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**Director,
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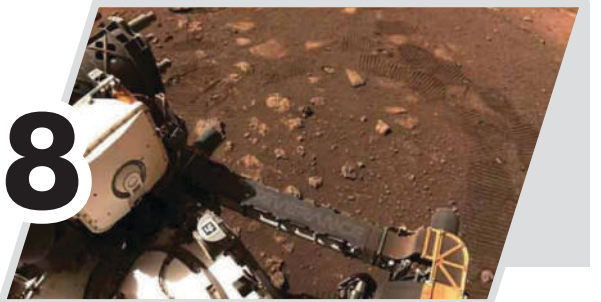
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1. HISTORY



1.1 IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
03-03-2021	World Wildlife Day	Theme 2021: "Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet".
03-03-2021	World Hearing Day	This year, the theme of World Hearing day -March 3 was "Hearing Care for All".
04-03-2021	India commemorates 'Chabahar day'	<p>India commemorated 'Chabahar day' on March 4, 2021, on the sidelines of the Marine India Summit-2021.</p> <p>The summit is being held from March 2 to 4. As per the MEA, the ministers of Armenia, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Russia will participate in the event.</p> <p>It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean and the agreement was signed between India and Iran in 2018 for its development.</p> <p>Chabahar Port</p> <p>It is located on the Gulf of Oman, Iran</p> <p>It is only 72 km away from the Gwadar port of Pakistan which has been developed by China.</p>
08-03-2021	International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on 8 March around the world	<p>The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day in the International Women's Year, 1975.</p> <p>International Womens Year – 1978.</p>
11-03-2021	World Kidney Day	Theme 2021- 'Living Well with Kidney Disease'.

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
14-03-2021	International Day of Mathematics	The theme for 2021 IDM is “Mathematics for a Better World”.
15-03-2021	World Consumer Rights Day	The theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is “Tackling Plastic Pollution.”
18-03-2021	Global Recycling Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme for 2021 is “Recycling Heroes”.
18-03-2021	Ordnance Factories' Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The day commemorates the foundation of the first Ordnance Factory in colonial India at Cossipore near Kolkata where production started on March 18, 1802. The Indian Ordnance Factories operate under the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The day is celebrated by displaying the rifles, guns, artillery, ammunition etc in exhibitions all over India. Currently, the Ordnance Factories organisation comprises 41 factories grouped into five operational divisions of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). <p>Arms Logistics Board of India</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formed on: 1712 Head Quarters: Kolkata
20-03-2021	International Day of Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2021 International Day of Happiness campaign theme is ‘Keep Calm. Stay Wise. Be Kind’.
22-03-2021	World Water Day 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Water Day is observed annually across the globe on March 22 with the purpose of highlighting the importance of water and raising awareness about the water crisis that the world faces. According to the United Nations (UN) website, the main focus of the day is to “support the achievement of sustainable development goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ 2030. On the occasion of World Water Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the ‘campaign in a video conference event.

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
23-03-2021	Martyrs Day (Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 23 is observed as Martyrs Day (Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day) to pay tribute on death anniversary of the freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru, who laid their lives for the freedom of India. ▪ It was on March 23 in 1931, in Lahore (Pakistan), that these three were hanged to death for assassinating John Saunders, a British police officer in 1928. ▪ They had mistook him for British police superintendent James Scott, who had ordered lathi charge, which eventually led to the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.
24-03-2021	World Tuberculosis Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The theme of World Tuberculosis Day 2021 is 'The Clock is Ticking'. ▪ On World Tuberculosis Day, 'Mask for the Masses' campaign was launched at the Government Stanley Medical College Hospital to promote the use of masks and prevent the spread of tuberculosis and COVID-19.
27-03-2021	Earth Hour 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every year, the Earth Hour is celebrated worldwide on the last Saturday of the March month to show support for fight against climate change and commitment towards better planet. ▪ Earth Hour 2021 is being marked on March 27, 2021. ▪ The Earth Hour 2021 theme will focus on "Climate Change to Save Earth". ▪ The Day is a worldwide movement organized by the WorldWide Fund for Nature (WWF), encouraging individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

1.2 DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND TERRORISM

Indian Air Force to Participate in EX Desert FLAG VI

- For the first time ever, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is participating in Exercise Desert Flag-VI, which has been organised from March 03 to 27, 2021 at Al-Dhafra airbase, UAE.
- Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- The exercise will also see the air forces of United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.
- The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 and one IL-78 tanker aircraft.

Desert Flag VI

- The Indian Air Force is for the first time participating in the annual multinational large force employment warfare exercise, Desert Flag VI, hosted by the United Arab Emirates Air Force.

