



# Monthly Current Affairs March 2021

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### Important News: State

- 1. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated Shaheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan Zoological Park in Gorakhpur**
  - The Chief Minister said the zoo has been named after great freedom fighter Shaheed Ashfaq Ullah Khan.
  - It will be the second biggest zoo in Uttar Pradesh after Kanpur Zoological Park.
  - **Note:** Recently Uttar Pradesh government has organized **Banana Festival in Kushinagar district** under ODOP (One District One Product) scheme.
- 2. Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu launched 'Dekho Apna Pradesh'**
  - Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu launched 'Dekho Apna Pradesh' – an initiative of the chief minister himself, conceptualized on the lines of the union tourism ministry's 'Dekho Apna Desh' initiative.
  - It aims to restart tourism activities and encourage citizens to take a pledge to visit at least 10 places in Arunachal Pradesh by 2022.
  - **About Dekho Apna Desh:** It is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism which was launched by Union Minister for Tourism Shri Prahlad Singh Patel at Konark, Odisha on 24th January 2020.
- 3. 'Anandam: The Center for Happiness' in IIM Jammu**
  - Union Minister of Education **Ramesh Pokhriyal** inaugurates 'Anandam: The Center for Happiness' at **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu** virtually.
  - Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, Shri Manoj Sinha; Founder, Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar virtually attended the occasion.
  - It aligns with the **National Education Policy 2020** that aims to transform India's education system by 2021.  
**'Anandam: The Center for Happiness'** will be divided into five broad categories, namely, Counselling, Holistic wellness, Elective courses on Happiness Development, Research and Leadership & Faculty Development
- 4. Uttar Pradesh government approves scheme offering affordable rental housing for urban migrants and poor**
  - The Uttar Pradesh government will start the **Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes (ARHC) scheme** for poor people living in cities and a proposal to this effect was approved by the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
  - **About ARHC scheme:** It has been launched by the government of India through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the 'self-reliant India' campaign.
  - **Note:** The scheme will be implemented under **two models** in the state.

- **Model one** involves converting vacant houses funded by the central or state government into an ARHC through an agreement.
- Under the **second model**, ARHC will be built, operated and maintained by public/private entities on their available vacant land.

#### 5. **First-of-its-kind Cruise service starts between Surat and Diu**

- Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (I/C) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya flagged off the Cruise service from Hazira Port of Surat to Diu.
- Before 2014, there were 139 cruise calls at the Indian Ports but today there are 450 cruise calls in the country.
- The number before 2014 was one lakh and the number of tourists in 2019-20 was 4.5 lakhs.

**Note:** Indian coastline has a huge potential for the cruise tourism industry and 6 International cruise terminals are being planned on both the west coast (Mumbai, Goa, Kochi) and east coast (Visakhapattanam, Kolkata, Chennai) of India

#### 6. **Power Minister R K Singh launches 'GRAM UJALA' in Bihar**

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Power and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, R K Singh launched the 'GRAM UJALA' programme in Arrah, Bihar.
- Under the GRAM UJALA programme, **Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)** will distribute high quality LED bulbs, at an affordable cost of 10 rupees per bulb in rural areas.
- The Village Ujala program will be funded entirely through **carbon credits** and will be the first such program in India.
- **In the first phase** of this programme, 1.5 crore LED bulbs will be distributed across villages of Aarah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and village in western Gujarat.

#### 7. **Bihar becomes first state in country to implement 'Ethanol Production Promotion policy 2021'**

- Bihar has become the first state in the country to implement 'Ethanol Production Promotion policy 2021' that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains.
- The Central government has already given permission for direct production of ethanol in December 2020 in consonance with **National Policy of Biofuels, 2018**.
- An investor will get an additional government subsidy of 15% of the cost of plant and machinery up to a maximum of Rs 5 crore, in addition to the existing incentives under the **Bihar Industrial Investment Promotion Policy, 2016**.
- **Note:** Currently, **India** produces 5.30 thousand barrel of ethanol, which is very low compared to countries like the USA and Brazil.
- At present, **Bihar** has been producing 12 crore litre ethanol per year and is the fifth highest ethanol-producing state in the country.
- **Uttar Pradesh** is the highest ethanol-producing state in the country.

## 8. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister launches India's first FPO portal

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched 'UPFPO Shakti Portal' as part of Kisan Kalyan Mission at an event in Gorakhpur.
- The Farmer Producer Organization-centric (FPO-centric) portal will bring farmers, producer groups, traders and the agriculture and other allied departments of the UP government on one platform.
- The portal was developed with technical and funding support from the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**.
- **Note:** The state currently has 576 FPOs comprising around 2.15 lakh farmers. Of these, 471 FPOs have registered themselves on the portal.

## 9. Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar opens

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Asia's largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar has been opened for the general public and tourists.
- **About Tulip Garden (Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip garden):** It is the largest tulip garden in Asia spread over an area of about 30 hectares.
- It is situated in the valley of the Jabarawan Hills on the banks of Dal Lake.
- The garden was opened in 2007 with the aim to boost floriculture and tourism in Kashmir Valley.
- **Note:** The **Tulip festival**, organised at the onset of spring season in the Valley, is an annual celebration that aims to showcase the range of flowers in the garden as part of tourism efforts by the government of Jammu and Kashmir.

## 10. Andhra Pradesh to launch India's first "Government-run Ambulance Network" for animals

- The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to set up mobile ambulance services "Government-run Ambulance Network" for animals to boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in the state.
- The Animal Husbandry Department has been further directed to set up one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at every assembly constituency.
- These mobile ambulances shall provide veterinary first aid services along with spot diagnosis and attending to emergency cases.
- **Facts about Andhra Pradesh:**  
**Capital:** Amaravati  
**Governor:** Biswabhusan Harichandan  
**Chief Minister:** Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy

## 11. Shri Sanjay Dhotre releases Commemorative Postage Stamp on 100 years of first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha

- Shri Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for Education, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology digitally released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on 100 years of first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha.
- This Commemorative Postage Stamp celebrates an important event of Indian History which is the **first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1921.**

- It energized the Non-Cooperation movement and strengthened the cause of the freedom struggle.

### **12. India's largest floating solar power plant at Telangana to be commissioned by May 2021**

- India's largest floating solar power plant of **100 MW capacity** is being developed in Telangana's Ramagundam and is likely to be commissioned by May, 2021.
- It is one of the solar plants being developed by the energy conglomerate NTPC, which is all set to commission around 217 MW floating solar capacity in the next few months.
- The other renewable energy plants that are likely to be commissioned this year are 92 MW floating unit at Kayamkulam gas plant in Kerala and 25 MW unit at Simhadri power plant.
- **Note: The world's largest solar power plant** with 600 MW capacity is being set up on Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh. The project is expected to start power generation only by 2022-23.

### **13. Kalanamak Rice Festival**

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated a three-day 'Kalanamak Rice Festival' in **Siddharthnagar district** on March 13, 2021.
- Kalanamak rice has been recognised with a **geographical indication (GI) tag**.
- It is under **ODOP (One District One Product)** scheme of the state government.
- **Kalanamak rice** is rich in micro-nutrients such as Iron and Zinc. Regular intake of Kalanamak rice can prevent Alzheimer's disease.
- **Note:** Earlier, the Chief Minister had inaugurated the **Strawberry Festival** in Jhansi and the **Jaggery Festival** in Lucknow.

### **14. Bengaluru airport launches India's first dedicated express cargo terminal**

- The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.
- The two lakh square feet built to suit facility will be operated by **Express Industry Council of India**.
- **Note:** Recently, Bengaluru airport has bagged global recognition from the **Airports Council International (ACI) World's 'Voice of the Customer'** award.

### **15. India's first AC railway station 'Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal' to function soon in Bengaluru**

- Named after one of the foremost civil engineers, Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya, the nation's first centralised AC (Air Conditioned) railway terminal at Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru is set to become operational soon.
- India's first AC railway terminal, built at an anticipated cost of Rs 314 crore, is all set to be inaugurated later this month.
- Byappanahalli is the third coach terminal sanctioned in 2015-16.

- **Facts about Karnataka:**  
**Capital:** Bengaluru  
**Governor:** Vajubhai Vala  
**Chief Minister:** B. S. Yediyurappa

#### **16. Mumbai's CSMT becomes first railway station in Maharashtra to get IGBC Gold Certification**

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) Railway Station of Central Railway is the first railway station in Maharashtra to be awarded with Gold certification as per CII's Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) ratings.
- Central Railway has implemented various green initiatives across its zone, with plantations creating green areas, installation of solar panels, customer-friendly initiatives at many stations etc.
- **Note: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT)** also known by its former name Victoria Terminus and It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
- **The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)**, part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was formed in the year 2001. The council offers a wide array of services which include developing new green building rating programmes, certification services and green building training programmes.

#### **17. Delhi government approves the formation of a separate school board in the city**

- The Delhi government approved the formation of the **Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE)**.
- The new Board will have a governing body headed by the Education Minister of the Delhi government and an executive body headed by a chief executive officer.
- **Note:** There are around 1,000 Delhi government schools and about 1,700 private schools, most of them affiliated to the CBSE, in the city.
- **Facts about Delhi: Chief**

**Minister:** Arvind Kejriwal

**Lieutenant Governor:** Anil Baijal

#### **18. India's first 'Transgender Community Desk' opens in Hyderabad**

- The Cyberabad Police launched India's first-ever 'Transgender Community Desk' at the Gachibowli Police Station in Hyderabad.
- The desk will provide support to file cases in offences related to violence or discrimination against any transgender person.
- Cyberabad Police chief VC Sajjanar inaugurated the desk.
- The desk will be managed by **a police liaison officer and a transgender person** who is designated as a **community coordinator**.

#### **19. President of India inaugurates conservation works at Singorgarh Fort in Madhya Pradesh**

- The President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for the conservation works of Singorgarh Fort in Singrampur village of Damoh district in Madhya Pradesh.
- The President also inaugurated the newly carved Jabalpur Circle of Archaeological Survey of India.
- He also addressed the State Level Tribal Conference at Singrampur village in Damoh. The program was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and the Tribal Affairs Department of Madhya Pradesh.

#### **20. Uttarakhand opens India's first 'forest healing centre'**

- The country's first 'forest healing centre' was inaugurated by noted environmentalist Joginder Bisht at Kalika near Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.
- The country's first forest healing centre based on the concept of making people healthy by bringing them into direct contact with nature was opened to the public.
- Drawing inspiration from the **Japanese technique of forest bathing (shinrin - yoku)**, the healing centre has been developed by the research wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department.

#### **21. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat resigns**

- Mr Rawat handed in his resignation to Governor Baby Rani Maurya just days short of completing four years in power.
- A first-timer, he was chosen by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the BJP swept the Uttarakhand election in 2017, winning 57 seats in the 69-member assembly.

#### **22. India's first 'World Skill Centre' in Bhubaneswar**

- Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'World Skill Centre' (WSC) at Mancheswar,
- It will provide skills training to 3000 students in eight trades.
- The State government has partnered with **Institute of Technical Education Services (ITEES), Singapore** to support **Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA)** in operationalising the centre.
- **Note:** The State will create **Odisha Skill Vision 2030** that will guide all future efforts in the skill development sector.

#### **23. Saras Aajeevika Mela opens at Noida Haat**

- Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 (26th February to 14th March 2021) at Noida Haat.
- **About SARAS Aajeevika Mela:** It is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India.
- Its aim is to bring the rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products.
- The Mela is organised by the marketing arm of the Ministry, Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).

#### **24. World's tallest Chenab rail bridge in Jammu & Kashmir**

- The world's highest railway bridge is being constructed over Jammu & Kashmir's Chenab River.
- The iconic steel arch is almost complete and the completion of the mega infrastructure project is scheduled for March this year.
- **Note:** The bridge which is being built by Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL) is a part of the 111- km Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail link Project (USBRL) which aims to connect Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country through a railway line.

## **25. Fossils of world's oldest animal Dickinsonia discovered inside Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh**

- Researchers are of the opinion that has traced Dickinsonia on the roof of *Auditorium Cave* at Bhimbetka, which dates back 570 million years.
- The fossil was discovered by chance by two experts from the Geological Survey of India (GSI) when they went ahead to explore Bhimbetka ahead of the 36th International Geological Congress.
- **About Bhimbetka rock shelters:** The Bhimbetka rock shelters are an archaeological site in central India. It is located in the Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh.

It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** that consists of seven hills and over 750 rock shelters distributed over 10 km.

## **26. 'Udaipur Science Centre' inaugurated in Tripura**

- The Governor of Tripura Ramesh Bais has inaugurated the 'Udaipur Science Centre', at Udaipur, Tripura.
- Udaipur Science Centre has been developed at a cost of Rs 6.00 crore funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India and Dept. of Science, Technology & Environment, Government of Tripura.
- **Note:** Udaipur Science Centre is the 22nd Science Centre which has been developed by NCSM and handed over to the State Governments under the Ministry of Culture's Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science.
- **National Council of Science Museums (NCSM):**

**Formation:** 4 April 1978

**Headquarters:** Kolkata

**Director General:** Shri A. D. Choudhury

**Parent Organisation:** Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

## **27. Haryana implements 75 percent reservation for locals in private sector jobs**

- The Haryana Governor has approved a bill (**The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2020**) that reserves 75 percent of the private sector jobs, that includes companies, societies and trusts, with gross salary upto ₹ 50,000 per month for the people of the state.
- The Bill was passed by the state assembly last year.



- **Facts about Haryana:**

**Capital:** Chandigarh

**Governor:** Satyadev Narayan Arya

**Chief Minister:** Manohar Lal Khattar

**Deputy Chief Minister:** Dushyant Chautala

## **Important News: India**

### **1. PM Modi's Bangladesh two day (26-27 March, 2021) visit**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Dhaka on March 26, 2021 to take part in Bangladesh's 50th Independence Day celebrations.
- This is the historic visit to celebrate **Mujib Borsho- the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**; 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh; and 50 years of Bangladesh's war of liberation.
- **Key points:** India and Bangladesh signed 5 MoUs in the fields of Disaster Management, trade, NCC, ICT and setting up of sports facilities.
- Swarna Jayanti scholarship for youths of Bangladesh announced.
- To invite 50 entrepreneurs of Bangladesh to visit India and join start-up initiative
- A Bangabandhu Chair will be established at Delhi University to facilitate Bangladesh studies.
- India and Bangladesh are together making a film titled Bangabandhu by the renowned film director Shyam Benegal.
- **Note:** This was PM Modi's first foreign trip since COVID-19.

