



# Monthly Current Affairs

## February 2021

### English

## Important News: State

### Prime Minister inaugurates and lays foundation stone of key projects of power and urban sector in Kerala

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Pugalur - Thrissur Power Transmission Project, Kasaragod Solar Power Project and Water Treatment Plant at Aruvikkara in Kerala.
- 2000 Megawatt state of the art Pugalur - Thrissur High Voltage Direct Current system inaugurated, is the first HVDC interconnection of Kerala with National Grid.
- He also laid the foundation stone of Integrated Command and Control Centre and Smart Roads Project in Thiruvananthapuram.

### Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh to be renamed as Narmadapuram

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced that Hoshangabad city in the state would be renamed as Narmadapuram.
- He made the announcement during the Narmada Jayanti programme held in Hoshangabad.
- **Famous attractions in Hoshangabad:** Bori Wildlife Sanctuary, Hill station- Pachmarhi, Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR) also known as Satpura National Park.

### Mamata Banerjee launches 'MAA' scheme

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched the "Maa" scheme under which her government would provide a meal at a nominal cost of ₹ 5 to poor people.
- They will get a platter of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry for ₹ 5 and the state government will bear a subsidy of ₹ 15 per plate.
- Self-help groups will operate the kitchens from 1 pm to 3 pm every day and such kitchens will be set up everywhere in the state gradually.

### Kerala Governor inaugurates India's first Digital University

- The Governor of Kerala Arif Mohammed Khan has inaugurated the country's first Digital University in the state which has been set up in Kerala's Technocity, Mangalapuram.
- **Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT-Digital University)** is established by upgrading the two-decade old state government's Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K).

### Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy resigns

- Puducherry Lt Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan has forwarded the resignation letter of Chief Minister V Narayanasamy to the Union Home Ministry for consideration.
- V Narayanasamy and his cabinet colleagues resigned, after the government lost the confidence vote sought by him in the Legislative Assembly.
- **Note:** With the collapse of the government, the Congress now is not a part of the government in any southern state or Union Territory.
- Since 2019, the Congress has lost power similarly in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

### President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates 'Narendra Modi Stadium', world's largest cricket stadium, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- The Motera Stadium (Sardar Patel Stadium), world's largest cricket stadium, was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind, and was renamed the 'Narendra Modi Stadium'.
- The President also performed 'Bhoomi Pujan' (ground breaking ceremony) of the '**Sardar Vallabhbhai Sports Enclave**'.

- **Note:** 1.32 lakh spectators will be able to witness matches at this stadium. The stadium has 11 pitches, unrivalled by any stadium in the world.
- It hosted its first ever pink ball Test match on 24 February 2021 between India and England.
- **Facts about Gujarat:**  
**State Bird:** Greater flamingo  
**State Animal:** Asiatic lion  
**State Flower:** Marigold  
**State Tree:** Banyan

### Odisha hosts 17th India International Mega Trade Fair 2021

- The 11 days long International Trade Fair from February 19 to March 1 has been organised by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (**CREDAI**) in collaboration with the Odisha Chamber of Commerce and West Bengal Chamber of Commerce.
- Odisha Law Minister Pratap Jena inaugurated the 17th India International Mega Trade Fair at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar.
- **Note:** Around 9 countries and 19 states of India are participating with a total number of 250 stalls in the trade fair.
- The countries participating included Bangladesh, Dubai, Iran, Thailand, Afghanistan, Malaysia, Lebanon and Tunisia.

### Asia's largest Livestock Research Centre in Salem

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami inaugurated the **Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS)**, the largest in Asia, near Thalaivasal in Salem district.
- The AIIRLAS, which also accommodates the State's fifth veterinary college, was constructed at a cost of Rs 1,023 crore on 1,100 acres.
- He also announced a **frozen semen station** that would be established at Karumandurai, in Salem, at a cost of Rs 100 crore soon.

- **Facts about Tamil Nadu's UNESCO World Heritage Sites:** Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Brihadishwara Temple, Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Jayakondam, Airavatesvara Temple, Darasuram, Shore Temple along with the collection of other monuments, Mamallapuram

### Uttar Pradesh receives award for fastest implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar awarded the top-performing States and Districts for their exemplary work with respect to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme.
- Uttar Pradesh has been awarded in the category of fastest take off in year 2020-21. Nearly 1.53 crore farmers were registered during the period of Dec 2018 to Mar 2019 in state.
- **Note:** The Union Minister distributed the awards during an event in New Delhi organized to celebrate the **2nd-year completion of the PM-KISAN scheme.**
- **PM-KISAN Scheme:** This flagship scheme of the Narendra Modi government was launched on February 24, 2019. Under this initiative, ₹6,000 is disbursed to farmers with cultivable landholdings.

### Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of several developmental projects worth over 8000 crore rupees in Tamil Nadu

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation, state-of-the-art Main Battle Tank Arjun Mark 1A which has been indigenously designed and manufactured by the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment of Defence Research and Development Organisation.

- Among the projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister in Tamil Nadu include, the Chennai Metro Rail Phase-I extension. The Central Government has accepted their long-standing demand of DevendrakulaVelalar community to be known as DevendrakulaVelalar. They will now be known by their heritage name and not the six to seven names listed in the Schedule to the Constitution.

- **Facts about Tamil Nadu:**

**Capital:** Chennai

**Governor:** Banwarilal Purohit

**Chief Minister:** Edappadi K.

Palaniswami

### **Prime Minister unveils several development projects worth Rs 6100 crore in Kerala**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled several key development projects worth 6,100 crore rupees at INS Garuda Naval Air Station at Kochi in Kerala.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated country's first full-fledged international cruise terminal, Sagarika at Cochin Port and Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd., the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation, the Ro-Ro Vessels at Willingdon Islands in Kochi.

### **Bihar signs MoU with UNEP for climate resilience and low carbon development**

- The Bihar government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for climate resilience and low carbon development strategy formulation.
- UNEP will provide technical assistance to Bihar to prepare its greenhouse gas inventory and carry out climate impact scenario and vulnerability assessments.
- It will also suggest revisions to the State Action Plans on Climate Change.
- **Facts about State symbols of Bihar:**  
**State Bird:** House Sparrow  
**State Animal:** Gaur

**State Flower:** Kachnar

**State Fruit:** Mango

**State Tree:** Peepal tree

### **Mandu Festival**

- In Madhya Pradesh, the three-day (13-15 February) Mandu Festival was celebrated at Mandu in the historic town of Dhar district.
- Handicrafts related to handmade art have been displayed in the Mandu Utsav.
- **Mandu** is an ancient fort city in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. It's also known for its Afghan architectural heritage.
- **Note: Dino Adventure Park & Fossils Museum** was also inaugurated by the state culture and tourism minister.
- The State Minister informed that the Dinosaur Park is the country's first modern fossil park which has 24 eggs and other fossils of dinosaurs on display. The park also provides information related to the life of the dinosaurs.

### **Odisha government to construct 'COVID Warrior Memorial'**

- Odisha is set to inaugurate the Covid warrior memorial in Bhubaneswar on Independence Day this year. The memorial will be established at the Biju Patnaik Park in the Capital city.
- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had on January 1 announced the decision to construct the memorial to honour and recognise the sacrifice and selfless service of the frontline workers, who lost their lives fighting the pandemic.
- **Note:** The Odisha government also had announced Rs. 50 lakh ex-gratia to all the health personnel (public and private) as well as members of all the support services who died of the pandemic.

### **Bhuri Bai of Madhya Pradesh invited as Chief Guest at Foundation Day celebrations of Bharat Bhavan**

- The tribal painter Bhuri Bai of Madhya Pradesh was invited as the Chief Guest



at the Foundation Day celebrations of Bharat Bhavan.

- When the construction of this building started, she used to work here as a labourer on a daily wage of Rs six.
- **Bhuri Bai's award:** Shikhar Samman-Government of Madhya Pradesh in 1986, Ahalya Samman in 1998, Rani Durgavati Award in 2009, **Padma Shri Award in 2021**

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' in Assam

- To mark the launch of 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra', he inaugurated the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari.
- He laid the foundation stone of Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on River Brahmaputra and launched digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business.
- **Note:** 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' programme will strengthen water connectivity by Brahmaputra water through port-led development.
- **Facts about Assam:**  
**World Heritage Sites:** Manas Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga Wildlife Sanctuary

### Prime Minister launches 'Asom Mala' and lays Foundation Stone of two Hospitals in Assam

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi laid the Foundation Stone of two hospitals in Biswanath and Charaideo and launched 'Asom Mala', a programme for state highways and major district roads, at Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur District, Assam. 'Asom Mala' has been started in line with 'Bharat Mala Project'.
- **About Bharatmala Pariyojana:** It is a centrally-sponsored and funded Road and Highways project of the Government of India. It was established on 31 July 2015.

- **Note:** The Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation **the LPG import terminal, 348 km Dobhi – Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline section**, which is part of the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project.
- He also laid the foundation stone of the **second Catalytic-Isodewaxing unit of Haldia Refinery.**

### Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attends third phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar mela in Guwahati

- In the event, the Assam government distributed financial assistance of 3000 rupees each to nearly 7.5 lakh people belonging to tea garden areas.
- **About Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela Scheme:** The scheme was launched by the Assam government in Financial Year 2017-18.
- The main objective of the scheme is to incentivize and strengthen the efforts of financial inclusion of the tea tribe community.
- A sum of Rs 2,500 was transferred to 6.3 lakh bank accounts in the first phase of the Assam Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela Scheme in 2017-18. An additional Rs 2,500 was deposited in 7.15 lakh accounts in the second phase in 2018-19.

### Himachal Pradesh becomes first State in the country to implement e-cabinet

- The new system will bring greater efficiency in the overall process of conducting a cabinet meeting by removing dependencies which arise due to the physical movement of cabinet memos.
- **Note:** On April 23, 2020, Uttar Pradesh became the first state to have the requisite infrastructure in all its courts for hearing cases through video conferencing.

### Madhya Pradesh launches 'SAANS' campaign to reduce infant mortality

- The health department in Madhya Pradesh has launched the **Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS)** campaign with the aim of reducing infant mortality due to pneumonia.
- **About SAANS campaign:** It was launched by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in 2019 to child mortality due to pneumonia.
- Under SAANS, the government is targeting a reduction in pneumonia-caused deaths by 2025 to less than 3 deaths out of 1000 live births.

### Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign

- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles and appealed to people to buy such vehicles to combat pollution in the city.
- Under its electric vehicle policy, the Delhi government has planned extensive subsidies on purchase of electric two-wheelers and four-wheelers, besides waiving road tax and registration charges.
- **Note:** More than 6,000 electric vehicles have been purchased since the policy launch in August 2020.
- The government has fixed an ambitious target of 25 percent electric vehicles among total vehicle registrations in Delhi by 2024.

### Preliminary survey shows deposits of Lithium in Mandya district of Karnataka

- Preliminary surveys on surface and limited subsurface by Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) have shown presence of Lithium resources of 1,600 tonnes in the pegmatites of Marlagalla – Allapatna area, Mandya district, Karnataka.
- **About Lithium:** The well-known uses of Lithium are in Lithium ion batteries, lubricating grease, high energy additive to rocket propellants, optical modulators

for mobile phones and for thermonuclear reactions.

### Uttar Pradesh announces 16-Digit Unicode to Identify Landholdings

- The revenue department will be issuing the Unicode for marking all kinds of agricultural, residential and commercial land and a person will now be able to know the details of the land with a single click.
- **Unicode numbers:** The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the first six digits based on the population of the land, the next 4 digits determining the unique identity of the land. The digits from 11 to 14 will be the number of the division of the land. The last 2 digits will have the details of the category, through which, the agricultural, residential and commercial land will be identified.

### Delhi government approves 'Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha' scholarship scheme

- The Delhi cabinet approved "Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha" in which Rs 5,000 will be provided to 1,000 meritorious students of Class 9 in schools of Delhi as a science scholarship.
- The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level.
- **Note:** Another decision that has been taken by the Delhi Cabinet is to digitise the education department.
- **Facts about Delhi:** 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Delhi - Qutb Complex, Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb.

### Vijayanagara becomes 31st district of Karnataka

- The Karnataka state Cabinet formally approved the borders for the newly carved out Vijayanagara district from the existing Ballary district.

- Vijayanagara will now be the 31st district in the state and will comprise six taluks - Hospet, Harapanahalli, Hoovina Hadagali, Hagari Bommanahalli, Kotturu and Kudligi.
- **Facts about Karnataka:**  
**Capital:** Bengaluru  
**Governor:** Vajubhai Vala  
**Chief Minister:** B. S. Yediyurappa

### India's First 'Gender Park' in Kerala's Kozhikode

- The Kerala government is all set to launch Rs 300 crore three-tower 'Gender Park' in Kozhikode.
- This launch will coincide with the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II).
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the February 11-13 ICGE-II and the Gender Park.
- He will also lay the foundation of the International Women's Trade and Research Centre (IWTRC), a Gender Museum, Gender Library, Convention Centre and an Amphitheatre will also be launched at the event.

### Justice Sunil Kumar Awasthi tenders his resignation from office of Judge of MP High Court

- Shri Justice Sunil Kumar Awasthi has tendered his resignation from the office of Judge, Madhya Pradesh High Court, in pursuance of proviso (a) to clause (1) of Article 217 of the Constitution.
- He was appointed as an Additional Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on October 13, 2016 and as Permanent Judge on March 17, 2018.

### Lucknow Metro becomes the first metro in the country to use ultraviolet (UV) rays to sanitise train coaches

- UPMRC got the idea from the New York Metro's experiment to sanitise trains with UV lamp rays.

