessels- Sagar Kanya, Sagar Sampada, Sagar Nidhi, Sagar Manjusha & Sagar Tara.

### **National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Ministry of Education along with Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, provided the CollabCAD Software and released a comprehensive e-book on CollabCAD 3D modeling**

- NIC and CBSE also signed a Memorandum of Understanding for ‘CollabCAD Software Support and Training for Students and Faculty in Engineering Graphics Curriculum for CBSE affiliated Schools’ for a period of 10 years.
- **About CollabCAD:** It is the first indigenous tool created by NIC in partnership with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. It is a collaborative network-enabled and desktop software system, providing a total engineering solution from 2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design for students and faculty of Engineering Graphics Curriculum.

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan dedicates an Innovation Portal developed by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India to the nation**

- The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan dedicated an Innovation Portal, developed by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) – India, an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, to the nation.
- The National Innovation Portal (NIP) is currently home to about 1.15 lakh innovations scouted from common people of the country, covering Engineering, Agriculture, Veterinary and Human Health.

### **India’s first indigenously designed & developed ‘Driverless Metro Car.’**

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, unveiled state-of-the-art ‘Driverless Metro Car’ for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).
- Indigenously designed & developed state-of-the-art Driverless Metro trains are being manufactured at BEML Bangalore Complex.

- MMRDA project has 63 percent indigenous content which will enhance to 75 percent in next two to three years.
- Shri Rajnath Singh also launched the Aerospace Assembly Hangar, situated within BEML's Bangalore Complex, and unveiled the first indigenously manufactured Tatra Cabin by BEML.

### **Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the new entity CSIR-NIScPR with a new Vision**

- The Union Minister of Science & Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a new institute of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) i.e. CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR).
- The new institute has been established consequent to the merger of two prestigious institutes of CSIR namely, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR) and CSIR-National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies (CSIR-NISTADS) which work at the interface of S&T and Society; and Science Communication and Policy Research.

### **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to establish Quantum Computing Applications Lab in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS)**

- Quantum computing is an emerging field harnessing the laws of quantum mechanics to build powerful tools to process information and has the potential to solve computational problems that are beyond the reach of classical computers.
- It will also provide quantum computing as a service to the government ministries and departments, researchers, scientists, academia, and developers, to enable advances in areas such as manufacturing, healthcare, agriculture, and aerospace engineering.
- **Facts about Amazon Web Services:**
  - CEO:** Andy Jassy
  - Founder:** Amazon.com
  - Founded:** 2006
  - Headquarters:** United States

### **Elon Musk's SpaceX creates new world record; launches 143 satellites on single rocket**

- The 143 satellites launched include commercial and government CubeSats, microsats and 10 Starlink satellites.
- With these satellites, SpaceX aims to provide near-global broadband internet coverage all over the world by 2021.
- The launch vehicle for the SpaceX record-breaking flight was the Falcon 9 rocket.
- **Note:** SpaceX has beaten the Indian space agency ISRO's record of deploying 104 satellites in a single launch in February 2017.

### **New ant species discovered from Kerala named after JNCASR researcher, evolutionary biologist Prof. Amitabh Joshi**

- Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in India. The species of the ant genus *Ooceraea* found in Kerala and Tamil Nadu add to the diversity of this rare genus. They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments.
- One of them found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala, has been named *Ooceraea joshii*, in honour of Prof. Amitabh Joshi, a distinguished evolutionary biologist from **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)** an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.
- The other, named *Ooceraea decamera*, was discovered from Alagarkoil in Madurai.

### **CSIR-CMERI unveils the first-ever ‘Aqua Rejuvenation Plant’ which facilitates an Organic Farming Model through treated Waste Water**

- CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute, Durgapur unveiled the first-ever Waste Water Treatment Technology Model which purifies Waste Water for Irrigation/Farming purposes.
- Prof. (Dr.) Harish Hirani, Director, CSIR-CMERI inaugurated the ‘Aqua Rejuv’ at CSIR-CMERI colony in Durgapur (West Bengal).
- **Aqua Rejuvenation Plant (ARP)** is an Integrated Waste Water Rejuvenation Model which has Six-Stage purification profile for comprehensive treatment of Waste Water, based upon diverse purification parameters.

## **Health**

### **Covishield and Covaxin are the first two Covid-19 vaccines to be approved in India**

- Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) has given approval for restricted use in emergency situations of vaccines- Covishield from Serum Institute of India (SII) based on the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and Covaxin from Bharat Biotech.
- The decision of the DGCI came after the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) recommended their emergency use.

