

**March 2021**

# **BOLT**

***Monthly Current Affairs***



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## Banking & Finance

### 1. RBI gives 3-month extension to Rupee Cooperative Bank

RBI granted a further 3-month extension of its banking licence to Rupee Cooperative Bank, Pune till May 31, 2021. Till January 2021, the bank made a total recovery of Rs 258.11 crore and aggregate operating profit of Rs 53.19 crore in the last four years. The bank is under the banking restrictions since 2013.

### 2. Fino payments Bank upgraded to Scheduled Commercial Bank status

RBI included Fino Payments Bank in the category of a scheduled commercial bank. It included the bank in the 2nd Schedule of Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. It will enable Fino to enhance its banking position in the treasury & participation in LAF window. MD & CEO of Fino Payments Bank: Rishi Gupta. Founded in 2017.

### 3. Kotak Mahindra Bank signs MoU with Indian army to handle salary accounts of personnel

Kotak to offer salary account(for active & retired personnel),enhanced complimentary personal accident insurance cover(for on-duty & off-duty),additional girl child benefit by covering dependent children of up to 22 years during accident claim etc.KMB: Chairman:Prakash Apte; Tagline:Let's Make Money Simple.

### 4. In a first, RBI announces Operation Twist-cum-Open Market Operations(OMO)

RBI will purchase government securities worth ₹20,000 cr & sell securities worth ₹15,000 cr on 10 March.This makes it a combination of Operation Twist of ₹15,000 cr & OMO of ₹5000 cr, a sign that RBI is open to using all tools to stabilise yields. It is to bring down yield on 10-year benchmark bond to below 6%

### 5. Axis Securities Launches 'YIELD',an online platform to buy and sell bonds & debentures in secondary market.

It is the first-of-its-kind initiative that allows retail investors direct access to the debt instruments.This removes the hassle of filling up physical forms or the need for separate KYC with the bond institutions & provides only secure options. Axis Securities: MD&CEO:Gop Kumar B; HQ:Mumbai.

### 6. KVGB inks pact with Our Food for arranging processing units to farmers

It is for arranging cost-effective processing units to farmers through the bank loan.The Visakhapatnam based vendor will ensure supply,delivery & installation of high-quality, standardised and branded equipment/machinery as per the farmer's requirement. KVGB: Chairman:P Gopi Krishna; HQ:Dharwad

### 7. In a first for RRBs,Telangana Grameena Bank(TGB) & Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank(APGVB) launch video-KYC facility

These SBI sponsored RRBs have become first among RRBs to adopt state-of-the-art technologies having full security features for zero contact onboarding of customers, which are at par with commercial banks.It will help increase their CASA portfolio. Head&HQ: V.Arvind,Hyderabad(TGB); Praveen Kumar,Warangal(APGVB)

### 8. Maintaining the inflation target at 4% into the medium-term is appropriate:RBI report.

Under Section 45ZA of the RBI Act, Centre with RBI consultation had fixed the inflation target/Flexible Inflation Target for the period between August 5, 2016 and March 31, 2021, at 4% with upper tolerance of 6% and lower tolerance level of 2%. Report is RBI's Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) for 2020-21

### 9. PNB Housing Finance, Yes Bank sign strategic co-lending pact for retail home loans;homebuyers will get loans at competitive rates

PNB Housing and Yes Bank will co-originate loan at agreed ratio.In 2020, the RBI allowed co-origination of housing finance companies with banks to enable NBFCs and other banking

institutions to provide mutually beneficial risk assessment services. PNB Housing Finance: MD & CEO: Hardayal Prasad; HQ: New Delhi.

#### **10. NPCI ties up with SBI Payments to launch 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution**

RuPay SoftPoS solution turns NFC (near-field communication)-enabled smartphones into PoS terminals for retailers. With this, merchants will be able to accept contactless payments of up to Rs.5000 through a simple tap & pay mechanism on their smartphones. SBI Payments: MD and CEO: Giri Kumar Nair; HQ: Mumbai

#### **11. Indian Bank to divest stake in asset reconstruction JV ASREC India**

It is as part of the monetisation of the bank's non-core assets. ASREC is an asset reconstruction company in which Bank of India, Union Bank of India, LIC and Deutsche Bank are the shareholders. The bank holds a 38.26 per cent stake in ASREC (India) Ltd. Indian Bank: MD & CEO: Padmaja Chunduru; HQ: Chennai.

#### **12. Sebi cancels Sahara India Financial Corp's registration as sub-broker.**

SEBI had appointed a designated authority in 2018 to enquire whether Sahara India Financial violated provisions of Intermediaries Regulations. SEBI cancelled Sahara stating failure to fulfill the "fit and proper" criteria as per the authority's report.

#### **13. Utkarsh Small Finance Bank files papers for Rs 1,350-crore IPO**

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank has filed a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with SEBI for the same. The public issue comprises a fresh issue of Rs 750 crore and an offer for sale by Utkarsh Coreinvest Ltd aggregating of up to Rs 600 crore. Utkarsh SFB: MD & CEO: Govind Singh; HQ: Varanasi.

#### **14. HDFC Bank launches SmartUp Unnati for women entrepreneurs**

HDFC Bank has rolled out a programme dedicated for mentoring women entrepreneurs by senior women executive leaders who will act as a sounding board for women entrepreneurs to undertake building diverse and innovative businesses. HDFC Bank Limited, Founder: Hasmukhbhai Parekh.

#### **15. SBI leads in MeitY Digital Payment Scorecard**

The scorecard tracks Commercial Banks' performance on various digital parameters. SBI remained the top remitter bank by recording the highest UPI transaction volume of nearly 64 crores having a user base of 13.5 crores. SBI processed 636 crore transactions Country's largest lender: State Bank of India

#### **16. IRDAI slaps Rs 1 cr penalty on Chola MS General for undue payments to MSIPs**

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India had conducted an onsite inspection of Chola MS General Insurance from May 1-4, 2018, and found that there were violations of certain provisions of the guidelines on MISPs issued by the authority. motor insurance service providers (MISPs)

#### **17. Karur Vysya Bank and Cholamandalam Investment partners for co-lending business**

The financial services arm of the Murugappa Group, jointly announced that they have successfully launched a Co-lending business in partnership. The co-lending model is a great opportunity for banks and NBFCs to draw upon each other's strengths. Karur Vysya Bank, Headquarters: Karur, Founded: 1916

#### **18. RBI pulls IDBI Bank out of the PCA framework, bank to resume normal lending**

RBI found the state-run lender was not in breach of its rules on regulatory capital, bad loans, and leverage ratio. IDBI Bank was placed under the so-called PCA framework in 2017 over its high bad loans and a negative return on assets. CEO: Rakesh Sharma; Headquarters: Mumbai

#### **19. Axis Bank NFC Enabled Wear N' Pay Wrist Band, Keychain, and Loop Launched For Contactless Payments**

The Axis Bank NFC wearables will be connected to savings accounts of users, and users can set transaction limits and individual PIN requirement preferences via the Axis Bank mobile banking for using the wearables. Bank will charge users Rs 750 as a one-time fee.

## **20. Cabinet approves bill to set up DFI with initial capital of Rs 20 thousand crore**

The Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up a Development Finance Institution (DFI) with an initial capital infusion of 20 thousand crore rupees. DFI is expected to raise long-term funds for infrastructure development projects in the country. Finance Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman

## **21. RBI asks banks to implement image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30**

This move aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service. There are about 18,000 bank branches that are still outside any formal clearing arrangement. The CTS is in use since 2010 and presently covers around 1,50,000 branches. RBI 25th governor: Shaktikanta Das; Formed: 1935; HQ: Mumbai

## **22. Punjab National Bank incorporates new entity PNB Cards & Services to manage credit card business**

"The authorized capital of the company is Rs 25 crore (divided into 250,00,000 equity shares of Rs 10 each) and the paid up capital is Rs 15 Crore (divided into 150,00,000 Equity Shares of Rs 10 each)," PNB : CEO: S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao.

## **23. Parliament panel headed by Jayant Sinha suggests systemic review of financial system by RBI**

Committee said that the resolution of IL&FS remains sub judice before the NCLT and delays in the resolution process not only cause a steep value erosion for bankers and other creditors, but also makes an understanding of the lacunae in the system elusive. National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

## **24. RBI slaps Rs 2 crore penalty on State Bank of India (SBI) for 'deficiencies in regulatory compliance'**

"This action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers," SBI Chairperson: Dinesh Kumar Khara.

## **25. SBI's digital transactions up by 7% from pre-COVID period:Chairman**

The increase is primarily due to adoption of e-commerce during the pandemic which led to an increase in digital transactions on SBI's platforms from 60% to 67% at present. SBI's digital lending platform YONO reported significant growth. SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara

## **26. RBI imposes ₹15-lakh penalty on Fedfina**

RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of ₹15 lakh on Fedbank Financial Services Ltd (Fedfina), Mumbai, for non-compliance with certain provisions of the central bank's directions on monitoring of frauds. This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. Fedfina is a subsidiary of Federal Bank. The bank has 74% stake in the NBFC.

## **27. Award for ESAF Small Finance Bank**

ESAF Small Finance Bank has been awarded 'Great Place to Work' certification by the Great Place to Work Institute.

The certification is the result of an employee survey conducted by the third-party global authority on recognising high-trust and performance culture at workplaces. ESAF Small Finance Bank: MD & CEO: K Paul Thomas; HQ: Thrissur, Kerala.

## **28. SEBI amends valuation norms on AT-1 bonds; maturity of all perpetual bonds to be treated as 100 years from date of their issuance**

In the financial year ended March 2022, the AT-1 bonds will be valued at 10 years or the call date mentioned in the bond. From April to September 2022, it will be valid at 20 years and from October 2022 to March 2023 it will have a lifespan of 30 years. Finally, from April 2023, the perpetual bonds will be valid at 100 years.

### **29. In a first, ICICI Bank enables customers to break high-value transactions into EMIs with 'EMI @Internet Banking' facility.**

ICICI Bank customers can break their high value transactions of over Rs 50,000 into suitable EMIs directly on its internet banking platform to make their purchases more affordable. It will be applicable on transactions up to Rs 5 lakh and will bear no additional cost on the customers. The bank has tied up with online payment gateways BillDesk and Razorpay to enable this.

### **30. Sebi in consultation with clearing corporations issues new penal structure for delivery default in derivatives segment**

In agricultural and non agricultural commodities, the penalty for delivery default by seller will now be 4% and 3% of the settlement price plus replacement cost. In respect of norms for apportionment of penalty, at least 1.75% of settlement price will be deposited in the Settlement Guarantee Fund of the clearing corporation while up to 0.25% retained for admin expenses. Norms will be effective from the first trading day of May 2021.

### **31. Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) launches 'IOB Trendy' savings account for millennials**

For opening an IOB Trendy account, a customer must be between 21 – 38 years. The account may be self or jointly operated. In case of a joint account, the primary holder has to be a millennial at the time of account opening. There is no 'Opening Balance' requirement for IOB Trendy. IOB Trendy customers need to maintain a daily minimum balance of ₹10,000 etc. IOB: CEO: Partha Pratim Sengupta; HQ: Chennai

### **32. Karnataka Bank and IIFL Securities launch 'KBL Smart Trade'**

Karnataka Bank and IIFL Securities have introduced 'KBL Smart Trade', a facility in which all customers of Karnataka Bank can access IIFL Securities Demat and trading account solution for their capital market needs. 'KBL Smart Trade' is a two-in-one account facility, where the Demat and trading account features are clubbed. CEO: Mahabaleshwara M. S; Headquarters: Mangalore

### **33. Union Bank and HPCL launch co-branded contactless RuPay card**

Union Bank of India – one of the largest Indian government-owned banks of India and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited – a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise, has announced the launch of the co-branded contactless RuPay credit card. This is the first time a co-branded RuPay credit card is being launched with NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) feature. Headquarters: Mumbai; CEO: Rajkiran Rai G.

### **34. RBI further extends restrictions on PMC Bank for 3 months till 30 June 2021**

The decision has been taken in the backdrop of financial condition of the bank which is likely to make the reconstruction process complex and time-consuming. The RBI had put PMC Bank under all-inclusive directions under sub-section (1) of Section 35 A read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, on September 23, 2019, to protect depositors' interests.

### **35. HDFC Bank Named India's Best SME Bank By Asiamoney**

HDFC Bank was adjudged the 'India's Best Bank for SMEs' at the Asiamoney Best Bank Awards 2021. Award was given in recognition of HDFC Bank's transformation of its micro, small and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) business over the past few years. Survey aims to identify which banks in each market have excelled over the past 12 months. Asiamoney is a Hong Kong based financial magazine.

## Economy

### 1. GST collections up by 7 % to Rs 1.13 lakh cr in February

Gross GST revenue collected in February is Rs. 1.13 Lakh Crore. Out of this, CGST is Rs. 21092 crore, SGST is Rs. 27273 crores & IGST is Rs. 55253 crore & Cess is Rs. 9,525 crore. Revenues for February are 7% higher than the GST revenues of February 2019. Revenues from the import of goods were 15% higher than Feb '19.

### 2. Govt lifts embargo on grant of govt businesses to private banks

The Centre lifted embargo on private sector banks for conducting of government-related banking transactions. These include taxes and other revenue payment facilities, pension payments and small savings. Union finance minister: Nirmala Sitharaman.

### 3. India's FDI inflow in April-Dec 2020 surges 22% to \$67.5 billion; Singapore top source of FDI in Apr-Dec.

Compared to this 22% surge, FDI inflow stood at \$55.14 billion in first ninth months of 2019-20. FDI equity inflow grew by 40% in the first 9 months of FY21 to \$51.47 billion from an year ago period of \$36.77 billion. Singapore topped with \$15.7 billion. Gujarat garnered highest share of FDI in the period at \$21.23 bn

### 4. India's FinTech industry valuation estimated at \$150-160 bn by 2025: BCG & FICCI report

India is strongly poised to realise a FinTech sector valuation of \$150-160 bn by 2025, translating to an incremental value-creation potential of approximately \$100 bn, as per Boston Consulting Group & FICCI report India has over 2,100 FinTechs estimated @ \$50-60 bn currently

### 5. UPI-Help' for digital payments now live on Bhim app for SBI, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, others

In continuation to the RBI's vision of having a customer-friendly and transparent dispute redressal mechanism (ODR), now National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has gone live with 'UPI-Help' on BHIM UPI, a part of Digi-Help stack by NPCI. NPCI Headquarters: Mumbai; Founded: 2008

### 6. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) forecast India's growth at 5% in 2021

The report, 'Out of the frying pan Into the fire?' published as an update to the Trade and Development Report 2020 by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development forecast India's economy to record a "stronger recovery" in 2021 and grow by 5 percent. UNCTAD HQs: Geneva, Switzerland; Founded: 30 December 1964.

### 7. At \$36 billion, FPI inflows into equities at record high since FY13: RBI report

On the other hand, net foreign direct investment inflows jumped to \$44 billion, till end January, up from \$36.3 billion a year ago, driven by the massive inflows in November & December, with the last month of the year getting a record \$6.3 bn. Report further notes that the quality of FPI inflows improved during the period as category-I foreign investors increased their stake. Except India, most Asian and emerging markets have seen FPI outflows.

### 8. Fitch Revises India's GDP Growth To 12.8% For FY22.

In its latest Global Economic Outlook, Fitch revised India's GDP growth estimate beginning April 1 from previous 11%. Revision was made due to stronger carryover effect, a looser fiscal stance and better virus containment leading to quicker recovery from lockdown-induced recession. GDP growth is to ease to 5.8% in FY23, a downward revision of -0.5% since December.

## National

### 1. Principal Scientific Adviser to GOI launches Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship

The Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to Govt of India under its Waste to Wealth Mission launched Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship to recognize students, community workers or SHGs and municipal or sanitary workers engaged in tackling waste management. Waste to Wealth Mission is one of the 9 missions of PM SITAC.

### 2. Nitin Gadkari launches Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas

Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari launched the Real-Time Monitoring System to assess the live condition at toll plazas pan India and released a rating system for highways. Government has made FASTag mandatory from the 15th of February. Minister of State for Road Transport: Mansukh L. Mandaviya.

### 3. Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launches field assessment of Swachh Survekshan -2021

MoHUA launched the field assessment of Swachh Survekshan -2021. Swachh Survekshan was introduced in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation. This will be the 6th edition of the annual cleanliness survey.

### 4. Dal lake, Agra Fort, Ajanta Caves among 12 iconic sites under 'Swachh Tourist Destinations'

The Swachh Tourist Destinations initiative comes under the overarching Swachh Bharat Mission of the Modi government which was launched by the government. The 12 sites have been selected under phase IV of the Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) project. SBM Phase 2 will be implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

### 5. Swachh Survekshan 2021: Government Launches Field Assessment Of The Annual Cleanliness Survey

Cities and towns across the country are once again ready to be assessed on the basis of their Swachh quotient as the Ministry of Housing and Housing Affairs (MoHUA) launched the field assessment of the Swachh Surveshan 2021. It is the sixth edition of the cleanliness survey (since 2016).

### 6. In A First, Rating Mechanism Formulated For National Highways, To Enhance Accountability Towards Motorists

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has released the ratings for 18,668 km of completed four and six lane stretches of National Highways covering 343 toll plazas. This has been done by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under MoRTH. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road, Transport, and Highways.

### 7. Rajya Sabha TV, Lok Sabha TV merged into 'Sansad TV'; Ravi Capoor named CEO

The decision was taken in line with the proposals given by a panel headed by former Prasar Bharati chairman A Surya Prakash. It was appointed by Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu in consultation with LS speaker Om Birla. Lok Sabha, Next election: May 2024.

### 8. Mumbai local train: Indian Railways install Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system, commuters to get real-time updates

MTRC system will monitor, track & aid in communication between trains & control room thereby ensuring smooth movement of railway rakes. System uses lowest time to connect calls i.e 300 milliseconds & it is the first time that MTRC is commissioned in India. Existing VHF based system, Mobile & CUG had its limitations.

### 9. 228th meeting of Central Board of Trustees (CBT) EPF: Interest rate kept unchanged at 8.5% to member accounts for FY21

Chairman, CBT launched e-facility for the Principal Employers, which would allow them to view PF compliance and remittance made by their contractors in monthly ECR; web facility for



complaints was launched & a booklet titled 'Response to Covid' was released. 228th meeting of CBT,EPF was held at Srinagar,J&K

#### **10. Union Education Minister inaugurates the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021**

The New Delhi World Book Fair was first held in the year 1972. It is arguably one of the biggest book fairs with a record footfall of more than 12 lakh visitors. This virtual edition has more than 15 foreign countries participating including UK, USA, France This year's theme is National Education Policy 2020.

#### **11. One Rail, One Helpline: Indian Railways Launches 139 For All Queries And Complaints**

The Helpline 139 will be available in twelve languages. Passengers can opt for IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System), or directly connect to the call-centre executive by pressing '\*' (asterisk). Helpline no. 182 would be discontinued from April 1, 2021.

