



CivilsTap Himachal

Current Affairs MONTHLY April 2021

By CivilsTap Himachal

For HPAS & Other
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in Himachal Pradesh

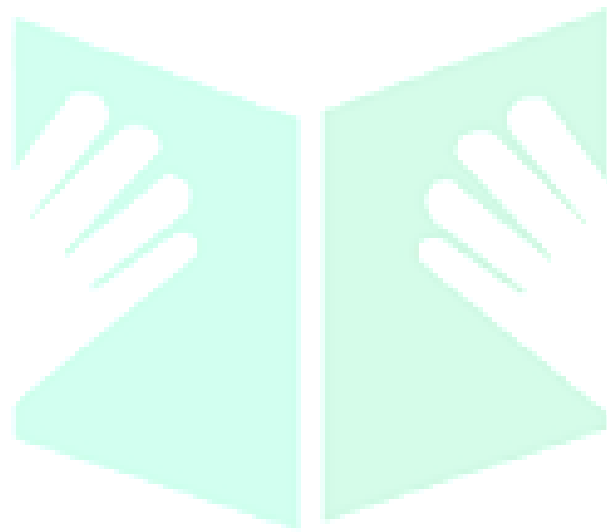


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Contents

National News.....	15
1.1 Dignitaries underlined the need to understand and control data at DST Golden Jubilee Discourse Series 15	
1.2 India levies anti-dumping duty on bottle-grade PET from China	16
1.3 Indian Railways rolls out first AC Three Tier Economy Class Coach.....	16
1.4 India holds Webinar with Chile on Defence Industry Global Outreach.....	16
1.5 Prime Minister pays homage at the Mausoleum of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	16
1.6 Prime Minister inaugurates the Babu-Bangabandhu Digital Exhibition	16
1.7 First-of-its-kind Cruise Service starts between Surat and Diu.....	17
1.8 Prime Minister to announce Yoga Awards on International Day of Yoga	17
1.9 India gold launches EMI-based gold purchase product 'EasyGold'	17
1.10 CJI S A Bobde inaugurated new Bombay High Court building.....	17
1.11 India abstains from UNHRC vote on Sri Lanka.....	18
1.12 Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana appointed as Chief Justice of India	18
1.13 Jyothismathi Institute of Technology and Science awarded grade 'A' by NAAC.....	18
1.14 First farm-based solar power plant established in Rajasthan.....	18
1.15 Indian Railways completes arch closure of Chenab bridge	18
1.16 Ministry of I&B issues advisory to disseminate message of 'Dawai Bhi, Kadai Bhi'	18
1.17 400 th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.....	18
1.18 India & Japan signs MoU for Academic and Research Cooperation and Exchange	19
1.19 India Post releases handbook on Aadhaar.....	19
1.20 PM greets people of Assam on Bohag Bihu.....	19
1.21 PM's greetings on Puthandu.....	19
1.22 PM's Greetings on Vishu	19
1.23 PM Greets People of Manipur on Sajibu Cheiraoba.....	20
1.24 Prime Minister congratulates King Abdullah II on 100th anniversary of Jordan.....	20
1.25 US & India to launch hydrogen task force under Strategic Energy Partnership.....	20
1.26 Two-day Scientific Convention on World Homoeopathy Day inaugurated.....	20
1.27 Harsh Vardhan pays tribute to Sitar Maestro Pt Ravi Shankar.....	20
1.28 Union Education Minister launches NanoSniffer.....	21
1.29 India-Bangladesh MoU on cooperation in trade remedial measures.....	21
1.30 Ministry of Tourism's 85 th webinar on "Khajuraho: Temples of Architectural Splendour"	21
1.31 Indian short film "For Those That Watch Me Dream" gets minted as an NFT	21
1.32 Covid-19: First 'Oxygen Express' train leave from Mumbai to Vizag.....	21
1.33 PM pays tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram on his Jayanti.....	22
1.34 MeitY inaugurates three new initiatives/services of National Internet Exchange of India	22



CivilsTap Hlmachal

1.35	ICCR is launching 'Little Guru App'	22
1.36	Chithirai festival to be held inside Meenakshi temple without public participation	22
1.37	Byju's launches Future School	22
1.38	Confederation of Indian Industry has launched 'Mission on Net Zero'	23
1.39	Central Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institute tested the first-ever electric Tractor	23
1.40	India to host G20 Summit in 2023 instead of 2022	23
1.41	INSACOG shares Genome Sequencing data with States	23
1.42	India, Russia to establish a '2+2 ministerial dialogue' between foreign, defence ministers.....	23
1.43	Air India's first Jumbo Jet landed Santa Cruz Airport	24
1.44	Tourism and Culture Minister inaugurates first-ever online exhibition on Ramayana.....	24
1.45	Culture launches India's first Heritage Olympiad.....	24
1.46	India's biggest floating solar power plant to be set up in Telangana	24
1.47	New deadlines for thermal power plants to meet emission standards.....	24
1.48	TRIFED launches contests to promote tribal craft, culture and lifestyle.....	25
1.49	TRIFED launches "Sankalp se Siddhi"- Village & Digital Connect Drive.....	25
1.50	An electronic market place "e-SANTA" launched for aqua farmers and buyers.....	27
1.51	India contributes \$300,000 to UN Women.....	27
1.52	MCA registers 1.55 lakh company incorporations in FY 2020-21.....	27
1.53	Ministry of Labour & Employment set up Expert Committees for suggesting standards under the OSH&WC Code, 2020.....	28
1.54	Labour Bureau launches two of the five all-India surveys	28
1.55	Government retains 4% inflation target for RBI's rate panel for 2021-26	29
1.56	India's GDP to grow 7.5% to 12.5% in FY22: World Bank	29
1.57	National Dialogue on Manufacturing Excellence & Innovation for Competitiveness & Sustainability of Chemicals Manufacturing.....	29
1.58	India hosts First Meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors	30
1.59	Union Health Minister launches tribal health collaborative 'Anamaya'	30
1.60	Union Transport Minister flags off Basic Care Ambulances	30
1.61	CXO Round Table conference organized in Vijayawada.....	31
1.62	WhatsApp announces new Business features for e-commerce	31
1.63	RBI retains FY22 GDP outlook.....	31
1.64	West Bengal contributes highest to Small savings schemes	31
1.65	India blends record ethanol with petrol in first 4 months of ESY 2020-21	32
1.66	Government releases the names of vaccine expert panel	33
1.67	Karnataka to build heliport to promote tourism	33
1.68	Union Agriculture Minister launches Madhukranti portal & Honey Corners at NAFED stores	33
1.69	Key Milestones of beekeeping by the National Bee Board.....	33

1.70	Project RE-HAB to be replicated in all elephant-affected States.....	34
1.71	MoS Ministry of Jal Shakti Addresses BRICS International Forum Webinar	34
1.72	NITI Aayog, Agami & Omidyar develops ODR Handbook.....	34
1.73	Chairperson-e-Committee of the Supreme Court inaugurates Judgments & Orders portal and e-filing 3.0 module.....	35
1.74	Commerce Minister launches DGFT Trade Facilitation App	35
1.75	NHAI to make NSV use mandatory for road condition survey.....	35
1.76	AIM partners with Dassault Systemes Fondation to promote entrepreneurship.....	36
1.77	Commerce Minister inaugurates e-SANTA marketplace	36
1.78	MoS, Ministry of IT inaugurates 34 th Foundation Day of C-DAC	36
1.79	AIM partners with AICTE to adopt ATL Labs to empower school student innovators.....	37
1.80	Center extends Special Allowances to AIS officers posted in Ladakh.....	37
1.81	MeitY launches three new initiative of NIXI	38
1.82	IIT-M launches fellowship for AI researchers.....	38
1.83	Centre, Japan sign loan pact for Madurai AIIMS	38
1.84	‘Invest in Afghanistan’ business series organized in Hyderabad.....	38
1.85	ReNew Power set to become a Net Zero company by 2050.....	39
1.86	Amazon India launches 'Mentor Connect' programme	39
1.87	SBI collects Rs 300 crores from zero balance accounts in 5 years.....	39
1.88	HUL, Google & MyGov launches AI for Agriculture Hackathon.....	40
1.89	Kerala announces ‘Crushing the Curve’ mass vaccination drive	40
1.90	Sonu Sood appointed brand ambassador for Punjab's COVID vaccination drive.....	40
1.91	New Zealand considers climate law for financial firms	40
1.92	Indian Bank’s online training in local dialects, a boon to MSMEs	40
1.93	Fifth session of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs begins virtually - India is the Host and Spices Board India serves as the secretariat of Committee.....	41
1.94	Italy launches first ever mega food park & food processing unit in India.....	41
1.95	High-level group constituted to conduct dialogues with stakeholders of Agri-food systems	42
1.96	Oxford University gets ethical nod for Covid reinfections study.....	42
1.97	IGX adds two trading hubs in Maharashtra	42
1.98	US joins Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT).....	42
1.99	EDF installs one lakh smart electricity metres in India.....	43
1.100	Hero Group launches education technology venture “Hero Vired”	43
1.101	Facebook & CleanMax announces partnership to support renewable power.....	44
1.102	India hosts BRICS seminar on misuse of Internet by terrorists	44
1.103	Tourism Minister launches mega tourism promotion event in Srinagar	44
1.104	Agriculture Ministry Signs MoU with Microsoft for a pilot project to raise farmers income	45

1.105	AIM signs Statement of Intent with Bayer	45
1.106	India's Agriculture trade grows during 2020-21	45
1.107	Amazon Pay to facilitate loans for kiranas	46
1.108	CDSCO extends license validity of 8 regulated medical devices by 6 months.....	46
1.109	DPCC flags off 'Clean to Green onWheels' programme	47
1.110	AndhraCM launches A.P. Amul Palavelluva project in Guntur	47
1.111	GAIL proposes wet waste-to-energy plant.....	47
1.112	EPFO adds 12.37 lakh net subscribers in the month ofFebruary, 2021.....	47
1.113	MeitY announces #FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge	48
1.114	SIDBI has launched quick credit delivery schemes to support Covid-19 preparedness	48
1.115	Supply Chain Resilience initiative launched	49
1.116	Madras High Court forms panel to provide insurance cover to 65,000 lawyers.....	49
1.117	Global Task Force on Pandemic Response: Mobilising for India.....	49
1.118	United Nations declares 2023 International Year of Millets.....	49
1.119	Facebook to launch "Vaccine Finder" tool in India	49
1.120	Aviation Ministry permits Telangana to use drones for vaccine delivery	50
1.121	Indian Army initiates Ladakh Ignited Minds project.....	50
1.122	Oxford Economics lowers India's 2021 GDP growth forecast to 10.2%.....	50
1.123	PFRDA allows Aadhaar-based online KYC process for new subscribers under NPS	50
1.124	PETA urges anti-speciesist approach in Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act revision.....	51
1.125	Project DANTAK completes 60 years in Bhutan.....	51
1.126	'Virafin' gets emergency nod for treating moderate COVID-19 infections in adults	51
1.127	East Godavari bags two national awards in rural development & governance	52
1.128	U.S. applauds India for stepping up its climate change commitment	52
1.129	HDFC Bank deploys mobile ATMs.....	52
1.130	Paytm launches India's first video-based Wealth Community	52
1.131	SEA organizes webinar on 'Mission Mustard 2025'	53
1.132	Labour Bureau to release 1st report of quarterly employment survey in July 2021.....	53
1.133	INYAS launches campaign to bust myths about Covid 19 vaccination programme.....	54
1.134	103rd Development Committee Meeting of World Bank-IMF.....	54
1.135	CSIR adopts 295 Atal Tinkering Labs.....	54
1.136	Regeneron antibody cocktail helps prevent symptomatic Covid-19	55
1.137	Rajasthan's First Wellness Resource Centre	55
1.138	Farm Exports Rose 16.9% in April-Feb, FY 21	55
1.139	Expenditure Department gets control over Public Financial Management System	56
1.140	EFPO increases maximum death insurance benefit.....	56
1.141	Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme	56

1.142	APEDA launched IT initiatives to boost exports.....	57
1.143	DPIIT to monitor internal trade, manufacturing, delivery of essential commodities	57
1.144	RBI withdraws restrictions on Youth Development Co-operative Bank.....	57
1.145	RBI extends 'On Tap TLTRO' scheme till 30 September, 2021	58
1.146	WazirX launches NFT marketplace for Indian artists.....	58
1.147	NPCI sets up subsidiary NPCI Bharat BillPay.....	58
1.148	Tiger Global makes its first India cryptocurrency firm investment.....	58
1.149	Government nominates economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth to RBI central board	59
1.150	ICICI Bank launches digital banking service 'Merchant Stack'	59
Polity and Governance		59
1.151	Draft "Standards for Road Train"	59
1.152	Nagaland forms panel on listing indigenous inhabitants.....	59
1.153	Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme notified for Air Conditioners (ACs) and LED lights	60
1.154	Amendments to GNCTD Act, 1991 Do not Alter Constitutional and Legal Responsibilities of Elected Government in Respect of Transferred Subjects in State & Concurrent Lists.....	61
1.155	The Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021	61
1.156	EU Council approves conclusions on Indo-Pacific strategy	63
1.157	JMM first party to declare name of electoral bonds donor	64
1.158	E-census of Assamese Muslims launched	64
1.159	DDA approves draft Master plan-2041	64
1.160	India elected to 3 bodies of U.N. Economic and Social Council.....	64
1.161	Unique ID for all land parcels by March 2022.....	65
1.162	PM Modi inaugurates 6 th edition of Raisina Dialogue	65
1.163	Gol simplifies process for re-issue of OCI Cards	66
1.164	Centre notifies Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2021	67
1.165	Vigilance officers to be transferred every 3 years.....	67
1.166	'National Register' for driving licences	68
1.167	IRDAI standardizes technical notes for Health & Motor Insurance Policies	69
1.168	Haryana Governor give consent to bill to recover damage of property by rioters	69
1.169	Gujarat Assembly passes "Freedom of Religion Act Bill"	70
SOCIAL ISSUES.....		70
1.170	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) extended for 2 months.....	70
1.171	Yoga towards wellbeing in Covid-19 pandemic.....	71
1.172	World Malaria Day	71
1.173	POTUS convenes the Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021	71
1.174	Ayushman Bharat Diwas: 30 th April	72
1.175	World Health Assembly endorses vision "Immunization Agenda 2030"	72

1.176	NCW launches WhatsApp helpline number for pregnant women	74
1.177	Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) plugs holes in Odisha government Niramaya scheme	75
1.178	National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2017-2022)	75
1.179	5th Virtual Global Forum on TB Vaccine.....	77
1.180	India commemorates 12th National Panchayati Raj Day.....	77
1.181	10 startups shortlisted under RICH-AID programme.....	78
1.182	Panel appointed to oversee Schools of Specialised Excellence.....	79
1.183	Ministry of Rural Development launches “Gender Samvaad” event	79
1.184	ADB, Habitat for Humanity to support housing microloans for India's vulnerable communities.....	79
1.185	Infant, Toddler and Caregiver-Friendly Neighborhoods Training and Capacity Building Programme Launched80	
1.186	NITI Aayog Launches ‘Poshan Gyan’	81
1.187	Hydrogen Roundtable being Organised by The Energy Forum and FIPI under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.....	82
1.188	Union Minister of Education launches “World 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series”, developed by IIT Hyderabad researchers.....	82
1.189	Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addresses “Amazon Sambhav online Summit”	82
1.190	Experts discuss recent innovations trends adopted in decarbonisation and promotion of Hydrogen based technologies.....	83
1.191	Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses the Next Gen Health Summit ‘Re-Imagine Healthcare’	83
1.192	Indian double mutant strain gets a name	84
1.193	India Holds National Dialogue on UN Food Systems Summit 2021	84
1.194	Union Health Minister addresses Tuberculosis Technical Consultants Network Teams.....	85
1.195	Dr. Reddy’s receives permission for restricted emergency use to Sputnik-V vaccine	85
1.196	Dept. of biotech approves additional funding to HGCO19 under Mission Covid Suraksha.....	85
1.197	Principal Scientific Adviser launches “MANAS” App.....	85
1.198	NCSC Launches Online Grievance Management Portal for Persons from Scheduled Castes.....	86
1.199	Dept. of Pension and Pensioners Welfare launches “75” series Pension awareness	86
1.200	Union Health Minister launches Aahaar Kranti Mission.....	87
1.201	Union Education Minister launches SARTHAQ portal.....	87
1.202	Union Minister of Education presents AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020	88
1.203	Union Health Minister chairs ICMR’s One Health Symposium	89
1.204	Union Health Minister approves National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021.....	89
1.205	MoS for Education attends consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries.....	91
1.206	Bajaj Allianz General Insurance launches “Criti-Care”	91
1.207	Union Health Minister launches Integrated Health Information Platform.....	92
1.208	Union Health Minister addresses WHO on World Health Day 2021	92
1.209	Union Education Minister launches “MyNEP2020” platform of NCTE Portal	93

1.210	Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021	93
1.211	Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses the 40 th Anniversary of AGE CARE India	93
1.212	India celebrates 'Tika Utsav' to combat Covid-19	94
1.213	India approves Sputnik V vaccine.....	94
1.214	Union Education Minister holds meeting with Director General of UNESCO	94
1.215	Government relaxes conditions for faster import of key medical devices.....	95
1.216	Central Assistance to Madhya Pradesh under Post Matric Scholarship for OBC students.....	95
1.217	Telangana government launches "Swatch Badi"	96
ECONOMY		96
1.218	Yes Bank executes its first trade borrowing transaction linked to SOFR.....	96
1.219	RBI constitutes Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0).....	97
1.220	NHB launches ₹10,000-crore Special Refinance Facility-SRF 2021	97
1.221	Cabinet approves Amendments to the Finance Bill, 2021.....	98
1.222	Implementing green contracts	99
1.223	Insurance Companies (Foreign Investment) Amendment 2021.....	99
1.224	Sebi issues guidelines for warehousing norms for agri, non-agri goods	101
1.225	RBI allows 15-year tenure for MD & CEO	102
1.226	RBI joins network for 'greening the financial system'	102
1.227	Hallmarking of gold jewellery to be mandatory from 1 st June 2021	103
1.228	RBI receives 8 applications for setting up banks under 'on tap' licensing.....	103
1.229	Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is bringing together the collective power of all stakeholders in the Agriculture ecosystem.....	104
1.230	Finance Ministry extends ECLGS 2.0 scheme to SMA-1 category borrowers	105
1.231	RBI extends Ways and Means credit for States/UTs	106
1.232	Intellectual Property Appellate Board abolished.....	106
1.233	Not necessary to activate CCyB for banks now: RBI.....	107
1.234	Commerce Minister launches Startup India Seed Fund Scheme.....	108
1.235	Government extends validity of FAME II certificate.....	109
1.236	Government announces 50% rebate for start-ups & others	109
1.237	G20 countries gives nod to Fresh SDR issue	109
1.238	IMF proposes 'solidarity' tax on pandemic winners and wealthy	110
1.239	Finance Minister attends Plenary Meeting of IMFC of IMF.....	110
1.240	Panel submits report on farm laws to SC	111
1.241	IMF Top Deputy optimistic G-20 will extend debt relief to low-income nations	112
1.242	RBI amends India's inflation-forecasting model.....	112
1.243	Centre sets Rs 10 lakh trigger for MSME rescue scheme	113
1.244	6-digit HSN code mandatory in invoices for biz with over Rs 5 crore turnover	114

1.245	Govt. notifies rule for winding up Income Tax Settlement Commission	114
1.246	Commerce Minister chairs first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council	115
1.247	Cabinet approves agreement on Customs Cooperation & Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters.....	115
Art and Culture	116
1.248	Babasaheb Ambedkar Digital Kala Festival	116
1.249	Launch of 'MICE' Roadshow and inauguration of Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho	116
1.250	Ministry of Tourism organises webinar on "Stories of Madurai"	116
1.251	World Cities Cultural Forum	116
1.252	29th edition of the Mumbai Sanskriti music festival.....	117
1.253	Tourism Minister addresses webinar 'India's Heritage: Powering Tourism'.....	117
International News	117
1.254	Israel to reduce 80% greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.....	117
1.255	Under the world's deepest lake, baikal telescope being assembled to hunt ghost particles.....	117
1.256	Indian Origin Boy in UK Finds Fossil from Millions of Years Ago in his Garden	118
1.257	China banned imports of Taiwanese pineapples.....	118
1.258	Japan court backs same-sex marriage.....	118
1.259	Russian President Vladimir Putin signs law paving way to rule until 2036	118
1.260	'Kill the bill' protesters rally across England and Wales	118
1.261	Russia registers world's 1st Covid vaccine Carnivac-Cov for animals.....	119
1.262	Forbes' 35 th annual list of the world's billionaires	119
1.263	Pakistan's human rights activist, journalist I.A. Rehman passed away.....	119
1.264	Japan to release contaminated Fukushima water into sea after treatment	119
1.265	Egypt unveils 3,000-year-old 'lost' city near Luxor	120
1.266	U.S. commits to withdrawal of combat troops from Iraq.....	120
1.267	United Arab Emirates names country's first female astronaut.....	120
1.268	Iran unveils advanced nuclear centrifuges.....	120
1.269	Australia launches grant program to widen Indo-Pacific partnership with India.....	120
1.270	US President Biden announces complete troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.....	121
1.271	Haiti's government resigns, new Prime Minister appointed.....	121
1.272	Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan launches construction of trans-border trade center	121
1.273	China launches hotline to report 'illegal' comments about Communist party	121
1.274	China's first Mars rover named 'Zhurong'.....	121
1.275	Myanmar junta chief attends ASEAN summit	122
1.276	South Korean President replaces PM & cabinet ministers	122
1.277	The Gambia Becomes 2 nd African State to eliminate Trachoma.....	122
1.278	Russia plans to launch own space station after quitting ISS.....	122

1.279	China launches key module of space station planned for 2022	122
1.280	UK announces regulation of use of self-driving vehicles at slow speeds on motorways	123
1.281	ASEAN 2021 Meet	123
1.282	France has approved 'ecocide' offence to punish environmental damage	123
1.283	US, Japan pledge to strengthen Quad to build free, open Indo-Pacific region	123
1.284	IAEA confirms Iran started enriching Uranium upto 60%, reached record level.....	124
1.285	Bitcoin' digital currency being considered by UK authorities	124
1.286	Turkey bans use of cryptocurrencies for payments	124
1.287	National Museum of Egyptian Civilization officially receives visitors	124
1.288	Apple orders 'Louis Armstrong' documentary from Imagine Documentaries	124
Appointments.....		125
1.289	Ajay Seth takes over as new economic affairs secretary	125
1.290	Mukhmeet S. Bhatia takes over the charge of Director General of ESIC.....	125
1.291	Tarun Bajaj appointed as Revenue Secretary	125
1.292	Sivasubramanian Ramann appointed as SIDBI Chairman & Managing Director	125
1.293	Guillermo Lasso has been elected as the president of Ecuador	125
1.294	Sushil Chandra takes over as the 24th CEC of India.....	125
1.295	Alessandra Galloni becomes first woman as Reuters editor-in-chief	126
1.296	Vanita Gupta becomes the first Indian-American to be US' Associate Attorney General	126
1.297	Accenture's Rekha Menon becomes first woman chairperson of Nasscom.....	126
1.298	Axis Bank board approves re-appointment of Amitabh Chaudhry as MD & CEO	126
1.299	Ajay Seth takes charge as Economic Affairs Secretary	126
1.300	CAG GC Murmu appointed as external auditor by OPCW	126
1.301	T V Somanathan named as Finance secretary	126
1.302	Imran Khan has appointed Shaukat Tareen as new finance minister of Pakistan.....	127
Persons in News		127
1.303	Shivananda Perla selected for Best Public Prosecutor Award.....	127
1.304	Nilam Sawhney takes charge of Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner	127
1.305	Veteran actor Shashikala passes away	127
1.306	Former India Davis Cupper Uday kumar passes away	127
1.307	Shabir Hussein becomes head of the BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit	127
1.308	Nguyen Xuan Phuc formally sworn in as President of Vietnam	127
1.309	India's first female Cricket commentator Chandra Nayadu passes away	128
1.310	RBI deputy governor BP Kanungo retires.....	128
1.311	Indian hockey legend Balbir Singh Junior passed away	128
1.312	Eminent Historian Yogesh Praveen passed away	128
1.313	Sanjaya Baru's book to tell inside story of India's power elite.....	128

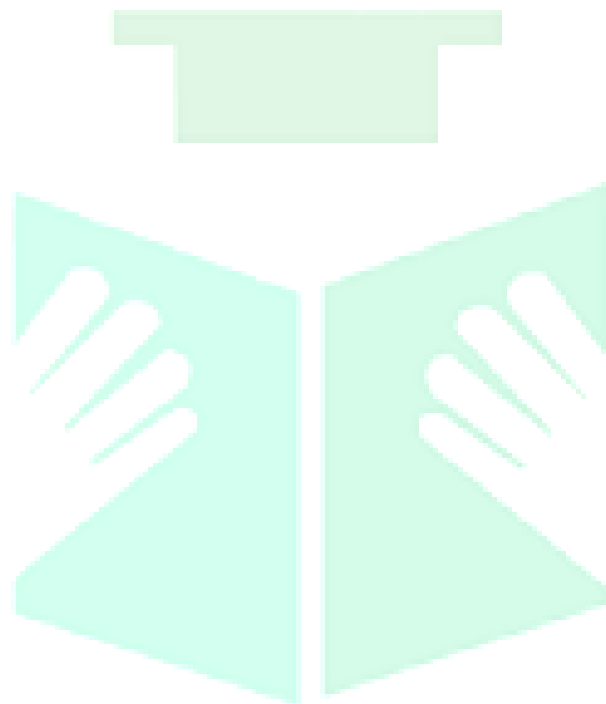
1.314	Former CBI Director Ranjit Sinha passes away	128
1.315	Soma Mondal becomes SCOPE's first woman Chairperson.....	128
1.316	Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, passes away	128
1.317	PM Modi releases Hindi Version of Odisha Itihaas	129
1.318	132 nd birth anniversary of Charlie Chaplin	129
1.319	Veteran Punjabi actor Satish Kaul passes away.....	129
1.320	Deepika Padukone steps down as Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival chairperson	129
1.321	Pakistan human rights icon I.A. Rehman passes away	129
1.322	Sumitra Bhawe, National Award-winning filmmaker, passed away	129
1.323	Former Chief Election Commissioner G.V.G Krishnamurty passed away	129
1.324	RBI Governor Maidavolu Narasimham passed away.....	129
1.325	Charles Geschke, co-founder of Adobe and developer of PDFs passed away	129
1.326	Player-turned-umpire Anupama Puchimanda passed away	130
1.327	Renowned hockey historian Baboolal Goverdhan Joshi passed away	130
1.328	National award-winning editor Waman Bhonsle passed away	130
1.329	Celebrating the Birth Centenary of Shri Satyajit Ray	130
1.330	Shooter Dadi' Chandro Tomar passes away	130
1.331	Shri Soli Sorabjee passes away	130
1.332	Chad President Deby passes away	130
	Science and Technology.....	130
1.333	National workshop on scientific problems in observational astronomy	130
1.334	DRDO developed Supplemental Oxygen Delivery System	131
1.335	Govt to launch National Programme on AI.....	131
1.336	India, France working on third joint space mission	132
1.337	CSC to make data from India's first solar space mission accessible for analysis	132
1.338	ISRO demonstrates free space quantum communication for the first time.....	132
1.339	IIT Kanpur develops touch-sensitive watch for visually impaired	133
1.340	NASA's Ingenuity helicopter dropped on Mars' surface ahead of flight	133
1.341	IIT-Hyderabad develops a 5V Dual Carbon Battery	133
1.342	NASA releases images of electric blue dunes on Mars to mark 20 years of Odyssey	133
1.343	Scientists from Singapore developed Robo Plant Technology to interact with plants.....	133
1.344	UAE to send rover 'Rashid' to the Moon in 2022	134
1.345	SoyuzMS-18 launch marks 60 years of human spaceflight	134
1.346	IIT-Delhi researchers develop device to diagnose dengue within an hour	134
1.347	NASA aims to land first woman, person of colour on Moon by 2024.....	134
1.348	Ingenuity gears up for flight on Mars.....	134
1.349	NASA's Perseverance mission produced oxygen on Mars.....	134

1.350	NASA's SpaceX Crew-2 Astronauts Headed to International Space Station	135
1.351	DRDO develops novel oxygen delivery system	135
1.352	World's most powerful weather, climate-change forecasting supercomputer to be built in UK	135
1.353	A black hole dubbed 'the Unicorn' may be galaxy's smallest one.....	135
1.354	IIT-M start-up builds a 3D printed house	136
1.355	China launches robot prototype capable of catching space debris with net.....	136
Note: World's first asteroid mining company Planetary Resources was set up in 2009.....		136
1.356	Russia to revisit Moon after 45 years, Luna 25 set to launch in October 2021.....	136
1.357	Lunar Occultation of Mars observed in Mangaluru.....	136
1.358	ISRO to support projects of IIT-Delhi.....	136
Days in News		137
1.359	World Autism Awareness Day: 2 April	137
1.360	Easter celebrated on 4 th April 2021	137
1.361	7 th April: World Health Day.....	137
1.362	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: 21 March.....	137
1.363	58 th National Maritime Day celebrated	137
1.364	International Day for Street Children: 12 th April	137
1.365	World Art Day: 15 th April	137
1.366	April 17 th : World Hemophilia Day	138
1.367	April 18 th : International Day for Monuments and Sites or World Heritage Day.....	138
1.368	April 14 th : National Fire Service Day	138
1.369	April 24 th to 30 th : World Immunization week	138
1.370	April 25: World Malaria Day	138
1.371	April 22 nd : World Earth Day	138
1.372	World Creativity and Innovation Day: 21 st April	138
1.373	National Civil Service Day: 21 st April	139
1.374	The World Veterinary Day: 25 th April.....	139
1.375	International Delegate's Day: 25 April	139
1.376	World Intellectual Property Day: April 26, 2021.....	139
1.377	World Immunization Week 2021: April 24th-30 th , 2021.....	139
1.378	World Book and Copyright Day: 23 rd April	139
1.379	World Day for Safety and Health at Work: 28 th April	139
Environment.....		140
1.380	BASIC nations oppose EU's plan to impose a 'carbon border tax'	140
1.381	India Renewables Dashboard launched	140
1.382	India – U.S. Climate Partnership	141
1.383	PM addresses the Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021.....	142

1.384	Last two rhinos translocated under IRV 2020.....	142
1.385	NITI Aayog launches India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0	143
1.386	India & USA launches 2030 Agenda to focus on climate finance & resilient infrastructure	143
1.387	Ghaziabad issues India's first municipal green bonds	144
1.388	World Bank & IMF plans to link debt relief to climate change spending	145
1.389	Odisha government proposes biosphere reserve at Mahendragiri.....	145
1.390	Maharashtra gets India's first floating LNG storage and regasification unit.....	146
1.391	Antarctica's 'Doomsday Glacier' led to the rise in global sea level	146
1.392	Dolphins population doubles in Chilika lake	146
1.393	New species from Arunachal added to India's bird list	146
1.394	New genus of freshwater crab discovered in Western Ghats.....	146
1.395	Monkeydactyl, the flying reptile with the 'oldest opposable thumbs'	147
1.396	Forest Range Officer gets award	147
1.397	Bohag Bihu Bird Count 2021	147
1.398	"Blue Nature Alliance" to protect and conserve oceans.....	147
1.399	Mining robot stranded on Pacific Ocean floor in deep-sea mining trial	147
Defence in News		148
1.400	DRDO opens up missile production partnership for Indian private sector	148
1.401	Indian Army participates in Exercise SHANTIR OGROSHENA 2021.....	148
1.402	DMSRDE develops light weight Bullet Proof Jacket	148
1.403	Visit of Rear Admiral Jacques Fayard in the Indian Ocean (ALINDIEN) to HQWNC.....	148
1.404	Pak successfully test fires nuclear-capable ballistic missile Shaheen 1-A	148
1.405	Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra' commissioned to enhance coastal security	149
1.406	INS Sarvekshak deployed to Mauritius to undertake Hydrographic Surveys	149
1.407	Bharat Dynamics Ltd manufactured Akash Missiles flagged off	149
1.408	Maritime exercise "La Pérouse" conducted in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region	149
1.409	DRDO develops Advanced Chaff Technology	149
1.410	Indian Army formally closes Military Farms Service.....	150
1.411	Webinar cum expo organised between Defence Ministries of India & Vietnam	150
1.412	Varuna-2021: India, France begins naval bilateral exercise in Arabian Sea.....	150
1.413	Ashok Leyland supplies first batch of light bullet proof vehicles for IAF	151
1.414	Gallantry Awards portal launches 'Innovative Tributes to Bravehearts' competition	151
1.415	India & Kyrgyzstan commences exercise "Khanjar"	151
1.416	Exercise "Defender Europe 21" launched in Albania	151
1.417	DRDO conducts maiden trial of Python-5 Air to Air Missile	151
1.418	Indian Navy dispatches DSRV to support Search & Rescue of missing Indonesian Submarine.....	152
1.419	Indian Air Force Commanders' Conference 2021	152

1.420	India to receive first batch of S-400 SAM from Russia in 2021	152
Sports.....		152
1.421	Vijay Hazare Trophy 2020-21: Mumbai clinch 4th title.....	152
1.422	Nine host cities announced for 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup.....	152
1.423	M.C. Mary Kom won the Sportstar of the Decade award	153
1.424	Australian women's cricket team sets ODI record	153
1.425	Rachael Blackmore, first woman jockey to win Randox Grand National 2021	153
1.426	Pakistan Cricket Board launches its own 'Hall of Fame'	153
1.427	Dilhara Lokuhettige banned for eight years under ICC Anti-Corruption code.....	153
1.428	Asian Wrestling Championships: Vinesh Phogat, Anshu Malik and Divya Kakran win gold medals	154
1.429	India's Jhilli Dalabehera grabs gold at Asian Weightlifting Championships	154
1.430	Arjun Kalyan became India's 68th Grandmaster	154
1.431	Suresh Raina's memoir 'Believe' to release in 2021	154
1.432	Japan's Matsuyama makes Masters history for Asia by winning at Augusta	154
1.433	Virat Kohli becomes first batsman to score 6,000 runs in IPL	154
1.434	Indian boxer Amit Panghal settles for bronze at Governor's Cup in Russia	155
1.435	Indian women's recurve team won gold in Archery World Cup.....	155
1.436	Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 2021 edition released.....	155
1.437	Siddharth Singh Longjam to replace Navin Agarwal as NADA DG	155
1.438	Wimbledon to become 14-day tournament.....	155
1.439	First Arab woman basketball referee to stand tall at Olympics.....	156
1.440	India, Australia and Pakistan among eight countries to compete in women's T20 in 2022	
Commonwealth Games.....		156
1.441	Mirabai Chanu creates a new Clean and Jerk world record	156
Awards.....		156
1.442	Rajinikanth honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award.....	156
1.443	Asuran, Oththa Seruppu bag national awards.....	156
1.444	R. Kichenamourthy honoured with oldest French civilian honour	156
1.445	Ravindra Bharati School bag second prize in NASA contest	157
1.446	IIM Kozhikode honors Robin Uthappa with National Excellence Award	157
1.447	BAFTA Awards 2021.....	157
1.448	M.S. Swaminathan felicitated for work towards TB eradication	157
1.449	Rakesh Bobba honored with AV Gandhi Award for Excellence in Endocrinology -2020.....	157
1.450	Marathi film Puglya wins Best Foreign Feature at Moscow Film Fest	158
1.451	Reetika Khera, Avijit Pathak and Kalyan Shankar honored.....	158
1.452	Oscar-winning producer Guneet Monga receives second highest civilian French honour	158
1.453	Shyamala Ganesh to be conferred "Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays"	158

1.454	Krithi Karanth to get 'Wild Innovator Award'	158
1.455	Saudi activist wins top Europe rights award	159
1.456	Oscar 2021	159
1.457	Roberto Benigni to receive Venice Film Festival's Lifetime Achievement award.....	159
Banking	159
1.458	RBI imposes restrictions on American Express Banking Corp & Diners Club International Ltd	159
1.459	Shivalik Small Finance Bank commences operations	160



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National News

1.1 Dignitaries underlined the need to understand and control data at DST Golden Jubilee Discourse Series

- Recently, the **Ministry of Science & Technology** has organized the **Golden Jubilee Discourse Series of the Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.
- As part of the Discourse Series, a **talk on Artificial Intelligence & Future of Power** has been jointly organised by the **National Council for Science & Technology Communication** and **Vigyan Prasar**.
- **Rajiv Malhotra**, author of the book '**Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Power**' has also participated in the Discourse Series.

Key Information Shared:

- DST has setup 25 different hubs across India under the National Mission on Cyber Physics.

1.2 India levies anti-dumping duty on bottle-grade PET from China

- India has imposed **anti-dumping duty** on the import of bottle grade **Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)** resin originating in or exported from **China** for 5 years.
- **IVL Dhunseri Petrochem Industries Pvt. Ltd** and **Reliance Industries Ltd**, the two largest producers of the product in India, accounting for 91% of domestic production, had filed an application before the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).
- DGTR, had recommended in December 2020 that anti-dumping duty ranging from **\$60.92 to \$200.66** (depending on the material quality) be imposed on the import of bottle grade PET resin from China.

Additional Information:

- India is currently the largest user of anti-dumping measures among **World Trade Organization (WTO)** members.

1.3 Indian Railways rolls out first AC Three Tier Economy Class Coach

- Indian Railways Production Unit, Railway Coach Factory, **Kapurthala** has recently rolled out the first prototype **Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB)** AC three-tier economy class coach of Indian Railways (IR).
- These coaches, after necessary sanctions, shall be inducted in all Mail / Express trains running with LHB coaches (except Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto and Jan Shatabdi etc. special type trains).

1.4 India holds Webinar with Chile on Defence Industry Global Outreach

- A webinar was held between **India** and **Chile**, under the aegis of Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence through Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM).
- **Theme** of webinar was "**Indian Defence Industry Global Outreach for Collaborative Partnership: Webinar and Expo**".
- This webinar was a part of the series of webinars which are being organized with friendly foreign countries in order to boost **defence** exports and achieve defence export target of **5 billion US Dollar** by the **year 2025**.

1.5 Prime Minister pays homage at the Mausoleum of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

- PM Modi paid tribute at the **Mausoleum of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** in **Tungipara**.
- This marked the first ever visit by any foreign Head of State or Head of Government to pay homage at **Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex**.
- PM Modi planted a **Bakul** tree sapling to commemorate this historic event.
- He also visited **Hari Mandir** in **Orakandi**, **Jeshoreshwari Kali temple** in **Ishwaripur village** and a temple in **Satkhira**, which is one of the **51 Shaktipeeths** in the Puranic tradition.

1.6 Prime Minister inaugurates the Bapu-Bangabandhu Digital Exhibition

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** along with Prime Minister of Bangladesh **Sheikh Hasina** jointly inaugurated "**Bangabandhu-Bapu Museum**" at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

- The museum has a digital exhibition on India's Father of the Nation **Mahatma Gandhi** and Bangladesh's Father of the Nation **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.
- The exhibition was inaugurated at a time when Bangladesh is celebrating the **golden jubilee of the country's independence** and the **birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.

1.7 First-of-its-kind Cruise Service starts between Surat and Diu

- Recently, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping & Waterways (I/C) **Shri Mansukh Mandaviya** flagged off the cruise service from **Hazira Port of Surat** to **Diu** via video conferencing.

Additional Information:

- In November, 2020, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated '**Hazira-Ghogha**' **RoPAX service** and within four months, one lakh passengers and thousands of vehicles utilised the ferry service to save journey time and the cost to travel from Hazira (Surat) to Ghogha (Bhavanagar).

About ROPAX:

- The acronym **ROPAX (roll-on/roll-off passenger)** describes a **RORO** vessel built for freight vehicle transport along with passenger accommodation.

1.8 Prime Minister to announce Yoga Awards on International Day of Yoga

- **The International Day of Yoga (IDY)** will be observed on **21st June 2021**.
- PM Narendra Modi, on the second IDY 2016, had announced two categories of Yoga awards- **International** and **National**.
- The purpose of the awards is to recognize and felicitate the individual(s)/organization(s) who/which have made a significant impact on the society, for a sustained period, by the way of promotion and development of Yoga.

1.9 India gold launches EMI-based gold purchase product 'EasyGold'

- **Fintech platform** for digital gold services, **Indiagold**, has launched **EasyGold**.
- **Indiagold** has partnered with precious metals management company, **Augmont Gold**, for the service.

- **EasyGold** allows users to buy the precious metal digitally, across equated monthly installments (EMIs) of **three to nine months**.
- The users can lock the price of the total gold they look to purchase, by paying 20% of the order value upfront.

Additional Information

- **Deepak Abbot** and **Nitin Misra** are the co-founders of Indiagold.

1.10 CJI S A Bobde inaugurated new Bombay High Court building

- Chief Justice of India Justice **S A Bobde** will inaugurate the building of the High Court of Bombay at **Penha de Franca, Porvorim** in **Goa**.

1.11 India abstains from UNHRC vote on Sri Lanka

- India abstained from a crucial vote on **Sri Lanka's** rights record at the **United Nations Human Rights Council Geneva**.
- A total of **22 countries** voted for the resolution that was very critical of Sri Lanka's failure to address human **rights violations** that occurred during the **civil war**
- **Eleven countries**, including **Bangladesh, China** and **Pakistan**, voted against the resolution, while **14 countries**, including **India, Indonesia, Japan** and **Nepal**, abstained.

1.12 Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana appointed as Chief Justice of India

- Recently, the President of India has appointed Shri **Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana**, Judge of the Supreme Court, to be the **Chief Justice of India**.
- He will **take over** as 48th Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India after **incumbent CJI S A Bobde**.

1.13 Jyothismathi Institute of Technology and Science awarded grade 'A' by NAAC

- Recently, the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** has awarded '**A**' grade to **Jyothismathi Institute of Technology and Science (JITS)** in **Karimnagar, Hyderabad, Telangana**.

1.14 First farm-based solar power plant established in Rajasthan

- Recently, the first farm-based solar power plant under the Prime Minister's **Kisan Urja Suraksha Evum Utthan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)** scheme has been set up in **Kotputli tehsil, Jaipur, Rajasthan**.
- The **1 MW project** has capacity to produce **17 lakh units** of **electricity** every year.

1.15 Indian Railways completes arch closure of Chenab bridge

- Recently, the Indian Railways has completed the Arch closure of the 1315 metre **Chenab Bridge**.
- **Chenab Bridge** is the **World's highest Railway Bridge** in **Jammu & Kashmir** at 359m above the riverbed level. It would be 35 metres higher than the **Eiffel Tower** in **Paris**.
- This bridge is part of the **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project (USBRL)**.

1.16 Ministry of I & B issues advisory to disseminate message of 'Dawai Bhi, Kadai Bhi'

- Recently, in view of the rising COVID-19 cases in the country, **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** has issued an advisory to all private television channels.

- Under the advisory, the Ministry has urged the channels to **generate greater awareness** on the **message** of '**Dawai Bhi Kadai Bhi**' by disseminating messages for COVID-appropriate behavior and vaccination of eligible persons.

1.17 400th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

- Prime Minister Shri **Narendra Modi** will **chair a meeting** of the **High-Level Committee (HLC)** to commemorate the **400th Birth Anniversary (Prakash Purab)** of **Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji**.
- **Aim-** To discuss the year-long calendar of events planned to mark the special occasion of Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.
- **About High Level Committee-**
 - It has **70 members** including the **Prime Minister as Chairman**.
 - It has been constituted to approve policies, plans and programs related to the commemoration of the 400th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

1.18 India & Japan signs MoU for Academic and Research Cooperation and Exchange

- National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (**NARL**), Department of Space, Government of **India** and Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere (**RISH**), Kyoto University, Kyoto, **Japan** signed an Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**).
- **Aim-** For **Academic and Research Cooperation and Exchange**.
- It will enable **NARL** and **RISH** to continue their **cooperation** in **areas of atmospheric science and technology**, collaborative scientific experiments/campaigns and related modelling studies utilising the research facilities of RISH and NARL.
- It will also lead to **mutual utilization** of **facilities** such as the **Middle and Upper atmosphere (MU) radar** in **Shigaraki, Japan**, the Equatorial Atmosphere Radar (**EAR**) in **Kototabang, Indonesia**.

1.19 India Post releases handbook on Aadhaar

- Recently, **India Post** released a **handbook** on **Aadhaar** published by **Karnataka Postal Circle** and edited by Mangaluru Postal Division in **Bengaluru**.
- The handbook **gives answers** to several **FAQs** such as-
 - how to **enrol** or **obtain new Aadhaar card**; how to **update** name/address/date of birth; how to update **biometric data**; how Aadhaar enabled payment system (**AEPS**) works; **FAQ on Aadhaar** and model-filled forms etc.