- The remote operated equipment also reduces the cost by 40 times less than what comes in sanitizing the coach by sodium hypochlorite.
- **Facts about Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC):**  
**Founded:** 25 November 2013  
**Headquarters:** Lucknow  
**Managing Director:** Kumar Keshav

### Kerala's first Human Milk Bank (HMB) to be opened on February 5

- The HMB shall open at the Ernakulam general hospital in the city by Health Minister KK Shailaja.
- The milk bank will be set up to ensure breast milk for newborn babies whose mothers cannot breastfeed them.
- **Note:** Rotary Club of Cochin Global took the lead to bring the project to the state with two such breast milk banks - one at Ernakulam and the other at Jubilee Medical Mission Hospital at Thrissur.
- The collected milk can be stored up to 6 months safely in the bank.

### PGIMER, Chandigarh launches India's first 'Amputee Clinic'

- India's **first amputee clinic** has been launched by the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh. It was inaugurated by the PGIMER Director Prof. Jagat Ram.
- It has been set up to improve the care of amputee patients by providing a wide range of services under one roof and with significant coordination.
- It will comprise specialists from various departments including orthopaedics, prosthetists, PMR (physical and medical rehabilitation), psychologists, occupational physiotherapy and nursing departments.
- **Note:** PGIMER has also stated that it will run amputee schools based on the successful knee school being run at PGI.

## Punjab CM launches 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' Mission

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh launched the 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission as part of the state government's campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 percent potable piped water supply in all rural households by 2022.
- The scheme is being funded by the World Bank, Jal Jeewan Mission of GoI, NABARD, and State Budget.

- He also inaugurated one **Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme** covering 85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.

### • **Facts about Punjab:**

**Capital:** Chandigarh

**Governor:** V. P. Singh Badnore

**Chief Minister:** Captain Amarinder

Singh

## Important News: India

### Transport Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari launches 'Go Electric' Campaign

- Shri Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises launched the "Go Electric" Campaign to spread awareness on the benefits of e-mobility and EV Charging Infrastructure as well as electric cooking in India.
- **Note:** Electric fuel is a major alternative for fossil fuels which have an import bill of Rs. 8 lakh Crore.
- When compared to conventional fuels the electric fuel has low cost, reduced emissions and it is also indigenous.

**Neighbourhoods Challenge'** cohort, in collaboration with the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) and technical partner WRI India.

- The Challenge is a 3-year initiative aimed at supporting early childhood-friendly neighbourhoods under the government's Smart Cities Mission.
- **About the Challenge: The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge**, launched on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, invited participation from all Smart Cities, capitals of States and UTs, and other cities with population above 5 lakhs were eligible to participate.

### 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival begins

- The week-long (20<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> February) 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival began in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh which is based on the Indian classical dance tradition.
- The festival is being organized by the Culture Department through Ustad Alauddin Khan Music and Arts Academy Bhopal.
- **Note:** The ceremony is being held once again in the temple premises after a gap of 44 years.

### Centre reconstitutes NITI Aayog governing council

- The Centre has reconstituted the governing council of the NITI Aayog with **Prime Minister Narendra Modi as its chairperson.**
- According to a notification of the Cabinet Secretariat, chief ministers of all states and those of the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Puducherry are **full time members of the council.**
- The Lieutenant Governors of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Ladakh, and the administrators of Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep will be **special invitees of the governing council.**

### Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge cohort announced

- The Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, announced **25 shortlisted cities** for the 'Nurturing



- **Note:** Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the sixth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog.
- The sixth meeting witnessed the entry of Ladakh for the first time, in addition to the participation of Jammu and Kashmir as a UT.
- **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

### **Government of India and World Bank sign project to improve quality of India's Education in Nagaland**

The Government of India, Government of Nagaland and the World Bank signed a \$68 million project to enhance the governance of schools across Nagaland as well as to improve teaching practices and learning environments in select schools.

- The “**Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project**” will improve classroom instruction; create opportunities for the professional development of teachers; and build technology systems to provide students and teachers.
- **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)

### **National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) & several digital initiatives launched for transforming Urban Governance**

- The National Urban Digital Mission has been launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs along with

the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

- Several other digital initiatives of MoHUA *vis.* **India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), SmartCode, Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS)** were also launched.
- **The National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM):** It will institutionalise a citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach to urban governance and service delivery in 2022 cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns in India by 2024.

### **11th ‘Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav’ inaugurated at Cooch Behar, West Bengal**

- The Governor of West Bengal Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar in the presence of Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the 11<sup>th</sup> Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 at Cooch Behar Palace at Cooch Behar in West Bengal.
- The eleventh edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is being held between 14<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 in West Bengal.
- **Note:** Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav, the flagship festival of this Ministry organized since 2015 with the active participation of Seven Zonal Culture Centres has been playing a pivotal role to take the vibrant culture of India out to the masses instead of confining to auditoria and galleries.

### **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launches MGNE with nine IIMs as academic partners**

- The Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Mahendra Nath Pandey chaired a function ‘Transforming skilling through strategic partnerships under SANKALP’ and rolling out of the

### **Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF).**

- The fellows under MGNF will acquire academic expertise and technical competency in understanding the overall skill ecosystem along with being attached to DSCs (District Skill Committees) and help them manage the skill development planning at district level through the mechanism of formulating District Skill Development Plans (DSDPs).
- **SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion)** is a World Bank loan assisted programme to strengthen the district skill administration and the District Skill Committees.

### **Major Port Authorities Bill 2020 passed by Rajya Sabha**

- A bill that seeks to provide greater autonomy in decision-making to 12 major ports in the country and professionalise their governance by setting up boards was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.
- The Bill 2020 will replace the Major Port Trusts Act of 1963.
- **Note: India has 12 major ports** -- Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), V O Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).
- Lok Sabha gives nod to **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021**.
- Government introduces **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021** in Lok Sabha.

### **Prime Minister lays the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and development work of Chittaura Lake**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and

development work of Chittaura Lake at Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh via video conference.

- The Prime Minister also inaugurated the medical College building named after Maharaja Suheldev.
- **About Maharaja Suheldev:** He was an Indian king from Shravasti, popularly known to have defeated and killed the Ghaznavid general Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud at Bahraich in 11th century.
- He is mentioned in the 17th century Persian-language historical romance Mirat-i-Masudi. Since the 20th century, various Hindu nationalist groups have characterized him as a Hindu King who defeated a Muslim invader.

### **Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launches E-Chhawani portal & mobile app**

- The portal has been created to provide online civic services to over 20 lakh residents of 62 Cantonment Boards across the country.
- Through the portal, the residents of cantonment areas will be able to avail basic services like renewal of leases, application for birth & death certificates, water & sewerage connections, trade licences, mobile toilet locators and payment of different types of taxes and fees, with just a click of a button.
- The portal, jointly developed by **eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) and National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, provides a platform to the residents to avail these services from the comfort of their home.

### **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan**

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban (JJM-U).

- It will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water.
- As a first step, the Ministry has decided to launch the Survekshan in 10 cities- Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur.
- **Note: Jal Jeevan Mission Urban** is designed to provide water supply to all households through taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal - 6.
- The total outlay proposed for JJM-U is 2 lakh 87 thousand crore rupees which includes 10 thousand crore rupees for continuing financial support to AMRUT Mission.
- **Facts about AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation):**  
**Launch year:** 2015  
**Sector:** Urban planning  
**Launched by (Prime Minister):**

Narendra Modi

**Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

### 3rd edition of Indian Sign Language Dictionary with 10,000 terms

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually released the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary with 10,000 terms (including 6,000 earlier terms).
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition contains a total of 10,000 terms of everyday use, academic terms, legal & administrative terms, medical terms, technical terms and agricultural terms.
- **Note:** The Dictionary has been brought out by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

(Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the ISL Dictionary was launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2018 with 3000 terms and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition with 6000 terms (including earlier 3000 terms) was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.

### Sandes, the government's new Instant Messaging platform

- The National Informatics Centre has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandes on the lines of WhatsApp.
- Like WhatsApp, the new NIC platform can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone with a mobile number or email id.
- Although there is no option to transfer the chat history between two platforms, the chats on Government Instant Messaging Systems (GIMS) can be backed up to a users' email.
- **Note:** In August 2020, the NIC released the first version of the app, which said that the app could be used by both central and state government officials for intra and inter-organisation communication.

### Union Minister launches Software Applications and instruction manuals with questionnaire for five All India Surveys

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour & Employment Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar launched the trainers' training programme for the All India Surveys being conducted by Labour Bureau, an attached office of Ministry of Labour & Employment by releasing the Instruction Manuals & Questionnaires for the surveys and the software application developed.
- **The Labour Bureau is entrusted with five All India surveys:** All India Survey of Migrant workers, Domestic Workers, Employment generated by Professionals, Employment generated in

Transport Sector and Quarterly Establishment based Employment

- **Note:** The surveys are significant in terms of the path-breaking initiative being taken by the Bureau in terms of use of Information Technology (IT) in the entire chain of data collection to report generation.

### **Cabinet approves Amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Women and Child Development to amend the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 to introduce measures for strengthening Child Protection set-up to ensure best interest of children.
- The amendments include authorizing District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** has been passed by Parliament of India amidst intense controversy, debate and protest on many of its provisions by Child Rights fraternity. It replaced the Indian juvenile delinquency law, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, and allows for juveniles in conflict with Law in the age group of 16–18, involved in Heinous Offences, to be tried as adults.

### **1st India-Bahrain Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in the field of Renewable Energy**

- The 1st meeting of the Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy between India and the Kingdom of

Bahrain held on February 4, 2021 in virtual format.

- H.E. Dr. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation. The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy.
- Both sides agreed to forging deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.
- **Note:** A Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain was signed in July 2018 for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bahrain in August 2019.** This was the first ever Prime Ministerial visit from India to Bahrain.

### **Shri Prahlad Singh Patel virtually attends the 8th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers' meeting**

- The Union Minister of State for Culture & Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel co-chaired the 8th Meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting with Minister of Tourism of Cambodia H.E. Dr. Thong Khon on February 05, 2021.
- The Meeting was in conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM).
- **Initiatives taken by Government of India to revive Tourism activities:**
- To organise the **International Buddhist Conclave (IBC)** to create awareness about India's Buddhist Heritage and to increase foreign tourist traffic to Buddhist sites.
- **SAATHI** (System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for Hospitality Industry) and the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (**IITF**) Certification Programme, an online learning platform



with the objective of creating a pool of well trained and professional Tourist Facilitators across the country.

- To organize a series of webinars under the theme **Dekho Apna Desh**

### **Cabinet Secretary Chairs review meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) to take stock of the Glacial Burst in Uttarakhand and the actions taken**

- The National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) under the chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba met to review the situation arising out of the natural disaster in Uttarakhand caused by glacial burst.
- The glacial burst led to the rising of water levels in the river Rishiganga, which washed away the **Rishiganga small hydro project of 13.2 MW**.
- The flash flood also affected the downstream **hydro project of NTPC at Tapovan** on the river Dhauliganga, which is a tributary of the river Alaknanda.
- As per the information given by the Central Water Commission (CWC), there is no danger of downstream flooding and the rise in water level has been contained.

### **Schools under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan to be renamed after Subhas Chandra Bose**

- The Ministry of Education has decided to name residential schools and hostels funded under Samagra Shiksha of the Ministry as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose residential schools or hostels.
- **About Samagra Shiksha:** Samagra Shiksha - an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12 has been, therefore, prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes. It

subsumes the **three erstwhile Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE)**.

- **Note:** A total of 1063 residential facilities which include 383 residential Schools and 680 Hostels have been sanctioned to States and UTs so far.

### **National Horticulture Fair 2021 begins in Bengaluru**

- The country's largest horticulture event, the five days National Horticulture Fair 2021, has been organized by the **Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR)** from February 8 to February 12 at its IIHR campus situated in Hessarghatta, Bengaluru.
- *The theme of the event is 'Horticulture for Start-up and Stand-up India'.*
- Cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices, and processing methods will be demonstrated.
- **Note:** IIHR is a subsidiary of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- **Facts about the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):**  
**Founded:** 16 July 1929  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Director:** Trilochan Mohapatra

### **First ever India Toy Fair-2021 to be organised**

- The Government is organising the first ever India Toy Fair from 27th February to 2nd March.
- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal jointly inaugurated the website of The India Toy Fair-2021 in New Delhi.
- **Note:** According to a Quality Council report in February last year, many of the toys imported from abroad were failing the safety standards. Thereafter import

duty on foreign toys was increased from 20 per cent to 60 per cent and a Quality Control Order was issued.

- Recently, the Government has organized the **1st Toycathon**.

### **NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) & Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) kick-start the India-Australia Circular Economy (I-ACE) Hackathon, 2021**

- I-ACE is supported by the Australian Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (DISER), AIM Atal Incubation Centre network, and various domain experts.
- Between 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the shortlisted teams were scheduled to be working on creating ingenious solutions.
- **About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** The Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- **About Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO):** The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation is Australia's national science agency and innovation catalyst, solving the greatest challenges through innovative science and technology.
- **Note:** The concept of I-ACE joint Hackathon originated in the virtual bilateral summit between the Hon. Prime Minister of India and the Hon. Prime Minister of Australia, held on June 4th, 2020.

### **ICC announces BYJU'S as global partner until 2023**

- The three-year agreement will see BYJU'S partner all ICC (International Cricket Council) events over the period, including the forthcoming men's T20 World Cup in India and the women's World Cup in New Zealand.