#### **12. Minister of Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurates All-Women's Art Exhibition titled 'Akshya Patra'**

He inaugurated the All-Women's Art Exhibition titled 'Akshya Patra' at Rabindra Bhavan Galleries in New Delhi on the occasion of International Women's Day. Also congratulated Lalit Kala Akademi for curating this encouraging opportunity. Lalit Kala Akademi formed on August 5th, 1954

#### **13. PM Narendra Modi launched the Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita**

The event has been organised to commemorate the sale of over 5 lakh copies of the Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita. Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu. Gita's Tamil version with his commentaries was published in 1951

#### **14. Department of Telecommunications Launches Online Certificate Course on 5G Technology to Train Government of India Officers**

DoT has launched a new online certificate course on 5G technology to be conducted by the National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT), which is the training institute of DoT. 5G is the 5th generation mobile network.

#### **15. India at 75 | PM Modi launched 'Amrut Mahotsav' to mark 75 years of India's Independence**

PM Modi has launched 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav', the government's initiative to mark 75 years of India's Independence. These celebrations will continue till August 15, 2023. The Mahotsav is a tribute to the country's freedom fighters & the freedom struggle. Mahatma Gandhi did a 386 km-long Dandi Yatra in 1930,

#### **16. Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates Two-day Workshop on Implementation of Clusters under SFURTI**

A two-day Workshop on implementation of traditional artisan clusters under Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) in New Delhi. The purpose of the workshop is to train the stakeholders to enhance their quality of production. Union Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises: Nitin Gadkari

#### **17. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal announces linking of OTPRMS certificates with DigiLocker**

The Ministry of Education has decided to link the certificates with DigiLocker in order to ensure hassle-free access to verified Online Teacher Pupil Registration Management System (OTPRMS) Certificates. The registration fee for the certificate is ₹200/-. Certificate issued by National Council for Teacher Education

#### **18. PM launches 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign on World Water Day.**

Campaign will be undertaken across rural and urban areas, with the theme "catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls". Historic Memorandum of Agreement for Ken Betwa Link Project to

be signed between Union Jal Shakti Minister and CM of MP and UP as well. Campaign will be implemented from 22nd March to 30th November.

### **19. India achieves 92.97 GW of renewable energy(RE) capacity in February this year**

India has set an ambitious target of achieving 175 GW of installed RE capacity (excluding large hydropower) by 2022. While 50.15 GW is under various stages of implementation, India has achieved 92.97 GW of renewable energy (RE) capacity till Feb. Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister: R K Singh

### **20. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank Inaugurated Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak In New Delhi**

Delhi University now has a Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak, which was inaugurated on the 90 years of martyrdom of Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru. The minister announced that the existing collection of books and freedom fighters at the smarak will be converted into 'Shahid Smriti Pustakalaya'.

### **21. Indian Railways launches massive drive against smoking and carriage of inflammable material.**

Indian Railways have launched massive drive against smoking and carriage of inflammable material through Railways in the view of incidents of fire resulting in loss of property and danger to life in various Zonal Railways. The drive has been launched from March 22 with legal action from 31st of this month. It may be continued till 30th April.

### **22. IIT Kharagpur Wins CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0; first time a squad from India has emerged as winners in the challenge.**

A team of 4 UG students from IIT, Kharagpur won the challenge sponsored by Cushman and Wakefield, KI and IA: Interior Architects.

The team worked on a hypothetical case on developing an environmentally resilient Corporate Real Estate Portfolio while gauging the impact of the pandemic, for Blue Banc, a fictitious financial institution based in London, England. CoreNet Global is a non-profit association, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia (US)

### **23. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' at more than 600 locations**

To improve commuters' experience on National Highways for both passengers and truckers, NHAI will develop world class 'Wayside Amenities' at more than 600 locations across 22 states in the next 5 years. Out of these, 130 are targeted for development in 2021-22. Amenities will include Fuel Station, Electric Charging Facilities, Food Court, Retail Shops, ATM, Toilets etc.

### **24. President Kovind Approves Bill to Set up National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development**

The bill seeks to establish National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) to support the development of long-term non-recourse infrastructure financing in India including development of the bonds and derivatives markets necessary for infrastructure financing and to carry on the business of financing infrastructure and for matters connected therewith. DFI (Development Finance Institution), called NaBFID will be answerable to Parliament.

### **25. Bengaluru's Kempegowda airport becomes first in south India to have operational parallel runways**

After receiving the necessary approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the refurbished and upgraded North Runway (which was closed since June 2020) at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru has commenced operations. The Runway will continue to be categorised as CAT I. CAT IIIB-equipped South Runway has been operational since December 6, 2019. Both runways operate in low visibility and adverse weather conditions.

## International

### 1. Bangladesh gets UN recommendation for graduating from LDC status

UN Committee for Development Policy recommended Bangladesh's graduation from Least Developed Country status. It met, for the 2nd time, all 3 eligibility criteria for graduation such as income per capita, human assets, economic & environmental vulnerability Myanmar and Lao PDR also met the criteria for the 2nd time.

### 2. Ghana becomes the world's first nation to receive COVAX vaccines

Ghana became the 1st country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery of 600,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India. COVAX is led by WHO, GAVI and CEPI. Ghana is among 92 countries that signed onto the COVAX program.

### 3. USA: Food and Drug Administration formally approves single-shot COVID-19 vaccine

US Food and Drug Administration formally approved the single-shot Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine. The vaccine is set to be a cost-effective alternative to the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and can be stored in a refrigerator instead of a freezer. It is the 3rd vaccine to be authorised in the country.

### 4. Israel officially receives first ever UAE ambassador

Israel's president received the first-ever ambassador from the UAE following the agreement between the countries to normalise ties under Abraham Accords. UAE envoy Mohamed Al Khaja delivered his credentials to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in Jerusalem. UAE – 3rd major Arab country to form ties with Israel.

### 5. Russia Launches First Satellite to Monitor Climate and Environment of Arctic

It will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean. Satellite will be able to transmit overview images of the Earth's northern polar region & the adjacent areas at least every 15-30 Min. Russia's space agency: Roscosmos.

### 6. UAE's Mohamed Al Khaja (First-Ever Ambassador) To Israel Arrives In Jerusalem

UAE was the first country to agree to establish full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state under the Abraham Accords, a pact brokered by former US President Donald Trump. Agreement made the UAE only the 3rd majority Arab country to form official ties Bahrain, Morocco & Sudan have subsequently joined Abraham Accords.

### 7. Russia and China signed MoU to build lunar space station

An international lunar science station is a complex of experimental and research facilities created on the surface and/or in orbit of the moon. Russia and China will promote international cooperation on the project and offer equal access to any nation. Roscosmos: - the Russian space agency

### 8. Switzerland referendum: People vote to ban full face coverings in public places

As many as 51.21 percent of voters voted in support of the controversial proposal in the referendum. The proposal has been widely criticized, especially by the Swiss religious organizations, human rights, and civic groups, and the federal government. Switzerland PM: Guy Parmelin; Capital: Bern; Currency: Swiss Franc

### 9. Quad member countries to be part of France-led joint naval exercises this year

India will be part of France-led exercises "La Pérouse" that will take place in early April in the Bay of Bengal. With the Indian Navy's addition, all Quad member countries - US, Japan, & Australia will be part of France initiated joint naval exercise QUAD nations agree to send 1 bn vaccines across Asia by end-2022

### 10. El Salvador certified as malaria-free by WHO

El Salvador is the first Central American country to achieve this status, third in all of the Americas in recent years. The certification follows more than 50 years of commitment by the

Salvadoran government and people to ending the disease. Capital: San Salvador; Currency: El Salvador colon

### **11. Canada clears Johnson & Johnson vaccine, first to approve 4 vaccines**

The vaccine shortage is so acute in Canada that provincial governments are now saying they will extend the interval between the two doses of Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca vaccines to four months rather than three to four weeks. Canada, Prime Minister: Justin Trudeau.

### **12. WHO Grants Emergency Use Authorization To Johnson & Johnson Vaccine**

The World Health Organization (WHO) issued emergency use authorization for Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus vaccine, paving the way for the one-shot dose to be used as part of the United Nation's international vaccine distribution effort. Alex Gorsky is chairman and CEO of Johnson & Johnson.

### **13. Italy signs International Solar Alliance under amended ISA Framework Agreement**

Italy joined the ISA under the amended ISA Framework Agreement. Initiated by India at the 2015 UN Paris Climate Conference, ISA provides a platform for cooperation through which the global community can help to accelerate the deployment of solar energy. ISA HQs: Gurugram, India; Italy Capital: Rome; Currency: Euro.

### **14. Sri Lanka signs three-year USD 1.5 billion currency swap deal with China**

The 10 billion yuan (about USD 1.5 billion) currency swap deal with China for a three year period is to be used for promoting bilateral trade and direct investment between the two countries. The deal was signed between the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) and the People's Bank of China (PBoC). China is Sri Lanka's largest source of imports.

### **15. World's 1st Catastrophe Bond sponsored by Danish Red Cross for Volcanic Eruptions Aims to Improve Disaster Relief**

The project's partners aim to raise as much as \$3 million with the launch of the note, which will transfer money to Denmark's branch of the Red Cross. The bond will cover 10 volcanoes.

Catastrophe bonds typically insure against damage from natural disasters like earthquakes and storms, with some already including volcanic eruptions in baskets of covered perils. The bond adds a new variant to World Bank's pandemic bonds issued in 2017.

### **16. Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of independence**

From 1947 to 1971, modern-day Pakistan was West Pakistan and Bangladesh was East Pakistan.

On March 26, 1971, Bangladesh was proclaimed as an independent nation by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and this led to Bangladesh Liberation War when war ensued between Pakistan and Bangladesh liberation forces with Indian support.

### **17. Republic of Congo: President Sassou Nguesso wins by landslide**

The longtime president of the Republic of Congo is set for another five-year term after getting over 88% of the vote. The election day was marred by the death of his main opponent, Guy Brice Parfait Koulélas. The African leader is one of the world's longest-serving presidents, earning him the nickname "emperor." He has led Congo for a total of 36 years. Republic of Congo: Capital: Brazzaville; Currency: franc.


### **18. Project billed as world's first ship tunnel slated for construction in Norway**

The tunnel will run underneath the mountains in Norway's Stadhavet peninsula. It will measure 1,700 metres long, 37 metres high and 26.5 metres wide when complete. At present, vessels sometimes have to wait days for harsh weather and rough tides to subside in the Stadhavet Sea. Construction on the project is expected to begin in 2022 and be complete by 2025 or 2026.

### **19. Indian-American physician Dr Vivek Murthy sworn in as US Surgeon General**

Indian-American physician Vivek Murthy has been sworn in as the 21st Surgeon General of the US, a role in which his top priority would be to end the coronavirus pandemic that has severely hit the country and be a voice for science. He has occupied the position of America's


Surgeon General for the second time. In 2011, president Barack Obama tapped him to serve on the advisor



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## States/UTs

### Andhra Pradesh

#### 1. Smart City Visakhapatnam gets the 'World's First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre'

Kiosk will provide clean, mineral-enriched potable water from the air by making use of Maithri Aquatech's Meghdoot solution as a source to generate water with no dependency on groundwater & surface water resources. It will also function as a Water Knowledge Resource Centre (WRKC) by creating awareness to public on the benefits of good water, sanitation and hygiene practices. Hyderabad-based startup, Maithri Aquatech has set up the kiosk.

#### 2. Andhra to launch India's first govt run ambulance network for animals

A total of 175 mobile ambulances clinics will be placed at Assembly Constituency Level on the lines of 108 Services for providing Veterinary services at the doorstep. One veterinary doctor, One Para-veterinary worker, will be assigned to every ambulance. These ambulances will also have a 24/7 toll-free call centre.

Ambulances will provide 'Hydraulic Lift' facility to lift animals to nearest govt clinic.

#### 3. Andhra CM along with Union Minister P Hardeep Singh Inaugurates Kurnool Airport

Kurnool Airport, 6th civilian airport in Andhra, is located at Orvakal and is named after first-ever freedom fighter from the region, Uyyalavada Narasimha Reddy, as a tribute to him. Built on a 1010 acre site at a cost of Rs.110 crore, airport has a 2000-metre runway with four aprons for parking of aircraft. Statue of former CM YS Rajasekhara Reddy was unveiled in the airport. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

### Bihar

#### 1. Bihar becomes first state to have own ethanol policy for biofuel

Bihar Cabinet has approved the Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021, becoming 1st Indian State to have ethanol promotion policy. The policy allows the extraction of ethanol, that was restricted to sugarcane, from surplus quantities of maize as well. Bioethanol blending in petrol in India stands at 6.2%.

#### 2. President Kovind extends greetings to people on Bihar Divas (March 22)

Bihar is celebrating its 109th foundation day today. The state was carved out from Bengal presidency on this day in 1912. The theme of this year's event is 'Jal Jivan Haryali'. Bihar: Governor: Phagu Chauhan; CM: Nitish Kumar

#### 3. Bihar CM Nitish Kumar inaugurates the nature safari in Nalanda

Nature Safari at Rajgir, Nalanda district which has the first glass skywalk in the country, besides the new ropeway. Developed over 500 hectares of land at a cost of ₹19 crores. The site also has a suspension bridge, adventure park, and butterfly zone. Governor of Bihar: Phagu Chauhan

#### 4. In a first; Rajgir, Bodh Gaya in Bihar set to be green energy towns

The towns will start getting solar energy through the first of its kind renewable energy project from 2023. The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a central government PSU, which will develop the system in Andhra Pradesh, has agreed in principle to Bihar's proposal to feed clean power to the two towns and some important government installations in Patna. Bihar will purchase 200 MW hybrid power through the SECI.

### Chhattisgarh

#### 1. Chhattisgarh ranks first in nation in terms of providing job under MGNREGA in the current financial year 2020-21.

The state government provided employment of 16.684 crore man-days under MGNREGA against the set target of creating 15 crore man-days, as sanctioned by Government of India. More than 107 percent of the given target was achieved. West Bengal holds second rank with 105 percent.

## Gujarat

### 1. Gujarat to get National Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Research and Referral Centre

The Centre will set up a National Wildlife Disease Diagnostic Research and Referral Centre. The proposal is part of the document for Project Lion drafted in consultation with the Gujarat government and Wildlife Institute of India. Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change: Prakash Javadekar

## Haryana

### 1. Haryana Chief Minister announced four welfare schemes on Ravidas Jayanti

Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana (for 1 lakh poorest families), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Awas Navinikarn Yojana (assistance of Rs 80,000 to repair house), legal aid to SC/ST increased to Rs 21,000 & Sant Mahapurush Vichar Samman and Prasaar Yojana announced. It was the 644th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas.

## Himachal Pradesh

### 1. Himachal Pradesh CM launches various e-services for Lahaul-Spiti district.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur virtually launched e-Office, e-Heli Service, e-Aagman and e-Lahaul for Lahaul-Spiti district from Shimla. Lahaul-Spiti would become the first district of the State in effectively adopting of e-office in the State. These initiatives were the best examples of optimum use of Information Technology for good governance. Himachal Pradesh Governor: Bandaru Dattatreya

## Jharkhand

### 1. Jharkhand's SAAMAR campaign to fight malnutrition in the state; launched with a 1000 days target.

SAAMAR (Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anemia Reduction) campaign aims to identify anemic women & malnourished children & converge various departments to effectively deal with it, in a state where malnutrition has been a major problem. As per NFHS-4 data, 70% children in the state are anemic.

## Karnataka

### 1. Karnataka unveils Engineering R&D policy to generate 50,000 new jobs

The new policy, a first of its kind, is the brainchild of the Department of Electronics, IT, Bt and S&T, Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS), and NASSCOM. The policy aims to develop Engineering R&D Future Skills Courses. Karnataka, Governor: Vajubhai Vala.

### 2. India's first machine tool park ready for investors in Karnataka

The park, spread over 530 acres at Vasanthnarasapura, about 90 kms from Bengaluru, is developed under the scheme of Enhancement of Competitiveness in Indian Capital Goods Sector, jointly by the state govt. & the Department of Heavy Industries, GoI. V Anbu, DG & CEO, Indian Machine Tool Manufacturers' Association.

### 3. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Rolls Out Project RE-HAB to Prevent Elephant – Human Conflict Using Honey Bees

Objective of Project RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant -Human Attacks using Bees) is to thwart elephant attacks in human habitations using honey bees & thus reducing loss of lives of both, humans as well as elephants. KVIC Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena. Pilot project launched at Chelur (Kodagu district) of Karnataka.

## Madhya Pradesh

### 1. Madhya Pradesh Tourism launches night safaris in 3 national parks.

Night safaris will be at Bandhavgarh National Park (NP), Kanha NP and Pench NP. Tourists can book their night safaris on the Wildlife Safari Reservation portal that is operated by the forest department of the state. Kanha NP is home to the Barasingha. Bandhavgarh NP: known for highest density of Royal Bengal Tigers.

## **2. Mission Gramodaya launched in Madhya Pradesh**

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan have launched the Mission Gramodaya. Under the Gramodaya mission, besides providing housing facilities in rural areas, basic and fundamental infrastructure will also be expanded. Capital: Bhopal; Governor: Anandiben Patel.

## **3. Launch of 'MICE Roadshow - Meet in India' and inauguration of Chhatrasal Convention Centre(CCC) at Khajuraho.**

The Convention Centre, named after the legendary Bundelkhand King Maharaja Chhatrasal, has been built at a cost of around Rs 51 crore 43 lakh under Swadesh-Darshan scheme.

In order to promote India as MICE Destination (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions), 'MICE Roadshow – Meet in India' was held between 25-27 March 2021 at CCC. MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the CCC.

### **Maharashtra**

#### **1. Maharashtra Cabinet approves Greenfield Pune – Nashik Semi High-Speed Rail Line**

The much-awaited Pune-Nashik Semi-High speed Rail Line would bring down travel time between two cities from present 06 hours to 01 hour 45 mins boosting passenger and freight movements. The entire cost of the project has been pegged at Rs 16,039 Crore. Rajesh Kumar Jaiswal, Managing Director, MahaRail.

#### **2. Maharashtra farmers start fresh fruit cake 'movement' to sustain during pandemic**

Fruit growers in rural Maharashtra have started an innovative movement to promote fresh fruit cakes as a healthier option, instead of the traditional bakery-made cakes to encourage the increase in intake of fruits and to find a new way of selling produce. Maharashtra CM: Uddhav Thackeray; Governor: B S Koshyari.

#### **3. New building of High Court of Bombay at Goa inaugurated**

Chief Justice of India Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde inaugurated the new building of the High Court of Bombay at Porvorim, Goa in the presence of Union Minister for Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad, and Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. The new building is Person with Disabilities (PwD) and environmentally friendly. The works of the District Court at Merces and Civil Court at Margao are in the pipeline.

### **Meghalaya**

#### **1. Meghalaya govt launches online registration portal for migrant workers**

Launched under Meghalaya Identification Registration (Safety and Security) of Migrant Workers Act 2020 enables migrant workers & persons/contractors employing migrant labourers/workers to register them, failing which they will be liable to pay Rs.5000 fine. Registration through portal can be made from any part of India.