1.20 PM greets people of Assam on Bohag Bihu

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has greeted the people of **Assam** on **Bohag Bihu**.

About Bohag Bihu:

- **Bohag Bihu** or **Rongali Bihu** is a traditional ethnic festival celebrated in the Northeastern Indian state of Assam and other parts of northeastern India by the indigenous ethnic groups of Assam, and marks the beginning of the **Assamese New Year**.

1.21 PM's greetings on Puthandu

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has conveyed his **greetings** on the occasion of **Puthandu** to Tamil sisters and brothers in **Tamil Nadu** and across the world.

About Puthandu:

- **Puthandu**, also known as **Puthuvarudam** or **Tamil New Year**, is the first day of year on the

Tamil calendar and traditionally celebrated as a festival.

1.22 PM's Greetings on Vishu

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has greeted the people of **Kerala** and **Malayalis** around the world on the festive occasion of **Vishu**.

About Vishu:

- **Vishu** is a Hindu festival celebrated in the Indian state of **Kerala**, **Tulu Nadu** region in **Karnataka**, **Mahé district of Union Territory of Pondicherry**, neighboring areas of **Tamil Nadu** and their diaspora communities. The festival marks the **first day of Medam**, the ninth month in the solar calendar followed in **Kerala**.

1.23 PM Greets People of Manipur on Sajibu Cheiraoba

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has conveyed **Sajibu Cheiraoba** greetings to the people of **Manipur**.

About Sajibu Cheiraoba:

- **Sajibu Nongma Pānba**, also called **Meetei Cheiraoba** or **Sajibu Cheiraoba**, is the lunar new year festival of the people who follow the religion of **Sanamahism** in the Indian state of **Manipur**.

1.24 Prime Minister congratulates King Abdullah II on 100th anniversary of Jordan

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** congratulated his **Majesty King Abdullah II** and people of **Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** on the occasion of the **100th anniversary** of the founding of the state of **Jordan**.
- He said **India** and **Jordan** were united in the belief that moderation and peaceful co-existence were essential for peace and prosperity.

1.25 US & India to launch hydrogen task force under Strategic Energy Partnership

- **India** and the **United States** will launch a **Hydrogen Task Force** under the **Strategic Energy Partnership**.
- **The announcement** has been made at the inaugural edition of the **Hydrogen Roundtable** titled "**Hydrogen Economy: New Delhi Dialogue - 2021**".
- The two countries will together focus on **production, transportation, industrial use, and hydrogen** as an **energy storage medium**, as well as the financial structures that will need to be present to ensure hydrogen's success.

1.26 Two-day Scientific Convention on World Homoeopathy Day inaugurated

- Recently, two-day convention on '**Homoeopathy- Roadmap for Integrative Medicine**' has been **inaugurated** at **New Delhi** to celebrate the occasion of the **World Homoeopathy Day**.
- **Organized by-** Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (**CCRH**).
- On the occasion, the **Homoeopathic Clinical Case Repository (HCCR)** portal of **CCRH** was also **launched**.
 - The portal aimed at **providing homoeopathic clinicians, researchers, medical students** etc. a user **platform** for entering homoeopathic clinical cases through a predefined standardized template.

About World Homoeopathy Day:

- The day is being observed every year on **10th April** to **commemorate** the **birth anniversary** of the founder of Homoeopathy, **Dr. Christian Fredrich Samuel Hahnemann**.

1.27 Harsh Vardhan pays tribute to Sitar Maestro Pt Ravi Shankar

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare has recently paid tribute to prolific
- Indian sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar on his 101st birth anniversary on 07th April 2021.
- The sitar maestro from **Uttar Pradesh**, was **honoured with a Bharat Ratna**, had won **5 Grammys**, and was nominated for an Academy award, too.

1.28 Union Education Minister launches NanoSniffer

- Union Education Minister has recently launched **NanoSniffer**, the **world's first Microsensor based Explosive Trace Detector (ETD)** developed by **NanoSniff Technologies**, an IIT Bombay incubated startup.
- Explosive trace detector device (ETD) - NanoSniffer can detect explosives in less than 10 seconds.
 - It detects all **classes of military, conventional and homemade explosives**.
 - It gives visible & audible alerts with sunlight-readable color display.

1.29 India-Bangladesh MoU on cooperation in trade remedial measures

- An MoU has been signed between the **Director General of Trade Remedies, Republic of India** and the **Bangladesh Trade & Tariff Commission, People's Republic of Bangladesh** at **Dhaka**.

Objectives:

- Promote cooperation between the two countries in the area of **trade remedies, exchange of information, undertaking capacity building activities** and activities in accordance with various provisions of **World Trade Organization (WTO)**.
- Foster cooperation between both the countries so as to discourage unfair trade practices and promote rule based bilateral trading between the two countries.

About Bangladesh:

- **Capital: Dhaka**
- **Currency: Bangladeshi taka**

1.30 Ministry of Tourism's 85th webinar on "Khajuraho: Temples of Architectural Splendour"

- **Union Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar** series held its **85th webinar** titled "**Khajuraho-Temples of Architectural Splendour**".
- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase **India's rich diversity** under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**.
- **Khajuraho** is a small village in Chattarpur District of **Madhya Pradesh, India**.
- **UNESCO** declared temples of Khajuraho as the **World Heritage Site**.
- Khajuraho Temples were built between 950-1050 AD by the **Chandela Dynasty**.

1.31 Indian short film "For Those That Watch Me Dream" gets minted as an NFT

- The short film titled "**For Those That Watch Me Dream**" by **Terence-Hari Fernandes** has been minted on the blockchain with a base price of **0.3 ethereum (current level \$674.53)**.
- Production house, **Lekh-Haq**, has announced that it has listed the **world's first Indian short**

film as a **non-fungible token (NFT)** on OpenSea, the biggest marketplace for NFTs.

1.32 Covid-19: First 'Oxygen Express' train leave from Mumbai to Vizag

- The first 'Oxygen Express' Ro-Ro (roll-on, roll-off) service departed from Central Railway's Kalamboli yard (Mumbai) to ferry liquid oxygen for Maharashtra from Vishakhapatnam Steel Plant in Andhra Pradesh.

- This train will move via Vasai Road, Jalgaon, Nagpur, Raipur Junction to Visakhapatnam steel plant siding in ECoR (The East Coast Railway) zone where it will be loaded with Liquid Medical Oxygen.

1.33 PM pays tributes to Babu Jagjivan Ram on his Jayanti

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has paid tributes to **Babu Jagjivan Ram** on his Jayanti.
- He was popularly known as Babuji and was an Indian independence activist and politician from Bihar.

1.34 MeitY inaugurates three new initiatives/services of National Internet Exchange of India About Three new initiatives.

IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru):

- IP Guru is a group to extend support to all the Indian entities who are finding it technically challenging to migrate and adopt IPv6.
- It's a joint effort of DOT, MeitY & community to promote IPv6. The expert panel group comprises members from government and private organizations.

NIXI Academy

- NIXI Academy is created to educate technical/non-technical people in India to learn and relearn technologies like IPv6 which are normally not taught in Educational Institutes.
- It comprises an IPv6 training portal which is developed with the help of various technical experts in order to provide mass training to the community. Through this academy our Internet community will be able to learn from various technical modules.

NIXI-IP-INDEX

- The portal will showcase the IPv6 adoption rate in India and across the world. It can be used to compare IPv6 Indian adoption rate with other economies in the world.

1.35 ICCR is launching 'Little Guru App'

- Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has tied up with **Gamapp Sportswizz Tech. Pvt. Ltd.** to launch 'LITTLE GURU', a specialized app for **learning Sanskrit**.
- Little Guru will be a gamified app based on an interactive platform which will make Sanskrit learning easy, entertaining and fun.

1.36 Chithirai festival to be held inside Meenakshi temple without public participation

- Recently, **Chithirai festival** has been celebrated on Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple.
- Temple is located in: Madurai, Tamil Nadu

1.37 Byju's launches Future School

- It will become **available** in the **United States, UK, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico**.
- The school will offer coding and Math with the aim of fostering engagement and personalized

learning through a live one to one teaching experience.

- The coding will be provided by its subsidiary **WhiteHat Jr.**

1.38 Confederation of Indian Industry has launched 'Mission on Net Zero'

- On Earth Day, **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** has launched '**IGBC Mission on Net Zero**' to facilitate India to achieve **net zero carbon emission** status by 2050.
- More than 250 leading organisations in building sector have committed to achieve Net Zero status for their new and existing buildings.
- Climate change poses an existential crisis for humanity, with rising global temperatures, melting ice caps, rising sea levels and man-induced natural calamities.

About CII:

- **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- **President: Uday Kotak**

1.39 Central Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institute tested the first-ever electric Tractor

- The first-ever **electric tractor** in the country has been tested at the **Central Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute (CFMTTI)** in **Budni, Madhya Pradesh**.
- According to the test report, electric tractor will be more environment friendly than other types of tractors.

Additional Information:

- **CFMTTI** obtained the **National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories Certificate** of Accreditation for Central Motor Vehicles Rules Test Laboratory.

1.40 India to host G20 Summit in 2023 instead of 2022

- **India** was earlier scheduled to host the **G20 Summit** in 2022 coinciding with 75th anniversary of Indian Independence will now host the Summit in **2023**.
- India has swapped the Group's Presidency with **Indonesia**.
- G20 Summit for **2021** will be hosted by **Italy**, **2022** by **Indonesia**, **2023** by **India** and **2024** by **Brazil**.

1.41 INSACOG shares Genome Sequencing data with States

- Recently, Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (**INSACOG**) has shared the **Genome Sequencing data** with **State Governments**.
- **INSACOG** reports **sequencing results to Central Surveillance unit (CSU)** of National Center for Diseases Control [**NCDC**], which is shared with the State Surveillance Units (SSUs) of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).

Note: INSACOG covered in March 2021 CA Magazine.

1.42 India, Russia to establish a '2+2 ministerial dialogue' between foreign, defence ministers

- Recently, India and Russia has agreed to establish a "2+2 ministerial dialogue" between foreign and defence ministers to add further momentum to the bilateral strategic partnership.
- Government has also approved Sputnik-V, a coronavirus vaccine for its use in India

1.43 Air India's first Jumbo Jet landed Santa Cruz Airport

- Air-India's first Jumbo jet "Emperor Ashoka" touched down at the Santa Cruz airport in Bombay.
- Earlier three Indian Air Force M.I.Gs rendezvoused with the Jumbo was escorted to Santa Cruz.

1.44 Tourism and Culture Minister inaugurates first-ever online exhibition on Ramayana

- Tourism and Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel has inaugurated the first-ever online exhibition on Ramayana.
- The online exhibition showcases 49 miniature paintings collections of National Museum, New Delhi from different art schools of India.

Additional Information:

- Mr Patel addressed a webinar 'India's Heritage: Powering Tourism' on the occasion of World Heritage Day 2021.
- World Heritage Day is observed every year on April 18.
- Theme for 2021: 'Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures'.

1.45 Cultre launches India's first Heritage Olympiad

- Recently, online heritage and culture start-up, Cultre, has launched India's first Heritage Olympiad on World Heritage day.
- Aim: to strengthen heritage education and provide a comprehensive test of all things related to Indian heritage, focusing on three main aspects: tangible, intangible, and natural heritage.

1.46 India's biggest floating solar power plant to be set up in Telangana

- India's biggest floating solar power plant (by generation capacity) with a capacity of 100 MW will be set up at Ramagundam thermal power plant reservoir in Telangana.
- The solar project is commissioned by the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and is aimed at reducing its carbon footprints and accelerate its green energy production to 30% of its capacity.
- The project, which is estimated to cost around Rs 423 crore, will have 4.5 lakh photovoltaic panels.

Additional Information-

- The world's largest solar power plant with 600 MW capacity is being set up on Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.
- The project costing 3,000 crore rupees is expected to start power generation only by 2022-23.

1.47 New deadlines for thermal power plants to meet emission standards

- Recently, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended rules allowing thermal power plants within 10 kilometres of the National Capital Region (NCR) and in cities with more than 10 lakh population to comply with new emission norms by the end of 2022.

- The thermal power plants (TPPs) in "non-attainment cities" and those within **10 kilometres** of **critically polluted areas** are required to **meet the emission norms** by **December 31, 2023**.
 - **Non-attainment cities** are those which have **consistently failed to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards**.
 - The CPCB has identified **124** non-attainment cities.
- **TPPs declared to retire before December 31, 2025**, are "**not required to meet** the specified **norms** if they submit an undertaking to the CPCB and the CEA (Central Electricity Authority) for exemption on ground of retirement.
- **Coal-fired power plants** in the rest of the areas have to comply with the new standards by **December 31, 2024**.
 - Major pollutants from coal-fired power plants are oxides of nitrogen (NOx), sulphur dioxide (SO2) and particulate matter (PM).
- The ministry has also announced to constitute the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** to "**categorise** thermal power plants (TPPs) in **three categories** on the basis of their **location**".
- According to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), in India, TPPs account for-
 - more than **60% of total industrial emissions** of particulate matter
 - 45% of SO2
 - 30% of NOx
 - more than 80% of mercury
- These are also responsible for 70% of the total freshwater withdrawal by all industries.

1.48 TRIFED launches contests to promote tribal craft, culture and lifestyle

- Recently, **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation Ltd (TRIFED)**, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has launched **two interesting competitions** along with "MyGov.in" (the citizen-government engagement platform) with the sole objective of promoting **tribal craft, culture and lifestyle**.
- The **two contests are as follows-**
 - Be the Brand Ambassador of Tribes India
 - Be a 'Friend' of TRIBES INDIA
- The contests will enhance the people's awareness about tribal heritage, arts, crafts, and the citizens will contribute to overall tribal empowerment by purchasing more tribal products.

About TRIFED-

- It is the **nodal agency** under **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
- It has been working **to improve the income and livelihoods** of the **tribal people**, while preserving their way of life and traditions.
- It also **helps the tribal population** in the area of **marketing development of their rich products**.

1.49 TRIFED launches "Sankalp se Siddhi"- Village & Digital Connect Drive

- Recently, the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation Ltd (TRIFED)**, under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched "**Sankalp se Siddhi**" - **Village & Digital Connect Drive**.
- **Aim-** To activate the **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVK)** in the 1500 villages of the country.

- This will be a **100 day drive**, starting from **April 1, 2021**, and will entail **150 teams** (10 in each region from TRIFED and State Implementation Agencies/Mentoring Agencies/Partners) **visiting ten villages each**.
- It will **cover 100 villages** in each region and **1500 villages in the country** in **100 days**.
- The visiting teams **will identify locations and shortlist potential VDVks** for clustering as **TRIFOOD**, and **SFURTI** units as larger enterprises.
 - They will also **identify tribal artisans** and other groups and **empanel them as suppliers** so that they can have access to larger markets through the Tribes India network- both physical outlets and TribesIndia.com.
- **Rs 200 crore Sales** during the next 12 months is **targeted** as a result of this initiative once the VDVks are activated in these 1500 villages.

About Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP'-

- **Aim-** To establish a **framework for ensuring fair prices** for the **tribal gatherers**, primary processing, storage, transportation etc. while ensuring sustainability of the resource base addressing the problems tribals are facing such as **perishable nature of the produce**, **lack of holding capacity**, lack of marketing infrastructure, exploitation by middle men, and **timely government intervention**.
- **Van Dhan Yojana or Van Dhan Scheme** is a component of the above scheme.
 - **Launched- 14th April, 2018**
 - **Implemented by- TRIFED** as the nodal agency.
 - **Van Dhan start ups** is a well thought master plan for the **socio-economic development** of the **tribal population** of the country.
 - It **targets livelihood generation** for **tribal gatherers** and transforming them into entrepreneurs.
 - It aims to set-up tribal community-owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in predominantly forested tribal districts.
 - ✓ A **Kendra** shall constitute of **15 tribal SHGs**, each comprising of up to **20 tribal Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) gatherers** or **artisans** i.e. about 300 beneficiaries per Van Dhan Kendra.
 - ✓ **100% Central Government Funded** with TRIFED providing **Rs. 15 lakhs** for each 300 member Van Dhan Kendra.

About TRIFOOD-

- It is a joint initiative of **Ministry of Food Processing Industry**, **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** and **TRIFED**.
- Under this scheme a **tertiary value addition center** will be set up in **Jagdalpur** in **Chhattisgarh** and **Raigad** in **Maharashtra** at a cost of **approximately Rs.11 crores**.
- It is being implemented in the backdrop of VanDhan Yojana will **promote value addition to Minor Forest Produce (MFP)**.
- The units are envisaged to be **professionally operated** by **reputed food processors** who will operate the facilities for a designated period of time under the overall administrative control of TRIFED.

- About **25% of total raw materials** is expected to be **sourced locally** from the identified **Vandhan SHGs/Vandhan Kendras** in the catchment areas as per the grade and quantity requirement, consistently for period of **5 years**.

1.50 An electronic market place “e-SANTA” launched for aqua farmers and buyers

- Recently, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goel has launched an **electronic market place “e-SANTA” for aqua farmers and buyers**.
- It is an end-to-end electronic trade platform, between aquaculture farmers and exporters.
- The term **e-SANTA** means **Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA Farmers’ Trade in Aquaculture**.
 - The National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (**NaCSA**) is an extension arm of the Kochi-based Marine Products Export Development Authority, under the Ministry of Commerce.
- The platform will **provide detailed specification of each product listing** and is backed by an electronic payment system with NaCSA.
 - After crop listing and online negotiation, a deal is struck, advance payment is made and an estimated invoice is generated.
- It **enables farmers to get better price by eliminating middlemen** and helping **exporters directly purchase quality products** from **farmers** enhancing traceability, a key factor in international trade.
- It is expected to **reduce risks for farmers, create awareness** about **products** and **markets**, increase farmer income, and shield them from wrong practices.

1.51 India contributes \$300,000 to UN Women

- **India** has contributed **USD 300,000** to the **United Nations Women**, the world organisation's entity for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- With the contribution, India has reaffirmed its **support** for **gender equality** and **women empowerment**, describing UN Women as a “valued partner in our progress from **women’s development to #women-leddevelopment.**”

About UN Women-

- It is the United Nations entity **dedicated to gender equality** and the **empowerment of women**. It was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.
- **Established-** July 2010
- **Executive Director-** Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
- **Headquarters-** New York

1.52 MCA registers 1.55 lakh company incorporations in FY 2020-21

- According to recent data, **the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** has **registered more than 1.55 Lakh company incorporations during 2020-21**, as compared to 1.22 Lakh companies during 2019-20 (**about 27% increase**).
- **Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs): 42,186 LLPs** have been incorporated during **2020-21**, as compared to 36,176 incorporations during 2019-20 (**about 17% increase**).

Key Initiatives by MCA to promote ease of doing business:

- Launch of **SPICe+ form in February 2020** to integrate **10 different services** across **3 Central Govt. Ministries/Departments** (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Labour & Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance) and **3 State Governments** (Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal).
- **Zero MCA fee for company incorporations up to Rs 15 lakh authorised capital**
- **Incentivisation of incorporation of One Person Companies (OPCs)**
- **De-criminalisation of technical & procedural violations under Companies Act.**

1.53 Ministry of Labour & Employment set up Expert Committees for suggesting standards under the OSH&WC Code, 2020

- Recently, the **Ministry of Labour and Employment** has constituted **Expert Committees** to review the existing rules and regulations **on safety, health and working conditions standards**, pertaining to factories, docks and construction work, under the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH&WC) Code, 2020**

Key Highlights:

S.No	Particulars	Chairman
1	Expert Committees for Factories and Dock Works	Dr. R. K. Elangovan
2	Expert Committee for the Building & Other Construction Works	P.L.N. Murthy
3	Expert Committee on Fire Safety	D. K. Shami

Background:

- **OSH&WC Code, 2020** has been enacted after amalgamating **13 different labour legislations** to simplify the laws regulating the OSH&WC in establishments.

1.54 Labour Bureau launches two of the five all-India surveys

- Recently, the **labour bureau** has launched the **All-India Survey of Migrant Workers and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES)** in Chandigarh.
- **AQEES** would provide the **employment estimates for establishments employing 10 or more workers as well as those with employing 9 or less workers**, to provide crucial data on the changes in employment situation across the selected sectors on a quarterly basis.

Key Highlights:

- **Five All India Surveys conducted under Labour Bureau:**
 - All India Survey of **Migrant workers**
 - All India survey of **Domestic Workers**
 - All India survey of **employment generated by Professionals**
 - All India survey of **employment generated in Transport Sector**
 - All-India **Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey**
- **Govt. constituted an expert committee to guide the Labour Bureau to conduct the surveys.**
 - **Chairman-** Dr. S. P. Mukherjee; **Co-Chairman-** Dr. Amitabh Kundu.
- **Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL)**, under the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** would provide **IT support**.
- **For, the first time the surveys would be conducted in major regional languages.**

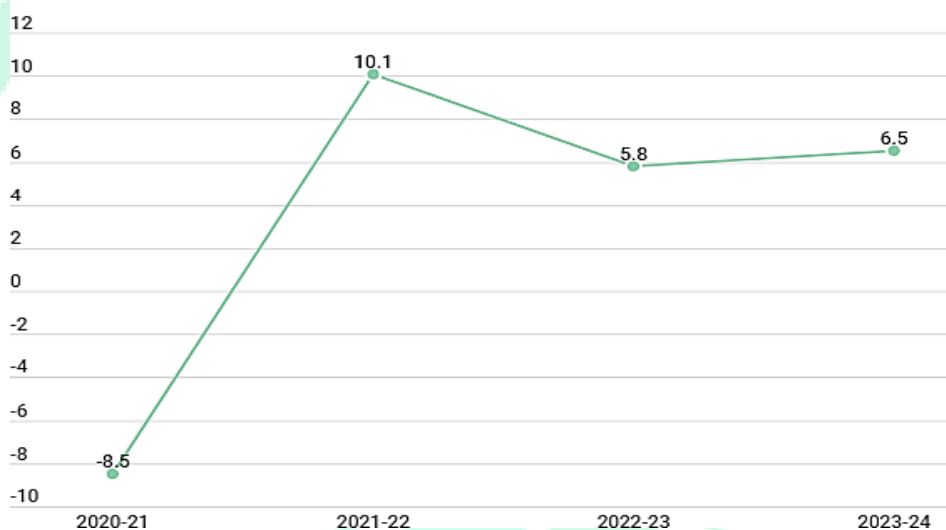
1.55 Government retains 4% inflation target for RBI's rate panel for 2021-26

- Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** has informed that the **Government of India** has decided to **retain the inflation target of 4%**, with a tolerance band of +/- 2% for the Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI for the period **April 2021, to March 2026**.

1.56 India's GDP to grow 7.5% to 12.5% in FY22: World Bank

- According to the recent update titled "**South Asia Vaccinates: South Asia Economic Focus, Spring 2021**" released by the **World Bank**, **Indian Economy** is expected to grow at **10.1%** for the fiscal year **2021-22**.

GDP growth in % year-on-year



- **Real GDP growth in FY22** could be in the range from **7.5 % to 12.5 %**.
- **Government consumption** is expected to **rise by 16.7 % in 2021**.

Region-Specific Findings:

- **Overall Asian Growth:** to increase by **7.2 % in 2021** and **4.4 % in 2022**.

About South Asia Economic Focus:

- It is a **biannual economic update** depicting recent economic developments and a near-term economic outlook for South Asia.

1.57 National Dialogue on Manufacturing Excellence & Innovation for Competitiveness & Sustainability of Chemicals Manufacturing

- Recently, the Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers has virtually addressed the "**National Dialogue on Manufacturing Excellence and Innovation for Competitiveness and Sustainability of Chemicals Manufacturing**".
- Organized by- **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, & United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**
- **UNIDO** had organised a dialogue under 'Clean Manufacturing in India' (Swachh Udyog) & hosted the **National Dialogue**.

Key Information Shared:

- **Indian chemicals industry** stood at **178 billion dollar in 2019** and would reach **304 billion dollar by 2025**.

- **The demand for chemicals is expected to grow by 9% per annum by 2025.**

About UNIDO:

- It is the specialized agency of the UN to **promote industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability.**
- **Establishment:** November 1966; **Headquarters:** Vienna, Austria

1.58 India hosts First Meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors

- Recently, **India has virtually hosted the first meeting of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.**
- **Chairpersons:** the Union Minister of Finance, Government of India and the Governor, Reserve Bank of India.
- **Key Focus:** strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation based on Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus.
- During the event, Union Finance Minister called for **coordination among BRICS members on the issue of 16th general review of Quotas of International Monetary Fund (IMF).**

About IMF quotas:

- IMF is a **quota-based institution**, where an **individual member country's quota** reflects its **relative position in the world economy.**
- **Quotas** are denominated in **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs).**

About Quota reviews:

- Conducted at regular intervals, **not more than a period of 5 years** by the **IMF Board of Governors.**
- **Any changes in quotas must be approved by an 85 % majority of the total voting power, and a member's own quota cannot be changed without its consent.**
- **Two main issues addressed in a general review of quotas:** the size of an overall quota increase; distribution of the increase among the members
- As per an IMF resolution, **the 16th General Review of Quotas should be concluded by December 15, 2023.**

Note: BRICS founded in June 2006.

1.59 Union Health Minister launches tribal health collaborative 'Anamaya'

- Recently, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare & the Union Minister for Tribal Affairs have jointly launched the **'Anamaya', the Tribal Health Collaborative.**
- **It is a multi-stakeholder initiative** to converge the efforts of various Government organizations to **enhance the health and nutrition status of the tribal communities of India.**
- **Supported by:** Piramal Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).

1.60 Union Transport Minister flags off Basic Care Ambulances

- Recently, **the Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways has flagged off 90 Basic Care Ambulances for the States / Union Territories viz, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Uttarakhand at New Delhi.**

- The Ambulances were **manufactured by the TATA Motors** and procured by the **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL)**.
- **Total Cost of Procurement:** Rs. 18.63 Crores +GST.

Key Information Shared:

- As per Road Accident Statistics, Out of **415 deaths per day in India**, about **40% lives can be saved** if **immediate medical treatment is provided during Golden hour period**.

1.61 CXO Round Table conference organized in Vijayawada

- Recently, the **Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications** of the **Andhra Pradesh Government** has organized a **CXO (Chief Experience Officer) Round Table conference** in **Vijayawada**.
- **During the event**, it has been announced that a **global IT conclave** would be organized by the **Andhra Government in May 2021 in Visakhapatnam** in collaboration with **NITI Aayog and The National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)**.

Key Information Shared:

- **Andhra Government** has set a **target of creating 19,000 IT workstations by 2024**.
- **Andhra Government** working on creating **digital infrastructure up to the panchayat level**.
- **Establishment of 30 Skill Development Centres (SDC)** across Andhra to impart training in **skills relevant for present market needs**.
- Setting up of a **high-end IT skills university in Visakhapatnam**.

1.62 WhatsApp announces new Business features for e-commerce

- Recently, **Whatsapp** has introduced **two new features to WhatsApp Business--the new e-commerce platform of the instant messaging application**.
- The features are viz, **better support for WhatsApp Catalogs on desktop devices**, and the **ability to hide out of stock items**.

1.63 RBI retains FY22 GDP outlook

- Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India** has retained **India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth projection for FY22 at 10.5%**.
- The economy is expected to grow **26.2% in Q1, 8.3% in Q2, 5.4% in Q3 and 6.2% in Q4 of FY22**.

1.64 West Bengal contributes highest to Small savings schemes

- Recently, the **National Savings Institute** under the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance has released the **"Annual Report on Analysis of Trends of Small Savings Collection 2017-2018"**.

Key Highlights:

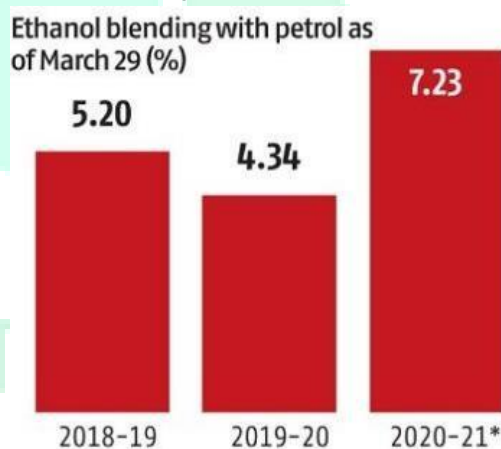
- **State wise Distribution to Gross Collections of Post Offices & Banks during 2017-18 (Top 10 states):**

Name of the State/ UT	Gross (₹ in crores)	% of total gross collections
West Bengal	₹ 89,991.74	15.09
Uttar Pradesh	₹ 69,660.70	11.68
Maharashtra	₹ 63,025.59	10.57
Gujarat	₹ 48,645.28	8.16
Tamil Nadu	₹ 28,598.18	4.80
Punjab	₹ 28,356.03	4.75
Delhi - UT	₹ 28,354.53	4.75
Bihar	₹ 26,860.67	4.50
Karnataka	₹ 26,264.51	4.40
Rajasthan	₹ 20,101.05	3.37
CONTRIBUTION OF TOP 10 STATES	₹ 4,29,858.27	72.08
Others	₹ 1,66,544.03	27.92
Total gross collections	₹ 5,96,402.30	100.00

- Apart from West Bengal & Tamil Nadu, other Poll bound states contributed the following:
 - **Assam**- Rs 9,446.37 crore, **Kerala**- Rs 14,763.01 crore, **Puducherry**- Rs 1,082.40 crore.

1.65 India blends record ethanol with petrol in first 4 months of ESY 2020-21

- Recently, for the first time in India, **Ethanol blending** has reached more than **7.2 %** in the first 4 months of the Ethanol Supply Year (**ESY**) **2020-21** (December 2020-November 2021).
- **So far, the best ever ethanol blend with petrol has been around 5.2 % at all-India level.**



- In states/UTs such as **Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh** and **Daman and Diu**, **9.5-10%** ethanol is being blended with petrol.

Relevance:

- Government of India has targeted to achieve **10 % ethanol blending by 2022 & 20% by 2025.**

Additional Information:

- So far, **Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs)** have ordered **4.57 billion litres** of Ethanol for **2020-21** from sugar companies, of which **bids for 3.25 billion litres** have been finalized.

1.66 Government releases the names of vaccine expert panel

- Recently, the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** has released the names of the **10-member Subject Expert Committee (SEC)** that approved restricted emergency use of **Covaxin** in clinical trial mode, **in January 2021**
- The Committee has been **constituted** by the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)**.

1.67 Karnataka to build heliport to promote tourism

- Recently, the **Karnataka Government** has proposed to build **heliports** in six major tourist destinations viz. **Bengaluru, Mysuru, Hubballi, Hampi, Mangaluru & Kalaburagi to promote tourism.**
- **Estimated Budget:** Rs 10 crore per heliport.

Other Initiatives:

- Karnataka Govt. has already been offering **5% of the project cost or Rs. 5 crore**, whichever is lower, for those coming forward **to build hotels in tourist destinations.**
- **Karnataka Govt.** to approach the Central Govt. **to add Sannati in Kalaburagi district, one of the major Buddhist sites in India**, excavated by the **Archaeological Survey of India**, in the **Buddhist Circuit.**

1.68 Union Agriculture Minister launches Madhukranti portal & Honey Corners at NAFED stores.

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare** has launched **Madhukranti portal** and **Honey Corners** of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (**NAFED**) in **New Delhi** to **increase farmers income, generate employment and increase in exports.**
- **Madhukranti portal** is an **initiative of National Bee Board (NBB)** under **National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM).**
- **Indian Bank** is the **technical & banking partner** of the portal and a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) has been signed between **National Bee Board & Indian Bank.**
- **Purpose:** developed for online registration to achieve traceability source of honey/ beehive products on a digital platform & check the quality and source of adulteration of honey.
- **10,000 Beekeepers/Beekeeping & Honey Societies/Firms/Companies** with **16.00 lakhs honeybee colonies** registered with NBB are **uploaded on Madhukranti Portal**
- To provide **marketing support** to the **Farmers Produce Organization (FPOs)**, **NAFED** has **developed 14-15 Honey Corners**, one each in **5 NAFED stores**

Relevance:

- **NBHM** has been approved by Gol for **Rs. 500 crores** for overall promotion and development of scientific beekeeping & **to achieve the goal of "Sweet Revolution"**

Note: NBHM covered in Feb 2021 Schemes Tap.

1.69 Key Milestones of beekeeping by the National Bee Board

- Setting up of **state of the Art Honey Testing Lab** at The National Dairy Development Board (**NDDB**), **Anand, Gujarat** under NBHM.
- **45 projects** for assistance of **Rs. 88.87 crores** approved for funding under NBHM.
- Setting up of **13 mini/ satellite & two big/ regional honey testing labs.**

- **70 FPOs of Beekeeper/honey producers**, including **65 by NABARD & others** and **5 by NAFED** in Bihar, UP, MP, Rajasthan & WB, have been formed.
- **29 Bee Breeders** developed for **multiplication of quality honeybee colonies**; Each **Bee Breeder** produces at least **2000 bee colonies every year**.
- **16 Integrated Beekeeping Development Centres (IBDCs)** have been commissioned in 16 states in India.

1.70 Project RE-HAB to be replicated in all elephant-affected States

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Industries** has informed that the **Project RE-HAB ((Reducing Elephant – Human Attacks Using Bees)**, launched by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** would be replicated in all elephant-affected States like West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- He has also sought support from the **Agriculture and Environment Ministries** to implement the scheme in all the states.

1.71 MoS Ministry of Jal Shakti Addresses BRICS International Forum Webinar

- Recently, the **MoS, Ministry of Jal Shakti** has addressed a **webinar organized by BRICS International Forum**, and highlighted the seriousness of water crisis faced in the world.

Key Information Shared:

- India launched **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in August 2019** with a total outlay of **Rs 3.60 lakh Crore (\$ 48 billion)**, to provide **pipled water supply to all the rural households by 2024**.
- Since launch, **JJM** has provided over **40 million piped water connections** to rural households.
- Under **JJM**, **each and every household** is getting water at **55 lpcd (Litres per Capita per Day)**.
- **Village level committees** have been constituted for making plans to **augment water supply** for their respective villages with **50% participation ensured for women**.
- **UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) resolution 64/292**: “the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”.

Background:

- According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **2.2 billion people** across the world **struggle to have access to safe drinking water**.
- In **2017-18, Cape Town, South Africa** became the **first city in the world to run out of water**.

Note: India chairs the 13th BRICS Summit.

1.72 NITI Aayog, Agami & Omidyar develops ODR Handbook

- Recently, **Agami and Omidyar India**, in association with **NITI Aayog** has developed the **first-of-its-kind Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) Handbook** along with the **support of ICICI Bank, Ashoka Innovators for the Public, Trilegal, Dalberg, Dvara, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP)**.
- **Justice DY Chandrachud, Supreme Court of India**, has launched the handbook.
- It envisages to **facilitate the process to adopt ODR in India** and **highlight actionable processes** for businesses to adopt ODR.

About ODR:

- It is the process of **resolving disputes outside court premises**, particularly cases with small and medium values using latest technologies and alternate dispute resolution (**ADR**) techniques such as **negotiation, mediation, and arbitration**.

1.73 Chairperson-e-Committee of the Supreme Court inaugurates Judgments & Orders portal and e-filing 3.0 module

- Recently, **Dr Justice DY Chandrachud, Chairperson, e-Committee of the Supreme Court**, has virtually inaugurated **Judgments and Orders Portal & e-Filing 3.0 module** developed by the **Pune based e-Courts project team**.

Key Highlights:

- **Judgments and Orders search portal:** a repository of judgments from various High Courts.
- **e-filing 3.0 module:** allows electronic filing of court documents without court visits; developed in 6 months.

Key Information Shared:

- The **e-courts project** of the **Department of Justice** has won **the Digital India Award 2020** under **Excellence in Digital Governance Award of a central ministry/dept. category**.

1.74 Commerce Minister launches DGFT Trade Facilitation App

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Commerce & Industry** has virtually launched the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) trade facilitation mobile application** to promote **ease of doing business** and provide **instant access to information to importers/exporters**.
- **App developed by** - **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**, as per the directions of the DGFT.

Key Highlights:

- Trade facilitation App is **READY** for **Industry 4.0**, as it provides:
 - Real-time trade policy updates, notifications, application status alert, tracking help requests
 - Explore item-wise Export-Import policy & statistics, Track Importer-Exporter Code (IEC) Portfolio
 - AI-based 24*7 assistance for trade queries
 - DGFT services made accessible to all
 - Your Trade Dashboard accessible anytime & anywhere.
- The initiative would contribute to achieve **export target of \$1 trillion by 2025** and **GDP target of \$5 trillion**.

1.75 NHAI to make NSV use mandatory for road conditions survey

- Recently, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** has decided to deploy **Network Survey Vehicle (NSV)** to provide **better roads by enhancing the quality of National Highways**.
- Carrying out **road condition survey using NSV** on the **National Highways** has been **made mandatory** at the **time of certifying project completion** and **every six months thereafter**.
- It has also been included as a part of the standard bidding document of consultancy services.

Key Highlights:

- NSV employs **latest survey techniques** for **measurement of distress** on road surface.

- Data from NSV survey would be **uploaded on NHA's AI based portal Data Lake**, where it will be **analyzed** by Road Asset Management Cell (**RAMS Cell**) to assess the **condition/roughness of road to prioritize for the maintenance**.
- The results from the survey would prompt **BOT (Build Operate Transfer)** operators/ NHA officials to take **corrective measures to increase the quality of the roads**.

1.76 AIM partners with Dassault Systemes Fondation to promote entrepreneurship

- Recently, the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, NITI Aayog & **Dassault Systemes Fondation** have signed a **Statement of Intent (Sol)**.
- **Objective:** to provide digitally rich ecosystem of Innovation in India and promote Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) based innovation and entrepreneurship.

Key Highlights:

- **Dassault Systemes Fondation** would contribute to the **Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) program** in **three broad areas** - project based, self-paced learning content (playbook), organizing hackathons and challenges and inter-country academia collaborations.
- The partnership encourages **inter country collaborations** amongst schools and school students for **collaborative science / technology learning, skilling and cultural interactions**.

Note: ATLs are one of the flagship initiatives of the AIM, NITI Aayog.

1.77 Commerce Minister inaugurates e-SANTA marketplace

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Commerce & Industry** has virtually inaugurated **e-SANTA (Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers' Trade in Aquaculture)**.
- It is an **electronic marketplace** providing a platform to **connect aqua farmers and the buyers**.
- **Initiative** of National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture (**NaCSA**).

Key Highlights:

- **e-SANTA** will **RAISE the lives & income of farmers** by:
 - Reducing Risk
 - Awareness of Products & Markets
 - Increase in Income
 - Shielding Against Wrong Practice
 - Ease of Processes.
- It acts as a **digital bridge**, eliminates middlemen, & provides **cashless, paperless e- trade platform** between aqua farmers and exporters/buyers.

Note: (NaCSA) is an extension arm of Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

1.78 MoS, Ministry of IT inaugurates 34th Foundation Day of C-DAC

- Recently, the **Minister of State, Ministry of Information & Technology** has virtually inaugurated the **34th Foundation Day of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, the premier **R&D organization** of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (**MeitY**)
- **Three novel initiatives** have been launched during the event.

Key initiatives launched:

- **Cyber Security Operation Centre (CSOC):** provides end to end security solutions.
- **Parallel Development Environment (ParaDE)** - Indigenous High-Performance Computing software (HPC) solutions to create parallel applications.
- **Automatic Parallelizing Compiler (CAPC):** provides fast and effective solution for code parallelization by automatically converting a sequential C code to a corresponding parallel code suitable for the target parallel hardware.

Key Information Shared:

- C-DAC has developed **32/64 bit processors named VEGA** as a part of its **Microprocessor initiative** for the **Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge** by MeitY.
- C-DAC enables manufacturing of systems & components of HPC in India under **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)**.
- C-DAC also plays huge role in implementing **National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019)**.

About National Supercomputing Mission (NSM):

Launch Year	2015
Implemented by	Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology & Department of Science and Technology, (Ministry of Science and Technology) through C-DAC, Pune & IISc, Bengaluru
Total Cost	Rs 4,500 crores
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to connect national academic and R&D institutions with a grid of over 70 high-performance computing facilities

About National Policy on Electronics 2019:

- **Aim:** to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM).

1.79 AIM partners with AICTE to adopt ATL Labs to empower school student innovators

- Recently, Atal Innovation Mission (**AIM**), and All India Council for Technical Education (**AICTE**), have entered into a **strategic collaboration to empower Atal Tinkering Lab school students for world class future ready innovation skills across India**, on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti.
- The partnership would **connect Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs)** in schools with **AICTE Institutions Innovation Councils (IICs)** in higher educational institutions in India.
- It is aligned with the National **Education Policy (NEP) 2020** objective of **bridging gap between schools and higher educational institutions**.

1.80 Center extends Special Allowances to AIS officers posted in Ladakh

- Recently, the **Central Government** has decided to extend provisions regarding additional monetary incentives called "**Special Allowances for officers belonging to North East cadres of AIS**" to the All India Services (**AIS**) officers posted in UT of **Ladakh**.
- After the **extension**, the **AIS officers in Ladakh**, would get **Special Allowance** and **Special Duty Allowance** payable at **20 %** and **10 %** of their **basic salary** respectively.
- Special Allowance is acceptable as per **the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission (7CPC) pay matrix** as mentioned in the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) Office Memorandum dated 25th July 2017.

Background:

- Earlier, Centre had granted **Special Allowances** to officers belonging to **North-East Cadres of the AIS** at **25 per % of basic pay** in addition to other allowances as per a DoPT letter from Feb 2009.
- It has been revised to Special Allowance (20% of basic pay) & Special Duty Allowance (10% of basic pay) in 2017.

About 7th Central Pay Commission:

- **Constitution:** 2014; **Chairman:** Justice Ashok Kumar Mathur
- **Implementation Period:** 2016-2026.

Note: A pay commission is appointed **once in every 10 years** & the commission takes **18 months to submit the report.**

Note: DGCI is the National Drug Regulator in India.

1.81 MeitY launches three new initiative of NIXI

- Recently, **Ajay Prakash Sawhney, Secretary** Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (**MeitY**) & **Chairman of National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI)**, has inaugurated **three new initiatives of NIXI.**

Key initiatives launched:

- **IPv6 Expert Panel (IP Guru):** to extend technical support to Indian Entities in adoption of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6); a joint effort of Department of Telecommunications (**DOT**), **MeitY** & community.
- **NIXI Academy:** to educate people to learn and relearn technologies like IPv6.
- **NIXI-IP-INDEX portal:** it will showcase & compare the IPv6 adoption rate in India and the world.

1.82 IIT-M launches fellowship for AI researchers

- Recently, the **Indian Institute of Technology Madras's (IIT-M) Robert Bosch Centre for Data Science and AI (RBCDSAI)** and **Narayanan Family Foundation, USA** have partnered to launch a **fellowship in Artificial Intelligence for Social Good** for recent Phd graduates & early career researchers
- **Funded by the Narayanan Family Foundation**, the fellows would be paid **Rs. 15 lakh to Rs. 18 lakh** (approx. \$20,000-\$24,000) annually & also eligible for a **one-time research grant of up to Rs. 30 lakh** (approx. \$40,000).

1.83 Centre, Japan sign loan pact for Madurai AIIMS

- According to a recent Right to Information Act (RTA) query, **Government of India & Government of Japan** have signed a **loan agreement** to set up All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (**AIIMS**) in **Madurai, Tamil Nadu.**

1.84 'Invest in Afghanistan' business series organized in Hyderabad

- Recently, the **Consulate General of Afghanistan in Hyderabad** has organized **"Invest in Afghanistan"** business series & **Afghanistan Food Festival** in **Hyderabad, Telangana.**

- **12 MoUs** signed between Afghanistan traders and prospective customers in India, during a buyer-seller meet organized during the food festival.
- **Import/export workshop & A Business-2-Business (B2B) meet** was organised, as a part of the business series.

Additional Information:

- **Total value of bilateral trade between India & Afghanistan for Calendar Year (CY) 2019-20:** USD 1.5 billion.
- **Top 5 items exported by India to Afghanistan:** textiles, sugar, transmission towers, tobacco and medicines.

1.85 ReNew Power set to become a Net Zero company by 2050

- Recently, Gurugram based renewable energy company, **ReNew Power**, has announced to achieve **net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**, in line with 'Race To Zero' campaign.

About 'Race to Zero' Campaign:

- An international campaign for a **healthy, resilient, zero-carbon recovery**
- **Led by:** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Champions for Climate Action.
- **Aim:** to bring together net-zero commitments from cities, businesses and investors across the climate action community in the run up to the Conference of the Parties 26(COP26).