- As a global partner, BYJU'S will have extensive in-venue, broadcast, and digital rights across all ICC events.
- **Note:** In August 2019, the company became the official jersey partners of the Indian cricket team.
- **Facts about BYJU'S:** Byju's is an Indian educational technology and online tutoring firm.  
**Founder:** Byju Raveendran  
**Founded:** 2011, Bengaluru  
**CEO:** Byju Raveendran

### **Prime Minister addresses 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata'**

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the 125th anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharata' organised by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati in Uttarakhand.
- **'Prabuddha Bharata'** is a monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order which was started by Swami Vivekananda. It has been in publication since 1896 and carries articles on social sciences and humanities comprising historical, psychological, cultural and social sciences themes.

### **Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addresses the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN-India Hackathon**

- The ASEAN-India Hackathon is being organized online from 1st -3rd February 2021.
- Hackathon will provide a unique opportunity to India and ASEAN countries to solve their common identified challenges under two broad themes of "Blue Economy" and "Education".
- **About ASEAN- India Hackathon:** It is an initiative taken by the Ministry of Education. This unique hackathon offers opportunities for all the 10 ASEAN countries and India to forward their economic and cultural ties through

collaboration in education, science and technology.

### 8th India International Silk Fair

- Union Minister for Women & Child Development and Textiles, Smt Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the 8th edition of India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal from 31st January to 4th February.
- India International Silk Fair is the Sourcing Fair for silk and silk blend products organised by the Indian Silk Export Promotion Council under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles and sponsored by Department of Commerce.
- **Note:** India has a long history of silk production and is the **2nd largest producer of Silk after China.**
- India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk i.e. Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.

### Prime Minister to inaugurate 'Chauri Chaura' Centenary Celebrations on 4th February

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, on 4th February 2021.
- The day marks 100 years of the 'Chauri Chaura' incident, a landmark event in the country's fight for independence.
- Prime Minister will also release a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura centenary during the event.
- **About Chauri Chaura incident:** It took place on 4 February 1922 at Chauri Chaura in the Gorakhpur district of the United Province (modern Uttar Pradesh) in British India, when a large group of protesters participating in the Non-cooperation movement, clashed with police who opened fire.

- Bhagyashree Sahu belonging to Odisha's Rourkela found mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 73rd "Mann ki Baat" for her artwork to promote cloth-based scroll paintings "Pattachitra".
- **About Pattachitra:** It is a general term for traditional, cloth-based scroll painting, based in the eastern Indian states of Odisha and West Bengal.
- **Geographical Indication (GI) of Pattachitra:** Geographical indication of Pattachitra is registered under to different state of India as the style and motif of Odisha and West Bengal Pattachitra are so different. The Pattachitra of Odisha is registered as Orissa Pattachitra. The Pattachitra of West Bengal is registered as Bengal Pattachitra.

### Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President, inaugurated the tribal festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' at Dilli Haat in New Delhi

- The Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' at Dilli Haat, New Delhi is being held from February 01-15, 2021.
- The theme of the festival is "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture and Commerce", which represents the basic ethos of tribal life.
- **Note:** The **Aadi Mahotsav** is an annual event that was started in 2017. The festival is being organized by TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India), under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

### Union Ministers jointly launch unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of

### Pattachitra Artform

GOBARDHAN activities across the nation.

- Gobardhan is an important component of Swachh Bharat Mission Phase-2 for organic solid waste management.
- **About GOBARDHAN Scheme:** Ministry for Drinking Water and Sanitation on April 30, 2018 launched the **GOBAR - DHAN (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Fund) Scheme**.
- Under GOBAR-DHAN scheme, solid waste of dung and fields will be changed into compost and fuels such as biogas and bio-CNG.

### **Year-long birth centenary celebrations of legendary classical singer Pandit Bhimsen Joshi begins**

- Different events have been organised including SwarBhaskar 100 by Jayateerth Mevundi, 'Abhivadan' by Arya Sangeet Prasarak Mandal.
- **Note:** Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (February 4, 1922 - January 24, 2011) was a vocalist from Karnataka.
- He received the Bharat Ratna in 2008.

## **Important News: World**

### **Bangladesh Supreme Court launches Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software 'Amar Vasha'**

- The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla.
- **Note:** The Software has been developed with '**EkStep**' foundation of India. It is based on their '**Anuvaad**' translation software used in India to translate from English to Indian languages including Bangla.
- Anuvaad was deployed by the Supreme Court of India as **SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software)** from November 2019.

### **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar launches the BRICS-2021 website**

- The website will provide comprehensive information about events and activities during the BRICS under the Chairship of India. .
- He also launched the upgraded facilities at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan that will serve as the Secretariat for BRICS Summit.
- **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.

- The theme for India's Chairship for 2021 would be '**BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**'.

- **Facts about BRICS:**

**Formation:** 2009

**Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

### **India to gift 2 lakh coronavirus vaccine to UN peacekeepers**

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made the announcement at the United Nations Security Council open debate on Implementation of Resolution 2532.
- 25 nations across the world have already received Made in India vaccines and 49 more countries will be supplied in the coming days under '**Vaccine Maitri**' initiatives.
- **Facts about UN (United Nations):**  
**Formation:** 24 October 1945  
**Headquarter:** New York, USA  
**Secretary General:** Antonio Guterres

### **World Bank report, "Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society"**

- The report titled "Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society", was released by Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari.



- The report highlights the disproportionate impact of a road crash on poor households that pushes them into a vicious cycle of poverty and debt.
- It sheds light on the links between road crashes, poverty and inequality in India.
- Post-crash impact among Low Income Households is more severe compared to High Income Households with incidence of fatality among poor households as high as 44% in rural areas compared to 11.6% in urban areas, the report by the World Bank and Save Life Foundation.
- **Note:** India is also a signatory to the United Nation's Brasilia Declaration with the target of reducing road fatalities by 50% by 2020. Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari also said the government aims to bring down road accidents and its related deaths down by 50 percent before 2025.

#### **Indian-origin Preeti Sinha to lead United Nations Capital Development Fund**

- The United Nations Capital Development Fund has appointed Indian-origin investment and development banker Preeti Sinha as its Executive Secretary.
- Sinha succeeds Judith Karl, who retired in February.
- **About The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF):** It makes public and private finance work for the poor in the world's 47 least developed countries.

**Headquarters:** New York, United

States

**Founded:** 1966

**Parent organizations:** United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Economic and Social Council

#### **US extends New START Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Russia for five years**

- United States has extended the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) nuclear arms control treaty with Russia for five years.

- The treaty had been set to lapse on 5 February, as the Trump administration had refused to approve the extension. Now the pact has been extended to 5th February 2026.
- **Note:** The treaty, which first went into effect in 2011, limits the United States and Russia to deploying no more than 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads each and imposes restrictions on the land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers to deliver them.

#### **14th International Children's Film festival concludes in Bangladesh (ICFFB)**

- 179 films from 37 countries were shown at various venues during the 7-day long festival organised by the Children's Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh.
- Apart from Bangladesh, films from India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China among others were shown in the course of the festival.
- Dutch Film Jackie and Oopjen was awarded the Best International Feature Film Award. The Best Director award went to Ani Oganessian for his film Stork's Nest from Armenia. A total of 12 awards were presented to the winners at the concluding ceremony.

Bangladeshi film Maati got The Young Talent Award while Lottery won the Special mention under the Young Talent Award.

#### **India, Afghanistan sign MoU to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul**

- External affairs minister S Jaishankar and his Afghan counterpart Haneef Atmar signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) for building Lalandar or Shatoot dam, which will meet the drinking water needs of two million people in Kabul, provide irrigation water to nearby areas and rejuvenate irrigation and drainage networks.
- **Note: Shahtoot dam** is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the **Friendship Dam**

or **Salma dam**, inaugurated by Modi and Ghani in June 2016.

- As a part of our Development Cooperation with Afghanistan, India has completed more than 400 projects covering all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

### **US government moves to rejoin UN Human Rights Council**

- President Joe Biden has moved to rejoin the United Nations Human Rights Council- UNHRC three years after the former US President Donald Trump withdrew from the global body.
- **Note:** Reversing other decisions of former US President, Joe Biden has also joined the World Health Organisation and Paris Climate Accord which the Trump administration withdrew from while he was in office.
- **Facts about UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council):**  
**Founded:** 15 March 2006  
**President:** Nazhat Shameem  
**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

### **The UAE's Hope Probe has successfully entered orbit around Mars**

- The United Arab Emirates' first mission to Mars arrived at the red planet and successfully entered orbit on its first attempt.
- The Emirates Mars Mission, known as the Hope Probe, marked the UAE as only the fifth country (after US, the Soviet Union, Europe and India) in history to reach the red planet and the Arab nation's first interplanetary mission.
- **Facts about the United Arab Emirates (UAE):**

**Capital:** Abu Dhabi

**Currency:** United Arab Emirates dirham

**President:** Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

### **Nepal decides to award hydropower project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam**

- Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of 679 megawatt Lower Arun Hydropower Project to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).
- This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by Prime Minister of Nepal.
- The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method.
- **Facts about Nepal:**  
**Capital:** Kathmandu  
**President:** Bidya Devi Bhandari  
**Prime minister:** K. P. Sharma Oli  
**Currency:** Nepalese Rupee

### **The Myanmar Military Tatmadaw has announced a one year state of emergency in the country**

- The Vice President Myint Swe has been made the acting President and all powers have been transferred to the Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing.
- The development follows detention of the State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) by the military.
- **Note:** Aung San Suu Kyi took over as the head of the civilian government in 2015 after a long period of military rule in Myanmar. The National Elections held on November last year saw a massive victory for NLD with the military supported USDP performing poorly.
- Aung San Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

### **Oxford names "Aatmanirbharta" as Hindi word of the year 2020**

- The word was chosen by an advisory panel of language experts Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell.
- **Note:** Previous Hindi words of the year are *Aadhaar* (2017), *Nari Shakti* (2018) and *Samvidhaan* (2019).

## Economy

### Government approves eight toy manufacturing clusters worth Rs 2,300 crore to boost India's traditional toys industry

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) are looking to develop toy clusters under existing schemes such as the **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)**.
- The government has approved three clusters in Madhya Pradesh, two in Rajasthan, and one each in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- **Note: The first virtual India Toy Fair-2021** will be held from February 27 to March 2, which will offer opportunities to buy toys from over 1,000 exhibitors across the country.
- Recently, Union Minister, Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated 50 SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) clusters in 18 States, which will support over 42,000 artisans in traditional crafts.

### China returns as top India's trade partner

- China regained its position as **India's top trade partner in 2020** because India was still dependent on the import of heavy machines, home appliances and telecom equipment.
- Two-way trade between India and China stood at \$77.7 billion in 2020, according to provisional data from India's commerce ministry.
- As a result, the bilateral trade gap with China was at almost \$40 billion in 2020, making it India's largest.
- **Note:** Total imports from China at \$58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the U.S. and the U.A.E, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively.

### RBI sets up panel to suggest steps for strengthening urban co-operative banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) to strengthen and examine the issues within the sector.
- **Former RBI Deputy Governor NS Vishwanathan will be the chairman of the eight-member committee.**
- The committee has been directed to submit its report within three months from the date of its first meeting.
- The committee will also "review the current regulatory/supervisory approach and recommend suitable measures/changes to strengthen the sector, taking into account recent amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, 1949."

### Amazon to set up its first device manufacturing line in India

- Amazon is setting up its first device manufacturing line in India to make Fire TV sticks locally and has partnered with Cloud Network Technology, a subsidiary of Foxconn, to begin producing the device at its Chennai plant later this year.
- It reiterated its commitment to invest \$1 billion into the country to digitise 10 million small and medium businesses by 2025 and create 1 million additional jobs by then.

**Note:** Amazon Fire TV stick is one of the best-selling devices. It is powered by a 1.7 GHz quad-core processor that enables faster streaming in 1080p at 60fps with HDR compatibility.

### Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s latest news

- RBI projects **GDP at 10.5 percent in the Financial Year 2021-22.**

- **RBI keeps Key Rates Unchanged:** The monetary policy review has decided to continue with an accommodative stance of monetary policy to maintain status quo on key policy rates. The repo rate is kept unchanged at 4 percent and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent.
- **RBI introduced a risk-based internal audit (RBIA) system for select non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks (UCBs):** All deposit-taking non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), NBFCs with an asset size of Rs 5,000 crore, and UCBs with an asset size of Rs 500 crore will have to implement the system by March 31, 2022.
- **RBI to set up a 24x7 helpline for digital payment services**
- **RBI has decided to implement, 'One Nation One Ombudsman' approach for grievance redressal.** The Integrated Ombudsman Scheme will be rolled out in June 2021.

#### **MCA21 Version 3.0 to be launched in Fiscal 2021-22**

- During the fiscal 2021-22, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) will launch data analytics driven MCA21 Version 3.0.
- MCA21 system is the first Mission Mode e-Governance project of the Government of India.
- MCA21 Version 3.0 Project is a technology-driven forward looking project, envisioned to strengthen enforcement, promote Ease of Doing Business, enhance user experience, facilitate seamless integration and data exchange among Regulators.
- **Note:** The key components of MCA21 to be launched during Fiscal Year 2021-22 are: **e-Scrutiny, e-Adjudication, e-Consultation, Compliance Management System (CMS), MCA Lab.**

#### **PM SVANidhi scheme: Zomato sign MoU to take street food vendors' businesses online**

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Zomato for empowering street food vendors with new digital technology and to provide greater income-earning opportunities on the food delivery platform.
- **Note:** Recently, MoHUA has signed a MoU with Swiggy to take street food vendors online under the PM SVANidhi scheme.
- **About PM SVANidhi (Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi) scheme:** It was launched on June 1, 2020, to help the street vendors resume their livelihood activities that were impacted by COVID-19.