India inks pact with Philippines for sale of 'defence equipment' including BrahMos

- India has signed a key pact with the Philippines called "implementing arrangement" for "procurement of defence material and equipment", on March 02, 2021, as per which the country will buy the BrahMos cruise missiles from India.
- The BrahMos missile is produced by an India-Russian joint venture "BrahMos Aerospace" and it can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or from land platforms.
- It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.

India's resolute response on borders

- Rajnath Singh has been participated at the Combined Commanders Conference (CCC) of the three Services at Kevadia in Gujarat.
- It is being held from March 4 to 6

Combined Commanders Conference

- It is the annual meeting of three-armed force services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the Ministry of Defence to plan India's long-term security.
- It provides a platform for discussions at the apex Level on all the Joint Issues and enables stock taking of the previous year and planning the way ahead for the next year.
- It is chaired by the Defence Minister, Minister of State (Defence) and also attended by the ministry top officials, National Security Advisor (NSA), Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), service chiefs and senior officers of the three services.

Scorpene-class submarine INS Karanj commissioned into the Indian Navy in Mumbai

- The third Scorpene-class submarine "INS Karanj" was commissioned into the Indian Navy in Mumbai on March 10, 2021, in presence of Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh and Admiral (Retired) VS Shekhawat.
- INS Karanj is third in the series of six Scorpene-class diesel-electric submarine, being built for Indian Navy.
- The technology have been designed by France's Naval Group and is being built in India by Mazagon Dock Limited under Project 75.

Other submarines of this class

- First two submarines, INS Kalvari and INS Khanderi, have already been commissioned into the Navy.
- 4th- INS Vela -undergoing trials at sea.
- 5th- INS Vagir - launched in November 2020 and is expected to be commissioned in 2022
- 6th - 'Vagsheer' - currently under construction

Project-75

- It is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building six Scorpene-Class attack submarines.

- The programme has been undertaken with transfer of technology from French company Naval Group (formerly known as DCNS) at the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL).

U.S. Defense Secretary

- American Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin will visit India from March 19 to 21 and to meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Discussion

- To strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and exchange views on regional security challenges and common interests in maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo Pacific region.
- Discussions regarding defence cooperation would also focus on how both countries could consolidate military to military cooperation and defence trade and industry cooperation.

India to buy 30 armed drones from US to counter China, Pakistan

- India plans to buy 30 armed drones from the U.S. to boost its sea and land defenses as tensions persist with neighbours China and Pakistan.
- The South Asian nation will approve next month the \$3 billion purchase of 30 MQ-9B Predator drones manufactured by San Diego-based General Atomics.
- The MQ-9B drone can fly for about 48 hours and carry a payload of about 1,700 kilograms (3,700 pounds). It will give the Indian Navy the ability to better monitor Chinese warships in the southern Indian Ocean, and equip the army to engage targets along the disputed India-Pakistan border in the Himalayas.

INS Jalashwa reaches Port Anjouan in Comoros to deliver 1,000 tonnes of rice

- The Indian Naval Ship INS Jalashwa arrived at Port Anjouan, Comoros on 14 March 2021 to deliver 1,000 Metric Tonnes of rice, under Mission Sagar-IV.
- SAGAR, which stands for "Security and Growth for all in the Indian Ocean Region", was started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2020 to assist maritime neighbours such as Comoros amid the coronavirus pandemic.

- INS Jalashwa is the largest amphibious ship of Indian Navy.

SAGAR

- Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) was launched in 2015. It is India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- Through SAGAR, India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.

Indian Army Decommissions two of longest serving artillery systems

- The Indian Army decommissioned two of the longest serving artillery systems from service on March 16, 2021 at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan.
- These include: 130mm Self Propelled M-46 Catapult Guns and the 160mm Tampella Mortars.
- The two weapon systems, have been in the inventory of the Indian Army for around 60 years.
- They have been decommissioned to make way for newer equipment with the latest technologies.

130mm Catapult

- It had a range of more than 27 km.
- The system was developed by merging two existing weapon systems: Vijayanta tanks and 130mm M-46 guns.

160mm Tampella mortars

- It had a range of 9.6km.
- This mortar was successfully deployed on the Line of Control in the Leepa valley (Hazad Kashmir, Pakistan) and the Hajipir Bowl and played a crucial part in maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Control.

Indian naval Landing Craft Utility L58 commissioned at Port Blair

- Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility (LCU) L58, the eighth and last ship of the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) Mark IV Class, was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- The LCU 58 is an amphibious ship that can carry 160 troops, in addition to its crew. With a displacement of 900 tons, the ship is capable of carrying various types of combat vehicles such as Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), BMPs, Armoured Vehicles, trucks, etc.
- The ship measures 63 meters in length and is fitted with two MTA 4,000 series engines, which are capable of propelling the ship at speeds of up to 15 knots (28 kmph).