### **2. New passenger train 'Mitali Express' inaugurated between India and Bangladesh**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated a new passenger train, '**Mitali Express**', **between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal** on the occasion of 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary and golden jubilee of Bangladesh's Independence on March 27, 2021.
- **Note:** This is the third passenger train after **Maitree Express** (Dhaka-Kolkata) and **Bandhan Express** (Khulna-Kolkata) running between the two neighbouring countries.

### **3. Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launches 'Tribal TB Initiative' in pursuit of TB Mukh Bharat**

- The government accords top priority to ensuring Universal Access to free treatment and care for TB (Tuberculosis) across the country.

- Over ten crore tribal population is living with a huge diversity in their population dynamics.
- **Note: The Union Territories of Lakshadweep and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir** have been declared **TB Free** on World TB Day 2021.
- India has 30 percent of the world's TB cases.

#### 4. **AYUSH Ministry set up interdisciplinary team to explore potential of Yoga**

- The Ministry of AYUSH has set up an interdisciplinary team of experts to explore the potential of Yoga as a productivity enhancing tool for the population.
- The committee is chaired by **H. R Nagendra, Chancellor, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana** and its members include representatives from AIIMS New Delhi, IIM Bangalore, IIT Bombay, various leading Yoga institutions, the corporate sector and the AYUSH Ministry.
- The committee will submit its preliminary recommendations by May 2021.
- **Note:** The Sports Ministry formally recognised **Yogasana** as a competitive sport, which will enable the ancient practice to avail government funding.

#### 5. **Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman launches Central Scrutiny Centre and IEPFA's Mobile App**

- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman launched **Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC)** and **Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority's (IEPFA) Mobile App** — two tech-enabled initiatives by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).
- The **Central Scrutiny Centre** will scrutinize certain Straight Through Process (STP) Forms filed by the corporates on the MCA21 registry.
- The **Mobile App** aims at achieving the goal of financial literacy, spreading investors' awareness, education, and protection among investors.

#### 6. **Prime Minister Modi unveils new version of 'Exam Warriors'**

- The new version of 'Exam Warriors' written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now available with many new mantras for students as well as for parents.
- The book reaffirms the need to remain stress free before an exam.
- The Exam Warriors module is also available on the NaMo App.
- **Note:** The initial version of the book 'Exam Warriors' was written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and was published in 2018.

#### 7. **MoU signed towards execution of planned actions in time bound manner in 132 cities under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**

- In the presence of Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by representatives of State Pollution Control Boards, Urban Local Bodies and Institutes of Repute for 132 identified cities for implementation of city specific action plans under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

- A **National Knowledge Network** comprising leading air quality specialists has also been constituted as a technical advisory group to support activities under NCAP.
- **About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):** It is a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20% to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024 (with 2017 as base year).

#### 8. **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurates the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho**

- Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh inaugurated the 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho developed under **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** of Ministry of Tourism in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.
- **The UNESCO world Heritage site Khajuraho** attracts tourists for its mesmerising temples. Adding on more to its features is the convention Centre with brilliant facilities, Named as Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre Khajuraho, this venue will cater to all your business needs.

#### 9. **AYUSH Ministry in collaboration with Vinoba Seva Pratishthan organizes 'Ayurveda Parav'**

- In a bid to promote Ayurveda as the mainstream treatment for the prevalent lifestyle related diseases, Vinoba Seva Pratisthan (VSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, has successfully organized 'Ayurveda Parav' in Bhubaneswar from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- The 3-days event was inaugurated by **Padma Vibhushan Dr Raghunath Mohapatra**, Hon'ble Member of Rajya Sabha along with **Shri Naba Kishore Das**, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Odisha and **Shri Trilochan Majhi**, Director of AYUSH, Govt. of Odisha.
- During this Parv, nearly 25 research papers were presented by experts and researchers.

#### 10. **The Road Transport and Highways Ministry published the draft rules regarding concession in motor vehicle tax against scrapped vehicles**

Under the draft rules, people will get 25 percent concession on the purchase of personal vehicles with vehicle scrappage certificate while on the purchase of commercial vehicles, the tax relief will be 15 percent.

- In case of personal vehicles, the tax concessions will be available up to 8 years while for commercial vehicles, it will be up to 15 years.
- The rules are proposed to come into force from October 01, 2021.
- **Note:** Recently, Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari announced the "**Vehicle Scrapping Policy**".

#### 11. **Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of DSIR-PRISM Scheme**

- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of the **Department of Scientific and Industrial Research - Promoting Innovations in Individuals, Startups and MSMEs (DSIR-PRISM)** scheme at IIT Delhi.
- The innovation movement by DSIR-PRISM making synergy with three National Initiatives like Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, Smart India Hackathon and Rural Technology Action Group is unique.
- **Note:** Under the initiative, an innovator of Indian nationality - student, professional and common citizen - is provided technical, strategic, and financial assistance by DSIR-PRISM.
- **Recently**, Dr. Harsh Vardhan digitally participated in a panel discussion on vaccine production and distribution across Asia at the “**World Immunisation and Logistics Summit**”.

#### **12. Atal Innovation Mission launches 'AIM-PRIME', in partnership with BMGF & Venture Center**

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog launched **AIM-PRIME (Program for Researchers on Innovations, Market-Readiness & Entrepreneurship)**, an initiative to promote and support science-based deep-tech startups & ventures across India.
- In this regard, AIM has joined hands with **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)** to launch this nationwide program which will be implemented by **Venture Center** - a non-profit technology business incubator.
- The first cohort of the program is open to technology developers (tech start ups/scientists/ engineers/ clinicians) with strong science-based deep tech business ideas.
- **About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** It is a flagship initiative set up by the NITI Aayog to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the country and was setup in 2016.

#### **13. MA Ganapathy appointed as Director General of NSG**

Mr Ganapathy, a 1986-batch IPS officer has been appointment as the Director General (DG) of National Security Guard (NSG) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

- He was serving as the DG of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).
- **About National Security Guard (NSG):** NSG was raised in 1984 as the federal contingency commando force and its primary task includes undertaking specific counter-terrorist, counter-hijack operations and VVIP protection duties.

#### **14. Prime Minister launches ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ campaign**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launched the ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ campaign on World Water Day.
- The campaign launched under the theme: '**Catch the Rain, where it falls, when it falls**' will be implemented in all districts, rural as well as urban areas,

of the country during the period March 22, 2021 to November 30, 2021 (the pre-monsoon and monsoon period).

- On the occasion, **A Memorandum of Agreement** was signed between the Union Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the **Ken Betwa Link Project**, the first project of the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.
- **About Ken Betwa Link Project:** This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project.

### **15. Government forms experts committee for Startup India Seed Fund Scheme**

- The government has constituted an experts advisory committee chaired by **H K Mittal** from the Department of Science and Technology.
  - The committee will be responsible for the overall execution and monitoring of the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme.
  - **About Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS):** It has been approved for the period of next four years starting from 2021-22.
  - It will be implemented with effect from April 1, 2021.
- Rs 945 crore corpus will be divided over the next four years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.

### **16. Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari announces the Vehicle Scrapping Policy**

- **The main features of the Policy:**
- It is proposed that commercial vehicles be de-registered after 15 years in case of failure to get the fitness certificate.
- It is proposed that Private Vehicles be de-registered after 20 years if found unfit or in case of a failure to renew registration certificate.
- The scheme shall provide strong incentives to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles through registered scrapping centres.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will promote setting up of **Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF)** across India.
- **Note:** Criteria to determine vehicle fitness will be primarily emission tests, braking, safety equipment, among many other tests which are as per the **Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989.**

### **17. Government to launch Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly**

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to launch a Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly, to provide nutrition support to the indigent elders, who are not staying in the Old Age Homes and are victims of severe malnutrition.
- The Gram Panchayats and Urban Municipalities will be the implementing agencies of the Scheme.

- The fund for the Scheme will be provided by the **Senior Citizens Welfare Fund**.
- **About Poshan Abhiyan:** Government is implementing Poshan Abhiyan, earlier known as National Nutrition Mission, since 18<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

### **18. Government of India drives Enforcement of Contracts and Conciliation Mechanism**

- In order to lay emphasis on Enforcement of Contracts and Conciliation Mechanism, **NITI Aayog has constituted two Task Forces**.
- **The Task Force for Enforcement of Contracts:** It will give its recommendation for a policy framework for Enforcement of Contracts.
- The Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog will be the Chairman of this Task force.
- The task force will also examine relevant provisions of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015.
- **The Task Force on Conciliation Mechanism:** It will give its recommendation for an effective Conciliation Mechanism.
- The CEO, NITI Aayog will be the Chairman of this Task force.
- The task force will also examine relevant provisions of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- **Facts about NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog:**  
**Formed:** 1 January 2015  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Chairperson:** Narendra Modi  
**Vice Chairperson:** Rajiv Kumar  
**CEO:** Amitabh Kant

### **19. Union Education Minister inaugurates Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak in New Delhi**

The University of Delhi organized a programme to pay homage and commemorate 90 years of martyrdom of our national icons of the Indian National Movement -**Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru on 'Shaheed Diwas'** in the Convention Hall of the Viceregal Lodge.

- On this occasion Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Education, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.
- The existing collection of books on freedom fighters in the Bhagat Singh Smarak has been announced to be converted into **“Shaheed Smriti Pustakalaya.”**

### **20. Parliament passes the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

- Rajya Sabha on March 24, 2021, passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The bill was earlier passed in the Lok Sabha on March 22, 2021.

- The latest bill amends the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 which provides a framework for the functioning of the Government of Delhi and the Legislative Assembly.
- **The Bill provides that the term ‘government’ referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly of Delhi will imply Lieutenant Governor, LG.**

### **21. Prime Minister inaugurates ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ from Sabarmati Ashram; flags off Dandi Padyatra**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the curtain raiser activities of the ‘**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**’ (**India@75**).
- He flagged off the ‘**Padyatra**’ (**Freedom March**) from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad, Gujarat on March 12, 2021.
- The Padyatra will cover a journey of 241 miles from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad to Dandi in Navsari and will end on 5th April, 2021 lasting for 25 days.
- Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture & Tourism will lead the first lap of 75 kilometers of the Padyatra.
- The launch of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ 75 weeks before 15 August 2022 will continue till 15 August, 2023.
- **Note:** Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a series of events to be organised by the Government of India to commemorate the **75th Anniversary of India’s Independence**.
- **Mahatma Gandhi** along with 81 persons had initiated the famous **Dandi Padyatra** from 12th March to 6th April, 1930.

### **22. Prime Minister addresses 4th Global Ayurveda Festival**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the 4th Global Ayurveda Festival (12-19 March, 2021, Kerala) through virtual mode.
- The **National AYUSH Mission** has been started to promote AYUSH medical systems through cost effective AYUSH services.
- India’s policy regarding Ayurveda and other Indian systems of medicine is already aligned with the **Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023 of the World Health Organisation**.
- **Note:** The **WHO** has also announced the setting up of the **Global Centre for Traditional Medicine** in India.

### **23. Government launches ‘Mera Ration’ mobile app**

- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution launched the ‘**Mera Ration**’ mobile app in line with the “**One Nation One Ration Card**” (**ONORC**) scheme.
- This app will benefit especially those ration card holders who move to new areas for livelihoods.
- **Note:** The system which was started initially in 4 States in August 2019 has been swiftly rolled out in a very short span of time in 32 States/UTs by December

2020 and the integration of remaining 4 States/UT (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and West Bengal) is expected to be completed in next few months.

- At present, the system covers nearly **69 Crore NFSA beneficiaries** (about 86% NFSA population) in the country.
- The **ONORC scheme** is being implemented by the Department of Food & Public Distribution for the nation-wide portability of ration cards under **National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.

#### **24. Union Minister Anurag Thakur appointed as Captain in Territorial Army**

- Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur became the first serving MP (Member of Parliament) to be appointed as Captain in the Territorial Army.
- Mr Thakur has been promoted to the rank of Captain at 124 Infantry Battalion Territorial Army (Sikh).
- **Note:** The four-time BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur was commissioned into the Territorial Army as a Lieutenant by then Chief of Army Staff General Dalbir S Suhag in July 2016.

#### **25. Government appointed GP Samanta as Chief Statistician of India**

- Samanta will also hold charge as Secretary in the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI).
- He will replace Kshatrapati Shivaji who was given additional charge in MoSPI in September.
- Samanta is currently as an advisor in the Reserve Bank of India's department of statistics and information management.

#### **26. Maths, physics, chemistry not compulsory for engineering admissions: AICTE**

- In a major change in the eligibility criteria for engineering courses, the **AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education)** has made Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (PCM) optional for students who wish to pursue technical courses like biotechnology, textile or agriculture engineering at the undergraduate level.
- However, PCM remains mandatory for most engineering subjects like computer science.
- **About AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education):** It is a statutory body, and a national-level council for technical education, under the Department of Higher Education.

**Founded:** November 1945

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Anil Sahasrabudhe

#### **27. Centre's Panel for air quality management in NCR dissolved within five months**



- **The Commission for Air Quality Management** in the National Capital Region (NCR) and its Adjoining Areas, formed by the Centre last year in October, stands dissolved as the ordinance under which it was established has lapsed.
- Since ordinance was not introduced in Parliament within six weeks of its convention, it has lapsed and consequently, the commission also has been shut down within five months of its constitution.
- **Note:** The commission was headed by **M M Kuttu**, former secretary to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Under the ordinance released by the Ministry of Law and Justice on October 28, the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) was dissolved and replaced by the commission.

### **28. New scheme announced for tourist vehicle operators**

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new scheme, under which any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an “All India Tourist Authorization/Permit” through online mode.
- The new set of rules, to be known as, “**All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021**”.
- The new rules will be applicable from 01 April 2021. All existing permits shall continue to be in force during their validity.
- The step was discussed in the **39th & 40th Transport Development Council Meetings**.

### **29. Cabinet approves closure of Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India Limited**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the closure of **Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India Limited (HHEC)**, a Government of India undertaking under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles.
- The Corporation has been continuously incurring losses since financial year 2015-16 and not earning sufficient income to meet its running expenses.