#### **"Formation and Promotion of 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)" of Rs. 6865 crore**

- Government of India has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations" with a clear strategy and committed resources to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs in the country with budgetary provision of Rs 6865 crore.
- **NAFED** would form the specialized FPOs which should necessarily be forwardly linked to the market, agri-value chain, etc. NAFED will provide market and value chain linkages to the FPOs formed by other Implementing Agencies.
- **Note:** Recently, during 2020-21, a total of 2200 FPO produce clusters have been allocated for formation of FPOs.
- Recently, NAFED has formed & registered **05 Honey FPOs** during current year in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar & West Bengal.
- **About NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India):** It is an apex



organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in India. It was established on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October 1958.

### Economic Survey 2021

- Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey that details the state of the economy ahead of the government's budget for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2021.
- The Economic Survey 2020-2021, authored by a team led by chief economic adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, focused on the state of different sectors of the economy.
- The Economic Survey has been **dedicated to all the COVID-19 warriors**, who have really helped in upholding India.
- **Key highlights:** India's GDP is estimated to contract by 7.7% in FY2020-21.
- The survey expects the Indian economy to grow by 11 percent during 2021-22 which is close to the growth forecast of 11.5 percent made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- V-shaped economic recovery due to mega vaccination drive, robust recovery in the services sector and robust growth in consumption and investment.

### Union Budget 2021-22

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament on 01 February, which is the first budget of this new decade and also a digital one in the backdrop of unprecedented COVID-19 crisis.
- Additionally, also on the path to fast-implementation are the 13 promises of Budget 2015-16-which were to materialize during the AmrutMahotsav

of 2022, on the 75<sup>th</sup> year of our Independence.

- **The Budget proposals for 2021-22 rest on 6 pillars:**  
Health and Wellbeing, Physical & Financial Capital and Infrastructure, Inclusive Development for Aspirational India, Reinvigorating Human Capital, Innovation and R&D, Minimum Government and Maximum Governance
- **The key highlights of the Union Budget 2021-22 are as follows:**
- Total spend of around Rs 2 lakh crore on healthcare, **Rs 35,000 crore for the Covid-19 vaccine**, Rs 1.10 lakh crore outlay for railways. To impose Rs 2.5 per litre agri infra cess on petrol and Rs 4 on diesel.
- The forthcoming Census could be India's first digital Census, allocating Rs 3,768 crore for FY21.
- Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA), Mission Poshan 2.0, PM Aatmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana will be launched.
- Government has increased the FDI limit from 49 to 74 per cent in Insurance Companies.
- No change in the Income Tax Slabs. Senior citizens who are of 75 years of age and above, having an only pension and interest income will be exempted from filing their income tax return.
- Set up of an asset reconstruction company and an asset management company to clean up non-performing assets in the banking sector.
- A *voluntary vehicle scrappage policy* has been introduced.
- **Note: 15th Finance Commission's final report:** The 15th Finance Commission (Chairman: Mr N. K. Singh) was required to submit two reports. The first report, consisting of recommendations for the financial year 2020-21, was tabled in Parliament on February 1, 2020.

- The final report with recommendations for 2021-22 to 2025-26 was tabled along with Budget 2021-22.

### **CCI approves acquisition of Indo Gulf Fertilisers by Indorama India Private Limited**

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of Indo Gulf Fertilisers by Indorama India Private Limited (IIPL) under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- **IIPL** is principally engaged in manufacture, trading and sale of fertilisers, primarily, phosphatic fertilisers and speciality plant nutrients.
- **Grasim's fertiliser division, Indo Gulf Fertilisers (IGF)** is a leading agri-solutions provider. Indo Gulf Fertilisers is an Indian company (a unit of Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd.) based in Mumbai and is part of the Aditya Birla Group of companies.

### **14 new Minor Forest Produce (MFP) items included under Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme to provide fair prices to tribal gatherers**

- The government has decided to include 14 new minor forest produce items under the mechanism for marketing of minor forest produce through a minimum support price scheme to provide remunerative and fair prices to tribal gatherers of forest produces.

- Newly included items are Tasar Cocoon, elephant apple dry, bamboo shoot, malkangani seed and wild dry mushroom among others.
- **About MFP (Minor Forest Produce):** The Central government had introduced a minimum support price for a selected list of minor produce items through mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce through Minimum Support Price and development of Value Chain of MFP Scheme in 2011.

### **RBI cancels license of Kolhapur's Shivam Sahakari Bank**

- According to the RBI, the licence of Maharashtra-based Shivam Sahakari Bank has been cancelled as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects.
- Consequently, the bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on January 29, 2021.
- With the cancellation of licence and commencement of liquidation proceedings, the process of paying the depositors of Shivam Sahakari Bank as per the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961 will be set in motion.
- **Note:** Recently, RBI cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra.

## **Awards and Honors**

### **Team TRIFED bags the award for excellence in PSU for Investment in Start-ups in the Organisational Awards category of the Business Leader of the Year awards**

- Team TRIFED (Tribal Co-operative Marketing Federation of India), led by Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED, has won 4 awards in the 19<sup>th</sup> Global edition and the 4<sup>th</sup> India Edition of World Leadership Congress and Awards.

- TRIFED won a collective award of Excellence in PSU – for investment in start-ups in the Organisational Award Category.
- Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director won three awards in the Individual Category for his exemplary and inspirational leadership – CEO of the year; Brand Builder of the Year and Entrepreneur of the Year.

## 12 companies selected for the prestigious National Technology Awards 2020 for commercialization of innovative indigenous technologies

- The companies have been selected under three categories --indigenous technologies, MSME, and startups.
- The awards were given by the Technology Development Board (TDB), a statutory body of the Government of India functioning under Department of Science of Technology for the year 2019-20.
- About TDB (Technology Development Board):** It was established in 1996 with a novel aim of providing financial assistance to Indian companies for commercialization of innovative indigenous technologies.

## US announces anti-corruption award for social activist Anjali Bhardwaj

- India's Anjali Bhardwaj was among 12 anti-corruption activists from around the world named by US secretary of state Antony Blinken as the first recipients of the new **'International Anti-corruption Champions Award'**.
- Bhardwaj established a foundation by the name of **Stark Nagrik Sangathan (SNS)** that encouraged citizens with a mandate of promoting accountability in the public and government institutions.
- For over two decades, she has remained an active member of the right to information (RTI) movement in India.

## Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2021

- Important winner list:**

Best Actress	Deepika Padukone (Chhapaak)
Best Actor	Akshay Kumar (Laxmii)
Critic's Best Actor	Sushant Singh Rajput (Dil Bechara)
Critic's Best Actress	Kiara Advani (Guilty)

Best Film	Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior
Best International Feature Film	Parasite
Best Director	Anurag Basu (Ludo)
Best Actor (Web Series)	Bobby Deol (Aashram)
Best Actress (Web Series)	Sushmita Sen (Aarya)
Best Web Series	Scam: 1992

- Note:** This year's awards also included the OTT (over-the-top) category.
- Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards** were introduced by the Government of India in 1969 to commemorate the Father of the Indian Cinema Dadasaheb Phalke.

## SERB announces Women Excellence Award 2021

- Four young women fellows of National Science Academies have been awarded for excelling in science and engineering on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2021.
- The SERB Women Excellence Award that has been conferred on them provides a grant of Rs. 15 lakhs for a period of three years to the awardees to pursue their research ideas.
- The four women scientists selected for the awards include **Dr. Shobhna Kapoor, Dr. Antara Banerjee, Dr. Sonu Gandhi** and **Dr. Ritu Gupta**.
- About Women Excellence Award 2021:** The award given by the **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**, a Statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) supporting basic research in the frontier areas of science and engineering, was launched in the year 2013. It is a one-time award given to women scientists below 40 years of age.

## Ministry of Tribal Affairs bags Award of Appreciation in the 18th CSI SIG e-Governance Awards 2020

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs bags the prestigious Award of Appreciation in the Project Category-Central Government Entity – in the 18th CSI SIG eGov Awards 2020 for their Performance Dashboard Empowering Tribals Transforming India through various ICT initiatives.
- **About the award:** The Computer Society of India (CSI) has instituted a series of awards for recognizing the contributions made in the field of e-Governance in the country. These awards have been conducted by CSI-SIGegov.
- **Note:** The Ministry also recently received the prestigious 5 SKOCH awards for different project, including the prestigious SKOCH Challenger Award for its “Best Performance in eGovernance”.

#### **Tamil film Koozhangal wins Tiger award at Rotterdam film festival 2021**

- Koozhangal (Pebbles) became the first Tamil film to win the coveted Tiger Award at the 50th Rotterdam Film Festival 2021.
- Directed by debutant P S Vinothraj, the film has been produced by actor Nayanthara and Vignesh Shivan.
- **Note:** Koozhangal has become the second Indian film ever to have won the award.
- The first Indian film to have won the honour was Malayalam filmmaker Sanal Kumar Sasidharan's Durga in 2017.

#### **Theodore Baskaran wins Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020**

- Sanctuary Nature Foundation honours conservation hero S Theodore Baskaran with Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020 for his role in wildlife conservation and his continuing legacy of writings in Tamil and English to the conservation discourse.
- **Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award** was instituted by the Sanctuary Nature

Foundation's Sanctuary Wildlife Service Awards in the year 2000 to recognise and draw national attention to the contribution of individuals working for the protection of wildlife and natural habitats in India.

#### **The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) awards dedicated for Animal Welfare and Protection-2021**

- Shri Giriraj Singh, Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Govt. of India distributed the awards on the auspicious day of Vasant Panchami.
- The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), the apex body in the country for the welfare and protection of animals, established under Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 conferred 14 Prani Mitra awards and JeevDaya awards 2021 to the individuals, organizations and corporates for their outstanding performance in the field of animal welfare.

#### **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy conferred Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award**

- The Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman, Skoch group, Sameer Kochhar personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh.
- **About SKOCH Award:** SKOCH Award, independently instituted in 2003, is India's honest civilian honour conferred by an independent organisation as a third party assessment. It is the only award in the country that is based on felt-needs assessment and outcome evaluation based on evidence. It recognises people, projects and institutions.

#### **WCCB receives Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020**

- The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-



2020 awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

- Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said that WCCB getting the award twice in three years is a testimony of India's commitment towards ending wildlife crime.
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been awarded this year under the Innovation category.
- **Note:** Earlier, the Bureau had received the award in 2018 under the same category.

#### **Rishabh Pant wins the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for January 2021**

- India's wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant became the first winner of the inaugural **ICC Player of the Month** award.
- Pant won the award for his spectacular performances in the two Tests against Australia.
- South Africa's **Shabnim Ismail** was named the **ICC Women's Player of the Month** for January 2021.
- She was rewarded for her incredible performances across three ODIs and two T20Is against **Pakistan**.

#### **Bengaluru airport achieves ACI World's 'Voice of the Customer' recognition**

- The Bangalore International Airport Limited's (BIAL) or Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru has bagged global recognition from the Airports Council International (ACI) World's 'Voice of the Customer' award.
- The 'Voice of the Customer' recognises airports that continued to prioritise their customers and remained committed to ensuring that their voice was heard during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.
- **Note:** Bengaluru Airport has made significant efforts in gathering passenger feedback through ACI's Airport Service Quality (ASQ) programme.

#### **Manasa Varanasi crowned Miss India World 2020**

- Manasa Varanasi, an engineer from Telangana, emerged as the winner of VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020.
- While Haryana's Manika Sheokand was declared VLCC Femina Miss Grand India 2020, Uttar Pradesh's Manya Singh was crowned VLCC Femina Miss India 2020 - runner-up.
- **Note:** Manasa Varanasi will represent India at the 70th Miss World pageant in December 2021.

#### **Robert Irwin wins Wildlife Photographer of the Year**

- Famous wildlife Australian zookeeper and wildlife expert Steve Irwin's son, Robert Irwin has won the first prize in the Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award.
- The image was titled 'bushfire' and was captured through a drone that shows a line of fire burning in between the bushes, dividing it into parts.
- Robert captured this image near the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York, Queensland.

#### **A.R. Rahman presented 'Alert Being Icon Award'**

- Oscar Award-winning music director A.R. Rahman and social activist from Saidapet Hari Krishnan were among the 14 people who were presented the **4th edition of the Alert Being Awards 2020 by the NGO ALERT**.
- The equivalent award for organisations was given to Biocon Foundation founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.
- **Note:** This year, a special category, Alert Being Covid Warriors, was added, and 30 Covid warriors received the Alert Being Covid Frontline Warrior Award for their contribution amid the pandemic.

## Successful user trials of DRDO-developed Anti-Tank Guided Missile Systems 'Helina' and 'Dhruvastra'

- Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems have been carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) platform in desert ranges.
- The missile systems have been designed and developed indigenously by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Note:** The Helina and Dhruvastra are third generation, Lock on Before Launch (LOBL) fire and forget Anti-Tank Guided Missiles that can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode.

## Indian Navy Ship Pralaya arrives in Abu Dhabi, UAE to participate in NAVDEX 21 and IDEX 21

- Indian Naval Ship *Pralaya* arrived at Abu Dhabi, UAE to participate in the NAVDEX 21 (Naval Defence Exhibition) and IDEX 21 (International Defence Exhibition), scheduled from 20 to 25 February 2021.
- INS *Pralaya*, the second ship of the indigenously built *Prabal* Class Missile Vessels, was commissioned in the Indian Navy on 18 December 2002.
- **Note:** Towards enhancing interactions between the two navies, the inaugural edition of Indian Navy – UAE Navy bilateral exercise GULF STAR - 1 was conducted in March 2018.
- The next edition of the exercise is likely to be conducted in 2021.

## Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurates DRDO Skill Development Centre for Fire Safety Training

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has inaugurated **Skill Development Centre (SDC)** for Fire Safety Training of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at Pilkhuwa in Uttar Pradesh.

- **The first of its kind in India**, SDC has been created by Delhi based DRDO laboratory Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES).
- It will provide fire prevention and fire-fighting training to Defence Fire Service Personnel and combatants from the Armed Forces.
- **Facts about DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation):**  
**Formed:** 1958  
**Headquarter:** New Delhi  
**Chairman:** Dr G. Satheesh Reddy  
**Parent Organization:** Ministry of Defence

## Successful launches of VL-SRSAM missile system

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).
- The launches were carried out from a static vertical launcher from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- **Indigenously designed and developed by DRDO for Indian Navy**, VL-SRSAM is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.

## Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approves proposals worth Rs 13,700 crore

- Defence Acquisition Council, under the chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, has approved capital acquisition proposals of various weapons/platforms/equipment/systems, **including 118 Arjun Mk-1A tanks** required by the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.
- Three Acceptance of Necessities (AoNs) for an overall cost of Rs 13,700 crore were accorded.
- All these AoNs are in the highest priority category of Defence Acquisition viz 'Buy [Indian-IDD]

(Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)].

- **Note:** Recently, the state-of-the-art indigenously developed Arjun Main Battle Tank (Mk-1A) was formally handed over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Army in Chennai.

### **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates more than 57,000 water structures in Madhya Pradesh under 'Jalabhishekam' campaign**

- The 'Jalabhishekam' Campaign is fulfilling the intention of 'water for every farm and work for every hand'.
- These water structures were created during COVID era by linking the work with the MNREGA scheme.
- **Facts about State symbols of Madhya Pradesh:**

**State animal:** Barasingha

**State bird:** Paradise flycatcher

**State tree:** Banyan tree

**State Flower:** Madonna lily

### **Indian Navy undertaking mega Exercise 'TROPEX 21' in the Indian Ocean Region**

- Indian Navy's largest war game, the biennial "Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise" (TROPEX) 21, which commenced in early January is currently underway with participation of all operational units of Indian Navy including ships, submarines, aircraft as well as units of the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard.
- The exercise will culminate by the third week of February.
- TROPEX is being progressed over distinct phases:
- **3 Phases of the Exercise:**
  - Phase I:** India's largest coastal defence drill "Sea Vigil" exercise from January 12-13
  - Phase II:** Tri-Service Joint Amphibious Exercise "AMPHEX-21" from January 21-25.
  - Phase III:** "The weapon workup phase, which concluded recently.

### **India joins "Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021"**

- India has joined Iran and Russia in a two-day navy exercise dubbed "Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021" in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.
- Forces and vessels from the navy divisions of both the Iranian army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) participated in the drill alongside several vessels from the Russian navy.
- **Note:** This is the second such joint Russia-Iran exercise since 2019, when the two nations plus China held a four-day exercise.

### **Indo-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' begins in Rajasthan**

- The 16th edition of the Indo-US joint military training exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' commenced at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in the western sector of Rajasthan.
- Around 250 soldiers from each side will participate in the exercise from February 8-21 at Mahajan field firing range.
- **Note:** The **previous version of the joint exercise** was held at Seattle in the United States.
- Earlier in January 2021, a five-day exercise was also organized in Rajasthan between the **Air Forces of India and France**.
- In the end of 2020, India conducted **Malabar Naval Exercise** with US, Japan and Australia.

### **First women team inducted into CRPF's CoBRA commando unit**

- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inducted 34 women commandos in its anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal hit areas.

- According to the CRPF, on the occasion of the 88th all-women battalion Raising Day, these women commandos have been inducted along with the introduction of all Mahila brass band.

- **Facts about COBRA:**

**Founded:** 2008

**Agency executive:** Anand Prakash Maheshwari, Director General

**Primary governing body:** Central Reserve Police Force

### **Supreme Court stays dismantling of decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Viraat**

- A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde issued notice to the Centre and others seeking their responses on a plea filed by a firm which seeks preservation of the ship from being dismantled and for creating it as a museum.
- **Note:** The centaur-class aircraft carrier, INS Viraat, was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987 and decommissioned in 2017.
- INS Viraat holds the world record, as mentioned in the Guinness Book of records, for being the longest-serving warship of the world.

### **Asia's biggest Aero show 'Aero India 2021' begins at Bengaluru in Karnataka**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the three-day (03-05 February 2021) mega event that is taking place for the first time in a hybrid mode due to Covid Pandemic. The 13th edition of Aero India show will see participants in both physical and virtual mode.

- India will host **Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave** on February 04, 2021 during Aero India 2021.
- **Note:** Bengaluru has hosted all 13 editions of the show.
- Aero India is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition.
- It is organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Ministry of Defence.  
The first edition of the air show was held in 1996.

### **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates HAL's second LCA production line**

- The Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on February 2, 2021, inaugurated the second Light Combat Aircraft- LCA production line of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- The Cabinet Committee of Security chaired by PM Modi on January 13, 2021, had given its approval to the massive deal for indigenous defence procurement. The deal is worth Rs. 48,000 crores for the purchase of 83 LCA Tejas Mark 1A fighter jets.
- **Facts about HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited):** Public Sector Undertaking (Aerospace and Defence)  
**Founded:** 1940 (As Hindustan Aircraft), 1964 (Renamed Hindustan Aeronautics)  
**Headquarters:** Bangalore, Karnataka  
**Chairman & MD:** R Madhavan

## **New Appointments**

### **Ajai Malhotra becomes first Indian Chairperson of Advisory Committee at Human Rights Council**

- Malhotra has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania.

- **Facts about the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):**  
**Founded:** 15 March 2006  
**President:** Nazhat Shameem  
**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland  
**Parent organization:** United Nations General Assembly



### **Asian Development Bank (ADB) appoints Woochong Um as Managing Director General**

- Um will support Asakawa to institute bank-wide coherence on key initiatives and issues.
- Um joined ADB in 1993. Since June 2018, he served as Director General and concurrently Chief Compliance Officer of ADB's sustainable development and climate change department.

- **Facts about ADB (Asian Development Bank):**

**Headquarters:** Mandaluyong, Philippines

**Membership:** 68 countries (49 from Asia-Pacific region and 19 from Outside regions)

**President:** Masatsugu Asakawa

**Founded:** 19 December 1966

### **Shri Vijay Sampla assumes charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)**

- Shri Vijay Sampla has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014-19.
- **The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):** It is an Indian constitutional body established to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, special provisions were made in the Constitution. It was formed in 2004.
- **Note: Article 338** of the Indian constitution deals with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.
- **Article 338 A** deals with the National Commission for Scheduled tribes.

### **Mario Draghi sworn in as Italy's new prime minister**

- The ex-head of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, has been sworn-in as Italy's next prime minister.

- He will lead a new national unity government to replace Giuseppe Conte's centre-left coalition that collapsed one month ago.

- **Facts about Italy:**

**President:** Sergio Mattarella

**Capital:** Rome

**Currency:** Euro

### **Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar appointed chief justice of Manipur High Court**

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar as the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court.
- Kumar is presently the Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- **Facts about Manipur:**  
**Capital:** Imphal  
**Governor:** Najma Heptulla  
**Chief Minister:** N. Biren Singh

### **Tata Motors appoints Marc Llistosella as CEO & MD**

- Tata Motors Limited has announced Marc Llistosella as the new CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and MD (Managing Director) of the company effective July 1, 2021. He will take over from the current incumbent Guenter Butschek.
- **Facts about Tata Motors Limited:**  
**Formerly Known:** Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company Ltd. (TELCO)  
**Founded:** 1945  
**Founder:** J. R. D. TATA  
**Headquarters:** Mumbai  
**Chairman:** Natarajan Chandrasekaran

### **ISA announces Dr Ajay Mathur as its new Director-General**

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members.
- Dr Mathur replaces Mr Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since the inception of the ISA.

- **Note:** **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** is an association of 121 countries initiated by India. It aims to work for efficient consumption of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

**Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India

**Founded:** 30 November 2015

### **Telangana Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan sworn-in as the new Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Puducherry**

- Chief Justice of Madras High Court Justice Sanjib Banerjee administered the oath of office to the LG.
- **Note:** Soundararajan is the fifth woman to hold the post of Lt Governor of Puducherry, after Chandrawati, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, Rajani Rai and Kiran Bedi.
- **Recently,** Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi was removed from her post when the Union Territory was witnessing a political crisis.

### **N. Venudhar Reddy takes over as Principal DG, AIR News**

- Senior officer of Indian Information Service N. Venudhar Reddy took over as Principal Director General of AIR (All India Radio) News.
- **Note:** Mr. Reddy replaces Jaideep Bhatnagar who is now posted as Officer on Special Duty to the Press Information Bureau, PIB. Mr. Bhatnagar will take over as Principal Director General of PIB from 1st March.
- **All India Radio (AIR),** officially known since 1957 as **Akashvani** ("Voice from the Sky"), is the national public radio broadcaster of India and is a division of Prasar Bharati. It was established in 1936.

### **Ayesha Aziz becomes India's youngest female pilot**

- Ayesha Aziz, the 25 -year-old from Kashmir, is the youngest female pilot in the country.
- **Note:** In the year 2011, Aziz became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 and underwent training to fly a MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase the following year.
- She later graduated in aviation from the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) and obtained a commercial license in 2017.

### **S. N. Subrahmanyam appointed as Chairman of National Safety Council (NSC)**

- The Ministry of Labour & Employment has appointed the CEO and Managing Director of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) Ltd, S. N. Subrahmanyam, as the new Chairman of the National Safety Council.
- **Note:** National Safety Council plays a major role to ensure safety in work places under new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020).

### **Praveen Sinha takes over as CBI interim Chief (Director)**

- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued a notification appointing Mr. Sinha, a 1988 batch Gujarat cadre IPS, to take over as the CBI's interim chief till the appointment of a regulator director.
- Praveen Sinha, currently Additional Director of the CBI, was appointed as its interim chief as current chief R.K Shukla's two-year tenure ended.
- **Facts about CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation):**

**Formed:** 1941 as the Special Police Establishment

**Headquarter:** New Delhi

### **Padma Shri awardee and Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu appointed to the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)**

- Vembu is one of the Padma Shri awardees announced by the government of India this year.

- The members of NSAB typically have two-year terms. Other new members in this term include former ISRO Chairman K Radhakrishnan, Anshuman Tripathy, faculty at IIM Bangalore, and Arun K Singh, former ambassador to France and the United States. **Note:** National Security Advisor Ajit Doval is the key advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on six sensitive verticals including defence, internal security, strategic (nuclear) affairs, space, external affairs and intelligence and receives consultations from the NSAB.

#### **Google Cloud appoints Bikram Singh Bedi as Managing Director for India business**

- Bedi succeeds Karan Bajwa, who was elevated as Vice President for Asia Pacific region last month.
- Bedi will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams.
- Bedi joins Google Cloud from Grofers where he served as President Strategy and New Initiatives.

#### **Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala first woman, African to head (Director-General) WTO**

- Nigerian economist, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has worked previously as the Managing Director of the World Bank. In her home country Nigeria, she was the first female Foreign Minister as well as held the position of Finance Minister twice.
- **Facts about WTO (World Trade Organization):**  
**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland  
**Founded:** 1 January 1995  
**Membership:** 164 member states

#### **Michael Bloomberg re-appointed as United Nations Climate Envoy**

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres re-appointed Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions.

- **Note:** Mr. Bloomberg will support the work of the secretary-general in growing and strengthening the coalition of governments, companies, cities and financial institutions committing to net-zero before 2050 in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

#### **Lt General Chandi Prasad Mohanty next Vice Chief of Army Staff**

- Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty will take over as the new vice-chief of Army staff on February 1.
- He is presently the Southern Army Commander and will be succeeding Lt General SK Saini on his superannuation.
- **Facts about Indian Army:**  
**Founded:** 1 April 1895  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Commander-in-Chief:** President

Ram Nath Kovind

**Chief of the Army Staff:** General Manoj Mukund Naravane

#### **R S Sharma appointed as new CEO of Ayushman Bharat**

- R S Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) by the National Health Authority (NHA).
- RS Sharma was former chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). He will replace Indu Bhushan.
- **Note: AB PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana):** It is the world's largest health assurance scheme which aims to provide a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. PM-JAY was launched on 23 September 2018 at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

#### **Kaja Kallas becomes first female Prime Minister of Estonia**

- The former Member of the European Parliament, Kaja Kallas has become the first female Prime Minister of Estonia as

the new two-party coalition government was sworn in on January 26, 2021.

### **Jay Shah takes over as Asian Cricket Council (ACC) President**

- BCCI secretary Jay Shah was unanimously elected as the President of the Asian Cricket Council following its AGM held virtually.
- He replaces Nazmul Hassan, President, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).
- **Facts about the Asian Cricket Council (ACC):**

**Headquarters:** Colombo, Sri Lanka

**Founded:** 19 September 1983

**Parent organization:** International Cricket Council

- **Note:** ACC is responsible for organizing the Asia Cup tournaments.