1.86 Amazon India launches 'Mentor Connect' programme

- Recently, **Amazon India** has launched '**Mentor Connect**' programme to accelerate the growth of **startups** and **emerging brand owners** enrolled under **Amazon Launchpad** initiative.
- The programme includes **1:1 mentorship sessions** for **3 months**.
- Apart from startups & brand owners, it would be **also extended to the winners of the Amazon Smbhav Entrepreneurship challenge** from **Amazon Smbhav summit**.

About Amazon Launchpad:

- Launched in **2016 in India**, It is a marketing programme by Amazon, to attract startups to sell their products/services in its e-commerce platform.

1.87 SBI collects Rs 300 crores from zero balance accounts in 5 years

- According, to a **recent study by Prof. Ashish Das, IIT Bombay**, several banks have been imposing **excessive charges on certain services** provided to zero-balance or Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts (**BSBDA**) including the State Bank of India (SBI).

Key Highlights:

- **SBI** had collected **Rs 300 crores** from **nearly 12 crore BSBDA holders** for certain services during **2015-20**.
- **SBI** had collected **Rs 72 crore during 2018-19 & Rs 158 crore during 2019-20 alone**.
- **SBI's decision** to levy a **charge of Rs 17.70** for every debit transaction, including digital transactions, beyond four in a month by the **BSBDA** account holders **cannot be considered as "reasonable"**.
- **Punjab National Bank**, has collected **Rs 9.9 crore during 2015-20**, from 3.9 crore BSBDA's.

Background:

- **Levying of charges on BSBDA is guided by September 2013 RBI guidelines.**
- According to the guidelines, BSBDA's can avail **free of charge minimum four withdrawals**, through ATMs and digital payment modes.
- It is **bank's discretion to charge for additional withdrawal/s, on a reasonable, non-discriminatory and transparent manner by banks.**
- Ironically, RBI also considers **withdrawals beyond 4 a month as a value added service & any value added service provided to BSBDA accounts should not be charged.**

Note: Punjab National Bank is the second largest Public Sector Bank in India.

1.88 HUL, Google & MyGov launches AI for Agriculture Hackathon

- Recently, **Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) & Google**, in collaboration with **MyGov India, MeiTY**, have conducted **Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Agriculture Hackathon** from **7th to 9th April 2021**.
- **The initiative was launched on World Water Day on 22nd March 2021.**
- **Aim:** to find innovative solutions to conserve freshwater usage and to address water scarcity problems in India by involving start-ups.

1.89 Kerala announces 'Crushing the Curve' mass vaccination drive

- Recently, the **Kerala Government** has decided to start a **mass vaccination drive** called "**Crushing the curve**", to control the fresh surge of Covid-19 cases in Kerala, by vaccinating **maximum number of people in the age group 45-60.**

Other Initiatives:

- Earlier, **Kerala Govt.** has launched '**Break the Chain**' and '**Back to Basics**' campaigns to combat Covid-19.

1.90 Sonu Sood appointed brand ambassador for Punjab's COVID vaccination drive

- Recently, Actor **Sonu Sood** has been appointed as the **brand ambassador** for **Punjab's anti-coronavirus vaccination programme.**

1.91 New Zealand considers climate law for financial firms

- Recently, **New Zealand** becomes the first country in the world to consider passing a **new bill** that would require **banks, insurers and asset managers to disclose the impacts of climate change on their businesses & measures to address climate-related risks and opportunities.**

Other declarations by New Zealand:

- **New Zealand** has declared **Climate Emergency** to achieve **net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.**
- It has also pledged to make its **public sector carbon neutral by 2025.**

Additional Information:

- In November 2020, **The European Central Bank** has announced that it would begin to assess **bank balance statement sheets for climate risks from 2022.**

1.92 Indian Bank's online training in local dialects, a boon to MSMEs

- Recently, **Indian Bank's** online portal **MSME Prerana** will be providing training in **financial statement analysis, filing of returns to handle business efficiently.**

About MSME Prerana

- **Launched by** – Indian Bank in collaboration with Poornatha & Co
- It is an **online business-mentoring programme for MSMEs** launched for **empowering MSME entrepreneurs through skill development and capacity-building workshops in the local language.**
- It enables MSME entrepreneurs to acquire expertise in handling finance and managerial skills, capacity to handle crises in business, understand the dynamics credit rating and risk management.
- The first two programmes has been conducted in Tamil for the Coimbatore clusters of the Indian Bank and further scaled up across India in Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali and Gujarati.
- **Certification** - On successful completion, all participants would get a certificate, issued jointly by Indian Bank, Poornatha & Co and MADE (Michigan Academy for Developing Entrepreneurs), USA.

1.93 Fifth session of Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs begins virtually - India is the Host and Spices Board India serves as the secretariat of Committee

- Recently, Fifth session of the **Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) established under Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** has taken place.
- It has considered the quality Standards for dried or dehydrated forms of Ginger, Cloves, Saffron and two culinary herbs, Oregano & Basil at step seven, besides Nutmeg and Chilli peppers & Paprika at step four in the Codex procedure of elaboration of food standards.
- It has considered three proposals for new work, viz. Cardamom, Turmeric and prioritized group standard for spices in the form of dried fruits and berries.

About Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)

- It was formed in 2013 with support of more than a hundred countries with **India** as the **host country** and **Spices Board India** as the **Secretariat**.
- It has developed and finalized standards for four spices, viz. dried or dehydrated forms of black/white/green pepper, cumin, thyme, and garlic.

About Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)

- It is an intergovernmental body established jointly by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

1.94 Italy launches first ever mega food park & food processing unit in India

- Recently, **Italy** has launched its first ever "**Mega Food Park**" project in **India** involving **food processing facilities**.
- The project has been launched with the **signing** of a **Letter of Intent** between **the ICE Office in Mumbai** and **Fanidhar MegaFood Park, in Gujarat**.
 - It involves the **Emilia Romagna Region, SACE, ANIMA** (Italian Association representing companies operating in the metalworking sector) and **FederUnacoma** (Italian Agricultural Machinery Federation of Manufacturers).
- The project aims to **create synergy** between **agriculture** and **industry** of the **two countries** and focuses on the **research** and **development** of new and more efficient technologies in the sector.

1.95 High-level group constituted to conduct dialogues with stakeholders of Agri-food systems

- Government of India has constituted a **high-level interdepartmental group** under a NITI Aayog member to conduct **national dialogues** with stakeholders of **Agri-food systems**.
- The group has been constituted under the **chairmanship** of **Ramesh Chand** along with the **representatives** from Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (**MoAFW**), **Rural Development** and others.
- **Aim-** To conduct **National Dialogues** with all the **stakeholders** of **agri-food systems** for exploring national pathways towards **creating sustainable and equitable food systems** in India and suitably contribute to transformation in global food systems to meet the needs of present and future.
- **Additional Information-** First-ever **UN Food Systems Summit** to be held in September 2021 to **strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems** in the World to realise the vision of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

1.96 Oxford University gets ethical nod for Covid reinfections study

- Recently, the **researchers** at the **University of Oxford** have gained **ethical approval** for a new **human challenge trial** that aims to check the **immune response** needed to **protect people against reinfection**.
- As part of the trial, **healthy people will be deliberately exposed** to a **disease-causing organism** in a carefully controlled manner, in order to **determine what kind of immune response prevents reinfection**.

1.97 IGX adds two trading hubs in Maharashtra

- **Indian Gas Exchange Ltd (IGX)** has recently begin trading from the two new physical hubs, **Dabhol and Jaigarh, in Maharashtra**.
 - Earlier, **IGX operates three existing trading hubs: Dahej and Hazira in Gujarat, and KG Basin in Andhra Pradesh**.
- The **Dabhol terminal** is owned by **GAIL (India) Ltd** and has an **operational capacity of 5 MMTPA (Million Metric Tonne Per Annum)**.
- The **Jaigarh Gas Hub** is at the **interconnection point** of the tie-in connectivity Jaigarh-Dabhol pipeline to DUDPL (Dabhol-Uran-Dahej-Panvel Pipeline) located in Dabhol.
 - **H-Energy**, through its wholly-owned subsidiary, **Western Concessions Private Ltd**, will shortly **commence operations** of **India's first Floating Storage and Re-Gasification Unit based LNG (Liquefied natural gas) terminal project** at the **Jaigarh Port**.

1.98 US joins Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)

- Recently, the **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has welcomed **US President Joseph Biden** into the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (**LeadIT**).
- **About LeadIT-**
 - It was launched by the governments of **Sweden and India** at the **UN Climate Action Summit** in September 2019 and is **supported** by the **World Economic Forum**.
 - It gathers **countries and companies** that are **committed** to action to **achieve the Paris Agreement**.

- **Members-**

- ✓ South Korea, the UK, Germany, France, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, India, Sweden, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United States of America.
- ✓ **Spicejet, Mahindra Group, and Dalmia Cement** are also among the members.

1.99 EDF installs one lakh smart electricity metres in India

- Paris based “EDF” has **installed one lakh smart metres in India** under a contract with **Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL)**, an energy service company under administration of **Ministry of Power**.
- This is the **first large-scale pre-paid smart metre solution** to be deployed in India.
- **About EDF’s contract with India-**
 - The contract was awarded to **EDF (95%)** in association with **Accenture Solutions India** in **2019**.
 - It covers design of an advanced metering infrastructure, proper installation of **50 lakh smart metres** across India, **integration of smart metres** with existing billing system of electricity distribution companies.
 - It will be responsible for **operation and maintenance** of the **whole system** for a **period of six-and-a-half years**.
- **Additional Information-**
 - In January, the consortium led by **EDF and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** was awarded the consulting mandate to plan **India's global electricity grid** including a technical and financial proposal for the '**One Sun One World One Grid**' (OSOWOG) project.
 - OSOWOG is an **electricity grid project** that **aims to transfer solar power produced in India across its borders** and is an important part of India's push for renewables.

1.100 Hero Group launches education technology venture “Hero Vired”

- **Hero Group** has recently **launched** a new **education technology venture “Hero Vired”** with the promoter Munjal family committing over USD 10 million (around Rs 75 crore).
- **Aim-** To address the **problem of employability in India** and the **skill gaps** that exist in the **industry** at present.
- The venture will **offer** learners **overall professional development** to make them **industry-ready for employment**.
- **Hero Vired** has partnered with **top global universities**, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and **Singularity University**, to **offer full-time and part-time programs** in-
 - finance and financial technologies; game design; integrated programs in data science, machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI); entrepreneurial thinking and innovation; and full-stack development.
- **It will target three segments of students-**
 - those **who passed class XII** and seeking quality education
 - **fresh college graduates** who are unable to get meaningful jobs

- **working professionals** with 0-10 years of experience, who are looking to upskill to enhance career growth.

1.101 Facebook & CleanMax announces partnership to support renewable power

- Recently, **Facebook** has tied up with **CleanMax** to **support renewable power** from **wind and solar facilities in India & also enable Facebook offices in India** to switch over to **100% renewable energy**.
- Both the parties would **assemble a portfolio of wind and solar projects supplying renewable power into India's electrical grid**.
- While **CleanMax** would **own and operate the projects**, **Facebook** has committed to purchase **100 % of the environmental attribute certificates** from the projects.
- **First project under the partnership:** 32MW wind project in Karnataka.

Note: Facebook has recently announced that it has achieved **net zero emissions & 100 % renewable energy** for its **global operations**.

1.102 India hosts BRICS seminar on misuse of Internet by terrorists

- Recently, the **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**, has organized a **BRICS seminar** for two days, as **India Chairs BRICS2021**.
- The event has been inaugurated by the **Union Home Secretary**.
- **Seminar Topic:** "Misuse of Internet for Terrorist Purposes and Role of Digital Forensics in Terrorist Investigations".

Background:

- **BRICS members** in the **3rd Counter-Terrorism Working Group (CTWG)** at **White River, South Africa** had agreed to establish **five sub-working groups** dedicated to enhance debates over specific challenges on the counter-terrorism front.
- In the **4th CTWG meeting** at **Brasilia, India** was given the **Presidency** of the **sub-working group** on "**Misuse of Internet for Terrorist Purposes**" for **one year**.

1.103 Tourism Minister launches mega tourism promotion event in Srinagar

- Recently, the **Ministry of Tourism**, in association with the **Tourism Department of Jammu-Kashmir**, **Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industries (FICCI)** and the **Indian Golf Tourism Association (IGTA)**, has organized "**Tapping the Potential of Kashmir: Another Day in Paradise**"- a mega tourism promotion event in **Srinagar**.
- **Union Tourism Minister & Lt. Governor, J&K** have **inaugurated** the event.
- **Objective:** to showcase tourism products & promote J&K tourism as the destination for leisure, adventure, eco, wedding, films and meetings, incentives, conferences & exhibitions (MICE) Tourism.

Key Information Shared:

- **Union Budget 2021-22 allocation for development of tourism in JK:** Rs 786 crores.
- Projects worth **Rs. 562.79 crores** sanctioned under **Swadesh Darshan** and **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)** schemes for development of Tourism infrastructure in JK.
- **JK** has witnessed **five times hike** in tourists in **Jan2021** as compared to **Jan2020**.

- **Direct flights** have been started from **Bengaluru** and **Ahmedabad** to **J&K** & **Night flights to Srinagar** have also started

Note: Kashmir is known as 'Paradise on Earth'.

1.104 Agriculture Ministry Signs MoU with Microsoft for a pilot project to raise farmers income

- Recently, **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with **Microsoft India** for a **pilot project** in **100 villages** of **6 states** viz, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Microsoft India** has joined hands with its **local partner, CropData** for the project & a **tripartite agreement** has been signed for the same.
- **Project Duration:** 1 year.
- **Aim:** to develop farmer interface for smart and well-organized agriculture, including post-harvest management and distribution to reduce input costs & enhance the income of farmers

1.105 AIM signs Statement of Intent with Bayer

- Recently, **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** & German pharma & life sciences company- **Bayer** has entered into a **collaboration** to work towards **healthcare** and **agriculture innovations**.
- It is **first of a kind collaboration** between **AIM and Bayer** in the sectors of **agriculture and healthcare**.
- **Both the parties** have signed a **Statement of Intent (Sol)**, to **formalize the collaboration**.

Key Highlights:

- **Under AIM's Atal Tinkering Labs' (ATL)** programme, **Bayer** would explore opportunities to mentor school children, inculcatedesign thinking, problem solving and adaptivelearning skills.
- **Bayer** would also **mentor young innovators and startups** and collaborate with them to further the cause of innovation, as a part of the **Atal Incubation Centres (AIC)** and **Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACIC)**.
- **Bayer** would also explore association with the **techno-preneurs** from the Atal New India Challenge (**ANIC**) and Atal New India Challenges in Applied Research & Innovation for Medium & Small Enterprises (**ARISE**) programs in the **areas of digital solutions** both in **agri and healthcare sectors**.

1.106 India's Agriculture trade grows during 2020-21

- Recently, the Ministry of Agricultureand Farmer's Welfarehas shared theperformance figures of agriculture trade in India during 2020-21.

Key Highlights:

- India's **agricultural & allied exports** during **2019-20** - **Rs. 2.52 lakh Crores** and **imports** - **Rs. 1.47 lakh Crores**.
- **Export of Agri and allied commodities during Apr, 2020 - Feb, 2021:** Rs. 2.74 lakh Crore, as against Rs. 2.31 Crore in the same period last year indicating an **increase of 18.49%**.
- **Imports of Agri and allied commodities during April, 2020 – Feb, 2021:** Rs. 141034.25 Crore as compared to Rs. 137014.39 Crore in the corresponding period last year indicating an **increase of 2.93%**.

- **Balance of trade in agriculture** has **increased** during April, 2020 – Feb, 2021 to **Rs. 132,579.69 Crore** as against Rs. 93,907.76 Crore during the corresponding period in 2019-20.
- **Wheat and other cereals** increased to **Rs. 3283 Crore** and to **Rs. 4542 Crore**, respectively.
- National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) has **exported 50,000 MT wheat to Afghanistan** and **40,000 MT wheat to Lebanon** under Government-To-Government (G2G) arrangement.
- **Wheat exports** showed a growth of **727 %**.
- **Non-Basmati Rice exports** showed a growth of **132%**.
- **Export of Non-Basmati Rice** increased to **Rs 30,277 crores in 2020-21**.
- **Soya meals exports** increased by **132%**.
- **Soya meal exports** increased to **Rs 7224 crores in 2020-21**.
- **Other commodities of Agri & Allied basket witnessing significant increase in export during April, 2020 to February, 2021:** Spices - 11.44%; Sugar- 39.64%; Raw Cotton - 67.96%; Fresh Vegetables-17.54% and Processed Vegetables -42.69%.

1.107 Amazon Pay to facilitate loans for kiranas

- Recently, **Amazon Pay** has announced to **provide small loans and insurance** for **kirana shops** and **allow offline merchant partners to generate their own (Quick Response) QR codes** using the **'Amazon Pay for Business' app** to receive customer payments.

Other initiatives by Amazon:

- **'Local Shops' programme:** plan to onboard 1 million offline retailers and neighbourhood stores on its platform by 2025, to help local stores gain digital space.
- **Amazon India acquired retail startup Perpule** to help kirana partners digitally manage and automate inventory, purchase orders from distributors and billings.
- **Amazon Pay** has launched **'Smart Stores'** in 2020 enabling customers to shop at local stores and make payments via QR code.
- **Amazon India** partnered with **CapitalFloat** to help customers pay through credit.

1.108 CDSCO extends license validity of 8 regulated medical devices by 6 months

- Recently, **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** has **extended the validity of 8 regulated medical devices**, by **additional 6 months**, listed under **Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940** for manufacturers & suppliers who have already submitted applications to Central/State Licensing Authorities, under the provisions of **Medical Devices Rules (MDR), 2017**.
- **Order** in this regard has been **issued by Drugs Controller General (India)**, Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation(**CDSCO**)
- **Objective:** to ensure supply chain continuity and access to 8 medical devices during the transition to new regulatory order under Medical Devices Rules (2017).

Relevance:

- The **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** had earlier notified the following **8 medical items to be regulated** under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** w.e.f. **1st April, 2021**, under **Medical Devices Rules 2017:**
 - All Implantable Medical Devices, CT scan equipment, MRI equipment, Defibrillators,
 - PET Equipment, Dialysis Machine, X-Ray Machine, Bone marrow cell separator.

- As per the order, **importers/manufacturers** are required to take **import/manufacturing licence** from **Central or State Licencing Authority**, for **import/manufacture of above devices**, w.e.f. **1st April, 2021**.

1.109 DPCC flags off 'Clean to Green on Wheels' programme

- Recently, the **Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC)** & **RLG India** have flagged off the **'Clean to Green on Wheels' programme** to spread awareness about e-waste.
- It is an **initiative of RLG India** under its **flagship campaign, Clean to Green (C2G)**.
- In line with **the Digital India movement** and with the **support of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, the "Clean to Green on Wheels" program would see nine mini commercial vehicles to cover about 110 cities and 300 towns & travel more than 1 lakh kms across India.
- **Aim:** to reach out to four million people across India in the next one year.

1.110 Andhra CM launches A.P. Amul Palavelluva project in Guntur

- Recently, the **Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh** has virtually launched the **A.P. Amul Palavelluva Project** in **Guntur district**.

Background:

- **Andhra Govt.** entered into **MoU** with **Amul** in **2020** to enable women self-help groups to set up milk cooperatives in government sector
- **A.P. Amul Palavelluva Project** was initially launched in **December 2020** in Chittoor, Kadapa and Prakasam districts.
- As a part of the project, **Bulk milk cooling units** and **automatic milk collection units** would be set up in 9,899 villages in AP at a cost of **Rs. 4,000 crores**.

Note: Amul has been ranked 8th in the International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN) ranking.

1.111 GAIL proposes wet waste-to-energy plant

- Recently, **GAIL Gas Limited (GGL)** has approached the municipal corporation of Greater Bangalore - **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)** to set up a **Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) plant** in **North Bengaluru** to utilize **segregated organic wet waste**.
- It would have a **minimum capacity** of processing **75 tonnes of wet waste per day (TPD)**.
- **GGL** has **earlier partnered** with **BBMP** in 2020 to provide **18 CNG-powered four-wheel dry waste collection vehicles** worth **Rs. 1 crore** under its CSR initiatives.

1.112 EPFO adds 12.37 lakh net subscribers in the month of February, 2021

- According to the recent provisional payroll data by the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), 12.37 lakh net subscribers have been added in Feb 2021, with an increase of 3.52% net subscribers over Jan 2021.
- The data also indicates **increase of 19.63%** in **net subscribers** as compared to the **corresponding period in Feb 2020**.
- **69.58 lakh net subscribers** have been during the **FY21 till Feb 2021**.

Key Highlights:

- **New Members added to EPFO for the first time in Feb 2021:** 7.56 lakh
-

- **Net Subscribers exited & rejoined EPFO:** 4.81 lakh
- **Top two age bracket with highest number of net enrollments:** 22-25 & 29-35 respectively
- **Top two categories contributing highest net payroll additions:** expert services & Trading-commercial establishments respectively.
- **Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka** are in forefront of net payroll addition, cumulatively contributing **54.81%** of the total net subscribers.
- Around **2.60 lakh net female subscribers** have added in Feb 2021 (**21%** of the total net addition in Feb 2021).

1.113 MeitY announces #FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge

- Recently, the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY)** has announced **#FOSS4GOV Innovation Challenge** to accelerate adoption of **Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in Government**.
- It calls upon **FOSS innovators, technology entrepreneurs and Indian Startups** to submit implementable **open source product innovations** in Customer Relationship Management (**CRM**) and Enterprise Resource Planning (**ERP**) with possible applications for **Govtech** in Health, Education, Agriculture, Urban Governance etc.
- The **announcement** has been made during a **virtual roundtable discussion** titled '**Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in Government**', organized by the **MeitY** in collaboration with **Omidyar Network India**.

Relevance:

- **Govt** had issued a **Policy on Adoption of Open Source Software in 2015**.
- **FOSS** is a **key component** of **GovTech 3.0**
- Due to the large number of 4G data subscribers in India, **96%** of whom access the digital world via open-source based mobile operating systems (primarily Android).
- **Example of Indian Government Project developed using FOSS:** Aadhaar.

1.114 SIDBI has launched quick credit delivery schemes to support Covid-19 preparedness

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has launched two new quick credit delivery schemes, **SHWAS (SIDBI assistance to Healthcare sector in War Against Second wave of COVID19)** and **AROG (SIDBI Assistance to MSMEs for Recovery & Organic Growth during COVID19 pandemic)**.
- These schemes provide funding for production and services related to **supply of oxygen cylinders, oxygen concentrators, oximeters and essential drugs**.
- These schemes envisage 100 per cent funding up to an amount of **₹2 crore** to an MSME unit at an attractive interest rate of 4.50-6 per cent, within 48 hours.

Additional Information:

- **SIDBI** had also launched **SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response against corona virus (SAFE) scheme** in March 2021.

About SIDBI:

- **Headquarters:** Lucknow
- **Chairman & MD:** Siva S Ramann

1.115 Supply Chain Resilience initiative launched

- The Trade Ministers of **India, Japan and Australia** have recently launched the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)**.
- The **SCRI** aims to create a **virtuous cycle** of enhancing **supply chain resilience** with a view to eventually attaining **strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth** in the region.
- **Under the SCRI**, following will be implemented as initial projects-
 - sharing of best practices on supply chain resilience
 - holding investment promotion events and buyer-seller matching eventsThe above will **provide opportunities** for stakeholders to **explore the possibility of diversification** of their **supply chains**.

1.116 Madras High Court forms panel to provide insurance cover to 65,000 lawyers

- Recently, the **Madras High Court** has constituted a **committee** to hold **discussions** with the **State government** and the **insurance companies**.
 - Above decision has been taken in **cognisance** of the fact that **many advocates have died due to COVID-19**.
- **Advocate General Vijay Narayan** will be the **chairman** of the Committee, while **Advocate General P.H. Arvinth Pandian** has been appointed as its coordinator.
- **The committee** will held **discussions** with the **State government** and the **insurance companies** to come up with a **group health insurance policy** that could **cover the medical expenses** incurred by around **65,000 advocates**, enrolled with the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (BCTNP), and their family members.

1.117 Global Task Force on Pandemic Response: Mobilising for India

- Recently, the **U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC)** of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the **U.S.-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF)** and Business Roundtable, have constituted a task force named as **“Global Task Force on Pandemic Response: Mobilising for India”**.
- **Aim-** To **mobilise resources** and **coordinate efforts** to help **India fight** the battle against **COVID-19**.
- The **task force** has **committed** to get **20,000 oxygen concentrators** to **India**, and will also provide **critical medical supplies, vaccines, oxygen** and other **life-saving assistance** amid an unprecedented surge in coronavirus cases.

1.118 United Nations declares 2023 International Year of Millets

- The **United Nations** General Assembly has recently **adopted** a **resolution**, **sponsored by India** and supported by more than 70 countries, declaring **2023** as the **International Year of Millets**.
- The resolution is intended to **increase public awareness** on the **health benefits of millets** and their suitability for cultivation under tough conditions marked by climate change.

1.119 Facebook to launch “Vaccine Finder” tool in India

- Recently, social media major **Facebook** has announced that it will begin rolling out **"Vaccine Finder"** tool on its mobile app in India.

- The tool has been **developed** in **partnership** with the **government of India** and will be **available** in **17 local languages**.
- The tool will **help people identify places** nearby to **get the vaccine**.
 - It will give **vaccination centre locations** and their hours of operation using data provided by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - It will also **show walk-in options** (for 45 years and above) and a link to register on the official covid vaccine portal **CoWin** to schedule one's vaccination appointment.
- **Additional Information- Facebook** has also **announced** a **\$10 million grant** for **emergency response efforts** in light of the **covid-19 situation** in India.

1.120 Aviation Ministry permits Telangana to use drones for vaccine delivery

- The **Civil Aviation Ministry** has recently **permitted** the **Telangana government** to **use drones** for **experimental delivery** of **vaccines** within the visual line of sight.
- According to the ministry, it has **granted conditional exemption** to the Telangana government from the **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, 2021**, for "**conducting experimental delivery of vaccines** using **drones** within the **visual line of sight range**".
- This exemption will be **valid for a period of one year** or until further orders.

1.121 Indian Army initiates Ladakh Ignited Minds project

- Recently, the **Indian Army** has **initiated** the project "**Ladakh Ignited Minds. A Centre of Excellence and Wellness**" in **Ladakh**.
- **Aim-** To provide better training facilities to disadvantaged Ladakhi students to give them opportunity to study in niche educational institutes.
- On behalf of Indian Army, **Fire and Fury Corps** has **signed** a couple of **MoUs** with partner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (**HPCL**) and executing agency, a Kanpur based NGO, **National Integrity and Educational Development Organization (NIEDO)**.
 - With the support of **HPCL & NIEDO**, **Fire and Fury Corps** will provide a holistic training for Ladakhi youth.

1.122 Oxford Economics lowers India's 2021 GDP growth forecast to 10.2%

- Global forecasting firm **Oxford Economics** has recently revised downwards its **India GDP growth** forecast for **2021** to **10.2%** from 11.8 per cent previously.
- It cited the country's escalating health burden, faltering vaccination rate and lack of a convincing government strategy to contain the pandemic, as a reason for the projections.

1.123 PFRDA allows Aadhaar-based online KYC process for new subscribers under NPS

- Recently, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (**PFRDA**) has allowed the **Aadhaar-based online KYC process** for onboarding of **new subscribers** under the **National Pension System (NPS)**.
- The **NSDL CRA** (National Securities Depository Limited-Central Recordkeeping Agency) has now **enabled** the **Aadhaar based online e-KYC authentication** functionality for NPS subscriber registration in the e-NPS platform.

- The **online Aadhaar e-KYC** will **simplify the process of account opening** which offers the subscribers, a unique digital experience with instantaneous generation of Permanent Retirement Account Number (**PRAN**).
- Till now, the registration under e-NPS was allowed either through **Aadhaar offline e-KYC** or through Permanent Account Number (**PAN**) and **bank account**.
- **About e-NPS**- It is the online NPS onboarding portal hosted by the Central Record Keeping Agencies (CRA) appointed by PFRDA wherein one can register and contribute online into NPS.

1.124 PETA urges anti-speciesist approach in Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act revision

- Recently, the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (**PETA**) **India** has **submitted its proposals** for the revision of the **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960**, to the **Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)**.
- **Some of the proposals are-**
 - **replacing** the pronoun **“it”** with **“he”** or **“she”** when referring to animals as a first step towards **recognising** them as **living, feeling beings**, and not objects.
 - PETA India wants the Act to be, at minimum, **less speciesist** (i.e. less exploitative of animals) than it is now.
 - **Increasing penalties for cruelty to animals** to a range between **₹25,000 and ₹1 lakh** and up to **5-years of imprisonment**.
 - Recommends **seizure of the person’s animal** and **preventing** him or her **from owning or working with any other animal**, for a cognisable offence or a second non-cognisable offence.
 - Prohibiting the caging of aerial birds, stopping the use of animals in circuses, eliminating all dissection of animals for teaching and training students.

1.125 Project DANTAK completes 60 years in Bhutan

- **Project DANTAK** has recently completed 60-years in **Bhutan**, and **reaffirmed its commitment** to support the march of Bhutan towards **realising the dreams of His Majesty Druk Gyalpo**, the **plans** of the **Royal Government of Bhutan** and aspirations of the people of the kingdom.
- Over the years, **DANTAK** has met the **myriad infrastructure requirements** in **Bhutan**.
- **About project DANTAK-**
 - It was **established on April 24, 1961** as a result of the visionary leadership of His Majesty the Third King and then Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru.
 - It was tasked to **construct the pioneering motorable roads** in the Kingdom.
 - It completed the road connecting Samdrup Jongkhar to Trashigang in 1968. In the same year, Thimphu was connected to Phuentsholing by DANTAK.

1.126 ‘Virafin’ gets emergency nod for treating moderate COVID-19 infections in adults

- Recently, **Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)** gave a **restricted emergency use** approval to the **Zydus Cadila’s ‘Virafin’** for treating the **patients showing moderate COVID-19 symptoms**.

- Department of Biotechnology (DBT)- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) COVID 19 Research Consortium has provided its support for **conducting the Phase II human clinical trial studies**.
- **Virafin** is a **pegylated interferon alpha-2b (PegIFN)**, which when subcutaneously injected to the patient in the early stages of infection, resulted in their faster recovery.

1.127 East Godavari bags two national awards in rural development & governance

- **East Godavari** Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy has recently received two **national awards** in **rural development** and **governance** from the **Union Ministry of Panchayat Raj** during the virtual celebrations of the **National Panchayat Raj Day**.
- **The two awards are-**
 - **Kakinada rural mandal** has won the **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP)** for delivering best services in the areas including **sanitation, e-governance, revenue generation**, and **civic services** such as drinking water and rural infrastructure facilities.
 - **G.Ragampeta** panchayat of **Peddapuram mandal** has won the **Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award** for better **planning and management of resources**.

1.128 U.S. applauds India for stepping up its climate change commitment

- Recently, the **US govt. has applauded India** for **stepping up its climate change commitment** including the **partnership with the United States**.
- **India-USA** have also launched the **“US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership”**, to create stronger **bilateral cooperation** in the **current decade** to meet the **goals of the Paris Agreement**.

About US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership:

- **Two main tracks of the Partnership:**
 - **Strategic Clean Energy Partnership and the Climate Action:** Co-chaired by US Energy Secretary **Jennifer Granholm** and Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas **Dharmendra Pradhan**
 - **Finance Mobilization Dialogue:** co-chaired US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate **John Kerry**.

1.129 HDFC Bank deploys mobile ATMs

- Recently, **HDFC Bank** has deployed **Mobile Automated Teller Machines (ATMs)** in **19 cities**, to cover **over 50 locations** across India to **assist customers amidst surge in covid-19 cases & lockdown**.

1.130 Paytm launches India's first video-based Wealth Community

- Recently, **Paytm** has launched **India's first video-based investing community** called **Paytm Wealth Community**, **owned & operated** by its parent company **One97 Communications Ltd (OCL)**.
- It enables **users to interact with super matter experts** across various **wealth topics**.

1.131 SEA organizes webinar on 'Mission Mustard 2025'

- Recently, the **Joint Secretary (Oilseeds), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** has addressed a **webinar on 'Mission Mustard 2025'**, organised by **Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA) of India**.

Key Information Shared:

- Govt. of India targets 17 million tonnes (MT) mustard production by 2025-26.**
- By 2025-26, Mustard cultivation area is expected to increase around nine million hectares.**
- Target for 2021-22: an area of 7.58 million hectares with a production of 12.24 MT.**
- Target areas for mustard cultivation in 2021: 368 districts in 13 States (same as in 2020)**
- Area covered under mustard cultivation during Rabi 2021: 7.3 million hectares**
- Amount spent on mustard mission in 2020: Around Rs 160 crore.**
- Average mustard production in India from 2014-15 to 2018-19: 7.7 MT, from 5.9 million hectares of land.**
- Gol has made planning for the next five years, and the areas identified include rice fallow areas, intercropping areas, and non-traditional areas.**
- Identification of cultivation areas for 2022 Rabi season:**

Category	States identified	Additional lands to be brought under mustard cultivation
Rice fallow areas	Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Odisha, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh	2 lakh hectares
Intercropping areas	Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Maharashtra	2 lakh hectares
Non-traditional areas	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala	-

1.132 Labour Bureau to release 1st report of quarterly employment survey in July 2021

- Recently, the **Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment** has announced that the **first report of the Quarterly Employment (QES)** is expected to be released in **July 2021** and the report of **Migrant Survey** in **November 2021**.

Background:

- All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES) has two parts, viz:**
 - Quarterly Employment Survey (QES):** provides employment estimates for the establishments employing 10 or more workers;
 - Area Frame Establishment Survey (AFES):** provides the employment estimates for the establishments recruiting 9 or less workers.

1.133 INYAS launches campaign to bust myths about Covid 19 vaccination programme

- Indian National Young Academy of Sciences (INYAS) has recently launched multipronged nationwide mass **awareness campaign to bust myths about Covid 19 vaccination programme.**
- The awareness campaign has been launched with information packages in **11 languages**, including English and Hindi, **make the immunization programme successful.**
- It will be carried out through **COVACNEWS** android-based **mobile app** made by INYAS for ensuring information at the fingertips.
- A pan-India info-graphic video is also been released along with the GYAN TEEKA webinar series dedicated to increase awareness about COVID-19 vaccination.

1.134 103rd Development Committee Meeting of World Bank-IMF

- **Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman** has recently participated in the **103rd Meeting** of the **Development Committee** of **World Bank-International Monetary Fund (IMF).**
- The items on the agenda included-
 - World Bank Group (**WBG**) and IMF Support for Debt Relief Under the Common Framework and Beyond
 - **COVID-19 pandemic:** World Bank Group Support for Fair and Affordable Access to Vaccines by Developing Countries
 - **From COVID-19 Crisis Response to Resilient Recovery** – Saving Lives and Livelihoods while Supporting **Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development (GRID).**
- Finance Minister mentioned that **the World Bank Group** has **stepped up its financing** in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic with **total financing approvals exceeding \$100 billion** for the first time.

1.135 CSIR adopts 295 Atal Tinkering Labs

- Recently, the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, **NITI Aayog's flagship 295 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs)** as well as their students were officially **adopted** by **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).**
- **Aim-** To inculcate scientific research and innovation culture among students.
- **CSIR** will be **nominating top research scholars and scientists** who will **mentor** each of the **ATLs** and act as **resource persons.**
- AIM and CSIR will also conduct a series of webinars for students on various topics related to scientific and technological concepts, ideas or societal issues.

About JIGYASA Program-

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (**CSIR**), has launched a **student-scientist connect programme 'JIGYASA'** in collaboration with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathans (**KVS**) on 6th July 2017.
- The **focus** of this scheme is on **connecting school students and scientists** so as to extend student's classroom learning with well planned research laboratory based learning.
- Through "**JIGAYASA**" **program**, **CSIR** has **connected** more than **3 lakh students** in the past few years.

1.136 Regeneron antibody cocktail helps prevent symptomatic Covid-19

- Drug maker **Regeneron** has announced that the combination shot of casirivimab and imdevimab called “**REGEN-COV**” was able to **prevent symptomatic Covid-19 among people exposed to the virus.**
 - During the trials, **REGEN-COV reduced** the overall risk of **progressing to symptomatic COVID-19** by 31%, and by 76% after the third day.
- **Regeneron** has announced to **seek expansion** of the **emergency use authorization** for the drug, which is currently available in the **United States** to **treat mild-to-moderate Covid-19** in people already infected with the coronavirus.

1.137 Rajasthan's First Wellness Resource Centre

- **First wellness and resource centre** of Rajasthan has been launched in **Jaipur** in **collaboration** with Indus Wellness Code Trust (**IWCT**) of Silicon Valley, **USA.**
- A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** has been signed between **Jaipur based Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR)** and **IWCT** for establishing the centre.
- Under the aegis of **India Community Centre – Crack the Wellness Code**, similar centres are operational in North America.
- **Objectives of Wellness and Resource Centre-**
 - The wellness resource centre will **emphasis on multidimensional wellness** by educating, inspiring and empowering the people to ensure their overall well-being.
 - The centre will also **provide relevant information** and **offer evidence based resources** in audio, video, and text formats on **multiple dimensions of wellness.**
 - It **would cover several aspects of wellness**, such as physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, environmental, occupational, financial, technological and legal wellness.
- The **alliance between IWCT and IIHMR** will also enable the latter's Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship to **extend support to the upcoming healthcare start-ups.**
- **Additional Information-** Under **Nirogi Rajasthan campaign** by the **state government of Rajasthan**, people were given useful information for fighting diseases and protecting themselves and their families.

1.138 Farm Exports Rose 16.9% in April-Feb, FY 21

- **India** has **exported agricultural commodities** worth **₹2.74 lakh crore** from **April 2020 till February 2021.**
 - This is a **16.9% increase** from **₹2.31 lakh crore** in same period in previous year.
 - **Wheat export increased** in value to **₹3,283 crore** from ₹425 crore.
 - **Non-basmati rice exported also increased** to **₹30,277 crore** from ₹13,030 crore.
- Also, the **value of agricultural and allied commodities** that were imported **increased by 3% to ₹1,41,034 crore** from ₹1,37,014 crore in same period in previous year.
- The **balance of trade in agriculture** has also **increased to ₹1,32,579.69 crore** from ₹93,907.76 crore in the same period.
- Under government to government arrangement, the **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)** has exported:

- 50,000 tonnes wheat to **Afghanistan**
- 40,000 tonnes wheat to **Lebanon**

1.139 Expenditure Department gets control over Public Financial Management System

- **Expenditure Department** under **Ministry of Finance** will now be **directly controlling Public Financial Management System (PFMS)**.

About Public Financial Management System (PFMS)-

- It was **set up in 2009**, and is a **web based online software** application **developed** and **implemented** by the **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)**.
- **Objective-**
 - To track funds released under all plan schemes of the centre.
 - For real time reporting of expenditure at all levels of programme implementation.
 - To cover direct payment to beneficiaries under all schemes.
- **Amendment to PFMS Functioning-**
 - **A dedicated PFMS Division within the CGA** will be created to exclusively look after the work of design, development and implementation of the system.
 - The division will be **given functional autonomy backed with administrative and financial powers**.
 - ✓ The division will be **headed by Additional CGA rank officer**.
- **Now all States and UTs have been clubbed into three Regional Directorate**, each one headed by a Deputy CGA.
 - Presently, each of State/UT is under one Indian Civil Account Service (ICAS) officer.

1.140 EPFO increases maximum death insurance benefit

- **Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has **increased death insurance benefit** to **₹2.5 lakhs and maximum ₹7 lakhs** from earlier ₹2 lakh and maximum ₹6 lakh.
 - It is **available to subscribers of employees deposit linked insurance (EDLI) scheme**.
 - **If an EDLI subscriber dies while in employment**, then family members are given his death benefits.
 - Currently there are **2 million EDLI subscribers** out of total 50 million subscribers of EPFO.
 - The **lower limit** of the above mentioned provision is **applicable retrospectively from 15th February, 2020**.
 - However, the **upper limit would have a prospective effect**.

1.141 Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme

- Chief Minister of **Andhra Pradesh**, has released **first instalment of ₹672 crore for fee reimbursement under Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme**.
 - This amount has been **directly transferred to the beneficiaries' mothers account**.

About Jagananna Vidya Deevena Scheme-

- This is a **flagship scholarship scheme** launched by **Government of Andhra Pradesh in April 2020**.

- **Financial assistance is provided to all students** who are willing to study and gain higher education but are unable to pay fees.
 - The reimbursements are made **directly into the mother's account of the students in 4 instalments annually.**
- **₹4,879 crore have been sanctioned** so far under the scheme **benefiting 10.88 lakh students.**

1.142 APEDA launched IT initiatives to boost exports

- The **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** has launched **information technology (IT) related initiatives.**
 - These initiatives will help to **speed up shipments and bring in more efficiency.**
- **Initiatives include:**
 - **Paperless office**— where fees along with documents can be submitted online for registration cum membership certification (RCMC).
 - Enabling **digital signatures** and **electronic payment facilities.**
 - **Phase wise delivery of online services**— traceability system for grapes, organic products, peanut, basmati rice and meat in phases.
 - ✓ **Hortinet** covers 40-plus vegetables, besides mango, pomegranate, citrus and other fruits.
 - ✓ **Grapenet** — is a blockchain based solution for traceability of grapes.
 - **Monitoring and evaluation.**
 - **Uniform access to shippers and conducting virtual trade fairs**— where exhibitors, visitors, exporters and industry meet and **exchange information** on new products and establish new partnerships.
 - **FarmerConnect portal**- to help farmer producers' organisations, cooperatives and exporters by **creating profiles and posting sales offers** on web platform.
 - ✓ Exporters can also post their enquiries or needs, and view matching sale offers.

1.143 DPIIT to monitor internal trade, manufacturing, delivery of essential commodities

- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** under **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, has decided to monitor status of transportation and delivery of essential commodities.
- **A control room will be set up** to monitor the issues related to internal trade, manufacturing, delivery and logistics of essential commodities during Covid pandemic.
- Any issue faced should be **reported to the control room**, which will in turn take up issue with concerned state/UT government.

1.144 RBI withdraws restrictions on Youth Development Co-operative Bank

- **Recently, RBI has withdrawn restrictions on Youth Development Co-operative Bank, Kohlapur .**
- It has earlier restricted bank with a withdrawal cap of Rs 5000.
- It was also barred from granting or renewing any loans and advances, making any investment, incurring any liability, without prior approval in writing from the Reserve Bank of India.

1.145 RBI extends 'On Tap TLTRO' scheme till 30 September, 2021

- Recently, Reserve Bank of India has extended On Tap TLTRO scheme till 30th September 2021.

About TLTRO (Targeted long-term repo operations)

- Long Term Repo Operations (LTRO) is a tool through which banks **borrow one to three-year funds** from the central bank at the repo rate.
- 'Targeted' LTRO is a case in which the central bank wants banks opting for funds to specifically invest in investment-grade corporate debt (corporate bonds, commercial papers, and non-convertible debentures (NCDs) etc.)

1.146 WazirX launches NFT marketplace for Indian artists

- Recently, Cryptocurrency exchange **WazirX** has launched a marketplace for **Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT)** which will enable Indian creators to auction their digital assets over the **Blockchain-based platform and earn royalty**.
- Under the exchange, Indian artists can place their digital assets including art pieces, audio files, videos, and even tweets, for auction over the blockchain-based NFT marketplace to earn royalty.

About NFT

- It is unique digital asset that is not interchangeable.

1.147 NPCI sets up subsidiary NPCI Bharat BillPay

- Recently, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced the formation of its wholly-owned subsidiary firm - NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL) which came into effect from 1st April 2021.
- It will offer various recurring payment services to customers, including bill payments, water and municipal taxes, NETC FASTag recharge, loan repayments, insurance, cable, housing society etc.

About Bharat Bill Payment System

- It is a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) conceptualized system driven by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) that offers interoperable and accessible bill payment service to consumers via digital (bank channels) as well as through a network of agents & bank branches.

1.148 Tiger Global makes its first India cryptocurrency firm investment

- Recently, **Tiger Global Management** has made USD 25 million (Rs 181 crore) its first Indian investment in cryptocurrency framework CoinSwitch Kuber in a Series B round of funding from, at a valuation of over \$500 million.

About Cryptocurrency

- A cryptocurrency is a form of **digital asset** based on a network that is distributed across a large number of computers. This decentralized structure allows them to exist outside the control of governments and central authorities.
- The word "cryptocurrency" is derived from the encryption techniques which are used to secure the network.
- Blockchains, which are organizational methods for ensuring the integrity of transactional data, are an essential component of many cryptocurrencies.