Samudri Virasat Pradarshan by Indian Navy

- INS Netaji Subhas, as part of the Swarnim Vijay Varsh 2021 Celebrations at Kolkata, conducted an Operational Demonstration on the Hooghly on 20th March 2021.
- This unique event displayed the maritime prowess of assets and personnel who sail the high seas as well as operate along the coast.

Ahom warrior a symbol of Atmanirbhar military

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi called 17th century Ahom General Lachit Borphukan a symbol of India's "atmanirbhar" military might
- PM Modi referring Ahom as a freedom fighter who "contributed to the independence of the country" at a programme to launch the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' on March 12.
- In 1671, Borphukan led the Ahoms in the Battle of Saraighat, considered the greatest naval battle on a river, to victory over the Mughals.
- The Prime Minister announced Borphukan was the inspiration behind strengthening India's naval force and revitalising inland water transport and creating infrastructure.

India ranked fourth most powerful military in world

- China has the strongest military force in the world while India stands at number four, according to a study released by defence website Military Direct.
- The 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, it noted, adding that China comes second with USD 261 billion, followed by India at USD 71 billion.

ICG Ship Vajra Commissioned

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship 'Vajra' was commissioned on March 24, 2021 at Chennai by General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff.
- The vessel was indigenously designed and built by Larsen and Toubro Shipbuilding Ltd in Chennai.
- It is the sixth in series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessels and will enhance coastal security.

India, U.S. begin two-day naval exercise in eastern Indian Ocean region

- India and the US kicked off a two-day naval exercise in the eastern Indian Ocean Region, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership.
- The Indian Navy deployed its warship Shivalik and long-range maritime patrol aircraft P8I in the 'PASSEX' exercise while the US Navy was represented by the USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group.
- The Malabar naval exercise was participated by the navies of the US, Australia and Japan.
- The four countries are part of the Quad or Quadrilateral coalition.

1.3 WORLD ORGANISATIONS – PACTS AND SUMMITS

Narendra Modi receives India's homegrown

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi received his first dose of Covaxin, a COVID-19 jab developed by Indian vaccine maker Bharat Biotech.

WHO

- President : Tedros Adhanom
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland
- Founded: 7 April 1948

UN declares 2023 as International Year of Millets

- The United Nations General Assembly has adopted the India-sponsored resolution and has declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- The resolution invites all member states and organisations to raise awareness regarding the benefits of millets.

United Nations

- Head Quarters: New York
- President: Volkan Bozkır
- Founded on – 24th Oct, 1945.

Quad to hold leadership summit

- Leaders of Australia, India, Japan and the United States will soon meet virtually for the first ever summit under the quadrilateral security arrangement.

Quad

- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.

Purposes of QUAD

- The idea behind the QUAD Group is to keep the strategic and significant sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence.

- It is seen as a strategic grouping to preempt and reduce Chinese influences.
- The core objectives of the QUAD is to secure a rules-based global order, liberal trading system and freedom of navigation.
- It seeks to contain a 'rising China' and work against its predatory trade and economic policies.
- Another purpose of the QUAD is to offer alternative debt financing for nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Quad leaders for 'open, free' Indo-Pacific

- The meeting focused on vaccines, climate change, emerging technologies makes group a force for global good.
- US President- Joe Biden
- Japanese Prime Minister - Yoshihide Suga
- Australian Prime Minister - Scott Morrison

UNDP launches Sahi Disha campaign

- The United Nations Development Program has launched the 'Sahi Disha' Campaign for celebrating the livelihoods and entrepreneurship of women living in rural parts of India.
- The campaign highlights the problems impacting the opportunities for women to access jobs and livelihoods.

About Disha Initiative:

- The Disha initiative is a five years collaboration between the IKEA Foundation and the United Nations Development Program.
- It enabled around 1 million women through counselling and skilling services for accessing livelihood and job opportunities in rural India.

About United Nations Development Program:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a specialised agency of United Nation formed in 1965
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network. It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries,

with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed.

- UNDP India's country programme for 2018-2022 has three major focus areas:
- Inclusive growth
- Environment and energy
- Strengthening systems and institutions.

India ranks 139 in World Happiness Report, Finland tops

- India has been placed at 139th position out of 149 countries in the UN World Happiness Report 2021 released on March 19, 2021. In 2019, India was ranked 140th.
- The World Happiness Report 2021 has been topped by Finland, for the fourth consecutive year.
- The 2021 report is the ninth World Happiness Report and focuses on the effects of COVID-19 and how people all over the world have fared.