### **30. Centre appoints high-level team to review Medical Care & Public Health arrangements for Kumbh Mela at Haridwar**

- Centre has deployed a three-member high-level central team to review Medical Care and Public Health arrangements for Kumbh Mela at Haridwar in Uttarakhand.
- The team is being led by **Dr SK Singh**, Director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). **Dr SK Jain**, Additional Director and **Dr Meera Dhuria**, Deputy Director, both from NCDC are the team members.
- **Note:** The Kumbh Mela at Haridwar is held every 12 years at Haridwar, India.

### **31. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Advisor PK Sinha resigns**

Sinha, a retired IAS officer of 1977 batch, was appointed as Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister in September 2019, after a brief stint as an officer on special duty (OSD).

- Sinha was made OSD to the Prime Minister in August 2019, after he had served four years as Cabinet Secretary.

**32. Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi's memoir titled "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future"**

"My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future" will be published by Portfolio Books on September 28, 2021.

- Indra Nooyi was honoured with Padam Bhushan in 2007.
- She worked at PepsiCo for 24 years.

**33. Rajya Sabha passes the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

- The Rajya Sabha has approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- The Bill was approved in Lok Sabha on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- **Some salient features of amendments:**
- **Enhancing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks** for special categories of women which will be defined in the amendments to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules and would include survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women (like differently-abled women, minors) etc.
- Opinion of only one provider will be required up to 20 weeks of gestation and of two providers for termination of pregnancy of 20-24 weeks of gestation.

**34. The Government constitutes a National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence**

- The committee has 259 members and includes dignitaries and eminent citizens.
- The Government intends to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence in a befitting manner at national and international level in the form of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- The 75 years of India's Independence falls on 15th August 2022 and celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th March 2021.
- **Note:** 12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic **Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.**

**35. Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches 'CSIR Floriculture Mission'**

- Harsh Vardhan encouraged scientists of CSIR laboratories across the country to develop the land available at each laboratory to be set up as a model under the "CSIR Floriculture Mission".
- CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in 21 States and Union Territories of India.
- Harsh Vardhan also launched **CSIR's Societal Portal along with the Android App.**

- **Note:** The Indian floriculture market was worth Rs 15700 cr in 2018. The market is projected to reach Rs 47200 cr by 2024 during 2019-24.

### 36. All major schemes of Women and Child Development Ministry classified under 3 Umbrella Schemes

- For effective implementation of various schemes and programmes of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), all major schemes of the Ministry have been classified under 3 umbrella schemes viz. **Mission Poshan 2.0, Mission Vatsalya** and **Mission Shakti**.
- For these 3 Umbrella Schemes, the following allocation has been made in the Budget 2021-22 under Demand No. 100 for Ministry of Women and Child Development:

S.No.	Umbrella Scheme	Schemes included	Budget 2021-22 (Rs. In crores)
1.	Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Mission POSHAN 2.0	Umbrella ICDS - Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme	20,105.00
2.	Mission Vatsalya	Child Protection Services and Child Welfare Services	900.00
3.	Mission Shakti (Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women)	Sambal (One Stop Centre, Mahila Police Volunteer, Women's Helpline/Swadhar/Ujjawala/Widow Homes etc.)  Samarthya (Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Creche, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana/ Gender Budgeting/Research	3,109

### 37. Indian Railway announces integrated Rail Madad Helpline number “139”

- Indian Railway has integrated all railway helplines into single number 139 (Rail Madad Helpline) for quick grievance redressal and enquiry during the journey.
- Various Railway grievances helplines were discontinued last year. Now, Helpline no. 182 would also be discontinued from 1.4.21, and merged into 139.
- The Ministry of Railways has also launched a Social Media campaign **#OneRailOneHelpline139** to inform and educate the passengers.
- **Note:** Recently, Indian Railways' Western Railway zone has introduced a **mobile train radio communication (MTRC)** system to prevent the train accidents by effective communication.

### **38. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the first-ever India Toy Fair 2021**

- The Toy Fair is being organized from 27th February to 2nd March 2021.
- **Note:** Today India's share in the \$ 100 billion global toy market is very small. 85 % of the toys in the country are sourced from abroad.
- The **National Toy Action Plan** has also been prepared. It has included 15 ministries and departments to make these industries competitive.
- Recently, **Toyathon-2021** was also organized to promote Indian sports based toys and more than 7000 ideas were brainstormed.

### **39. City Innovation Exchange (CiX) launched for Fostering Innovation in Urban Ecosystem**

- The City Innovation Exchange platform was launched by Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **About City Innovation Exchange (CiX):** CiX will connect cities to innovators across the national ecosystem to design innovative solutions for their pressing challenges.
- The Platform has more than 400 start-ups, 100 smart cities, more than 150 challenges statements and over 215 solutions at the time of launch.

### **40. Swachh Iconic Places - Ministry of Jal Shakti announces selection of 12 sites for transforming them into 'Swachh Tourist Destinations' under Phase IV**

- Under Swachh Iconic Places initiative of Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G), the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti has announced the selection of the following 12 iconic sites under Phase IV-

1. **Ajanta Caves**, Maharashtra
2. **Sanchi Stupa**, Madhya Pradesh
3. **Kumbhalgarh Fort**, Rajasthan
4. **Jaisalmer Fort**, Rajasthan
5. **Ramdevra**, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
6. **Golconda Fort**, Hyderabad, Telangana
7. **Sun Temple**, Konark, Odisha
8. **Rock Garden**, Chandigarh
9. **Dal Lake**, Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir
10. **Banke Bihari Temple**, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh
11. **Agra Fort**, Agra, Uttar Pradesh
12. **Kalighat Temple**, West Bengal

### **41. Election Commission of India announced the schedule for 2021 General Elections to State Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry**

- Polls are to be held for 294 seats in West Bengal, 234 seats in Tamil Nadu, 140 seats in Kerala, 126 seats in Assam and 30 seats in Puducherry.
- **Note: Recently, President's Rule was imposed in Puducherry.**

#### 42. MoHUA launches field assessment of Swachh Survekshan 2021

- Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Housing Affairs (MoHUA) launched the field assessment of Swachh Survekshan (SS) 2021.
- It is the sixth edition of the annual cleanliness survey conducted by the Government of India.
- **About Swachh Survekshan (SS):** It was introduced by MoHUA in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation.
- **Note:** Every year, the on-field assessment for SS takes place between January 4-31. However, the same had been delayed by two months due to the COVID pandemic and will now be conducted between **1-28 March 2021**.

#### 43. Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari launched the Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas.
- It improves traffic congestion problem at toll plazas/ city roads/highways by using central monitoring system.
- It uses several technologies like Satellite Imagery, GIS, Remote Sensing along with a proprietary algorithm to remotely monitor the congestion status of the roads.
- **Note:** The government has made **FASTag** mandatory from the 15th February midnight and any vehicle not fitted with it will be charged double the toll at electronic toll plazas across the country.

#### 44. Government notifies Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021

- The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 has been framed in exercise of powers under section 87 (2) of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and in supersession of the earlier Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011.
- The new rules have been widely introduced for social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

#### 45. Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot launched “Sugamya Bharat App” and a handbook entitled “Access – The Photo Digest”

- The App and the handbook have been developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- **Sugamya Bharat App** — a Crowd sourcing Mobile Application is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign i.e. built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India.
- The handbook entitled “**Access - The Photo Digest**” is a collection of photographs from across different States and UTs.
- This Book is envisaged as a tool and guide to sensitise stakeholders about 10 basic features of accessibility and related good-bad practices in easy to understand pictorial form.

#### 46. Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV merges, now to be known as Sansad TV

- Retired IAS officer Ravi Capoor has been appointed as its Chief Executive Officer of Sansad TV.
- The decision has been taken jointly by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, M. Venkaiah Naidu, and Speaker of Lok Sabha, Om Birla, based on the report of a committee set up to look into the integration of the two channels.

### Important News: World

#### 1. World's first ship tunnel to be constructed in Norway

- The world's first ship tunnel '**Stad Ship Tunnel**' is to be constructed in Norway.
- As per Norwegian Coastal Administration, the construction on the engineering project is expected to begin in 2022 and get completed by 2025-26.
- The ship tunnel is planned to run underneath the mountains in Norway's Stadhavet peninsula.
- It is expected to measure 1,700 metres long, 37 metres high and 26.5 metres wide after completion.

#### 2. Indo-Korean Friendship Park inaugurated

- India's First Indo-Korean Friendship Park was jointly inaugurated by Mr Suh Wook, Hon'ble Minister of National Defence, South Korea (Republic of Korea) and Shri Rajnath Singh, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, at Delhi Cantonment on 26 Mar 2021.
- The park's significance is not only because of it being a symbol of strong India-South Korea friendly relations, but also as a monument to India's contributions as part of 21 countries which participated in Korean war 1950-53, under the aegis of the United Nations.
- **Note:** The **South Korea's Minister of National Defence, Suh Wook** visited India between March 25-27, 2021 with a focus on boosting bilateral defence and military cooperation.
- **Facts about South Korea:**  
**Capital:** Seoul  
**President:** Moon Jae-in  
**Currency:** South Korean Won

#### 3. The cargo ship 'Ever Given' stranded in Egypt's Suez Canal lifted off the side of the channel

- The Suez Canal Authority has announced that the cargo '**Ever Given**' which has blocked Suez Canal for almost a week has been freed and is now on the move.
- **About Suez Canal:** It is an artificial sea-level waterway in Egypt, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez and dividing Africa and Asia.

- About 15% of world shipping traffic transits the Suez Canal, which is an important source of foreign currency revenue for Egypt.

#### 4. Iran, China sign a 25-Year 'Strategic Cooperation Pact'

- Iran and China signed a 25-year "Strategic Cooperation Pact" in the latest expansion of Beijing's flagship trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative.
- China is Iran's leading trade partner and was one of the biggest buyers of Iranian oil.
- The agreement, signed in Tehran by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.
- **Note:** Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the pact had first been proposed during a visit to Tehran by Chinese President Xi Jinping in January 2016.

#### 5. India takes part in 2nd Sherpas meeting of G7, guest countries

- The 2nd meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held on March 30, 2021.
- India's representative (Sherpa) Suresh Prabhu attended the meeting.
- The priority issues under the UK's G7 Presidency agenda were discussed, including preparations for the COP26 Summit and global health cooperation.
- **Note:** The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa.
- The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13, 2021.
- **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

#### 6. 3rd phase of Indian Beamline Project for materials research in Japan initiated

- The 3rd phase of the Indian Beamline Project, a facility for materials research set up under India-Japan Scientific and Technological Cooperation, was initiated on March 23, 2021, with special focus on industrial application research.
- The phase would increase the number of young researchers from India to be trained in advanced X-ray techniques of material research.
- **About Indian Beamline:** The Indian Beamline has been constructed and maintained by **Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP)**, Kolkata and **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, Bangalore; in Japanese synchrotron light source Photon Factory (PF) of High Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK), with support from Nano Mission, Department of Science and Technology.

#### 7. US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative launched

- On March 17, 2021, Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF) has launched the US-India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative.
- **USIAI** will serve as a platform to discuss opportunities for bilateral AI R&D collaboration.
- **The Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)** established under an agreement between the Governments of India and the United States of America in March 2000, is an autonomous bilateral organization jointly funded by both the Governments that promotes Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovation.

#### 8. UNDP launches "Sahi Disha" campaign in rural India

- The UNDP has launched "Sahi Disha" campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.
- The Disha initiative, a five-year collaboration between UNDP and the IKEA Foundation, enabled one million women through skilling and counselling services to access job and livelihood opportunities across five states - Delhi NCR, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana.
- **Facts about UNDP (United Nations Development Programme):**  
**Headquarters:** New York, United States  
**Founded:** 22 November 1965  
**Parent organization:** United Nations General Assembly

#### 9. European Union (EU) joins India's International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-CDRI

- The European Union has joined the CDRI during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of annual conference- **International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-ICDRI (March 17-19, 2021)**.
- **About CDRI:** Launched in 2019 by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** at the UN Climate Change Summit, the CDRI is an international collaborative platform involving the public and private sector which aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- **Facts about the European Union (EU):**  
**Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium  
**Founded:** 1 November 1993  
**Members Countries:** 27
- The **United Kingdom** became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020.
- In 2012, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize**.

#### 10. India, US to re-establish Homeland Security Dialogue

- **The Joe Biden administration** has announced the re-establishment of the Homeland Security Dialogue with India that was discontinued by the former President of the USA, Donald Trump.
- Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu agreed to re-establish the US-India Homeland Security Dialogue and to discuss important issues such as cybersecurity, emerging technology and addressing violent extremism.



- **Note:** An initiative of the Obama administration, the first India-US Homeland Security Dialogue was held in India in May 2011.
- The second India-US Homeland Security Dialogue was held in Washington DC in 2013.

#### **11. First Quad Leaders' virtual summit 2021**

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually participated, along with Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison and Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga and President of U.S.A. Joseph R. Biden, in the first Leaders' Summit of the Quadrilateral Framework on 12th March 2021.
- The Leaders discussed regional and global issues of shared interest and exchange views on practical areas of cooperation towards maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- **Note: Quad Leaders** agreed to pool financing, manufacturing and distribution capacity to send **1 billion coronavirus vaccines across Asia by the end of 2022.**
- **About Quad:** The **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue** also known as the **Quad** is an informal strategic forum between **Australia, India, Japan and the United States.**

#### **12. 1st Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues held**

- The BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) held their first meeting under India's Chairship from 9-11 March 2021.
- The theme of BRICS this year is - "**BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**".
- **Note:** The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.
- **Facts about BRICS:**  
**Formation:** 2009  
**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

#### **13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2021**

- Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), in partnership with member countries, organisations and institutions, is hosting the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) 2021, a three-day virtual Conference scheduled to be held from March 17 to March 19, 2021.
- **Facts about Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):**  
**Formation:** September 23, 2019  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi, India

**Director General:** Sandeep Poundrik

#### **14. Italy joins International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement**

- The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.

- The Framework Agreement was signed by Italy's Ambassador, Vincenzo De Luca.
- **About International Solar Alliance (ISA):** The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP21, in Paris.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India
- **Founded:** 30 November 2015

#### 15. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh

- 'Maitri Setu', 1.9 kilometres long, joining Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh, has been built over the **Feni River** which flows between the Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh.
- Due to this bridge over Feni River, Agartala will become the nearest city to an international sea port in India.
- **Note: Two ships of Indian navy (INS Kulish and INS Sumedha)** arrived at the port city of Mongla in Bangladesh to commemorate the ongoing 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh'.