### **Nagaland**

#### **1. Nagaland Health Minister launches 'i-Learn' for Community Health Officers**

Nagaland Health and Family Welfare Minister S Pangnyu Phom launched i-Learn, a capacity building and performance tracking application for Community Health Officers, CHOs in the state at his office chamber in Kohima. The state government launched the i-Learn application in partnership with USAID-NISHTHA/Jgpiego. Capital: Kohima; Governor: RN Ravi; Chief minister: Neiphiu Rio

### **Odisha**

#### **1. Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik Inaugurates World Skill Centre(WSC) At Bhubaneswar;set up at a budget of nearly Rs.1342.2 Crores**

WSC is being modelled around TVET Institute, ITE (Institute of Technical Education) Singapore and seeks inspiration from World Skills, Russia and GIFTS (Global Institute for Transferring Skills), South Korea. Established with assistance from ADB with ITEES. Established under Odisha Skill Development Project.



## 2. Odisha to host the Hero Indian Women's League in 2021

Indian Women's League is the top division women's professional football league in India with the first season kicking off in Cuttack in October 2016. It is run by the All India Football Federation (AIFF). AIFF: President: Praful Patel; HQ: New Delhi

## 3. The Zoom Studios Partners Odisha Tourism for the New Season of Reunion

The leading digital content destination, The Zoom Studios announces the much-anticipated new season of its maiden show Reunion, in partnership with Odisha Tourism. Previous season created a record run with over 50 million views on YouTube and Facebook. Odisha Capital: Bhubaneswar Governor: Ganeshi Lal

### Telangana

#### 1. India's first 'Transgender Community Desk' opens in Telangana's Gachibowli

The desk will be managed by a police liaison officer and a transgender person who is designated as community coordinator. It will be the focal point for all grievance redressal among transgender community in Cyberabad Commissionerate. Telangana: CM: K. Chandrashekar Rao Governor: Tamilsai S.

### Tripura

#### 1. New Science Centre Inaugurated In Udaipur (Tripura) by Governor Ramesh Bais

The Udaipur Science Centre has been developed at a cost of ₹6 crores funded jointly by Ministry of Culture, Government of India & Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Tripura Govt. It has been developed by National Council of Museums (NCSM). Science centres are now there in all north eastern states.

#### 2. Digital platform 'Jagrut Tripura' launched by CM to boost e-governance

At least 102 schemes of various departments of both the governments are available on the platform. The project was developed by EasyGov, a Jio Group company, and it will be available to all the residents of Tripura. Tripura: CM: Biplab Kumar Deb; Constituency: Banamalipur.

### Uttar Pradesh

#### 1. Kushinagar Airport gets DGCA licence for international flights

The Kushinagar Airport is granted the licence to operate international flights and has become the 3rd such airport in Uttar Pradesh after Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow and Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi. Kushinagar Airport Director: A K Dwivedi.

#### 2. UP moves to second spot on GSDP list, surpasses Tamil Nadu, Gujarat

Uttar Pradesh amid the pandemic-driven slowdown became the 2nd largest state in India locking Rs 19.48 lakh crore of Gross State Domestic Product. It surpassed states such as Gujarat, Karnataka & Tamil Nadu. UP climbed 3 ranks from number 5 to number 2. Maharashtra is ranked at the top of the list.

#### 3. Two-day Gur Mahotsav or jaggery festival underway in Lucknow

The state government aims to provide the maximum benefit of their products to the farmers. The sugar cane farmers in the state have been paid one lakh 25 thousand 600 crore rupees for their sugar cane crops. This event is to motivate the jaggery producers. CM: Yogi Adityanath Governor: Anandiben Patel

#### 4. Yogi Adityanath inaugurates Rasin Dam and Chillimal Dam in Chitrakoot (UP)

The cost of Rasin dam project in Chitrakoot increased from 17 crores to 141.64 crores. With the release of 2290 hectares of irrigated land in 17 villages, along with the launch. In the coming days, the fields will be uprooted by crops. UP's Capital: Lucknow; Governor: Anandiben Patel.

#### 5. Uttar Pradesh govt develops India's first Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO) portal

The UP FPO Shakti Portal has been developed by dept of agriculture with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and is aimed at benefiting farmers at the grassroots level. It

will bring farmers, producer groups, traders and the department of agriculture and other allied departments of the state government on one platform. It will contain all information on FPOs. UP currently has 576 FPOs of 2.15 lakh farmers. 471 FPOs have registered on the portal.

### **6. UP, Madhya Pradesh, Centre Sign Ken-Betwa River Linking Pact**

The Ken-Betwa river link project is the first major project under the National River Linking Project (NRLP).

The Ken Betwa Link Project (KBLP) involves the transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa river through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr project, Kotha Barrage, and the Bina Complex Multipurpose Project. Jal Shakti Minister: Gajendra Singh Shekhawat,

### **7. Banana festival organised in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh.**

The festival witnessed stalls from at least 35 farmers and entrepreneurs. In the fair, clothes made from banana fiber, slippers, carpets and items made for home decoration, banana papad, chips and pickles etc were found. In 2018, UP government started the ODOP (One District One Product) scheme. All the products made from banana are included in ODOP scheme of Kushinagar district. Earlier this month Kalanamak Rice Festival in Siddharthnagar district was held.

## **Uttarakhand**

### **1. "Gharoki Pechan, Chelik Naam" Scheme launched in Nainital by the CM**

Gharoki Pechan, Chelik Naam (daughter's name is a home's identity), a Rs.42 cr worth scheme is initially launched in Nainital & will cover entire state in coming weeks. It is for women empowerment & 32,000 women groups are being linked with self-employment. Uttarakhand: CM: Shri Trivendra Singh Rawat; Constituency: Doiwala

### **2. Garhwal MP Tirath Singh Rawat to be new Uttarakhand CM**

Tirath Singh Rawat, 57 has been chosen as the new chief minister of the hill state. He was the Uttarakhand BJP chief in 2013-2015. He replaced Trivendra Singh Rawat who resigned recently. Asan Conservation Reserve is Uttarakhand's first Ramsar site.

### **3. India's first forest healing centre inaugurated in Uttarakhand's Ranikhet**

The forest healing centre has been developed by the Research Wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department after research on healing properties of the forests and its revitalizing impact on overall health and well being. It is spread over an area of around 13 acres. Uttarakhand CM: Tirath Singh Rawat; Governor: Baby Rani Maurya

### **4. High-level central team led by Dr S K Singh to review medical care arrangements at Kumbh Mela in Haridwar**

A high-level central team led by Dr. S. K. Singh, Director, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) with Dr. S. K. Jain and Dr. Meera Dhuri (both from NCDC) as other team members has been deployed to review medical care and public health arrangements. NCDC was established in July 1963.

## **Andaman and Nicobar Island**

### **1. Andaman & Nicobar achieves 100% Functional Household Tap Connection coverage under Jal Jeevan Mission**

Andaman and Nicobar Islands became the third state/UT in the country to achieve the target after Goa and Telangana under Jal Jeevan Mission. The connections were provided at 266 villages located in 9 blocks in all the three districts. Andaman and Nicobar Islands Lt. Governor: Admiral D K Joshi

## **Delhi**

### **1. Delhi govt approves formation of separate board for 2,700 schools in city**

In the beginning, 21-22 state government schools will be affiliated to the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE) and in the next four-five years all the schools will be brought under it. New Board will have a governing body headed by the Education Minister. Most schools in Delhi are affiliated to the CBSE now.

## **2. Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee launches 'India's biggest' dialysis facility inside Gurudwara Bangla Sahib**

Guru Harkishan Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Kidney Dialysis Hospital will offer a dialysis facility to 101 patients simultaneously & it can cater to 500 patients daily. Capacity will soon be increased to 1,000 beds from the current 101 beds. Delhi;CM: Arvind Kejriwal: Lt governor: Anil Bajjal

## **3. President gives assent to bill giving more powers to Delhi Lieutenant Governor**

President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021. The Act provides that the term "government" referred to in any law made by the Legislative Assembly will imply Lieutenant Governor. Also gave his assent to:- National Bank for Financing Infrastructure & Development Act, 2021; Mines and Minerals Act 2021. Delhi Lieutenant Governor: Anil Bajjal

## **4. President Ram Nath Kovind clears NCT bill; Delhi Lieutenant Governor(LG) gets sweeping powers over city govt**

President Kovind gave his assent to Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The Bill amends certain powers & responsibilities of the Legislative Assembly & the LG. As per the legislation, the "government" in Delhi means "Lieutenant Governor" and the city government will now have to seek LG's opinion before taking any executive decision.

## **Jammu and Kashmir**

### **1. Jammu & Kashmir LG Manoj Sinha inaugurates 2-day long 6th Technology Exhibition cum Seed Sale Mela**

In Jammu & Kashmir LG Manoj Sinha who is also the Chancellor of Sher-i-Kashmir University of Agriculture Science and Technology Kashmir (SKUAST-Kashmir) inaugurated a 2-day long 6th Technology Exhibition cum Seed Sale Mela at the University of Srinagar. Theme of event: Shaping the Future Farming for Better Returns.

### **2. Jammu and Kashmir finish top as Khelo India Winter Games conclude in Gulmarg**

The UT stood first for the second successive time. They won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze to finish with a tally of 34 medals. More than 1000 athletes from various parts of the country participated in the mega five-day event. In ice hockey ASCB won gold. Karnataka came 2nd with 5 gold and 4 bronze medals.

### **3. J-K administration launches ANMOL app under national health mission**

Tablets were distributed among auxiliary nursing midwives (ANMs) & an application under the national health mission for identification and tracking of beneficiaries was launched. App will empower ANMs & frontline health workers in carrying out their work. Key feature of the portal is that it works on offline mode

### **4. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor launches super-75 scholarship scheme for meritorious girls**

The scheme is meant to support the education of meritorious girls from poor families, so that they can excel in streams like medicine, engineering, ITI (Industrial training institutes) and humanity and contribute to nation-building. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

### **5. J&K celebrates festival of Shivratri 'Herath'**

It is a three-day festival. This festival symbolizes the values of devotion and harmony, which are the hallmarks of the glorious tradition & cultural ethos of Jammu and Kashmir. Festival Mahashivratri is locally known as Herath in Kashmir. Watak Nath Pooja: religious offering by Kashmiri Pandit

### **6. Jammu & Kashmir's handicraft, handloom products to be promoted in Canada**

The event aimed to increase the export of handicrafts and handloom in Canada by creating more avenues of trade. The virtual meet was attended by Apoorva Srivastava, Consulate

General of India Toronto; Vijay Thomas, president, Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce.  
Canada Capital: Ottawa; Currency: Canadian dollar

### 7. JKTPO, TPCI Sign MoU For Agro & Food Processing, Film Tourism Sectors

Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) signed MoU with Trade Promotion Corporation of India (TPCI) for the Agro & Food Processing sector and Film Tourism sector. According to the MoU, both JKTPO and TPCI will work together to enhance the outreach to the International Community in India.

MoU was signed during inauguration of J&K Pavilion at Indus-Food 2021 trade show.

### 8. J&K Lieutenant Governor(LG) Manoj Sinha e-inaugurates 73 AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres

LG also launched "Arogya Siddhi", a compendium of clinical outcomes of AYUSH Interventions across the UT.

Out of 73 centres, 9 are in Udhampur, 7 in Rajouri, 6 in Reasi, 5 in Baramulla, 4 in Budgam, Bandipora, Doda and Ramban, 3 in Jammu, Srinagar, Kathua, Kupwara, Poonch, Anantnag and Pulwama, 2 in Kulgam, Ganderbal, Shopian, Samba and 1 in Kishtwar.

Out of 571 approved centres, 94 have been completed in the first phase.

### 9. Education Minister inaugurates Center for Happiness in Indian Institute of Management, Jammu

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated "Ānandam: The Center for Happiness" in Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu virtually. Anandam - the Centre for Happiness' aligns with the National Education Policy 2020, aiming to achieve holistic wellbeing for all. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor: Manoj Sinha

### 10. Jammu and Kashmir government organises drama festival in Srinagar.

In a bid to promote theatre in Kashmir, a two-week-long Annual Drama Festival was organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAAL) at Tagore Hall in Srinagar. The festival was aimed to revive the theatre activities and create awareness among the youth about the importance of Kashmir theatre.

## Ladakh

### 1. Ladakh, J&K to have separate cell in National Commission for Women (NCW)

In the absence of State Women's Commissions, this is being done. Earlier Ladakh became launching pad for 1st-ever online training programme Empowering Women through Entrepreneurship. NCW with IIM Bangalore & India SME Forum is training 5000 women across India National Commission for Women Chairperson: Rekha Sharma

### 2. Ladakh LG inaugurates first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of KREDA at Lato Village

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur has inaugurated the first Solar Lift Irrigation Scheme of Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) at Lato Village. This is the last Village on the Line Of Actual Control. The project is inspired by the Vision of PM Narendra Modi for solarising Ladakh as a model region by making it fully solarised and Carbon neutral. A 41 Hp Submersible Pump backed with 50Kw Solar Photovoltaic Plant installed in Ladakh.

## Sports

### 1. Vinesh Phogat bags Gold in Ukraine wrestling event

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine. She defeated world number 7 Vanesa Kaladzinskaya of Belarus in the finals to win the medal. She is 1st Indian nominated for Laureus World Sports Awards.

### 2. Shooting: Indian women's trap team win silver medal at ISSF Shotgun World Cup

The trio of Kirti Gupta, Manisha Keer and Rajeshwari Kumari went down 4-6 to Russia in the final of International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo, Egypt. The men's Skeet team bagged a bronze medal earlier on in the tournament ISSF: President: Vladimir Lisin; HQ: Munich, Germany

### 3. Manu Bhaker Emerging Player, Anju George wins BBC Lifetime award

Olympian Anju Bobby George was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement award while chess Grandmaster Koneru Humpy was the Sportswoman of the Year. English cricket star Ben Stokes announced the 19-year-old Manu Bhaker as the winner. British Broadcasting Corporation; HQ: London

### 4. Mithali Raj Becomes First Indian Woman Cricketer To Score 10,000 International Runs

Mithali Raj has become the 1st Indian woman and 2nd international cricketer to score 10,000 runs in international cricket across all formats. Mithali reached the milestone in the ongoing third One-day International (ODI) against South Africa in Lucknow. UK's Charlotte E is the only other lady cricketer with this feat

### 5. C. A. Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer ever to qualify for Olympics

Bhavani Devi has become the first Indian fencer in history to qualify for the Olympics. She qualified after Hungary lost to South Korea in the quarterfinals of the Fencing Sabre World Cup. Currently, she is ranked 45th in the world In 2017 She won India's 1st international gold medal in fencing.

### 6. Virat Kohli becomes first player to score 3000 runs in men's T20I

Indian captain Virat Kohli breached the 3000-run mark in Twenty20 Internationals with his last shot in the second T20I against England. Kohli's knock of 73 runs, which came off 49 balls, also helped India to level the five-match T20I series. Virat Kohli: First player to play 200 matches for a team in T20

### 7. National Anti-Doping Agency imposes sanctions on Madhavan R & Ruchika for violation of its code.

NADA the disciplinary panel imposed sanctions on weightlifter Madhavan R and boxer Ruchika for violation of its code. Madhavan tested positive for the prohibited substances Phentermine & Mephentermine. Ruchika tested positive for Furosemide. NADA, HQ: New Delhi; CEO: Navin Agarwal

### 8. Federation Cup: Murali Sreeshankar qualifies for Olympics, sets national record in long-jump

The 21-year-old Shreeshankar set a national record after making a jump of 8.26 metres in his final attempt at the Federation Cup and as a result, he attained qualification for the Olympics. He surpassed his own record of 8.20m. Tokyo Olympics will be held from 23 July to 8 August 2021.

### 9. Hashmatullah Shahidi becomes Afghanistan's first double-centurion in Test cricket

Hashmatullah Shahidi (200\*) became the first Afghanistan player to score a double-century in Test cricket. Asghar Afghan briefly held the record for the highest individual score for Afghanistan with his 164 before Shahidi overtook him. Capital: Kabul; President: Ashraf Ghani; Currency: Afghan afghani

### **10. Kapil Dev Inducted as Professional Golf Tour of India Board Member**

Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI), the sports body. Dev, who captained India to World Cup glory in 1983, said he would work for the development of golf in the country. The Professional Golf Tour of India was founded in 2006.

### **11. Two United Arab Emirates (UAE) players Mohammad Naveed, Shaiman Anwar Banned For 8 Years For Breaching ICC Anti-Corruption Code**

The ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal found them guilty, and their bans have been backdated to October 16, 2019 when they were provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt games at the ICC T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in the UAE. International Cricket Council (ICC) Chairperson: Greg Barclay.

### **12. Yashaswini Deswal wins 1st gold medal for India in Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final**

Yashaswini Deswal bagged 1st gold medal for India in Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of International Shooting Sport Federation at World Cup. Deswal accumulated 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal. International Shooting Sport Federation HQs: Munich, Germany.

### **13. Indian table tennis duo Sharath Kamal, Manika Batra qualify for mixed doubles event at Tokyo Olympics**

They became the first Indian pairing to qualify for the mega event in Tokyo, beating world no. 8 Korean duo of Sang-Su Lee and Jihee Jeon 4-2 in the final of the Asian Qualification Tournament. The pair are 2018 Asian Games bronze medallists. Delayed Tokyo Games will be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021.

### **14. Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia wins All England Badminton C'ships Men's title; Nozomi Okuhara clinches Women's title**

22 year old Lee Zii Jia won the All England Open men's title as he defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen in the summit clash. Japan's Nozomi Okuhara won the All England women's title as she defeated Pornpawee Chochuwong.

### **15. India's Singhraj wins gold in Para Shooting World Cup 2021**

Indian para-athlete Singhraj won gold medal in the 2021 Para Shooting World Cup at Al Ain in the UAE today. He defeated Uzbekistan's Server Ibragimov to get the top honour in the P1 - Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1 final. With this, India has moved to third place in the medals table. India has now two medals in its list - one gold and one bronze.

### **16. ISSF World Cup: India's Divyansh Singh Panwar & Elavenil Valarivan win gold medal**

India's Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan won the gold medal on in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event at the The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup being held in Delhi. The Indian duo won by beating the Hungarian team of Istvan Peni and Eszter Denes 16-10 to take home the top prize. Divyansh Singh Panwar had won the bronze in the 10m Air Rifle individual event earlier.

### **17. Royal London Cup 2021: Shreyas Iyer becomes 6th Indian to sign for Lancashire**

India batsman Shreyas Iyer has joined Lancashire for the 2021 Royal London Cup, the English county club. Farokh Engineer joined the county in 1968. Since Engineer retired, four further Indian Internationals - Murali Kartik, Dinesh Mongia, VVS Laxman, and Sourav Ganguly - have represented the club. Lancashire will kick off their Royal London Cup campaign at home to Sussex on July 23.

### **18. Nikhat Zareen, Gaurav Solanki win bronze at Bosphorus Boxing Tournament in Turkey.**

Asian Championship bronze medallist Zareen, who defeated world champions Paltceva Ekaterina of Russia and Nazym Kyzaibay of Kazakhstan in her last two bouts, suffered a 0-5

loss to 2019 Worlds silver medallist Busenaz Cakiroglu of Turkey in the semi-final. Commonwealth Games gold medallist Solanki lost 0-5 to Argentina's Nirco Cuello.

### 19. Chinki Yadav and Aishwary Tomar win gold at ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.

Chinki Yadav won gold and India claimed all three medals in women's 25m pistol event. Rani Sarnobat and Manu Bhaker won silver and bronze respectively. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won the gold medal in the men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event. The 20-year-old became the youngest in history to win a shooting World Cup gold in the 3 Positions event.