### **Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates CEPI Centralized network lab at DBT-THSTI Faridabad**

- The Minister for Science & Technology, Health & Family Welfare and Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated one of the seven labs of the world called as the centralized network lab of **Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)** established at Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad.

- **Note:** CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organizations, launched at Davos in 2017, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.

### **Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1, India Report**

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare released India Report on Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1.
- The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has undertaken the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India, through International Institute for Population Sciences, (IIPS), Mumbai in collaboration with Harvard School of Public Health, University of Southern California, USA, Dte.GHS, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and National Institute on Ageing.
- It is India's first and the world's largest ever survey that provides a longitudinal database for designing policies and programmes for the older population in the broad domains of social, health, and economic well-being.

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches the pan India rollout of COVID-19 vaccination drive on 16 January**

- This is the world's largest vaccination program covering the entire country.
- **Note:** India's drugs regulator gave emergency use authorisation to Covishield, produced by Pune-based Serum Institute of India after securing licence from British pharma company AstraZeneca, and Covaxin, indigenously developed jointly by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech and Indian Council of Medical Research scientists.

## **Environment and Ecology**

### **India's first pollinator park opens in Uttarakhand**

- The Uttarakhand forest department dedicated the newly built Pollinator Park to the public, claiming it to be the country's first such park, spread over 4 acres in Haldwani in Nainital district.
- The park has more than 40 pollinator species with displays on the mechanism of pollination of plant species by various species of butterflies, honeybees, birds, insects, moths, beetles, wasps, and small mammals.

### **India to be a co-chair of regional forum to conserve wildlife habitats**

- After successfully increasing population of wild animals such as tigers, lions and leopards through protecting their habitats, India will be the co-chair of the IUCN-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for three years.
- The APAP, formally launched at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Australia in 2014, is chaired by IUCN Asia and co-chaired by an APAP country member. India will replace South Korea which held this position for three years till November, 2020.

### **Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife approves advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict management**

- The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with the problematic wild animals as per the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Utilising add-on coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna for crop compensation against crop damage due to Human Wildlife Conflict and augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas are some key steps envisaged to reduce Human Wildlife Conflict and payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief.
- **Note:** The National Board for Wildlife is constituted by the Central Government under Section 5 A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

### **Euphranta siruvani -New species of fruit fly from India named after Siruvani in Western Ghats**

- Euphranta siruvani is a new species of fruit fly in the family Tephritidae. This species is reported from the Siruvani which is an ecological hot spot located in the Western Ghats of India.
- This species has been collected from a non forest area near Siruvani in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, India. This species is differentiated from other species of Euphranta by the presence of a 'V' shaped black band on the wing.

### **PCRA launches a month long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about 'Green and Clean Energy'**

- With a view to create awareness among the consumers of fossil fuels, Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA), Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas launched a month long campaign 'SAKSHAM' (Sanrakshan Kshamata Mahotsav), highlighting the adverse health and environmental impacts of increasing carbon footprints.
- The campaign through various pan-India activities such as cyclothon, farmer workshops, seminars, painting competition, CNG vehicle driving contest, etc will spread awareness among masses about the advantages of using clean fuels.

### **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI): Sunderbans is home to 428 species of birds**

- Indian Sunderbans is home to 428 species of birds, a recent publication "Birds of the Sunderban Biosphere Reserve" by ZSI.
- **About Indian Sundarbans:** The Sundarbans National Park is a national park, tiger reserve, and biosphere reserve in West Bengal, India.
- It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site inscribed in 1987, and it has been designated as a Ramsar site since 2019.
- It is considered as a World Network of Biosphere Reserve (Man and Biosphere Reserve) from 1989.

- Indian Sundarbans were considered endangered in a 2020 assessment under the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems framework.

### **Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari approved a proposal to levy a “Green Tax” on old vehicles which are polluting the environment**

- Some important principles to be followed while levying the Green Tax are: Transport vehicles older than 8 years could be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of fitness certificate, at the rate of 10 to 25 % of road tax, Personal vehicles to be charged Green Tax at the time of renewal of Registration Certification after 15 years, Electric vehicles and alternate fuels like CNG, ethanol, LPG and vehicles used in farming, such as tractor, harvester, tiller etc to be exempted.