### **Bhavya Lal, the Indian-American scientist, has been appointed as the Acting Chief of Staff of the US space agency (NASA)**

- Lal brings "extensive experience" in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.
- Lal served as a member of the Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team for the agency and oversaw the agency's transition under the administration of President Biden.
- **Facts about NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration):** It is an independent agency of the U.S. Federal Government responsible for the civilian space

program, as well as aeronautics and space research.

**Founded:** 1 October 1958

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

### **Ajay Singh re-elected as president of Boxing Federation of India**

- Spicejet airlines chairman Ajay Singh defeated Ashish Shelar in a contest to get re-elected as president of Boxing Federation India for a second term at the general elections held in Gurugram.
- **About Indian Boxing Federation:** It is the Indian national governing body for Olympic boxing and is India's member organization of the International Amateur Boxing Association. It is headquartered in New Delhi. Indian Boxing Federation is also known as all India boxing association.

### **Andy Jassy to replace Jeff Bezos as Amazon CEO**

- Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has announced to step down from his position later this year as chief executive of the company he built from a startup into one of the world's most valuable firms.
- Andy Jassy is currently serving as CEO of Amazon Web Services (AWS).
- **Facts about Amazon:**  
**CEO:** Jeff Bezos  
**Founder:** Jeff Bezos  
**Founded:** 5 July 1994  
**Headquarters:** Seattle, Washington, United States

## **Science and Technology**

### **American space agency NASA lands its rover 'Perseverance' on Mars successfully**

- The American space agency NASA successfully landed its fifth rover 'Perseverance' on Mars in a deep crater near the planet's equator called Jezero.
- It will attempt to collect around 30 rock and soil samples, to be eventually sent

back to Earth sometime in the 2030s for lab analysis.

### **TIFAC unveils two new initiatives of Technology —SAKSHAM and a Seaweed Mission**



- Two new initiatives of Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC):
- **(i) SAKSHAM (Shramik Shakti Manch)**- a dynamic job portal for mapping the skills of Shramiks vis-à-vis requirements of MSMEs to directly connect Shramiks with MSMEs and facilitate placement of 10 lakh blue-collar jobs and **(ii) Seaweed Mission** for commercial farming of seaweeds and its processing for value addition towards boosting national economy were launched on the occasion of the 34<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day celebrations.
- **About Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC):** It is an autonomous technology think tank under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India.

**Executive Director:** Pradeep Srivastava

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Founded:** 1988

### ISRO tests satellites developed by private sector for the first time

- Two satellites by Indian startups—SpaceKidz India and Pixxel (incorporated as Sygyzy)—were tested at the UR Rao Satellite Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru.
- Earlier ISRO had only provided launch facilities to private firms at a cost.
- **Note:** In June 2020, ISRO chairman K Sivan had announced that the agency will open its labs, testing facilities and quality facilities to private companies so they don't have to invest in infrastructure.
- An independent body, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (**IN-SPACe**), was set up to not only to oversee the space activity of the private sector, but also to share ISRO facilities.

### Jammu and Kashmir to get 1st impact-based flood forecasting system

- Jammu and Kashmir is likely to get the country's first impact-based flood forecasting system in collaboration with the UK space agency, enabling the prediction of the impact impending floods may have on people's lives including, houses, crops, livestock, and transport routes, thereby helping in mitigating several of these challenges.
- **Note:** A recent report has put India among the 10 most disaster prone countries in the world and ranked floods as one of the greatest climate-related hazards.
- J&K falls in seismic zone IV and V, making it prone to quakes as well.

• **Facts about Jammu and Kashmir:**  
**Union territory established:** 31

October 2019

**Capital:** Srinagar (May–October), Jammu (Nov–April)

**Lieutenant Governor:** Manoj Sinha

### MapmyIndia ties up with ISRO to build an alternative to Google Maps

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has entered into an agreement with MapmyIndia to develop mapping and other location-based services in India, which MapmyIndia suggested could become an alternative to widely-used Google maps and similar products.
- **About MapmyIndia:** It is an Indian technology company that builds digital map data, telematics services, location-based SaaS and GIS AI services. The company was founded in 1992 and is headquartered at New Delhi.

### Indian astronomers detect huge optical flare from super massive black hole

- According to the Department of Science and Technology, Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding super massive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae.

- The analysis can help to trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission and can provide a lead to probe mysteries and trace events at different stages of evolution of the Universe.
- **BL Lacertae blazar** is 10 million light-years away and is among the 50 most prominent blazars that can be observed with the help of a relatively small telescope.
- It was among the 3 to 4 blazars that was predicted to be experiencing flares by the Whole Earth Blazar Telescope (WEBT), an international consortium of astronomers.

### **IIT Madras-incubated startup Pi Beam has launched an electric two-wheeler, PiMo, for Rs 30,000**

- PiMo is a vehicle that's between an electric bicycle and entry-level electric scooter.
- PiMo, having 90% of components manufactured in India, is a stylishly designed two-wheeler offering a range of 50 km on a single charge with a top speed of 25 kmph.
- The company aims to sell 10,000 units by the end of next financial year (2021-22).
- **About Pi Beam:** "Pi Beam is an incubated company at IIT-M to bring electric mobility in India. They have been working on vehicles which essentially enable carrying of goods and passengers.

### **Stardust 1.0, the first rocket to run on biofuel**

- Recently, Stardust 1.0 was launched from Loring Commerce Centre in Maine, US, a former military base, becoming the first commercial space launch powered by biofuel, which is non-toxic for the environment as opposed to traditionally used rocket fuels.
- **About Stardust 1.0:** It is a launch vehicle suited for student and budget payloads. The rocket is 20 feet tall and

has a mass of roughly 250 kg. The rocket can carry a maximum payload mass of 8 kg and during its first launch carried three payloads.

- The rocket is manufactured by bluShift, an aerospace company based in Maine.

### **India's first geothermal power project to be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh**

- India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022.
- The tripartite MoU was signed between ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh.
- The project will work in different stages. In the first phase of the pilot project, one megawatt (MW) power generation capacity will be generated.
- **Note:** Puga has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy in the country by the scientists. Puga is a place where it is uncovered with a potential of more than 100 mw of geothermal energies.

### **Odisha's Balasore to get Country's first Thunderstorm Research Testbed**

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is all set to establish the country's first thunderstorm research testbed at Balasore.
- The objective of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimise human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.
- The thunderstorm testbed will be established in collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **Note:** IMD Director-General Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra also revealed that a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal.

## Square Kilometre Array Observatory launched

- Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its maiden meeting and approved the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope.
- SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy and is headquartered in the UK.
- The Square Kilometre Array Observatory Council aims to build and operate two radio telescope networks, which would be the largest and most complex ones ever conceived.
- With these two networks, the intergovernmental organisation hopes to answer some of the fundamental questions regarding the universe. The two networks will be based in South Africa and Australia.
- Around 16 countries are currently a part of the project either at a government or national-coordination level or as observers.
- **India** is participating in the Square Kilometre Array Observatory at a national-coordination level, led by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.

## India's first CNG Tractor

- India's first-ever diesel Tractor, converted to **CNG (Compressed Natural Gas)**, will be formally launched by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Sh. Nitin Gadkari.
- The conversion, carried out jointly by Rawmatt Techno Solutions & Tomasetto Achille India, will help farmers increase their income, by lowering costs, and help to create job opportunities in rural India.
- **Important benefits of conversion to CNG are:**
- It is a Clean Fuel as it has the lowest content of carbon and other pollutants.

- It is part of Waste to Wealth as stubble (Parali) can be used as a raw material for producing Bio-CNG which will help the farmers to earn money by selling it to the Bio-CNG production units in their locality

## Visual intelligence tool TEJAS, e-Auction India, 'Work from AnyWhere' portal launched on silver jubilee of NICSI

- On the occasion of silver jubilee of National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICSI), a public sector enterprise under National Informatics Centre (NIC), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has launched visual intelligence tool TEJAS, e-Auction India, 'Work from AnyWhere' and NIC products portfolio.
- **Facts about National Informatics Centre (NIC):**  
**Founded:** 1976  
**Director General:** Neeta Verma  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi  
**Parent organisation:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

## The Department of Space has entered into a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA) with Skyroot Aerospace Pvt. Ltd.

- The NDA will enable the company to access the facilities and technical expertise available in ISRO centers to proceed with their launch vehicle development program.
- **About Skyroot Aerospace Private Limited:** It is an Indian private aerospace manufacturer and commercial launch service provider located in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The company was founded by former engineers and scientists from ISRO, DRDO, and various aerospace companies.
- **Note:** The company has been developing its first launch vehicle, the

“Vikram-I,” which is on track for its initial launch around December 2021.

## Health

### Over 1.2 lakh died due to air pollution in India in 2020: Greenpeace Report

- According to the report by **Greenpeace**, a global climate activist group, titled '**Greenpeace: Cost to Economy Due to Air Pollution Analysis 2021**', around 1.2 lakh lives were lost due to air pollution in six Indian cities and that the economic losses on account of bad air amounted to over ₹2 lakh crore.
- According to the study, there were 54,000 air pollution-related deaths in Delhi, 25,000 in Mumbai, 12,000 in Bengaluru, 11,000 each in Hyderabad and Chennai and around 6,700 in Lucknow.
- **Note:** Globally, approximate 160,000 deaths have been attributed to PM2.5 air pollution in the five most populous cities (Delhi, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Shanghai and Tokyo).

### Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and CSIR, India sign MoU to promote health research

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support the development, conduct and promotion of health research in India.
- Gates Foundation and CSIR will work together to identify opportunities to initiate scientific and technological collaborations.
- **Note: Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)** is India's premier S&T organization comprising 37 research laboratories focused on diverse scientific and industrial research areas.
- **Facts about the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:**  
**Founded:** 2000  
**Headquarters:** Washington, USA  
**Founders:** Melinda Gates, Bill Gates

### India becomes 1st country in world to identify need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, launched the operational guidelines for Integration of NAFLD (Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease) with NPCDCS.
- **About NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke):** In order to prevent and control major NCDs (Non-communicable diseases), the NPCDCS was launched in 2010.

### Food regulator FSSAI notifies regulations to limit trans fat in food items

- Under the regulation notified on December 29 last year, FSSAI said it has limited industrial TFA (trans fatty acids) to not more than 3 per cent in all fats and oils by January 2021 and not more than 2 per cent by January 2022.
- The Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Second Amendment Regulations, 2021, has been notified.
- This regulation states that all food products in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient should not contain industrial trans fatty acids more than 2 per cent by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product, on and from January 1, 2022.
- **Note:** In 2018, the WHO called for elimination of industrially-produced trans fat from the food supply by 2023 and released an action package 'REPLACE' for the same.
- **Facts about FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India):** It has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.



**Founded:** August 2011

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Agency executive:** Rita Teaotia  
(Chairperson)

## Environment and Ecology

### Hyderabad gets recognition as '2020 Tree City of the World'

- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Arbor Day Foundation have recognized Hyderabad as a '2020 Tree City of the World'.
- Hyderabad earned recognition in the Foundation's second year of the programme along with 51 other cities globally and the only city in India to get this recognition so far.
- Most of the cities were from the US, UK, Canada, Australia among other countries.

### New alpine plant species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

- A new species of alpine plant in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district has been discovered by a group of scientists of three institutes of the country.
- The discovery of the species was published in '**Biodiversitas: Journal of Biological Diversity**'.
- The new species belongs to the family of Himalayan sunflower.
- It is named as '**Cremanthodium indicum**' and the plant species, which generally flowers from July to August, is endemic to Penga-Teng Tso Lake of Tawang district.
- **Note:** The alpine plant species is assessed as critically endangered, according to the IUCN guidelines.

### Mandarin duck sighted after 118 years in Assam

- A colourful duck from eastern Asia spotted in Assam after 118 years has raised hopes for a wetland that was affected by

a blowout and inferno at a natural gas well in May-June, 2020.

- The duck, whose primary habitat is in eastern China and southern Japan, had landed in Assam by accident too.
- Its scientific name is *Aix galericulata*.
- The **mandarin duck** is a perching duck species native to the East Palearctic. It is medium-sized, at 41–49 cm long with a 65–75 cm wingspan. It is closely related to the North American wood duck.

### First highway with wildlife protection corridor

- According to Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, The Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Economic corridor will be India's first highway where there will be a 12-kilometer long elevated corridor for protection of wildlife.
- The highway project is being developed between Delhi's Akshardham and Dehradun in four sections.
- The ministry has decided to execute the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway project under Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) mode.
- This highway project, once completed, will reduce the distance between the two cities from 235 km to 210 km, and travel time from the current 6.5 hours to just 2.5 hours.

### Reliance gets world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from US

- This transaction is a first step in the creation of a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil.
- Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US as it looks to

become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

- Reliance got 2 million barrels of consignment. The Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), which is a division of US oil major Occidental, had delivered the carbon-neutral oil to Reliance.
- Occidental is the first US-based international energy company to announce an ambition to achieve net-zero GHG emissions associated with the use of its products by 2050.
- **Note:** Mukesh Ambani's Reliance operates the world's largest single-location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with a capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year.

### **Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve (SMTR) becomes the fifth tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu**

- Tamil Nadu is set to get its fifth tiger reserve spread over one lakh hectares of land under the Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has approved the new tiger reserve.
- The proposal states that the new tiger reserve will not only lead to wildlife protection of the country's flagship species but will also result in the rejuvenation of the Vaigai River by protecting the river's origins in these forests.
- **Note:** The first tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu – **Kalakkad Mundanthurai** – was formed around 1988-89, which was followed by **Anamalai** and **Mudumalai** in 2008 and 2009. The fourth reserve – **Sathyamangalam** – was created around 2013-14.
- This will be the **51st tiger reserve in the country**.