### 20. Khelo India scheme to be extended from 2021-22 to 2025-26: Shri Kiren Rijiju

An amount of ₹ 8750 crore has been estimated as financial implication of the new Khelo India Scheme (2021-22 to 2025-26) in the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) memorandum furnished to the Ministry of Finance. An amount of ₹ 657.71 crore has been allocated in the Budget Estimate (B.E.) for the year 2021-22 under the Khelo India Scheme. The constituency of Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju is Arunachal (West).

### 21. 'Girl Gang' Announced Official Song Of ICC Women's World Cup 2022

Girl Gang, a track by New Zealand singer Gin Wigmore, has been announced as the official song of the 2022 ICC Women's World Cup. The tournament is set to be hosted in New Zealand from March 4 to April 3, 2022. Originally scheduled to be held from February 6 to March 7, 2021, the World Cup was postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 22. Rahi Sarnobat, Chinky Yadav and Manu Bhaker clinch Gold in Women's 25m pistol team event at ISSF Shooting World Cup.


The Indian women's team of Rahi Sarnobat, Chinki Yadav and Manu Bhaker beat Poland's Joanna Iwona Wawrzonowska, Julita Borek and Agnieszka Korejwo 17-7 in the gold medal match. India's Anjum Moudgil, Shreya Saksena and Gaayathri Nithyanadam claimed the silver medal in the 50m rifle 3 positions team event.

### 23. Para shooter Sidhartha Babu claims bronze in the R6 mixed 50m rifle prone SH1, India finish para shooting WC with 7 medals

Para shooter Sidhartha Babu won a bronze as India ended their campaign with seven medals, including two gold medals, at the Al Ain 2021 Shooting World Cup. Manish Narwal and Singhraj were the gold medal winners for India. Avani Lekhara had claimed the silver medal. India finished in third place behind Ukraine and UAE.

### 24. Residential hockey centre of excellence to come up in Lucknow

A 100-bed hostel for boys and girls, modern sports medicine and physiotherapy centres as well as top coaches would be part of the centre to come up at the state government-run Padma Shri Mohd Shahid Synthetic Stadium. The union sports ministry will fund the centre and Uttar Pradesh Sports Directorate will run it in consultation with Uttar Pradesh Hockey.






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## Agreements & MoUs

### **1. IIT Bombay, MIB India join hands for a Gaming Centre at campus for courses related to VFX, Animation**

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in collaboration with IIT Bombay decided to form a Centre of Excellence in gaming and other related areas. The objective is to create India's own games and apps in line with #MakeInIndia for the world. Information and Broadcasting Minister: Prakash Javadekar.

### **2. Ministry of Corporate Affairs and CBIC sign MoU Delhi for data exchange**

Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs signed an MoU for data exchange between the two organisations. It is in line with the vision of both organisations to harness data capabilities to ensure effective enforcement. Minister of State for Corporate Affairs: Nirmala Sitharaman.

### **3. India inks deal with Philippines for sale of 'defence equipment' including BrahMos cruise missiles**

Defence Undersecretary Raymundo Elefante and India's Ambassador to the Philippines Shambu S.Kumaran signed an "implementing arrangement" for "procurement of defence material and equipment". BrahMos missile is produced by an Indo-Russian joint venture. Philippines: Currency: Philippine peso; Capital: Manila

### **4. ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel strikes \$6.9 billion (Rs.50,000 crore) deal with Odisha govt to set up steel plant**

It is to set up a 12 million ton integrated steel plant in Kendrapara district. This comes at a time when the Union government is looking to boost investment in sectors such as housing, roads, ports and railways. ArcelorMittal: Chairman: Lakshmi Mittal; CEO: Aditya Mittal

### **5. Amazon India partners with UN Women to launch storefront for women sellers**

The storefront will offer over 80,000 unique products like organic items, handmade crafts, healthy snacks etc. Over 450 women-led businesses & over 280,000 women entrepreneurs & artisans from Amazon Saheli are likely to benefit. Launched in Nov 2017, Amazon Saheli offers skill devt workshops.

### **6. CSC Partners With GoodWorker To Provide 1 Lakh Job Opportunities On CSC Gramin Naukri Portal**

The partnership was launched via the Facebook page of the Common Service Centers. It has been launched by renowned actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood. The Job opportunities will be provided on the CSC Gramin Naukri portal. Sanjay Kumar Rakesh, CEO, CSC SPV.

### **7. Cabinet approves MoU between India, Maldives on Cooperation in Sports & Youth Affairs**

This Bilateral exchange programmes in the field of sports and youth affairs between India and Maldives will help in expanding knowledge and expertise in the area of sports science, sports medicine, coaching techniques, participation in youth festivals etc. Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports: Kiren Rijju

### **8. NSIC to help agri, processed food MSMEs explore export potential; partners with trade promotion body APEDA**

MSME support and development organization NSIC would now be helping micro, small and medium enterprises working with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) across multiple areas. National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) is a Mini Ratna PSU.

### **9. FICCI-IFSCA Sign Mou For Development Of GIFT City As Fintech Hub**

FICCI-IFSCA signed an MoU to establish a framework for collaboration and co-operation for the development of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) IFSC as a world-class FinTech Hub. FICCI will also assist IFSCA in the development of FinTech Accelerator programmes in GIFT IFSC amongst other cooperation areas.



MoU was signed by Injeti Srinivas, Chairman,IFSCA & Dilip Chenoy, Secretary-General,FICCI

### **10. Labour Bureau inks agreement with Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Ltd (BECIL)for conducting all-India surveys.**

The surveys(including on migrant workers)to be undertaken by Bureau will be integrated with the technology provided by the BECIL,which will substantially reduce the time taken for completion of surveys by at least 30-40%.The agreement marks the beginning of a new era in the field of IT-enabled surveys.George Kuruvilla is CMD,BECIL (a mini Ratna Company of I&B Ministry).

### **11. India, Kuwait announce joint commission to boost ties in energy**

India and Kuwait announced the creation of a joint commission to further institutionalise their relations in areas ranging from energy to defence and to forge a framework for cooperation in the future.Joint Commission will be co-chaired by the foreign ministers of the two sides.Joint Commission Meeting will be held regularly to review all bilateral matters.Kuwait: Capital:Kuwait City; Currency:Kuwaiti dinar

### **12. India, Japan agree for greater cooperation in patent verification**

India and Japan have agreed to recognize each other's offices to act mutually as competent International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA) for any international patent application filed with them.This memorandum of cooperation on industrial property was arrived at during the 4th review meeting between DPIIT and Japan Patent Office.Function of offices acting mutually as competent ISA/IPEA will commence from 1 July 2021.

### **13. Cabinet apprised of Memorandum of Cooperation(MoC) signed between India, Japan in water sector**

MoC is aimed at achieving water security, improved irrigation facility and sustainability in water resources development.It was signed between Department of Water Resources,River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation,Ministry of Jal Shakti and Water and Disaster Management Bureau,Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan in the field of water resources.

### **14. Centre approves MoU between UPSC and Afghanistan's public service commission**

The MoU will strengthen the relationship between Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission(IARCSC), Afghanistan & UPSC.The salient features of the MoU include exchange of experience on modern approach to public service recruitment and selection, particularly the functions of the UPSC and the IARCSC.

### **15. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)enters into partnership with Denmark to support Jal Jeevan Mission in UP.**

The Jal Shakti Ministry entered a partnership with the UNOPS and the government of Denmark to help bring tap water connections to 11 water-scarce districts in Uttar Pradesh's water-starved Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions under the Jal Jeevan missionThe project has a million dollar budget for 2021, but is likely to be scaled up in the following years. UNOPS: HQ:Denmark; Executive Director:Grete Faremo.

### **16. Dubai International Airport partners with Magzter to become world's first 'smart reading airport'**

Dubai International Airport (DXB) has partnered with digital magazine newsstand provider Magzter to offer its customers a collection of more than 7,000 leading magazines, newspapers, journals and comics.It is a fully contactless and paperless digital experience through the use of geofencing satellite technology.Magzter Inc: Founder & CEO: Girish Ramdas; HQ:New York.

### **17. TRIFED signs MoU with Government of Arunachal Pradesh for The Implementation of MSP for MFP Scheme and Van Dhan Yojana**

The Rural Development Department in the State of Arunachal Pradesh will be the nodal agency for the implementation of this scheme while Arunachal Pradesh State Rural Livelihood

Mission (ArSRLM) will be the State Implementation Agency. Under this agreement, 100 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras are planned to be set-up in the state this year. TRIFED has so far sanctioned 1770 Van Dhan Kendras in 21 States and 1 UT.

### **18. Semiconductor major NXP India partners with MeitY, FabCI, IIT Hyderabad for semiconductor incubation programmes for startups**

In the 'Semiconductor Startup Incubation and Acceleration Programme' up to five startups will be incubated for a period of two years in each cohort every year. The participants will include Semiconductor Chip Design, IP Design, Design Services startups with an IP focus and Chip Design Tool related startups. Indian semiconductor market stands at around \$300 million. India imports all semiconductor fab units from China right now.

### **19. JICA signs loan agreement with TCCL for climate change project**

International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a loan agreement for a maximum amount of 10 billion yen with the Tata Cleantech Capital Limited to support the company to offer loans to businesses across India that focus on renewable energy generation, e-mobility solutions, energy efficiency etc & reduce the emission of greenhouse gas following the Green Loan Principles. India has committed to cut GHG emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35 per cent by 2030.

### **20. CESL inks pact with CSC SPV to create demand aggregation for Electric vehicles, other initiatives**

Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL) signed a pact with CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd (CSC SPV) to create demand aggregation for electric mobility, solar, energy-efficiency solutions, and other initiatives of CESL. Under the agreement, CESL & CSC will carry out feasibility studies for projects in renewables, energy efficiency, e-mobility and battery energy storages.

### **21. ISRO partners with the IIST, akin to the JPL-Caltech model in the US, for very advanced, totally new and futuristic projects**

ISRO is striking a partnership with the IIST, akin to the JPL-Caltech model in the US. To coordinate joint research activities between ISRO centres and IIST, a dedicated framework has now been put into place, with Capacity Building Programme Office (CBPO) located at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru as a focal point. IIST is based out of Thiruvananthapuram.

### **22. India, Bangladesh ink 5 MoUs to further enhance bilateral ties; India gifted 109 ambulances and 1.2 million doses of Covishield.**

5 MoUs include that on Disaster Management, Resilience and Mitigation, between Bangladesh National Cadet Corps & NCC of India, establishment of a framework of Cooperation in Trade Remedial Measures, tripartite MoU on Establishment of Sports facilities at Rajshahi College & tripartite MoU on resources for Bangladesh-Bharat Digital Service & Employment and Training Center. Passenger train 'Mitali Express' connecting Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri was inaugurated.

### **23. India, Japan sign 4 pacts to support healthcare projects under Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GGP) scheme in India.**

The total amount to be disbursed for the four projects is around 29.30 million Yen (\$ 265,000). Since 1989, GGP has been supporting relatively small-scale projects implemented by non-profit organizations through Japanese diplomatic missions in developing countries. India is one of the largest recipients of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA).

### **24. Tide, RBL Bank partner to serve banking needs of Indian SMEs**

Tide is a leading UK-based fintech which is set to launch in India as its first overseas market. As per the alliance, Tide members, small and medium-sized enterprises, will get the option to open current and savings accounts at RBL Bank through Tide's platform. Tide will also focus on serving unregistered and unorganised sector, helping bring these SMEs into the mainstream. Tide CEO: Dr. Oliver Prill; RBL Bank MD and CEO: Vishwvir Ahuja.

### 25. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank partners with nStore to take local kirana stores online with 'nLincs' app.

Bangalore based Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has joined hands with nStore to digitise offline retailers and small businesses in the country. Under this partnership, the lender will offer a mobile application 'nLincs' to its current account holders who own local businesses. With this new application, the merchants can sell their merchandise online. CEO: nStore: Pradeep Kumar Sampath; Ujjivan SFB: Nitin Chugh

### 26. Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and Yamuna International Airport Private Limited sign LoA for civil aviation security

The Letter of Agreement defines provisions for civil aviation security responsibilities and functions at the upcoming international airport at Jewar, Noida. The contract of construction of the airport has been awarded to YIAPL, which is a joint venture of the Airport Authority of India (AAI), the Government of Uttar Pradesh, and Zurich international airport.

### 27. Equitas Small Finance Bank renews partnership with Chennai Super Kings for IPL 2021.

Equitas Small Finance Bank will be the official retail banking partner for the franchisee. Under the agreement, the bank's logo will be positioned at the back of the helmet and cap of the players. It is also going to launch a new campaign titled "The Bank Behind Every Champion". Equitas SFB was previously associated with the 3-time IPL champions from 2018 to 2020. Equitas SFB: HQ: Chennai; MD & CEO: P N Vasudevan.

### 28. TRIFED exchanges MoU with Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Administration for MSP for MFP scheme and Van Dhan Yojana.

Under this MoU, the Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP will be implemented. To begin with there are plans to set up 1 Van Dhan Vikas Kendra in the UT. MSP for MFP is a flagship scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs that aims to provide remunerative and fair prices to forest produces. Van Dhan Kendras are established through Van Dhan Yojana programme for marketing MFPs.



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## Schemes

### 1. On Janaushadhi Divas, PM Narendra Modi inaugurates 7,500th Janaushadhi Kendra to provide medicines at low cost

Centre is located at the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS) in Sikkim & the inauguration was held with the help of video conferencing. This scheme is to purchase medicines for people with limited means 'जनऔषधि दिवस' (Janaushadhi Diwas) : 7 मार्च.

### 2. Google plans to support 1 million rural business women under Women Will programme

Google announced to celebrate International Women's Day being committing to support 1 million rural women entrepreneurs all across India as part of their Women Will program. It will award a grant of \$500,000 to the Nasscom Foundation. Google founders:- Larry Page, Sergey Brin CEO: Sundar Pichai

### 3. Cabinet approves creation of PMSSN as a single non-lapsable reserve fund for health

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a single non-lapsable reserve fund for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education cess levied. Cess levied under Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.

### 4. Tata Motors launches 'Wheels of Love', a holistic programme to support parenthood

It supports new parents in their exciting journey both as a parent and also as a valued employee while promoting a progressive culture of care, inclusion, and sensitization within the organization across levels. Also presented curated book, 'Wheels of Love' Tata motors HQ: Mumbai; CEO: Guenter Butschek

### 5. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021

Road Transport Ministry has announced a new scheme, under which any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an "All India Tourist Authorization/Permit" through online mode. The new rules will be applicable from 1 April 2021. MoRTH: Mansukh L. Mandaviya (MoS), Nitin Gadkari (Minister)

### 6. Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) Launches the GRAM UJALA Programme

CESL, wholly-owned subsidiary of EESL, has unveiled GRAM UJALA programme. CESL will distribute high-quality LED bulbs, at an affordable cost of ₹10 per bulb in rural areas. It'll be financed entirely through carbon credits & will be the 1st such programme. Under it, 7W & 12W LED bulbs with 3 yrs warranty will be given.

### 7. Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launches 'Tribal TB Initiative' in pursuit of TB Mukht Bharat

The government accords top priority to ensuring Universal Access to free treatment and care for TB across the country. The government has already increased the Budget allocation for TB in India four-fold in the last five years. Union Territories of Lakshadweep and the district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir declared TB Free on World TB Day (March 24). Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious infection that usually attacks the lungs.

## Appointments & Resignations

### 1. Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar takes charge as Western Naval Command Chief

Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar took charge as the Flag Officer Commanding-In-Chief of Western Naval Command, one of the 3 command-level formations of Indian Navy. He took the charge from C. Ajit Kumar in a ceremony at the Command Post of Headquarters, Mumbai. Western Naval Command is headquartered in Mumbai.

### 2. Economic Affairs Secy Tarun Bajaj gets additional charge of Dept of Revenue

Dept of economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj is given the additional charge of revenue secretary. Present revenue secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey retired on February 28. Prior to this, AB Pandey also headed the Unique Identification Authority of India. Department of Economic Affairs works under Ministry of Finance.

### 3. Matam Venkata Rao Assumes Charge As MD & CEO Of Central Bank Of India

His appointment is for a period of 3 years with effect from the date of assumption of office on or after March 1, 2021, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He is a Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers. Central Bank Of India, Headquarters: Mumbai

### 4. Kuldiep Singh takes additional charge as CRPF DG

The Ministry of Home Affairs has given an additional charge of DG Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to Kuldiep Singh who is a 1986 batch officer from the West Bengal cadre. V. G. Kanetkar was the first Director-General of the CRPF.

### 5. Manpreet Vohra Appointed India's High Commissioner To Australia

Senior diplomat Manpreet Vohra has been appointed as India's next High Commissioner to Australia. Mr Vohra, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, is presently Ambassador of India to Mexico. Australia, Prime minister: Scott Morrison

### 6. Mary Kom appointed as Chairperson of International Boxing Association (AIBA)'s champions & veterans committee

Six time world champion pugilist Mary Kom will head the Committee which consists of most respected worldwide boxing veterans & champions who have achieved significant results & who are ready to share their experience. Kom won Olympic bronze medal in 2012.

AIBA: President: Umar Kremlev; HQ: Lausanne, Switzerland.

### 7. Kotak Mahindra Bank appoints agricultural economist Ashok Gulati as additional independent director

The term of Gulati, a keen backer of the recent farm laws who has also been appointed by the Supreme Court to a four-member panel, is for five years starting from 6th March 2021. He is currently the Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture at ICRIER. KMB's non-executive chairman is Prakash Apte.

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

Pramod Chandra Mody is a 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, was appointed as the CBDT chief in February 2019. Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the extension with effect from March 1, 2021, to May 31, 2021.

### 9. Indian-American Naureen Hassan appointed first VP, COO of New York Federal Bank

Naureen Hassan's innings as the first VP and COO of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York will begin from March 15. Hassan will be the New York Fed's second ranking officer and an alternative voting member of the Federal Open Market Committee. New York Fed President and CEO is John Williams.

### 10. Glenmark Pharma signs Rohit Sharma as brand ambassador for Candid Powder

Glenmark's Candid Powder brand is a market leader in its category, with a market share of 64% in the medicated powder category. Glenmark's Candid Dusting Powder is used to treat 4 key skin problems of redness, irritation, sweat rash and fungal infections. Glenmark Pharma: CMD: Glenn Mario Saldanha; HQ: Mumbai.

### **11. CAG India appointed chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors for 2021**

Currently, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is also the external auditor of the World Health Organization, Geneva (2020 - 2023) and Food & Agriculture Organization, Rome (2020 - 2025) and Inter Parliamentary Union (2020-2022). Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu.

### **12. GP Samanta Named Chief Statistician Of India**

The government has appointed G P Samanta as the new Chief Statistician of India for a period of two years. Samanta was till now an adviser in the RBI's Department Of Statistics and Information Management. Samanta is India's fourth CSI. He is a recipient of Prof P. C. Mahalanobis award (2010).