### **CAQM setting up Decision Support System for air quality for Delhi-NCR**

- The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas has begun the process of setting up a Decision Support System (DSS).
- It will have a web, Geographical Information System (GIS) and multi-model based operational and planning decision support tool.
- The Commission has entrusted the task to expert groups from reputed knowledge institutions of the country for framework development of Air Quality Management Decision Support System. These are India Meteorological Department (IMD), IITM-Pune, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), IIT-Delhi, NEERI and C-DAC Pune. The System will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help improve the air quality.
- **Note:** Recently, the Centre has set up the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in Delhi-NCR and adjacent areas with former Delhi chief secretary M M Kutty as the new body's first chairperson.

## **Summits and Conferences**

### **India sets up high-level group for South Asia energy security**

- The center has set up a high-level group to help build a South Asia-focused energy security architecture.
- The high-level group, headed by former Union power secretary Ram Vinay Shahi, is named the South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE).
- It has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)-run think tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

### **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention on January 9, 2021**

- The theme of the event was ‘Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat’.
- The names of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees **2020-2021** will also be announced.

- **Youth Pravasi Bhartiya Divas** was observed on the theme "**Bringing together Young Achievers from India and Indian Diaspora**" on 8 January 2021.
- **About Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD):** This day has its own significance as it is the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa in 1915.
- *The first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or Non-Resident Indian Day was celebrated on 9 January, 2003. Its format has been revised since 2015 to celebrate the PBD once every two years.*

#### 4<sup>th</sup> 'One Planet Summit' for biodiversity

- **The Summit was organized by France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank on January 11, 2021.**
- The summit's theme is "Let's act together for nature!"
- The Summit programme focused on biodiversity preservation: the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the promotion of agroecology, the mobilization of funding for biodiversity, and the link between deforestation, species and human health.

#### Shri Piyush Goyal inaugurates the 'Prarambh': Startup India International Summit'

- The two day 'Prarambh', Startup India International Summit (15-16 January 2021) held in New Delhi, with members of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) countries participating in the inaugural event.
- The Summit was organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, M/o Commerce & Industry.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a seed fund worth Rs 1,000 crore for startups to provide them with initial capital to start and grow their business during the summit.
- **Note:** The summit marked the fifth anniversary of the Startup India initiative launched by Modi on this day in 2016.

#### Britain invites PM Modi to attend G7 Summit to be held in June this year

- The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest. The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13 this year.
- A statement by the British High Commission said, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is also likely to visit India ahead of the G7 Summit.
- Besides India, Australia and South Korea have also been invited as guest countries.
- **Facts about G7:** The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the European Union, meet at the annual G7 Summit.

**Founded:** 1975

**Members:** United Kingdom, United States, Japan, France, Germany, Canada, Italy

#### Climate Adaptation Summit 2021

- The online international Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS) 2021 on 25 and 26 January was hosted by the Netherlands, convened global leaders and local stakeholders.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 25, 2021 addressed the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 and said that India is targeting 450 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity by the year 2030.
- **Note:** The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as **COP26**, is the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference. It is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland, from **1 to 12 November 2021** under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

### **PM Modi addresses World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue**

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue on January 28, 2021.
- The Prime Minister asserted that India is working on all the four factors of Industry 4.0- connectivity, automation, artificial intelligence or machine learning and real-time data.
- The Davos Dialogues agenda marks the launch of the World Economic Forum's Great Reset Initiative in the post Covid-19 world.
- **About World Economic Forum:** It is an international NGO that was founded on January 24, 1971. Klaus Martin Schwab is the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum hosts its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland at the end of January.

### **India signs Strategic Partnership Agreement with International Energy Agency (IEA)**

- The Framework for Strategic Partnership between the International Energy Agency (IEA) members and the Government of India was signed on 27th January, 2021 to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation & enhance global energy security, stability and sustainability.
- The MoU was signed by Mr. Sanjiv Nandan Sahai, Secretary (Power) from the Indian side and Dr. Fatih Birol, IEA Executive Director from the IEA side.
- **Facts about International Energy Agency:**
  - Headquarters:** Paris, France
  - Membership:** 30 member countries
  - Executive Director:** Fatih Birol
  - Establishment:** November 1974
- **Note:** In March 2017, India joined the IEA as an association country. (Total 8 association countries are in IEA).