### **South Korea plans to construct world's largest offshore wind farm**

- South Korea plans to build an **8.2 GW offshore wind farm** in Jeonnam province by 2030.
- The offshore wind farm project is expected to boost South Korea's wind power capacity to 16.5 GW by 2030 from 1.67 GW now.
- **Note: Currently, the world's largest offshore wind farm is Hornsea 1 in Britain, which has 1.12 GW capacity.**
- **Facts about South Korea:**  
**Capital:** Seoul  
**President:** Moon Jae-in  
**Currency:** South Korean won

### **Denmark to create world's first energy island in the North Sea**

- Denmark approved a plan to build the world's first energy island in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to cover the electricity needs of 3 million European households.
- The energy island, which will cost around 210 billion Danish crowns (\$33.9 billion) to build, is an important part of Denmark's legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels, one of the world's most ambitious.
- **Note:** Denmark also has plans for an energy island in the Baltic Sea.

### **National Marine Turtle Action Plan launched**

- The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' and 'National Marine Turtle Action Plan'.
- India has rich marine biodiversity along a vast coastline of over 7,500 km. India's coastal waters and beaches provide foraging and nesting sites for a variety of marine species, including sea turtles.
- **Five species of sea turtles are known to inhabit Indian coastal waters and**

**islands.** These are the Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), Green (*Chelonia mydas*), Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and the Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) turtles. Except the Loggerhead, the remaining four species nest along the Indian coast.

- They are protected in Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

### 2021: Year of Indo-French alliance towards a Greener Planet

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar and Ms Barbara Pompili, the French Minister for Ecological Transition launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment.
- The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on **five main themes**: environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, and the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency.
- **Note: India** has made significant progress towards climate change action & has already achieved 26% of reduction of emission intensity. As of 2020 the renewable capacity in India stands at 90 GW which includes 36 GW of solar energy & 38 GW of wind energy.

### India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCW)

- On the occasion of the World Wetland Day, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate

Change, Babul Supriyo announced the establishment of a Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management, as a part of the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, an institution under the Ministry.

- **Note:** India has nearly 4.6% of its land as wetlands, covering an area of 15.26 million hectares and has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 1.08 million hectares.
- **NamamiGange** is the first of its kind program where Wetland Conservation is integrated with Basin Management Plan.

### Uttarakhand sets up first arboretum for Shivalik range

- A first of its kind arboretum conserving over 210 species of trees found in the Shivalik range of Himalayas was inaugurated in Uttarakhand's Nainital district.
- The arboretum was inaugurated by Ajay Singh Rawat, a noted environmentalist from Uttarakhand.
- The Shivalik Arboretum has over 210 tree and shrub species, making it one of the biggest arboretum in the state. Some of the trees preserved include Kafal, Buransh, Tejpat and Sanjeevani.
- **Note: Shivalik range or Outer Himalayas** spreads across states and union territories like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and seven states in the country's northeast.

## Summits and Conferences

### Third Quad Ministerial Meeting

- Foreign Ministers of Quad countries - India, Australia, Japan and US - discussed the necessity to promote freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region.

- External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar represented India at the Third Quad Ministerial Meeting.
- **Note:** The 1st meeting of Quad was organized in New York in the year 2019 and the 2nd meeting in Tokyo in the year 2020.

### India hosts first meeting of BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies

- India hosted a meeting of BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies virtually and was co-Chaired by Shri. Tarun Bajaj, Secretary Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Dr. Michael Patra, Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India.
- Other participants included BRICS Finance and Central Bank Deputies of Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa.
- **Note: India assumed the BRICS Chairship in 2021**, at a time when BRICS is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- This was the first meeting on the BRICS Financial Cooperation under India Chairship in 2021.

### Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank,' delivers inaugural address at the 16th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2021

- The 16<sup>th</sup> edition of FICCI higher Education Summit (25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021) is being organised virtually by FICCI in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The theme of the summit is '**Higher Education @ 2030: R.I.S.E. – Resilience, Innovation, Sustainability, Enterprise.**'
- The Inaugural session also witnessed the release of FICCI- EY report '**Higher Education in India: Vision 2040.**'
- **Facts about FICCI** (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry): It is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in India.

**Founded:** 1927

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**President:** Uday Shankar

**Founders:** Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Ghanshyam Das Birla

### Prime Minister addresses NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF) via video conferencing.
- It is the flagship event of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM).
- The theme of this year's event is 'Shaping the future towards a better normal'.
- **Note:** The Prime Minister listed the steps taken in recent times such as National Communication Policy, policy to make India Global Software Product Hub and Other Service Provider (OSP) guidelines which were issued during Corona period.
- **Facts about NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies):** It is a non-profit organisation.  
**Chairperson:** U. B. Pravin Rao  
**Founded:** 1 March 1988  
**Headquarters:** New Delhi

### India hosts SAARC virtual meet

- India hosted a virtual health secretary-level meeting with South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries on February 18, 2021 to discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Pakistan has been also invited to attend the workshop.
- The virtual workshop was held on COVID-19 management and response to the pandemic and exchange of best practices amid the pandemic.
- **Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi had proposed a Coronavirus Emergency Fund for the SAARC region during a video conference of the SAARC Heads of State on March 15, 2020.
- **Facts about SAARC:** The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia. Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan,



India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

**Founded:** 8 December 1985, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**Headquarters:** Kathmandu, Nepal

**Secretary General:** Esala Weerakoon

### 1st India-EU High Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment held

- The 1st High Level Dialogue (HLD), co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Piyush Goyal and the European Union Executive Vice-President & Trade Commissioner Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis, was held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- The Ministers also agreed to meet within the next three months, with an objective for reaching consensus on a host of bilateral trade & investment cooperation issues- a bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue.
- **Note:** Commitment to the establishment of this Dialogue was a major outcome of the 15th India-EU Leader's Summit held in July 2020.
- **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.

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit-2021

- The theme of the summit is 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'.
- **Note:** The 20th edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event, the World Sustainable

Development Summit, is being organized online from 10-12 February in New Delhi and will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change.

### 2nd Maritime India Summit (MIS) - 2021

- Around 20,000 delegates will participate, 24 partner countries will join and more than 400 Projects are set to be showcased in the 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit (MIS) 2021 to be held virtually from **2nd March to 4th March**.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March.
- The event is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner.
- MIS-2021 is going to provide a powerful platform for international collaboration and bring in partner countries for mutual exchange of knowledge and opportunities.

### 5th Joint Meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum

- India and Japan held the fifth joint meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum (AEF) on 28 January 2021 in New Delhi.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Foreign Secretary, and H.E. Mr. Suzuki Satoshi, Ambassador of Japan to India.
- **About Act East Forum (AEF):** It was established in 2017 to provide a platform for India-Japan collaboration in the North Eastern Region under India's "Act East Policy" and Japan's vision for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific".

## **Bhim Army chief Chandra Shekhar Aazad, five Indian-origin persons, feature in TIME magazine's list of 100 emerging leaders**

- **Bhim Army** is an Ambedkarite and dalit rights organisation in India. It was founded by Satish Kumar, Vijay Ratan Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad in 2015.
- **Five Indian-origin persons featured in Time:** Twitter lawyer Vijaya Gadde, UK's Finance Minister Rishi Sunak, Instacart founder and CEO Apoorva Mehta, Get Us PPE executive director and doctor Shikha Gupta and founder of nonprofit Upsolve's Rohan Pavuluri
- **Note: The 2021 TIME100 Next** is an expansion of TIME's flagship TIME100 franchise of the most influential people in the world and highlights 100 emerging leaders who are shaping the future.

## **India falls to 53rd position in EIU's Democracy Index**

- India slipped two places to 53rd position in the 2020 Democracy Index's global ranking as India was ranked 51st in the 2019 Democracy Index.
- Norway topped The EIU's latest Democracy Index report titled "Democracy in sickness and in health?" with Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada making up the top five.
- Out of 167 countries, the Democracy Index classifies 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes and 57 as authoritarian regimes.
- India has been classified as a 'flawed democracy' along with countries such as the U.S., France, Belgium and Brazil.
- **Facts about the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU):** It is the world's leading resource for economic and business research, forecasting and analysis.

**Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom

**Parent organization:** Economist Group

**Founded:** 1946

## **India to be largest source of energy demand growth to 2040: IEA's India Energy Outlook 2021**

- India will make up the biggest share of energy demand growth at 25 % over the next two decades, as it overtakes the European Union as the world's third-biggest energy consumer by 2030.
- India's energy consumption is expected to nearly double as the nation's gross domestic product expands to an estimated \$8.6 trillion by 2040 under its current national policy scenario.

### **Facts about International Energy Agency (IEA):**

**Headquarters:** Paris, France

**Member Countries:** 30 member countries and 8 association countries

**Executive Director:** Fatih Birol

**Establishment:** November 1974

## **India ranked 86th in Corruption Perception Index 2020**

- India's rank is 86 out of 180 nations with a score of 40 released by Transparency International (TI).
- India's rank has slipped six places in 2020 as India was ranked at 80th position out of 180 countries in 2019.
- New Zealand and Denmark were ranked at first position with scores of 88.
- Somalia and South Sudan were ranked lowest at 179th position.

### **Facts about Transparency International (TI):**

**Headquarters:** Berlin, Germany

**Chairperson:** Delia Ferreira Rubio

**Founded:** 4 May 1993

## **India ranks 86th on Covid-19 Response Index**

- India has ranked 86th in a coronavirus performance index comprising 98 countries, according to the performance

index compiled by the Sydney-based Lowy Institute.

- **Top three countries** are New Zealand, Vietnam, Taiwan respectively and Brazil was ranked at the bottom in the list.
- The study measured a number of key indicators, including confirmed cases, deaths, cases per million people and deaths per million people.

### **Reliance Jio ranked fifth strongest brand globally**

- Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's four-year-old telecom venture Reliance Jio has been ranked the fifth strongest brand globally.
- Jio has entered the ranking for the first time and claimed fifth position with a BSI score of 91.7 out of 100 and the elite AAA+ brand strength rating.
- **According to the Brand Finance's Global 500, 2021, Chinese mobile app WeChat was at the top position.**

### **UN World Tourism Organization confirms 2020 as 'Worst Year on Record'**

- Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals dropping by 74 percent according to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- Destinations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals in 2020 than in the previous year (2019), due to an unprecedented fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions.
- **Facts about the World Tourism Organization:** It is the United Nations specialized agency.

**Headquarters:** Madrid, Spain

**Formation:** 1 November 1974

**Head:** Zurab Pololikashvili

### **India ranks 10th in Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index**

- India ranked 10th out of 11 Asia Pacific countries in a newly-launched health

index to measure the progress towards personalised healthcare.

- Singapore ranked 1st, Taiwan 2nd and Japan 3<sup>rd</sup> in the index.
- **Note:** The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report 'Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index', developed by the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies in partnership with Roche, measures the readiness of 11 health systems across the region — Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand — in adopting personalised healthcare.

### **Maharashtra ranks first in justice delivery in India**

- In the second edition of the **India Justice Report (IJR) 2020**, Maharashtra has retained the top spot on delivering justice to people among 18 large and medium sized states, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab and Kerala.
- Only 29 % of Judges in High Courts across the country are women.
- Bihar, Uttarakhand, Tripura and Meghalaya have no woman judges in their High Courts.
- **About the India Justice Report:** It is an initiative of Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS-Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, and How India Lives.

### **PHDCCI: India 2nd most resilient economy among the top 10 leading economies in 2021**

- Germany ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in the **PHDCCI International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank** followed by India and South Korea at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions respectively.
- The analysis of the leading economies conducted on the basis of the five leading macroeconomic parameters.

- India's Real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest at 11.5% in the year 2021 among the top 10 leading economies in the world.
- **About PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** It is a proactive National

Apex Chamber working as a catalyst in the promotion of industry, trade and entrepreneurship.

**Establishment:** 1905

**President:** Sanjay Aggarwal

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

## Important Days

### 21 February, International Mother Language Day

- International Mother Language Day is a worldwide annual observance held on 21 February to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.
- The theme of the 2021 International Mother Language Day is “**Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society.**”
- **Note:** The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh. It was approved at the 1999 UNESCO General Conference and has been observed throughout the world since 2000.

### 20 February, World Day of Social Justice

- World Day of Social Justice is an international day recognizing the need to promote social justice, which includes efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion, gender equality, unemployment, human rights, and social protections.
- The theme of the day is ‘A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy’
- **Note:** The United Nations General Assembly has decided to observe 20 February annually, approved on 26 November 2007 and starting in 2009, as the World Day of Social Justice.

### February 13, National Women's Day

- India celebrates Sarojini Naidu's birthday as National Women's Day every year on February 13.

- **About Sarojini Naidu:** Sarojini Naidu was not only a freedom fighter, but she also became the first woman governor of the United Provinces, the present Uttar Pradesh.
- She was famous for her nickname ‘Nightingale of India’ or ‘Bharat Kokila’ because of her poems.

### February 13, World Radio Day

- The Day was decided by UNESCO on 3 November 2011 during its 36th conference and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day.
- The theme of World Radio Day 2021 was "New World, New Radio".
- **Note:** Radio has remained the most resilient and effective mode of communication, which is, till date, used by the majority for receiving information. Even after 110 years, Radio still reaches difficult terrains to connect people.