### **13. Former Central Bank of India CEO Pallav Mohapatra appointed MD & CEO of Asset Reconstruction Co India Ltd**

Mohapatra, a former State Bank of India executive retired as Central Bank CEO at the end of February. The government has waived his mandatory one-year cooling-off period. Its shareholders include Avenue Capital, SBI, IDBI, ICICI, PNB & also GIC Singapore. Arcil is India's oldest asset reconstruction company (2002).

### **14. World Bank economist Deepak Mishra appointed as director of Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations**

Deepak Mishra, Practice Manager in the World Bank's Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment Global Practice, has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). He was World Bank's Country Economist for India from 2001-04

### **15. Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd. reappoints Sundeep Sikka as Executive Director & CEO**

Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd announced the re-appointed Sundeep Sikka as executive director and CEO for another five years. The appointment, with effect from April 22, 2021, is subject to the approval of the shareholders of the company. Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd was incorporated in 1995.

### **16. MA Ganapathy appointed National Security Guard chief, Kuldiep Singh to head CRPF**

MA Ganapathy has been appointed the Director General, NSG, from the date of joining the post and up to February 29, 2024. Kuldiep Singh has been appointed Director-General, CRPF up to September 30, 2022. Chief of the Army Staff: Manoj Mukund Naravane

### **17. Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of Stop TB Partnership Board**

Geneva-based Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB. The Union Health Minister will hence serve a three-year term, commencing July 2021, as the Chair of the Board. 'Stop TB Partnership': Established in the year 2000.

### **18. PM's principal adviser, PK Sinha, steps down**

The Prime Minister's principal adviser, PK Sinha, stepped down from his position. In the first tenure of the Narendra Modi government, he served as the cabinet secretary, taking over from Ajit Seth. He was appointed Principal Advisor to the PM in September 2019.

### **19. Samia Suluhu sworn in as first female President of Tanzania**

Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan has been sworn as the sixth President of the United Republic of Tanzania following the death of President John Magufuli. She will serve the remaining period of the five-year term that began on November 5, 2020. In 1961, Tanzania gained independence from Britain.

### **20. Arindam Bagchi takes charge as MEA spokesperson, succeeds Anurag Srivastava**

Arindam Bagchi, an officer of the 1995 batch of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), has assumed charge as the new spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). He is replacing

Anurag Srivastava, an officer of the 1999 batch of IFS. MEA officeholder: Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

### 21. NeoGrowth appoints Ajinkya Rahane as brand ambassador

NeoGrowth Credit Pvt. Ltd, a lender to small businesses appointed cricketer Ajinkya Rahane as its brand ambassador. The agreement is for a year which can be extended further. Rahane will feature in a campaign "Keeping it simple" to be released. NeoGrowth: CEO: Arun Kumar Nayyar; HQ: Mumbai.

### 23. Saurabh Garg appointed UIDAI CEO, Sanjeev Kumar to be AAI chief

Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). Sanjeev Kumar has been appointed as the Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI). Atish Chandra will be Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India.

### 24. SAIL chief Soma Mondal is new chairperson of SCOPE

Soma Mondal, chairperson of state-owned Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), was elected the new chairperson of Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE). SCOPE is an apex professional organization representing the Central Public Sector Enterprises. Mondal will have a two-year term starting April.



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## Awards

### 1. PM Modi to receive CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award

He will also deliver keynote address at Cambridge Energy Research Associates Week (CERAWeek) 2021. It has been organized in Houston in March every year since 1983. CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award was instituted in 2016. CERAWeek was founded in 1983 by Dr. Daniel Yergin.

### 2. Golden Globes 2021 Winners

Nomadland won best director, best drama film; best Musical or comedy by Borat Subsequent Moviefilm; Best actor & actress (Drama)-Chadwick Boseman & Viola Davis; Soul won best score & best animated motion picture and Minari won best foreign language film etc. The Crown won 4 of its 6 nominations including Best TV series.

### 3. Hurun Global Rich List 2021: Mukesh Ambani 8th richest in world, Elon Musk at top

Ambani recently overtook China's Zhong Shanshan to become the richest person in Asia. He has net worth of \$83 billion. Gautam Adani and family ranked 48, Shiv Nadar and family ranked 58, Lakshmi N Mittal at 104 & Cyrus Poonawalla of Serum Institute at 113. India now has 209 billionaires, of which 177 live in India

### 4. Three chosen for honorary award of Konkani Sahitya Academy

Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy has chosen Aruna Subrao Ubhayakar of Kumta (literature), Puttur Panduranga Nayak (arts), & Lakshmi Krishna Siddi of Yellapura (folklore) for its honorary award, carrying a purse of ₹50,000, a memento, a citation & a shawl Awards would be presented at Kumta in Uttara Kannada

### 5. 'Digambara Kavi' Nihileswar wins Sahitya Akademi Award

Renowned writer Nihileswar, & one among the six 'Digambara Kavulu' has been chosen for the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award-2020 for his anthology of poems Agniswaasa penned in 2017. For almost six decades, Nihileswar also contributed to English and Hindi He was the founder-secretary of Viplava Rachayithala Sangham

### 6. Gowsalya Shankar presented with International Woman of Courage 2021 Award

U.S. Consulate honoured Tamil Nadu-based anti-caste activist Gowsalya Shankar with the International Woman of Courage Award, which honours women who have demonstrated exceptional courage, strength, & leadership in acting to improve other people's lives. She launched the Shankar Social Justice Trust in March 2017

### 7. Amitabh Bachchan honoured with FIAF award; was presented by Martin Scorsese and Christopher Nolan virtually.

Bachchan has been awarded with International Federation of Film Archives award. He is the first Indian to be honoured with the award for his contribution in preserving India's film heritage. His name was nominated by FIAF affiliate Film Heritage Foundation. FIAF is worldwide organization of film archives & museums.

### 8. 67th National Film Awards announced for the year 2019; Malayalam war epic Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea won Best Feature Film.

Best acting honours went to Manoj Bajapayee for Bhonsle, Dhanush for Tamil film Asuran & Kangana Ranaut for two of her films: Panga and Manikarnika. Vijay Sethupathi (Super Deluxe) & Pallavi Joshi (The Tashkent Files) won the supporting actor awards, while director Sanjay Puri was awarded for Bahattar Hoorain. Sikkim won the most film friendly state. Special Jury Award: Oththa Seruppu Size 7 (Tamil) and Best Hindi Film: Chhichhore.

### 9. Gandhi Peace Prize for the Year 2019 and 2020.

For the year 2019, award is being conferred on (Late) His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman & for 2020, it is being conferred on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by Govt of India since 1995, the 125th Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award carries an



amount of Rs.1 crore,citation etc. Jury for the prize is chaired by PM,Chief Justice of India & Leader of opposition in LS.

#### **10. Hindi Writer Prof. Sharad Pagare to be conferred with Vyas Samman - 2020**

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

#### **11. Lakshadweep,district Budgam in J-K declared TB free;Himachal first in country in TB elimination campaign**

J&K's Budgam is the only district in India that has achieved 80% reduction in cases of Tuberculosis.In Category 2 –over 60% reduction in cases,Diu district and union territories of Daman and Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli were awarded.Himachal Pradesh ranked No.1 among all states having a population of more than 50 lakh in National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme.India has set 2025 as the target for eliminating TB across states.

#### **12. Rathbones Folio prize 2021: Carmen Maria Machado wins for her radical memoir about same-sex abuse.**

'In The Dream House: A Memoir' by Carmen Maria Machado Wins The Rathbones Folio Prize 2021.The prize is open to all genres – fiction, non-fiction, and poetry- from writers from around the world.It is the only prize in which all the books considered for the prize are selected and judged by an academy of peers,though there are three main judges. The prize is backed by London-based publisher The Folio Society & Rathbone Investment.

#### **13. Mahinder Giri, range officer won the International Ranger Award**

Mahinder Giri, range officer of Rajaji Tiger Reserve for being the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award for his contribution towards conservation. The award has been announced by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the World Commission on Protected Areas WCPA. This award created in 2020. IUCN HQ: Gland, Switzerland; Founded: 5 October 1948

#### **14. Maggie O'Farrell's 'Hamnet' wins US book critics award for fiction**

Maggie O'Farrell's Hamnet, an imagined take on the death of Shakespeare's son from the bubonic plague, has won the US National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction. The autobiography award went to Cathy Park Hong for Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning. The book critics circle was founded in 1974 and has hundreds of members around US.

#### **15. 66th Filmfare Awards for 2021;Thappad won seven trophies and Gulabo Sitabo won six.**

Winners:Best Film:Thappad; Best Director:Om Raut (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior);Best Actor in a Leading Role(Male): Irrfan Khan (Angrezi Medium);Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female):Taapsee Pannu (Thappad);Best Actor (Critics):Amitabh Bachchan (Gulabo Sitabo) and Tillotama Shome (Sir);Best Director(Critics):Prateek Vats(Eeb Allay Ooo!) etc. Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Irrfan Khan as well.

## Ranks & Reports

### 1. Ease of Living Index 2020: Bengaluru, Shimla adjudged best cities

Among Indian cities with a population of over a million, the ease of living is the highest in Bengaluru, Pune and Ahmedabad while it is the lowest in Bareilly, Dhanbad and Srinagar, according to the Ease of Living Index 2020 prepared by the MoHUA. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs(MoHUA), Founded: 1952.

### 2. Pandemic will leave 375 million children with health impacts: State of India's Environment 2021 report

India is likely to see a pandemic generation with 375 million children under the age of 14 years suffering from long-lasting impacts ranging from being underweight, stunting and increased child mortality to losses in education and work productivity. India has ranked 86th in Covid 19 performance index.

### 3. QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021: 12 Indian institutions secure position in top 100

12 Indian institutions have made it to the top 100 of the world: IIT Bombay(41st), IIT Delhi, IIT Madras,IIT Kharagpur(44th),IISC Bangalore,IIT Guwahati,IIM Bangalore,IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi(50th) & O.P Jindal University.IIT Madras ranked 30th in the world for Petroleum Engineering.

### 4. Municipal Performance Index 2020: Indore tops in municipalities having over a million population followed by Surat and Bhopal.

MPI report ranking 114 civic bodies classified municipalities based on their population- Million+ and Less than Million.In the Less than Million category, New Delhi Municipal Council has emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar. It was released by the Union housing and urban affairs minister.

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

India had been rated as "free" in this Freedom House's reports for 2018,2019 and 2020, though its scores on a scale of 100 had declined during this period from 77 to 71.In the latest report, India had a score of 67 out of 100. Freedom House is US govt funded NGO studying political freedom.

### 6. WHO's first World Report on Hearing:1 in 4 people (nearly 2.5 billion people) projected to have hearing problems by 2050

At least 700 million of these people will require access to ear and hearing care and other rehabilitation services unless action is taken.Over 1 billion young adults are at risk of permanent, avoidable hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices.In children, almost 60% of hearing loss is preventable.

### 7. Estimated 931 mn tonnes of food wasted globally in 2019; India's share 68 mn:Food Waste Index Report 2021

61% per cent of the waste came from households,26% from food service and 13% from retail.17% of total global food production may be wasted. In India,household food waste estimate in per capita per year is 50 kg,US is 59 kg and China is 64 kg.Report is by UNEP and partner organisation WRAP.

### 8. COVID-19 induced closure of 1.5 million schools affected 25 crore Indian children: UNICEF study

Report stated that online education is not an option for all as only 1 in 4 children has access to digital devices & internet connectivity. Pre-COVID,only a quarter of households(24%) in India had access to internet & there is large rural-urban divide. Over 6 mn children were already out of school even before COVID.

### **9. MP leads in land record digitisation for 2nd year in a row, Bihar shows most improvement: NCAER's Land Records and Services Index**

NLRSI 2020-21 says that 29 out of 32 states and UTs showed a gradual improvement in their efforts to digitise land records compared to the previous year. West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu followed to round up the top five. NCAER is a Delhi-based think-tank.

### **10. Gender inequality has cost world USD 70 trillion since 1990, report finds.**

Report notes that full gender equality globally can increase the world GDP by up to \$28 trillion by 2025 & loss of human capital wealth due to gender inequality alone is estimated at \$160.2 trillion. It will take 257 years to close the gap at current rate. The report is by economists at BofA Securities.

### **11. At least 1 in 7 children lived under stay-at-home policies during COVID-19 pandemic, putting mental health at risk, warns UNICEF**

Based on new research, UNICEF said, more than 330 million youngsters have been stuck at home for at least nine months, since the virus spread uncontrollably this time last year, leaving them feeling isolated and anxious about their future. UNICEF: Head: Henrietta H. Fore; HQ: New York.

### **12. World Wasted 931 Million Tonnes Of Food When 690 Million People Slept Empty Stomach In 2019: UN Report**

Indian households waste nearly 50 kg of food per person per year on average. Homes, retail outlets, and restaurants around the world wasted an estimated 931 million tonnes of food or 17 percent available for consumption in 2019. Headquarters: New York; Founded: 24 October 1945

### **13. Economic freedom index 2021: Singapore ranks First, India 26th in Asia-Pacific**

Singapore topped the global ranking for the second year in a row in the latest Economic Freedom Index published last week by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation. As for the major economies, the United Kingdom is 7th & United States is 20th. Edwin J. Feulner, founder of The Heritage Foundation.

### **14. According to PwC Global CEO survey, India among world's top 5th investment destinations**

The US has extended its lead over China as the top growth market that CEOs are looking to invest. Germany remains in the third spot. The UK has overtaken India to occupy the 4th spot after Brexit while India has managed to remain in the top 5 ahead of Japan. Survey stated that pandemics & health crisis are a top threat.

### **15. IQAir AirVisual 2020 World Air Quality report | 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities globally located in India**

The major sources of India's air pollution include transportation, biomass burning for cooking, electricity generation, industry, construction, waste burning, and episodic agricultural burning. Rank 1 | Hotan, China, Rank 2 | Ghaziabad, India. IQAir is a St. Gallen (Switzerland)-based company.

### **16. Global Home Price Index: India Slips To 56th Rank, Records 3.6% Drop In Home Prices**

According to a report 'Global House Price Index Q4 2020'. India slipped 13 spots lower, touching the 56th rank, in the global home price index in the fourth and last quarter of the financial year, against its 43rd rank in the same quarter previous fiscal. Turkey leads the global ranking with prices up by 30.3%.

### **17. China blows past global wind power records, doubling annual installations in 2020**

According to the data released by GWEC, In 2020, China broke the world record for most wind power capacity installed in a single year with 52 GW of new capacity – double the country's

annual installations compared to the previous year. India ranked 2nd in new wind power capacity in Asia Pacific.

### **18. NPAs expected to increase in first half of 2021: FICCI-IBA survey carried out between July and December 2020.**

About 78% of participating state-run banks have cited a reduction in NPA levels during the second half of 2020. In terms of outlook, 68% of respondent bankers expect the NPA levels to be above 10% in the first half of 2021. Survey was conducted on 20 banks (public, private & foreign banks)

### **19. Covid-19 pandemic pushes back India's \$5-trillion GDP goal by 3 years to FY32: Bank of America (BofA) Securities report**

Currently, India is fifth-largest economy in the world behind Germany. The government has set a target of becoming a USD 5-trillion economy by 2030. The pandemic-induced shocks to the economy which have already shaved off 15.7% of GDP from the previous year, will delay the ambitious target of becoming the third-largest economy by three years to 2031-32 now, says BofA report. In 2017, BofA predicted that India would emerge as the third-largest economy in 2027-28.

### **20. India has world's fourth strongest armed forces: Military Direct's study**

China has the strongest military in the world, scoring 82 out of 100 points in the index, according to a study released by defence website Military Direct. USA, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in 2nd place with 74 points, followed by Russia with 69, India at 61 and then France with 58. The UK just about makes the Top 10, coming in 9th place with a score of 43. The world's biggest military spender with a budget of USD 732 billion per year is the USA

### **21. India ranks 40th on International Intellectual Property Index**

India ranked 40th in 2020, scoring 38.4 out of 100 on a set of 50 intellectual property-related indicators. The Index evaluates Intellectual Property rights in 53 global economies from patent and copyright policies to commercialisation of IP assets and ratification of international treaties. Index is released annually by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre.

### **22. Mangal Prabhat Lodha named India's richest real estate developer: GROHE Hurun India Real Estate Rich List 2020**

With a wealth of Rs 44,270 crore, Mangal Prabhat Lodha of Macrotech Developers (Lodha Group) topped the list of richest real estate tycoons for the fourth year in a row. His wealth increased by 39% in 2020. The total wealth of the 100 richest builders in India jumped a full 26% year-on-year to Rs 3,48,660 crore, according to the list.

### **23. Healthcare sector expected to reach USD 372 billion in 2022: Niti Aayog report**

The report, titled 'Investment Opportunities in India's Healthcare Sector', also said India's healthcare sector has the potential to generate 27 lakh jobs in India between 2017 and 2022 - over 5 lakh new jobs per year. The report outlined a range of investment opportunities in the country's healthcare sector across hospitals, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. FDI inflows in healthcare sector increased from \$94 mn in 2011 to \$1275 million in 2016.

## Important Days

### 1. Zero Discrimination Day: March 1

Zero discrimination Day is commemorated on March 1 every year by the UN & other international institutions. It aims at highlighting the need to take action to end inequalities. The Day was launched in December 2013. The symbol for this day is a butterfly. Zero Discrimination Day was first observed on March 1, 2014.

### 2. World Civil Defence Day: March 1

World Civil Defence Day is celebrated on March 1st every year to raise awareness about the importance of civil protection and to pay tribute to the efforts, sacrifices and accomplishments of all the services responsible to fight against disasters. Theme for 2021: Civil Defence and a faster aider in every home.

### 3. World Wildlife Day- 3 March 2021

On 20 December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March – the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973 -as UN World Wildlife Day. Theme- "Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet"

### 4. 'International Women's Day': observed on March 8 with theme, Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world

It highlights the stories and extraordinary achievements of women that have on many occasions been erased. In 1975, the UN finally acknowledged 'International Women's Day' on global. This year the theme for the campaign is 'Choose to Challenge'. SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

### 5. World Consumer Rights Day 2021: March 15

With the aim to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs, World Consumer Rights Day is observed every year on March 15, since 1983. The theme of the World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is 'Tackle plastic pollution'. Grahak Panchayat was established in Pune in 1974.

### 6. National Vaccination Day 2021: March 16

Also called National Immunization Day, It was first observed in the year 1995, the year on which India started Pulse Polio Programme. The program worked effectively as India was declared Polio free by the World Health Organization in 2014. The Universal Immunization Programme was introduced in 1978.

### 7. International Day of Happiness: 20 March

The International Day of Happiness is observed every year around the world on March 20. The day recognizes happiness as the most important need in any human's life & links it to the overall well-being of humans. Theme 2021: "Happiness For All, Forever". World Happiness Report 2021, India ranked 139 out of 149 nations

### 8. World Sparrow Day | March 20

Every year March 20 is observed as World Sparrow Day to raise awareness about the bird. The need for marking this day was felt due to the tremendous decrease in its population. The house sparrow is on the verge of extinction. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010.

### 9. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: 21 March

Int. Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21st March that aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality, anti-discrimination, and calls on everyone to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes. Theme 2021: "Youth standing up against racism".