## **Ranking and Index**

### **RBI unveils digital payment index**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constructed a composite Digital Payments Index (DPI) to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.

- The RBI-DPI has been constructed with March 2018 as the base period. The DPI for March 2019 and March 2020 work out to 153.47 and 207.84 respectively, indicating appreciable growth.
- **Note:** The RBI-DPI comprises five broad parameters that enable the measurement of deepening and expansion of digital payments in the country over different time periods.
- These parameters include Payment Enablers (weight 25%), Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10%), Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors (15%), Payment Performance (45%) and Consumer Centricity (5%).

### **Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar released Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) report of 146 National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the country**

- At present, India has a network of 903 Protected Areas covering about five percent of the total geographic area of the country.
- 70 percent of the global tiger population, 70 percent of Asiatic lions and more than 60 percent of leopard's population in country, is a certificate of India's thriving biodiversity.
- The Minister also announced that from this year onwards ten best National Parks, five Coastal and Marine parks and top five Zoos in the country will be ranked and awarded every year.
- Javadekar also launched the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian Zoos framework which proposes guidelines, criteria and indicators for evaluation of zoos of the country.

### **India ranks 85<sup>th</sup> in World's most powerful passports index 2021**

- Henley Passport Index 2021 has revealed the list of the world's most powerful passports and India has been ranked 85th on it.
- India's passport got a visa-free score of 58, which means Indian passport holders can visit 58 countries without prior visa.
- **First rank-** Japan (191), **Second rank-** Singapore (190)
- Iraq and Afghanistan are the countries with the worst passport with score 28 and 26 respectively.

### **At 18 million, India has the world's largest diaspora population**

- India has the largest diaspora population in the world with 18 million people from the country living outside their homeland in 2020. India's large diaspora is distributed across the United Arab Emirates (3.5 million), the United States of America (2.7 million) and Saudi Arabia (2.5 million).
- Other countries hosting large numbers of Indian migrants included Australia, Canada, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar and the United Kingdom.
- Other countries with a large diaspora population included Mexico and Russia (11 million each), China (10 million).

- The US remained by far the largest country of destination of international migrants with 51 million migrants in 2020, equal to 18 percent of the world's total. Germany hosted the second largest number of migrants worldwide at around 16 million.
- **Note:** The report 'International Migration 2020 Highlights' was released by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

### 11 domestic companies in Hurun's top 500 list, India ranked 10th

- Total 11 private Indian firms have made it to the list of 500 most valuable companies across the world, and the country is ranked 10th on the chart.
- Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries ranked 54<sup>th</sup>, Tata Consultancy Services' ranking 73rd globally and making it the second most valuable Indian firm.
- The list of 500 is led by consumer technology major Apple and is followed by Microsoft and Amazon.
- **Note:** The Hurun Global 500 List recognizes the world's top 500 non-state-owned companies, which are ranked according to their market capitalization or valuations.

### NITI Aayog releases 2nd edition of India Innovation Index-2020

- The index demonstrates the government's continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy.
- 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 9 Union Territories and Small States for effectively comparing their performance.
- Karnataka stands at the first position in the Major States category.
- In the North East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh stands at first position.
- Delhi stands at the first position in the Union Territories and small States category.
- **Facts about NITI Aayog:** It is a policy think tank of the Government of India.

**Formed:** 1 January 2015

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Shri Narendra Modi

### The Global Risks Report 2021

- The 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Risks Report, published by the World Economic Forum with support from Marsh McLennan in partnership with SK Group and Zurich Insurance Group, highlights the disruptive implications of major risks, including the COVID-19 pandemic that may reshape our world in 2021 and over the next decade.
- **Note: World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda** scheduled to be held in virtual mode between 25-29 January, 2021.
- **Facts about World Economic Forum:** It is an international NGO.

**Headquarters:** Cologny, Switzerland

**Founded:** January 1971

**Leader:** Klaus Schwab

### **Global Firepower Nations Index (2021) - Military Strength Ranking**

- According to the defence analytics website, Global powers ranked by potential military strength.
- The finalized Global Firepower ranking below utilizes **over 50 individual factors** to determine a given nation's **PowerIndex ('PwrIndx')** score with categories ranging from military might and financials to logistical capability and geography. There are currently **138 countries** considered for the Global Firepower (GFP) annual defense review (which currently covers the year 2021).
- First rank- United States of America
- Second rank- Russia
- Third rank- China
- **Fourth rank- India**
- Fifth rank- Japan

### **Global Climate Risk Index 2021**

- The Global Climate Risk Index 2021, released by **Germanwatch -an NGO based in Bonn, Germany**, analyses to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of weather-related loss events.
- The most recent data available for 2019 and from 2000 to 2019 were taken into account.
- The countries and territories affected most in 2019 were Mozambique, Zimbabwe as well as the Bahamas.
- For the period from 2000 to 2019 Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti rank highest.
- **India ranks seventh** among countries most affected in 2019 by climate change.