#### 16. France launches first military exercises in space

- France launched its first military exercise in space to evaluate its ability to defend its satellites and other defense equipment from an attack.
- The exercise, codenamed "AsterX" in memory of the first French satellite from 1965, will be based on 18 simulated events in an operations room.
- **Note:** The French Space Forces Command was created in 2019 and is set to have 500 personnel by 2025.
- **Facts about France:**

**Capital:** Paris

**President:** Emmanuel Macron

**Prime Minister:** Jean Castex

**Currency:** Euro

#### 17. Pakistan to remain on FATF 'Grey List'

- Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to keep Pakistan on its terrorism financing 'Grey List' till June 2021.
- **Note:** In October 2020, the FATF had kept Pakistan on the grey list citing its failure to fulfill six out of 27 obligations of the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.
- Pakistan has been on the FATF's grey list since June 2018.
- **Facts about the Financial Action Task Force (FATF):**

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**President:** Marcus Pleyer

**Founded:** 1989

**Membership:** 39

**Two lists of FATF:**

**Grey List:** Those Countries that are considered safe haven for supporting terror funding and money laundering. It serves as a warning to the country that it may enter the blacklist.

**Black List:** Those Countries known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories are put in the blacklist. These countries support terror funding and money laundering activities.

### **18. UN body recommends Bangladesh graduation from LDC**

- **The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP)** has recommended graduation of Bangladesh from the category of **Least Developed Country (LDC)** as it fulfilled the eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability.
- This is the second consecutive time since 2018 that the CDP has made recommendation for Bangladesh for graduation from LDC category.
- The proposal will be sent to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**) for endorsement in June to be finally approved by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September this year.
- **Note:** Bangladesh will get time upto 2026 to prepare for the transition to the status of a developing country.

### **19. Israel officially receives first ever UAE ambassador**

- Israel formally received the first-ever ambassador from the **UAE (United Arab Emirates)**, following last year's historic agreement between the countries to normalise ties.
- **The UAE's first ambassador to Israel, Mohamed Al Khajah** delivered his credentials to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin at a ceremony in Jerusalem.
- The UAE was the first country to agree to establish full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state under the **Abraham Accords**, a pact brokered by former US president Donald Trump.
- **Facts about Israel:**

**President:** Reuven Rivlin

**Prime Minister:** Benjamin Netanyahu

**Capital:** Jerusalem

**Currency:** Israeli Shekel

### **20. UN General Assembly adopts India's resolution to declare 2023 as 'International Year of Millets'**

- The resolution titled 'International Year of Millets 2023' was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.
- The primary objective of the proposal is to increase awareness and direct policy action for nutritional and health benefits for consumption of millet and their suitability for farming in adverse and changing climatic conditions.
- **Note:** In April 2016, the UN General Assembly had proclaimed the **UN Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025**, recognizing the need to eradicate hunger and prevent all forms of malnutrition worldwide.

## Economy

### 1. Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attends 6th Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank

- Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs and India's Governor in New Development Bank (NDB), Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of New Development Bank on March 30, 2021.
- The meeting was also attended by Governors/Alternate Governors of Brazil, China, Russia and South Africa.
- This year's Annual Meeting theme was **“New Development Paradigms: The Evolution of Infrastructure”**.
- **Note:** Sitharaman mentioned that India is going to set up a new Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) with initial paid-up capital of around \$3 billion with a lending target of \$69 billion in next three years.
- **About New Development Bank (NDB):**  
**Headquarters:** Shanghai, China  
**President:** Marcos Prado Troyjo  
**Founder:** BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).  
**Founded:** 15 July 2014  
**First President:** K. V. Kamath

### 2. NITI Aayog releases report 'Investment Opportunities in India's Healthcare Sector'

- NITI Aayog released a report outlining the range of investment opportunities in various segments of India's healthcare sector, including hospitals, medical devices and equipment, health insurance, telemedicine, home healthcare and medical value travel.
- The report was released by NITI Aayog Member Dr VK Paul, CEO Amitabh Kant, and Additional Secretary Dr Rakesh Sarwal.
- India's healthcare industry has been growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 22% since 2016. At this rate, it is expected to reach USD 372 billion in 2022.
- As per estimates by the National Skill Development Corporation, healthcare can generate 27 lakh additional jobs in India between 2017-22.

### **3. Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 passed in Rajya Sabha; Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit increased from 49 to 74 %**

- The Rajya Sabha has passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021. It seeks to amend the Insurance Act, 1938 which will increase the limit of foreign investment allowed in Indian insurance companies.
- The Bill provides to increase the foreign direct investment limit from existing 49 percent to 74 percent.
- **Note:** The Act was first amended during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure when 26 percent FDI was allowed in the insurance sector.
- In 2015, the law was amended further to allow 49 percent FDI.

### **4. Government to launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors**

- In order to further strengthen efforts to promote domestic investments, the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** is in the process of finalising the 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' digital portal.
- The portal is in testing phase and the final version will be ready for launch by 15th May this year.

**Some of the special features of the Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra portal** include One-stop-shop to access all MSME portals; Information about the Approvals, Licenses, Clearances, Incentives & Schemes applicable to specific businesses across different sectors and Information on Manufacturing Clusters and Land Availability.

### **5. US becomes India's second biggest oil supplier**

- The United States overtook Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier in February 2021, as refiners boosted cheaper U.S. crude purchases to record levels to offset OPEC+ supply cuts.
- The trade data is released by Reuters.
- India's imports from the United States - the world's top producer - rose 48 percent to a record 545,300 barrels per day (bpd) in February 2021.
- Saudi Arabia, which has consistently been one of India's top two suppliers, slipped to No. 4 for the first time since at least January 2006.
- **India is the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer**, shipping in about 84% of its crude needs, and relies heavily on the Middle East.
- **Note:** Iraq is the India's first biggest oil supplier.

### **6. India's Foreign-exchange reserves (Forex reserves) have become the fourth largest in the world, surpassing Russia**

- As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign currency holdings, which dropped \$4.3 billion to \$580.3 billion on March 5, 2021, surpassed Russia's \$580.1 billion.
- As of March 2021, International Monetary Fund (IMF) table, **China has the largest Forex reserves followed by Japan and Switzerland.**

- **Foreign-exchange reserves:** Foreign exchange reserves are cash and other reserve assets such as gold held by a central bank or other monetary authority that are primarily available to balance payments of the country, influence the foreign exchange rate of its currency, and to maintain confidence in financial markets.

#### **7. RBI asks banks to implement image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30, 2021.

- The move is aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service.
- Last month, the RBI had announced pan-India coverage of CTS by bringing all bank branches under the image-based clearing mechanism.
- **Note:** There are about 18,000 bank branches that are still outside any formal clearing arrangement. The CTS is in use since 2010 and presently covers around 1,50,000 branches.

#### **8. India home to 4.12-lakh millionaire households, Mumbai tops the chart: Hurun India Wealth Report 2020**

- According to Hurun India Wealth Report 2020, there are 4.12-lakh millionaire households / affluent households in India with a networth of at least Rs 7 crore.
- Region-wise, the top 10 states are home to 70.3 percent of millionaire households in the country. Maharashtra has the highest number of millionaires (56,000), followed by Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu.
- There are 16,933 millionaire households in Mumbai, which contributes about 6.16 percent to the country's GDP.
- **Note:** The report has identified a novel household category in India – the '**New Middle Class**' – with an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum.

#### **9. Union Cabinet approves 'Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi' as 'single non-lapsable reserve fund'**

- The Union Cabinet approved the 'Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi' (PMSSN) as a 'single non-lapsable reserve fund' for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Finance Act, 2007.
- The use of this fund will be utilized for the **flagship schemes of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** namely: Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres, National Health Mission and Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana.
- **Note:** In the budget speech 2018, the Finance Minister while announcing Ayushman Bharat Scheme, also announced replacement of existing 3% Education Cess by 4% Health and Education Cess.

#### **10. APEDA organizes first ever Virtual Trade Fair (VTF)**

- In a first of its kind initiative for boosting export potential of India's agricultural and processed food products during COVID19 pandemic, APEDA launched its first Virtual Trade Fair on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The fair will conclude on March 12, 2021.
- The fair with a theme '**India Rice and Agro Commodity**', will focus on showcasing the exports potential of various agricultural commodities.
- **Facts about Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA):**

**Formation:** 1986

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairman:** Dr. M. Angamuthu

**Parent organization:** Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India

### **11. NITI Aayog and RMI India releases a report 'Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India'**

- It highlights the role of finance in India's transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and analyses that the transition will require a cumulative capital investment of USD 266 billion (Rs 19.7 lakh crore) in EVs, charging infrastructure, and batteries over the next decade.
- The report also identifies a market size of USD 50 billion (Rs 3.7 lakh crore) for the financing of EVs in 2030.
- **Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)**, an independent non-profit founded in 1982, transforms global energy use to create a clean, prosperous, and secure low-carbon future.

### **12. "India Telecom 2021"- a platform for convergence of technologies and business exchange**

- **TEPC (Telecom Equipment Export Promotion Council)** has organized 'India Telecom 2021' (March 3- 4, 2021) - an Exclusive International Business Expo under Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAI) of Department of Commerce, Government of India and with support of Department of Telecommunications & Ministry of External Affairs.
- **Note:** The government has announced the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes** for various sectors, including telecom sector, to become a part of the global supply chain.
- **About TEPC (Telecom Equipment Export Promotion Council):** TEPC has been set up by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Communications, Government of India to promote and develop of Export of Telecom Equipment and Services.

### **13. Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017**

- The Union Government on 2nd March 2021 notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017, with a view to improve the working of the

Insurance Ombudsman mechanism to facilitate resolution of complaints regarding deficiencies in insurance services in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner.

- The amended rules have enlarged the scope of complaints to Ombudsman from only disputes earlier to deficiencies in service on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.

**Note:** The Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers, which has been renamed as the **Council for Insurance Ombudsman**

## Award and Honor

### 1. Asha Bhosle to be honoured with Maharashtra Bhushan Award

- Legendary singer Asha Bhosle will be honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020.
- A committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray decided to select Asha Bhosle for this award.
- **About the Maharashtra Bhushan award:** It is a highest and prestigious award presented annually by the government of Maharashtra state in India. The Maharashtra Bhushan was first awarded in 1996.
- **Note:** Asha Bhosle was also honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2000.

### 2. Mahinder Giri, Range Officer, won International Ranger Award

- Mahinder Giri, range officer of Rajaji Tiger Reserve became the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award for his contribution towards conservation.
- The award has been announced for 10 professionals across the world by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).**

### 3. Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale to receive Saraswati Samman 2020

- Noted Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale will receive Saraswati Samman, 2020 for his book **Sanatan**.
- Limbale's Sanatan has been published in 2018. Sanatan is an important social and historical document of dalit struggle.
- **About Saraswati Samman:** It, instituted by K K Birla Foundation in 1991, is recognised as the most prestigious and highest literary award in the country.
- The award carries fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque.

### 4. Rajinikanth to be honoured with 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar announced the recipient of the 51<sup>st</sup> Dadasaheb Phalke Award.
- The award for 2019 will be conferred to legendary actor Shri Rajinikanth.



- It will be presented on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, along with the National Film Awards.
- **Note:** Debuted in Apoorva Raagangal (1975), **Rajinikanth** is an Indian actor who works primarily in Tamil cinema. He was also honored with the Padma Vibhushan (2016) by the Government of India.
- **Facts about Dadasaheb Phalke Award:**  
**First winner:** Devika Rani  
**Most recent winner:** Amitabh Bachchan (2018)  
**Established:** 1969  
**Category of:** National Film Awards

#### 5. NTPC conferred 'Role Model' award at 11th CII National HR Excellence Award 2020-21

- NTPC Ltd, a Public Sector Undertaking under the Ministry of Power has been conferred the prestigious 'Role Model' award at the 11<sup>th</sup> CII National HR Excellence Award 2020-21.
- This award is the highest level of recognition in the field of Human Resources by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- **Note:** Since the institutionalization of CII National HR Excellence Award, this is only the second time when the award of Role Model has been conferred to any organization. NTPC is the only PSU to have received this prestigious award.

#### 6. Gandhi Peace Prize for the Year 2019, 2020 announced

- The Government of India conferred the **Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2019** on (Late) His Majesty **Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said** of Oman.
- **Qaboos bin Said Al Said** was the longest-serving leader in the Middle East and Arab world.
- The Government of India conferred the **Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020** on **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.
- **Rahman** was the first President and later the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. He is known as the "Father of the Nation" or simply "Mujib" in Bangladesh.
- **About Gandhi Peace Prize:** It is an annual award instituted by Government of India since 1995, the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The award carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft/ handloom item.

#### 7. Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare to be conferred with Vyas Samman – 2020

- Well known Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman - 2020 for his novel 'Patliputru Ki Samragi.'
- **Note:** The **Vyas Samman**, started in 1991, is given by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years.
  - It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.

## 8. Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020

- The names of the recipients of the awards were announced by **the India's National Academy of Letters** during the opening day of its annual 'Festival of Letters' event on March 12, 2021.
- **Sahitya Akademi** presents the award to the literary works in 24 languages including English. It was established in 1954 and the award comprises a copper-plaque, a shawl and a cash prize of ₹ 1,00,000.
- **Note: Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020** were presented in 20 languages. Awards in Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani languages will be announced at a later date.