- **Important Cryptocurrencies of World:** Ethereum, Litecoin, Cardano, Polkadot, Stellar, Chainlink, Tether, Monero etc.

1.149 Government nominates economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth to RBI central board

- Recently, **The central government has nominated economic affairs secretary Ajay Seth as a director on the Central Board of Reserve Bank of India.**
- He has replaced Tarun Bajaj.

1.150 ICICI Bank launches digital banking service 'Merchant Stack'

- Recently, **ICICI Bank has announced the launch of its 'Merchant Stack', a set of the country's most comprehensive digital banking services specially curated for retail merchants.**
- The services will enable merchants — grocers, super markets, large retail store chains, online businesses and large e-commerce firms to meet their banking requirements seamlessly.
- The main pillars of the stack are
 - A new account named, 'Super Merchant Current Account'
 - Two instant credit facilities called 'Merchant Overdraft' and 'Express Credit ; both are' based on POS transactions, and first in the industry
 - 'Digital Store Management' facility to help merchants take their business online
 - Exclusive loyalty rewards programme, an industry first feature
 - Value added services like alliances with major e-commerce and digital marketing platforms for expansion of online presence.

Polity and Governance

1.151 Draft "Standards for Road Train"

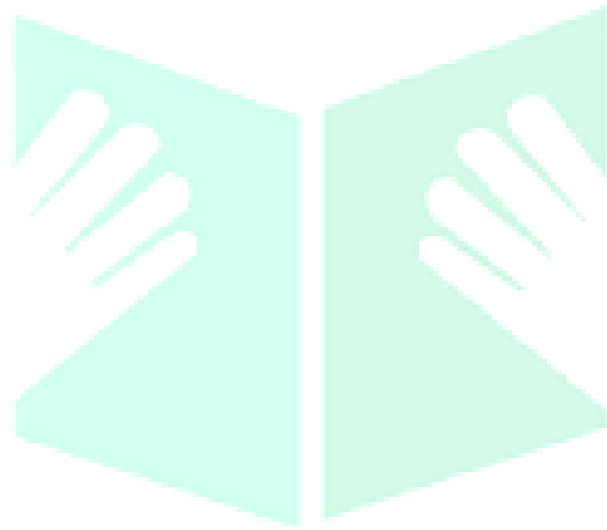
- **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** has released **draft "Standards for Road Train"**.
- **Automotive Industry Standards Committee (AISC) – amended AIS-113 standards**, which will now include safety requirements for road trains.
 - **European benchmarks have been examined** while preparing these standards.
 - **Road Train:** It is a trucking vehicle that consists of 2 or more trailers or semi-trailers hauled by a prime mover.

About Automotive Industry Standards Committee (AISC)-

- It **consists of representatives from** several relevant ministries, testing agencies, industry stakeholders, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), among others.
- Recent amended standard **AIS-113** (Code of Practice for Type Approval of Trailers / Semi-trailers of categories T2, T3 and T4 being towed by Motor Vehicles of categories N2 and N3) is open for public comments.
- The amendment will help to **revolutionize Indian transport industry**, along with reducing logistics costs.
- It will also help in **reducing congestion, save fuel, reduce noise and air pollution.**

1.152 Nagaland forms panel on listing indigenous inhabitants

- Recently, **Nagaland government** has decided to **form a joint consultative committee (JCC)** for taking an exercise **to register the state's indigenous inhabitants.**



CivilsTap Hlmachal

- This committee would involve all traditional tribal bodies and civil society organisations.
- The decision was taken in presence of leaders of community based and social organisations along with political parties on issues of **preparing the Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN)**.
- The JCC will be **headed by Home Commissioner Abhijit Sinha** and will include members from the Central Nagaland Tribes' Council, Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation and the Tenyemie People's Organisation.

About Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland (RIIN)-

- **Nagaland government in July 2019, launched RIIN** which is a variant of **Assam's National Register of Citizens**.
- **Aim-** To prevent outsiders from obtaining fake indigenous certificates for seeking jobs and benefits of government schemes.
- The **exercise was suspended** following protests from community-based and extremist organizations.
- **Nagaland attained statehood on 1st December, 1963** and this was the **cut-off date for determining the "permanent residents" of the state**.
 - As per this the **non Nagas and Nagas people living beyond the boundaries of Nagaland** could be left out of RIIN.

1.153 Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme notified for Air Conditioners (ACs) and LED lights

- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has notified the **PLI scheme for ACs and LED lights**.
- An **Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS), chaired by the Cabinet Secretary** will monitor the PLI scheme. It will:
 - Undertake periodic reviews of the outgo under the scheme.
 - Ensure uniformity of all PLIs.
 - Take appropriate action to ensure that the expenditure is within the prescribed outlay.
 - Can also make any changes in modalities of the scheme.

PLI Scheme for ACs and LED Lights

- The government has **allocated a budgetary outlay of of Rs 6,238 crore** for implementation of PLI scheme for **white goods** – air conditioners and LED lights.
- **Objective-** To **make manufacturing** in India **globally competitive**, creating economies of scale and removing sectoral disabilities and ensuring efficiencies.
- The scheme will be **implemented from 2021-22 to 2028-29**.
- **Intended benefits of the scheme:**
 - It will facilitate **additional investments of Rs 7,920 crores**.
 - **4 lakh jobs** will be created.
 - **Direct and indirect revenues of Rs 49,300 crores** is expected to be generated.
 - It will **provide incentive of 4% to 6%** to the **companies engaged in the manufacturing** of Air Conditioners and LED lights.

- ✓ This benefit will be available on **incremental sales of goods manufacture** in India **for a period of 5 years** and not on mere assembly of finished products in India.
- ✓ The 5-year period will be calculated subsequent to a base year and 1 year if gestation period.
- It is expected to **increase production by worth Rs 1,68,000 crores** and **exports worth Rs 64,000 crores.**

About White goods-

- They are generally **large home appliances** such as **refrigerators, dish washers, washing machines, air conditioners.**

1.154 Amendments to GNCTD Act, 1991 Do not Alter Constitutional and Legal Responsibilities of Elected Government in Respect of Transferred Subjects in State & Concurrent Lists

- Recently, Ministry of Home Affairs has clarified that the amendments to the GNCTD Act, 1991, in no way alter the constitutional and legal responsibilities of the elected Government to take necessary action, in respect of the subjects transferred to them in the State and Concurrent Lists of the Constitution of India, including subjects such as health, education, etc.

Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021

- **Aim** – To "further define the responsibilities of the elected government and Lieutenant Governor (LG) in Delhi".

Provisions of the Bill:

- **Definition of Government:** The expression 'Government' referred to in any law to be made by the Legislative Assembly shall mean the **Lieutenant Governor (LG).**
- **Discretionary Powers of LG:** The Bill gives discretionary powers to the LG even in matters where the Legislative Assembly of Delhi is empowered to make laws.
- **Necessarily Granted an Opportunity to LG:** It seeks to ensure that the LG is "necessarily granted an opportunity" to give her/his opinion before any decision taken by the Council of Ministers (or the Delhi Cabinet) is implemented.
- **Related to Administrative Decisions:** The amendment also says that "Legislative Assembly shall not make any rule to enable itself to consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the Capital or conduct inquiries in relation to the administrative decisions".

Background

- Delhi's status as a UT with a Legislative Assembly is an outcome of the **69th Amendment Act** through which **Articles 239AA and 239BB** were introduced in the Constitution.
- The Act was passed simultaneously to supplement the constitutional provisions relating to the Assembly and the Council of Ministers in the national capital.
- For all practical purposes, it outlined the powers of the Assembly, the discretionary powers enjoyed by the L-G, and the duties of the CM with respect to the need to furnish information to the L-G.

1.155 The Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021

- Recently, the **President of India**, has promulgated **Tribunal Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance 2021**, which dissolves certain existing appellate bodies and transfers their functions to other judicial bodies.

- The Ordinance has **amended the Finance Act 2017** to include provisions related to the **composition of search-cum-selection committees of 19 tribunals, and term of office of members** in the Act itself.
- It also includes the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission** established under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** within the purview of the **Finance Act, 2017**

Key Highlights:

- **Search-cum-selection committees:**
 - **Chairperson and Members of the Tribunals** would be **appointed** by the **central government** on the **recommendation** of a **Search-cum-Selection Committee**.
 - **Composition of committee:**
 - i. The Chief Justice of India, or a Supreme Court Judge nominated by him, as the Chairperson (with casting vote),
 - ii. Two Secretaries nominated by the central government.
 - iii. The sitting or outgoing Chairperson, or a retired Supreme Court Judge, or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court.
 - iv. The Secretary of the Ministry under which the Tribunal is constituted (with no voting right).
- **Term of Office:**
 - **Chairperson of the tribunal:** four years or till the attainment of the age of seventy years, whichever is earlier.
 - **Other Members:** four years or till the age of sixty-seven years, whichever is earlier.
- **Removal of bodies from the purview of the Finance Act, 2017:**
 - Airport Appellate Tribunal established under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994,
 - Appellate Board established under the Trade Marks Act, 1999,
 - Authority of Advance Ruling established under the Income Tax Act, 1961,
 - Film Certification Appellate Authority established under the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- **List of Appellate authorities to be replaced:**

Acts	Appellate body	Proposed entity
The Cinematograph Act, 1952	Appellate Tribunal	High Court
The Trade Marks Act, 1999	Appellate Board	High Court
The Copyright Act, 1957	Appellate Board	Commercial Court or the Commercial Division of a High Court
The Customs Act, 1962	Authority for Advance Rulings	High Court
The Patents Act, 1970	Appellate Board	High Court
The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2002	Airport Appellate Tribunal	Civil Court#
The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999	Appellate Board	High Court
The Airports Authority of India Act, 1994	Airport Appellate Tribunal	Central government, for disputes arising from the

disposal of properties left on airport premises by unauthorised occupants.

High Court, for appeals against orders of an eviction officer.

1.156 EU Council approves conclusions on Indo-Pacific strategy

- Recently, the **Council of the European Union** has **approved conclusions** on a **European Union strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific** to reinforce its strategic focus, presence and actions.
- **Aim:** to contribute to regional stability, security, prosperity and sustainable development at a time of rising challenges and tensions in the region.
- The council had tasked the high representative and the Commission with putting forward a **Joint Communication on cooperation in the Indo-Pacific by September 2021**

About EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific (EU Indo-Pacific Strategy)

- It is **adopted by 27 Foreign Ministers** of the **European Union's member countries**.
- It is **based on an inclusive & broad-based approach**.



- **The Indo-Pacific Strategy would allow the EU to enhance cooperation in the region in many areas including:** Ocean Governance, Research & Technology, Connectivity, and Health, Strengthening regional organizations, intensify cooperation in multilateral fora & reinforce on tackling global challenges such as climate change.
- **The strategy also intends EU to strengthen the Security & Defence Aspects in the region by:**
 - Protecting critical maritime routes.
 - Organizing more joint exercises and port calls between Indo-Pacific naval units and the EU counter-piracy Naval Force **Operation Atalanta**.
 - To expand its security and defence dialogue to include more partners and engage strongly in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) **Regional Forum**.

1.157 JMM first party to declare name of electoral bonds donor

- According to the recently released report titled “Analysis of Income & Expenditure of National and Regional Political Parties for FY 2019-20” by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is the first party that has declared the name of the entity which made donations to it through electoral bonds.
- **Hindalco** has donated **Rs. 1 crore to JMM** through **electoral bonds** in FY 2019-20.

Key Highlights of the report:

- The report has analysed the income/expenditure of **19 political parties**.
- **Total income declared by the 19 parties in FY 2019-20:** Rs 619.28 crores.
- **More than 50% of the total income (Rs 312.37 crore)** of 19 parties was received from **donations through electoral bonds**.
- **Electoral bonds** worth **Rs 3,429.56 crore** were **redeemed** by parties in **2019-20**.
- **Remaining Rs 3,117.19 crore**, or approximately **91% worth of electoral bonds**, were **encashed by parties** whose audit reports are yet to be available on the Election Commission’s website.
- **Top 3 parties reporting highest income:** All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Telugu Desam Party (TDP) & Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

Note: Electoral bearer bonds discussed in March 2021 Magazine.

1.158

E-census of Assamese Muslims launched

- Recently, **Janagosthiya Samannay Parishad, Assam (JSPA)** has launched an **online portal** for **conducting the first-ever census of Assamese Muslims**.
- It has been **modelled on the lines of the National Register of Citizens (NRC)** and aimed at **distinguishing Indigenous Assamese Muslim Communities** viz, the Goriyas, the Moriyas & the Deshis from Bengali-speaking migrant Muslims.

1.159 DDA approves draft Master plan-2041

- Recently, the **Delhi Development Authority (DDA)** has given the **preliminary approval** for the **draft Master Plan for Delhi-2041 (MPD-2041)**.
- **MPD-2041** has been divided into **two volumes** and **nine sections**, containing **22 chapters**.
- It **facilitate Delhi’s development** by **assessing the present condition** and **guiding how to achieve the desired development**.
- It envisages to make **Delhi an environmentally responsible & future-ready city**.
- **Vision of MPD 2041:** “Foster a Sustainable, Liveable and Vibrant Delhi by 2041”.

Background:

- The **first master plan** has been promulgated in **1962** under the **Delhi Development Act 1957**, followed by the plans of **2001** and **2021**.

1.160 India elected to 3 bodies of U.N. Economic and Social Council

- Recently, **India** has been **elected by acclamation** to following **three bodies** of the **UN Economic and Social Council** for a three-year term beginning **January 1, 2022-**
 - **Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

- ✓ Austria, Bahrain, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Ghana, Libya, Pakistan, Qatar, Thailand, Togo and the U.S. were also elected by acclamation while Brazil, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Chile, Cuba were elected by secret ballot.
- Executive Board of the **U.N. Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (U.N. Women)**
 - ✓ Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Gambia, Guyana, Kenya, Monaco, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, Turkmenistan and Ukraine were also elected by acclamation to the U.N. body.
- **Executive Board of the World Food Programme**
 - ✓ France, Ghana, the Republic of Korea, Russia and Sweden have also been elected by acclamation to the World Food Programme.

1.161 Unique ID for all land parcels by March 2022

- Recently, the **dept. of land resources** has informed **standing committee on rural development** that a **14-digit identification number** would be **allotted for every plot of land in India by March 2022** under the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme.
- Described as **"the Aadhaar for land"**, ULPIN scheme has been **launched in 10 states in 2021**.
- It is next step in the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (**DILRMP**), which has been **extended till 2023-24**.
- The identification would be based on the **longitude and latitude coordinates** of the land parcel, and is dependent on **detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps**.

Key recommendations by the dept. of land resources:

- Creating **modern land record room in every district** would cost **Rs 50 lakh per district**.
- Integration of **land records with the Revenue Court Management System** would cost **Rs 270 crores**.
- DILRMP's next phase would include **linkage of land record database with banks**.

Background

- In Union Budget 2021-22, Union Finance Minister has announced **DILRMP** has been extended up to 2020-21 at a **total cost of Rs. 950 crores**.

About DILRMP (previously the National Land Records Modernization Programme):

Launch Year	2008
Implemented by	Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to digitize/ modernize land records and develop a centralized land record management system in India
Key Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) • Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

1.162 PM Modi inaugurates 6th edition of Raisina Dialogue

- The Raisina Dialogue is **India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics**, held annually since 2016.

- It is jointly organised by the **Ministry of External Affairs** and the **Observer Research Foundation**.
- The **theme** for the 2021 edition of Raisina Dialogue - "**#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers and Out of Control**".

1.163 GoI simplifies process for re-issue of OCI Cards

- Recently, as per the **directions of the Union Home Minister**, the Government of India has **simplified** the process for **re-issue** of Overseas Citizen of India (**OCI**) cards.

Key Highlights:

- According to the new rules, a person registered as OCI **cardholder prior to attaining the age of 20 years** will have to get the OCI card re-issued **only once when a new passport is issued after completing 20 years of age**.
- If a person has obtained **registration as OCI cardholder** after **attaining the age of 20 years**, there will be **no requirement of re-issue of OCI card**.
- With a view to update the data regarding **new passports obtained by the OCI cardholder** they should **upload a copy of the new passport with photo** and also a **latest photo on the online OCI portal**, each time a **new passport is issued up to 20 years of age** and **once after completing 50 years of age**.
- However, in the case of **people registered as OCI cardholder as spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India** or an OCI cardholder, the person concerned will **be required to upload a copy of the new passport**.
- The **documents must be uploaded** by OCI Cardholder/OCI Cardholder Spouse **within 3 months of receipt of the new passport**.

Background:

- At present, the OCI card is required to be re-issued each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age, in view of biological changes in the face of the applicant.
- So far about **37.72 lakh OCI Cards** have been **issued** by the Government of India.

About OCI Citizens:

CivilsTap Hlmachal

Who is an Overseas Citizen of India?

A foreign national, -

- (i) who was a citizen of India at the time of, or at any time after 26th January, 1950; or*
- (ii) who was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26th January, 1950; or*
- (iii) who belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15th August, 1947; or*
- (iv) who is a child or a grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen; or*
- (v) who is a minor child of such persons mentioned above; or*
- (vi) who is a minor child and whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the parents is a citizen of India*



- **Government of India provides benefits to OCIs under Section 7B(I) of the Citizenship Act, 1955.**

1.164 Centre notifies Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2021

- Recently, **the Government of India has notified Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2021.**
- **Aim:** to ensure smooth and flawless compliance in the digital era by adopting electronic means as primary mode of communication in the Copyright Office.

Key Highlights:

- The amendments have **harmonized the Copyright Rules** with the provisions of **Finance Act, 2017** whereby the **Copyright Board has been merged with Appellate Board.**
- An applicant can **file the first 10 and last 10 pages of source code, or the entire source code if less than 20 pages, with no blocked out or redacted portions,** thereby reducing compliance requirements for the registration of software.
- **Time limit for the Central Government to respond to an application to register as a copyright society is extended to 180 days.**
- A new provision regarding **publication of a copyrights journal has been incorporated,** thereby eliminating the requirement of publication in the Official Gazette.
- New provisions introduced to deal with the **undistributed royalty amounts and use of electronic and traceable payment methods** while collection and distribution of royalties.
- To reinforce transparency in working of copyright societies, the copyright societies will be required to make public an **Annual Transparency Report for each financial year.**

Background:

- In India, the copyright regime is governed by the **Copyright Act, 1957** and the **Copyright Rules, 2013; Copyright Rules, 2013 were last amended in 2016.**

1.165 Vigilance officers to be transferred every 3 years

- Recently, the **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** has modified the guidelines pertaining to the **transfer and posting of officials** in the **vigilance units** of government organizations.

Key Highlights:

- **Officers** who have worked for **over three years** at one place **should be transferred in phases, with priority** given to those who have **served for the maximum period**.
- **Officers completed over five years at one place** should be transferred on **top priority basis**.
- **Under Phase I**, at least **10%** of officers should be shifted in a sequential order
- **Phase I should be completed by 31st May 2021** & the **complete process to be completed by 30th June 2021**.
- The tenure may be **extended to three more years**, although at a **different place of posting**.
- Officers can have **two continuous postings in vigilance units** at **different places of posting**, each running to a maximum of three years.
- **In case someone has served at one place for over three years**, his **tenure at the next place would be curtailed** to ensure that the **combined tenure was limited to six years**
- **After transfer** there would be a **compulsory cooling off period of three years** before anyone could be considered again for posting in the unit.

1.166 'National Register' for driving licences

- Recently, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued the notification to amend the **Central Motor Vehicle Rules 1989** and cover sections 4-28, 76 & 77 (part) of the Motor Vehicles (amendment) Act 2019.

The following important aspects have been covered:

- **'National Register'** for driving licenses (DLs) has been brought in effect from **March 31**.
 - It is intended to **weed out duplicate driving licenses** and to **prevent duplication or misuse**.
 - Now **states** are required to **migrate all older DL related data online** within the next few months. Although most of the **States' driving licenses** are already on the **"sarathi"** portal of the **National Informatics Centre**.
- In order to weed out irresponsible drivers, the Ministry has provided for **putting in public domain names of people** whose **driving licenses have been revoked** due to various reasons, thereby **red-flagging "dangerous drivers"**.
- **National Register of DL and RC** (Certificate of Registration) has come into effect, **subsuming state registers of DL and RC** of all the States.
 - This will help in updating and accessing the data on a real-time basis anywhere in the country.
- Ministry has also informed that the **norms will now permit using electronic forms** and documents for a medical certificate, learners license, and renewal of DL.
- The complete grant of learner's license has been made online, from application to the printing of license.
- **Driving license renewal-**
 - **Driving licenses** can be renewed one year before to expiry till one year after expiry, as per a Ministry notification.
- **Dealer point registration-**

- It is now permitted, doing away with the mandatory need to furnish vehicles for inspection to the Regional Transport Offices in case of fully built vehicles, hence easing the process of registration.
- **Renewal of the registration certificate** is possible **60 days in advance**.
 - The **time limit** for **temporary registration** has been **extended** from one month to **six months**.
- **Process of alteration and retrofit-ment** of vehicles has been **brought under the legal framework**.
 - This will result in the fixing of liability on both the owner and workshops or authorised agencies who alter or retrofit vehicles.
 - The Ministry also has permitted insurance in case of altered vehicles.
- **Additional Information-**
 - **India** sees almost **1.5 lakh deaths annually** due to **road crashes**, many of which are due to drivers' fault, among others.

About Sarathi-4:

- **SARATHI-4 application** of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) for Driving License processing, which is a **web based online application** has a built-in facility to **identify duplicate driving licenses**.
- It can **identify duplicates** on the basis of certain combination of available personal parameters.

1.167 IRDAI standardizes technical notes for Health & Motor Insurance Policies

- Recently, the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** has **standardized technical notes** for filing **health** and **motor insurance policies**.
- Under this, the **insurance companies** now have to **submit a standard format for technical note**, detailing pricing aspects of health insurance product filing, resulting in fast product clearance process.
- It will also help to **ensure uniformity amongst insurers** in the matter of filing pricing and product related information for insurance products. Hence, it will also **tighten the control over the price of health insurance**.
- **For health insurance-**
 - under the technical note, insurance have to provide **description of the methodology used in pricing** and **justification** for the choice of methodology.
- **For motor insurance-**
 - companies will have to **provide assumptions used in pricing the product or add-ons** along with justification, details of how the impact of excess and any other specific feature have been allowed in pricing as well as how sub-limits or caps have been considered in estimation of premium rates.

1.168 Haryana Governor give consent to bill to recover damage of property by rioters

Recently, Haryana Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya has gave his consent for the **Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property During Disturbance to Public Order Bill, 2021**.

- The bill provides for **recovery of damages to properties caused by persons** during-

- disturbances to public order by an assembly, lawful or unlawful, including riots and violent disorder and for constitution of claims tribunal to determine the liability, to assess the damages caused and to award compensation in Haryana and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- State government will also **constitute** a one or more **Claims Tribunal** to **adjudicate upon application for compensation for damages**.

About Claim Tribunal-

- **Composition of Claim Tribunal-**
 - It will be **presided over by a person** from **amongst the Haryana Superior Judicial Services** to be designated as such in consultation with the chief justice of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana and where it consists of two or more members.
 - The other members of the Claims Tribunal will be from amongst the **officers of the state government** not below the rank of additional deputy commissioner.
- **Function of Claim Tribunal-**
 - It will **determine the liability**, assess the **claims for compensation** forwarded to it.
 - It will also **determine the monetary value of the damages** and on such determination, award suitable compensation related thereto and its apportionment thereof.

1.169 Gujarat Assembly passes "Freedom of Religion Act Bill"

- Recently, the **Gujarat Assembly** has **passed the Freedom of Religion Act Bill, 2003**, and has become the third state after Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh make a law against 'love jihad'.
- The bill seeks to **penalise forcible or fraudulent conversion by marriage** or "love jihad" bringing in provisions against forcible conversion through marriage or allurement.
- It stipulates **3-10 years in jail** and a fine of up to **Rs. 5 lakh**.
- According to the bill, it is necessary to **prohibit "forcible conversion by marriage or by getting a person married or by aiding a person to get married"**.

SOCIAL ISSUES

1.170 Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) extended for 2 months

- **Prime Minister** has recently announced that **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** will be **extended for next 2 months of May and June 2021**.
- Under the planned scheme **5 Kg per person per month free of cost food grains** will be provided to about **80 crore National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) beneficiaries**.
- This allocation would be **over and above NFSA foodgrains for next two months i.e. May and June 2021**.
 - This would result in **additional 80 Lakh Metric Tonne (LMT) supply of food grains by Food Corporation of India (FCI)** for May and June 2021 to state/UT governments.
- In total **approximately 179 LMT foodgrains**, would be supplied by FCI for NFSA & PMGKAY scheme in May and June 2021.

About Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)-

- The scheme was **announced in March 2020**, by **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman**.

- **Aim** – To provide free of cost 5 Kg per person per month foodgrains (Rice/Wheat) over and above the regular monthly entitlements under NFSA.
- Beneficiaries - around 80 Crore NFSA beneficiaries which are covered under both categories of NFSA, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Householders (PHH).
- **PMGKAY** was carried out in 2 phases:
 - **PMGKAY-I** - from April-June 2020
 - **PMGKAY-II** - from July-November 2020

1.171 Yoga towards wellbeing in Covid-19 pandemic

- “Yoga towards wellbeing in Covid-19 pandemic” event has been organised recently.
- This is part of the ongoing “Yoga for unity and wellbeing-2021” initiative by Ministry of Ayush and leading Yoga institutions.
- The event consists of:
 - A segment on **Yoga protocol** developed by the **Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY)**, which would be helpful in COVID Prevention.
- **Aim-** To make people aware of health assuring and stress relieving feature of Yoga and how this can help in finding balance in our day-to-day lives in present pandemic reality.

About “Yoga for unity and wellbeing 2021” Programme-

- This is a **100 day long programme inaugurated on 14th March 2021**.
- The initiative is supported by the **Ministry of Ayush**, along with Shri Ram Chandra Mission (**Heartfulness Institute**), the Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (**SVYASA**) and the **Patanjali YogPeeth**.
- It would **culminate on 21st June, 2021** which is celebrated as **International Day of Yoga (IDY)**.
- “**Be with Yoga, Be at Home!**” message is being sent out by this initiative.

1.172 World Malaria Day

- **World Malaria Day** is celebrated by **World Health Organization** on **25th April every year**.
 - The theme of 2021 is “**Reaching the zero malaria target**”.
- **WHO** has launched an initiative called “**E-2025 Initiative**”.
- **WHO** has also released a **report** titled “**Zeroing in on malaria elimination**” on 21st April 2021.
- **39 countries are malaria free** and in out of **87 countries with malaria, 46 countries have reported less than 10000 malaria cases in 2019**.

About E-2025 Initiative-

- The aim of this initiative is to **eradicate malaria by 2025 in 25 countries**.
- These 25 countries will have to overcome **dual threat of malaria and COVID-19 pandemic**.
- **South Africa, Botswana and Eswatini** are **3 African countries among the 25 nations selected**.
- African burden on global malaria cases:
 - **94% of global malaria deaths have occurred in African continent**.
 - **In South Africa – malaria cases increased by 44% between 2019 and 2020**.

1.173 POTUS convenes the Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021

- Recently, the **President of the United States (POTUS)**, has virtually convened the **Leader’s Summit on Climate 2021** during **22nd-23rd April 2021**.

- **40 world leaders** have been invited by the POTUS to participate in the Summit.
- The Summit is a **key milestone** on the road to the **UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)** to be held in **November 2021 in Glasgow**.
- It has also reconvened the **U.S led Major Economies Forum (MEF) on Energy and Climate**.
- **Objective:** to encourage the world's major economies, especially the original members of the MEF, to enhance ambition to keep the goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.
- **Six key themes of the summit:**
 - Galvanizing efforts by the world's major economies to reduce emissions during this critical decade to keep a limit to warming of 1.5 degree Celsius within reach.
 - Mobilizing public and private sector finance to drive the net-zero transition and to help vulnerable countries cope with climate impacts.
 - The economic benefits of climate action, with a strong emphasis on job creation, and the importance of ensuring all communities and workers benefit from the transition to a new clean energy economy.
 - Spurring transformational technologies that can help reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, while also creating enormous new economic opportunities and building the industries of the future.
 - Showcasing subnational and non-state actors that are committed to green recovery and an equitable vision for limiting warming to 1.5 degree Celsius, and are working closely with national governments to advance ambition and resilience.
 - Discussing opportunities to strengthen capacity to protect lives and livelihoods from the impacts of climate change, address the global security challenges posed by climate change and the impact on readiness, and address the role of nature-based solutions in achieving net zero by 2050 goals.

About MEF:

- **Launch Year:** 2009; **Members:** 17
- **Aim:** facilitating candid dialogue among major emitting countries, to garner the political leadership needed to advance efforts against climate change.

Note: 17 member countries of MEF contribute 80 % of global emissions and global GDP; India is also a member of MEF.

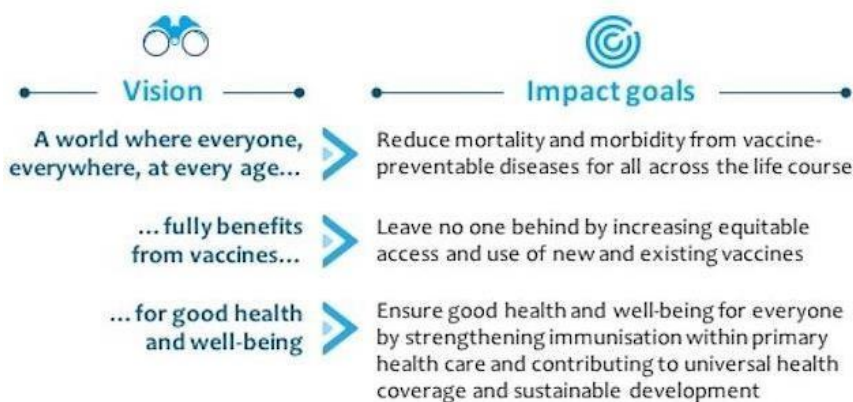
1.174 Ayushman Bharat Diwas: 30th April

- **India** celebrates **Ayushman Bharat Diwas** on **30th April** every year.
- The day marks the **national importance** to mark the **launch** of **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)** as in **2018**, the **policy** was **launched** by PM Narendra Modi to **provide health insurance benefits** to the deprived families with a cover of **Rs 5 lakh per year**.

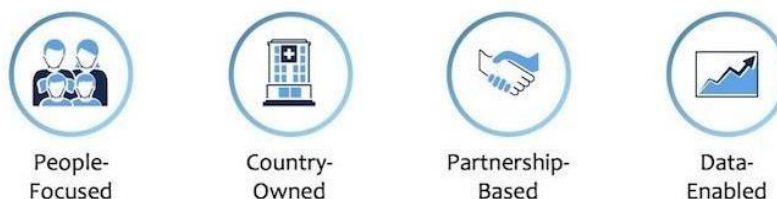
1.175 World Health Assembly endorses vision "Immunization Agenda 2030"

- The **World Health Assembly** has recently endorsed a new global **vision** and **strategy**, called the **Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030)**.
- **IA2030** envisions a world where everyone, everywhere, at every age, fully **benefits from vaccines** to improve health and well-being.

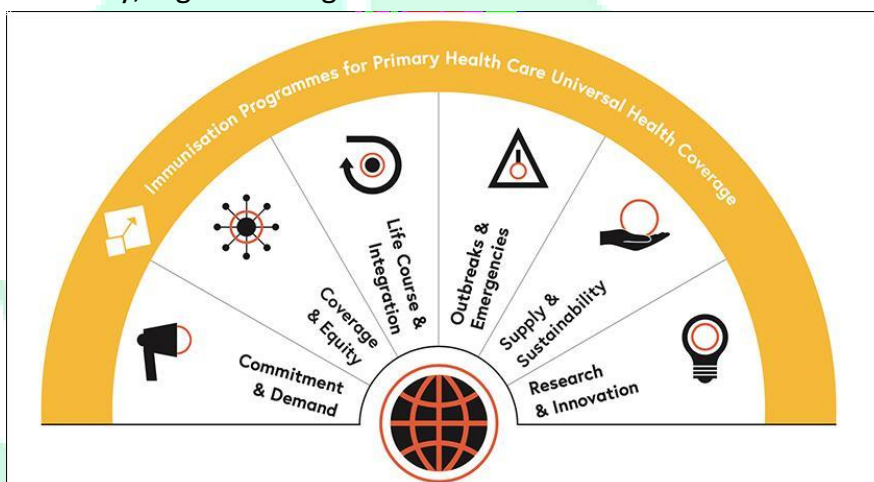
- It aims to maintain hard-won gains in immunization, recover from the disruptions caused by COVID-19, and achieve even more – by **leaving no one behind, in any situation or at any stage of life.**



- It is underpinned by **four core principles-**



- IA2030 has been developed through a **“bottom-up” co-creation process**, with close engagement of countries to ensure that the **vision, strategic priorities and goals are aligned** with country needs. It is also designed to be tailored by countries to their local context.
- Underneath IA2030’s **three Impact Goals** are **seven Impact Goal Indicators** to monitor progress across country, regional and global levels.



- **Strategic Priority Goals-**

Immunisation Programmes for primary health care/universal health coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate health workforce availability • Build and strengthen comprehensive vaccine-preventable disease surveillance supported by strong and reliable laboratory-based systems • Secure high-quality supply chains and effective vaccine management to facilitate equitable coverage in immunisation and establish synergies with other primary health care supply chains where possible • Generate fit-for-purpose immunisation data for evidence-based decision-making • Ensure functional vaccine safety systems in close collaboration with national regulatory agencies
Commitment & Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and sustain strong social, financial and political commitment for immunisation • Strengthen leadership, management and coordination for immunisation at all levels • Ensure people and communities value, actively support and seek out immunisation services
Coverage & Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach high equitable immunisation coverage at national level and in all districts • Increase coverage of vaccines among the most disadvantaged populations • Reduce the number of children not reached through the immunisation programme (“zero-dose” children)
Life course & Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen policies and service delivery to provide new and underused vaccines and appropriate catch-up vaccination across the life-course • Establish integrated delivery touchpoints for immunisation and other public health interventions across the life course
Outbreaks & Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease the number and magnitude of outbreaks of epidemic-prone vaccine-preventable diseases • Ensure timely, well-organized responses to outbreaks of epidemic-prone vaccine-preventable diseases • Establish timely and appropriate vaccination services in acute emergencies and humanitarian crises
Supply & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build and sustain healthy markets across all antigens at the global level • Safeguard access quality assured vaccines in a timely fashion in all countries • Ensure sufficient financial support for immunisation programmes across all countries to achieve universal coverage • Increase immunisation expenditure from domestic resources for aid dependent countries, and when transitioning away from aid, secure government domestic funding to sustain coverage of all vaccines after transition
Research & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and strengthen country capacity to identify, create and manage innovation • Develop new vaccines and technologies and improve existing products and services for immunisation programmes • Introduce and scale up new and underused vaccines and improved technologies, services and practices

- Immunization is playing a critical role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It reaches more people than any other health and social service, making it the foundation of primary health care systems and a key driver toward universal health coverage.
 - This makes **immunization** critical to **SDG3 – to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.**
 - Because health is so fundamental to development, IA2030 will also contribute—either directly or indirectly—to 13 of the other SDGs.

1.176 NCW launches WhatsApp helpline number for pregnant women

- The **National Commission for Women** has launched a **WhatsApp helpline number**.
- **The step has been taken to provide emergency medical assistance to pregnant women** as they were facing difficulty in accessing medical aid.
- Expectant mothers from across the country can reach out to the Commission through “**9354954224**” number which will be functional round the clock.
- A dedicated team is looking after speedy redressal of grievances.

1.177 Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) plugs holes in Odisha government Niramaya scheme

- **CAGs audit conducted in Odisha for the years from 2016 to 2019 for various schemes, revealed that:**
 - In **Niramaya scheme** - the procurement process was riddled with systemic flaws along with inordinate delay in finalisation of annual procurement plans for drugs, medical consumables and equipment, instruments and furniture (EIFs).
 - In **KHUSHI scheme** - sanitary napkins were procured at higher prices.
 - In **Sunetra Yojana** - undue favours were given to some particular firm for procurement of spectacles.
- **Also, only 49% of the indented/approved quantity of drugs and medical consumables to health institutions during 2016-19 were supplied.**
- **19% of the procured EIF had not been installed and were lying unutilised, as per the audit report.**

About KHUSHI scheme –

- **Launched by the Odisha State government on 26th February 2018, to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across the state.**
- **The scheme will be implemented by the health and family welfare department of the state at a cost of Rs 70 crore per year.**
- **Under this scheme, the Health Department of Odisha Government aims to provide free sanitary pads to 1.7 million girl students from grade 6th to 12th in government and government-aided schools.**
- **It also aims to promote health and hygiene among school going girls and higher retention of girls in school.**

About Sunetra Yojana –

- **Launched by the Odisha State government on 12th October 2017, to provide free eye care to all the people of the state.**
- **The scheme targets to achieve universal eye health care by 2023.**
- **A budget of Rs 680 crore has been sanctioned for a period of five years.**

About Niramaya Scheme –

- **Launched by the Odisha State government, with an aim to provide drugs free of cost to all patients at all public health facilities in the state.**
- **It is being implemented since 1st May 2015 by Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL).**

1.178 National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (2017-2022)

- **Recently, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has chaired the “Reaching Zero” forum on malaria elimination to celebrate World Malaria Day on 25th April 2021.**

Achievements

- **World Malaria Reports of 2018, 2019, and 2020 have recognized that malaria burden in India has reduced by 84.5% in terms of cases and 83.6% by deaths.**

About National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Malaria Elimination (2017-22)

- It is based on 2016 **National Framework for Malaria Elimination** framed with support of **WHO's Global Technical Strategy for Malaria, 2016-2030**.
- **Vision – Malaria-free country by 2027 and elimination by 2030.**
- **Goal**
 - Eliminate malaria in Category 1 districts (API <1) by 2020 and Category 2 districts (API 1-2) by 2022,
 - Reduce transmission in Category 3 districts to stabilize API at <1 by 2022.
- **Four components, based on recommendations WHO:**
 - Diagnosis and case management
 - Surveillance and epidemic response
 - Prevention — integrated vector management
 - Cross-cutting interventions, which include communication, advocacy, R&D and other initiatives.

About National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME) 2016-2030

- **Goal**
 - Eliminate malaria (zero indigenous cases) throughout the entire country by 2030; and
 - Maintain malaria-free status in areas where malaria transmission has been interrupted and prevent re-introduction of malaria.
- **Objectives**
 - **Eliminate malaria** from all **low (Category 1)** and **moderate (Category 2)** endemic states/UTs (26) by **2022**
 - **Reduce incidence of malaria to less than 1 case per 1000 population** in all States/UTs and the districts and **malaria elimination** in 31 states/UTs by **2024**.
 - **Interrupt indigenous transmission** of malaria in all States/ UTs (Category 3) by **2027**.
 - Prevent re-establishment of local transmission of malaria in areas where it has been eliminated and to maintain **malaria-free status** of the country by **2030**.

Classification of States/UTs based on Annual Parasite Incidence (API) as primary criterion

S. No.	Categories of states/UTs	Definition
1.	Category 0: Prevention of re-establishment phase	States/UTs with zero indigenous cases of malaria.
2.	Category 1: Elimination phase	States/UTs (15) including their districts reporting an API of less than 1 case per 1000 population at risk.
3.	Category 2: Pre-elimination phase	States/UTs (11) with an API of less than 1 case per 1000 population at risk, but some of their districts are reporting an API of 1/1000 or above.
4.	Category 3: Intensified control phase	States/UTs (10) with an API of 1 case per 1000 population at risk or above.

Short term milestones

- By end of **2016**, all states/UTs are expected to include malaria elimination in their **broader health policies and planning framework**
- By end of **2017**, all states are expected to **bring down API to less than 1 per thousand population**.

- By end of **2020**, 15 states/UTs under **category 1 (elimination phase)** are expected to **interrupt transmission of malaria** and achieve zero indigenous cases and deaths due to malaria.

Background

- During East Asia Summit in Malaysia in 2015 a Malaria Elimination roadmap of Asia Pacific has been set up with the goal of ensuring the region becomes free of malaria by 2030.

Important Points to remember

- WHO's Global Technical Strategy for Malaria, 2016-2030, guides **WHO Global Malaria Programme (GMP)** which is responsible for coordinating WHO's global efforts to control and eliminate malaria.
- **Targets** - To reduce malaria 40% by 2020, 75% by 2025 and 90% by 2030 with 2015 as baseline.
- In the **South-East Asia Region (SEAR)** of the World Health Organization (WHO), the **Maldives (2015)** and **Sri Lanka (2016)** have been certified to be **malaria free** and Bhutan is fast approaching towards elimination in the foreseeable future.

1.179 5th Virtual Global Forum on TB Vaccine

- Recently, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare has addressed the **5th Global Forum on TB Vaccine** which is the world's largest gathering of stakeholders striving to **develop and deploy new vaccines** to prevent Tuberculosis (TB).

India and TB

- India has the **largest burden of TB patients** globally in terms of absolute numbers with an estimate of **2.64 million**.
- **Union Territory of Lakshadweep** and the **District Budgam** in Jammu & Kashmir have been certified as the **1st TB Free Union Territory** and **1st TB Free District** in India.
- India had almost returned to **pre-COVID levels** in TB enrollment with over **1.8 million patients** notified by **December 2020**, **11% more** than the estimated projections made in **April 2020**.

Initiatives Taken for controlling TB

- Government has launched a "**TB Mukh Bharat**" campaign to take the effort towards fighting TB to the community level and making it a "People's Movement."
- **Indian Council for Medical Research** through its **India TB Research Consortium** has been working on **developing new drugs, diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics** for Tuberculosis.
- It has also been closely working with the **BRICS TB Research Network** for multi-country collaborations."

Efforts to curb TB

- The minister has called global community to **re-double** their efforts to ensure adequate funding, so that, a **TB Vaccine** can be developed by **2023** and **End TB in India by 2025** and **Globally before 2030**.

1.180 India commemorates 12th National Panchayati Raj Day

India commemorates the **National Panchayati Raj Day** virtually on **24th April, 2021**.

- **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** commemorates 24th April of every year as the National Panchayati Raj Day, as the **73rd Constitutional Amendment** came into force on this date.

- This occasion provides an opportunity for **direct dialogue** with **Panchayat representatives** from all over the country as well as **recognizing their achievements** to empower and motivate them further.
- **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** also awarded the **best performing Panchayats/States/UTs** across the country under the **Incentivization of Panchayats** in recognition of their good work for improving delivery of services and public goods.
 - **Awards are given under various categories namely-**
 - ✓ Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (**DDUPSP**)
 - ✓ Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (**NDRGGSP**)
 - ✓ Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (**CFGPA**)
 - ✓ Gram Panchayat Development Plan (**GPDP**) Award
- Ministry also awarded **e-Panchayat Puraskar to 12 states**.
- On the occasion, **Prime Minister** also transferred the **award money** (as Grants-in-Aid) ranging from **Rs.5 lakh to Rs.50 lakh** to the bank account of the Panchayats concerned in real time.
- **Prime Minister** has also dedicated the **“Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas” (SVAMITVA)** to the entire nation.
 - He has also launched **distribution of e-property cards** to **4.09 lakh property owners** on this occasion.

About SVAMITVA scheme-

- **Launched-** National Panchayati Raj Day, **24th April 2020**
- **Nodal Ministry-** Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- **Aim-** To provide the **‘record of rights’** to **village household owners** in rural abadi areas and **issuance of Property cards**.
- It has been **approved for implementation** at an **outlay of Rs 566.23 crore** across the country in phased manner over a period of **five years (2020-2025)** and would eventually cover approximately **6.62 lakh villages** of the entire country.
- It will pave the way for using property as a financial asset by villagers for taking loans and other financial benefits, as in the case in towns and cities.

1.18110 startups shortlisted under RICH-AID programme

- Recently, **10 startups** have been **selected** for the **first cohort** of the **Acceleration Initiative for Diagnostics (AID) program** of the **Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH)**.
- **Acceleration grant under the programme:** Rs. 2 lakh each
- **Selected startups** would also receive other benefits like **incubation at Atal Incubation Centre – Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (AIC-CCMB)**, access to test beds under the Project Tej scheme etc, in the coming six months.

About RICH-AID Programme:

- It offers a **platform to startups and entrepreneurs in the diagnostics sector**.
- **Incubation Partner:** AIC-CCMB
- **Aim:** to identify and nurture the best startups in the diagnostics space for nationwide as well as global impact.
- The programme also seeks to leverage the following positions/ titles held by Hyderabad:

- **Hyderabad –Pharma Capital of India**
- **Hyderabad is home to India’s largest med park- ‘Medical Devices Park’.**

Note: RICH is an initiative of the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to the government of India and the Telangana government.