## **Important Days**

### **January 04, World Braille Day**

- World Braille Day is celebrated every year on January 4 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Louis Braille who was the inventor of Braille for persons with visual disabilities.
- Braille is a code which represents letters that can be recognized by visually impaired individuals by their sense of touch.
- **Note:** The first World Braille Day was celebrated on January 4 in 2019 after it got approval from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) via a proclamation in November 2018.

### **January 10, World Hindi Day**

- Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is **the third most-spoken language in the world** with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.
- Every year on Jan 10, World Hindi Day is marked to commemorate the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, had inaugurated the conference.
- The World Hindi Day was observed for the first time in 2006.
- **Note:** National Hindi Divas is celebrated annually on September 14.

### January 12, National Youth Day

- National Youth Day is celebrated on 12 January being the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. In 1984 the Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.

### Government decides to celebrate birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as 'Parakram Diwas' on 23rd of January every year

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the Parakram Diwas event in Kolkata and will inaugurate an exhibition there.
- **Note:** Recently Government has decided to constitute a High Level Committee headed by Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

### January 23, Parakram Diwas 2021

- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti or officially "Parakram Diwas" is a national event celebrated in India to mark the birthday of a prominent Indian freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- He was the head of Indian National Army (Azad Hind Fouj). He was the founder-head of the Azad Hind Government.
- **Note:** The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi attended the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Kolkata.
- Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) and Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari have been selected for the **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar** for their excellent work in Disaster Management.

### January 24, National Girl Child Day

- It was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India in 2008, with the purpose to spread awareness among people about all the inequalities girls face in the Indian society.
- In January 2015, Narendra Modi government had launched Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme with an objective to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio.
- Sex Ratio at Birth has improved by 16 points from 918 in 2014-15 to 934 in 2019-20.

### January 24, International Day of Education

- This year's theme for International Education Day is "Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation."
- As per UNESCO data, around 258 million children are out of school, 617 million children and adults cannot read and do basic math.
- **Note:** The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming this day as International Day of Education on December 3, 2018, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.

### January 25, National Tourism Day

- Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.
- **Note:** The **World Tourism Day** is celebrated on 27 September.

### 25 January- National Voters Day (NVD)

- The theme for this year's NVD, '**Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed**', envisages active and participative voters during elections.
- The National Voters' Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year since 2011, all across the country to mark the foundation day of Election Commission of India, i.e. 25th January 1950.
- **Note:** During the event, the Honourable President of India will confer the **National Awards for the year 2020-21** and launch ECI's Web Radio: '**Hello Voters**'.
- Union Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad will launch the **e-EPIC** programme and distribute **e-EPICs and Elector Photo Identity Cards to five new voters**.

### January 24, Uttar Pradesh Diwas

- Theme of Uttar Pradesh Diwas was 'Self-reliant Uttar Pradesh: Women, youths, Farmers: Development of all, Honour to All.' 'Sabka Vikas Sabka Samman '.
- Uttar Pradesh Diwas is observed as the **foundation day of this state**. It was on this very same day in 1950, Uttar Pradesh had got itself renamed. Earlier the state was known as United Provinces. On May 2017, it was announced by the UP state government that the 24th January will be celebrated as Uttar Pradesh day (Uttar Pradesh Diwas).
- **Note:** On this day (24 January 2021), **Laxman Award and Rani Laxmibai Award** were given to male and female sportspersons who have achieved remarkable achievement in the world of sports.
- On this day (24 January 2021), '**Mukhyamantri Abhyudaya Yojana**' announced by CM Yogi Adityanath to give a free coaching facility to the youth. In this coaching center, IAS, IPS and PCS officers will directly give coaching to the students of the state.

### January 26, Republic Day of India

- India is celebrating its 72nd Republic Day this year.