Language	Title and Genre	Name of the Author
Assamese	Bengsata (Short Stories)	Apurba Kumar Saikia
Bengali	Eka Eka Ekashi (Memoirs)	Sankar (Manishankar Mukhopadhyay)
Bodo	Gwthenay Lamayao Gwdan Agan (Short Stories)	(late) Dharanidhar Owari
Dogri	Baba Jitmal (Play)	Gian Singh
<b>English</b>	<b>When God Is a Traveller (Poetry)</b>	<b>Arundhati Subramaniam</b>
Gujarati	Banaras Diary (Poetry)	Harish Meenashru
Hindi	Tokri Mein Digant 'Their Gatha' : 2014 (Poetry)	Anamika
<b>Kannada</b>	<b>Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam (Epic Poetry)</b>	<b>M. Veerappa Moily</b>
Kashmiri	Tilasm-e-Khanabadosh (Short Stories)	(Late) Hirday Koul Bharti
Konkani	Yugaparivarthanancha Yatri (Poetry)	R.S. Bhaskar
Maithili	Gachh Roosal Achhi (Short Stories)	Kamalkant Jha
Manipuri	Malangbana Kari Hai (Poetry)	Irungbam Deven
Marathi	Udya (Novel)	Nanda Khare
Punjabi	Aam Khass (Short Stories)	Gurdev Singh Rupana
Sanskrit	Vaishali (Novel)	Mahesh Chandra Sharma Gautam
Santali	Gur Dak Kasa Dak (Poetry)	Rupchand Hansdah
Sindhi	Jehad (Plays)	Jetho Lalwani
Tamil	Sellaatha Panam (Novel)	Imaiyam
Telugu	Agniswaasa (Poetry)	Nikhileswar
Urdu	Amawas Main Khwab (Novel)	Hussain-ul-Haque

## 9. Grammy Awards 2021

- One of the most prestigious awards in the world of music, the **63rd Annual Grammy Awards** took place in Los Angeles.
- The awards recognise the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year, running from September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020.
- The Grammy Award is presented by the **Recording Academy**.
- **Important awards:**
- **Billie Eilish** became the **first solo artist to win the record of the year award** at Grammys for **two years in a row**.
- **Beyonce** created history by becoming the **most-awarded woman in the history of Grammys with 28 wins**.
- Beyonce picked up four awards during this year's ceremony, two for 'Savage' along with rapper Megan Thee Stallion, one for her own 'Black Parade' and another for 'Blown Skin Girl'.
- **Taylor Swift** became the **first woman to win the album of the year award three times**.

## 10. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi awarded CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also delivered the keynote address at the CERAWeek 2021 (1 - 5 March 2021) through video conference.
- CERAWeek Founder Dr Daniel Yergin gave the CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award to Mr Narendra Modi.
- **About CERAWeek (Cambridge Energy Research Associates Week):** CERAWeek was founded in 1983 by Dr. Daniel Yergin. It has been organized in Houston every year since 1983 and is considered the world's premier annual energy platform.
- **About the Award:** CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award was instituted in 2016. It recognizes the commitment of leadership on the future of global energy & environment and for offering solutions and policies for energy access, affordability & environmental stewardship.

## 11. President Ram Nath Kovind presents a Baton of Honour to Kiran Bedi

- The former Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi received a Baton of Honor decorated with the emblem of the Indian Republic and the appreciation letter recognizing her service in the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- **Note:** Kiran Bedi was removed as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry on February 16 by the President of India and Tamilisai Soundararajan took additional charge as the Lieutenant Governor on February 18.

## 12. ICAR receives "King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award" of FAO

- Suchitra Durai, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Thailand received the prestigious "King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award" of FAO on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

- Chalermchai Srion, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of the Kingdom of Thailand conferred the award in a Ceremony held at Bangkok, Thailand.
- **Note:** The international recognition was announced by the FAO, Rome on the World Soil Day - 2020 in view of the ICAR's contributions in "*Soil Health Awareness*".
- **Facts about Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):**

**Established:** 16 July 1929

**Director:** Trilochan Mohapatra

- **Facts about Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):**

**Formation:** 16 October 1945

**Headquarters:** Rome, Italy

**Parent organization:** United Nations Economic and Social Council

**Director-General:** Qu Dongyu

### 13. Amitabh Bachchan to be honoured with FIAF Award 2021

- Megastar Amitabh Bachchan will be honoured with an award by the **International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF)**.
- Bachchan will be the first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world's film heritage.
- **Note:** The **FIAF** is a worldwide organisation, comprising film archives and museums from across the world.
- Bachchan's name was nominated by the **FIAF affiliate Film Heritage Foundation**.

### 14. Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan literary awards 2019: Bharat-Bharti honour for Dr Suryabala

- Dr Suryabala from Mumbai will get the coveted Bharat-Bharti award given by Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan (UPHS).
- It includes Rs 5 lakh cash prize and a citation.

### 15. Bihari Puraskar 2020 to be awarded to Mohankrishna Bohara

- The 30th Bihari Puraskar for 2020 will be given to Mohankrishna Bohara for his Hindi book of Criticism, titled **Taslina: Sangharsh aur Sahitya**.
- **The K.K. Birla Foundation** announced this in New Delhi.
- Named after famous Hindi poet Bihari, the award is given every year for an outstanding work in Hindi or Rajasthani published in the last 10 years by a Rajasthani writer.
- **Note:** **K.K. Birla Foundation** was established in 1991 by Krishna Kumar Birla in Delhi.
- The **other awards** of this foundation are Saraswati Samman, Vyas Samman, Shankar Puraskar, Vachaspati Puraskar, G.D. Birla Award for Scientific Research.

## Defense

### 1. India conducts first-ever Joint Patrol in Madagascar EEZ

- In a first, the navies of India and Madagascar undertook joint patrolling of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and also conducted a **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** on 24 Mar 2021.
- **Indian Navy's INS Shardul** and Malagasy Naval Ship Trozona undertook Joint Patrol of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone and participated in PASSEX.
- Indian Naval Ship Shardul had arrived at port of Antsiranana, Madagascar on 21 March 2021 for Overseas Deployment of a training squadron headed by Captain Aftab Ahmed Khan.
- **Facts about Madagascar:**  
**Capital:** Antananarivo  
**President:** Andry Rajoelina

**Currency:** Malagasy ariary

### 2. India Navy participates with US Navy in PASSEX in Eastern Indian Ocean Region

- India Navy and US Navy conducted a 2 day Passage Exercise from March 28-29, 2021 in the eastern Indian Ocean Region, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership.
- The Indian Navy deployed its warship Shivalik and long-range maritime patrol aircraft P8I in the 'PASSEX' exercise while the US Navy was represented by the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group.
- **Note:** The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise **VAJRA PRAHAR 2021** was conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh in March 2021.
- Recently America's Secretary of Defense, General Lloyd Austin visited India.

### 3. Operation Sankalp 2021: Indian Navy undertakes Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force

- Indian Navy on March 17, 2021 undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.
- Enhancing interoperability & strengthening bilateral Maritime cooperation, Reassuring Diaspora & merchant shipping Indian Navy Ship INS Talwar undertook Passage Exercise with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf.
- **Note:** Maritime Security Operations was initiated in the Gulf region on June 19, 2019, in the aftermath of the attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman.
- **Facts about Bahrain:**  
**Crown Prince & Prime Minister:** Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa  
**Capital:** Manama  
**Currency:** Bahraini Dinar

#### 4. **India, Pakistan, China to participate in SCO joint anti-terrorism exercise**

- India, Pakistan, China and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise in 2021.
- The decision to hold the joint exercise "**Pabbi-Antiterror-2021**" was announced during the **36th meeting of the Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- **Note:** The next meeting of the Council of the RATS SCO is scheduled to be held in September in Uzbekistan.
- **RATS**, headquartered in Tashkent, is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- **Facts about SCO:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.

**Formed:** 15 June 2001

**Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.

**Headquarter:** Beijing, China

#### 5. **‘Vajra’ commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard**

- Indian Coast Guard Ship ‘Vajra’ was commissioned by General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff at Kattupalli in Chennai.
- This is the **sixth in the series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessels** constructed by M/s Larsen & Toubro Ltd. Vajra will be based under the Operational and Administrative Control of Coast Guard District (Tuticorin) and will be deployed extensively for surveillance in exclusive economic zones in the Indian Coastal region.

#### 6. **Indian Army to procure Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems**

- The Indian Army is in the process of procuring Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems under **Make II Category of DAP 2020**.
- The system is envisaged as a lightweight, portable, state of art integrated communication solution with satellite backhaul and wireless access system to support voice, video and data.
- Development of MINT systems will enhance the operational communication capability of the field army in consonance to the self-reliance vision of **“Aatmanirbhar Bharat” for Defence production**.

#### 7. **SIPRI Report: India's import of arms decreases by 33 percent**

- According to the report by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, Arms imports by India decreased by 33 percent between 2011-15 and 2016-20.
- **India’s top three arms suppliers** during 2016-20 were Russia (49% import), France (18%) and Israel (13%).

- **Globally**, the five largest arms exporters in 2016-20 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China, while the top importers were Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China.
- **Note: India's Export Level:** India accounted for 0.2% of the share of global arms exports during 2016-20, making the country the world's 24th largest exporter of major arms.

#### 8. India commissions Nuclear Missile Tracking Vessel 'INS Dhruv'

- **INS Dhruv (codenamed as VC 11184)**, the Ocean Surveillance and Nuclear Missile Tracking Vessel, was commissioned into Indian Navy in a secret manner in October 2020.
- It is capable of monitoring missile launches at long distances, enhancing the testing programme and adding a crucial part to a national missile defence system.
- It was constructed at Hindustan Shipyard Ltd, Visakhapatnam.
- It will be operated by a joint crew of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy.
- **Note:** At present, only the **US, France, China and Russia** operate similar vessels that are used to track missile launches at sea.

#### 9. DRDO conducts successful flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully carried out a flight demonstration based on **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)** technology from Integrated Test Range Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- During the test, many new technologies were proven, including Solid Fuel based Ducted Ramjet technology.
- **Note:** Last month, the DRDO had successfully launched an indigenously-designed and developed Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (**VL-SRSAM**).

#### 10. India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise "DUSTLIK II" commenced in Chaubatia, Uttarakhand

- This is the second edition (March 10-19, 2021) of the annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies.
- 45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and the Indian Army are participating in the exercise.
- In the exercise, the troops of the two countries will share the war techniques, introducing high-tech battle skills.
- **Note:** The **first edition** of the exercise was held in Uzbekistan in Nov 2019.
- **Facts about Uzbekistan:**

**Capital:** Tashkent

**President:** Shavkat Mirziyoyev

**Prime Minister:** Abdulla Aripov

**Currency:** Uzbekistani som

### 11. 'INS Karanj', third Scorpene-class Submarine commissioned at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai

- Indian Navy's third stealth Scorpene-class Submarine INS Karanj has been commissioned at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai through a formal commissioning ceremony.
- **Note:** With INS Karanj, three of the six superior and advanced indigenous submarines based on the Scorpene-class under Project 75 are now functional.
- **INS Kalvari** was commissioned in 2017 and **INS Khanderi** was commissioned in 2019. While **INS Vela** is undergoing sea trials, **INS Vagir** was launched last year and the sixth one, **INS Vagsheer**, is under construction.
- Six Scorpene-class submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.

### 12. Indian Air Force (IAF) participation in Exercise Desert Flag-VI

- Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- The exercise is scheduled from 03 March to 27 March 2021 at Al-Dhafra airbase, UAE.
- **Note:** The Indian Air Force is participating for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with air forces of United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.
- **Facts about United Arab Emirates (UAE):**

**Capital:** Abu Dhabi

**Currency:** United Arab Emirates dirham

**President:** Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

### 13. India described Sri Lanka as "Priority One" partner in the defence sphere

- The participation of Indian military aircraft in the 70th-anniversary celebration of the **Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF)** is indicative of the growing cooperation, camaraderie and friendship between the two militaries.
- The SLAF celebrated its 70th Anniversary on March 2.
- A total of 23 aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy participated in the grand event.

### 14. IAF gifts 1971 war helicopter to Bangladesh, gets F-86 fighter as return gift

- Commemorating 50 years of defeating Pakistan in the 1971 war, Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief RKS Bhadauria gifted a legacy Alouette III helicopter to Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and got a legacy F-86 Sabre aircraft as a return gift from Dhaka.
- **Note:** The exchange of aircraft took place in Dhaka during the **four day trip of IAF Chief RKS Bhadauria to Bangladesh.**



- Bangladesh's Defense Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) has inducted RKS Bhadauria into the '**Mirpur Hall of Fame**'.
- Bhadoria took part in the 18th Air Staff Course from this college in Mirpur in 1997-98.
- **Facts about Bangladesh:**

**Capital:** Dhaka

**Currency:** Bangladeshi taka

**President:** Abdul Hamid **Prime**

**Minister:** Sheikh Hasina

## **New Appointment**

### **1. Saurabh Garg appointed as CEO of UIDAI**

- Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of UIDAI by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- Garg is at present serving in his cadre state Odisha. He is a 1991 batch IAS officer.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Garg as the CEO, UIDAI in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.
- **Facts about UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India):**  
**Founded:** 28 January 2009  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi

### **2. Sanjeev Kumar appointed as Chairman of AAI**

- The government appointed senior IAS officer Sanjeev Kumar as the Chairman of AAI (Airports Authority of India).
- Kumar is a 1993 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre.
- **Facts about AAI (Airports Authority of India):**  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Founded:** 1 April 1995  
**Parent organizations:** Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India

### **3. Atish Chandra appointed as CMD of FCI**

- Atish Chandra has been appointed as the CMD (Chairman and Managing Director) of FCI (Food Corporation of India).
- Chandra, a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, is currently Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.
- **Facts about FCI (Food Corporation of India):**  
**Founded:** 14 January 1965  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi

#### 4. **SAIL chairperson Soma Mondal is new chairperson of SCOPE**

- Soma Mondal, chairperson of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), was elected the new chairperson of the **SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises)**.
- Mondal will have a two-year term starting April; she took charge of SAIL chairperson on January 1, 2021.
- **About SCOPE (Standing Conference of Public Enterprises):** It is an apex professional organization representing the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). It promotes excellence in organisations where public investment is involved, in order to enable them to be globally competitive.

#### 15. **Justice N.V. Ramana to be next Chief Justice of India**

- **Chief Justice of India S A Bobde** has recommended the Union Government to appoint the senior most Supreme Court Judge Justice N V Ramanna as the **48th Chief Justice of India**.
- Chief Justice Bobde is set to retire on 23rd April, 2021.
- **Note:** Justice Ramana was elevated as the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court on September 2, 2013 and was elevated as a Supreme Court Judge on February 17, 2014.

#### 16. **US Senate confirms Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy as Surgeon General**

- The US Senate has voted to confirm Indian-American Dr Vivek Murthy to be President Biden's Surgeon General.
- He will be the **21st surgeon general** of the United States.
- **Note:** Dr Murthy had served as the Surgeon General under the Obama administration from 2014 to 2017.

#### 17. **World Bank economist Deepak Mishra appointed as director of ICRIER**

- Deepak Mishra, Practice Manager in the World Bank's Macroeconomics, Trade and Investment Global Practice, has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the **Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)**.
- He will take the charge from Rajat Kathuria.

#### 18. **Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of international body 'Stop TB Partnership Board'**

- Dr Harsh Vardhan was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025.
- He will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year.