1.182 Panel appointed to oversee Schools of Specialised Excellence

- Recently, the **first general body meeting** of the **‘Delhi Schools of Specialised Excellence Society’** was **presided** over by the **Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi.**
- The meeting **approved** the constitution of a **seven-member executive committee** responsible for day-to-day functioning of Society.

Relevance:

- **‘Delhi Schools of Specialised Excellence Society’** would be **functional** from the **academic year 2021-22** to **establish** over **100 ‘Schools of Specialised Excellence’** across **Delhi.**
- Schools of Specialised Excellence would be the **first-of-its-kind initiative in India.**
- **Delhi Cabinet approved** to set up **Schools of Specialised Excellence in March 2021.**

1.183 Ministry of Rural Development launches “Gender Samvaad” event

- **Ministry of Rural Development**, Government of India, has recently launched **Gender Samvaad** event.
- **Gender Samvaad** event, a **joint attempt** between **DAY-NRLM** (Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission) and the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (**IWWAGE**) to create a **common platform to share experiences** emerging from this effort.
- **Aim-** To **generate greater awareness** on **gender related interventions** under **DAY-NRLM** across the country and best practices, with a **focus on hearing voices from the states** and the field.
- **Gender Samvaad provides states with opportunities to:**
 - Understand **best practices/initiatives** that other states have been undertaking to **improve women’s agency**
 - Understand **gender interventions** globally
 - Engage with experts and other colleagues on suggestions regarding how to **handle issues/implementation barriers**
 - Contribute to creation of a **‘gender repository’** with resource materials on **best practices for gender interventions** across the country/other countries
 - Build advocacy around the need to focus on **gender issues across SRLMs** (State Rural Livelihoods Mission) and the **NRLM**

1.184 ADB, Habitat for Humanity to support housing microloans for India's vulnerable communities

- Recently, **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has teamed with **Habitat for Humanity International** to expand **ADB's microfinance risk participation and guarantee programme** to help microfinance institutions (MFIs) deliver **housing loans to low-income families in rural and peri-urban areas of India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines.**

- The collaboration will include microloans for **housing, home improvement, and water and sanitation** for vulnerable and climate change-exposed communities.
- An expected 20,000 households will receive housing microloans from partner MFIs in the programme's first phase to enhance construction quality and climate resilience, including upgrading semi-permanent structures and installing sanitation and water connections.
- ADB also aims to **encourage private sector financing** through **risk-allocation and guarantees**. The collaboration will help to **empower women**, with **90 per cent of financing targeted for women micro-borrowers**.

How programme will work?

- ADB will help MFIs obtain finances from commercial banks of up to **30 million dollars** in the first phase.
- **Habitat for Humanity** will build the MFIs' capacity to design, **pilot-test and roll out** the loans with technical assistance from ADB.

About ADB's Microfinance Risk Participation and Guarantee Programme

- It is a credit enhancement and a risk-allocation tool, designed to address a market gap and **promote local currency lending** to MFIs.
- ADB partners with micro-finance institutions, to increase their **access to local currency funding** and address the **financial needs of millions of people**, at the base of the pyramid across the region.
- Given its risk-sharing structure, the program encourages private sector participation on market-determined terms.

1.185 Infant, Toddler and Caregiver-Friendly Neighborhoods Training and Capacity Building Programme Launched

- Recently, **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)** in partnership with **Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF)** has launched '**Infant Toddler and Caregiver-friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) Training and Capacity Building Programme.**'
- It has been designed to help build capacities of city officials and young professionals for developing young children and family-friendly neighbourhoods within cities in India.
- **Twin objectives of the programme:**
 - Embedding the learnings from the inventory of knowledge developed by NIUA and BvLF within the on-going and proposed urban development initiatives at neighbourhood and city level.
 - Handholding participants to embed learnings into the various initiatives of the cities which take into account the everyday needs of young children and caregivers.
- Under the programme, city officials and young professionals are proposed to be skilled through certified training and capacity building module which is proposed to be delivered through well-structured training modules, provided online through **National Urban Learning Platform (NULP)**.
- An **academic certified course** for young professionals has been planned to sensitize them about the needs of **young citizens (0-5 years)** in the city and to equip them with the adequate tools for the purpose.

About National Urban Learning Platform (NULP)

- It is a platform developed for knowledge dissemination by **MoHUA and NIUA**.
- It digitally consolidates key **skills and knowledge** required by urban stakeholders and making these available to all actors on a channel of their choice.
- The NULP will include tools to enable and streamline content creation, content organisation and management, course building, course management, assessment and certification.



About National Institute of Urban Affairs

- It was established in 1976 as a premier Institute of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India for research and capacity building for the urban sector in India.

1.186 NITI Aayog Launches 'Poshan Gyan'

- Recently, **NITI Aayog**, in partnership with **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University** has launched **Poshan Gyan**.
- **About POSHAN Gyan**
- It is a **national digital repository** on health and nutrition
- It is a trusted and comprehensive online resource for anybody working in the nutrition sector in India.
- It is a collection of **effective communication materials** created by government agencies and other development organizations to **tackle the challenges of knowledge awareness** and behavior change in the nutrition sector.
- It is designed to be **accessible for everybody** to use - whether frontline health workers, community leaders, teachers or anyone else seeking to improve nutritional outcomes.
- It contains materials targeted towards different audiences using a variety of media types, such as interpersonal communication, mass media, outdoor advertising etc.

- It highlights the “**Theme of the Month**” (in line with MoHFW and MoWCD guidelines to promote key topics) and the “**Most Downloaded Media**” (as a way to learn about the materials that are most preferred by audiences).

Note: Theme for April 2021 – “Ante Natal Care”

1.187 Hydrogen Roundtable being Organised by The Energy Forum and FIPI under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

- Recently, **The Energy Forum (TEF) and the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FIPI)**, has organized a first of its kind **Hydrogen Roundtable** titled “**Hydrogen Economy- the Indian Dialogue- 2021.**”
- It has been launched to discuss **emerging hydrogen ecosystems** and exploring opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and coalition.
- **Objective** – To understand the **progress of Hydrogen ecosystem** across continents and contribute to creating synchrony among the think tanks, Governments and the industry to join forces for developing innovative and sustainable technologies at attractive costs.
- Under the dialogue, a separate session devoted to **India's Hydrogen Mission** has also taken place.

About National Hydrogen Mission

- The Mission has been proposed by union finance Minister in her budget speech of 2021-22.
- **Aim** - To develop India into a global hub for manufacturing of hydrogen and fuel cells technologies across the value chain.
- It would put forward specific strategy for the **short term (4 years)**, and broad strokes principles for **long term (10 years and beyond)**.

Benefit

- India's ambitious goal of **175 GW by 2022** got an impetus in the 2021-22 budget which allocated **Rs. 1500 crore** for renewable energy development and National Hydrogen Mission.
- The usage of hydrogen will not only help India in achieving its emission goals under the Paris Agreement, but will also reduce import dependency on fossil fuels.

Note: Prime Minister of India has proposed National Hydrogen Energy Mission while inaugurating the **3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-INVEST 2020) in November 2020.**

1.188 Union Minister of Education launches “World 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product DuroKea Series”, developed by IIT Hyderabad researchers

- Recently, Union Education minister has launched world 1st affordable and long-lasting hygiene product “**DuroKea Series.**”
- **Developed by** – Researchers of IIT Hyderabad led by **Dr. Jyotsnendu Giri**.
- It has been launched to combat COVID-19 virus spreading and kills 99.99% of germs instantly and leaves behind the long-lasting protective nanoscale coating up to 35 days till next wash.

1.189 Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addresses “Amazon Sambhav online Summit”

- Recently, Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Dr Jitendra Singh addresses “**Amazon Sambhav online Summit.**”
- Theme: “Unlocking Infinite Possibilities for India”

Key Initiatives launched by Amazon during Summit

- **Sambhav Venture Fund** - The venture fund of **\$250 Million** will focus on **digitization of small businesses, agri-tech innovations and health tech**.
 - As part of the Venture Fund, Amazon has announced an investment in **“M1xchange”**– a startup focusing on **invoice discounting marketplace exchange for MSMEs** (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises) established under the **TReDS license** (Trade Receivables Discounting System license).
 - It **connects MSMEs with banks & financiers** (and vice versa) through the marketplace exchange and the MSME is able to assign its invoice dues to a bank or financier and receive financing at better rates; thereby, solving the payments challenge for MSMEs.
- **Spotlight North East** – It will have a dedicated focus to **boost the local economy**, create jobs, accelerate financial inclusion, **empower women and tribal communities** and to **boost exports** of key commodities like tea, spices and honey from the region.
- **Local Shops enablement** – It plans to digitally empower and bring 1 million offline retailers and neighbourhood stores online, on the Amazon India marketplace, by 2025.

1.190 Experts discuss recent innovations trends adopted in decarbonisation and promotion of Hydrogen based technologies

- Recently, India-Japan Webinar on **“De-carbonisation: Exploring the Hydrogen Prospects and Innovative Technologies”** has taken place.
- **Organized by** – Embassy of India in Japan, Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India along with The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan, and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India.

Key Highlights

- At present 38% of India’s total installed electricity generation is based on renewables which is about 136 Giga Watts and is expected to reach a target of 175 GW by next year and 450GW by 2030.
- Japan is the first country to formulate a basic hydrogen strategy. Hydrogen is included in the fifth Energy plan of Japan.
- Japanese companies like Toyota have already operationalized commercially available hydrogen-powered vehicle which is much more than a simple electric-powered vehicle.

1.191 Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses the Next Gen Health Summit ‘Re-Imagine Healthcare’

- Recently, Union Health Minister has addressed the **Next Gen Health Summit ‘Re-Imagine Healthcare’**, **organized by** the **IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry**.

Key Information Shared

- 75,000 Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres has been set up across nation and government intends to further expand this number to 1,50,000 by the end of year 2022.
- He also added that “Our Fit India, Swachh Bharat, Eat Right India programs have enjoyed huge success in building mass public movements around health and wellbeing.”

1.192 Indian double mutant strain gets a name

- Recently, the “**double mutant**” virus, causing the fast spread of Covid-19 in India has been named (scientific classification) as “**B.1.617**”.
- However, it is **yet to be classified** as ‘**Variant of Concern**’ (VOC)

Key Highlights:

- **B.1.617** was first **detected in India** in **December 2020**.
- B.1.617 genome has **at least 15 mutations**.

Relevance:

- Earlier, Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (**INSACOG**), confirmed the presence of two mutations, **E484Q** and **L452R** **together only in India**.
- At present, nearly **70% of the genome sequences** with mutations characterizing **B.1.617** and submitted to **GISAID (Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data)** are from **India**.
- INSACOG, has also informed, there is also a **third significant mutation - P614R**.

1.193 India Holds National Dialogue on UN Food Systems Summit 2021

- Recently, the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer’s Welfare** has conducted the **first National Level Dialogue on Agri-Food Systems-Advancing Equitable Livelihoods**, as a part of **UN Food Systems Summit 2021**.
- The Dialogue was facilitated by **Inter departmental Group constituted by Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare** and representatives from UN Agencies.
- **Chairman of the Group & National Convener for the dialogue:** Prof. Ramesh Chand.

Background

- **The United Nations Secretary General** has called for the **first ever UN Food Systems Summit** to be held in **September 2021**, as part of the **Decade of Action** to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030**.
- **Aim:** to strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems in the World to realize the vision of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.
- **Five Action Tracks**, would guide National and Sub-national dialogues:

Track Number	Action Track Name	UN Anchor Agency
1	Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
2	Shift to sustainable consumption patterns	The World Health Organization (WHO)
3	Boost nature-positive production	UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
4	Advance equitable livelihoods	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
5	Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress	World Food Programme (WFP)

- **Venue:** Pre-Summit in Italy in July 2021 & Culminating Summit in New York in September 2021.

Relevance:

- **India has volunteered**, for the **Action Track 4** for the **UN Food System Summit 2021**.

- Gol constituted **Inter department Committee to conduct national dialogues** as a part of the summit.

1.194 Union Health Minister addresses Tuberculosis Technical Consultants Network Teams

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare** has virtually addressed the **Tuberculosis Technical Consultants Network Teams** comprised of WHO-National Professional Officers for TB and consultants across India.

Key Information Shared:

- **Target year to eliminate TB in India: 2025**
- **Budget Allocation for TB elimination** increased from **USD 105 million (2016)** to **USD 458 million (2018)**

1.195 Dr. Reddy's receives permission for restricted emergency use to Sputnik-V vaccine

- Recently, the **Dr Reddy's Laboratories Limited** has received **approval** from the Drugs Controller General of India (**DCGI**), for **Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)** of **Sputnik-V- Gam-COVID-Vac** combined vector vaccines in India, as per the recommendations of the **Subject Expert Committee (SEC)**
- **Sputnik-V** has been developed by **Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, Russia.**
- The approval has been granted as per the provisions of the **New Drug and Clinical Trials rules, 2019** under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1945.**

1.196 Dept. of biotech approves additional funding to HGCO19 under Mission Covid Suraksha

- Recently, the **Department of Biotechnology**, Ministry of Science & Technology, has **approved additional funding** towards **clinical studies** of India's '**first of its kind**' **Messenger RNA (mRNA)** based **COVID-19 vaccine – "HGCO19"** under vaccine discovery programme of '**Mission COVID Suraksha**'.
- **HGCO19** is developed by **Gennova Biopharmaceuticals Ltd, Pune**, in collaboration with **HDT Biotech Corporation, USA.**
- **Gennova** has also started enrollment for **phase 1 & phase 2 human clinical trials.**

About Mission Covid Suraksha-The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission:

- **Launch Year:** November 2020
- **Led by:** Department of Biotechnology
- **Implemented by:** dedicated Mission Implementation Unit at the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).
- **Funds allotted under Phase I: Rs.900 Crore for 12 months.**
- **Aim:** to help accelerate the development of approximately 5-6 vaccine candidates and ensure they are brought closer to licensure and introduction in the market.

1.197 Principal Scientific Adviser launches "MANAS" App

- Recently, the **Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)** to the Gol, has launched **MANAS (Mental Health and Normalcy Augmentation System) app**, to promote **wellbeing across age groups.**

- It was endorsed as a **national program** by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (**PM-STIAC**).
- **App Developers:** National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (**NIMHANS**) Bengaluru, Armed Forces Medical College (**AFMC**) Pune and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing(**C-DAC**) Bengaluru.
- **Mission Conceptualized & led by Dr. Ketaki Bapat.**
- **Motto:** "Uttam Mann, Saksham Jan".

Key Highlight:

- MANAS is a **comprehensive, scalable, and national digital wellbeing** platform and app.
- **Initial version of MANAS** focuses to promote mental health in the age group of **15-35 years**.

About PM-STIAC:

- A **comprehensive council** that enables the **PSA's Office** to assess the status in specific **science and technology domains**, comprehend challenges, formulate interventions, develop a **futuristic roadmap** and advise the Prime Minister accordingly.
- The **project management team at Invest India**, & the **office of the PSA**, will facilitate the delivery and progress of **all nine national missions** under **PM-STIAC**.

Note: National missions under PM-STIAC covered in March 2021 Magazine.

1.198 NCSC Launches Online Grievance Management Portal for Persons from Scheduled Castes

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Law & Justice** has launched the "**NCSC Grievance Management Portal**" on the occasion of the **130th birth anniversary** of **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** in **New Delhi**.
- **Portal Developers:** National Commission for Scheduled Castes (**NCSC**), , in collaboration with the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics (**BISAG-N**), a centre of excellence under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- **Aim:** to streamline the grievance redressal especially of the scheduled caste population.

About National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC):

- **Set up** under **Article 338** of the **Constitution of India**.
- **Parent Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- **Objective:** to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes and Anglo Indian communities; to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests.

1.199 Dept.of Pension and Pensioners Welfare launches "75" series Pension awareness

- Recently, the **MoS(I/C), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions** has launched **75" series Pension awareness** under "**Azad Ka Amrut Mahotsav**" to mark **75 years of India's independence**.
- The "**75**" series awareness activities would be **conducted** by the **Dept. of Pension and Pensioners Welfare**.

Key Activities:

- Dissemination of a **series of 75 important rules for family pensioners** through **two Tweets per week** in the form of **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** during the coming year.

- Training on “**Bhavishya**” (**Online Pension Sanction Module**) through **75 offices** of the Gol, including Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) offices, **from April 2021**.
- **Online workshop on Pension Awareness Rules** for senior government pensioners and family pensioners **above 75 years** would be held from **May 2021**.
- **Digital publication of 75 “Anubhav” write-ups** from the **Anubhav Portal** from **June 2021**.

1.200 Union Health Minister launches Aahaar Kranti Mission

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare** has launched the ‘**Aahaar Kranti**’ **Mission**, initiated by the **Vijnana Bharati (Vibha)** and **Global Indian Scientists' and Technocrats' Forum (GIST)**.
- **Other Partners:** CSIR, ICAR, Vigyan Prasar & Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark (Prabhaas)
- **Motto:** **Uttam Aahaar Uttam Vichaar or Good Diet-Good Cognition.**
- **Aim:** to spread the message of the need for a nutritionally balanced diet and to understand the importance of accessible to all local fruits and vegetables.

Key Highlights:

- It proposes to **address ‘hunger and diseases in abundance’**.
- It will renew the focus on nutritionally balanced diets (**Uttam evam santulit aahaar**) replete in locally sourced fruits and vegetables.
- **Focus:** training teachers, who, in turn, would pass on the message to students, and ultimately to the society.



Relevance:

- **United Nations** has declared **2021** as the **International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (IYFV)**.

1.201 Union Education Minister launches SARTHAQ portal

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Education** has launched the ‘**Students’ and Teachers’ Holistic Advancement through Quality Education (SARTHAQ)** portal, at a **high level meeting chaired by him** on the **implementation of National Educational Policy 2020** in **New Delhi**.
- The portal has been launched as a **part of “Azad ka Amrit Mahotsav”** celebrations.

- **Portal Developer:** Department of School Education and Literacy.
- **Purpose:** It is an indicative and suggestive **Implementation Plan for School Education**, in pursuance of the **goals and objectives of the NEP 2020** released in July 2020.

Key Highlights:

- The **portal links recommendations of NEP 2020** with **297 Tasks** along with responsible agencies, timelines and **304 outputs of the Tasks**.
- It provides the **roadmap for the implementation of NEP 2020 for the next 10 years**.

Key Envisaged Outcomes:

- Increase in Gross Enrolment Ratio (**GER**), Net Enrolment Ratio (**NER**), transition rate and retention rate at all levels.
- **Reduction in drop outs** and out of school children.
- Access to quality early childhood care and education (**ECCE**) and **Universal Acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by Grade 3**.
- Safe, Secure, inclusive and conducive learning environment for students and teachers.
- **Integration of technology** in educational governance and **availability of ICT** and quality e-content in classrooms.
- Emphasis on teaching and learning through **mother tongue in early years**.
- Development of **New National and State Curriculum Frameworks for School Education**, Early Childhood Care and Education, Teacher Education and Adult Education.
- Introduction of **Experiential learning & adoption of innovative pedagogies** in classroom teaching.
- Uniform standards in learning outcomes and governance across public and private schools through setting-up of an online, transparent public disclosure system through establishment of **State School Standards Authority (SSSA)** in states.

Background:

- In **September 2020**, Ministry of Education has organized a **“ShikshakParv”** (Teacher’s fest), to discuss the recommendations of NEP 2020 and **implementation strategies**.

1.202 Union Minister of Education presents AICTE Lilavati Awards 2020

- Recently, the **Union Minister of Education** has presented the All India Council for Technical Education (**AICTE**) **Lilavati Awards 2020** in New Delhi.
- Based on the **theme: 'Women Empowerment'**, AICTE finalized the winners from 456 entries who competed across **6 sub themes**, viz:
 - Women's Health
 - Self-Defense
 - Sanitation and Hygiene
 - Literacy
 - Women Entrepreneurship
 - Legal Awareness

Key Highlights:

S.No	Sub theme	Team Name &Winners:
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1	Legal Awareness	Radiant Seetha from Thiagarajar Polytechnic College, Tamil Nadu
2	Self Defense	Paritranas from St. Joseph's College of Engineering, Tamil Nadu
3	Sanitation & Hygiene	SKBCOP ECO CLUB from Smt. Kishoritai Bhoyar College Of Pharmacy, Maharashtra
4	Women Health	WIT Women Health Coalition from Walchand Institute Of Technology, Maharashtra
5	Women Entrepreneurship	SWEAT (Sona Women Entrepreneurship and Training) from Sona College of Technology, Tamil Nadu
6	Literacy	Digital Literacy from Bharathi Vidyapeeth, Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune, Maharashtra

Background:

- AICTE launched **Lilavati Awards in November 2020**, to **recognize efforts** made by the **AICTE approved institutions to treat women with “equality & fairness”** in all walks of life.
- **Named after “Lilavati”**, the daughter of mathematician **Bhaskara II** & the **book of same name written by him**.
- **Prize:** Rs 1 lakh, Rs 75,000 & Rs 50,000 for winner, 1st runner up & 2nd runner up respectively under each sub theme/category.

1.203 Union Health Minister chairs ICMR’s One Health Symposium

- Recently, the **Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare** has virtually **chaired an International Symposium** organized by the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**.
- **Symposium Title:** “One Health in India: Research informing biosafety, preparedness and response”.

Key initiatives launched during the event:

- **Special issue** of ICMR’s **Indian Journal of Medical Research (IJMR)** on **One Health approach**.
- **Announcement** of the constitution of a **high-level steering committee for Eco Health Initiatives in India**.

About the Committee for Eco Health Initiatives:

- The **Secretariat** of the Committee would be **hosted at the ICMR**.
- It would be supported by the **National Institute of One Health**, which would be setup in **Nagpur**.

1.204 Union Health Minister approves National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021

- Recently, **Union Health & Family Welfare Minister** approved the **“National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021”**.

Key Highlights

- **Aim**
 - To increase focus on indigenous research and local production of medicines.
 - To lower the cost of treatment of rare diseases.

- To screen and detect rare diseases early at early stages, which will in turn help in their prevention.
- **Focus –**
 - Indigenous research with the help of a **National Consortium** to be set up with Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as convenor.
 - **Early screening and prevention through primary and secondary health care** infrastructure such as Health and Wellness Centres and District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) and through counselling for the high-risk parents and will be supported by Nidan Kendras set up by Department of Biotechnology.
- **Categorization of Disease**
- The policy has categorized rare diseases in **three groups**:
 - **Group 1:** Disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment.
 - **Group 2:** Those requiring long term or lifelong treatment.
 - **Group 3:** Diseases for which definitive treatment is available but challenges are to make optimal patient selection for benefit, very high cost and lifelong therapy.
- **Important Institutes**
 - **Centres of Excellence:**
 - ✓ The policy aims to strengthen tertiary health care facilities for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through designating eight health facilities as 'Centres of Excellence' and these will also be provided one-time financial support of up to Rs. 5 crore for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.
 - **National Registry:**
 - ✓ A national hospital-based registry of rare diseases will be created to ensure adequate data and comprehensive definitions of such diseases are available for those interested in research and development.
- **Financial Support**
 - **Financial Support for treating rare disease-** ₹15 lakh to ₹20 lakh
 - Financial support **upto Rs. 20 lakhs** under the Umbrella Scheme of **Rastriya Arogya Nidhi** for treatment, of those rare diseases that require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under Group 1 in the rare disease policy).
 - Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but the benefit would be extended to about **40% of the population**, who are eligible under **Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)**.
 - Alternate Funding:
 - ✓ Voluntary crowdfunding treatment by setting up a digital platform for voluntary individual contribution and corporate donors to voluntarily contribute to the treatment cost of patients of rare diseases.
- **Challenges**
 - **Lack of Sustainable Funding:**
 - ✓ Unlike conditions under Group 1 and Group 2, patients with Group 3 disorders require sustainable treatment support.

- ✓ In the **absence of a sustainable funding** support for Group 3 patients, the precious lives of all patients, mostly children, are now at risk and at the mercy of crowdfunding.
- **Lack of Drug Manufacturing:**
 - ✓ Where drugs are available, they are prohibitively expensive, placing immense strain on resources.
 - ✓ Currently few pharmaceutical companies are manufacturing drugs for rare diseases globally and there are no domestic manufacturers in India except for those who make medical-grade food for those with metabolic disorders.

Why there is a need for such bill?

- About 95% rare diseases have no approved treatment and less than 1 in 10 patients receive disease-specific treatment.
- The diseases have differing definitions in various countries and range from those that are prevalent in 1 in 10,000 of the population to 6 per 10,000. India has said it lacks epidemiological data on the prevalence here and hence has only classified certain diseases as 'rare.'
- There are few pharmaceutical companies manufacturing drugs for rare diseases globally and there are no domestic manufacturers in India except for those who make medical-grade food for those with metabolic disorders.

1.205 MoS for Education attends consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries

- Recently, the Minister of State (MoS) for Education has attended the consultation meeting of **Education Ministers of E9 countries** on “**E9 initiative: Scaling up digital learning to accelerate progress towards SDG4**”.
- The consultation is the **first of a three-phased process** to co-create an initiative on digital learning and skills, targeting marginalized children and youth, especially girls.

About E9 Partnership:

- A forum of **nine countries**, formed to **achieve the goals** of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s **(UNESCO) Education for All (EFA)** initiative.
- **Launched in 1993** at the **EFA Summit in New Delhi**.
- **Members:** Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan.

About E9 initiative:

- **The E9 is the first of its kind global collaboration for digital learning.**
- It focuses on **three of the five priorities** of the **2020 Global Education meeting Declaration: supporting teachers; investing in skills; and narrowing the digital divide.**
- **Aim:** to accelerate recovery and advance the Sustainable Development Goal4 -“Quality Education” by driving rapid change in education systems.

Note: Target Year to achieve all the 17 SDGs is 2030.

1.206 Bajaj Allianz General Insurance launches “Criti-Care”

- Recently, **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** has launched “**Criti-Care**”- a **critical illness policy**, covering over 43 critical illnesses, including both initial and advanced stages, that allows the customers to design the coverage by selecting any or all 5 sections within the policy , waiting period as well as survival period.

Key Highlights:

- It is a **benefit only policy** i.e. a lump sum amount is paid to the customers if diagnosed with the listed ailment.
- **5 sections under the policy:** Cancer Care, Cardiovascular Care, Kidney Care, Neuro Care, Transplants Care & Sensory Organ Care.
- **Sum insured** under each section ranges from **Rs 1 lakh to Rs 50 lakh & the maximum total sum Insured of the policy is Rs 2 crores.**

1.207 Union Health Minister launches Integrated Health Information Platform

- Recently, **the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has virtually launched the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP), the next generation highly refined version of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP).**
- IHIP is the **world's largest online disease surveillance platform & India has become the first country to adopt an advanced disease surveillance system.**

Key Highlights:

- **IHIP has been launched in sync with the National Digital Health Mission.**
- **Designed with assistance from National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), World Health Organization (WHO), etc.**
- **IHIP houses the data entry and management for India's disease surveillance program & ensures near-real-time data in digital mode & move towards 'One Health' approach.**
- **Total number diseases tracked using IHIP: 33, as compared to 18 in the previous version.**

About IDSP:

- **A World Bank funded project launched in November 2004 by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.**
- **Objective:** to strengthen/maintain decentralized laboratory based IT enabled disease surveillance system for epidemic prone diseases to monitor disease trends and to detect and respond to outbreaks in early rising phase through trained Rapid Response Team (RRTs).

About National Digital Health Mission:

Launch Year	August 2020
Formulated by	The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Parent Agency	National Health Authority
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide the necessary support for integration of digital health infrastructure in India.

1.208 Union Health Minister addresses WHO on World Health Day 2021

- Recently, **the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has virtually addressed the World Health Organization (WHO) South East Asia Regional Office, New Delhi on World Health Day 2021.**

Key Information Shared:

- Establishment of **150,000 Health and Wellness Centres by 2022 under Ayushman Bharat Yojana** to provide **Comprehensive Primary Health Care.**
- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana:** Provision of **cashless insurance of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year** for secondary and tertiary care.

About Ayushman Bharat Yojana:

Launch Year	September 2018
Implemented by	National Health Authority, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
Key Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs)Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

1.209 Union Education Minister launches "MyNEP2020" platform of NCTE Portal

- Recently, the Union Minister for Education has launched the **"MyNEP2020" Platform of National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) Web Portal** to seek suggestions from teachers, academicians, & other stakeholders to prepare draft for **development of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) and National Mission for Mentoring Program membership (NMM)**.
- The platform would be operational from **1st April 2021 to 15th May 2021**.
- An expert committee would review the suggestions and formulate the draft.**
- Objective:** To prepare 21st century teachers to provide high quality training to improve the educational outcomes as per the policy directions of NEP 2020.

Note: NPST & NMM are the two major recommendations of NEP 2020.

1.210 Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021

- The Prime Minister, Shri **Narendra Modi** will interact with **students, teachers and parents** all over the world at "**Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021**" on 7th April, 2021.

About Pariksha Pe Charcha-

- It is part of the larger movement - **'Exam Warriors'** - led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to **create a stress-free atmosphere for youngsters**.
- It aims to bring together students, parents, teachers, and the society to foster an environment where the **unique individuality of each child is celebrated, encouraged and allowed** to express itself fully.

1.211 Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses the 40th Anniversary of AGE CARE India

- Recently, **Dr Harsh Vardhan**, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare has addressed the **40th anniversary of AGE-CARE India** and the **Elders Day celebrations** at the **India International Centre**.
- On the occasion, the minister conferred the **"Most Eminent Senior Citizen"** award to-
 - Padma Shree Awardee Prof. **(Dr.) J. S. Guleria**. He is a Senior Consultant, Medicine at Sita Ram Bhartia Institute.
 - Dr. G. P. Seth**, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine.
- He also mentioned that-
 - India exported **hydroxychloroquine** to **more than 150 countries** at the peak of the pandemic.
 - India has administered **7.5 crore doses in India**, and more than **6.5 crore doses** have also been **sent to other countries**.

- **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** already has a programme dedicated to addressing the various health related problems of the elderly called the “**National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly**” (NPHCE).

About National Programme for the Health Care of Elderly-

- **Launched by-** Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in 2010.
- **Aim-** It envisaged to **provide promotional, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services** in an integrated manner **for the Elderly** in various Government health facilities.
- The range of services will include-
 - health promotion, preventive services, diagnosis and management of geriatric medical problems (out and in-patient), day care services, rehabilitative services and home based care as needed.

1.212 India celebrates 'Tika Utsav' to combat Covid-19

- The '**Tika Utsav**' is a four-day exercise, started from **April 11**, which is the birth anniversary of social activist **Jyotiba Phule** and ended on **April 14**, which marks the birth anniversary of **BR Ambedkar**.
- **Aim-** inoculating as many people as possible against the **Covid-19** disease.
- The **two** vaccines being used were **Covishield**, the Oxford University-AstraZeneca's shot, which is being manufactured here by the **Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII)** and **Covaxin**, India's only homemade vaccine against the viral disease, being manufactured by **Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Limited**.

1.213 India approves Sputnik V vaccine

- Recently, Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) has announced that **India** became the **60th country** to **approve the use of Sputnik V** against coronavirus.
- The Drug Controller General of India (**DCGI**) has **registered the vaccine** under the **emergency use authorisation procedure**.
- Over **850 million doses** of **Sputnik V** are going to be **produced in India annually**.
- **Sputnik** will be the **third vaccine** to be used in India **against coronavirus**.
 - **Other two COVID-19 vaccines** -- **Covaxin** of Bharat Biotech and **Covishield** of Oxford-AstraZeneca manufactured by Serum Institute of India in Pune.

1.214 Union Education Minister holds meeting with Director General of UNESCO

- Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh **Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** held a virtual meeting Director General UNESCO, **Ms Audrey Azoulay** in **New Delhi**.
- Discussion was on key issues of mutual importance including **National Education Policy, India's response COVID Pandemic** especially in the **education sector**, among others concerning India UNESCO cooperation.
- Initiatives taken by India to ensure continuity of education for children across the country:
 - E –Vidya scheme, **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing)** platform was started to continue education for students (with internet access).

- One Class - One Channel programme 'SWAYAM PRABHA' was initiated for providing education to children without internet access.
- **Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY)**, an initiative for differently-able children.
- **MANODARPAN**, the government's initiative to provide online psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for their mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Minister emphasized that Year 2020 will be remembered for **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of Government of India**.
- **Aim of NEP:**
 - To achieve 100% GER in school education by 2030, and 50% in Higher Education by the year 2035 will bring additional 35 million students into the fold of higher education. He also shared that Gender Parity Index in Higher education in India has crossed 1.
 - NEP-2020 recommendations are in accordance with the SDG Goal 4, "Education for All".
- To mark the important occasion of 'commemoration of **75th year of India's independence ("Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav")**, an event at the UNESCO Headquarters will take place highlighting India's journey through these 75 years.

1.215 Government relaxes conditions for faster import of key medical devices

- Recently, the **Department of Consumer Affairs** has **permitted** the medical devices importers to **import 17 categories of medical devices for three months** from 28th April 2021 **by relaxing the conditions for clearances under rule 33(1) and rule 6 of the Legal Metrology (Packaging Rules 2011)**.
- As per the conditions, importers shall make **all mandatory declarations immediately after import/ custom clearance and before sale by stamping or putting sticker or online printing** for the above mentioned medical devices.
- The importers of such medical devices shall **inform all such imports with quantities imported** to the **Director (Legal Metrology)** and the **Controller (Legal Metrology)** in the State where the import is made, immediately after import.

About Legal Metrology Act 2009

- **Administered by:** Department of Consumer Affairs.
- It provides for application of legal requirements to measurements and measuring instruments.
- **Objective:** to ensure public guarantee from the point of view of security and accuracy of the weighments and measurements.

About Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities), Rules 2011:

- It intends to ensure that the consumers are able to make informed choices by being informed of essential declarations on the pre-packed commodities.

1.216 Central Assistance to Madhya Pradesh under Post Matric Scholarship for OBC students

- Recently, the **Central Government** has released an **amount of Rs 39.86 Crore** only as **Central Assistance** to the State Government of **Madhya Pradesh** under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of **Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC Student** during the year **2020-21**.
- Earlier **Rs 20 crore** only was **released** to State Government of **Madhya Pradesh** on Ad-hoc basis on 12th June, 2020 and **Rs 19.86 Crore** was also released on 22nd September, 2020.

- Hence **total amount** of Rs 79.72 Crore (up to Notional Allocation) is available with the State Government for expenditure in 2020-21.

About Post–Matric Scholarship for OBC Student-

- **Objective-** To provide financial assistance to the **OBCs students** studying at **post matriculation** or **post-secondary stage** to enable them to complete their education.
- These scholarships shall be **available for studies in India only** and will be **awarded** by the **Government of State/Union Territory** to which the applicant actually belongs, i.e. permanently settled.
- The **value of scholarship** will include **maintenance allowance, reader charges for blind students, reimbursement of compulsory non-refundable fees**, Study Tour Charges, thesis typing/printing charges and book allowance for students pursuing correspondence course, for complete duration of the course.
- The **scholarships** will be **open to India nationals** belonging to OBCs as notified by the Central Government/State Government Union Territory Administration.
- The **income ceiling of parents/guardians** for eligibility is **Rs.1.00 lakh per annum** (including self income, if employed).

1.217 Telangana government launches “Swatch Badi”

- **Telangana Government** has recently **inaugurated “Swatch Badi”**, a learning centre to know and **deal with garbage**, to teach **lessons on solid waste management**.
 - This is the **second such school in India**. The **first one** is located at **Bengaluru**.
- At Swatch Badi, **faculty will teach collection of garbage, segregation of wet, dry and harmful garbage**, public health involved in the system, avoiding plastic, and **how to produce compost** from **garbage** at houses.
- The lessons will be taught not only to children but also elderly people on garbage management.
- Government has also announced that the **first glow garden** would be established at **Komati cheruvu, Siddipet**, the **first in the country**.

ECONOMY

1.218 Yes Bank executes its first trade borrowing transaction linked to SOFR

- Recently, **Yes Bank has executed its first Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) linked transaction**.
- The transaction has been a trade borrowing availed from **Wells Fargo Bank** and will provide further impetus to the bank’s export finance business.
- SOFR is an identified **replacement for USD (US Dollar) LIBOR** (London InterBank Offered Rate), which is expected to be phased out at the end of 2021.

About London InterBank Offered Rate (LIBOR)-

- It is a **benchmark interest rate** at which major **global banks lend to one another** in the **international interbank market for short-term loans**.
- The rate is calculated and will continue to be published each day by the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE).

About Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)-

- It is a benchmark interest rate for **dollar-denominated derivatives and loans**.
- It is based on transactions in the Treasury repurchase market, where investors offer banks overnight loans backed by their bond assets.
- It was **launched by the New York Federal Reserve in 2018**.

1.219 RBI constitutes Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0)

- **Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to set up a new Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0) to streamline regulatory instructions, reduce compliance burden of the regulated entities by simplifying procedures, and reduce reporting requirements, wherever possible.**
- It has been constituted considering the developments in the regulatory functions of the central bank over the past two decades and evolution of the regulatory perimeter.
- Chaired by - M Rajeshwar Rao
- Tenure - one year from May 1

Key Highlights

- To make regulatory and supervisory instructions more effective by **removing redundancies and duplications**, if any.
- To **reduce compliance burden on regulated entities** by **streamlining the reporting mechanism**; revoking obsolete instructions if necessary and obviating **paper-based submission of returns** wherever possible.
- To obtain feedback from regulated entities on **simplification of procedures and enhancement of ease of compliance**.
- Examine and suggest the changes required in **dissemination process of RBI circulars/ instructions** (this would entail suggestions on the areas where the manner of issuing circulars, their updation and website linkages)
- Identify any other issue germane to the subject matter.

Background

- The RBI had set up the first RRA initially for a period of one year from April 1, 1999, for reviewing the regulations, circulars, reporting systems, based on the feedback from public, banks and financial institutions.
- **Chaired by** – YV Reddy

1.220 NHB launches ₹10,000-crore Special Refinance Facility-SRF 2021

- Recently, **National Housing Bank (NHB) has rolled out a ₹10,000-crore 'Special Refinance Facility-2021' (SRF-2021)** to provide short term refinance support to housing finance companies (HFCs) and other eligible Primary Lending Institutions (PLIs).
- **Objective** – To provide liquidity Support to HFCs and eligible PLIs by providing short term refinance support.
- Under the facility SRF, NHB has decided to provide short term liquidity support to PLIs.
- This scheme also gives support to HFCs to maintain a constant growth in the housing finance sector.

Key Highlights

- **Eligibility** - All PLIs who have availed financial assistance under SRF/ ASRF including any other eligible PLI with a **maximum net NPA of 7.5%** and a **minimum of 51% ratio of individual housing loans** to total assets (as under Liberalised Refinance Scheme(LRS) for HFCs).
- **Tenure** – The period of loan is **one year** from the date of draw down and it has to **be repaid in 4 equal quarterly installments or before it.**
- **Interest rate** - Based on the **repo rate** and is as same as repo rate plus the rating spread and it has to be paid on quarterly basis along with installment.
- **Maximum value of refinance** - 20% of the net owned fund of the PLI as on 31st March 2020/ **NHB or Rs.2000 crore**, whichever is lower.
- Only standard accounts will be considered as security for refinancing
- The initiative is in line with **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Rs.10,000 crore Special liquidity Facility-2(SLF-2)** provided to NHB in accordance to the recent increase of covid-19 cases.

Relevance

- NHB in April 2020 had provided Rs.10,000crore SRF that was granted by RBI under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan. During the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, NHB has extended an amount of Rs.42,823.93 crore as refinance to PLIs.
- NHB had also provided **refinance support of ₹ 14,000 crore** under the Special Refinance Facility (SRF) and Additional Special Refinance Facility (ASRF) during May-August 2020.

1.221 Cabinet approves Amendments to the Finance Bill, 2021

- Recently, **Cabinet has approved amendments to the Finance Bill, 2021.**
- **Objectives** - To provide equity and inclusiveness to all the taxpayers by addressing stakeholders concerns arising out of amendments proposed in the Bill.
- The Government amendments to the Finance Bill, 2021 are tax proposals which shall generate timely revenue for the Government and streamline existing provisions by addressing grievances of the taxpayers.

Key Highlights of Finance Bill 2021

- **Senior Citizens aged 75 year and above**, who will **not be required to file income tax returns** in case of income only from pension or interest.
- It provides **10-year income-tax exemption** to the **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development** and **5-year tax exemption** to **private sector development finance institutions**, which can be **extended by another five years.**
- It has proposed to insert **Section 245MA to the IT Act** for constitution of Dispute Resolution Committees by the Central Government, for dispute resolution in the case of such persons as may be specified by the CBDT.
 - The committee shall have the powers to reduce or waive any penalty imposable under the IT Act or grant immunity from prosecution for any offense punishable under the Act in case of a person whose dispute is resolved.
 - Anyone with a **taxable income up to Rs. 50 lakh** and disputed income up to **Rs. 10 lakh** shall be eligible to approach the Committee.

- **Exemption from Audit:** The Bill has proposed to increase the monetary limit for tax audit from **Rs. 5 crore to Rs. 10 crore** under Section 44AB of the IT Act. It will incentivize digital transactions and reduce the compliance burden of persons who make 95% of digital transactions.
- The Bill proposes to introduce an **Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess** of **₹ 2.5 per litre** applicable on **petrol** and **₹ 4 per litre** applicable on **Disel**.

1.222 Implementing green contracts

- **About Green Contracts .**
- It refers to commercial contracts which mandate that contracting parties **cut down greenhouse gas emissions** at different stages of delivery of goods/services including design, manufacturing, transportation, operations and waste disposal as applicable to the industry.
- The contract may **commence at the bidding stage** itself, when various interested companies participate in the tender process.
 - A **'green tender'** may prescribe necessary **'green qualifications'**, which can be considered when awarding the contract to a bidder.
 - ✓ The green qualifications can range from using a **pre-defined percentage of 'green energy'** in service delivery to adequate **on-site waste management**, reducing carbon emissions by a certain level over period of time, etc.
- Once such a bidder is chosen, the contracting agreement between the parties can prescribe the **'green obligations'** in detail, making the **obligations binding and enforceable** in the eyes of the law.
- It is this obligatory nature of green contracts which sets the tone for the parties to cut down emissions.
 - It can be achieved by **contractual clauses** providing for the use of good quality and energy-efficient infrastructure for production of goods/services, efforts in day-to-day operations such as reducing noise, air and water pollution and ensuring eco-friendly means of transportation like bicycles on site, establishing and maintaining a sustainable waste management system, and so on.

1.223 Insurance Companies (Foreign Investment) Amendment 2021

- Recently, The Finance Ministry has notified Indian **Insurance Companies (Foreign Investment) Amendment 2021**.

Key Highlights

- It has prescribed **one year** time frame for compliance of requirements related with appointment of Resident Indian Citizens on key management posts.
- Companies with **foreign ownership of more than 49 per cent** will have to maintain a **solvency margin of 180 per cent** if they declare dividend payments in a financial year.
 - If insurance companies repatriate profit in the form of dividend to their shareholders but cannot meet the 180 per cent margin, they will have to set aside **50 per cent** of their **net profit in a general reserve**.

- Indian Insurance Company having foreign investment, a majority of its directors, a majority of its key management persons, and at least one among the chairperson of its Board, its managing director and its Chief Executive Officer, will be **Resident Indian Citizen**.
- At least **50 per cent of directors** in the board will be **independent directors**.
 - If the **chairperson** is an **independent director** then at-least **one third of its Board** shall comprise **independent directors**.
- Downstream investment
 - **Investment by foreigner (non-resident)** in an Indian entity is considered as **Direct Foreign Investment**.
 - Investment by an **Indian company (which is owned or controlled by foreigners)** into another Indian entity is considered as **Indirect Foreign Investment**.

FDI in private sector

- According to a report in March 2019, the **average FDI investments** in the 23 private life insurer is only **35.5 per cent**, 30 per cent for 21 non-life private insurers and 31.7 per cent for the 7-specialised health insurance.
- Increase in FDI limit in the insurance may receive ₹5,000-6,000 crore of foreign investment in the sector in the next 1-2 years and ₹15,000-16,000 crore in the next 5-years, apart from deeper product expertise and better underwriting skills.

Effect

- the rules reflected two things announced in the Union Budget -- of having a majority of board members of insurance companies as Indians and retaining a certain amount of profit as a general reserve.