- **Note:** Republic Day of India is celebrated on January 26 to mark the day when the Constitution of India came into effect. The Constitution of India, which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, came into effect on January 26, 1950.
- **Flight lieutenant Bhawana Kanth** will be a part of the Republic Day parade this year to become the first woman fighter pilot to take part in India's biggest ceremonial event on January 26.
- This year, **Rafale fighter** jet will also take part in the Republic Day parade for the first time.
- **A tableau from Union Territory of Ladakh** will participate in the Republic Day Parade on Rajpath for the first time this year.
- For the first time, a 122-member strong contingent of the **Bangladesh Armed Forces** will participate at the Republic Day celebrations.
- On the occasion of Republic Day, 2021, 73 personnel have been **awarded Fire Service Medals**.
- A total of 946 Police personnel have been awarded Medals (**Award of Gallantry Medals / Service Medals**) on the occasion.
- The President of India has approved the conferment of **Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards – 2020** on 40 persons.

## Books and Authors

### The book titled "Modi India Calling - 2021" released

- A coffee table book filled with over hundreds of photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his 107 overseas and bilateral visits was released on the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
- The idea of this book was given by senior BJP leader Vijay Jolly. It was released by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta.

### Manipur Governor released book "Making of a General A Himalayan Echo"

- Manipur Governor Dr Najma Heptulla released a book titled "Making of a General-A Himalayan Echo" authored by (Retd) Lt General Konsam Himalaya Singh.

### January 15, Indian Army Day

- On the occasion of the 73rd Army Day on January 15, Army chief MM Naravane lauded the "supreme sacrifice" of the bravehearts in the line of duty.
- Army Day is celebrated on 15 January every year in India, in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15 January 1949.

### Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant released a book 'Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record'

- The book has been written by senior journalist Shri Waman Subha Prabhu.
- The book is a collection of memories of Shri Waman Prabhu who happened to be with late Parrikar during the journey of his life. In this book the author

endeavored to narrate the multi-faceted personality of late Mr. Manohar Parrikar who served as Chief Minister of Goa.

## Obituaries

### **Former Union minister Buta Singh passes away**

- Singh, a senior Congress leader, served as Lok Sabha MP for eight terms from the Jalore constituency in Rajasthan. He also served as the governor of Bihar.

### **Legendary music director Shantanu Mohapatra passes away**

- Mohapatra was associated with the Odia music industry for almost 60 years. He had many firsts to his credits in the field of Odia music as a music composer.

### **Olympic bronze and World Cup winning hockey player Michael Kindo passes away**

- He played three Men's Hockey World Cup in 1971, 1973 and 1975 where India bagged bronze, silver and gold medals respectively.
- He also represented in the 1972 Olympic Games where India secured a bronze medal. Kindo received the Arjuna Award in 1972.

### **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's niece Chitra Ghosh passes away**

- Chitra Ghosh, the youngest daughter of Sarat Chandra Bose and niece of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, passed away.
- Professor Chitra Ghosh made pioneering contributions to academics and community service.

### **Tamil writer A Madhavan passes away**

- A Madhavan had won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2015 for his collection of short stories, *Ilakkiya Chuvadukal*. The Tamil Nadu government has honored him with the prestigious Kalaimamani Award.

### **Former Gujarat Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki passes away**

- The veteran Congress leader Madhavsinh Solanki was Chief Minister of Gujarat four times between 1976 and 1990. He was the longest-serving Chief Minister of the state before Narendra Modi.
- He was also India's External Affairs Minister under Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

### **Senior Telugu journalist Turlapati Kutumba Rao passes away**

- Veteran journalist and Padma Shri awardee Turlapati Kutumba Rao died in Vijayawada.

- Rao is known for his contribution to Telugu journalism with 4,000 biographies and 16,000 public speeches which won him a place in the world records.

#### **Eminent social worker Padma Shri D Prakash Rao passed away**

- Rao was conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2019 by the Government of India for his contribution towards boosting the value of education among slum and orphan kids in Cuttack.

#### **Renowned writer Ved Mehta passes away**

- Indian-American novelist Ved Mehta, who overcame blindness and became widely known as the 20th-century writer most responsible for introducing American readers to India.
- He was the MacArthur Prize fellow and member of the British Royal Society of Literature.

#### **Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away**

- He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1991, followed by Padma Bhushan in 2006 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018.
- In 2003, he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

#### **Veteran Actor and Director Biswajit Chatterjee has been conferred Indian Personality of the Year Award, at 51st IFFI**

- The 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa has conferred Shri Biswajit Chatterjee, veteran actor, producer, director and singer of Hindi and Bengali cinema, with the Indian Personality of the Year Award.