- **The Stop TB Partnership** is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB. The Partnership's vision is a **TB-free world.**

**Note:** On 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister launched the 'TB Harega Desh Jeetega' Campaign along with the National TB Prevalence Survey.

#### **19. Kapil Dev inducted as PGTI board member**

- Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
- **Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI)**, the controlling body for professional golf in India, was formed in September of 2006. Mr. Gautam Thapar is President of PGTI.
- **Note:** Kapil Dev captained the Indian cricket team that won the 1983 Cricket World Cup.

#### **20. Indian-American Naureen Hassan has been appointed as the first Vice President (VP) and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York**

- As the first vice president, Hassan will be the New York Fed's second ranking officer and an alternative voting member of the Federal Open Market Committee.
- Hassan's appointment has been approved by the **Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.**
- Till recently, she was the Chief Digital Officer for Morgan Stanley Wealth Management (MSWM).
- **About the Federal Reserve Bank of New York:** It is one of the 12 Federal Reserve Banks of the United States.

**Headquarters: New York, USA**

**Established: November 16, 1914**

**President and Chief Executive Officer: John C. Williams**

#### **21. Tirath Singh Rawat takes oath as new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand**

- Tirath replaced Trivendra Singh Rawat, who stepped down from the CM's post on 09 March 2021 after completing nearly 4 years.
- Rawat is a Member of Parliament from Pauri Garhwal.
- He was the first education minister after the formation of the Uttarakhand state in 2000.

#### **22. NABARD's chairman G R Chintala takes charge as chairman of APRACA**

- Chintala has taken over from DPK Gunasekera, who is also the Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Ceylon.
- **About APRACA (Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association):**

- APRACA, established in 1977, is an association of institutions involved in agricultural, rural and microfinance policy and development, representing 21 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

### 23. Girish Murmu appointed Chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors again

- **Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu** has been re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the year 2021.
- **Note:** Murmu was initially elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2020.
- **About the UN Panel of External Auditors:** The UN General Assembly had in 1959 established the Panel of External Auditors, comprising the individual external auditors of the United Nations system.
- Presently, the panel consists of 13 countries -- India, Germany, Chile, China, United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

### 24. Haryana Dy CM Dushyant Chautala re-elected TTFI president

- Haryana's Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala was re-elected as President of Table Tennis Federation of India for a four-year term during the 84th annual meeting of the TTFI.
- **Facts about Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI):**

**Membership:** 32 state units and 37 institutions

**Founded:** 1926

**Affiliation:** International Table Tennis Federation

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

### 25. Russian supermodel 'Supernova' Natalia Vodianova named new UN goodwill ambassador

- Natalia Vodianova became a United Nations goodwill ambassador, pledging to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.
- She will be a campaigner for the UN Population Fund, which now calls itself the U.N.'s sexual and reproductive health agency, known as UNFPA.

### 26. Indian economist Ligia Noronha appointed as Assistant Secretary-General of UN

- United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has announced the appointment of Ligia Noronha of India as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.
- Noronha is an economist with over 30 years of international experience in the field of sustainable development.

- She has worked since 2014 as Director of UNEP's Economy Division based in Nairobi.

### **27. CBDT Chairman P C Mody gets further extension for three months**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved an extension in the re-appointment of Shri Pramod Chandra Mody as Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), for a further period of three months with effect from March 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021.
- Mr Mody, a 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, was appointed as the CBDT chief in February 2019.

### **28. Mary Kom appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association's "Champions and Veterans" committee**

- **Note: "Champions and Veterans" committee**, formed in December 2020, consists of most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.
- **About Mary Kom:** Six-time world champion Mary Kom is an Indian boxer, politician, and incumbent Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha. Awards: Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri. She won a bronze medal in the 2012 Summer Olympics and many more.
- **Facts about the International Boxing Association (AIBA):**

**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland

**President:** Umar Kremlev

**Founded:** 1946

### **29. Shri Manpreet Vohra appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Australia**

- Mr Vohra, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, is presently Ambassador of India to Mexico.
- **Facts about Australia:**

**Prime Minister:** Scott Morrison

**Capital:** Canberra

## **Science & Technology**

### **1. Maithri Aquatech sets up the 'World's First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre' in the smart city Visakhapatnam**

- This initiative is supported by GVMC (Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and

Health) - an alliance between USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and SWN (Safe Water Network).

- The kiosk will provide clean, mineral-enriched potable water harvested from the air by making use of Maithri Aquatech's own MEGHDOOT solution as a source to generate water with no dependency on scarce groundwater as well as surface water resources.
- **Maithri Aquatech** is a Hyderabad-based company. The company has developed an innovative solution called **MEGHDOOT** which can generate water by harvesting the moisture in the air.

## 2. Russia launches 38 foreign satellites from 18 countries

- **Russian space agency 'Roscosmos'** successfully launched 38 foreign satellites from a Soyuz 2.1a carrier rocket from Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan.
- The rocket will place in orbit 38 satellites from 18 countries, including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil.
- Among them is the **Challenge-1, the first satellite made completely in Tunisia**, which was created by the Telnet telecommunications group.
- **Note:** Recently, **India's PSLV-C51 launched Brazil's Amazonia-1, 18 other satellites.**
- **Facts about Russia:**  
**President:** Vladimir Putin  
**Capital:** Moscow  
**Currency:** Russian Ruble

## 3. World's most powerful supercomputer 'Fugaku'

- The world's most powerful supercomputer '**Fugaku**' is now ready to use.
- Fugaku, the machine was created by Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN in collaboration with multinational IT developer Fujitsu.
- **Note:** In June 2020, Fugaku was deemed the world's most powerful supercomputer in the **TOP500 supercomputer speed rankings**, overtaking IBM's Summit.
- **Facts about Japan:**  
**Prime Minister:** Yoshihide Suga  
**Capital:** Tokyo  
**Currency:** Japanese yen

## 4. Google launches the "Women Will" web platform

- Google launched the "Women Will" web platform for women entrepreneurs on International Women's Day.
- This platform aims to support 1 million women in rural areas of the country to pursue their ambitions and improve their livelihoods through entrepreneurship.
- Google will work initially with **2,000 'Internet Saathi'** to help other women turn entrepreneurs.

- **Internet Saathi** is a programme to improve digital literacy among women in rural areas in India. The programme is a joint initiative of Google India, Intel and Tata Trusts.
- **Facts about Google:**

**CEO:** Sundar Pichai

**Founded:** 4 September 1998

**Headquarters:** California, USA

**Founders:** Larry Page, Sergey Brin

#### 5. ISRO develops radar (SAR) for joint earth observation satellite mission with NASA

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has completed the development of a **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
- **NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR)** is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation.
- **NISAR** will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in our planet's surface less than a centimetre across.
- **Note:** The mission is targeted to launch in early 2022 from ISRO's Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district.

#### 6. India's PSLV-C51 launches Brazil's Amazonia-1, 18 other satellites

- India's Polar rocket successfully launched Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 other satellites from the launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, in the first mission of the year for space agency ISRO.
- The 18 co-passenger satellites placed in the orbit are -four from ISRO's Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (three UNITY Sats from consortium of three Indian academic institutes and the SD-SAT from Chennai-based Space Kidz India-SKI, which is engraved with a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi) and 14 from NSIL.
- SKI's Satish Dhawan Satellite (SD-SAT) also carried Bhagavad Gita in a Secured Digital card format.
- **Note:** PSLV-C51 is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), ISRO's commercial arm.

#### 7. Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the three-day Global Bio India 2021

- The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the second edition of Global Bio-India-2021 (1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021).
- The theme for this year is "**Transforming lives**" with the tag line "**Biosciences to Bio-economy**".

- The event will showcase the strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community.
- Harsh Vardhan unveiled the "**National Biotech Strategy**" and also inaugurated the **Virtual Exhibition of Global Bio-India**.
- **Note:** The Government of India is playing a transformative and catalytic role in building a USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.

#### 8. Russia launches first Arctic-monitoring satellite "Arktika-M"

- Russia's space corporation Roscosmos has successfully launched its first satellite "Arktika-M" to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.
- A Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket with the "Arktika-M" satellite on board blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
- The Arktika-M will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean.

#### 9. Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships launched by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser

- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its "**Waste to Wealth**" Mission launched the "**Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship**."
- The fellowship is an initiative to empower young innovators who are engaged in community work of waste management/awareness campaigns/waste surveys/studies, etc. as Swachhta Saarthis.
- **Note:** '**Waste to Wealth**' Mission, is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

### Summits & Conference

#### 1. Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH 2021

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the 7<sup>th</sup> annual summit of NATHEALTH (March 25-26, 2021) organized by NATHEALTH-Healthcare Federation of India.
- The theme is '**Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era**'.
- **Note:** Health has also been identified in Budget 2021-22 as one of the six main pillars to drive growth.
- A holistic approach towards health and wellbeing has been adopted with an enormous financial allocation of Rs 2,23,846 crore in 2021-22 which is a mammoth 137% increase over the previous year.

#### 2. S Jaishankar attends Heart of Asia conference in Tajikistan

- During his three-day bilateral visit to Tajikistan, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the **9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process (HoA-IP)** on Afghanistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on March 30, 2021.



- Jaishankar asserted that for a durable peace in Afghanistan, every stakeholder should work towards genuine ‘double peace’ mechanism, which includes peace both within and around Afghanistan.
- **Note:** The 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process ministerial conference is part of the Istanbul Process - a regional initiative on security and cooperation for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan - that was launched on November 2, 2011, in Turkey.
- India co-hosted the 6th Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Amritsar, Punjab in December 2016.
- **Facts about Tajikistan:**  
**Capital:** Dushanbe  
**Currency:** Tajikistani somoni  
**President:** Emomali Rahmon

### 3. **MOS Telecom Shri Sanjay Dhotre represents India at the World Summit on Information Society Forum 2021**

- The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021 represents one of the world's largest annual gathering of the ‘ICT for development’ community, is co-organized by International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.
- Shri Dhotre underscored the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for modernization and transformation of the industry, promotion of inclusive economic growth and stimulation of the national economies to meet the larger objectives of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Note:** The 2021 WSIS Forum will provide an opportunity to serve as a platform to track the achievements of WSIS Action Lines in collaboration with the UN Agencies involved and provide information and analyses of the implementation of WSIS Action Lines since 2005.

### 4. **Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare delivers the keynote address at the ‘India TB Summit’**

- The summit was organized to highlight the global and national prevalence of Tuberculosis in the run up to **World TB Day celebrations on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.**
- The Union Health Minister reaffirmed the political commitment of the government to end TB, we have accorded high priority to eradicating Tuberculosis in India by 2025, five years ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) target of 2030.
- The slogan is **“TB Haarega Desh Jeetega.”**

### 5. **India Finland Virtual Summit**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland H.E. Ms. Sanna Marin held a Virtual Summit on March 16, 2021.

- The two leaders reviewed the ongoing bilateral engagements and expressed their desire to further expand and diversify the relationship across sectors such as trade

and investment, innovation, education, emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, and quantum computing.

- Prime Minister Modi invited Finland to join the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.

- **Facts about Finland:**

**Capital:** Helsinki

**Prime Minister:** Sanna Marin

**Currency:** Euro

**President:** Sauli Niinistö

#### 6. 6<sup>th</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum

- The 6<sup>th</sup> India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was held virtually on 16 March, 2021.
- The meeting was chaired by Smriti Zubin Irani, Minister of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
- A **joint declaration** was also issued highlighting the shared IBSA goals and commitments for achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.

**The India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Cooperation Forum** is a unique platform which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents

#### 7. India - Sweden Virtual Summit 2021

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden H.E. Stefan Löfven held a Virtual Summit.
- Prime Minister Modi welcomed Sweden's decision to join the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- The leaders also noted the growing membership of the India-Sweden joint initiative – the Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT) that was launched during the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 in New York.
- They welcomed the creation of a **Sweden-India Health Hub** at AIIMS-Jodhpur.
- **Note:** They welcomed the upcoming India-EU+27 Leaders' Meeting in Portugal in May 2021 which will be a new milestone for India-EU Strategic Partnership.
- **Facts about Sweden:**

**Capital:** Stockholm

**Currency:** Swedish Krona

#### 8. Techbharat 2021

- Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed the inaugural session of TechBharat 2021.
- **Laghu Udyog Bharati and IMS Foundation** have organized the 2nd edition of the conclave bringing together stakeholders from the **HealthTech & Edutech sector** on a virtual platform.

- **Techbharat** is facilitating interactions & deliberations between thousands of domestic & global participants, including policy makers, government representatives, industry members, investors & start-ups to nurture resourceful partnerships and boost growth in the sectors.

#### 9. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates second edition of 'Maritime India Summit 2021'

- The Maritime India Summit 2021 is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways from March 2 to March 4.
- Denmark is the partner country for the summit.
- The Maritime India Summit is one of the biggest virtual summits in the world, with the participation of more than 1.7 lakh registered participants from more than 100 nations.
- Prime Minister released e-book of '**Maritime India Vision-2030**'.
- Prime Minister also unveiled the e-plaque of '**Sagar-Manthan**': **Mercantile Maritime Domain Awareness Centre (MM-DAC)**. It is an information system for enhancing maritime safety, search and rescue capabilities, security and marine environment protection.

#### 10. Chabahar Day

- Chabahar Day was commemorated on March 04, 2021 on the sidelines of the Second edition of **International Maritime Summit-2021** (March 2-4).
- **Note:** India, Iran and Uzbekistan had conducted the **first trilateral working group meeting** on the joint use of Chabahar port virtually in December 2020. India had proposed then to hold **Chabahar Day** on the sidelines of the International Maritime Summit.
- **Chabahar port:** India and Iran had signed an agreement in 2018 to develop the Chabahar Port, located in the Gulf of Oman in south-eastern Iran.
- Chabahar is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean.
- The port is a key connectivity project that is aimed at boosting trade ties between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.

## Ranking & Index

### 1. World Development Report 2021

- The **World Bank** recently released the **World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives**.
- The latest edition of the World Development Report provides a blueprint on how to harness the power of data for development, to ensure no one is left behind.
- Most countries have shied away from an open-data policy. Only 11 percent low-income countries consistently made available a license classifiable as 'open'.
- The comparable rate for lower-middle-income countries was 19 per cent, for upper-middle-income countries 22 percent and high-income countries 44 percent.