Relevance

- Recently, Parliament has approved amendment in the Bill for raising FDI limit to 74 per cent from 49 per cent.
- The foreign investment in insurance sector was permitted in the year 2000 by allowing the same up to 26 per cent in an Indian insurance company. Later, in 2015, this limit was raised to 49 per cent.

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KEY PROPOSALS

Indian Insurance Companies (Foreign Investment) (Amendment) Rules, 2021

- ▶ Foreign-owned insurance companies will have to maintain a solvency ratio of 1.8 to repatriate profits
- ▶ Set aside 50% net profit in reserve if solvency requirement not met
- ▶ 50% of directors shall be independent directors if FDI in insurance company exceeds 49%
- ▶ If board chairman is an independent director, at least one-third of board shall comprise independent directors



1.224 Sebi issues guidelines for warehousing norms for agri, non-agri goods

- Recently, SEBI has come out with guidelines for preparing warehousing norms by clearing corporations for agricultural, agri-processed, base and industrial metals goods.

Guidelines by SEBI to Clearing Corporations:

- The norms set by **Clearing Corporations** will be the minimum requirements/standards that its **Warehouse Service Providers(WSPs)** should comply with.
- In addition to the norms of clearing corporations, the WSPs should comply with the norms laid down by **Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)**
- **Bankruptcy:** In the event of bankruptcy or insolvency of the WSP, the clearing corporations **should remove the WSP from the accredited warehouse list** and should not place any restriction for possession of its commodities.
- A clearing corporations **cannot stop** its WSP from providing service to **other clearing corporations** as it can be accredited with more than one Clearing Corporations.

Warehousing Norms:

- **Capital:** An accredited WSP should have a **minimum subscribed and paid-up share capital of Rs 10 crore.**
- **Net worth:** The net worth required of a WSP varies for agricultural/agri-processed, base/industrial metals and composite goods and they will get six months to augment the net worth in case there is a reduction of net worth below the stipulated amount.

- The value of the goods stored in the accredited storage facilities of WSP should **not exceed 33 times** the net worth of the WSP (irrespective of the number of CCs it serves)
- **Review:** Every year Clearing Corporations have to review each WSP and it should have a grievance cell to handle the investor complaints.

1.225 RBI allows 15-year tenure for MD & CEO

- Recently, **The Reserve Bank of India has given a breather to private sector banks' managing director and CEO or Whole Time Director (WTD), who are also promoters, allowing them a tenure of up to 12 years instead of 10.**

Key Highlights of RBI's Discussion Paper on 'Governance in Commercial Banks in India'

- A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Whole-Time Director (WTD) of a bank could work **till she or he turned 70 years.**
- The **maximum age limit for chairman and non-executive directors** has been fixed at **75 years.**
- If the CEO or WTD is not a promoter or major shareholder he can stay in office for **15 years.**
- A person can be **re-appointed only after three years** in which there should be no association with the bank in any capacity.
- The Board meeting should record its minutes as well as committee discussions to appreciate the quality of deliberations including the views of individual directors, independent directors and dissenting member.
- RBI will have to be satisfied that independence of director is real.
- Senior management of the bank must be responsible for unacceptable behaviour and weak management oversight.
- The board will be responsible for creating the culture and values of the bank and should have an oversight on adherence to such values.
- The board would be ensuring that there is no conflict of interest either in management or in the bank's dealings with its group entities.
- The board will have the powers to take disciplinary action on remuneration or career progression of a person if the values and code of conduct are breached.
- The **nomination and remuneration committee** of a board should comprise at least **three non-executive directors.**
- **Chairman** of the bank **cannot** head the **remuneration committee.**

1.226 RBI joins network for 'greening the financial system'

- Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined the Central Banks and Supervisors Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS) as a Member.

About Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)

- The System was launched at the Paris One Planet Summit on December 2017.
- It is a group of Central banks and supervisors willing to share the best practices and contribute to the development of the environment and climate risk management in the financial sector, while mobilising mainstream finance to support the transition towards a sustainable economy.

1.227 Hallmarking of gold jewellery to be mandatory from 1st June 2021

- The Central government has recently made an announcement that it is fully prepared to **implement compulsory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts** from **1st of June 2021**.
 - **Gold hallmarking** is a purity certification and is **voluntary** at **present**.
 - Around **40% of gold jewellery sold** in the **country** is being **hallmarked** at **present**.
- As per the new rules, if **jewellery** or an **artefact** made of **14-, 18- or 22-carat gold** is **sold without** the **BIS hallmark**, the **jeweller** could be **penalised** five times the cost of the object or imprisoned for up to one year.
 - The **mandatory hallmarking** will protect the **public against lower caratage** and ensure consumers are not cheated and get the purity as marked on the ornaments.
- In year 2020, the then Union Minister for Consumer Affairs had announced **15th January 2021 as the deadline**, but jewellers had been given an extension in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.228 RBI receives 8 applications for setting up banks under 'on tap' licensing

- Recently, **RBI** has received **four applications each** under the guidelines for **'on tap' licensing** of **universal banks** and **small finance banks**.

Key Guidelines for on tap' licensing of universal banks:

- **Eligible Promoters:**
 - **Individuals/professionals** who are residents and have **10 years of experience** in banking and finance at a senior level.
 - **Entities/groups in the private sector** owned and controlled by residents, having a successful **track record for at least 10 years**, with **total assets of Rs 50 billion or more**, the **non-financial business of the group does not account for 40 % or more** in terms of total assets/in terms of gross income.
 - Existing non-banking financial companies (**NBFCs**) controlled by residents and have a successful **track record for at least 10 years**.
 - However, any NBFC, which is a part of the group that has total assets of Rs 50 billion or more and that the non-financial business of the group accounts for 40 % or more in terms of total assets/in terms of gross income, is **not eligible**.
- **Corporate structure: Not less than 51 %** of the total paid-up equity capital of the Non-Operative Financial Holding Company (NOFHC) shall be owned by the Promoter.
- **Minimum capital requirement:**
 - The initial minimum paid-up voting equity capital for a bank shall be **Rs five billion**. Thereafter, the bank shall have a **minimum net worth of Rs five billion at all times**.
 - The promoter/s and the promoter group / NOFHC, shall hold a **minimum of 40 % of the paid-up voting equity capital** of the bank which shall be locked-in for a period of **five years** from the date of commencement of business of the bank. The promoter group shareholding shall be **brought down to 15 % within a period of 15 years from the date of commencement of business of the bank**.
- **Foreign shareholding in the bank:** At present the aggregate foreign investment limit is **74%**.

- **Other conditions:** The bank shall get its shares listed on the stock exchanges within six years of the commencement of business; at least 25 % of its branches must be in unbanked rural centres.

Key Guidelines for on tap licensing of Small finance banks:

- **Minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth** requirement shall be **Rs 200 crore**;
- Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs), voluntarily transiting into Small Finance Banks (SFBs) require initial net worth of **Rs 100 crore**, which will have to be **increased to Rs 200 crore within five years from the date of commencement of business.**
- **Payments Banks can apply for conversion into SFB after five years of operations.**

About on tap licensing:

- RBI would accept applications / grant license for banks **throughout the year.**
- Lastly, **Bandhan Bank & IDFC Bank** were granted on tap licenses to start universal banks in **2015.**

Additional Information:

- RBI recently had announced a **Standing External Advisory Committee** headed by **Shyamala Gopinath**, for evaluating applications for universal banks and small finance banks.

1.229 Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is bringing together the collective power of all stakeholders in the Agriculture ecosystem

- Recently, **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** has informed that **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund has crossed the Rs. 8000 crore mark after receiving 8,665 applications worth Rs. 8,216 crores.**
- **Contribution:** Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) (58%), agri-entrepreneurs (24%) and Individual farmers (13%).
- **Top 5 leading states:** Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka & Rajasthan.
- Madhya Pradesh stands out with the highest non-PACS applications.

About Agriculture Infrastructure Fund –

- It is a **Central Sector Scheme.**
- It was announced in 2020 as a part of the over **Rs. 20 lakh crore** stimulus package announced in response to the **Covid-19 crisis.**
- The scheme shall provide a **medium - long term debt financing facility** for investment in viable projects for **post-harvest management Infrastructure and community farming assets** through **interest subvention** and **financial support.**
- Under the scheme, **Rs. 1 Lakh Crore** will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to-
 - Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS),
 - Marketing Cooperative Societies
 - Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs),
 - Self Help Group (SHG), Farmers, Joint Liability Groups (JLG)
 - Multipurpose Cooperative Societies
 - Agri-entrepreneurs
 - Startups

- Aggregation Infrastructure Providers
- Central/State agency or Local Body sponsored Public Private Partnership Project

Details of the Project

- **Duration** - The duration of the Scheme shall be from **FY2020 to FY2029 (10 years)**.
- Loans have been disbursed in four years starting with sanction of **Rs. 10,000 crore in FY 2020** and **Rs. 30,000 crore each in next three financial years**.
- **Loan Cap:** The scheme **does not have a minimum or maximum loan cap**.
- **Interest subvention: 3% per annum** up to a limit of **Rs. 2 crore** which will be available for a **maximum** period of **seven years**.
- Credit guarantee coverage will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility under **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme** for a loan up to **Rs. 2 crore**. The **fee** for this coverage will be **paid by the Government**.
- **Decision on the loan application to the applicant – Maximum period of 60 days** from the date of application of the loan
- In case of FPOs the credit guarantee may be availed from the facility created under FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW).
- **Moratorium for repayment** under this financing facility may vary subject to **minimum of 6 months and maximum of 2 years**.
- The Project by way of facilitating formal credit to farm and farm processing-based activities is expected to create numerous job opportunities in rural areas.
- **Managed and monitored** through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform.

1.230 Finance Ministry extends ECLGS 2.0 scheme to SMA-1 category borrowers

- Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** has **extended the scope** of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 2.0 (**ECLGS 2.0**) to Special Mention Account (**SMA**)-1 borrowers in the **healthcare sector & 26 stressed sectors identified by the KV Kamath Committee**.
- **Revised Operational Guidelines issued by:** National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC).

About SMA Classification:

- Introduced by **RBI in 2014**.
- SMA's are those accounts that are potential to become a non-performing/stressed assets & show symptoms of bad asset quality in the **first 90 days itself**.
- **SMA Classification:**

SMA Sub-categories	<u>Basis for classification</u>
	Principal or interest payment or any other amount wholly or partially overdue for
SMA-0	1-30 days
SMA-1	31-60 days
SMA-2	61-90 days

Key Components of ECLGS 2.0:

- **Eligibility:** Entities with credit outstanding of Rs 50 to Rs 500 crores as on 29th February 2020
- **Eligible Loan Amount:** 20% of outstanding credit
- **Loan Repayment Period:** 5 years.
- **Moratorium:** 1 year.

About ECLGS:

- Launched as a part of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.
- **Aim:** to provide Rs 3 lakh crore worth of collateral-free loans to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to mitigate the distress caused by the lockdown.

1.231 RBI extends Ways and Means credit for States/UTs

- Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has decided to **extend** the existing **interim Ways and Means Advances (WMA) scheme limit** of **Rs 51,560 crore** for all States/ UTs shall for **six months** up to **30th September 2021**.
- The decision has been made based on the **recommendations** of the **Advisory Committee on WMA to State Governments 2021**, chaired by **Sudhir Shrivastava**.

Key Highlights:

- **WMA limit** arrived based on **total expenditure** of States/ UTs, works out to **Rs 47,010 crores**.
- **Special Drawings Facility (SDF)** availed by States/ UTs shall **continue to be linked** to the quantum of **investments in marketable securities issued by the GoI**, including the **Auction Treasury Bills (ATBs)**.
- **Net annual incremental investments** in Consolidated Sinking Fund (**CSF**) and Guarantee Redemption Fund (**GRF**) shall **continue to be eligible for availing of SDF, without any upper limit**.
- **Uniform hair-cut of 5%** shall be **applied on the market value of securities**, for determining the **operating limit of SDF on a daily basis**.
- **Interest rate on SDF, WMA and OD shall continue to be linked to the Repo rate:**

Scheme	Limit	Rate of Interest
SDF	If availed against net annual incremental investment in CSF and GRF	Repo rate minus 2 per cent
	If availed against investment in G-sec/ ATBs	Repo rate minus 1 per cent
WMA	If outstanding up to 3 months from the date of making the advance	Repo rate
	If outstanding beyond three months from the date of making the advance	Repo rate plus 1 per cent
OD	If availed up to 100 per cent of WMA limit	Repo rate plus 2 per cent
	If exceeds 100 per cent of WMA limit	Repo rate plus 5 per cent

About Way & Means Advances:

- **Temporary loans** provided by RBI to States/UTs to **meet mismatches** in the **receipts and payments** of the government; Introduced in **1997**.
- **Section 17(5) of the RBI Act, 1934** authorizes the central bank to lend to the Centre and state governments subject to their being repayable **not later than three months** from the date of the making of the advance.
- When **WMA exceeds 90 days**, it would be treated as **an overdraft**
- **Types:** normal and special or SDF;
- **Number of loans under normal WMA** is based on a **three-year average of actual revenue and capital expenditure of the state**.

1.232 Intellectual Property Appellate Board abolished

- Recently, the **President of India** has promulgated the **Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021** and **abolished the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB)**.

Key Reasons for Abolishment:

- The IPAB's jurisdiction of cases was split between trademarks, patents, copyright, and geographical indication, where the predominant business pertained to trademarks.
- It was understaffed and underfunded.

About IPAB:

- **Establishment:** September 2003
- **Parent Ministry:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry
- **Headquartered at Chennai** and shall have **sittings at Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Ahmedabad**
- Established to **hear appeals against the decisions of the Registrar** under the **Trade Marks Act, 1999** and the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**.
- **Section 83 of the Trade Marks Act, 1999(Act)**, provides for the **establishment of an Appellate Board to be known as the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB)**.
- After passing **The Patents (Amendment) Act of 2002**, IPAB attained power to rectify and revoke applications that used to be heard by various high courts, which actually came in effect from **2007**.

1.233 Not necessary to activate CCyB for banks now: RBI

- Recently, based on the **review and empirical testing of countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB) indicators**, RBI has decided that it is **not necessary to activate CCyB for banks at this point in time**.
- **RBI did not activate CCyB in April 2020 as well**, for a period of **one year or earlier**, as may be necessary.

About CCyB:

- The **framework on countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB)** was put in place by the **RBI** in terms of guidelines issued in **February 2015**.
- The guidelines are formulated based on the **recommendations** of the **final Report on the implementation of Countercyclical Capital Buffer** submitted by the **Internal Working Group of the RBI under the Chairmanship of B Mahapatra**.
- **Two fold Aim of CCyB:**
 - Banks should build up a buffer of capital in good times which may be used to maintain flow of credit to the real sector in difficult times.
 - To achieve macro-prudential goal of restricting the banking sector from indiscriminate lending in the periods of excess credit growth that have often been associated with the building up of system-wide risk.

Guidelines for implementing CCyB:

- **CCyB** should be maintained in the form of **Common Equity Tier 1 (CET 1) capital** or **other fully loss absorbing capital only**, and the **amount of the CCCB** may vary from **0 to 2.5%** of **total risk weighted assets (RWA)** of the banks.
 - The **CCyB decision** would normally be **pre-announced with a lead time of 4 quarters**. However, depending on the CCCB indicators, the banks may be advised to build up requisite buffer in a shorter span of time
-

- **Main Indicator:** credit-to-GDP gap
- **Supplementary Indicators:**
 - Credit-to-Deposit Ratio for a moving period of three years ((along with its correlation with credit-to-GDP gap and Gross Non-Performing Asset- GNPA growth)
 - Industry Outlook (IO) assessment index (along with its correlation with GNPA growth)
 - Interest Coverage Ratio ((along with its correlation with credit-to-GDP gap).
 - Asset Quality.
- CCyB framework has **two thresholds** viz, **lower threshold** and **upper threshold**, with respect to credit-to-GDP gap are **3 percentage points & 15 percentage points** respectively.

About credit-to-GDP gap:

- It is the **difference** between **credit-to-GDP ratio** and the **long term trend value of credit-to-GDP ratio** at any point in time.

1.234 Commerce Minister launches Startup India Seed Fund Scheme

- Recently, the **Union Minister of Commerce and Industry** has launched the **Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)**.
- **SISFS** would **Secure seed funding, Inspire innovation, Support transformative ideas, Facilitate implementation, and Start startup revolution**
- **Aim:** to provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry, and commercialization.

Key Highlights:

- **Implementing Agency:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- Under the Scheme, **Rs. 945 Crore corpus** would be **divided over the next 4 years** to provide **seed funds to eligible startups** through **eligible incubators** across India.
- **Expected Beneficiaries: 3,600 startups** through **300 incubators**.
- It would impact the innovations in **tier 2 and tier 3** regions of India.
- **DPIIT** has created an **online portal** allowing incubators to apply for funds.
- **An Experts Advisory Committee (EAC)** has been created by **DPIIT** to execute and monitor SISFS.
- **Grants of upto Rs 5 Crores** shall be provided to the **eligible incubators** selected by the EAC.
- **Selected incubators** shall provide grants of **up to Rs 20 lakhs** for **validation of Proof of Concept, or prototype development, or product trials to startups**.
- Additionally, **investments of up to Rs 50 lakhs** shall be provided to the startups for **market entry, commercialization, or scaling up through convertible debentures or debt-linked instruments**.

Background:

- **SISFS** has been **announced by the PM** during the **Plenary address of 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit'**, marking the **five-year's of the Startup India initiative**.
- **SISFS** has been announced under the **motto of Connect, Collaborate & Catalyse**.

1.235 Government extends validity of FAME II certificate

- The **Department of Heavy Industry (DHI)** has recently **extended by one year the eligibility certificates** issued by **testing agencies and approvals for electric vehicles** given by the National Automotive Board (**NAB**) and **DHI** that were valid till **March 31, 2021**.
- Originally, **manufacturers** were **required to submit re-validation certificates** for availing of demand incentives under the **FAME-II (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) scheme**.
- **Additional Information-**
 - In **2019**, the **government** had announced an **outlay of ₹10,000 crore** for the **FAME II scheme** for **three years**, that is, till **2022**.
 - The scheme had envisaged **supporting 10 lakh electric two-wheelers, 5 lakh electric three-wheelers, 55,000 electric four-wheelers and 7,000 electric buses**.

1.236 Government announces 50% rebate for start-ups & others

- The **government** has recently **slashed the annual marking fee** to get a **new BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) license and certification by 50%** for **micro-industry, startups and women entrepreneurs**.
- For **existing license holders**, a **20% rebate** was already given and now an additional 10% will be given to them, which will give a boost to the **government 'Vocal for Local' campaign**.
- It was also **announced** that the **services of BIS** are now **made available free of cost** to everyone and can be **downloaded** from the **standardisation port of e-BIS**.
- **Entire process of certification**, including grant of license, renewal of license, and inclusion is **automated** through **Manak Online Portal of e-BIS**.
- To make the laboratory operations more efficient, **development of LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) to automate the entire process of testing** of product samples in **BIS and recognized private labs**.
 - LIMS ensure tracking of the progress of each and every sample on real-time basis.
- These new initiatives will **improve efficiency** of our **manufacturing sector, standardisation and Quality of products**.

About BIS-

- It is a **government quality standards-setting body**, issues **licenses with a standard mark** to help identify the unit, which has manufactured the product at a specific location.
- BIS have nearly 21000 Indian Standards.

1.237 G20 countries gives nod to Fresh SDR issue

- Recently, during the **Second G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting (FMCBG)**, **G20 finance ministers** have given nod the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** to issue fresh **Special Drawing Rights (SDR)** worth **USD 650 billion to member countries**, to boost the reserves of all nations, and avoid pushing low-income countries into further distress.
- However, **India was the only country to resist the proposal to issue fresh SDR**.
- **G20 Finance Ministers** have also agreed to **extend Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)** by **six months to December 2021**.

About Special Drawings Rights:

- It is an **international reserve asset** created by the **IMF**.
- The **value of the SDR** is based on a **basket of five currencies**—US Dollar, Euro, Chinese Renminbi, Japanese Yen, and British Pound Sterling.
- **One SDR** is currently valued at **USD 1.425**.

Additional Information:

- **A supermajority vote at the IMF** for major policy decisions requires **85% of votes**.
- **USA** has unique veto power at the IMF with **16.52% voting rights**.
- **India** has a voting right of **2.6%**.

Note: 2nd FMCBG was chaired by Italy.

1.238 IMF proposes 'solidarity' tax on pandemic winners and wealthy

- Recently, the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has released "**Fiscal Monitor April 2021**" & **proposed to impose additional tax to the companies/high earners that prospered during the covid19 pandemic period in 2020 to show solidarity to the masses affected by the pandemic, even if there is no need to repair the public finances.**
- The report has also suggested advanced economies to increase the income tax rates for a period.

Key Highlights:

- **Advanced economies** borrowed **11.7 % of GDP, emerging countries - 9.8 % of GDP and low income countries - 5.5 % of GDP in 2020.**
- **Average public debt worldwide in 2020: 97 % of GDP**
- **Average public debt worldwide projection for 2021: around 99 % of GDP.**
- Investment in **Production/ Distribution of Covid-19 vaccinations** is the most important **fiscal policy to be implemented by countries.**
- **Production/distribution cost of Covid-19 vaccines, should boost growth prospects sufficiently to raise tax revenues in advanced countries alone by USD 1 trillion by 2025.**

About Fiscal Monitor:

- It is a **bi-annual report** released by the **IMF**.

1.239 Finance Minister attends Plenary Meeting of IMFC of IMF

- Recently, the **Union Finance Minister** has attended the **Plenary Meeting** of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (**IMFC**) of the **Board of Governors** of the International Monetary Fund (**IMF**) at the **virtual Spring Meetings 2021**.
- The discussions were based on **IMF Managing Director's Global Policy Agenda (GPA)** titled, "**Bolstering the Recovery, Countering Divergence**".
- **Total Participants:** Governors/Alternate Governors representing **190 member countries** of the IMF.

About IMFC:

- It advises and reports to the **IMF Board of Governors** on the **management of the international monetary and financial system.**
- **Total Members of IMFC: 24; Current Chair:** Magdalena Andersson, Finance Minister of Sweden. (**First Women to hold the position**)

- IMFC meets twice during the year viz. **Spring Meetings in April**, and **Annual Meetings in October**.

Note: IMFC & The joint Bank-IMF Development Committees are the two key events of Springs/Annual meetings.

1.240 Panel submits report on farm laws to SC

- Recently, Supreme Court appointed panel has submitted its report on the three agricultural reform laws in a closed cover.
- The panel was set up in January 2021 to persuade farmers agitating against them to come to the “negotiating table” and formed a four-member committee to “negotiate” between the farmers and the government.
- **Members include:** Ashok Gulati, Anil Ghanwat, Bhupinder Singh Mann and Pramod Joshi, out of which Bhupinder Singh Mann has resigned.
- The three laws which were passed by Parliament in September and are being opposed by farmers’ unions are The Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act.

About Farmers’ Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act 2020

- Key Features of the Act
 - It seeks to provide for **barrier-free trade of farmers’ produce** outside the markets notified under the various state agricultural produce market laws (state APMC Acts).
 - **Farmers’ produce** means food items including cereals such as wheat and rice, oilseeds, oils, vegetables, fruits, spice, and sugarcane.
 - It also includes: (i) products of poultry, piggery, goater, fishery, dairy, (ii) raw cotton and jute, and (iii) cattle fodder.
 - A person transacting with a farmer will be required to make payments to the farmer on the same day, or within three working days in certain conditions, for any transaction of scheduled farmers’ produce.
 - It prohibits state governments from levying any market fee, cess or levy on farmers, traders, and electronic trading platforms for any trade under the Ordinance.

About Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Service Act 2020

- It has provided a framework for the protection and empowerment of farmers with reference to the sale and purchase of farm products.
- **Key Features**
 - It provides for a farming agreement prior to the production or rearing of any farm produce, aimed at facilitating farmers in selling farm produces to sponsors.
 - The minimum period of an agreement will be one crop season, or one production cycle of livestock.
 - The **maximum period will be five years**.
 - For production cycle beyond five years, the maximum period for the agreement will be mutually decided by the farmer and the sponsor.

- Farming produce under a farming agreement will be exempted from all state Acts aimed at regulating sale and purchase of farming produce.
- The provisions of the Ordinance will override all state APMC laws.

About amendments in Essential Commodities Act, 1955

- The ordinance has empowered the central government to control the production, supply, distribution, trade, and commerce in certain commodities.
- Aim - To liberalise the regulatory system while protecting the interests of consumers.

1.241 IMF Top Deputy optimistic G-20 will extend debt relief to low-income nations

- Recently, the First Deputy Managing Director of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF) Geoffrey Okamoto** has announced that he is optimistic that **G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)**, would be **extended** till the end of **December 2021**, to provide debt relief to low income nations.

Key Information Shared:

- According to the World Bank, **DSSI** has delivered **\$5 billion in relief** for **more than 40 countries**.
- **IMF** has proposed to create **\$650 billion in reserve assets called special drawing rights**, to help developing countries to combat the pandemic.
- **U.S Treasury Dept.** has announced to provide **\$21 billion in liquidity support for low-income countries** and about **\$212 billion to other emerging-market and developing nations, except China**, to support the reserve-assets creation.
- **Emergency concessional financing by the IMF in 2020: \$13 billion**

About DSSI:

- **An initiative of G20 Countries** launched in **May 2020** as per the **request by the World Bank and IMF**, to help low income countries fight the economic impact of the pandemic.
- Under the initiative, **73 countries are eligible for a temporary suspension of debt-service payments owed to their official bilateral creditors**
- The suspension period, **originally set to end in December 2020**, had been **extended to June 2021**, and agreed to **consider a further six-month extension**.

1.242 RBI amends India's inflation-forecasting model

- Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India** in its latest bi-annual monetary policy report, **has revised the inflation-forecasting model to capture how fiscal and monetary policy interact with real-economy elements**.
- The model has been named as **Quarterly Projection Model 2.0 - an open economy, calibrated, new-Keynesian gap model**.
- The previous version had been criticized for over-estimating upside risks to inflation.

Key Highlights:

- **QPM 2.0 is incorporated into three structures, viz:**
 - fiscal-monetary dynamics
 - disaggregated fuel pricing
 - balance of payments and exchange rate interactions
- **The new model is broken into three blocks, viz:**

- **Fiscal Block:** decomposes government's primary deficit into structural and cyclical components, with shocks to the structural component impacting inflation through aggregate demand and country risk premia.
- **Fuel block:** It takes into account, Indian pricing system of fuels & cost-push implications in the enhanced aggregate supply block. Fuel pricing system includes:
 - ✓ Petrol/diesel priced based on international prices, exchange rates, and local taxes.
 - ✓ Liquefied petroleum gas and kerosene prices are determined by market.
 - ✓ Electricity costs are administered by state governments.
- **Balance of payments block:** It recognizes the costs associated with spurts in volatility in the exchange rate; it also incorporates the determinants of current & capital accounts and their interaction with the exchange market.
- The model properties of features can be best represented through impulse response functions which trace out the impact on key macroeconomic variable in response to shocks:
 - **Analysis in Fiscal Block:** an expansionary structural fiscal shock contributes to demand pressures and creates a positive output gap & Increasing debt could contribute to depreciation of the currency would lead to inflation; if the fiscal deficit shock is cyclical, it has a modest impact on inflation.
 - **Analysis in Fuel Block:** an increase in fuel taxes feeds into higher fuel prices and ex-food fuel inflation through the cost-push channel. Headline inflation goes up by 25bps in response to a fuel tax increase of Rs 10 per litre; If tax reversal does not happen, inflation will remain higher.
 - **Analysis in Balance of Payment Block:** In case of a capital outflow shock of 1% of GDP, and assuming the RBI intervenes and sterilizes 70% of the outflow, reserves will deplete by 0.7% of GDP and the exchange rate will depreciate, inducing inflationary pressure.

About Quarterly Projection Model:

- It is RBI's Forecast and Policy Analysis System (FPAS) and the **workhorse model** for generating medium term projections and undertaking policy scenario analysis, consistent with the central bank's mandate under the **flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework**.

1.243 Centre sets Rs 10 lakh trigger for MSME rescue scheme

- Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** has announced that the Central Government has set a payment default of **Rs 10 lakh** as the trigger for **bankruptcy proceedings of Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** under the pre-pack scheme.
- The **threshold of payment default is much lower than the Rs 1 crore threshold** otherwise applicable under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for **initiating bankruptcy proceedings in the case of non-MSME businesses**.

Key Highlights:

- A **voluntary initiation of pre-pack scheme** would need **75% shareholder approval** backed by **creditors representing 66% of the debt**.
- In case of **large companies**, if the **payment default criteria is met**, **even one lender could initiate proceedings against the defaulter**.

Relevance:

- The President of India has recently **promulgated the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021**, which provides pre-packaged resolution solution for MSMEs.

About Pre-Pack Scheme:

- Launched in line with the **recommendations of the sub-committee of the Insolvency Law Committee (ILC), headed by M. S. Sahoo.**
- The pre-pack scheme is **an arrangement where the corporate debtor proposes a resolution plan to the secured creditors before the initiation of corporate insolvency resolution procedure (CIRP).**
- **Prescribed Timelines:** 120 days for the entire process; 90 days for the submission of the resolution plans; and 30 days to receive NCLT's approval.

1.2446-digit HSN code mandatory in invoices for biz with over Rs 5 crore turnover

- Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** has announced that **businesses with turnover of more than Rs 5 crore**, in the **preceding financial year**, would have to **mandatorily furnish six-digit HSN (Harmonised System of Nomenclature Code), or SAC (Service Accounting Code)** on the invoices issued for supplies of **taxable goods and services w.e.f. 1st April 2021.**
- Businesses with **turnover of up to Rs 5 crore in the preceding financial year** would be required to **mandatorily furnish four-digit HSN code on Business to Business (B2B) invoices.**
- Earlier, the requirement was 4 digits and 2 digits respectively.

Background:

- HSN codes for goods at 6 digits are universally common. Therefore, common HSN codes apply to Customs and GST.
- **Accordingly, codes prescribed in the Customs tariff are used for the GST purposes too** (specifically mentioned in the GST rate schedule).
- In **Customs Tariff**, HS code is prescribed as heading (**4 digits HS**), sub-heading (**6 digits HS**) and tariff items (**8 digits**)

About SAC (Service Accounting Code):

- Issued by the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** to **uniformly classify each services** under the GST regime.
- **Total Digits: 6.**

Note: HSN code discussed in March 2021 Magazine.

1.245 Govt. notifies rule for winding up Income Tax Settlement Commission

- Recently, the **Ministry of Finance** has notified the rule for **winding up of the Settlement Commission**, handling income tax (**IT**) and wealth tax (**WT**) disputes, **effective 1st February 2021**, to setup new dispute resolution system for small tax payers.

Key Highlights:

- The **new dispute resolution system** under a committee would be available to **assesseees with taxable income up to Rs 50 lakh** in cases **where disputed income is up to Rs 10 lakh.**

Relevance:

- In Union Budget 2021-22, the Finance Minister has proposed to set up a faceless, dispute resolution system committee, to help reduce litigation for small taxpayers.

- **The Finance Bill 2021** proposed the **discontinuation of Income Tax Settlement Commission** with immediate effect from **1st February'2021**.
- Under **Vivad se Vishwas** scheme, **direct tax disputes** around **Rs 1 trillion** has been already **settled** so far, fetching about **Rs 53,800 crore** to the exchequer.

About Settlement Commission (IT-WT):

- Constituted in **1976** under **section 245B of Income-tax Act, 1961** & and **section 22B of the Wealth Tax Act, 1957** as per the recommendations of **Direct Taxes Enquiry Committee (Wanchoo Committee)**.

1.246 Commerce Minister chairs first meeting of National Startup Advisory Council

- Recently, **the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry** has **chaired the first meeting of the National Startup Advisory Council**, to advise govt. on measures to build a strong startup ecosystem in India.

About National Startup Advisory Council:

- **Constituted by:** Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)
- **Chairman:** Minister for Commerce & Industry
- **Convener:** Joint Secretary, DPIIT
- **Ex-officio Members:** Nominees of the concerned Ministries/Departments/Organizations not below the rank of Joint Secretary.
- **Non-official Members:** Industrial players nominated by the Central Government
 - **Total nominated non-official members: 28**
 - **Term: 2 years.**

Note: Functions of National Startup Advisory Council covered in January 2021 Magazine.

1.247 Cabinet approves agreement on Customs Cooperation & Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters

- Recently, the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister, has **approved the signing and ratification of an agreement between-**
 - Government of Republic of **India** and the Government of the **United Kingdom** of Great Britain and **Northern Ireland** on **Customs Cooperation** and Mutual Administrative Assistance in **Customs Matters**.
- **Features of the agreement-**
 - It will help in the **availability of relevant information** for the **prevention and investigation** of **Customs offences**.
 - It will also **facilitate trade** and ensure **efficient clearance** of **goods** traded between the countries.
 - It will **provide a legal framework** for sharing of information and intelligence between the Customs authorities
 - It will help in the proper application of Customs laws, prevention and investigation of Customs offences and the facilitation of legitimate trade.

Art and Culture

1.248 Babasaheb Ambedkar Digital Kala Festival

- Babasaheb Ambedkar Digital Kala Festival has been launched by Delhi government on 14th April to mark the 130th birth anniversary of the social reformer and revolutionary Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

About Digital Kala Festival:

- The first edition of the festival, will be a week-long exhibition is initiative of Department of Art, Culture and Languages (ACL) of Delhi government.
- It seeks to promote the teachings of Baba Saheb Ambedkar in the people, especially theyouth in the city.
- The festival is curated by Anurag Minus Verma and will be based on the theme of Babasaheb's famous quote, "We are all equal under the blue sky".
 - The Delhi government wants to encourage out of the box and unique interpretations of this quote, along with inculcating a new sense of patriotism in the participants.

1.249 Launch of 'MICE' Roadshow and inauguration of Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho

- Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) and Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh has inaugurated the Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho.
- This center was developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism.
- They also launched "Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) Roadshow Meet in India" Brand and Roadmap for the Promotion of India as MICE Destination in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.

1.250 Ministry of Tourism organises webinar on "Stories of Madurai"

- The Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series held its 82nd webinar titled "Stories of Madurai".
- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

About Madurai

- Madurai, one of the oldest living cities, holds the soul of Tamil Nadu.
- The most spectacular of these is the Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple, which is the heartbeat of the city and is visited by thousands of devotees.

1.251 World Cities Cultural Forum

- Recently, the Delhi government has announced that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will represent the Capital and India at the World Cities Cultural Forum.
- Delhi will also be part of the World Cities Culture Report, the most comprehensive global dataset on culture in cities.
- About World Cities Cultural Forum-
 - The forum comprises of 40 world cities including London, Tokyo and New York, and will be attended by Deputy Mayors for Culture and Heads of Culture from the member cities.

- This year's **theme** — **The Future of Culture.**

1.252 29th edition of the Mumbai Sanskriti music festival

- Recently, the **29th edition** of the **Mumbai Sanskriti music festival** has commenced in the virtual mode and will be streamed on the official YouTube channel of the **Indian Heritage Society-Mumbai.**
- **Theme of the festival- Use Live Music to Save Heritage**

1.253 Tourism Minister addresses webinar 'India's Heritage: Powering Tourism'

- Recently, the **Union Tourism Minister** has addressed a **webinar titled 'India's Heritage: Powering Tourism'**, organized by **Ministry of Tourism** on the occasion of **World Heritage Day 2021 on 18th April 2021.**
- He also **inaugurated the first ever online exhibition** on the **Ramayana, the Epic by Maharishi Valmiki**, showcasing 49 miniature paintings collections of National Museum, New Delhi.
- **Theme of World Heritage Day 2021: "Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures".**

International News

1.254 Israel to reduce 80% greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

- Recently, the **Israeli Ministry of Energy** has announced a **national plan** which includes a main target of **reducing 80 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.**
- It also aims to-
 - **shut down all coal-fired power plants by 2025**
 - **reduce greenhouse gas emissions** in the electricity sector by **75 to 85% by 2050**
 - **increase electricity generation** from renewable energy (mainly from solar energy)
 - **improve the energy consumption** per unit of produce by **1.3% every year.**
- This would be done by **developing innovative technologies, improvements in the power grid, changes in energy use by households, transition to electric vehicles, etc.**

1.255 Under the world's deepest lake, baikal telescope being assembled to hunt ghost particles

- Russian scientists launched one of the world's biggest underwater **neutrino telescopes** called the **Baikal-GVD (Gigaton Volume Detector).**
- This telescope is assembled in the waters of **Lake Baikal**, the world's **deepest lake** situated in **Siberia.**
- **Aim** - this telescope was constructed to study in detail the elusive **fundamental particles** called **neutrinos** and to determine their sources.
- The **Baikal-GVD** is one of the **three largest** neutrino detectors in the world along with the **IceCube** at the **South Pole** and **ANTARES** in the **Mediterranean Sea.**

About Siberia:

- **Capital: Novosibirsk**
 - **Currency: Russian Rubles**
-

1.256 Indian Origin Boy in UK Finds Fossil from Millions of Years Ago in his Garden

- A six-year-old Indian-origin boy found a **fossil** from millions of years ago while digging in his garden, he was using **fossil-hunting set** he received as a Christmas present when he came across a rock that looked like a **horn** in the **West Midlands region** of **England**.
- The fossil's markings mean it is most likely a **Rugosa coral** and that the period that they existed from was between **500 and 251 million years ago**, the **Paleozoic Era**.

1.257 China banned imports of Taiwanese pineapples

- On March 1, **China banned** the import of **pineapples** from **Taiwan**, alleging there was a risk of **“harmful creatures”** that could threaten its own agriculture.
- China is Taiwan’s largest trading partner, making up nearly 30% of the island’s total trade – which includes commerce in agricultural products.
- Taiwan’s foreign minister also urged **“like-minded friends around the globe to stand with #Taiwan & rally behind the #FreedomPineapple”**.

About Taiwan:

- **Capital: Taipei**
- **Currency: New Taiwan dollar**

1.258 Japan court backs same-sex marriage

- A **Japanese court** has ruled that the lack of legal recognition for **same-sex marriage violates** the constitution.
- The country’s first such judgment in support of **marriage equality**.
- The court in northern Sapporo ruled that the government’s current failure to offer same-sex couples ways to **“enjoy even a part of the legal effects that arise from marriage violates Article 14”** of the constitution, which mandates equality under the law.

About Japan:

- **Capital: Tokyo**
- **Currency: Japanese yen**

1.259 Russian President Vladimir Putin signs law paving way to rule until 2036

- Recently, the **Russian government** has announced that the **Russian President Vladimir Putin** signed a law allowing him to **run for two more presidential terms** in the Kremlin once his **current term ends in 2024**.
- The **legislation** allows him to run for **two more six-year terms**.

1.260 ‘Kill the bill’ protesters rally across England and Wales

- Thousands of protesters have joined **'Kill the Bill' rallies** across **England** and **Wales** against a proposed **new law**.
- The **police, crime, sentencing and courts bill**, which passed its second reading in parliament last month, will **modify existing public order legislation** to make it **easier for police to ban or shut down peaceful protests** if they are considered too disruptive or likely to lead to disorder.

1.261 Russia registers world's 1st Covid vaccine Carnivac-Cov for animals

- Russia's agriculture safety watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor has announced that world's first animal vaccine against the novel coronavirus has been registered in Russia.
- The **vaccine for animals**, developed by a unit of **Rosselkhoznadzor** (Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance), has been named as **Carnivac-Cov**.
- The use of this vaccine, as per Russian scientists, can **prevent the development of virus mutations**.

1.262 Forbes' 35th annual list of the world's billionaires

- **Forbes** has recently released the **Forbes' 35th annual list of the world's billionaires**.
- Top -5 **billionaires** are-

Rank	Person	Source of Wealth	Networth
1	Jeff Bezos	AMAZON	\$177 BILLION
2	Elon Musk	TESLA, SPACEX	\$151 BILLION
3	Bernard Arnault	LUXURY GOODS	\$150 BILLION
4	Bill Gates	MICROSOFT	\$124 BILLION
5	Mark Zuckerberg	FACEBOOK	\$97 BILLION

- **India specific findings-**
 - **India** (140) has the **third highest number of billionaires** in the world after the US (724) and China (698).
 - **Mukesh Ambani** ranked **10th** in the list with an estimated **networth of \$84.5 billion**.
 - Adani Group chairman **Gautam Adani**, the **second richest Indian**, is ranked **24th** on the **global list** of billionaires with a net worth of **\$50.5 billion**.

1.263 Pakistan's human rights activist, journalist I.A. Rehman passed away

- Recently, Pakistani **Human rights reformer** and **former journalist Ibn Abdur Rehman** passed away in Lahore.
- He was awarded with the **Ramon Magasaysay Award** for Peace and International Understanding in 2004, along with **Indian Admiral L. Ramdas**.
- **Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)** has given him the title of **"titan of human rights"**.

About Pakistan:

- **Capital: Islamabad**
- **Currency: Pakistani rupee**

1.264 Japan to release contaminated Fukushima water into sea after treatment

- Japan will release more than **one million tonnes** of contaminated water from the destroyed **Fukushima nuclear station** into the sea.
- The first release of water will take place in about **two years**, giving plant operator Tokyo Electric Power time to begin filtering the water to remove **harmful isotopes** from the water.
- The water is stored in huge tanks at the **Fukushima Daiichi plant** at an annual cost of about **100 billion yen (\$912.66 million)** and space is running out.

- **The United States** noted that **Japan** has worked closely with the **International Atomic Energy Agency** in its handling of the site since the meltdown in three reactors a decade ago.

1.265 Egypt unveils 3,000-year-old 'lost' city near Luxor

- Recently, **Egypt** has announced the discovery of one of the most important finds since the unearthing of **King Tutankhamun's tomb** almost 100 years ago in 1922.
- A 3000-year-old "**lost golden city**" from the era of **18th-dynasty king Amenhotep III**, who ruled ancient Egypt from 1391 to 1353 B.C., was found in the southern province of **Luxor**.
- The Egyptian mission under **Dr Zahi Hawass** found the city that was lost under the sands.

About Egypt:

- **Capital: Cairo**
- **Currency: Egyptian Pound**

1.266 U.S. commits to withdrawal of combat troops from Iraq

- Recently, the **United States** has **committed to move remaining forces from Iraq**.
- This would be the second withdrawal of U.S. troops since the 2003 invasion.
- The timeline of the troop's withdrawal would be worked out in the upcoming talks between two nations.

1.267 United Arab Emirates names country's first female astronaut

- The **United Arab Emirates** has recently named the next two astronauts in its space programme which also includes the country's first female astronaut.
- **Noura al-Matroushi** has been named as the **UAE's first female astronaut** while her **male counterpart** is **Mohammed al-Mulla**.
- The two will undergo training at **NASA's** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) **Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas**.
- **Additional Information-** In 2019, **Maj. Hazzaa al-Mansoori** became the **UAE's first astronaut in space**.

1.268 Iran unveils advanced nuclear centrifuges

- Recently, **Iran** has inaugurated **the three cascades of 164 IR-6 centrifuges, 30 IR-5 and another 30 IR-6 devices** at **Iran's Natanz uranium enrichment plant**.
- Iran has also announced that it has started up **advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges**.

1.269 Australia launches grant program to widen Indo-Pacific partnership with India

- Australia's High Commissioner to India, **Barry O'Farrell**, has launched the **Australia-India Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership (AIPOIP) grant program**.
- This AUD 1.4 million (INR 8.12 crore) grant program is a practical initiative to advance Australia and India's shared vision for the Indo-Pacific".
- **Aim** - to help support a free, open and prosperous **Indo-Pacific underpinned** by the rule of law and respect for sovereignty.
- The **AIPOIP grants program** will help deliver practical outcomes under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the **14th East Asia Summit** in November 2019.

1.270 US President Biden announces complete troop withdrawal from Afghanistan

- US President **Joe Biden** has announced that all American troops, US troops, as well as forces deployed by **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Allies**, would be withdrawn from **Afghanistan** by **September 11** this year 2021.
- September 11, 2021 is the **20th anniversary** of the **9/11**, which were a series of four coordinated terrorist attacks by the Wahhabi terrorist group **Al-Qaeda** against the **United States**.

1.271 Haiti's government resigns, new Prime Minister appointed

- **President Jovenel Moise** has informed that **Claude Joseph** has been appointed as new **Prime Minister of Haiti**.

About Haiti

- **Capital** – Port-au-Prince
- **Currency** - Haitian gourde

1.272 Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan launches construction of trans-border trade center

- Recently, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have launched the construction of an international center for trade and economic cooperation named 'Central Asia' on the borders of the two countries.