#### **World renowned oncologist Dr. V Shanta passes away**

- Dr. Shanta was the Chairperson of Adyar Cancer Centre, Chennai.
- Dr. Shanta's contribution to the field of oncology, had earned her the Magsaysay, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan awards.

#### **Former Arunachal Pradesh Governor Mata Prasad dies**

- Mata Prasad served as minister in the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh in 1988- 89 and was appointed as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in 1993.

#### **Veteran Singer Narendra Chanchal passes away**

- Chanchal was known for his religious songs and bhajans. He won the Filmfare Award for Best Male Singer for Bobby.

#### **Former India and Mohun Bagan goalkeeper Prasanta Dora dies aged 44**

- Prasanta made his national debut in 1999 against Thailand in the Olympic qualifiers. He represented Bengal in the Santosh Trophy.

- At club-level, Prasanta started his career at the Tollygunge Agragami before moving to Calcutta Port Trust, Mohammedan Sporting, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal.

## Sports

### **Leon Mendonca becomes India's 67th Chess Grandmaster**

- Goa's 14-year-old Leon Mendonca has become India's 67th chess Grandmaster by winning the third and final norm at a tournament in Italy.
- Mendonca is the second GM from the coastal state.
- The first GM from Goa is Ivana Maria Furtado, she achieved it in 2011.
- Chennai player G Akash, had in July, become the country's 66th Grandmaster.

### **Claire Polosak becomes first female match official in men's Test match**

- Australia's Claire Polosak became the first female match official in a men's Test match when she took up the fourth umpire's role in the third Test between India and Australia.
- **Note:** The 32-year-old from New South Wales had, earlier, already earned the distinction of being the first woman on-field umpire in a men's ODI match during ICC's Division 2 league between Namibia and Oman played at the Windhoek in 2019.

### **In UT Ladakh, Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament organised at Chiktan in Kargil district**

- Alongwith 11 teams from different villages of Chiktan, for the first time two Women Teams of Chiktan also participated in the Khelo India Games.
- Shakar Chiktan SDM, Kacho Asgar Ali khan inaugurated the tournament.

### **Jigmet Dolma from India secured fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021**

- Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police.
- In the full marathon, among the SAARC and local runners, Bahadur Singh of India became the champion in the men's category and Pushpa Bhandari of Nepal became the champion in the women's category.
- 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.

### **First ever Ice climbing festival celebrated in Nubra valley**

- In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in Nubra valley.
- To promote winter tourism in Nubra valley, Nubra Adventure Club, with the help of Social activist Dr. Nordan Otzer, has organized the seven day Ice Climbing festival.

### In Ladakh, a 13-day Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth festival 2021 began from 18th January

- A series of snow based activities are scheduled for next 13 days in the Snow bound, picturesque remote Zaskar.
- The first ever Zaskar winter festival would definitely open a new arena in Ladakh for adventure and Nature loving tourists and a boost for local Youth to hone up their skills in winter sports to represent India.

### Team India creates history; clinches test series against Australia 2-1

- India becomes the first Asian team to win at the Gabba.
- India created history by defeating Australia by three wickets in the fourth and final Test at the Gabba in Brisbane and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.
- **Note: Recent series between India and Australia**  
**T20 International series:** India won the 3-match series 2-1  
**One Day International series:** Australia won the 3-match series 2-1

### Yonex Thailand Open badminton tournament 2021

- **Location:** BANGKOK, THAILAND
- It was the first badminton tournament of 2021 by Badminton World Federation (BWF).
- **List of winners**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
<b>Winner-</b> Viktor Axelsen  <b>Runner-up-</b> Angus Long	<b>Winner-</b> Carolina Marin  <b>Runner-up-</b> Tai Tzu-Ying	<b>Winner-</b> Lee Yang, Wang Chi-Lin  <b>Runner-up-</b> Goh V Shem, Tan Wee Kiong	<b>Winner-</b> Greysia Polii, Apriyani Rahayu  <b>Runner-up-</b> Jongkolphan Kititharakul, Rawinda Prajongjai	<b>Winner-</b> Dechapol Puavaranukroh, Sapsiree Taerattanachai  <b>Runner-up-</b> Praveen Jordan, Melati Daeva Oktavianti

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