### 10. World Poetry Day: 21 March

Held every year on 21 March, World Poetry Day was 1st adopted by UNESCO in 1999. One of the main objectives is to support linguistic diversity through poetic expression and to offer

endangered languages the opportunity to be heard within their communities. UNESCO HQs: Paris, France; Founded: 16 November 1945.

### **11. International Day of Forests: 21st March**

The UN General Assembly proclaimed March 21 as the International Day of Forests in 2012 to commemorate and raise awareness about the conservation of forests for a sustainable future as they hold significant importance in human life. 2021 theme: Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being

### **12. World Down Syndrome Day: 21 March**

World Down Syndrome Day is a global awareness day that has been officially observed by the United Nations on 21st March since 2012. Down syndrome is a condition in which a child is born with an extra copy of their 21st chromosome. Down Syndrome is also known as trisomy 21.

### **13. International Day of Nowruz: 21 March**

The United Nations marks 21st March of every year as the International Day of Nowruz. The festival was added to the 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' in 2009 and the occasion has been celebrated since 2010. Nowruz marks 1st day of spring which usually occurs on 21 March.

### **14. World Water Day 2021 | 22 March**

The World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the global water crisis, and a core focus of the observance is to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030. The theme of World Water Day 2021 is valuing water.

### **15. World Meteorological Day | March 23**

World Meteorological Day is celebrated on March 23 every year to commemorate the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization(WMO)on this day in 1950.This World Meteorological Day theme - The ocean, our climate and weather – celebrates WMO's focus in connecting the ocean, climate and weather within the Earth System. Theme is in conjunction with UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

### **16. Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day | March 23**

On this Shaheed Diwas,Indians in particular pay tribute to Bhagat Singh,Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru. These freedom fighters had lost their lives on March 23 in 1931 during the struggle for India's independence.They were hanged for assassinating British officer John Saunders in 1928.There are six days declared as Martyrs' Day in India.

### **17. World Tuberculosis Day | March 24**

Each year, World Tuberculosis (TB) Day on March 24 is commemorated to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB, and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB. The theme of World TB Day 2021 - 'The Clock is Ticking'

### **18. International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims | 24 March**

The day honours the memory of victims of heinous and systematic abuses. This annual observance pays tribute to the memory of Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero, who was murdered on 24 March 1980. Monsignor Romero was actively engaged in denouncing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador.

### **19. International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members | March 25**

This is a day to mobilize action, demand justice and strengthen resolve to protect UN staff and peacekeepers as well as their colleagues in the non-governmental community and the press. The day is marked each year on the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett, a former

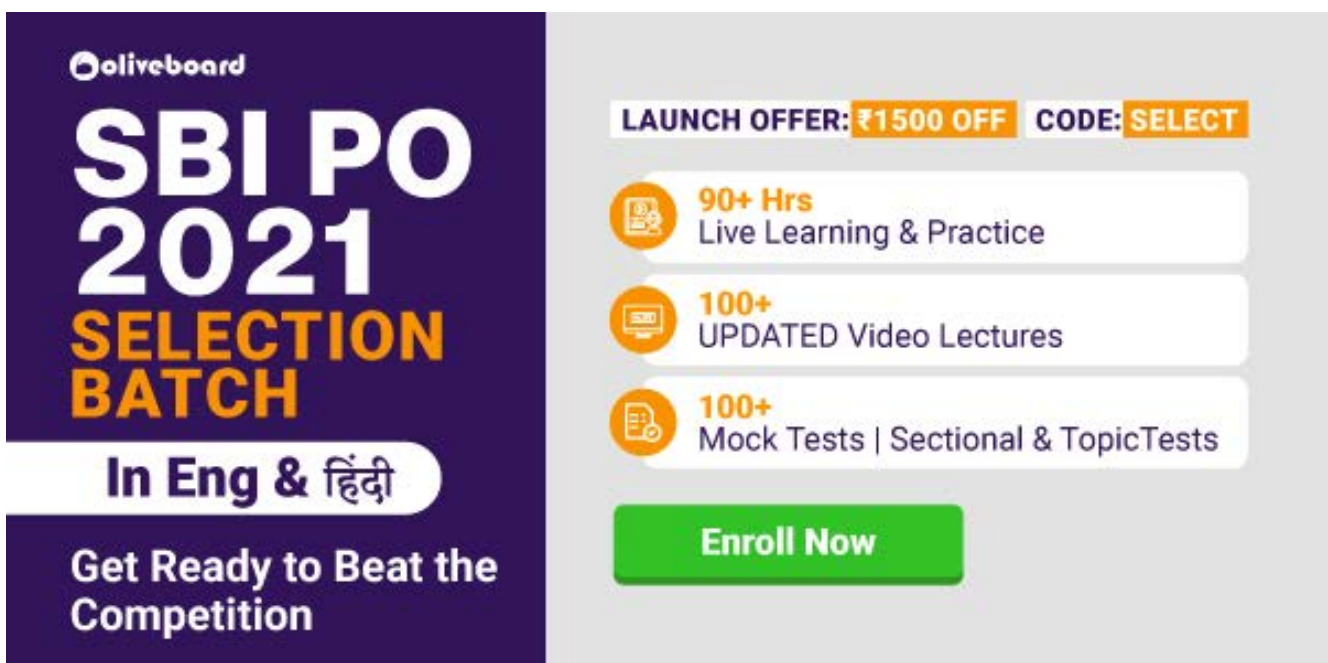
journalist working for UNRWA, in 1985. His body was finally found in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley in 2009.

## 20. International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade | March 25

Every year on 25 March, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system. The International Day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today. 2021 Theme: "Ending Slavery's Legacy of Racism: A Global Imperative for Justice"

## 21. International Transgender Day of Visibility | March 31

Founded by US-based transgender activist Rachel Crandall, International Transgender Day of Visibility is marked on March 31 every year, with the aim to celebrate transgender individuals' contributions to society. The day also calls upon us to counter the homophobic, biphobic and transphobic social attitudes that inflict incredible harm on the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals.



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## Summit & Conferences

### **1. Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank addressed the 16th edition of FICCI Higher Education Summit 2021**

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank addressed the inaugural session of the 16th Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry Higher Education Summit 2021. He also released the FICCI EY report titled 'Higher Education in India: 2040'. Organisers: FICCI, Min of Education & Min of Commerce & Industry

### **2. 11th Edition of the GAPIO - Global Indian Physicians Congress Held**

Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin, a non-profit organization, & leading association for the Indian medical diaspora organised its annual Global Indian Physicians Congress in February. Minister of Health Dr Harsh Vardhan was the chief guest. Founder of GAPIO: Dr. Prathap C Reddy.

### **3. PM Modi inaugurated Maritime India Summit 2021, investments worth Rs 3 lakh crore expected**

PM inaugurated the 2nd edition of the Maritime India summit. Investment announcements worth Rs 3 lakh crore are expected. The ministry of ports is the main coordinating ministry. 1.7 Lakh participants from more than 100 nations to take part in the summit. PM also launched an e-book of maritime 'vision 2030'.

### **4. Union Minister Piyush Goyal presides 3rd Governing Council Meeting of Bureau of Indian Standards**

Consumer Affairs Min reviewed the process of making Indian Standards & their implementation with BIS officials, senior officials from different Ministries or Regulators. According to the meeting, there is a need to change approach towards standardization. BIS is headquartered in New Delhi.

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

Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the 2nd edition of Global Bio-India-2021. The 3-day event will showcase the strength and opportunities of India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community. Theme: 'Transforming Lives'. Tagline of the event: 'Biosciences to Bio-economy'.

### **6. India commemorated Chabahar Day on March 4 on the sidelines of the 2nd Maritime India Summit-2021.**

The event was held virtually. Ministers from Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan participated in the event. Chabahar port was termed as the 'connecting point' for the region to deliver humanitarian assistance. The meeting was chaired by Mansukh Mandaviya, Ports Minister.

### **7. 3 day Combined Commanders' Conference(CCC) at Kevadia, Gujarat.**

It is a premier brainstorming event of the Military Commanders from the three Services. Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh held deliberations on Day 2. In a first, valedictory session on the third and final day to be chaired by the PM Narendra Modi. Last CCC was held in 2018 at the Air Force Station, Jodhpur.

### **8. Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated GI Mahotsav at LBSNAA, Mussoorie To Sensitize IAS Probationers.**

It is an exhibition of GI tagged products & more than 40 GI registered proprietors, authorised users & artisans participated. TRIFED organised it in collaboration with LBSNAA. 130th Tribes India Showroom was inaugurated at Velridge Building as well. TRIFED jackets with geometric Ikat weaving was launched.

### **9. Dr Harsh Vardhan addresses the inaugural session of Techbharat 2021**

Laghu Udyog Bharati and IMS Foundation have organized the 2nd edition of the conclave bringing together stakeholders from the HealthTech & Edutech sector on a virtual platform &



facilitating interactions & deliberations between thousands of participants. Harsh Vardhan is Union Health & Family Welfare Minister.

#### **10. Govt forms 259-member panel headed by PM Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's independence**

Members of the panel include former president Pratibha Patil, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, 28 chief ministers, artistes like Lata Mangeshkar, A R Rahman, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, L K Advani etc. Celebrations are to be launched 75 weeks prior on Mar 12, 2021.

#### **11. NITI Aayog and Department of Economic Affairs organises a National-level virtual workshop on asset monetization**

The workshop is chaired by the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, the workshop engaged with the Chief Secretaries of States and Administrators of Union Territories. workshop elaborated on the strategic context of core and non-core asset monetization. NITI Aayog formed: 1 January 2015; HQ: New Delhi

#### **12. First-ever Quad summit between India, Japan, Australia and US held**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian PM Scott Morrison, Japan's PM Yoshihide Suga and US President Joseph R Biden participated in the summit. The COVID-19 vaccine was the key focus. In November 2017, approval for Quad was given.

#### **13. 1st Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group On Economic and Trade Issues held**

1st Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues was held under India's Chairmanship. The theme of BRICS this year is -"BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus" New Development Bank was established by BRICS nations in 2014

#### **14. Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to chair conference on Jal Jeevan Mission**

Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat will be chairing a conference of states and UTs ministers on Jal Jeevan Mission on Saturday (March 13, 2021). It will be with all the ministers of states and UTs in-charge of the Rural Water Supply. Mission has developed the online portal and mobile app on WQMIS

#### **15. 27th "Hunar Haat" inaugurated at Lal Parade Ground, Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)**

27th "Hunar Haat" of indigenous products of artisans & craftsmen from across the country was inaugurated by MP CM Shivraj S Chouhan. More than 600 artisans, craftsmen from more than 31 States/UTs are participating in the "Hunar Haat" in Bhopal. Union Minority Affairs Minister: Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

#### **16. Women entrepreneurs from India and Australia join hands to expand business ties**

International Women's Day 2021 Boardroom Session was organized by FICCI FLO in association with Australia India Business Council under the aegis of the Women of 7 Continents (W7) initiative signed MoU with AIBC Women in Business. Focus of the MOU is to have inclusive trade b/w two countries

#### **17. APEDA organizes virtual buyer-seller-meet with Nepal for harnessing and strengthening agri-exports potential**

In a bid to strengthen the footprint of India's agricultural and processed food products export to Nepal, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) organized a virtual Buyer Seller Meet (BSM) in association with Indian Embassy, Kathmandu. In 2019-20, India's- total merchandise trade with Nepal stood at 7.87 billion dollars. Nepal Capital: Kathmandu; Prime minister: K. P. Sharma Oli President: Bidya Devi Bhandari

### **18. India, South Korea discuss maritime cooperation, defence issues;friendship park inaugurated.**

Defence minister Rajnath Singh & Korean counterpart Suh Wook met to discuss maritime cooperation as part of the Indo-Pacific strategy and also cooperation in the defense industry and future technologies.They inaugurated an Indo-Korean friendship park in the Indian capital commemorating the contribution of Indian peacekeepers during the Korean War in 1950s. South Korea President: Moon Jae-in; Capital: Seoul

### **19. 28th "Hunar Haat" being organised at Kala Academy, Panaji (Goa)**

The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs is organising the "Hunar Haat" in Goa with the theme of "Vocal for Local" where more than 500 artisans and craftsmen from more than 30 states/UTs are participating.Goa Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant formally inaugurated the Hunar Haat on 27th March that is to be held till 4th April.Union Minister of Minority Affairs: Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

### **20. 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) ministerial conference**

The conference is part of the Istanbul Process,a regional initiative on security and cooperation for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan.External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will attend along with his Pakistani counterpart and representatives of 49 other nations.The conference will be held in Tajikistan's Dushanbe. The Istanbul Process was launched on November 2,2011 in Turkey.

### **21. Dr.Harsh Vardhan addresses NATHEALTH 7th Annual Summit 2021;Healthcare leaders calls for new measures in post-pandemic era.**

Highlights include: MoU with Duke University on building vaccine confidence,fostering innovation across health systems through collaboration and partnerships;Collaboration with SAMRIDH Blended Health Finance and IPE Global to scale up innovation;Release of NATHEALTH Patient Confidence Study by iQVIA;India Africa Health Summit Report etc.7th Annual Summit theme:Indian Health System Expansion in Post-COVID Era.

### **22. Indus water panel meeting held as part of the broader process of normalisation of bilateral ties between India and Pakistan.**

After a gap of more than two and half years Indian and Pakistani delegations held the 116th Meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission here.The two-day meeting was led on the Indian side by Indus Water Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Saxena & on Pakistan's side by Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Mohammad Mehr Ali Shah. The last meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission was held on August 29, 2018.

### **23. 6th round of India-Australia Dialogue on Disarmament, Non-Proliferation & Export Control takes place virtually**

The two sides exchanged views on contemporary issues of mutual interest in the areas of nuclear, chemical, biological disarmament and non-proliferation, conventional weapons, outer space security and strategic export control.The dialogue will contribute to the India- Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. In February 2021,India-Japan held 9th round dialogue regarding the same.

### **24. AYUSH Ministry in collaboration with Vinoba Seva Pratishthan organized 'Ayurveda Parav' in Bhubaneswar.**

In a bid to promote Ayurveda as the mainstream treatment for the prevalent lifestyle related diseases,Vinoba SevaPratishthan(VSP), in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, successfully organized a 3-days "Ayurveda Parav" in Bhubaneswar from 26th to 28th March 2021.The 3-days event was inaugurated by Dr Raghunath Mohapatra,Member of Rajya Sabha along with others.

### **25. India takes part in second Sherpas meeting of G7, guest countries**

Suresh Prabhu, who is India's Sherpa to G-20 and G7, attended the second virtual meeting of Sherpas of Group of Seven (G7) and guest countries.During the meeting, the key priority issues under UK's G7 Presidency agenda were discussed, including preparations for the COP26

Summit and global health cooperation.G7 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan,the UK and the US.



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## Science & Technology

### 1. ISRO flags off 2021 with 19 satellites, e-Gita & PM Modi's picture

The Indian Space Research Organisation made its first launch of 2021 by successfully blasting into space the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C51. It carried 19 payloads: Brazil's 637-kg Amazonia-1 (its primary passenger) & 18 co-passenger satellites. It was also the 1st commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited

### 2. SpaceX Starship prototype rocket explodes after successful landing in high-altitude flight test

SpaceX test flew Serial Number 10, or SN10, on a flight to about 32,800 feet altitude before returning for a soft landing on a concrete pad at the company's facility in Boca Chica, Texas. Starship is developed to get people and payloads to the moon, Mars etc. Plan is to use Starship to shuttle 12 people around moon in 2023

### 3. ISRF Awards Research Fellowship To 40 Scholars From 6 Countries: Ministry Of Science

It is for doing research in science and technology at Indian institutes and universities. These scholars have been selected for India Science and Research Fellowship (ISRF) 2021 based on research proposal, experience, academic merit and publication record. The ISRF program was implemented in 2015.

### 4. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announces Project Development Cell for Biotechnology

He made this announcement in the Global Bio-India 2021 conclave, a three-day event focusing on different aspects of biotechnology that has been organized by DBT-BIRAC. Aimed to ensure that start-ups should not be afraid of failures. Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)

### 5. ISRO launches sounding rocket RH-560

ISRO launched the sounding rocket (RH-560) to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds & plasma dynamics carried out @ Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. The rockets are 1 or 2-stage solid propellant rockets used for probing upper atmosphere ISRO has launched indigenously made sounding rockets from 1965

### 6. Samsung Opens Innovation Lab in Delhi, Ties with DTU to Work with Students

Samsung India has inaugurated a Samsung Innovation Lab at Delhi Technological University (DTU) under the Samsung Innovation Campus initiative, strengthening its commitment towards the Government's Skill India initiative. Skill India initiative latest vision #PoweringDigitalIndia.

### 7. Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates state-of-the-art facilities at various research centres in Chandigarh and Mohali

IMTECH Bio Innovation Centre, a Unit of Atal Incubation Centre (AIC)-CCMB at CSIR-IMTECH, Chandigarh, Centre of Excellence for Intelligent Sensors and System at CSIR-CSIO, Chandigarh & Advanced High Resolution Microscopy Facility at NABI, Mohali were inaugurated. Four Star rating under GRIHA was unveiled at CIAB, Mohali.

### 8. In a first, ISRO makes breakthrough demonstration of free-space Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) over 300 m

Demonstration used indigenously developed 'NAVIC' receiver for time synchronisation between transmitter & receiver modules, & gimbal mechanism systems instead of bulky large-aperture telescopes for optical alignment. QKD technology underpins Quantum Communication technology. Demonstration is a step towards ISRO's goal of demonstrating Satellite Based Quantum Communication. Demonstration was done at Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad.

## 9. Russia Launches Soyuz Rocket Into Space Carrying 38 Satellites From 18 Countries

The Soyuz-2.1 rocket with the Fregat upper stage and 38 satellites from 18 countries lifted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome. In a first, Tanzania has manufactured its own satellite dubbed Challenge-1 that took off with Russia's Soyuz rocket along with other satellites for countries including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy, and Brazil. Russia's State Corporation for Space Activities is ROSCOSMOS.

## 10. Women-led startup Astrome develops low-cost Internet services to suburban and rural areas.

The wireless product 'Giga Mesh' could enable telecom operators to deploy quality, high-speed rural telecom infrastructure at five times lower cost. The Multi-beam E-band product, Giga Mesh, packs 6 Point-to-Point E-band radios in one, thereby distributing the device's cost over multiple links and hence reduces capital expenditure. Neha Satak, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer at Astrome



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## Defence

### **1. Indian Air Force participates for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag beginning in UAE**

The country is participating for the first time in the exercise and will join the airforces of France, the US, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and Bahrain. Starting on 3 March, the exercise will run until 27 March at Al-Dhafra airbase in the UAE. Indian Air Force, Founded: 8 October 1932, India.

### **2. DRDO successfully conducted flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) Technology from Integrated Test Range, Odisha.**

This will enable DRDO to develop long range air-to-air missiles (AAMs). DRDO had conducted successful tests in 2018 and 2019 as well. Ramjet powered missiles provide greater range and a higher average speed compared to missiles powered by solid propellants. DRDO began developing SFDR first in 2017.

### **3. Indian Army begins training Turkmenistan Special Forces in combat capabilities**

Turkmenistan's paratroopers will be trained in 'Combat Free Fall' as a precursor to a series of customised courses which will assist in their capability enhancement. Special Forces Training School in Nahan, Himachal Pradesh is responsible for the training. Turkmenistan: Capital: Ashgabat; Currency: Manat.