About Uzbekistan

- **Capital** - Tashkent
- **Currency** - Uzbekistaniso'm

About Kazakhstan

- **Capital** - Nur-Sultan
- **Currency** - Kazakhstanitenge

1.273 China launches hotline to report 'illegal' comments about Communist party

- Recently, **China's cyber regulator** has launched a **hotline to report online criticism** of the **ruling Communist party** and its history, vowing to crack down on "historical nihilists."

About China

- **Capital** - Beijing
- **Currency** - renminbi

1.274 China's first Mars rover named 'Zhurong'

- **China's first Mars rover** has been named '**Zhurong**' after a traditional fire god.
- The rover aboard the **Tianwen-1 probe** arrived in Mars orbit on February 24 and is due to land in May to look for evidence of life.
- China would become the **third country** after the former **Soviet Union** and the **United States** to put a robot rover on Mars.

About China:

- **Capital: Beijing**
- **Currency: Renminbi**

1.275 Myanmar junta chief attends ASEAN summit

- Recently, the **Myanmar junta Chief Min Aung Hlaing**, has attended the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (**ASEAN**) summit held in **Jakarta, Indonesia**.

About Myanmar:

- **Capital**- Naypyidaw
- **Currency**- Myanmar Kyat

About ASEAN:

- **Secretariat**- Jakarta
- **Members**- 10

1.276 South Korean President replaces PM & cabinet ministers

- Recently, **South Korean President Moon Jae-in** has **replaced the Prime Minister and six other cabinet Ministers** after election defeat.
- He has **nominated Kim Boo-kyum**, to succeed **Chung Sye-kyun** as the next PM.

About South Korea:

- **Capital**- Seoul
- **Currency**- South Korean Won

1.277 The Gambia Becomes 2nd African State to eliminate Trachoma

- The **Government of Gambia** has recently announced that the African State has **eliminated trachoma**, one of the leading **causes of blindness** worldwide.
- It has become the **second African state** to achieve this feat, after Ghana did in 2018.
- **Trachoma**, a bacterial eye infection that damages the eyelids and causes the eyelashes to turn inwards, is one of 20 **neglected tropical diseases (NTDs)**.

About Gambia-

- **Capital**- Banjul
- **Currency**- Gambian dalasi

1.278 Russia plans to launch own space station after quitting ISS

- The head of the Russian space agency "**Roscosmos**" has announced that the **first core module** of the new **Russian orbital station** is in the works, with the aim of having it **ready for launch in 2025**.
- Russian officials have also indicated they could **pull out** of the **International Space Station (ISS) in 2025**.
- The International Space Station (**ISS**) was launched in **1998**.
 - The ISS is backed by the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan and Canada.

1.279 China launches key module of space station planned for 2022

- **China** has recently **launched an unmanned module** named "**Tianhe**", or "**Harmony of the Heavens**", on the Long March 5B, China's largest carrier rocket.
- The **module contains** what will become **living quarters** for **three crew** on a **permanent space station** that it plans to complete by the **end of 2022**.

- **Tianhe** is one of three **main components** of what would be **China's first self-developed space station**.
 - It will have a life span of at least 10 years.

1.280 UK announces regulation of use of self-driving vehicles at slow speeds on motorways

- The **UK** has become the **first country** to announce **regulation** of the **use of self-driving vehicles** at slow speeds on **motorways**.
- UK's transport ministry has that it will start with **Automated Lane Keeping Systems (ALKS)**, which use sensors and software to keep cars within a lane, allowing them to accelerate and brake without driver input.
- Use of ALKS would be **restricted to motorways**, at speeds under **60 km per hour**.
- **Ministry** also projected that by **2035** around **40%** of **new UK cars** could have **self-driving capabilities**, creating up to 38,000 new skilled jobs.

1.281 ASEAN 2021 Meet

- ASEAN Meet for 2021 has taken place at Brunei Darusalam.
- **Theme** – “WeCare, We Prepare, We Prosper”

About Brunei Darusalam

- **Capital**- Beijing
- **Currency**- Renminbi

1.282 France has approved 'ecocide' offence to punish environmental damage

- The **French National Assembly** has approved the creation of an “**ecocide**” offence as part of a battery of measures.
- **Aim:**
 - Protecting the environment and tackling climate change.
 - to strengthen the sanctions available to deal with “serious and durable” cases of intentional pollution of water, air or soil.
- Who violates the rule will be liable to up to **10 years** in prison and a fine of **4.5 million euros (\$5.4 million)**.

About France:

- **Capital:** Paris
- **Currency:** Euro

1.283 US, Japan pledge to strengthen Quad to build free, open Indo-Pacific region

- **US President Joe Biden** and **Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga** have pledged to work with **India** and **Australia**.
- **Aim:** to strengthen the **Quad**, to build a **free, open, accessible, diverse** and **thriving Indo-Pacific**, as the two leaders discussed the impact of China's actions on peace and prosperity in the region.
- **Quad** is the grouping of **India, the US, Japan** and **Australia**.

Additional Information:

- The first-ever leader summit of the Quad held on March 12, 2021, where the Quad Vaccine Experts Group was designed to expand safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing, procurement, and delivery for the Indo-Pacific region.

1.284 IAEA confirms Iran started enriching Uranium upto 60%, reached record level

- **The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** has confirmed that **Iran** started **enriching uranium up to 60 per cent**, reaching its **highest-ever level of enrichment**.
- The decision to increase uranium enrichment came in response to a recent incident at Natanz nuclear facility that damaged the plant's electricity distribution network.

About Iran:

- **Capital:** Tehran
- **Currency:** Iranian rial

1.285 Bitcoin' digital currency being considered by UK authorities

- **British authorities** are exploring the **possibility** of **creating a new digital currency** known as **Bitcoin**.
- The **Bank of England** and the **Treasury** have announced that they will **work together** to assess the benefits of a **central bank digital currency**, at a time when cash payments are generally on the decline, partly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.
- The bank also announced the new currency would be form of digital money for use by households and businesses and would exist alongside cash and bank deposits.

Additional Information-

- Currently, only the **Bahamas** has such a **currency**, though China is trialing it in several cities.

1.286 Turkey bans use of cryptocurrencies for payments

- Recently, the **Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey (CBRT)**, has **banned using cryptocurrencies/crypto assets** as a **form of payment** citing risk of "non-recoverable" losses.

About Turkey:

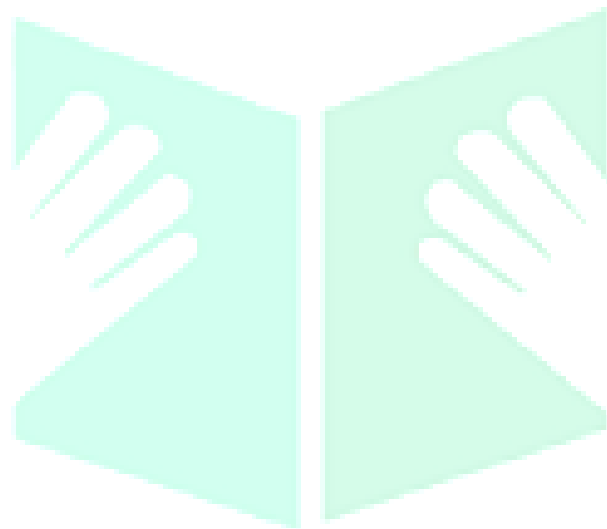
- **Capital:** Ankara;
- **Currency:** Turkish Lira

1.287 National Museum of Egyptian Civilization officially receives visitors

- Recently, the **National Museum of Egyptian Civilization** in **Fustat, Cairo** has displayed 14 mummies & **opened doors for visitors on World Heritage Day**.
- Earlier, the mummified remains of 22 pharaohs and queens have been transported in a procession from the Egyptian Museum to the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

1.288 Apple orders 'Louis Armstrong' documentary from Imagine Documentaries

- **Apple Original Films** has ordered a documentary on **jazz legend Louis Armstrong** from **Brian Grazer** and **Ron Howard's Imagine Documentaries**.
- Titled "**Black & Blues: The Colorful Ballad of Louis Armstrong**", the feature will be directed by **Sacha Jenkins**.
- The documentary will examine **Armstrong's life** and legacy as a founding father of jazz, the first **pop star** and a **cultural ambassador of the United States**.



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- The project is part of **Apple's first-look agreement** with **Imagine Documentaries**.

Additional Information:

- **Apple** and **Imagine Documentaries** previously collaborated on **Bryce Dallas Howard's** documentary **Dads** and **Morgan Neville's** docuseries **Peanuts in Space: Secrets of Apollo 10"**.

Appointments

1.289 Ajay Seth takes over as new economic affairs secretary

- **Ajay Seth** takes charge as the **new Secretary of Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance**, in **New Delhi**.
- He replaces **Tarun Bajaj**, who moved as **Revenue Secretary** in the **Ministry of Finance**.
- He is a 1987 Batch Indian Administrative Service officer of Karnataka Cadre and previously held charge as Managing Director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited.

1.290 Mukhmeet S. Bhatia takes over the charge of Director General of ESIC

- Recently, **Mukhmeet S. Bhatia** has been appointed as the new **Director General of the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)**.
- He earlier served as the Additional Secretary in the Dept. of Economic Affairs.

1.291 Tarun Bajaj appointed as Revenue Secretary

- Recently, the union government has approved the appointment of **Tarun Bajaj** as new **revenue secretary** under the **Ministry of Finance**. Earlier he was serving as the secretary to the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).
- **Among other appointments-**
 - **Ajay Seth** has been appointed as new **secretary** for **DEA**.

1.292 Sivasubramanian Ramann appointed as SIDBI Chairman & Managing Director

- Recently, the Government of India has appointed **Sivasubramanian Ramann** as **Chairman** and **Managing Director** of Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
- He is currently serving as the **CEO of National E-Governance Services Ltd**, India's first Information Utility.

1.293 Guillermo Lasso has been elected as the president of Ecuador

- **Guillermo Lasso**, a former banker, has won **Ecuador's presidential election** against **left-wing economist Andrés Arauz**.
- He will be replacing **Lenín Moreno** as the president.

About Ecuador:

- **Capital: Quito**
- **Currency: U.S. dollar**

1.294 Sushil Chandra takes over as the 24th CEC of India

- Recently, Shri **Sushil Chandra** has assumed charge as the **24th Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)** of India, succeeding Shri Sunil Arora who demitted the office after completing his tenure.

1.295 Alessandra Galloni becomes first woman as Reuters editor-in-chief

- She has replaced **Stephen Adler**.

1.296 Vanita Gupta becomes the first Indian-American to be US' Associate Attorney General

- Civil rights lawyer **Vanita Gupta** made history, when the United States Senate voted to confirm her as **Associate Attorney General**.
- She became the **first Indian American** to serve as the **US Justice Department's third-highest ranking official**.

1.297 Accenture's Rekha Menon becomes first woman chairperson of Nasscom

- Indian IT industry's apex body **Nasscom** has appointed **Rekha M. Menon, Chairperson and Senior Managing Director** at **Accenture** in India, as its chairperson for 2021-22.
- She has become the **first woman** to take on the role of chairperson for **Nasscom** in 30 years.
- Menon, earlier the vice chairperson, succeeded **U.B. Pravin Rao**, chief operating officer, Infosys Ltd, who served as chairman of **Nasscom** for 2020-21.
- **Nasscom** has also appointed **Krishnan Ramanujam**, head of **Business & Technology services, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Ltd** as their **vice chairperson** for 2021-22.

1.298 Axis Bank board approves re-appointment of Amitabh Chaudhry as MD & CEO

- Private sector lender **Axis Bank board** has approved the re-appointment of **Amitabh Chaudhry** as its **Managing Director and CEO** for **three years** with effect from January 1, 2022.
- Prior to joining Axis Bank, he was **MD and CEO** of **HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company**.

1.299 Ajay Seth takes charge as Economic Affairs Secretary

- Recently, **Ajay Seth** has taken charge as **Secretary, Dept. of Economic Affairs**, replacing **Tarun Bajaj**.
- Ajay Seth **previously** served as **Managing Director** of **Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL)**.

1.300 CAG GC Murmu appointed as external auditor by OPCW

- India's **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) GC Murmu** has been appointed as the **external auditor** by Hague-based Conference of State Parties of the **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**.
- **India** was also selected as the **member** of the **Executive Council of the OPCW** representing **Asia Group** for another two-year term during the **OPCW Conference of State Parties**.
- **OPCW** a prestigious **intergovernmental organisation** working for the elimination of chemical weapons.

1.301 T V Somanathan named as Finance secretary

- Recently, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (**ACC**) has approved the appointment of Expenditure Secretary **T V Somanathan** as the **finance secretary**.
- He will take charge as the finance secretary, a position earlier held by **Ajay Bhushan Pandey**.

1.302 Imran Khan has appointed Shaukat Tareen as new finance minister of Pakistan

- **Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan** has appointed **Shaukat Tareen** as the **new finance minister** of the country, the fourth to don the mantle, in another **cabinet reshuffle**.
- **Shaukat Tareen** is replacing **Hammad Azhar**, who was appointed towards the end of the last month after **Dr Abdul Hafeez Shaikh** was removed for failure to control raging inflation in the country.

About Pakistan:

- **Capital:** Islamabad
- **Currency:** Pakistani rupee

Persons in News

1.303 Shivananda Perla selected for Best Public Prosecutor Award

- Recently, public prosecutor **Shivananda Perla** has been selected for the **Best Public Prosecutor Award** for **2020** on the occasion of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Day celebrated on 1st April every year.
- Perla is a public prosecutor, CBI Anti-corruption Branch, Bengaluru.

1.304 Nilam Sawhney takes charge of Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner

- Recently, **Nilam Sawhney** has assumed the office of the **Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner (SEC)**, replacing **N. Ramesh Kumar**, who had retired from service.
- She was the **first woman Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh** and will now be the **first woman SEC**.

1.305 Veteran actor Shashikala passes away

- Veteran actor **Shashikala** from Maharashtra, who was best known for her supporting roles in 1960s-70s films, has passed away recently.

1.306 Former India Davis Cupper Uday kumar passes away

- **A.J. Udaykumar**, the former India Davis Cupper, has passed away recently.
- The **Davis Cup** is the premier **international team event** in **men's tennis**.

1.307 Shabir Hussein becomes head of the BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit

- Recently, the Former Gujarat DGP **Shabir Hussein Shekhadam Khandwawala** has taken over from Ajit Singh as the **head** of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI's) **Anti-Corruption Unit**.

1.308 Nguyen Xuan Phuc formally sworn in as President of Vietnam

- Recently, former Vietnamese Prime Minister, **Nguyen Xuan Phuc** has formally sworn in as **President of Vietnam**.
- Also, **Pham Minh Chinh**, a former deputy minister of public security, was sworn in as **Prime Minister of Vietnam**.

About Vietnam-

- **Capital-** Hanoi
 - **Currency-** Vietnamese dong
-

1.309 India's first female Cricket commentator Chandra Nayadu passes away

- **Chandra Nayudu**, India's first female **cricket commentator** and daughter of India's first Test captain C.K. Nayudu, has passed away recently.

1.310 RBI deputy governor BP Kanungo retires

- Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) deputy governor BP Kanungo retired** from the Reserve Bank on completion of his one-year extension.
- He took charge as Deputy Governor of RBI on April 3, 2017, for a three-year term ending April 2, 2020, but was given a one-year extension.

1.311 Indian hockey legend Balbir Singh Junior passed away

- **Balbir Singh Junior** was a member of the **silver medal-winning 1958 Asian Games Indian hockey team**.
- He was also known as the **nursery of hockey players in India** and was the first one to get selected to play for the Indian hockey team in 1951 during the tour of Afghanistan.

About Hockey India:

- **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- **President: Gyanendro Nigombam**

1.312 Eminent Historian Yogesh Praveen passed away

- Recently, eminent historian **Yogesh Praveen** passed away.
- He was an expert on Awadh, especially Lucknow.
- He was awarded with **Padma Shri** in **2019**.

1.313 Sanjaya Baru's book to tell inside story of India's power elite

- **Sanjaya Baru's** new book named **India's Power Elite: Class, Caste and a Cultural Revolution**, will tell the readers about the "**untold story**" of Indian society.
- Sanjaya Baru, who was the **former media advisor to Manmohan Singh**, tries to capture not just the churn brought about by the 2014 general election and the decline of the Congress in the political sphere, but its impact on the social and cultural landscape, and the nuts and bolts that makeup India's elite.

1.314 Former CBI Director Ranjit Sinha passes away

- Former Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director **Ranjit Sinha** passed away.

1.315 Soma Mondal becomes SCOPE's first woman Chairperson

- Recently, Chairperson of SAIL, **Soma Mondal** has taken over as the **first woman Chairperson** of the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (**SCOPE**).
- **Pradip Kumar Das** has taken over as **Vice-Chairman** of **SCOPE**.

1.316 Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, passes away

- England's **Prince Philip**, the **Duke of Edinburgh**, has passed away recently.
- **Prince Philip** was the **husband of Queen Elizabeth II**, the reigning British monarch – the longest-reigning consort in British history.

1.317 PM Modi releases Hindi Version of Odisha Itihaas

- Recently, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has released the **Hindi translation** of the book '**Odisha Itihaas**' written by 'Utkal Keshari' **Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab**.
- The **book**, available in Odia and English so far, has been **translated** into **Hindi** by **Shri. Shankarlal Purohit**.

1.318 132nd birth anniversary of Charlie Chaplin

- Vizag Film society (**VFS**) will organize the **special meeting** on **16th April 2021** to celebrate the **132nd birth anniversary of Charlie Chaplin**, at the Andhra University HRD Centre.
- The meeting will be followed by the **screening of Charlie Chaplin's film 'The Kid'**, which is the **first silent movie made by Chaplin in 1921**, and was released on February 6, 1921.

1.319 Veteran Punjabi actor Satish Kaul passes away

- Veteran Punjabi actor **Satish Kaul**, who featured in several Hindi films and shows including "Mahabharat", has passed away recently.

1.320 Deepika Padukone steps down as Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival chairperson

- Recently, actor **Deepika Padukone** has announced her **resignation** as the **chairperson of Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival**.

1.321 Pakistan human rights icon I.A. Rehman passes away

- Recently, Ramon Magsaysay award winner **Pakistani Human rights** crusader and former journalist **Ibn Abdur Rehman** has passed away recently.

1.322 Sumitra Bhave, National Award-winning filmmaker, passed away

- Sumitra Bhave made her **first short film Bai**, which won several national awards.
- In 1995, **Sumitra Bhave** and **Sukthankar** made their directorial debut with **Doghi**, which received the **National Film Award**.

1.323 Former Chief Election Commissioner G.V.G Krishnamurthy passed away

- **Mr. Krishnamurthy** led to many contributions particularly in **strengthening laws** and procedures of **conducting elections**.

1.324 RBI Governor Maidavolu Narasimham passed away

- **Maidavolu Narasimham** was the first and so far the only **Governor** to be appointed from the **Reserve Bank cadre**, he joined the central bank as a Research Officer in the Economic Department.

1.325 Charles Geschke, co-founder of Adobe and developer of PDFs passed away

- **Charles Chuck Geschke** the co-founder of the software company **Adobe Inc** developed **Portable Document Format technology**, or **PDFs** passed away.

About Adobe:

- **Headquarters: San Jose, California, United States**
 - **Founders: Charles Geschke, John Warnock**
-

1.326 Player-turned-umpire Anupama Puchimanda passed away

- Former Karnataka State **hockey player** and **international umpire Anupama Puchimanda** passed away.
- In 2006, she became the **first woman umpire** from India to officiate at the **Commonwealth Games**.

1.327 Renowned hockey historian Baboolal Goverdhan Joshi passed away

- **Hockey historian** and **statistician B.G. Joshi** passed away.
- He worked as an engineer at the Madhya Pradesh Water Resource Department.

1.328 National award-winning editor Waman Bhonsle passed away

- **Waman Bhonsle** won the best editing award at the **25th National Film award** for "Inkaar".

1.329 Celebrating the Birth Centenary of Shri Satyajit Ray

- **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B)** will organise **year-long centenary celebrations** of late Shri **Satyajit Ray** across **India** and **abroad**, to pay homage to the legendary filmmaker.
 - To oversee the activities, an **Implementation Committee** under the **chairmanship of Secretary (I&B)** has been set up.
- In recognition of the auteur's legacy, "**Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema**" has been **instituted** from this year to be given at the **International Film Festival of India (IFFI)** every year starting from this year.
- **Shri Satyaji Ray** (2nd May, 1921- 23rd April, 1992) was a renowned **filmmaker, writer, illustrator, graphic designer, music composer**.
 - He was **honoured** with the **Bharat Ratna**, the highest civilian award, in **1992**.

1.330 Shooter Dadi' Chandro Tomar passes away

- Octogenarian shooter **Chandro Tomar**, nicknamed '**Shooter Dadi**' passed away.
- She was already 60-plus when she picked up a gun for the first time but went on to win many national competitions, even inspiring a Bollywood movie on her life.

1.331 Shri Soli Sorabjee passes away

- An outstanding **lawyer** and **intellectual Shri Soli Sorabjee** passed away.

1.332 Chad President Deby passes away

- **Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno**, who ruled the **central African nation** for more than three decades passed away.
- He died of wounds suffered on the battlefield during a fight against **rebels** who launched an offensive against his regime from **Libya**.

Science and Technology

1.333 National workshop on scientific problems in observational astronomy

- Scientists from various institutions throughout the country will discuss some long standing scientific problems in observational astronomy at a national workshop titled '**Astrophysical jets and observational facilities: National perspective**'.
-

- The workshop **organised** by **Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES)**, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (**DST**) Government of India.
- This workshop is being organized as a part of the **Golden Jubilee** Commemoration Year of the **Department of Science and Technology** (1971-2021) and also one of the first national events to celebrate the 75 years of Independence- '**Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**'.
- **Aim:** to bring all the stakeholders together to discuss the subject matter at length and review the progress made so far and the proposed path ahead to strengthen the Indian community at large.

1.334 DRDO developed Supplemental Oxygen Delivery System

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed **SpO2 (Blood Oxygen Saturation) supplemental Oxygen Delivery System** for soldiers posted at extreme high-altitude areas.
- It is developed by **Defence Bio-Engineering & Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL)**, Bengaluru of DRDO.
- The system delivers **supplemental oxygen based** on the **SpO2 levels** and prevents the person from sinking in to a state of **Hypoxia**.

About Hypoxia:

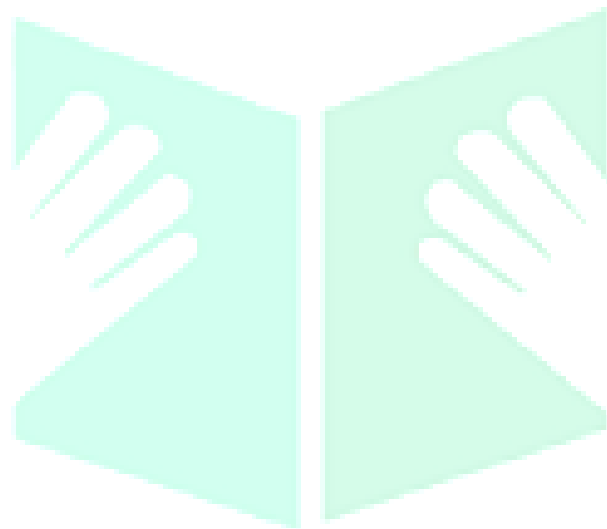
- **Hypoxia** is a state in which the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues is inadequate to fulfill all the energy requirements of the body.
- This is exactly the situation that gets replicated in a Covid patient due to the virus infection and has been a leading factor in the current crisis.

1.335 Govt to launch National Programme on AI

- Recently, a Joint Secretary in MeitY, while addressing the **2nd edition of the Biz Summit 2021** organised by the **Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (HYSEA)** in **Hyderabad**, has announced that **Gol** has proposed to launch a **National Programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.
- National Programme on AI would **identify high value data sets in the public sector and provide access to the data to AI models**.
- **Gol** has also planned to launch **Digital India 2.0** to **boost National Programme on AI & totake the digital service offerings, infrastructure and cyber security to next level**.

Key Highlights:

- Both the Digital India 2.0 and the National Programme on AI would support MSMEs and startups in the respective fields.
- **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** would set up **Rs 1000 crores fund** to give small and medium companies access to capital.
- The **Dept. of Electronics and IT** to set up a **digital product fund** to invest in start-ups through accelerators and incubators.
- **Nationwide Enterprise Architecture** would be established as **part of the Digital India 2.0**.
- Under **Digital India 2.0**, **Gol** would develop **indigenous cybersecurity products and robust digital infrastructure**.



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About 2nd Edition of HYSEA Biz Summit 2021:

- **Theme:** “Exploring Growth Horizons in the New Normal”

About Digital India:

- A **Flagship Programme** of Gol launched in **2015**
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.
- **Vision:** to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.
- **Three key Vision Areas:**
 - Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen
 - Governance & Services on Demand
 - Digital Empowerment of Citizens.
- **Total Programme Pillars:** 9.

1.336 India, France working on third joint space mission

- **India and France** are working on their third joint satellite mission, which including **human spaceflight programme**.
- **Plans –**
 - **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** and **Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES)** will be launching **TRISHNA (Thermal infraRed Imaging Satellite for High resolution Natural Resource Assessment)**.
 - The two space agencies have also finalised all interface control documents for accommodating **CNES's 'ARGOS' (The Advanced Research and Global Observation Satellite)** instrument in ISRO's **OCEANSAT-3 satellite**.
 - **'NavIC'** reference station will be established in France and **CNES 'Scintillation'** receivers in India.

Additional Information:

- **ISRO** and French space agency (**CNES**) have undertaken two joint missions **'Megha-Tropiques'**, which was launched in 2011, and **'Saral-Altika'** in 2013.

1.337 CSC to make data from India's first solar space mission accessible for analysis

- A community service centre (**CSC**) called **Aditya-L1 Support Cell (AL1SC)** has been set up recently to **bring all data on board India's first dedicated solar space mission** to a single web-based interface.
- This will enable users to quickly look at the data and identify the interesting science cases.
- **About AL1SC-**
 - It is a **joint effort** of Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) and Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (**ARIES**)
 - Set up at the transit campus of **ARIES at Haldwani, Uttarakhand**

1.338 ISRO demonstrates free space quantum communication for the first time

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully demonstrated free-space **Quantum Communication** over a distance of **300 meters**, with several technologies developed within the country.
- This project included the use of an indigenously developed **navigation satellite system NavIC**.

- The demonstration included live video conferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals, at **Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad**, between two line-of-sight buildings within the campus.

Additional information:

- **NavIC** is an independent regional navigation satellite system developed and maintained by India.
- It covers India and a region extending 1,500 km (930 mi) around it.

1.339 IIT Kanpur develops touch-sensitive watch for visually impaired

- Recently, the researchers from **IIT Kanpur** have **developed a touch-sensitive watch** that can help **visually impaired people** learn what time it is by touching the face.
- The **watch conveys the time** in the form of **vibrations** when a person touches the right spoke on the face.

1.340 NASA's Ingenuity helicopter dropped on Mars' surface ahead of flight

- Recently, the US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced that its **Ingenuity mini-helicopter** has been **dropped** on the **surface of Mars** in preparation for its first flight.
- **Ingenuity** will be **attempting to fly** in an atmosphere that is **one percent the density of Earth's**, which makes achieving lift harder.

1.341 IIT-Hyderabad develops a 5V Dual Carbon Battery

- Recently, the Electrochemical Energy Storage (**EES**) Lab at **IIT-Hyderabad** has developed a **5V Dual Carbon Battery**, an alternative to lithium-ion batteries.
- The battery utilizes **self-standing carbon fiber mats** as both electrodes (cathode and anode), and sets aside the requirement of toxic, costly and heavy transitional metals.

1.342 NASA releases images of electric blue dunes on Mars to mark 20 years of Odyssey

- Recently, **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has shared an image of **Mars** in which the surface of the **Red Planet** was visible.
- NASA titled it as '**Blue Dunes of Red Planet**', the picture combines shots captured between December 2002 and November 2004.
- These images were captured by the **Thermal Emission Imaging System instrument** on the **Odyssey orbiter** which was launched by **NASA** on **April 7, 2001**.
- These images were released to mark the **20th anniversary** of **Odyssey**, the longest-working Mars spacecraft in history.

About NASA:

- **Washington, D.C., United States**

1.343 Scientists from Singapore developed Robo Plant Technology to interact with plants

- A team of scientists led by **Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore)** has developed a device that can **deliver electrical signals to and from plants**.
 - The name of the technology is "**Robo Plant**".
 - **Robo Plant** can be further used to enable farmers to **detect diseases in plants**.
-

1.344 UAE to send rover 'Rashid' to the Moon in 2022

- Recently, the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has partnered with **Japan's iSpace** to send UAE's unmanned **rover** to the **moon** in **2022**.
- iSpace "will deliver the **Emirates lunar mission's 'Rashid'** rover to the **Moon**, provide **wired communication** and **power** during the **cruise phase**, and engage in wireless communication on the lunar surface.
- Dubai's **Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRSC)** will **build** the **Rashid lunar rover**.

1.345 Soyuz MS-18 launch marks 60 years of human spaceflight

- Recently, the **Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft**, carrying three new members, Roscosmos **cosmonauts Oleg Novitsky** and **Pyotr Dubrov** and NASA astronaut **Mark Vande Hei**, for Expeditions 64 and 65, **launched** to the **International Space Station** at the **Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan**.
- The launch came three days before the 60th anniversary of **Yuri Gagarin's groundbreaking orbital flight** when he became the **first member of the human race to reach space**.
- Russian space agency **Roscosmos** named the **Soyuz spacecraft "Yuri A. Gagarin"**.
- Overall, **Soyuz MS-18 was the 146th launch** of a crewed **Soyuz spacecraft**, which began human flight operations on April 23, 1967 with the first generation of the craft.

1.346 IIT-Delhi researchers develop device to diagnose dengue within an hour

- Recently, researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), **Delhi** have developed a handheld **Surface Enhanced Raman Spectroscopy (SERS)-based platform** for early **diagnosis** of **dengue** and also gives **dengue test results** within one hour (rapid diagnosis).

1.347 NASA aims to land first woman, person of colour on Moon by 2024

- Recently, **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has informed that in addition to **landing the first woman on the Moon**, it has also planned to send the **first person of colour to the lunar surface** as part of its ambitious international spaceflight programme, '**Artemis**'.
- **About Artemis-**
 - The mission, endorsed by the Biden-Harris administration, aims to land the astronauts on the lunar south pole by 2024 and create sustainable missions to the earth's natural satellite by 2028.

1.348 Ingenuity gears up for flight on Mars

- Recently, NASA's Ingenuity Helicopter has taken its first experimental flight on **Mars**.
- The helicopter was carried along with the Perseverance rover in 2020.

1.349 NASA's Perseverance mission produced oxygen on Mars

- **NASA'S** Perseverance mission, **Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization Experiment (MOXIE)** carried out its first operation, and was able to use **carbon dioxide** in the atmosphere of Mars to produce **5 grams of oxygen**.
- This Oxygen was sufficient to support an astronaut for 10 minutes.
- **96%** of the Martian atmosphere is made of **carbon dioxide**, while **oxygen** is only about **0.13%**, compared to 21% in Earth's atmosphere.

About NASA:

- **Headquarters: Washington DC**

1.350 NASA's SpaceX Crew-2 Astronauts Headed to International Space Station

- Recently, four astronauts were launched to the **International Space Station (ISS)** from **Florida** as part of a collaboration between **NASA** and **SpaceX** under the Commercial Crew Program, under the mission **Crew-2**.
- Out of the four astronauts, two are from **NASA** and two are from the **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** and the **European Space Agency (ESA)**.
- They will stay aboard the ISS for **six months** during which time they will conduct science experiments in low-Earth orbit.
- **Boeing** and **SpaceX** were selected by NASA in September 2014 to develop transportation systems meant to transfer crew from the **US** to the **ISS**.

1.351 DRDO develops novel oxygen delivery system

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed SpO₂ (Blood Oxygen Saturation) supplemental oxygen delivery system for soldiers posted at extreme high-altitude areas.
- **Developed by** – Defence Bio-Engineering & Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL), Bengaluru
- The system delivers supplemental oxygen based on the SpO₂ levels and prevents the person from sinking in to a state of Hypoxia, which is fatal in most cases.

1.352 World's most powerful weather, climate-change forecasting supercomputer to be built in UK

- **Microsoft and UK's Met Office** have teamed up to build the world's most powerful supercomputer to forecast weather and climate-change.

Other Important Supercomputers

- Japan's Fujitsu Laboratories used the world's most powerful supercomputer, **Fugaku**, to develop an AI model to **predict tsunami flooding**.
- Hewlett Packard Enterprise is developing a supercomputer to help study phenomena such as climate change, and severe weather in the U.S.A.

Relevance

- In February 2020, the UK government had announced funding of £1.2 billion (about ₹12,400 crore) to develop the supercomputer, which is expected to be one of the top 25 supercomputers in the world.

1.353 A black hole dubbed 'the Unicorn' may be galaxy's smallest one

- Recently, Scientists have discovered the smallest-known black hole in the Milky Way galaxy and the closest to our solar system.
- It has been nicknamed as '**the Unicorn**'.
- It is located about 1,500 light years or 9.5 trillion km from Earth.
- There are three categories of blackholes:

- The **smallest**, like 'the Unicorn,' are so-called stellar mass black holes formed by the gravitational **collapse of a single star**.
- There are **gargantuan 'supermassive' black holes** like the one at our galaxy's center, 26,000 light years from Earth, which is four million times the sun's mass.
- A few **intermediate-mass black holes** also have been found with masses somewhere in between.

1.354 IIT-M start-up builds a 3D printed house

- Recently, IIT-Madras start-up Tvasta has constructed a **3D printed house** within the campus.
- The particular house within the IIT campus was developed in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity's Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter.
- It has been designed, developed, and realised by Tvasta's '**Concrete 3D Printing**' technology.

About Tvasta

- Tvasta is part of the new incubator of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs established at IIT Madras called Asha Incubator.

1.355 China launches robot prototype capable of catching space debris with net

- Recently, A Chinese space mining start-up has launched **NEO-01** into low Earth orbit, a robot prototype that can scoop up debris left behind by other spacecraft with a big net.
- It will use a net to capture debris and then burn it with its electric propulsion system,
- **Developed by** – OriginSpace

Note: World's first asteroid mining company Planetary Resources was set up in 2009.

1.356 Russia to revisit Moon after 45 years, Luna 25 set to launch in October 2021

- **Russian Space Agency 'Roscosmos'** is all set with its mission to launch its spacecraft '**Luna 25**' on **October 1, 2021**, towards the icy South pole of the Moon.
- **Purpose:** to study the water beneath the surface at the South pole of the Moon.
- The Moon lander will use a camera built by the **European Space Agency (ESA), European Pilot-D** for the **lunar missions**, the camera will capture the terrain of the Moon.

1.357 Lunar Occultation of Mars observed in Mangaluru

- A **Lunar Occultation of Mars** was observed and photographed in **Mangaluru** by **Rohit S. Rao** of the **Amateur Astronomers Association**.
- **Lunar Occultation** occurs when the **Moon** passes in front of **Mars** and is similar to an **eclipse**.
- Since the Moon is quite close to the Earth and Mars is far away, Mars appears to be a little dot in comparison to the Moon.

Additional Information:

- The previous Lunar Occultation was visible only from **Africa** and **South America**.
- The present occultation was visible throughout India in **Udupi** and **Dakshina Kannada**.

1.358 ISRO to support projects of IIT-Delhi

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has announced that it will support **Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi** in eight joint research projects mooted by the **Space Technology Cell (STC), IIT-Delhi**.

- The ISRO will support the projects under its **RESPOND programme** with varying duration of **1-3 years**.

Additional Information:

- **The Space Technology Cell** was set up at IIT, Delhi under an **MoU** signed between the ISRO and **IIT-D** in **November 2019** with an aim to **strengthen** the research collaboration between the two organisations and to carry out focused research projects in the space technology.

Days in News

1.359 World Autism Awareness Day: 2 April

- **World Autism Awareness Day** is being **celebrated** all over the world on **2nd April** every year.
- This year the World Autism Awareness Day celebration focuses on **“Inclusion in the Workplace: Challenges and Opportunities in a Post-Pandemic World”**.

1.360 Easter celebrated on 4th April 2021

- Recently, the **Easter festival** has been **celebrated** across the **world** on **4th April 2021**.

1.361 7th April: World Health Day

- **Purpose - World health day** is a day to reaffirm our gratitude and appreciation to all those who work day and night to keep our planet healthy.
- The theme for 2021 - is **"building a fairer, healthier world"**.

1.362 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: 21 March

- **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** is being celebrated every year on **21st of March**.
- **Theme** for year 2021- **Youth standing up against racism**.
- It also engages the public through **#FightRacism**, which aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-discrimination.

1.363 58th National Maritime Day celebrated

- Recently, the **58th National Maritime Day** has been celebrated on **05th of April**.
- The day is being celebrated in commemoration of the **maiden voyage** of the **first Indian flag** merchant vessel **‘S.S. LOYALTY’** (Owned by M/s. Scindia Steam Navigation Company), from **Mumbai to London**, on the **5th April, 1919**.
- The **theme** of National Maritime Day is **‘Sustainable Shipping beyond COVID-19’**.

1.364 International Day for Street Children: 12th April

- **International Day for Street Children** is being observed every year on **12th April** to acknowledge the strength and resilience of millions of street children around the world.
- This year, the day focusses on **“Standing With Street Children Around the World”**.

1.365 World Art Day: 15th April

- The day was declared by the **International Association of Art (IAA)**, a partner of **UNESCO**, to promote awareness about fine arts worldwide.
- The day is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Leonardo da Vinci**.

1.366 April 17th: World Hemophilia Day

- This day is celebrated every year on **17th April** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Frank Schnabel**, founder of the World Federation of Hemophilia.
- **Hemophilia** is a rare disorder of the blood, in which it doesn't clot normally because it lacks sufficient blood-clotting proteins.
- **Theme for 2021: 'Adapting to Change, sustaining care in a new world'**

1.367 April 18th: International Day for Monuments and Sites or World Heritage Day.

- **International Day for Monuments and Sites** is marked by United Nations on **18th April** every year.
- **Theme** for year 2021: **Complex Pasts: Diverse Futures.**
- Globally, the day is promoted by the **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).**

1.368 April 14th: National Fire Service Day

- The **National Fire Services Day** is observed to pay homage to 66 firemen and officers of the Mumbai Fire Brigade who lost their lives while fighting a major fire on the ship, Fort Stikine, in 1944.
- **Theme** for year 2021: **'Maintenance of fire safety equipment is key to mitigate fire hazards'**

1.369 April 24th to 30th: World Immunization week

- World Immunization Week is celebrated every year in the **last week of April.**
- **Theme** for 2021: **'Vaccines bring us closer'.**
- **Aim:** Promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease.

1.370 April 25: World Malaria Day

- **Dr. Harsh Vardhan**, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare chaired the **"Reaching Zero"** forum on **malaria elimination** to celebrate **World Malaria Day.**
- **World Malaria Day** is observed on **25th April** every year.
- **Theme** for 2021: **"Reaching the Zero Malaria target."**

Additional Information:

- PM Modi has been among the **18 Global leaders** who endorsed the **Malaria Elimination** roadmap of **Asia Pacific Leaders Malaria Alliance** at the **East Asia Summit** held in **Malaysia** in **2015.**

1.371 April 22nd: World Earth Day

- **World Earth day** is observed every year on **April 22.**
- **Purpose:** to remind people about the need to protect and safeguard our environment so that we can make this planet a better place for our future generations.
- **Theme for 2021: "Restore Our Earth".**

1.372 World Creativity and Innovation Day: 21st April

- **World Creativity and Innovation Day** is observed by **UN** on **21st April** every year.

- **Purpose:** to raise awareness about the role of innovation and creativity in each aspect of human development.

1.373 National Civil Service Day: 21st April

- The central government celebrates **April 21** as **Civil Services day** every year.
- **Purpose:** the day is dedicated to all those who are involved in civil service in order to commemorate their exemplary services.
- On this day, the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration are presented.

1.374 The World Veterinary Day: 25th April

- The **World Veterinary Day** is observed on **April 25** every year.
- **Aim:** to promote the veterinary profession and work on improving animal and human welfare, the environment, food safety, animal transport, and quarantine.
- **Theme for 2021:** “Environmental safety for enhancing animal and human wellbeing”.

1.375 International Delegate's Day: 25 April

- United Nations celebrates **International Delegate's Day** every year on **25th April** to raise awareness of the role of the representatives and delegates of the Member States to the United Nations.
- The Day marks the anniversary of the first day of the **San Francisco Conference**, also known as **the United Nations Conference on International Organization**.

1.376 World Intellectual Property Day: April 26, 2021

- **World Intellectual Property Day 2021** is being celebrated every year on **26th April**.
- It raises awareness on the critical role of small and medium-sized enterprises (**SMEs**) in the economy and how they can use intellectual property (**IP**) rights to build stronger, more competitive and resilient businesses.
- **Theme for year 2021-** “IP and SMEs: Taking your ideas to market”

1.377 World Immunization Week 2021: April 24th-30th, 2021

- **World Immunization Week 2021** will be observed from **24th-30th April, 2021** to show how vaccination connects us to the people, goals and moments that matter to us most, helping improve the health of everyone, everywhere throughout life.
- **Theme-** Vaccines bring us closer

1.378 World Book and Copyright Day: 23rd April

- **World Book and Copyright Day** is being celebrated every year on **23rd April** to recognize the scope of books - a link between the past and the future, a bridge between generations and across cultures.
- As a celebration for this year's World's Book and Copyright Day, **UNESCO** has created a **Bookface challenge**.
- The **World Book Capital for 2021** will be **Tbilisi**, the capital city of **Georgia**.

1.379 World Day for Safety and Health at Work: 28th April

- The day was an initiative by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**.

- **Aim:** to highlight the prevention of accidents and diseases at work and raise awareness of occupational safety and health.
- The day is also commemorated as **International Day for Dead and Injured Workers**.
- **Theme for 2021: 'Anticipate, prepare and respond to crises and invest now in resilient OHS systems'**.

Environment

1.380 BASIC nations oppose EU's plan to impose a 'carbon border tax'

- Recently, during the **30th BASIC ministerial meeting**, Brazil, South Africa, India & China (**BASIC countries**), have **jointly opposed European Union's (EU) plan** to impose a 'carbon border tax'.
- **Imposing such a tax** would be **against the principles of equity under Paris Agreement on Climate Change** and **CBDR-RC** (Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities) principle within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**).
- The four countries are also going to **express views on the tax** at **Leaders Summit on Climate hosted by the US**.
- Besides, Carbon border tax, BASIC Countries have also raised the **issue of climate finance & rich countries failure to fulfill pre-2020 promises** under the **Kyoto Protocol**.

About Carbon Border Tax:

- Proposed by **27 EU Nations**, it is a **tax on carbon emissions** imposed to **imported goods** that have **not been carbon-taxed at the exporting country**.
- Part of **European Commission's European Green Deal** aimed to make **Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050**.

About Kyoto Protocol:

- Signed in **1997**, it is the **world's only legally binding treaty to reduce greenhouse emissions**.
- **Kyoto 1st Commitment Period:** 2008–12
- **Kyoto 2nd Commitment Period:** the **Doha Amendment signed in 2012**, to the Kyoto Protocol was adopted for a **second commitment period 2013-20**.

About 30th BASIC Ministerial Meeting:

- **Host:** India; **Chair:** Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Gol.

Note: 29th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change was held in Beijing in October 2019

About BASIC:

- **Formation:** 2009.
- The four members committed to act jointly at the **Copenhagen climate summit**,
- It is one of several groups of nations working to **fight climate change** and **carry out negotiations within the UNFCCC**.

1.381 India Renewables Dashboard launched

- **Central Electricity Authority (CEA)** and **Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) Centre for Energy Finance (CEEW-CEF)** have launched the **India Renewables Dashboard**.

About India Renewables dashboard-

- It will provide detailed **operational information on renewable energy (RE) projects** in India.
- The information on dashboard is **freely available** to policymakers, developers, financiers, and the public which users can **download in multiple formats and conduct their own bespoke analyses**.
 - This will allow **invaluable insights in renewable sector** on:
 - ✓ Improving project implementation
 - ✓ Infrastructure planning
 - ✓ Power generation forecasting
- The dashboard is supported by the **Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation**, which captures **daily generation of data at the state, regional and national levels** for the installed RE capacity in India.
- The India Renewables Dashboard **automates the process of updating daily RE generation**.

1.382 India – U.S. Climate Partnership

- Recently, **the Leaders’ Summit on Climate** was convened by the US President Joe Biden, virtually.
 - **40 world leaders, including the Prime Minister of India**, were invited to the event to underscore the urgency of stronger climate action.
- At the summit, **India and U.S. launched** a new high-level partnership, the “**India – U.S. Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership**”.