### February 12, National Productivity Day

- The formation of the National Productivity Council is being celebrated every year all over the country by commemorating 12th February as Productivity Day.
- **About National Productivity Council (NPC):** It, established in the year 1958, is an autonomous organization under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

**The NPC is a constituent of the Tokyo-based APO (Asian Productivity Organization), an**



intergovernmental body, of which the Government of India is a founding member.

### First Ever International Day of Human Fraternity

- In December 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare **4 February** as International Day of Human Fraternity.
- International Day of Human Fraternity aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance.

### International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on **February 6** as part of the UN's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003.
- The theme of the Day was "No Time for Global Inaction, Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation."

### February 11, International Day of Women and Girls in Science

- The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is the 11th day of February, by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 22 December, 2015.
- The theme is "Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19".
- **Note:** The 6th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly is organized by the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT). The theme is "**Beyond the Borders: Equality in Science for Society**".

### January 30, Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Diwas)

- Every year, Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day is observed on 30 January in India.

This day marks the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

- On January 30, 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in Birla House.
- **Note: March 23** is also celebrated as **Martyr's Day** to pay tribute to three extraordinary revolutionaries of India who were hanged to death by the British namely **Bhagat Singh**, Rajguru and Sukhdev.

### World Leprosy Day 2021

- World Leprosy Day is celebrated on the last Sunday of January every year all over the world to increase knowledge about it and propagate the need and importance of eradicating the disease.
- This year World Leprosy Day took place on 31 January.
- **In India**, the day is celebrated on January 30, which is also remembered as the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, father of the nation.
- **National Leprosy Eradication Program** is a health scheme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to eradicate leprosy in India. It was launched in 1983 as a continuation of the National Leprosy Control Program of 1955.

### February 2, World Wetlands Day

- 2 February each year is World Wetlands Day to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and our planet.
- This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- The theme is Wetlands and Water.
- **Note:** There are 42 Ramsar sites in India. These are wetlands deemed to be of "international importance" under the Ramsar Convention.

### February 4, World Cancer Day

- World Cancer Day is an international day marked on February 4 to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.
- The theme for World Cancer Day 2021 is 'I Am and I Will.'
- **Note:** World Cancer Day was originated at the first World Summit against Cancer in 2000. It was held in Paris and was founded by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC).

- Recent studies estimate about one out of six people worldwide died from cancer that's more than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria combined.
- **According to the World Health Organization, India** contributes to nearly 60% of head and neck cancer patients worldwide and this number is expected to double by 2030.

## Books and Authors

**Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu releases a book "Maveric Messiah", a political biography on N.T. Rama Rao**

- The book was authored by senior journalist, Ramesh Kandula.
- **Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, popularly known as NTR**, was an Indian actor, producer, director, film editor and politician who served as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh for seven years over three terms.

**Home Minister Amit Shah releases book 'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha'**

- This book depicts the dignified history of CRPF, its entire journey, challenges, successes and dedication.  
**Note:** CRPF celebrated its **first-ever Veterans Day**.
- The third Friday of February will be celebrated every year as the Veterans Day of the force.

**Award-winning author Irwin Allan Sealy's new novel ASOCA: A Sutra**

- The novel will be presented as an imagined memoir of *Ashoka The Great*.
- It will be published by Penguin Random House India.
- **Note:** Allan has won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, Best First Book, Europe and South Asia, the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in 1991, the Crossword Book Award and the **Padma Shri** by the President of India in 2012.

**Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's art book, 'The Lost Soul'**

- Olga Tokarczuk translates *The Lost Soul*, from Polish to English and merged with illustrations to produce a picture book.
- First published in Poland in 2017 as *Zgubiona dusza*.
- The illustrations were done by Joanna Concejo and translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones.
- It is published by Seven Stories Press.
- **Note:** Tokarczuk was awarded the **2018 Man Booker International Prize** for novel 'Flights'.
- She was awarded the **2018 Nobel Prize in Literature**.

**Kabir Bedi's autobiography, 'Stories I Must Tell: The Emotional Journey of an Actor'**

- Veteran actor Kabir Bedi will tell the story of his life in his memoir which will be published this April.
- This is the story of a middle-class boy from Delhi who met with extraordinary successes. The book is published by Westland Publications.

**Priyanka Chopra releases her memoir 'Unfinished'**

- The former Miss World, Actor-producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas officially turned author with the release of her first book, "Unfinished: A Memoir".

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

#### **Mohammad Hamid Ansari authors a book titled 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'**

- The book is published by Rupa Publications.
- **Note: Mohammad Hamid Ansari** was the vice president of India and chairman of the Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2017.

#### **Hunter Biden's memoir titled 'Beautiful Things'**

- Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden, plans to publish his memoir titled "Beautiful Things" on April 6 through Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.
- The book focuses on the life of Hunter Biden's struggles with substance abuse.

#### **Tamil translation of French novel 'Le mariage de plaisir' won the Romain Rolland Book Prize at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival 2021 in Kolkata**

- The winners of the prize are translator Dr S A Vengada Soupraya Nayagar and publisher Amutharasan Paulraj of

Thadagam Publishers for the Tamil translation of the book, authored by Tahar Ben Jelloun.

- **Note: Romain Rolland Book Prize**, started in 2017, aims at awarding the best translation of a French title into any Indian language, including English.

#### **Dalai Lama's new book 'The Little Book of Encouragement'**

- Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama shares quotes and words of wisdom to deal with the new realities of the panic-stricken world along with how to combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change besides his views on Tibet in his new book.
- "The Little Book of Encouragement", which has 130 quotes, is edited by Renuka Singh and published by Penguin Random House.
- **Note: Dalai Lama** is a title given by the Tibetan people to the foremost spiritual leader of the Gelug or "Yellow Hat" school of Tibetan Buddhism, the newest of the classical schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The 14th and current Dalai Lama is Tenzin Gyatso, who lives as a refugee in India.

### **Obituaries**

#### **Former Governor and High Court Chief Justice (Retd.) M Rama Jois passes away**

- M Rama Jois was the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- He had also served as the Governor of Jharkhand and Bihar and as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

#### **India tennis legend Akhtar Ali, a former Davis Cup coach, passes away**

- Akhtar played eight Davis Cup ties between 1958 and 1964 and also captained the Indian team.
- Akhtar was conferred the Arjuna Award in 2000 for his lifetime contribution to tennis.

#### **Actor-director Rajiv Kapoor passes away**

- Bollywood actor and Raj Kapoor's son Rajiv Kapoor passed away.
- Rajiv Kapoor, who made his debut in Bollywood with the 1983 film Ek Jaan

Hain Hum, was best known for the 1985 blockbuster *Ram Teri Ganga Maili*.

### Oscar-winning actress Cloris Leachman passes away at 94

- Cloris Leachman was known as one of Hollywood's most prolific performers having won an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, and eight Primetime Emmy Awards.

### Paul J. Crutzen, Nobel laureate passes away

- He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995 for his work on atmospheric chemistry and specifically for his efforts in studying the formation and decomposition of atmospheric ozone. In addition to studying the ozone layer and climate change, he popularized the term Anthropocene.

## Sports

### IPL Auction 2021: Chris Morris becomes most expensive player in auction history

- South-African all-rounder Chris Morris became the costliest player in the history of Indian Premier League (IPL) auction when Rajasthan Royals snapped him up for Rs 16.25 crore.
- Note:** Earlier, Yuvraj Singh was the costliest-ever buy in auction history as he was bought for Rs 16 crore by Delhi Daredevils in IPL 2015.

### Kings XI Punjab renamed as 'Punjab Kings'

- Kings XI Punjab has been renamed as 'Punjab Kings' as a part of the franchise's rebranding strategy ahead of the IPL 2021 auction in Chennai.
- The Punjab side has been a part of the Indian Premier League since its inaugural season in 2008, and is co-owned by Bollywood actor Preity Zinta, along with businessman Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman and Karn Paul.

### Australian Open 2021

- Location:** Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (8–21 February 2021)
- List of winners:**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
<b>Winner-</b> Novak Djokovic (Serbia)  <b>Runner-up-</b> Daniil Medvedev (Russia)	<b>Winner-</b> Naomi Osaka (Japan)  <b>Runner-up-</b> Jennifer Brady (America)	<b>Winner-</b> Ivan Dodig (Croatia), Filip Polasek (Slovakia)  <b>Runner-up-</b> Rajeev Ram (America), Joe Salisbury (UK)	<b>Winner-</b> Elise Mertens (Belgium), Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)  <b>Runner-up-</b> Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic), Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic)	<b>Winner-</b> Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic), Rajeev Ram (America)  <b>Runner-up-</b> Samantha Stosur (Australia), Matthew Ebden (Australia)

- Note: Novak Djokovic (Serbia)** has won his ninth Australian Open title. He has now won 18 Grand Slam men's singles titles.
- Naomi Osaka (Japan)** has now won two Australian Open and the two US Open.

**Karnataka to host second Khelo India University Games in 2021**



- Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has announced that the second Khelo India University Games (KIUG) will be hosted by Karnataka in 2021.
- The Games will be held in Bengaluru's Jain University and other venues in the state, in partnership with the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).
- **Note:** In the second edition of the games, **Yogasana and Mallakhamb** have been added.
- The **first edition of University games** was held in Bhubaneswar in 2020.

### **India's women's contingent finishes at top in 30th 'Adriatic Pearl' tournament in Budva, Montenegro**

- In Boxing, Arundhati Choudhary, Naorem Babyrojisana Chanu, Alfiya Pathan, Vinka and T Sanamacha Chanu won gold medals, with **five gold, three silver and two bronze medals**.
- India's women's contingent thus finished top at the tournament. Uzbekistan (2 gold) and Czech Republic (1 gold) ended at second and third position respectively.
- Vinka received the best women's boxer of the tournament award.
- With two medals in the men's category, the 19-member Indian team concluded its campaign with an **overall second position (12 medals) with Uzbekistan first and Ukraine third**.

### **Naman Ojha announces retirement from all forms of Cricket**

- India wicketkeeper-batsman Naman Ojha has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on February 15, 2021.
- He made his first-class debut for Madhya Pradesh in 2000-01.
- He holds the record for the most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy, featured in one Test, one ODI and two T20 Internationals.

### **Japan Olympics Minister Hashimoto to accept role as head of Tokyo 2020**

- Japanese Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto, a woman who has competed in seven Olympic Games, intends to accept the job of Head of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee.
- Former chairman of the committee Yoshiro Mori had resigned from the post last week over indecent remarks on women.
- **Note:** Originally scheduled to take place between 24 July and 9 August 2020, the Olympic Games are now rescheduled for 23 July to 8 August 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Joe Root becomes first batsman to score 200 in 100th Test**

- England skipper Joe Root became the first cricketer to notch up a double century in his 100th Test, touching the milestone on the second day of the first Test against India, at the M.A. Chidambaram stadium in Chennai.
- **Note:** Former Pakistan skipper Inzamam ul Haq, who hit 184 against India in Bengaluru in 2005, held the previous best score in the 100<sup>th</sup> Test.

### **Drass Red wins 13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship**

- In Kargil Ladakh, Drass Red has won the 13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship beating Hockey Club Chiktan team in the Final match.
- The 1st Women CEC Ice Hockey Cup 2021 was lifted by Shakar Chiktan Team defeating Wakha Mulbekh Team.

**Note:** 32 Men teams and 5 Women Teams participated in the tournament which was organized by the District Youth Services & Sports.

### **Ishant Sharma becomes 3rd Indian pacer to take 300 Test wickets**

- Fast bowler Ishant Sharma became the 6th Indian and the 3rd pacer from the

country to take 300 wickets in Test cricket.

- **Note:** Besides Kumble (619) and Kapil (434), Ravichandran Ashwin (377 before this game), Harbhajan Singh (417), and Zaheer Khan (311) are the other bowlers from the country who have reached the landmark.

### **Tamil Nadu beat Baroda to lift Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy**

- In Cricket, Tamil Nadu lifted the coveted Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy after defeating Baroda by seven wickets in the final at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad.
- This was Tamil Nadu's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph, after winning their first title way back in 2006-07.
- Baroda had won the title twice in the past (in 2011-12 and 2013-14).

### **No Ranji Trophy for first time in 87 years**

- For the first time in 87 years, the BCCI decided that it won't be conducting country's premier first-class domestic tournament Ranji Trophy 2020-21.
- The cricket body decided to conduct the Vijay Hazare Trophy, instead of having a truncated Ranji Trophy. BCCI has also decided to host the U-19 National One Day tournament for the Vinoo Mankad Trophy and the Women's national 50-over tournament.
- **About Ranji Trophy:** The first edition of the Ranji Trophy was held in 1934 and it was the only national cricket championship that was played even during the World War 2.

### **India top medals tally at first Asian Online Shooting Championship**

- India's 24-member shooting contingent topped the medals tally in the first Asian Online Shooting Championship.
- The squad won four out of the eight gold medals on offer, besides two silver and

five bronze medals, for a total of 11 podium finishes.

- India's gold winners were Saurabh Chaudhary in the men's 10m air pistol, Divyansh Singh Panwar in the men's 10m air rifle, Kynan Chenai in men's trap and Rajeshwari Kumari in women's trap.
- **Note:** The two-day competition was organised by the Kuwait Shooting Federation and saw 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries take part.

### **Indian Cricketer Ashok Dinda announces retirement from all forms of cricket**

- Fast bowler, Dinda, who has 420 first-class wickets in his bag, has also played 13 ODIs and nine T20s for India, taking 12 and 17 wickets respectively.
- Dinda made his T20 international Debut for India in December 2009 against Sri Lanka and his ODI debut against Zimbabwe in May 2010.

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