### **4. ITBP hands over SCME to Himachal Pradesh Police personnel deployed on Atal Tunnel Security**

ITBP hands over more than 60 sets of various categories of Special Clothing and Mountaineering Equipment (SCME) to Himachal Pradesh Police personnel deployed on Atal Tunnel Security. Atal Tunnel is located at altitudes of more than 10000 feet. ITBP: - Founded: 24 October 1962; Headquarters: New Delhi

### **5. DRDO develops AIP technology, Indian subs to be more silent and lethal**

The development of AIP technology is a major boost as the US, France, China, UK and Russia have this key technology. The Indian Navy now plans to retrofit all its Kalvari class non-nuclear attack with AIP during their first upgrade, expected around 2023. Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) design tested on land in Mumbai.

### **6. INS Jalashwa reaches Madagascar's Antsiranana Port with Indian Naval training team on-board**

INS Jalashwa reached the port of Antsiranana, Madagascar with an Indian Naval training team on-board. The Indian Naval training team will be deployed in Madagascar for capacity building and training of the Malagasy Special Forces for two weeks. Madagascar Capital: Antananarivo; Currency: Malagasy ariary

### **7. India's arms imports down by 33%, says Sipri report**

India's arms imports fell 33 % between 2011-15 and 2016-20. India accounted for 0.2% of the share of global arms exports during 2016-20, making the country the world's 24th largest exporter of major arms. Russia was the most affected supplier. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri).

### **8. INDO-UZBEKISTAN Field Training Exercise 'DUSTLIK' culminates in Uttarakhand**

The 2nd edition of Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training Exercise, EXERCISE DUSTLIK-II culminated in Ranikhet, Uttarakhand. It was focused on Counter Insurgency/Counter-Terrorism operations in urban scenario as well as sharing of expertise on Skills at Arms. Uzbekistan Capital: Tashkent; Currency: Uzbekistani so'm.

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

Indian Navy undertook PASSEX with Royal Bahrain Naval Force in Persian Gulf under Op. Sankalp to enhance interoperability & strengthen bilateral Maritime cooperation. PASSEXs are

conducted regularly by Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies. Chief of the Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh.

#### **10. Ministry of Defence (MoD) signs contract with Mahindra Defence Systems Ltd (MDSL) to supply LSV to Indian Army at Rs.1056 crore.**

Providing further boost to 'Make in India', MoD signed a contract with MDSL for supply of 1,300 Light Specialist Vehicles (LSV) in 4 years. LSV is indigenously designed and developed by MDSL. LSV is a modern fighting vehicle and will be authorised to various fighting units for carriage of Medium Machine Guns, Automatic Grenade Launchers as well as Anti-tank Guided Missiles.

#### **11. Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vajra' commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) by General Bipin Rawat.**

It was commissioned by the Chief of Defence Staff at Kattupalli in Chennai. This is the sixth in the series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessel constructed by M/s Larsen & Toubro Ltd, Chennai. The 98 meter ship fitted with state-of-the-art Navigation and Communication Equipment, Sensors and Machinery is designed to carry one twin-engine helicopter and four high speed boats.

#### **12. India conducts first-ever joint patrol in Madagascar EEZ**

In a first, the navies of India and Madagascar undertook joint patrolling of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and also conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX). Objective is to ensure maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The INS Shardul and Malagasy Naval Ship Trozona undertook the patrol.

#### **13. India and US started two-day naval exercise PASSEX in Bay of Bengal**

Indian Navy deployed its warship Shivalik and long-range maritime patrol aircraft P8I in the 'PASSEX' exercise while the US Navy was represented by the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group. The exercises is aimed at consolidating the synergy and interoperability achieved during the Malabar exercise. Indian Navy, US, Australian & Japanese navies participated in the Malabar naval exercise

#### **14. Cochin Shipyard Ltd. delivers MV 'Sindhu', passengers cum Cargo Vessel for Andaman & Nicobar**

Cochin Shipyard Ltd. delivers MV 'Sindhu' A 500 pax passengers cum 150 MT Cargo Vessel built indigenously for Andaman and Nicobar. The world-class ship will be proven to be a boon in the Shipping Service of the far-flung islands.

#### **15. In a first, Indian Navy to take part in French Naval Exercise 'La Perouse' in Bay of Bengal along with other QUAD members.**

India is to participate in French-led naval drill La Perouse for the first time in the Bay of Bengal next month. Australia, Japan and the US will also participate in La Perouse. The exercise is scheduled between April 5 and 7. After La Perouse, the India-French Varuna exercise will also take place. This time, it will also include the United Arab Emirates.

## Books & Authors

### 1. 'State of Terror': Hillary Clinton, Louise Penny to publish political thriller

Hillary Clinton is to publish a suspense thriller with Louise Penny. The book tells the story of a novice secretary of state serving in the administration of her political rival as a series of terrorist attacks throws the global order into disarray. Hillary Clinton: Former Secretary. Louise Penny: Canadian Author

### 2. Anindya Dutta recounts India's tennis journey, since 1885 in the book 'Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis'

Advantage India introduces readers to former greats of the game, the journeymen & millennials of Indian tennis. It covers all major players, achievements & their place in the pantheon of tennis. It is a tribute to Indian lawn tennis players since 1885. Anindya Dutta's first book: A Gentleman's Game.

### 3. Actor Samir Soni's debut book on anxiety, self-discovery to release in 2021

Actor Samir Soni debut book titled 'My Experiments with Silence' will be published by OM Books International in 2021. In 'My Experiments with Silence', Soni will pen his "darkest, most intense and introspective thoughts" about anxiety and self-discovery.

### 4. HarperCollins India to publish Vinod Kapri's true account of the migrant exodus- 1232 km: The Long Journey Home

HarperCollins India is proud to announce the upcoming publication of journalist turned filmmaker, Vinod Kapri's compelling book, 1232 km: A Long Journey Home, a true account of human grief, grit, and gumption.

The 2020 nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19 left millions of migrant labourers without job, food and home. The book will release in May 2021. The book is about the journey of seven migrants from Bihar.

### 5. PM Modi unveils new version of 'Exam Warriors' to make students stress free before examinations

PM Modi said launched the new edition of 'Exam Warriors' and informed that it has been enriched with valuable new mantras for student, parents and teachers. It is available at retail stores as well as online. The Exam Warriors module is also available on the NaMo App.

### 6. Names of the Women, a book by Jeet Thayil

Names of the Women talks about the women whose roles were suppressed, reduced, or erased in the Gospels. Jeet Thayil is a renowned author, best known for his book 'Narcopolis' which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2012 and won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. His most recent book 'Low' was released in 2020.



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## Miscellaneous

### 1. Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru launches India's first dedicated express cargo terminal

KIA in Bengaluru now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers that will be operated by the Express Industry Council of India to enable ease of doing business & reduce transaction time. Karnataka Governor: Vajubhai Vala; CM: B. S. Yediyurappa

### 2. United Nations Development Programme launches 'Sahi Disha' campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods in rural India

UNDP has launched the 'Sahi Disha' campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods & entrepreneurship in rural India. It highlights issues & hurdles that impact the opportunities for women in rural India to access jobs and livelihoods & establish enterprises. UNDP HQs: New York, US; Founded: 22 November 1965.

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## Obituary

### **1. Muthoot Finance chairman MG George passes away.**

He is the son of M George Muthoot, who began the finance business and the grandson of Muthoot Ninan Mathai, the group founder. His eldest son George M George is the executive director of the group and the youngest son Alexander George is the director.

### **2. Kannada poet Lakshminarayana Bhatta passes away**

Born in 1936 in Shivamogga district, he was a prolific writer, publishing several collections of poems besides critical works & translations. Some of his best known songs: Thaye ninna madilali, Marege ninthu kayuthiruva karulu yaavudu, Baare nanna Deepika etc He has won Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award, Masti Prashasti etc.

### **3. Veteran Indian athlete and Dhyan Chand awardee Ishar Singh Deol dies at 91**

Deol had won many medals for the country and the state since 1951 and was awarded the Dhyan Chand National Award in 2009 for his lifelong contribution towards sports. Deol was General Secretary of the Punjab Athletes Association for 30 consecutive years. He clinched gold- Asian Veteran Athletic Meet, Singapore(1982).

### **4. Boxing great Marvelous Marvin Hagler dies at 66**

Boxing legend Marvin Hagler, the undisputed middleweight champion from 1980 to 1987, died at age 66. Hagler won the World Boxing Council and World Boxing Association middleweight titles in 1980 & defended the undisputed crown 12 times From 1976 to 1986, Hagler went unbeaten with 36 wins

### **5. Lou Ottens, Dutch engineer who invented cassette tape and CD, passed away at 94**

In 1963, Ottens presented the first cassette tape at the Berlin Radio Show electronics fair. After the fair deal signed between Sony and Philips to patent his creation that gained worldwide popularity. Ottens also worked on the CD development project. The inventor of first workable digital CD device: James Russell.

### **6. Kathakali maestro Guru Chemancheri dies at 105**

Veteran Kathakali exponent Guru Chemancheri Kunhircaman Nair, one of the oldest practitioners of the classical art form. In 1944 he established the first classical dance school in Kannur, Bharatiya Nritya Kalalayam. Kerala Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

### **7. Laxman Pai, renowned Goan painter and Padma Bhushan awardee, passes away at 95**

Born in Margao, Goa in 1926, Pai was honoured with several prestigious awards, including the Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Nehru Award, and Lalit Kala Akademi Award. He was also the principal at the Goa College of Art. Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant.

### **8. Former Sebi chairman GV Ramakrishna passes away**

Former Sebi chairman GV Ramakrishna, 91, passed away. He was appointed as the chairman of markets regulator Sebi in 1990 when it lacked legal status. He headed that body till 1994 and then became the first chairman of Disinvestment Commission in 1996.

### **9. Former president of Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Malali Vasanthkumar passes away.**

Malali Vasanthkumar, Kannada littérateur & former president of Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Mysuru unit, passed away. He had established himself as a prolific writer focusing on short stories, poetry, essays, literary criticisms, and plays. He played prominent part in pro-Kannada Gokak movement in 1980s.

### **10. Veteran CPI leader and former Kerala Deputy Speaker CA Kurian passes away**

Veteran CPI leader, trade unionist and former Deputy Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly, C A Kurian passed away in Kerala. He represented Peermade constituency thrice in the state Assembly(1977,1980 and 1996).

### 11. Acclaimed Egyptian feminist Nawal Saadawi dies at age 89

Nawal Saadawi, a renowned Egyptian feminist, psychiatrist and novelist, whose writings have stirred controversy for decades in an overwhelming conservative society passed away. She was a fierce advocate of women rights in Egypt and the Arab world.

### 12. Veteran Scriptwriter and Filmmaker Sagar Sarhadi Passes Away Aged 88.

Noted writer and filmmaker Sagar Sarhadi, known for films like "Kabhi Kabhie", "Silсила", and "Bazaar", passed away. Sarhadi began his career writing Urdu short stories and entered Bollywood via Yash Chopra's 1976 "Kabhi Kabhie", starring Amitabh Bachchan and Raakhee. In 1982, Sarhadi turned director with "Bazaar".

### 13. Acclaimed Polish poet Adam Zagajewski dies at the age 75

Zagajewski was a leading figure in Poland's New Wave or Generation '68, literary movement of the late 1960s that called for a simple language to relate directly to reality. He wrote a poem 'Try to Praise the Mutilated World' that came to symbolise the world's sense of shock and loss after the September 11 attacks in the US.

### 14. Oscar-nominated actor George Segal dies at 87

Hailing from Great Neck, New York, George Segal received an Academy Award nomination for best supporting actor for his portrayal of Nick in 1966's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? The film was headlined by Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.

### 15. Noted Odissi dancer Laxmipriya Mohapatra dies at 86

Noted Odissi dancer Laxmipriya Mohapatra, the wife of legendary classical dancer Kelucharan Mohapatra, has died. She started her dancing career at the Annapurna Theatre in Puri in 1947. She has also acted in four Odia movies.

### 16. Former RBI Deputy Governor KC Chakrabarty passes away

Former Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor, KC Chakrabarty passed away due to a heart attack. He was the RBI DG from June 2009 to April 2014.

### 17. Journalist and writer Anil Dharker passes away at 74

Indian journalist and writer Anil Dharker died of a cardiac ailment in Mumbai. The founder and director of the Mumbai International Literary Festival and of Tata Literature Live. Dharker was also a member of the National Centre for the Performing Arts theatre committee and a columnist for the NCPA's monthly magazine.

### 18. Beloved children's author of US, Beverly Cleary, dies at 104

Beverly Cleary, the celebrated children's author whose memories of her Oregon childhood were shared with millions through the likes of Ramona and Beezus Quimby and Henry Huggins, has died. She was named a Living Legend in 2000 by the Library of Congress. In 2003, she was chosen as one of the winners of the National Medal of Arts.

### 19. 1971 Battle of Basantar hero, Lieutenant General WAG Pinto (Retd) dies at 97

Lieutenant General WAG Pinto (Retd) led the 54 Infantry Division in the Battle of Basantar in the 1971 India-Pakistan War that gave birth to Bangladesh, leading his troops from the front with the motto he coined "bash on regardless". In this battle, Pinto's division won as many as 196 gallantry medals, including 2 Param Vir Chakras and 9 Maha Vir Chakras.

## Person in news

### 1. Kartik Aaryan appointed as the first-ever brand ambassador of Doritos in India


This vibrant partnership between Doritos and Kartik Aaryan will further help increase brand reach in India and amplify the uniquely bold messaging of the brand. Doritos is available in three exciting flavours. Doritos is a Nacho Chip brand from PepsiCo India.

### 2. Union minister Anurag Thakur appointed as Captain in Territorial Army

The four-time BJP MP from Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur was commissioned into the Territorial Army as a Lieutenant by then Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Dalbir S Suhag TA in July 2016. Thakur was promoted as Captain in the 124 Sikh regiment. Anurag Thakur, Constituency: Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh.

### 3. S Dhanalakshmi breaks PT Usha's Federation Cup record, Swapna Barman wins heptathlon

Tamil Nadu's S Dhanalakshmi clocked a meet record time of 23.26 seconds in the women's 200m semi-finals at the 24th National Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships in Patiala. Her timing broke PT Usha's long-standing meet record of 23.30 seconds. PT Usha often referred to as Payyoli Express.






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## Insurance

### 1. Aditya Birla Health Insurance introduces India's first health insurance plan with up to 100% return on premium

Aditya Birla Health Insurance Company Ltd., the Health Insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited announced an industry-first initiative of up to 100% health insurance premium returns and other significant product offering upgrades. The newly designed product is called 'Activ Health'.

### 2. IOB signs corporate agency pact with SBI General Insurance

Public Sector Indian Overseas Bank signed a Corporate Agency agreement with SBI General Insurance to retail its insurance products to bank customers. IOB signed a bancassurance agreement for distribution of non-life offerings with SBI General Insurance. IOB CEO: Partha Pratim Sengupta HQ: Chennai

### 3. Govt Amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules,2017 for better resolution of policyholders' complaints;brings brokers under the ambit.

Scope of complaints to Ombudsmen enlarged from only disputes earlier to deficiencies in services on the part of insurers,agents,brokers & other intermediaries,Executive Council of Insurers renamed as Council for Insurance Ombudsmen etc. Amended exercising powers under section 24 of IRDAI Act,1999.

### 4. Alliance Insurance launches insurance portal 'SMEInsure'; 5 crore SMEs will benefit


From buying insurance, renewing cover to filing claims — customers will be able to manage all insurance-related queries under SMEInsure. Buyers will have an option to choose products from various well-known insurance service providers and compare them. Alliance Insurance: CEO:S. V. Thakkar; HQ:Mumbai;

### 5. HDFC ERGO Launches Business Kish Suraksha to Protect MFIs & Financial Institutions against Calamities & Natural Disasters

This will address impacts of calamities on lending business by compensating against climate change and protect them from rising NPA.Business Kish can be customised based on geographical presence of the lenders. HDFC ERGO: MD & CEO:Ritesh Kumar; HQ:Mumbai.

### 6. Lok Sabha passes Insurance Amendment Bill 2021, FDI raised to 74%

Under the new structure of 74% FDI limit, majority of directors on boards & key management positions will be resident Indians with at least 50% directors will be independent directors.A specified percentage of profit will be retained as general reserve.This means that Indian promoters in an insurance joint venture would have the right to accept or reject any board decision. Previous FDI hike took 7 years to be passed in 2015 hiking the limit from 26% to 49%.



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## India & World

### 1. China regains its position as India's largest trading partner

According to provisional data from India's Commerce ministry, China regained its position as India's top trade partner as the two-way trade between the countries stood at \$77.7 billion. It was, however, lower than the previous year's \$85.5 billion total. India's 2nd largest trading partner: USA (\$75.9 billion).

### 2. India opens Energy Office in Moscow to expand investments and procurement

The IEO will cover five top Indian entities -- Oil India Limited, ONGC Limited Videsh Limited, GAIL (India) Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, and Engineers India Limited. Russian President Vladimir Putin.

### 3. Exim Bank inks USD 10.40 mn soft loan pact with Eswatini

Exim Bank, on behalf of the Indian government, has extended a Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 10.40 million to the government of the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland) for the construction of disaster recovery site. David Rasquinha, managing director and CEO of Exim Bank.

### 4. UN General Assembly unanimously adopts India-sponsored resolution declaring 2023 as International Year of Millets

It is aimed at raising awareness about the health benefits of the grain & their suitability for cultivation under changing climatic conditions. It also recognises the vast genetic diversity of millets & advocate for diversified, balanced and healthy diets.

India's Permanent Representative to UN: T.S. Tirumurti

### 5. India to fund Nepali ₹246 million for reconstruction of three Cultural Heritage projects in Nepal.

MoU for restoration and reconstruction were signed for Jestha Varna Mahavihara in Lalitpur, Sulighyang Gumba and Shermathang Gumba located in Sindhupalchowk district. On February 11, India funded NRs 142 mn for restoration of 3 cultural heritage projects. India is to undertake 28 projects under reconstruction grant.

### 6. India grants NRs 44.17M to build new school building under Nepal-Bharat Maitri Development Partnership

Nepal will build a new school building in Rupandehi district. Under High Impact Community Development Projects programme, India has completed 446 projects in the areas of health, education, drinking water, connectivity, sanitation etc across all 7 provinces India is reconstructing 71 institutions damaged in 2015 quake.

### 7. ISRO Develops Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission Radar With NASA

NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in our planet's surface less than a centimeter across", according to NASA. Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation

### 8. PM Modi inaugurates India-Bangladesh 'Maitri Setu' bridge, multiple infrastructure projects in Tripura

The bridge 'Maitri Setu' has been built over Feni river. It is a 1.9 km long bridge joining Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh. The bridge was constructed at a cost of Rs 133 crore by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina.

### 9. India, Pakistan, China to participate in SCO joint anti-terrorism exercise 'Pabbi-Antiterror-2021'

The decision to hold the joint exercise 'Pabbi-Antiterror-2021' was announced during the 36th meeting of the Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. India, Pakistan, China and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise this year. RATS, headquartered in Tashkent, is a permanent organ of the SCO.