About India - US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership:

- It is a **joint climate and clean energy initiative of India with the US**.
- It will demonstrate **how the world can align swift climate action with inclusive and resilient economic development**.
- **Aim-**
 - **Mobilize finance** and speed clean energy deployment.
 - **Demonstrate and scale innovative clean technologies** needed to decarbonize sectors including industry, transportation, power, and buildings.
 - **Build capacity** to measure, manage, and adapt to the risks of climate-related impacts.
- The Partnership will proceed along **two main tracks**:
 - **The Strategic Clean Energy Partnership**
 - **The Climate Action and Finance Mobilization Dialogue**
- The partnership **will work together in achieving ambitious climate targets of both countries** and would also **create templates of sustainable development for other developing countries**.

USA Climate Action

- **USA has submitted new Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets** which aims at reducing **net greenhouse gas emissions by 50–52% below 2005 levels by 2030**.
 - This target is double than the target set up by former President Barack Obama in 2015.
- It also announced to **double its public climate financing to developing countries** and **triple public financing** for climate adaptation in **developing countries by 2024**.
- **China, U.S. and India are the top three emitters of CO2 in absolute terms, but U.S. has a much greater per capita emission statistic** than China and India.

India and Climate Change-

- **India** is among the few countries whose **NDCs** are **2-degree Celsius compatible**.
- **India** is targeting a **2030 GDP emissions intensity** (i.e., volume of emissions per unit of GDP) which is **33-35% below 2005 levels**.
- It also seeks to have **40% of power generated** from **non-fossil fuel** sources by **2030**.
- India has set a target of **installing 450 GW of renewable energy** by **2030**.
- Also, **India's per capita carbon footprint** is **60% lower** than the **global average**.

1.383 PM addresses the Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021

- Recently, the **Prime Minister of India** has virtually **addressed** the **Leaders' Summit on Climate 2021** convened by the **United States (U.S)**
- **Topic:** "Our Collective Sprint to 2030".

Key Information Shared:

- '**Back to basics**' - **important pillar of economic strategy** for the **post-Covid era**.
- India has encouraged global initiatives like **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, **Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)**, and the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.

About ISA:

- **Initiated** by the **PM of India** in **November 2015**.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram.
- **Purpose:** to bring countries located between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn on a platform that supports clean energy, sustainable environment, clean public transport and clean climate.
- **Total Signatories to ISA Framework:** 94 (**Italy is 94th country to sign the framework**)

About LeadIT:

- **Launched by:** Indian & Sweden Governments at the **UN Climate Action Summit in 2019**.
- **Supported by** - the World Economic Forum (WEF)
- It is a coalition of countries and companies that are committed to achieve the Paris Agreement.
- **Aim:** to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

About CDRI:

- **Launched by:** PM of India at the **UN Climate Action Summit in 2019**
- An **international coalition** of countries, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, private sector, and academic institutions **to promote disaster-resilient infrastructure**.
- **Secretariat:** New Delhi, India; **Members:** 22 countries and 7 organizations.

1.384 Last two rhinos translocated under IRV 2020

- Recently, **last two rhinos** have been released in **Bansbari range** of **Manas National Park, Assam** transported from **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam**, under the **8th round of rhino translocation** under **Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV 2020)**.
- With this, the **project has come to an end**.
- However, the **plan to spread the one horned rhinos** across **four protected areas beyond Kaziranga National Park, Orang National Park and Pobitora WLS** could not **materialize**.

Key Highlights:

- Under **IRV 2020**, **Manas** has received **22 rhinos in total** from other protected areas.

- Translocation of rhinos, has helped **Manas National Park** to regain **UNESCO World Heritage Status** in **2011**, originally awarded in **1985**.

About Indian Rhino Vision 2020:

- **Launch Year:** 2005
- **Launched by:** the Assam Forest Department in partnership with WWF-India, the International Rhino Foundation and US Fish & Wildlife Service.
- **Target:** to attain the wild population of atleast 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in Assam by 2020.
- **Seven Protected Areas:** Kaziranga NP, Pobitora WLS, Orang NP, Manas NP, Laokhowa WLS, Burachapori WLS and Dibru Saikhowa WLS.

About Greater One-Horned Rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*):

- It is listed under the **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- It is the **State Animal of Assam**.

1.385 NITI Aayog launches India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0

- Recently, **NITI Aayog** has launched **India Energy Dashboards (IED) Version 2.0** to provide **single-window access to the energy data for India**.
- **Energy data** published by **Central Electricity Authority, Coal Controller's Organization & Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** has been **compiled in IED**.

Key Features of IED Version 2.0:

- It provides **time series data** from **FY 2005-06** until **FY 2019-20**.
- It also provides **data at sub-yearly frequencies** including **monthly data** & Application Programming Interface (**API**) data.
- **API linked data** from Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (**Saubhagya**), Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (**UJALA**), Payment Ratification and Analysis in Power Procurement (**PRAAPTI**), and **Vidyut PRAVAH** portals have been **incorporated in IED**.
- **Semi-automated workflow/ issue-tracking system** for managing **periodic updates** to the IED.
- **Addition of technical and financial data of electricity utilities** from the **regulatory documents in Maharashtra**, specifically served by Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (**MSEDCL**).

Background:

- **IED Version 1.0** was launched in **May 2017** by **NITI Aayog**.

1.386 India & USA launches 2030 Agenda to focus on climate finance & resilient infrastructure

- Recently, at the **Leaders' Summit on Climate, India & USA** have launched the **"U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership"**, led by the **Prime Minister of India & the President of the United States**.
- **Focus:** clean & green energy, adequate finance, resilient infrastructure, and green hydrogen.
- **Aim:** to demonstrate how the world can **align swift climate action** with inclusive and resilient economic development, taking into account national circumstances and sustainable development priorities.
- **Objective:** to achieve climate and clean energy targets and to strengthen bilateral collaboration across climate and clean energy.

Key Highlights:

- **Two main tracks of the Partnership:**
 - Strategic Clean Energy Partnership and the Climate Action
 - Finance Mobilization Dialogue

Relevance:

- **NDC (Nationally Defined Contributions) targets by India & USA**
 - **India:** reducing **emission intensity** by **33-35%** of GDP by **2005 levels in 2030**; to increase the share of **non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40 % by 2030**; to enhance **forest cover to absorb 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2030**
 - **USA:** reducing **net greenhouse gas emissions** by **50-52% below 2005 levels in 2030**.
- **India's per capita carbon footprint** is **60 % lower** than the **global average**.
- **India** has set a **target** of installing **450 GW of renewable energy by 2030**.

About Paris Agreement:

- Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**), on **climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance** signed in **2016**.
- **Goal:** to limit global warming to below 2, preferably to **1.5 degrees Celsius**, compared to pre-industrial levels.

1.387 Ghaziabad issues India's first municipal green bonds

- Recently, the **Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam (GNN)**, a civic body in Uttar Pradesh, has successfully raised and listed **India's first Green Municipal bond** issue on Bombay Stock Exchange (**BSE**) **bond platform**.
- With this, GNN raised **Rs 150 crore** at a cost of **8.1%**.
 - Effectively Ghaziabad has raised funds at **6%** as Urban Development Ministry has provided a **2% interest subvention**.
 - Raised money will be used to **clean up dirty water** by **setting up a tertiary water treatment plant** and supply piped water through water-meters to places like Sahibabad.
- GNN also received **Rs 19.5 crore incentive** from the **Union government** for raising funds through municipal bonds.
- GNN saw the interest of at least 40 bids attracting a total subscription of Rs 401 crore.
- **Additional Information-** So far apart from Ghaziabad, nine cities have earlier raised municipal bonds. These are-
 - **Ahmedabad, Surat, Visakhapatnam, Amravati, Indore, Bhopal, Pune, Hyderabad, Lucknow.**
- **About Municipal Green Bonds-**
 - It is a **fixed-income financial instrument** for **raising capital** through the **debt capital market**.
 - Under this, the **bond issuer raises a fixed amount of capital** from investors over an **established period of time** (the "maturity"), repays the capital (the "principal") when the bond matures, and pays an agreed-upon amount of interest ("coupons") during that time.

- The **key difference** between a **green bond** and a **regular bond** is that under green bond a **commitment** is made to **use the proceeds of the green bond** to exclusively **finance or re-finance projects** with an **environmental benefit**.

1.388 World Bank & IMF plans to link debt relief to climate change spending

- According to the “**World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings 2021: Development Committee Communiqué**” both the institutions are planning to launch a **platform to advise poor countries on funding climate and conservation activities**, to **link such spending to debt relief**.
- The World Bank is developing an “**organizing framework**” for **connecting debt relief to countries’ plans** for investing in “**Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development,**” or **GRID**
- It aims for **holistic approach** to the **triple crisis of debt, climate change and biodiversity loss**.

Key Highlights:

- For **countries that are close to their debt limits**, **financing GRID** would require **sufficient grants and concessional lending** which could be **augmented by conditional debt relief or reprofiling**.
- The platform **would not replace ‘Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the DSSI’** launched by **G20 in November 2020**.

Background:

- The **World Bank** estimates that **over 30 of the world’s poorest countries** are **at high risk of debt distress**.
- In **2020**, **Chad, Ethiopia and Zambia** - **requested restructuring of debts** under a common framework agreed by **China, the world’s largest bilateral creditor**, and other **G20 economies with the Paris Club of official creditors**.

About The joint Bank-IMF Development Committee:

- It is a **joint meeting of the Boards of the Governors of the World Bank and the IMF**.
- It meets **twice a year during Spring Meetings in April, and Annual Meetings in October**.
- **Current Chair:** Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados.

Additional Information:

- **2021 Annual Meeting** of the World Bank Group & IMF would be hosted in **Washington DC**.
- **2022 Spring & Annual Meetings** would be hosted in **Washington DC & Marrakech, Morocco** respectively.

1.389 Odisha government proposes biosphere reserve at Mahendragiri

- The **Odisha government** has recently proposed a **second biosphere reserve** in the southern part of the state at **Mahendragiri**, a hill ecosystem having rich biodiversity.
- The area of **the proposed Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve** is around **470,955 hectares** and is spread over **Gajapati and Ganjam districts** in the **Eastern Ghats**.
- The rich flora in Mahendragiri represents **40% of the reported flora of Odisha**, with around **1,358 species of plants**.
- The **5,569-square kilometre Similipal Biosphere Reserve** is **Odisha’s first such reserve**.

1.390 Maharashtra gets India's first floating LNG storage and regasification unit

- Recently, **India's first** Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU)- **Höegh Giant** has arrived at **H-Energy's Jaigarh Terminal** at **JSW Jaigarh Port** in **Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra**.
- **Jaigarh Terminal** would also be the **first year-round Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal** in **Maharashtra**.

Key Highlights:

- **FSRU Höegh Giant** had sailed from **Keppel Shipyard, Singapore**.
- **H-Energy** has **chartered** the FSRU for **10 years**.
- The **2017-built Höegh Giant** has **storage capacity of 170,000 cubic metres** and **installed regasification capacity of 750 million cubic feet per day** (equivalent to about six million tonnes a year).
- Höegh Giant would **deliver regasified LNG** to the **56-km long Jaigarh-Dabhol natural gas pipeline**, connecting the **LNG terminal to the national gas grid**.

Note: JSW Jaigarh Port is the first deep water, 24x7 operational private port in Maharashtra.

1.391 Antarctica's 'Doomsday Glacier' led to the rise in global sea level

- The melting of **Antarctica's Thwaites Glacier**, also called the "**Doomsday Glacier**", has a high potential of speeding up the global sea level rise due to climate change.
- The glacier is **1.9 lakh square km** in size and it contains enough water to raise the world sea level by more than half a meter.
- The submarine called "**Ran**" measured the strength, temperature, salinity and oxygen content of the ocean currents that go under the glacier.

1.392 Dolphins population doubles in Chilika lake

- According to the wildlife wing of the State Forest and Environment Department, the **population of dolphins in Chilika**, India's largest brackish water lake, and along the Odisha coast has **doubled this year** compared with last year.
- **Three species** were recorded during the census, with **544 Irrawaddy, bottle-nose and humpback dolphins** sighted this year, compared with **233 last year**.

1.393 New species from Arunachal added to India's bird list

- The three-banded **rosefinch**, a **bird** spotted in **Arunachal Pradesh** at an altitude higher than its recorded perch in adjoining China has become the **1,340th species** of the **bird family** in **India**.
- The three-banded rosefinch is a resident of southern China and a vagrant in Bhutan.

1.394 New genus of freshwater crab discovered in Western Ghats

- Researchers have recently **discovered** a new genus of **freshwater crab** with two new species from the **Western Ghats** region in **Idukki district, Kerala**.
- The genus has been named **Rajathelphusa ala** and **Rajathelphusa muni**, after Rajakumari, the place where the specimens were spotted.

1.395 Monkeydactyl, the flying reptile with the 'oldest opposable thumbs'

- Recently, The new fossil of pterosaur species of reptiles has been discovered in the **Tiaojishan Formation of Liaoning, China**, and is believed to be 160 million years old.
- It has now been described by an international team of researchers from China, Brazil, UK, Denmark and Japan, and has been named *Kunpengopterus antipollicatus*, also dubbed "Monkeydactyl."
- It is older than far older than the "**Cryodrakon boreas**" species of pterosaur identified in 2019 in Western Canada which was believed to be one of the largest flying animals, which "flew over the heads of dinosaurs."

1.396 Forest Range Officer gets award

- Recently, Ramanathapuram Forest Range Officer S. Sathish has been awarded 'International Ranger Award 2021' for his works at Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park.

About 'International Ranger Award 2021'

- **Issued by** - International Union for Conservation of Nature, Switzerland; World Commission on Protected Areas; International Ranger Federation; and Global Wildlife Conservation and Conservation Allies

1.397 Bohag Bihu Bird Count 2021

- **Hosted by** - Assam Bird Monitoring Network which, along with Bird Count India (BCI)
- It has been informed that there is a plan to document avian diversity across three Bihu seasons — Magh (winter), Bohag (spring) and Kati (autumn).

Relevance

- Tamil Nadu conducts bird counts under the name of "Pongal Bird Count" and the "Great Backyard Bird Count".

1.398 "Blue Nature Alliance" to protect and conserve oceans

- Recently, a new global marine initiative "**Blue Nature Alliance**" has been launched to protect and conserve **18 million square kilometres** of the **ocean** (seven million square miles) over the **next 5-years**.
- **Aim**- to work with national governments, local communities, Indigenous peoples, scientists, and academics to advance effective large-scale ocean conservation.
- The Alliance is led by **five core partners**:
 - Conservation International, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Global Environment Facility, Minderoo Foundation, and the Rob & Melani Walton Foundation.
- The **initial protection work** will cover **4.8 million sq km** across **three marine locations**:
 - **Fiji's** Lau Seascape, **Antarctica's** Southern Ocean and the **volcanic archipelago of Tristan da Cunha** in the southern Atlantic Ocean.

1.399 Mining robot stranded on Pacific Ocean floor in deep-sea mining trial

- Recently, a **seabed mining robot** being **tested** on the **Pacific Ocean** floor at a **depth of more than 4 km (13,000 ft)** has become **detached**.
- **Global Sea Mineral Resources (GSR)** has been testing **Patania II**, a 25-tonne mining robot prototype, in its concession in the Clarion Clipperton Zone.

- The machine is meant to **collect the potato-sized nodules** rich in cobalt and other battery metals that pepper the seabed in this area, and was connected to **GSR's ship with a 5km cable**.

Defence in News

1.400 DRDO opens up missile production partnership for Indian private sector

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has recently **allowed private sector firms to co-develop missile systems** with DRDO and then also produce them under the **Development cum Production Partner (DCPP) programme**.
- Under the programme, bids have been received for the **Vertically-launched Short-range Surface to Air Missile system (VL-SRSAM)** project.
- The effort is part of initiatives to **prepare the private sector industry** to be able to **develop complex military systems** under the Make in India project.

1.401 Indian Army participates in Exercise SHANTIR OGROSHENA 2021

- Recently, the **DOGRA Regiment** from the **Indian Army** has **participated** in a 10 day Multinational Military Exercise **SHANTIR OGROSHENA 2021 (Front Runner of the Peace)**, at **Bangabandhu Senaniba (BBS) in Bangladesh** from 4th to 12th April 2021.
- **Theme: "Robust Peace Keeping Operations"**.
- The exercise has been organized **to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangladesh 'Father of the Nation' Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** and mark **50 years of liberation**.
- **Other Participating Nations:** Bhutan, Sri Lanka & Bangladesh

1.402 DMSRDE develops light weight Bullet Proof Jacket

- Recently, the Defence Materials and Stores Research and Development Establishment (**DMSRDE**), **Kanpur**, a Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) **lab**, has developed **lightweight Bullet Proof Jacket (BPJ)** weighing 9.0 kilograms.
- The **Front Hard Armour Panel (FHAP) jacket** was tested at the **Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL), Chandigarh**.

1.403 Visit of Rear Admiral Jacques Fayard in the Indian Ocean (ALINDIEN) to HQWNC

- A French naval delegation headed by **Rear Admiral Jacques Fayard, French Joint Forces Commander in the Indian Ocean (ALINDIEN)** called on **Vice Admiral Hari Kumar**, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command at Mumbai.
- In the discussion they have planned that the annual bilateral exercise '**Varuna**' between **Indian Navy** and **French Navy's Carrier Strike Group** will take place in April 2021.

1.404 Pak successfully test fires nuclear-capable ballistic missile Shaheen 1-A

- Recently, **Pakistan** had successfully test-fired a **nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-1A**.
- **Aim-** re-validating various design and technical parameters of the weapon system including advanced navigation system.

About Shaheen-1A

- The missile has a range of **900 kilometers**, its sophisticated and advanced guidance system is a highly accurate missile system.

1.405 Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra' commissioned to enhance coastal security

- Recently, Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra', the sixth offshore patrol vessel to enhance coastal security, has been commissioned into service.
- On the commissioning of the ship, Chief of Defence staff General **Bipin Rawat** formally unveiled a 'plaque' and the ship 'Vajra' meaning 'Thunderbolt' at the **Chennai Port Trust**.
- The ship was designed and built by **Larsen and Toubro Ship building Ltd**.

Features:

- Vajra is fitted with highly sophisticated **navigation and communication systems**.
- The ship has a **30mm gun** as main armament and equipped with **2 FCS controlled 12.7 mm SRCG (Stabilised Remote Controlled Gun)** for enhanced fighting efficiency.
- The ship would be based at **Tuticorin** under the operational control of coast guard eastern region.

1.406 INS Sarvekshak deployed to Mauritius to undertake Hydrographic Surveys

- **INS Sarvekshak**, a hydrographic survey ship, has been **deployed** to **Mauritius** for undertaking **joint hydrographic surveys** along with their Mauritian counterparts.
- The ship visited Port Louis, Mauritius and commenced the hydrographic survey of 'Deep sea area off Port Louis'.

1.407 Bharat Dynamics Ltd manufactured Akash Missiles flagged off

- Recently, **Akash Missiles**, manufactured by **Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL)** have been flagged off for **delivery** to the **Indian Army**.
- It has been **designed and developed** by **DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation)** with 96% indigenous content, is being manufactured by **BDL** at its **Hyderabad Unit**.
- It has the capability to **engage aerial threats** up to the **maximum range of 25 km** and up to an altitude of 20 km, operating at a **speed range of 1.8 to 2.5 Mach**.

1.408 Maritime exercise "LaPérouse" conducted in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region

- Recently, Indian Navy Ships **INS Satpura** and **INS Kiltan** along with **P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft** have participated for the first time in multi-lateral maritime exercise **La Pérouse**.
- The **maritime exercise** has been conducted in the **Eastern Indian Ocean Region**.
- **Participants-** **Indian Navy**, **French Navy (FN)**, **Royal Australian Navy (RAN)**, **Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF)** and **United States Navy (USN)**.

1.409 DRDO develops Advanced Chaff Technology

- Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) has developed an **Advanced Chaff Technology** to **safeguard** the **naval ships** against **enemy missile attack**.
- DRDO has developed three variants of the technology namely-

- Short Range Chaff Rocket (**SRCR**), Medium Range Chaff Rocket (**MRCR**) and Long Range Chaff Rocket (**LRRCR**).

- **About Chaff Technology-** It is a **passive expendable electronic countermeasure technology** used worldwide to **protect naval ships** from **enemy's radar** and **Radio Frequency (RF)** missile seekers.

1.410 Indian Army formally closes Military Farms Service

- After **132 years of glorious service** to the nation, the **Indian Army** has **formally closed** the **Military Farms Service** which administered the **130 military farms all across the country**.
- A **flag ceremony** for the closure of the facilities was held at **Military Farms Records** at **Delhi Cantonment**.

About Military Farms Service-

- **Military Farms were established by the British Army** for **production and supply of hygienic, wholesome and fresh cows milk to troops** located in various garrisons **across undivided India**.
- The **first Military Farm** was set up on **01 Feb 1889** with the establishment of **Military Farm Allahabad**.

1.411 Webinar cum expo organised between Defence Ministries of India & Vietnam

- A webinar cum expo has been organised between **Ministry of Defence, India** and **Ministry of National Defence, Vietnam** on April 20, 2021.
- **Theme** of the webinar - '**India - Vietnam Defence Cooperation**'.
- The webinar has been organised under the aegis of **Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence through FICCI**.
- It is part of the series of webinars which are being organised with friendly foreign countries in order to boost defence exports and achieve defence export target of **\$5 billion by 2025**.

About Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI):

- **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- **President: Uday Shankar**

1.412 Varuna-2021: India, France begins naval bilateral exercise in Arabian Sea

- The **19th edition** of the **Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'Varuna-2021'** has been conducted in the **Arabian Sea** from 25th to 27th April 2021.
- The '**Varuna**' joint exercise is part of the French carrier strike group's '**CLEMENCEAU 21**' **deployment**, which the French Navy is conducting from February to June 2021 in the eastern Mediterranean, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea).
- **Goal:** Contribute to the stabilization of these strategic zones and strengthening cooperation with the navies of partner countries.

Additional Information:

- Earlier in 2021 Indian Navy took part for the first time in the France-led naval exercise "**La Pérouse**" with the navies of the **US, Australia** and **Japan**.

1.413 Ashok Leyland supplies first batch of light bullet proof vehicles for IAF

- Recently, **Ashok Leyland** has delivered the **first batch** of **light bulletproof vehicles (LBPV)** to the **Indian Air Force (IAF)**, developed under the **transfer of technology (TOT)** from **Lockheed Martin** to **Ashok Leyland**.
- **LBPV** is completely **indigenized and developed** in **India** & an **adapted version** of **Lockheed Martin's CVNG (common vehicle next-gen)**.

1.414 Gallantry Awards portal launches 'Innovative Tributes to Bravehearts' competition

- Recently, **Gallantry Awards portal** has launched '**Innovative Tributes to Bravehearts' competition** from 15th April to 15th May 2021, to find a series of **befitting tribute messages for the Gallantry Awardees**.
- Winners would be provided a chance to witness the Republic Day Parade 2022 in New Delhi.

1.415 India & Kyrgyzstan commences exercise "Khanjar"

- The special forces of **India** and **Kyrgyzstan** have started a two-week military exercise "**Khanjar**" in **Bishkek** with a focus on **counter-terror drills**.
- It is the **eighth edition** of the **India-Kyrgyz Joint Special Forces Exercise** which was held for the **first time** in **2011**.

1.416 Exercise "Defender Europe 21" launched in Albania

- Recently, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (**NATO**) has launched **joint military exercises "Defender Europe 21"** in **Albania**.
- This is the first such large-scale drills since World War II in the Western Balkans.
- This year's exercise involves **26 nations**, including the **U.S.**, and around **28,000 multinational forces** all focused on building operational readiness and interoperability between **NATO allies and partners**.

About NATO-

- **NATO** is an alliance of countries from Europe and North America. There are currently 30 members in NATO.

1.417 DRDO conducts maiden trial of Python-5 Air to Air Missile

- Recently, **The indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA)** has fired the **Python-5 air-to-air missile (AAM)** for the **first time**.
- The tests were also aimed to validate the enhanced capability of the already integrated Israeli-origin Derby beyond visual range AAM on Tejas.

About Python Missile

- **Developed by** - Israeli defence company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.
- It is the newest member of the Python family.
- The fifth generation air-to-air missile provides the pilot engaging an enemy aircraft with a revolutionary full sphere launch capability.
- It is a **dual use missile** suitable for **air-to-air and surface-to-air missions**.
- It can operate a range of more than 20 km.

1.418 Indian Navy dispatches DSRV to support Search & Rescue of missing Indonesian Submarine

- Recently, **Indian Navy** has dispatched its **Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV)** from **Visakhapatnam** to support the **Indonesian Navy** in search and rescue of its missing submarine **KRI Nanggala**.
- **Indian Navy's DSRV system** can locate a submarine upto **1000 meter** depth utilising its state of the art **Side Scan Sonar (SSS)** and **Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV)**.

1.419 Indian Air Force Commanders' Conference 2021

- Recently, the **first biannual IAF Commanders' Conference** for **2021** has been concluded at **Air Headquarters (Vayu Bhawan)** in **New Delhi**.
- The **three day event** has been inaugurated by the **Union Minister for Defence & Air Officers Commanding-in-Chief of the seven commands** attended the conference.
- **Theme:** 'Reorienting for the Future'.

1.420 India to receive first batch of S-400 SAM from Russia in 2021

- Recently, it has been confirmed that **India** is going to receive the **first regimental set of S-400 Triumf 'SA-21 Growler'** air defence systems from **Russia** in **2021**.
- **The entire delivery** is expected to be completed ahead of **2025**.

Background:

- In October 2018, **India signed a \$5.43 billion deal with Russia for five S-400 regiments** despite objections from the **U.S.A.**
- Although **USA's Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**, imposes Sanctions on **Russia**, the deal has met national security considerations.

About S-400 air defence system:

- It is a **long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) system**.
- It has **four different types of missiles** ranging between **40 km, 100 km, 200km and 400 km** & targets flying at up to **30km altitude**.
- With **92N6E electronically-steered phased array radar**, it is resistant to electronic jamming.

Sports

1.421 Vijay Hazare Trophy 2020-21: Mumbai clinch 4th title

- **Mumbai** won their 4th **Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021** title against **Uttar Pradesh** at the **Ferozeshah Kotla** in **New Delhi**.
- They won this title after chasing a target of **313 runs**.
- Great contribution was given by captain **Prithvi Shaw** for making **73 runs** in **39 balls**.
- **Aditya Tare**, who brought up his maiden century, scored an **unbeaten 118 runs** in the match.

1.422 Nine host cities announced for 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup

- The **2023 FIFA Women's World Cup** will be spread across **nine cities** in **Australia** and **New Zealand**.

- The opening match will take place at **Eden Park** in **Auckland** and the final match will be hosted by **Sydney's Stadium Australia**, the two semifinal matches will be split between Australia and New Zealand.
- **Australia** joined the **Asian confederation** after qualifying for the **2006 men's World Cup**, leaving **New Zealand** as the **largest member** of the **Oceania confederation**.

1.423 M.C. Mary Kom won the Sportstar of the Decade award

- Recently, the six-time boxing world champion, M.C. Mary Kom has won **the Sportstar of the Decade award** at the **2021 Sportstar Aces – Giants of the Decade** edition.
- **Abhinav Bindra**, the only Indian to win an individual Olympic gold medal, has been conferred **the Inspirational Giant of Indian Sport** honour.
- **K. Srikanth** and reigning badminton World champion **P.V. Sindhu** bagged the **Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Decade (Racquet Sports)** titles.
- PV Sindhu's **2019 World Championship victory** and Viswanathan Anand's **2017 World Rapid chess** championship win were adjudged **Moments of the Decade**.
- National badminton coach **P. Gopi Chand** has bagged the **Coach of the Decade Trophy**.

1.424 Australian women's cricket team sets ODI record

- Recently, the **Australian women's cricket team** led by **Meg Lanning** has won its **22nd consecutive match** to set a new **ODI (One Day International)** record.
- With this the **Australian women's cricket team** now holds the **longest winning streak** in any format of **international cricket**.
- This record was earlier held by **Australian men's cricket team** with **21 consecutive ODI victories** which they achieved in **2003**.

1.425 Rachael Blackmore, first woman jockey to win Randox Grand National 2021

- **Rachael Blackmore** from Ireland, became the **first female jockey** to win **Britain's grueling Grand National horse race, Randox Grand National 2021**, breaking down one of the biggest gender barriers in sports.
- She rode **Minella Times** to a landmark victory at odds of 11-1 in the 173rd edition of the famous steeplechase at Aintree in Liverpool, northwest **England**.

1.426 Pakistan Cricket Board launches its own 'Hall of Fame'

- The **Pakistan Cricket Board** has decided to have its own **'Hall of Fame'** to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of its stalwarts.
- As part of the launch, **six members of the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame- Hanif Mohammad, Imran Khan, Javed Miandad, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis and Zaheer Abbas**, will be inducted into the PCB Hall of Fame.

1.427 Dilhara Lokuhettige banned for eight years under ICC Anti-Corruption code

- Former **Sri Lanka cricketer Dilhara Lokuhettige** has been banned from all cricket for **eight years** after being found guilty of breaching the **ICC Anti-Corruption Code**.

1.428 Asian Wrestling Championships: Vinesh Phogat, Anshu Malik and Divya Kakran win gold medals

- Indian wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** won her maiden gold at **Asian Wrestling Championships** in **Almaty, Kazakhstan**.
 - She won this gold after beating **Taipei's Meng Hsuan Hsieh** in the final.
- **Anshul Malik** also won her **first Asian championship gold** as she defeated **Battsetseg Altansetseg of Mongolia** in the 57kg.
- Another gold was bagged by **Divya Kakran**, she defeated **South Korea's Sujin Park and Mongolia's Tsevegmed Enkhbayar** to emerge with most wins in the 72kg category, **while Sakshi Malik (65kg) won silver medal**.
- **Sarita Mor (59kg) had won gold while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) had won bronze medals**.
- **India ended with seven medals from the women's event with won four gold, one silver and two bronze**.

1.429 India's Jhilli Dalabehera grabs gold at Asian Weightlifting Championships

- **Jhilli Dalabehera** clinched the **gold medal** in women's 45kg field at the Asian weightlifting championships in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.
- Jhilli, a former **World junior bronze medallist, totalled 157kg** (snatch 69kg, clean and jerk 88kg) to take the gold medal.
- **Mary Flor Diaz (60kg, 75kg, 135kg) of the Philippines won the silver medal**.

1.430 Arjun Kalyan became India's 68th Grandmaster

- **Arjun Kalyan** became **India's 68th Grandmaster** in the ongoing **Grandmaster (GM) round robin "Rujna Zora-3 2021" tournament** at **Arandjelovac** in **Serbia**.
- He defeated **GM Kotic Dragan of Montenegro** in the fifth round to achieve the feat.

1.431 Suresh Raina's memoir 'Believe' to release in 2021

- Cricketer **Suresh Raina** has **penned** his memoir '**Believe: What Life and Cricket Taught Me**' along with cricket writer **Bharat Sundaresan**.

1.432 Japan's Matsuyama makes Masters history for Asia by winning at Augusta

- Recently, **Hideki Matsuyama** has become **the first player from Japan** to win the **August Masters Tournament**.
- He has become only the second Asian male golfer to win a major following **YE Yang's** triumph at the 2009 PGA Championship.

1.433 Virat Kohli becomes first batsman to score 6,000 runs in IPL

- Recently, **Royal Challengers Bangalore** captain **Virat Kohli** became the **first batsman** to score **6,000 runs** in the **Indian Premier League (IPL)**.
- He reached this milestone in **196 matches** and leads the list ahead of **Suresh Raina (5,448 runs), Shikhar Dhawan (5,428), David Warner (5,384) and Rohit Sharma (5,368)**.

1.434 Indian boxer Amit Panghal settles for bronze at Governor's Cup in Russia

- Indian boxer **Amit Panghal** (52kg) settled for a **bronze medal** at the **Governor's Cup** in **St. Petersburg, Russia**.
- He lost to world champion **Shakhobidin Zoirov** in 52kg men's semifinals at the Governor Cup in Russia.

Addition Information:

- **Amit Panghal** has been a consistent performer for the past three years, claiming **gold medals** at the **Asian Games** and the **Asian Championships**.
- He also became **India's first** World Championship finalist in 2019.

1.435 Indian women's recurve team won gold in Archery World Cup

- **Indian women's recurve team**, comprising **Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat** and **Komalika Bari**, won the **gold medal** in the **Archery World Cup Stage 1** in **Guatemala City**.
- They defeated Mexico, consisting of **Ana Vazquez, Alejandra Valencia** and **Aida Roman** by 5-4 in the title clash.

Additional Information:

- This was **India's fifth recurve women's team gold** in World Cup having won in **Shanghai-2011, Medellin-2013, Wroclaw-2013 and 2014** previously.

1.436 Wisden Cricketers' Almanack 2021 edition released

- Recently, the **annual** publication of **Wisden Cricketers' Almanack** for **2021** has been released.
- To perpetuate the **50th anniversary of the first One-Day International**, **five ODI cricketers of the decade** ranging from **1970s to 2010s** have been listed in **Wisden Almanack's 2021 edition**.

Winners:

- **ODI Cricketer of the 1970s:** Viv Richards (West Indies)
- **ODI Cricketer of the 1980s:** Kapil Dev
- **ODI Cricketer of the 1990s:** Sachin Tendulkar
- **ODI Cricketer of the 2000s:** Muttiah Muralitharan (Sri Lanka)
- **ODI player of the 2010s:** Virat Kohli
- **Leading Cricketer in the world 2020:** Ben Stokes (England)
- **Leading woman cricketer in the world 2020:** Beth Mooney (Australia)
- **Leading T20 Cricketer in the World in 2020:** Kieron Pollard (West Indies)
- **Cricketers of the Year 2021:** Jason Holder (West Indies), Mohammed Rizwan (Pakistan), Dom Sibley (England), Zak Crawley (England), and Darren Stevens (England).

1.437 Siddharth Singh Longjam to replace Navin Agarwal as NADA DG

- Recently, Siddharth Singh Longjam has succeeded Navin Agarwal as the Director General of National Anti-Doping Agency.

1.438 Wimbledon to become 14-day tournament

- **All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC)** has announced that The Wimbledon Championships will become a 14-day tournament from **2022**.
 - It has also banned players from renting private houses near the grounds.
-

1.439 First Arab woman basketball referee to stand tall at Olympics

- Sarah Gamal will become first Arab and African woman officiating at the Olympics.
- She will be refereeing the **3-on-3 basketball game**.

1.440 India, Australia and Pakistan among eight countries to compete in women's T20 in 2022 Commonwealth Games

- Recently, India, Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa and hosts England were named as qualified teams for the women's T20 competition of the 2022 Commonwealth Games.
- The women's game will feature in the CWG for the first time in 22 editions and cricket for only the second time ever.

Note: Men's ODI competition was part of Kuala Lumpur Games in 1998 and was won by South Africa.

1.441 Mirabai Chanu creates a new Clean and Jerk world record

- Recently, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, has set a **new world record** in the **women's 49kg Clean and Jerk** at the **2020 Asian Weightlifting Championship** in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, organized by the **Asian Weightlifting Federation**.
- She lifted **86kg in snatch** and a **world record of 119kg** (old record 118kg) in **clean and jerk** for a **total of 205kg** which also won her the **bronze medal at the event**.
- **Gold & Silver Medals** were won by **Hou Zhihui (China) & Jiang Huihua (China)** respectively.

Additional Information-

- **2020 Asian Weightlifting Championships** was the **49th men's** and **30th women's** championship.

Awards

1.442 Rajinikanth honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award

- Recently, the **Directorate of Film Festivals**, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, **has** awarded the **51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award** to actor **Rajinikanth** for the year 2019.

About Dadasaheb Phalke Award:

- Introduced in **1969**, to recognize the contribution of film personalities towards the development of Indian Cinema.
- **First Recipient:** Devika Rani Roerich; **Rewards:** Swarna Kamal & a cash prize of Rs. 10,00,000.

1.443 Asuran, Oththa Seruppu bag national awards

- 67th National Film Awards for the year 2019 were announced:
- **Dhanush** has won the **Best Actor award** (shared) for his performance in **Asuran** while the film has bagged the **Best Tamil Film Award** for the year 2019
- **Asuran** was directed by **Vetri Maaran** and produced by **Kalaipuli S Thanu**.
- This marks the second National Award for **Dhanush**, who has earlier won it for the film **Aadukalam** (2011), which was, incidentally, also directed by **Vetri Maaran**.

1.444 R. Kichenamourthy honoured with oldest French civilian honour

- **R. Kichenamourthy**, former Head of the Department of French and UGC Emeritus Fellow, Pondicherry University has been **honoured** with prestigious '**Commandeur dans l'Ordre des**

Palmes Académiques', the **oldest French civilian honour**, at the recent Francophonie Week celebrations.

- He has been awarded for his meritorious service in the field of French education and translation in India.
- The title is awarded by the Ministry of National Education, **Government of France**.

1.445 Ravindra Bharati School bag second prize in NASA contest

- Recently, **Ravindra Bharati School**, NAD branch, **Andhra Pradesh**, has secured the **second prize**, under Grade IX, at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (**NASA**) **ICDC virtual conference 2021**.
- The **IX Grade students** prepared a project entitled '**Techniti Gi**' on the **space settlement** programme.

1.446 IIM Kozhikode honors Robin Uthappa with National Excellence Award

- Recently, **Cricketer Robin Uthappa** has been presented the **National Excellence Award** for his remarkable **contribution** to the **field of cricket** by the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (**IIMK**).
- This is the third edition of the award, presented annually to eminent personalities for their contribution to the world of sports.

1.447 BAFTA Awards 2021

- Recently, winners of the 2021 British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) have been announced.
- List of winners is as below-

S. No.	Winner	Category
1	NOMADLAND	BEST FILM
2	PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN	OUTSTANDING BRITISH FILM
3	BUKKY BAKRAY	EE RISING STAR AWARD
4	MY OCTOPUS TEACHER	DOCUMENTARY
5	SOUL	ANIMATED FILM
6	Chloé Zhao for "NOMADLAND"	DIRECTOR
7	FRANCES McDORMAND for "Nomadland"	LEADING ACTRESS
8	ANTHONY HOPKINS for "The Father"	LEADING ACTOR
9	THE PRESENT	BRITISH SHORT FILM
10	Ang Lee	BAFTA Fellowship

1.448 M.S. Swaminathan felicitated for work towards TB eradication

- Eminent agricultural scientist **M.S. Swaminathan** has been recently **felicitated** by a Chennai-based non-profit organisation "**REACH**" for his contribution **towards eradication of tuberculosis**.

1.449 Rakesh Bobba honored with AV Gandhi Award for Excellence in Endocrinology-2020

- Recently, **Rakesh Bobba**, **endocrinologist** and specialist in diabetes, hormonal disorders, thyroid and infertility, has been awarded the annual '**AV Gandhi Award for Excellence in Endocrinology -2020**'.

- He has been awarded for his research on '**Bone Health in Transgender**'.

1.450 Marathi film Puglya wins Best Foreign Feature at Moscow Film Fest

- **The Marathi film "Puglya" has won the Best Foreign Language Feature award at Moscow International Film Festival, 2021.**
- The film has been directed and produced by **Vinod Sam Peter** under the banner **Abraham Films**.

1.451 Reetika Khera, Avijit Pathak and Kalyan Shankar honored

- **Reetika Khera**, associate professor of IIT Delhi, professor **Avijit Pathak** of the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, and **V. Kalyan Shankar**, associate professor of Symbiosis School of Economics, Pune have been selected for the **Malcolm Adiseshiah award**.
- The annual award given by **Dr. Malcolm and Elizabeth Adiseshiah Trust** is presented to social scientists for their outstanding contributions to the society.

1.452 Oscar-winning producer Guneet Monga receives second highest civilian French honour

- Recently, **Guneet Monga** has been honored with "**Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters**" or '**Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres**' of for her contribution to world cinema.

Other Important Awardees

- Pop star Shakira, South star Kamal Hassan and actor-filmmaker Nandita Das are the previous awardees of Chevalier title.

1.453 Shyamala Ganeshtobeconferred"OrderoftheRisingSun,GoldandSilverRays"

- Recently, Consulate-General of Japan, Bengaluru has announced that **Shyamala Ganesh**, the former director of the Japanese Language School, will be **conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays**.
- She will be awarded for her contribution to the spread of the Japanese language and culture in Karnataka.

1.454 Krithi Karanth to get 'Wild Innovator Award'

- **Dr Krithi K Karanth**, Chief Conservation **Scientist** at Bengaluru-based **Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS)**, has been chosen as the **first Indian and Asian woman** for the 2021 '**WILD Innovator Award**'.
- This award given by the 'WILD ELEMENTS Foundation' brings together a coalition of innovators, advocates and partners to **disrupt the status quo and identify solutions to global sustainability and conservation**.
- **Other winners are-**
 - **Richelle Thomas (USA)**, **Abigail Williams and Jayne Goss (United Kingdom)**, **Erika Allen and Laurell Sims (USA)**, **AnnaSophia Robb, Genesis Butler (USA)**, **Sheila Funnell (Kenya)**, **Rosamira Guillen (Colombia)**, **Resson Kantai Duff (Kenya)**, **Dr. Adriana Verges (Australia)**, and **Dominique Goncalves (Mozambique)**.

1.455 Saudi activist wins top Europe rights award

- Saudi activist **Loujain al-Hathloul** was awarded **The Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize** in recognition of her fight for **women's rights** in the kingdom, including her efforts to end a ban on women driving.

About The Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize-

- It is awarded annually for civil society action in defence of human rights by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

1.456 Oscar 2021

- **List of Winners**
 - **Best Film** – "Nomadland"
 - **Best Actor** – Anthony Hopkins - "The Father"
 - **Best Actress** – Frances McDormand
 - **Best Director** - Chloe Zhao ("Nomadland")
 - **Best Original Screenplay** - "Promising Young Woman," Emerald Fennell
 - **Best Adapted Screenplay** - "The Father," Christopher Hampton, Florian Zeller
 - **Best International Feature Film** - "Another Round" (Denmark)
 - **Best Supporting Actor** - Daniel Kaluuya ("Judas and the Black Messiah")
 - **Best Supporting Actress** - Youn Yuh-jung - "Minari"
 - **Best Animated Feature Film** - "Soul"
 - **Best Documentary Film** - "My Octopus Teacher"
 - **Best Music** - "Soul" - Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross and Jon Batiste
 - **Best Visual Effects** - "Tenet" - Andrew Jackson, David Lee, Andrew Lockley and Scott Fisher
 - **Best Short Film (Animated)** - "If Anything Happens I Love You" - Will McCormack and Michael Govier
 - **Best Original Song** - "Fight for You" - "Judas and the Black Messiah"

1.457 Roberto Benigni receive Venice Film Festival's Lifetime Achievement award

- Recently, **Italian director-actor Roberto Benigni** has been honoured with the **Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement** of the **78th Venice International Film Festival**.
- He directed the famous holocaust drama '**Life is Beautiful**'.

About Venice International Festival:

- **Organised** by **La Biennale di Venezia** and **directed** by **Alberto Barbera**.
- **78th Venice International Film Festival** to be held at **Venice Lido, Italy** from **1st to 11th September 2021**.

Banking

1.458 RBI imposes restrictions on American Express Banking Corp & Diners Club International Ltd

- Recently, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has **imposed restrictions** on **American Express Banking Corp.** and **Diners Club International Ltd.** from **onboarding new domestic customers** onto their card networks from **1st of May 2021**.
- The decision has been taken as these entities have been **found non-compliant with the directions on storage of payment system data**. This order will not impact existing customers.

- **American Express Banking Corp.** and **Diners Club International Ltd.** are **payment system operators** authorised to operate card networks in the country under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (**PSS Act**).

About Directions on storage of payment system data-

- As per the terms of **RBI circular on Storage of Payment System Data** of April 6, 2018-
 - **All payment system providers** were directed to **ensure** that within a **period of 6-months** the **entire data** (full end-to-end transaction details / information collected / carried / processed as part of the message / payment instruction) **relating to payment systems operated by them is stored in a system only in India.**

1.459 Shivalik Small Finance Bank commences operations

- Recently, **Shivalik Small Finance Bank** has commenced its operations as the **Reserve Bank** had **issued a licence** to the bank under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 to carry on the business of small finance bank in India

Background

- Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd. was granted an in-principle approval for transition into a small finance bank in January 2020, under the “Scheme on voluntary transition of Urban Co-operative Bank into a Small Finance Bank”

About Shivalik Small Finance Bank

- **Headquarter** – Saharanpur

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