- **Facts about World Bank:**

Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States Founded:

July 1944

President: David Malpass

**MD and CFO:** Anshula Kant

**Membership:** 189 countries (IBRD), 173 countries (IDA)

## 2. India ranks 40th on International Intellectual Property Index 2021

- India ranked 40 among 53 global economies in the 9th International Intellectual Property (IP) Index.
- The overall global IP environment improved in 2020, with positive score increasing in 32 of the 53 economies measured by the IP Index.
- **The USA topped the Index.**
- **About International Intellectual Property Index:** Released annually by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC), USA, the Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights in 53 global economies from patent and copyright policies to commercialisation of IP assets and ratification of international treaties.

## 3. 2020 World Air Quality Report: India 3<sup>rd</sup> most polluted country; Delhi most polluted capital city

- The report is prepared by the **IQAir (Swiss- Air Quality Technology Company)**.
- 37 of the 40 most polluted cities in the world are in South Asia.
- 22 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India.
- Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.
- **World's most polluted cities 2020:**
  - 1st Rank- Hotan, China
  - 2nd Rank- Ghaziabad, India
  - 3rd Rank- Bulandshahr, India
- **World's most polluted countries 2020:**
  - 1st Rank- Bangladesh
  - 2nd Rank- Pakistan
  - 3rd Rank- India

**Note:** The 2020 World Air Quality Report is based on PM2.5 data from 106 countries

## 4. India downgraded from 'free' to 'partly free' in democracy report titled "Freedom in the World 2021 - Democracy under Siege"

- India's status as a democracy and free society has been downgraded to "partly free" in the latest annual report on global political rights and liberties by Freedom House, a US government-funded NGO that studies political freedom around the world.
- **In the report (2021), India had a score of 67 out of 100.**

- **Note:** India had been rated as “free” in Freedom House’s reports for 2018, 2019 and 2020.
- **About Freedom House:** In 1973, Freedom House launched the Freedom in the World report, which assessed the level of freedom in each country and ranked them with a numerical score and declared them as “free”, “partly free” or “not free”.

## 5. QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021

- Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ addressed at the unveiling of QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021.
- **12 Indian institutions have** made it to the top 100 of the world - IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IISc Bangalore, IIT Guwahati, IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi, and O.P Jindal University.
- Amongst these top 100 ranked institutions, IIT Madras has been ranked 30th in the world for Petroleum Engineering, IIT Bombay has been ranked 41st and IIT Kharagpur has been ranked 44th in the world for Minerals and Mining Engineering, and the University of Delhi has been ranked 50th in the world for Development Studies.
- **Note: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA** has continued to remain in the top position.

## 6. UNEP Food Waste Index Report 2021

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP released the Food Waste Index Report 2021.
- The report estimates that around 931 million tonnes of food waste was generated in 2019, 61 percent of which came from households, 26 percent from food service and 13 percent from retail.
- On a global per capita-level, 121 kgs of consumer-level food is wasted each year, with 74 kgs of this happening in households.
- In **India**, the household food waste estimate is **50 kg per capita per year**, or 68,760,163 tonnes a year.
- Estimates suggest **8-10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions** are associated with food that is not consumed.
- **Facts about the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):**

**Formation:** 5 June 1972

**Headquarters:** Nairobi, Kenya **Executive**

**Director:** Inger Andersen

**Parent organization:** United Nations

## 7. Economic Freedom Index 2021: Singapore ranks 1st, India ranks 121st

- Singapore topped the global ranking for the second year in a row.
- Overall, the Global Economy remains ‘Moderately Free’ in the Index 2021.

**1<sup>st</sup> rank:** Singapore (Category- Free)

**2<sup>nd</sup> rank:** New Zealand (Category- Free)

**3<sup>rd</sup> rank:** Australia (Category- Free)

**121<sup>st</sup> rank: India** (Category- **Mostly Unfree**)

- India came in around the middle of the pack among **Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26<sup>th</sup> out of 40 countries.**
- **Economic Freedom Index 2021** was published by US think-tank, The Heritage Foundation. 184 countries were covered in the study this time and the period of study is July 2019 to June 2020.
- **Note:** The Heritage Foundation decided to exclude **Hong Kong** from its rankings for the first time ever.

#### **8. Hurun Global Rich List 2021: Mukesh Ambani 8th richest in the world**

- Reliance Industries chairman & managing director and the country's richest man Mukesh Ambani has acquired the eighth spot in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021.

**1<sup>st</sup> rank:** Elon Musk (\$197 billion-Tesla)

**2<sup>nd</sup> rank:** Jeff Bezos (\$189 billion-Amazon)

**3<sup>rd</sup> rank:** Bernard Arnault (\$114 billion-LVMH)

**8<sup>th</sup> rank: Mukesh Ambani (\$ 83 billion- Reliance)**

- India now has 209 billionaires, of which 177 live in India.
- **Note:** In the Hurun Global Rich List 2020, Mukesh Ambani was ranked 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **9. Rankings for Ease of Living Index 2020 and Municipal Performance Index 2020 announced**

- Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Housing and Urban Affairs announced the release of the final rankings of Ease of Living Index (EoLI)2020 and the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020.
- The rankings under **Ease of Living Index 2020** were announced for cities with a population of more than a million, and cities with less than a million people.
- 111 cities participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020.

#### **Top 10 Rankings:**

Rank	Ease of Living Index			
	Population Million+		Population Less than Million	
	City	Score	City	Score

1	Bengaluru	66.70	Shimla	60.90
2	Pune	66.27	Bhubaneshwar	59.85
3	Ahmedabad	64.87	Silvassa	58.43
4	Chennai	62.61	Kakinada	56.84
5	Surat	61.73	Salem	56.40
6	Navi Mumbai	61.60	Vellore	56.38
7	Coimbatore	59.72	Gandhinagar	56.25
8	Vadodara	59.24	Gurugram	56.00
9	Indore	58.58	Davangere	55.25
10	Greater Mumbai	58.23	Tiruchirapalli	55.24

- Similar to the EoLI index, the **assessment framework under Municipal Performance Index 2020** has classified municipalities based on their population- Million+ (municipalities having over a million population) and Less than Million Population.
- The MPI examined the sectoral performance of 111 municipalities.

<b>Municipal Performance Index</b>				
Population Million+			Population Less than Million	
Rank	Municipality	Score	Municipality	Score
1	Indore	66.08	New Delhi MC	52.92
2	Surat	60.82	Tirupati	51.69
3	Bhopal	59.04	Gandhinagar	51.59
4	Pimpri Chinchwad	59.00	Karnal	51.39
5	Pune	58.79	Salem	49.04
6	Ahmedabad	57.60	Tiruppur	48.92
7	Raipur	54.98	Bilaspur	47.99
8	Greater Mumbai	54.36	Udaipur	47.77
9	Visakhapatnam	52.77	Jhansi	47.04
10	Vadodara	52.68	Tirunelveli	47.02

- **Note: The Ease of Living Index (EoLI)** is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various initiatives for urban development.
- **The Municipal Performance Index (MPI)** was launched as an accompaniment to the Ease of Living Index. It seeks to examine local government practice in municipalities across areas of services, finance, policy, technology and governance.

## Important Days

### 1. April 2, World Autism Awareness Day

- The **United Nations General Assembly** unanimously declared 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day to highlight the need to help improve the quality of life of those with autism.
- World Autism Awareness Day, passed in council on 1 November 2007, and adopted on 18 December 2007.

**About Autism:** Autism, also called Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a complicated condition that includes problems with communication and behavior

### 2. March 20, International Day of Happiness

- The theme for this year is “**Happiness for All, Forever.**”
- The International Day of Happiness was established by the United Nations General Assembly on 28 June 2012.
- **World Happiness Report 2021:** The Report was released by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- In the report, **Finland was ranked as the happiest country in the world**, for the fourth time in a row.
- Afghanistan was ranked the least happy nation.
- **India** ranked 139 out of 149 countries in the report.

### 3. March 20, World Sparrow Day

- It is an international initiative by the **Nature Forever Society of India** in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.

**Note:** The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010 in different parts of the world.

### 4. March 21, International Day of Forests

- The theme for 2021 is "**Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being**".
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012.
- On each International Day of Forests, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns.

### 5. March 22, World Water Day

- The theme for 2021 is ‘**Valuing Water**’.
- World Water Day raises awareness about water and the global water crisis and the main focus of the day is **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.**



- The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution by which 22 March of each year was declared World Day for Water, to be observed starting in 1993.

#### 6. March 23, World Meteorological Day

- The day is observed as the foundation day of the World Meteorological Organization which was established on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1950.
- It showcases the essential contribution of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to the safety and wellbeing of society.
- The theme for 2021 is “**The Ocean, our climate and weather.**”

#### 7. March 15, World Consumer Rights Day

- World Consumer Rights Day is an annual occasion dedicated to highlighting **the power of consumers and their rights for a fair, safe and sustainable marketplace for everyone.**
- The World Consumer Rights Day 2021 theme is to gather all the consumers in a fight to ‘**Tackle Plastic Pollution**’.
- **Note: India:** On July 20th, 2020, the new **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** came into force in India, replacing the previous enactment of 1986.
- **National Consumer Day** is celebrated on 24 December.

#### 8. March 16, National Vaccination Day

- India observes National Vaccination Day also known as **National Immunization Day** every year on March 16.
- It was first celebrated at the time when the **National Pulse Polio vaccination** drive was launched, in 1995.

#### 9. March 07, Janaushadhi Diwas

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addresses the ‘Janaushadhi Diwas’ celebrations on 7th March, 2021.
- He dedicated to the nation the **7500<sup>th</sup> Janaushadhi Kendra at NEIGRIHMS, Shillong** during the event.
- 1st March to 7th March was celebrated as ‘**Janaushadhi Week**’ across the nation, with the theme of “**Jan Aushadhi – Seva bhi, Rozgar bhi**”.
- **About Janaushadhi Diwas:** The ‘Janaushadhi Diwas’ was observed across the country on March 7, 2019. On the occasion of the ‘Janaushadhi Diwas’, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with owners of Janaushadhi Kendras and beneficiaries of the **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)** across the country.

#### 10. March 08, International Women’s Day

- The theme of this year is “**Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world**”.

**Note:** The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day in the International Women's Year, 1975. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace

### 11. February 28, National Science Day

- The day is celebrated every year on 28th of February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect'. On this day, Physicist CV Raman announced the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930.
- The theme for National Science Day 2021 is 'Future of Science and Technology and Innovation: Impact on Education Skills and Work'.
- **Note:** With a view to promote science and innovation, the government presents the National Science Communication Awards every year on this day.

### 12. February 27, World NGO Day

- The day aims to inspire people to become actively involved with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), both in the public and private sectors.
- **Note:** The first World NGO Day was observed by the United Nations in 2014, although it was officially recognised and declared in 2010 by 12 member nations of IX Baltic Sea NGO Forum of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

### 13. March 03, World Wildlife Day

- On 20 December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March – the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 – as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.
- World Wildlife Day 2021 theme is "**Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet.**"

### 14. March 03, World Hearing Day

- World Hearing Day is a campaign held each year by the Office of Prevention of Blindness and Deafness of the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The theme of the campaign for 2021 is '**Hearing Care for All**'.
- **Note:** As per first World Report on Hearing released by World Health Organisation (WHO), 1 in 4 people projected to have hearing problems by 2050 worldwide.

### 15. March 04, National Safety Day

- This year's theme is '**Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety).**'
- The **National Safety Week** is also celebrated from 4 March to 10 March.
- **Note:** National Safety Day was first observed on the foundation day of the National Safety Council in 1972.
- **About the National Safety Council:** It was set up by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on 4 March 1966 to develop and bring into practice a voluntary routine on Safety, Health, and Environment.

## Books and Authors

- 1. Sanjaya Baru's book "India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution"**
  - Sanjaya Baru is releasing a book titled, 'India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution' in April 2021 by Penguin Random House India.
  - **Note:** He has earlier written a memoir '**The Accidental Prime Minister**' which was on former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.
- 2. Book titled "Battle Ready for 21st Century" released at Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)**
  - A book titled "Battle Ready for 21st Century" **co-edited by Lt Gen AK Singh, Distinguished Fellow CLAWS and Brig Narender Kumar, Visiting Fellow CLAWS** was released by Gen Bipin Rawat, CDS and Gen Deepak Kapoor, Former Chief of the Army Staff at Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) on 17 March 2021.
  - The authors with hands-on experience and domain specialisation have endeavoured to define and suggest the ways and means necessary to secure India from emerging security challenges on land, air, sea, space, cyber domain and even cognitive domain.
- 3. Environment Minister launches e-book on Women Forest Officers**
  - On International Women's Day, Union Minister for Forest, Environment and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar launched an e-book on women forest officials.
  - This e-book titled "**The Green Queens of India - A nation's pride**" is based on the lives of women forest officials.
  - This book is a compilation of her life experiences which have been prepared by many women officers together.
- 4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi releases 11 Volumes of Manuscript with commentaries by 21 scholars on shlokas of Srimad Bhagavadgita**
  - The Manuscript, published by Dharmarth Trust, is written with an extraordinary variety of Indian calligraphy ranging from Shankar Bhashya to Bhasanuvada.
  - Dr Karan Singh who is the Chairman Trustee of Dharmarth Trust, Jammu and Kashmir also highlighted the importance of Gita and its message.
- 5. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's autobiography 'The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle' released in english**
  - First published in Pashto in 1983, the autobiography of freedom fighter Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, fondly **known as Frontier Gandhi**, is now out in English, announced by publishing house Roli Books.
  - The book is translated by former Pakistani civil servant and author Imtiaz Ahmad Sahibzada.

- This is the “first time” that Khan’s autobiography is available in English.
- 6. The book, titled "Dynasty to Democracy: The Untold Story of Smriti Irani's Triumph" to be released in English**
- The English translation of journalist-author Anant Vijay's book "**Amethi Sangram: Aitihasik Jeet Ankahi Dastan**" will be released on March 15.
  - The book traces Union Minister Irani's journey from her defeat in 2014 to her victory in the Congress stronghold of Amethi, Uttar Pradesh during the 2019 Lok Sabha election.
  - **Note:** The Hindi book was published in December, 2020.
- 7. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launches the e-book version of Swami Chidbhavanandaji’s Bhagavad Gita**
- This e-book would deepen the connection between the eternal Gita and the glorious Tamil culture.
  - **Note: Swami Chidbhavanandaji** was the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.
  - Swamiji has authored 186 books and all genres of literary composition. His scholarly work on the Gita is one of the most extensive books on the subject.