## 10. Mission Sagar IV INS Jalashwa Arrives at Port Ehoala (Madagascar)

As part of Mission Sagar - IV, Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa arrived at Port Ehoala, Madagascar on 22 March 2021. This is the second visit of an Indian Navy ship to Madagascar. The ship will deliver a consignment of 1,000 Metric Tonne of rice and 100,000 Hydroxychloroquine tablets in response to an appeal made by Madagascar for assistance to deal with natural calamities. Madagascar: Capital: Antananarivo; Currency: Malagasy ariary



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## Environment

### 1. IEA says global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions rising again after nearly 6% fall last year

China, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, was the only country that experienced an increase in emissions last year of 0.8%, or 75 million tonnes, from 2019 levels. Primary energy demand fell 4% in 2020. International Energy Agency (IEA) Headquarters: Paris, France

### 2. Five new species of shrub frogs found in Western Ghats as part of a decade long study.

The frogs, belonging to the Old World tree frog family Rhacophoridae, were discovered by researchers from University of Delhi and Kerala Forest Research Institute and University of Minnesota as part of a long comprehensive study on the Shrub frogs. Over 80% of known shrub frogs are restricted to Western Ghats.

### 3. Australia building world's first platypus sanctuary

Taronga Conservation Society Australia & New South Wales State govt will build it at a zoo 391 km (243 miles) from Sydney, by 2022, which could house up to 65 platypuses. Concerns about the platypus going extinct have heightened since the 'black summer'. Scientists estimate nearly 3 bn animals died in black summer.

### 4. Agharkar Research Institute (ARI) scientists discover new species of diatoms from Mula river in Pune.

In a first, a team of international researchers has discovered a new species of diatoms living in the freshwater flowing downstream Mulshi dam in Pune district. Diatoms are single-celled algae that grow in nearly all kinds of water bodies including rivers, lakes, and streams. These microorganisms contribute in generating oxygen in the atmosphere. Species named as *Epithemia agharkarii* after late S P Agharkar, founder-director of ARI.

## Apps & Portals

### 1. Thaawarchand Gehlot launches Sugamya Bharat App & handbook entitled Access - The Photo Digest

Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot virtually launched Sugamya Bharat App & a handbook, Access – The Photo Digest. App is a means for sensitising and enhancing accessibility. Handbook is a tool to sensitise stakeholders about 10 basic features of accessibility. Minister for Social justice and Empowerment: Thaawarchand Gehlot

### 2. One Nation One Ration Card: Centre launches 'Mera Ration' app to help migrant workers get subsidised foodgrains

Food ministry has launched 'Mera Ration' mobile app which to help ration card holders, especially migrant workers, to avail subsidised foodgrains from any fair price shops in the country. System covers about 690 mn people under National Food Security Act. At present 32 states & UTs are covered under ONORC scheme

### 3. Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) And IEPFA's Mobile App Launched By Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman

CSC and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority's (IEPFA) Mobile App are two tech-enabled initiatives by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. IEPFA App will have facility of tracking the status and progress of IEPF claim refund process. CSC will scrutinize certain Straight Through Process Forms filed by corporates on MCA21 registry & flag companies for more scrutiny.



## Acquisitions & Mergers

### 1. BPCL approves sale of its 61.65% stake in Numaligarh refinery for ₹9,875 crore

Bharat Petroleum Corp board approved sale of its 61.65% stake in Numaligarh refinery for ₹9875 crore. Consortium of OIL & Engineers India Ltd to acquire 49% & 13.65% to be sold to govt of Assam. Sale of NRL is seen as 1st step towards disinvestment of BPCL Numaligarh Refinery is located in Golaghat district of Assam.

### 2. Reliance Strategic Business Ventures Limited (RSBVL) Acquires Majority Equity Stake In SkyTran Inc for USD 26.76 million.

RSVBL increased its shareholding to 54.46% on a fully diluted basis. Delaware, US based skyTran has developed breakthrough passive magnetic levitation & propulsion technology for implementing personal transportation systems solving traffic congestion problem RSBVL is a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries.

### 3. Bharat Gas Resources (BGRL) To Merge With BPCL.

The merger will streamline the corporate structure and consolidate the assets and liabilities of BGRL within BPCL. It will also help in availing easier financial support for the business of BGRL. BGRL is a 100% subsidiary of BPCL and its main business is gas sourcing and retailing. It was incorporated in June 2018.

### 4. State-Owned Power Grid To Buy JP Power's 74% Stake In Transmission JV, Signs Share Purchase Agreement

Power Grid, a Maharatna PSE under Ministry of Power, has signed a share purchase agreement with Jaiprakash Power Ventures Limited (JPVL) to acquire 74% stake in Jaypee Powergrid Limited-JV (JPL), in which the state-owned PSU holds 26% equity. JPL will become a wholly owned subsidiary of Power Grid following this acquisition.

### 5. Adani Ports to acquire additional 58.1% stake in Gangavaram Port for ₹3,604 crore

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) will acquire the 58.1% stake held by D.V.S. Raju and family in Gangavaram Port Limited (GPL) for ₹3,604 crore. The deal is subject to regulatory approvals. With this acquisition, APSEZ will have 89.6% stake in GPL, which has its port operations in Andhra Pradesh. APSEZ: CEO: Karan Adani; HQ: Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

## Agri-Business

### 1. First export consignments of 'red rice' from Assam to the USA flagged off from Sonapat, Haryana by APEDA Chairman.

It is a major boost to India's rice exports potential. Iron rich 'red rice' is grown in Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer. The rice variety is referred as 'Bao-dhaan', which is an integral part of the Assamese food. APEDA Chairman: Dr M. Angamuthu

### 2. Dr. Harsh Vardhan launches CSIR Floriculture Mission; CSIR's Societal Portal along with the Android App launched as well.

CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in 21 States & UTs. Knowledge base in CSIR Institutes to be utilized to help Indian farmers & industry re-position itself to meet import requirements and create opportunity for entrepreneurship Indian floriculture market projected to reach Rs 47200cr by 2024

### 3. APEDA organizes 1st ever virtual trade fair to boost agri, processed foods export

The fair with a theme 'India Rice and Agro Commodity', focused on showcasing the exports potential of various agricultural commodities. Importers, as well as exporters, will be key participants of the virtual trade fair (VTF). APEDA established in the year 1985.

## External Affairs

### 1. India,US agree to revamp Strategic Energy Partnership(SEP);meeting for the same to be convened soon.

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and US Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm have agreed to revamp India-US SEP to reflect the new priorities of PM Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden with focus on promoting clean energy with low-carbon pathways and accelerating green energy cooperation. Inaugural SEP, a ministerial meeting, was first held on April 2018

### 2. India delivers 20,000 litres of pesticide to Iran to fight locust swarms in Sistan-Balochistan and South Khorasan provinces

India has delivered 20,000 litres of the pesticide Malathion to Iran via the strategic Chabahar port to help mount a coordinated regional response to the threat posed by swarms of desert locusts.

This was the second consignment of Malathion (first in June 2020), a 95% ultra-low volume pesticide, supplied to Iran under a government-to-government locust control programme. Iran witnessed its worst locust invasion of the past 25 years in 2020.

## PSUs

### 1. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) Launches Certified E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT"

PRANIT will lead to less paperwork and ease of operation, making the tendering process more transparent. It has been certified by Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC), Ministry of Electronics and Information. POWERGRID is now the only organization in India to have an eProcurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM). POWERGRID headquartered in Gurugram is a central Maharatna PSU under Ministry of Power.

## Committees

### 1. RBI sets up 5-member panel headed by Shyamala Gopinath for evaluating applications for Universal Banks & Small Finance Banks.

Standing External Advisory Committee(SEAC) members are:Revathy Iyer,Director,Central Board,RBI;B Mahapatra, former Executive Director, RBI & presently Chairman,National Payments Corporation of India;TN Manoharan, former Chairman,Canara Bank; & Hemant G Contractor,former MD,SBI & former Chairman, PFRDA.Term will be for three years. Shyamala Gopinath is former Deputy Governor of RBI.

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


The committee is chaired by H. R Nagendra, Chancellor,Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana and its members include representatives from AIIMS New Delhi, IIM Bangalore, IIT Bombay, various leading Yoga institutions,the corporate sector and the AYUSH Ministry.The committee will submit its preliminary recommendations by May this year.

### 3. Niti Aayog sets up task forces for achieving policy certainty in contract enforcement, dispute resolution.

One task force, which will suggest facilitation of speedy resolution of contractual disputes between private entities and the government, will be headed by Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.The second task force, which will recommend a policy framework for the enforcement of contracts, will be led by Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar.Task force will also examine relevant provisions of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act.

### 4. Supreme Court constitutes 7-member expert committee to lay down guidelines on cutting trees for developmental projects

The decision in a petition against West Bengal's decision to fell the trees,in order to construct Road Over Bridges and widen the Roads.The committee will be headed by Dr.MK Ranjitsinh Jhala, a wildlife expert and former Chairman of the Wildlife Trust of India.The order was passed by a Bench of Chief Justice of India SA Bobde & Justices AS Bopanna & V Ramasubramanian.



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### BANKING

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Repo Rate	4.00%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate (MSF)	4.25%
Bank Rate	4.25%
Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)	3.50%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)	18.0%

### ECONOMY

ORGANIZATION/ PARAMETERS	RATE/ FIGURES
<b>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</b>	Predicts India's growth at 5% in 2021
<b>Fitch</b>	Forecasts India's GDP growth at 12.8% for FY2022

### APPOINTMENTS

APPOINTMENT	POST
<b>R Hari Kumar</b>	Western Naval Command Chief
<b>Tarun Bajaj</b>	Additional charge of Revenue Secretary
<b>Matam Venkata Rao</b>	MD & CEO of Central Bank Of India
<b>Kuldiep Singh</b>	Director General: Central Reserve Police Force
<b>Manpreet Vohra</b>	India's High Commissioner To Australia
<b>Mary Kom</b>	Chairperson - International Boxing Association (AIBA)'s champions & veterans committee
<b>Ashok Gulati</b>	Additional Independent Director - Kotak Mahindra Bank
<b>Naureen Hassan</b>	First VP, and Chief Operating Officer (COO)- New York Federal Bank
<b>Girish Chandra Murmu</b>	Chairman- UN Panel of External Auditors
<b>G P Samanta</b>	Chief Statistician of India
<b>Pallav Mohapatra</b>	MD & CEO - Asset Reconstruction Co India Ltd
<b>Deepak Mishra</b>	Director and Chief Executive - Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
<b>Sundeep Sikka</b>	Executive Director and CEO - Nippon Life India Asset Management Ltd
<b>MA Ganapathy</b>	Director General - National Security Guard

<b>Dr Harsh Vardhan</b>	Chairman - Stop TB Partnership Board
<b>Samia Suluhu Hassan</b>	First Female President - Tanzania
<b>Arindam Bagchi</b>	Spokesperson - Ministry of External Affairs
<b>Saurabh Garg</b>	CEO- Unique Identification Authority of India
<b>Sanjeev Kumar</b>	Chairman - Airports Authority of India
<b>Atish Chandra</b>	Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India.
<b>Soma Mondal</b>	Chairperson - Standing Conference of Public Enterprises

## AWARDS

WINNER	AWARD
<b>Prime Minister Narendra Modi</b>	CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award
<b>Nomadland</b>	Golden Globes 2021: best director, best drama film
<b>Chadwick Boseman</b>	Golden Globes 2021: Best actor (Drama)
<b>Viola Davis</b>	Golden Globes 2021: Best actress (Drama)
<b>Soul</b>	Golden Globes 2021: Best animated motion picture
<b>Minari</b>	Golden Globes 2021: Best foreign language film
<b>Aruna Subrao Ubhayakar</b>	Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy (literature)
<b>Puttur Panduranga Nayak</b>	Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy (arts)
<b>Lakshmi Krishna Siddi</b>	Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy (folklore)
<b>Nikhileswar</b>	Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award-2020
<b>Gowsalya Shankar</b>	International Woman of Courage 2021 Award
<b>Amitabh Bachchan</b>	International Federation of Film Archives Award
<b>Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said</b>	Gandhi Peace Prize 2019
<b>Sheikh Mujibur Rahman</b>	Gandhi Peace Prize 2020
<b>Sharad Pagare</b>	Vyas Samman – 2020
<b>Carmen Maria Machado</b>	Rathbones Folio Prize 2021
<b>Mahinder Giri</b>	International Ranger Award
<b>Maggie O'Farrell</b>	US National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction
<b>Thappad</b>	66th Filmfare Awards: Best Film
<b>Om Raut</b>	66th Filmfare Awards: Best Director
<b>Irrfan Khan</b>	66th Filmfare Awards: Best Actor (Male)
<b>Taapsee Pannu</b>	66th Filmfare Awards: Best Actor (Female)
<b>Irrfan Khan</b>	66th Filmfare Awards: Lifetime Achievement Award

## IMPORTANT DAYS

DATE	DAY	THEME
<b>1st March</b>	Zero discrimination Day	
<b>1st March</b>	World Civil Defence Day	Civil Defence and a faster aider in every home.
<b>3rd March</b>	World Wildlife Day	Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet
<b>8th March</b>	International Women's Day	Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world
<b>15th March</b>	World Consumer Rights Day	Tackle plastic pollution
<b>16th March</b>	National Vaccination Day, also known as National Immunization Day	
<b>20th March</b>	International Day of Happiness	Happiness For All, Forever
<b>20th March</b>	World Sparrow Day	
<b>21st March</b>	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	Youth standing up against racism
<b>21st March</b>	World Poetry Day	
<b>21st March</b>	International Day of Forests	Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being
<b>21st March</b>	World Down Syndrome Day	
<b>21st March</b>	International Day of Nowruz	
<b>22nd March</b>	World Water Day	Valuing Water
<b>23rd March</b>	World Meteorological Day	The Ocean, Our Climate and Weather.
<b>24th March</b>	World Tuberculosis (TB) Day	The Clock is Ticking
<b>24th March</b>	International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims	
<b>25th March</b>	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members	
<b>25th March</b>	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	Ending Slavery's Legacy of Racism: A Global Imperative for Justice
<b>31st March</b>	International Transgender Day of Visibility	

## OBITUARY

OBITUARY	RELATED FIELD
<b>MG George</b>	Muthoot Finance chairman
<b>Lakshminarayana Bhatta</b>	Kannada poet
<b>Ishar Singh Deol</b>	Veteran Indian athlete
<b>Marvin Hagler</b>	Boxer
<b>Lou Ottens</b>	Dutch engineer; Inventor of cassette tape and CD
<b>Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair</b>	Kathakali Maestro
<b>Laxman Pai</b>	Painter
<b>GV Ramakrishna</b>	Former SEBI Chairman
<b>Malali Vasanthkumar</b>	Kannada litterateur; Former president of Kannada Sahitya Parishat
<b>C A Kurian</b>	Veteran CPI leader; Former Deputy Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly
<b>Nawal Saadawi</b>	Egyptian feminist
<b>Sagar Sarhadi</b>	Scriptwriter, and Filmmaker
<b>Adam Zagajewski</b>	Polish poet
<b>George Segal</b>	Actor
<b>Laxmipriya Mohapatra</b>	Odissi dancer
<b>KC Chakrabarty</b>	Former Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor
<b>Anil Dharker</b>	Journalist and writer
<b>Beverly Cleary</b>	Children's author
<b>WAG Pinto</b>	Lieutenant General; Battle of Basantar hero

## IMPORTANT STATIC & CURRENT INFO

### INDIAN STATES, CAPITALS, CHIEF MINISTERS & GOVERNORS

STATE	CAPITAL	CHIEF MINISTER	GOVERNOR
Andhra Pradesh	Amaravati	Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy	Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Pema Khandu	Brigadier BD Mishra (retd)
Assam	Dispur	Sarabananda Sonowal	Prof. Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Patna	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Bhupesh Baghel	Anusuiya Uikey
Goa	Panaji	Pramod Sawant	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Gujarat	Gandhi Nagar	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Dev Vrat

Haryana	Chandigarh	Manohar Lal Khattar	Satyadeo Narain Arya
Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	Jai Ram Thakur	Bandaru Dattatraya
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	Droupadi Murmu
Karnataka	Bengaluru	B S Yediyurappa	Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Shivraj Singh Chauhan	Anandiben Patel
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Uddhav Thackrey	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Sangma	Satya Pal Malik
Mizoram	Aizawl	Pu Zoramthanga	P S Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Kohima	Neiphiu Rio	RN Ravi
Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Chandigarh	Amarinder Singh	V P Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	Gangtok	PS Golay	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	Hyderabad	K. Chandrasekhar Rao	Tamilisai Soundararajan
Tripura	Agartala	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Yogi Aditya Nath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Tirath Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

### UNION TERRITORIES, LIEUTENANT GOVERNORS & ADMINISTRATORS

Union Territory	Lt. Governor & Administrator
Andaman and Nicobar Island (UT)	Admiral D K Joshi (Lieutenant Governor)
Chandigarh (UT)	V.P. Singh Badnore (Administrator)
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (UT)	Praful Patel (Administrator)
Delhi (NCT)	Anil Baijal (Lieutenant Governor)
Jammu and Kashmir (UT)	Manoj Sinha (Lieutenant Governor)




Lakshadweep (UT)	Praful Patel (Administrator)
Puducherry (UT)	Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan (Addl. Charge) (Lieutenant Governor)
Ladakh (UT)	Radha Krishna Mathur (Lieutenant Governor)

### UNION MINISTERS, PORTFOLIO & CONSTITUENCY

Union Minister	Portfolio	Constituency
Narendra Modi	Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions	Varanasi, UP
Rajnath Singh	Ministry of Defence	Lucknow, UP
Amit Shah	Ministry of Home Affairs	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
Nitin Gadkari	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises	Nagpur, Maharashtra
DV Sadananda Gowda	Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers	Bangalore North, Karnataka
Nirmala Sitharaman	Ministry of Finance Ministry of Corporate Affairs	Rajya Sabha
Piyush Goyal	Ministry of Commerce and Industry Ministry of Railways Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution	Rajya Sabha (Maharashtra)
Narendra Singh Tomar	Ministry of agriculture and Farmers welfare Ministry of Rural Development Ministry of Panchayati Raj Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Morena, M. P
Ravi Shankar Prasad	Ministry of Law and Justice Ministry of communications Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Patna Sahib, Bihar
Thaawar Chand Gehlot	Ministry of Social justice and empowerment	Rajya Sabha (M.P)
Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar	Ministry of External Affairs	Rajya Sabha (Gujarat)
Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Ministry of Human Resource Development	Haridwar, Uttarakhand
Arjun Munda	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Khunti, Jharkhand
Smriti Zubin Irani	Ministry of Women and child Development	Amethi, UP


	Ministry of Textiles	
Dr Harsh Vardhan	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Ministry of Science and Technology Ministry of Earth Sciences	Chandni Chowk, Delhi
Prakash Javadekar	Ministry of environment, forest and climate change Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise	Rajya Sabha (M.P)
Dharmendra Pradhan	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry of Steel	Rajya Sabha (M.P)
Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Rajya Sabha (Jharkhand)
Pralhad Joshi	Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs Ministry of coal Ministry of Mines	Dharwad, Karnataka
Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Chandauli, UP
Giriraj Singh	Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying and fisheries	Begusarai, Bihar



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