## Obituaries

- 1. Noted journalist and author Anil Dharker passes away at 74**
- Anil Dharker was the founder and director of the Mumbai International Literary Festival.
  - In his five-decade-long illustrious career, Dharker had been a columnist and writer, a member of the advisory committee of the film certification board and more.
- 1. He was a columnist for The Indian Express newspaper and has authored ‘The Romance of Salt’, a book on Mahatma Gandhi’s Dandi March.**
- Writer-Director Sagar Sarhadi passes away**
- Veteran Writer-Director Sagar Sarhadi passed away at 88.
  - Sagar Sarhadi gained recognition in the film industry by writing and co-writing blockbuster films like Kabhi Kabhie, Sawaal, Silsila, Karmayogi, Zindagi, Inkaar, Noorie, Faasle, Anubhav, Deewana and Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai.
- 2. Kathakali maestro Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair passes away at 105**
- Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair, also known as **Guru Chemancheri** was a noted **Indian Kathakali actor**.
  - The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest civilian honor, **Padma Shri** in 2017.

### 3. **Renowned artist, Padma Bhushan awardee Laxman Pai passes away**

- Artist and painter from Goa Laxman Pai passed away at 95.
- The former principal of the Goa College of Art had several laurels under his name including Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Nehru Award, and Lalit Kala Akademi Award.

### 4. **Tanzanian President John Magufuli passes away**

- Magufuli won the October 2015 presidential election and was sworn in on 5 November 2015; he was re-elected in 2020.
- **Note:** According to the constitution of the African country, **Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan** will be sworn in as the new president and will serve in the post for the remaining tenure of Magufuli.
- She will be Tanzania's first female president.
- **Facts about Tanzania:** Country in East Africa  
**Capital:** Dodoma  
**Currency:** Tanzanian shilling

### 5. **Former Governor of Rajasthan Anshuman Singh passes away**

- Justice (retired) Anshuman Singh took charge as the Governor of Rajasthan on January 16, 1999 and remained in office till May 2003.
- He was also appointed as the governor of Gujarat in 1998.
- He was appointed judge of the Allahabad High Court in 1984 and later became acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court.

### 6. **Indian athlete Ishar Singh Deol passes away**

- Deol had won many medals for the country and the state since 1951 and was awarded the **Dhyan Chand National Award in 2009** for his lifelong contribution towards sports.
- Deol was General Secretary of the Punjab Athletes Association for 30 consecutive years and Vice President of the Athletic Federation of India and a member of the Selection Committee for many years.

### 7. **Brahma Kumaris' chief Dadi Hriday Mohini passes away at 93**

- Dadi Gulzaar aka Hridaya Mohini was the Administrative head of Prajapita Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

### 8. **Malayalam poet Vishnunarayanan Namboothiri passes away**

- Namboothiri, 81, one of the widely acclaimed poets of contemporary Malayalam literature, was awarded the Padma Shri in 2014.
- He was also a recipient of several literary honours, including the Kerala Sahitya Akademi award.

## Sports

### 1. India vs England Cricket Series 2021 (One Day International series)

- India won the 3-match series 2-1.
- **Player of the series:** Jonny Bairstow (England)
- **Note:** Virat Kohli-led side has now won all the series' in this England's tour of India. India claimed the Test series 3-1 and then won the five-match T20I series by 3-2.
- Virat Kohli became the 3rd Indian Captain to lead Indian side in 200 International matches. (Mohammad Azharuddin-221 matches, MS Dhoni-332 matches)

### 2. Al Ain World Shooting Para Sport World Cup 2021

- (Al Ain, United Arab Emirates: 15 - 25 March 2021)
- **India finishes 3<sup>rd</sup> place** in the medals table in the Al Ain 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup.

Place	Countries	Medals
1	Ukraine	11 Medals (5 Gold 5 Silver 1 Bronze)
2	United Arab Emirates	5 Medals (3 Gold 2 Silver)
3	India	7 Medals (2 Gold 1 Silver 4 Bronze)

- **Note:** India's Singhraj and Manish Narwal won gold in World Shooting Para Sport World Cup 2021.

### 3. International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup 2021 (Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Ranges, New Delhi: 18-29 March 2021)

- India tops the medals tally with 15 gold, 9 silver & 6 bronze in ISSF Shooting World Cup 2021.

- **MEDAL STANDINGS**

Place	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	India	15	9	6	30
2	USA	4	3	1	8
3	Italy	2	0	2	4

**Note:** India's Yashaswini Deswal won the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the ISSF World Cup 2021

#### 4. F1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2021

- **British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) won the F1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2021** held at Bahrain International Circuit, Sakhir, Bahrain.
- Max Verstappen (**Red Bull**) got second position and Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) got third position.
- **Note:** This was Hamilton's 96th career Formula 1 victory.

#### 5. India vs England cricket (2021)

- **T20 International series**
- India won the 5-match series 3-2
- Player of the Series: Virat Kohli

#### 6. Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia wins All England Badminton Championships 2021 Men's title; Nozomi Okuhara clinches Women's title

- **Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia** has won the **men's single title** as he defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the finals.
- **Japan's Nozomi Okuhara** has won the **women's single title** as she defeated Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong in the finals.

#### 7. Shreyas Iyer signs up with Lancashire for Royal London Cup 2021

- English county Lancashire announced the overseas signing of India batsman Shreyas Iyer for the 2021 Royal London Cup.
- The top-order batsman is regarded as one of the most attacking and fluent stroke players in Indian cricket and he has played in 21 ODIs and 29 T20 Internationals for his country.
- **Note:** The first Indian to join the club was wicketkeeper-batsman Farokh Engineer who joined the club in 1968.
- After Engineer retired, four other Indian — Murali Kartik, Dinesh Mongia, VVS Laxman, and Sourav Ganguly have represented the club.

#### 8. Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021 (20 February to 14 March 2021)

- **Final: Mumbai vs Uttar Pradesh**
- Mumbai won **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021 title**.
- This is Mumbai's fourth Hazare title.
- **Note:** Mumbai captain Prithvi Shaw became the first cricketer to score 800 runs in a single edition of Vijay Hazare Trophy.

#### 9. Virat Kohli becomes first cricketer to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International

- India's Captain Virat Kohli has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International (T20I).
- Kohli achieved the milestone during the second T20I against England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

- He now has 3,001 runs from 87 T20I matches.
- **Note:** New Zealand's Martin Guptill comes second in the list with 2,839 runs in 99 matches.
- India's Rohit Sharma comes third in the list with 2,773 runs in 108 matches.

#### 10. Thomas Bach re-elected as IOC president

- Olympic champion Thomas Bach has been re-elected for an additional four-year term as President of the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**.
- **Facts about the International Olympic Committee (IOC):**  
**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland  
**President:** Thomas Bach  
**Founded:** 23 June 1894

#### 11. Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics 2021 Games

- Tamil Nadu's Bhavani Devi, 8-time national champion, secured a spot for the Tokyo Olympics at the World Cup in Hungary.
- Bhavani Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method.

#### 12. Mithali Raj becomes first Indian woman cricketer to score 10,000 international runs

- Mithali reached the milestone in the ongoing third One-day International match against South Africa in Lucknow.
- **Note:** Mithali is now the **second international cricketer to score 10,000 runs**.
- **England's Charlotte Edwards** is the only other woman cricketer who has achieved this feat.

#### 13. ISL (Indian Super League) 2020-21: Mumbai City FC wins title

- Mumbai City lifted their first-ever Hero Indian Super League (ISL) trophy after beating last season's winners ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final at the Fatorda Stadium in Margao.
- **Note:** In February 2021, Mumbai City FC won the **ISL League Winners Shield**.

#### 14. India to host Asian Boxing Championships 2021

**The International Boxing Association** announced that Asian Boxing Championships 2021 will be hosted by New Delhi, India from May 21-31.

- It will be the first boxing tournament in Asia to be held in 2021.
- **Facts about the International Boxing Association (AIBA):**  
**Headquarters:** Lausanne, Switzerland  
**President:** Umar Kremlev  
**Founded:** 1946

#### 15. India vs England Test Series 2021

- India won the 4- Test match series 3-1
- **Player of the series:** Ravichandran Ashwin.



- **Note:** India also qualified for the World Test Championship final.
- With this win, India will meet New Zealand in the final of the ICC World Test Championship which is scheduled to start from June 18 at Lord's Cricket Ground.

#### 16. Wrestler Bajrang Punia regains world number one ranking

- Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia has regained world number one ranking after clinching a second successive gold medal at the **Matteo Pallicone Ranking Series** in Rome.
- Punia defeated Tulga Tumur Ochir from Mongolia in the **65kg freestyle** event final in Rome.
- Bajrang Punia was ranked at the second spot in the world rankings before the beginning of the Matteo Pallicone Ranking Series.
- **Note:** In 2020, the Indian wrestler had defeated USA's Jordan Oliver in the final to clinch the gold medal at the tournament.
- Punia had reserved his place in the Tokyo Olympic Games in September 2019 after clinching bronze at the World Championships.

#### 17. PV Sindhu wins silver medal at BWF Swiss Open Super 300, 2021

- Indian Shuttler PV Sindhu won silver medal in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300 (Yonex Swiss Open 2021) at Basel, Switzerland.
- She was defeated by Carolina Marin (Spain) in the final of the **Women's Singles Title**

**Note:** Viktor Axelsen (Denmark) won Men's Singles Title in the BWF Swiss Open Super 300.

#### 18. Vinesh Phogat wins her 2nd gold in Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event

- **Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat** won her second gold medal in the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event and reclaimed the **top rank** in the 53-kg category in Rome.
- Vinesh defeated Canada's Diana Mary Helen Weicker.
- **Note:** Recently, Vinesh had won a gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.
- Vinesh Phogat is the only Indian woman wrestler who has qualified for the **Tokyo Olympics**.

#### 19. Ravichandran Ashwin declared ICC Men's Player of the Month for February 2021

- India's off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was named the **ICC Men's Player of the Month** for February for his stellar show against England in a four-match Test series.
- England's Tammy Beaumont was adjudged the **ICC Women's Player of the Month**.
- **Note:** Rishabh Pant won the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for January 2021.

#### 20. Chess player Koneru Humpy wins BBC ISWOTY award for 2020

- Chess player Koneru Humpy from Andhra Pradesh has won the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY)** for 2020.

- Humpy is the **World Rapid Chess champion** having won the title in December 2019.
- She received the **Arjuna Award in 2003** and **Padma Shri in 2007**.
- **Note: the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year** initiative was launched in 2019 to celebrate female achievements in sport and highlight the issues and challenges faced by women in India.

#### **21. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games 2021 at Gulmarg**

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the second edition of Khelo India Winter Games (February 26 – March 02, 2021) begins at Gulmarg.
- ‘Khelo India Winter Games’ has been **organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs And Sports** in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of J&K.
- The games include snowshoe race, ice skating, ice hockey, skiing, nordic skiing, snowboarding, ski mountaineering and ice stock.

#### **22. Yusuf Pathan announces retirement from all formats of cricket**

- He played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is for India between 2007 and 2012.
- Pathan was part of the 2007 T20 World Cup as well as the 2011 ODI World Cup, both of which were won by the Indian team.

#### **23. Vinay Kumar announces retirement from all formats of cricket**

- Kumar, a pace bowler who has represented India in all formats.
- He played 1 Test, 31 ODIs and 9 T20Is for India between 2010 and 2013.

#### **24. Indian men's skeet team wins bronze in ISSF World Cup**

- The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.
- The Indians defeated the Kazakhstan team of David Pochivalov, Eduard Yechshenko and Alexandr Mukhamediyev.

#### **25. Vinesh Phogat wins Gold in Ukraine wrestling event**

- Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat has won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine.
- Vinesh Phogat defeated world number seven Vanesa Kaladzinskaya of Belarus in the finals to win the gold medal.
- **Note:** Vinesh Phogat is the only Indian woman wrestler who has qualified for the **Tokyo Olympics**.

#### **26. 78<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards 2021**

- The Golden Globes for film and television, organised by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), were handed out at a virtual ceremony.
- **Following is a list of winners in key categories:**
- **Movies:**

BEST DRAMA	Nomadland
BEST COMEDY OR MUSICAL	Borat Subsequent Moviefilm
BEST ACTOR, DRAMA	Chadwick Boseman for "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom"
BEST ACTRESS, DRAMA	Andra Day for "The United States vs. Billie Holiday"
BEST DIRECTOR	Chloé Zhao for "Nomadland"
BEST ANIMATED FILM	Soul
BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM	Minari(USA)

- **Television:**

BEST TV DRAMA SERIES	The Crown
BEST TV COMEDY/MUSICAL SERIES	Schitt's Creek
BEST ACTOR, TV DRAMA	Josh O'Connor for "The Crown"
BEST ACTRESS, TV DRAMA	Emma Corrin for "The Crown"
BEST TV MOVIE OR LIMITED SERIES	The Queen's Gambit

## 27. Odisha to host Indian Women's League

- **The All India Football Federation (AIFF)** has announced that Odisha will host the 2020-2021 Hero Indian Women's League. The dates for the tournament will be announced soon.
- **About the Indian Women's League:** It is the top division women's professional football league in India.
- The first season of the league was organized in Cuttack in October 2016.
- The league is run by the All India Football Federation.
- **Facts about the All India Football Federation (AIFF):**

**Headquarters location:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 23 June 1937

**President:** Praful Patel

- **Note:** India is scheduled to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022 which will be followed by the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022.

### **28. Sports Ministry restores recognition of Gymnastics Federation of India after 10 years**

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has decided to restore the recognition of the **Gymnastics Federation of India (GFI)** as a **National Sports Federation (NSF)**.

- The recognition has been granted till December 31, 2021.
- **Note:** The GFI was de-recognized by the ministry in 2011 because of infighting in the body.

### **29. J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Winter National Games in Gulmarg**

- Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally in the second edition of Khelo India Winter National Games.
- **J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.**
- The five-day mega sports event which began on 26th of February, concluded in Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.
- **Note: The event was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**
- The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

### **30. Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur, Malvika Bansod win Uganda International titles**

- Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur and Malvika Bansod won the men's and women's singles titles respectively at the 2021 Uganda International Badminton Tournament in Kampala.
- Varun defeated Sankar Muthusamy in men's singles and Malvika defeated Anupama Upadhyaya in the women's singles.

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