Top 10 Countries

- Finland is followed by Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Norway, New Zealand and Austria.

Bottom 5 Countries

- People in Afghanistan (149) are the most unhappy with their lives, followed by Zimbabwe (148), Rwanda (147), Botswana (146) and Lesotho (145).

World Happiness Report

- The World Happiness Report is issued by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, to rank countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be.
- The countries of the world are ranked on the basis of questions from the Gallup World Poll. The results are then correlated with other factors, like gross domestic product per person, healthy life expectancy and the opinions of residents.

India, Pakistan, China to participate in SCO joint anti-terrorism exercise

- India, Pakistan, China and other members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise this year.

- 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 on March 18.
- The SCO is an economic and security bloc in which India and Pakistan were admitted as full members in 2017. Its founding members included China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- The next meeting of the Council of the RATS SCO is scheduled to be held in September in Uzbekistan.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

- SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.
- It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organisation aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- It was created in 2001.
- The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.

World Bank Releases "World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives"

- The "World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives" was released by the World Bank on March 24, 2021.
- The World Development Report focuses on how data can improve the lives of poor people and advance development objectives, to ensure no one is left behind.

World Bank

- President : David Malpass
- Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
- Founded: July 1944, Bretton Wood

2020 was Best Year for Wind Industry: Global Wind Report 2021

- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry as this sector installed 93GW of new capacity in 2020, according to a new report titled 'Global Wind Report 2021, released by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC-Headquarters location: Brussels, Belgium).

- This is the 16th annual flagship report, released by GWEC on March 25, 2021.
- The 93GW represents a 53% year-on-year increase.

United Nations Peace-Keeping Force

- United Nations Peacekeeping is a joint effort between the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support.
- Every peacekeeping mission is authorized by the Security Council.
- The financial resources of UN Peacekeeping operations are the collective responsibility of UN Member States.

- According to UN Charter every Member State is legally obligated to pay their respective share for peacekeeping.

Internationally

- As of 2020, there are currently 13 active UN Peacekeeping Missions
- These missions are spread across 3 continents; Asia, Africa and Europe. The highest number of peacekeeping missions are in Africa.
- Troops, police and civilian personnel for UN peacekeeping missions are contributed by more than 120 countries.

1.4 EMINENT PERSONS

Jeeva, the leader of the Tamil Nadu Green Movement, has passed away

- Jeeva, the leader of the Tamil Nadu Green Movement and a doctor.
- He started 7 hospitals in Erode, Tanjore and pondicherry for service purposes.
- Jeeva, who had a great devotion to Bharati, has been conducting Bharati festivals in Erode for many years. He set up a center in Erode to rehabilitate alcoholics.
- His book on Tipu Sultan changed the image of Tipu Sultan. Has translated more than 15 texts from English to Tamil.

Tamil Nadu Green movement

- Conservation warrior and leader from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Jayachandran S, has won this year's prestigious Sanctuary Wildlife Award for his pioneering work in key protected areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.
- He started the Tamil Nadu Green Movement in 1990 which has been actively assisting the forest departments in law enforcement and advocacy.

Ayya Vaikunda Avataram

- Ayya Vaikunda Avataram Day celebrated by the followers of Ayyavazhi on the 20th day of

the Tamil month of Masi, the date on which the Ayyavazhi followers believe that Lord Narayana himself incarnated as Vaikundar during an encounter with a deity Goddess Lakshmi, he was beget inside the sea and arose from the sea of Thiruchendur on Kollam Year 1008 at 20th day of Tamil Month Masi (1st March 1833 CE, Friday).

Vaikunda Swamikal (1809-1851)

- Born: 1809 at Sastankoil Vilai, a village in then south Travancore (Present day Kanyakumari district).
- He was one of the earliest crusaders of social justice
- Original Name: Mudichudum Perumal was changed to Muthukutty by his parents due to objection raised by the upper caste Hindus
- His followers called him Aiya (father) and his cult came to be known as Aiya Vazhi (path of the father)
- He attacked the traditional caste-ridden Travancore society and its ruler for collecting excessive taxes from the lower caste people
- He was arrested and jailed by the Raja of Travancore for his "seditious speeches"

Teachings

- He exhorted them not to offer animal sacrifices to their deities

- Akila Thirattu: The compiled text of his teachings which is recited religiously to this day
- He urged his followers to wear a turban, a right which was permitted only to upper castes in those days
- He requested the people to give up all the irrelevant rites and rituals in their worship.

Former Dinamalar editor R Krishnamurthy

- R Krishnamurthy, a former editor of Tamil daily Dinamalar and a renowned epigraphist, died in Chennai due to age-related ailments.
- Krishnamurthy was born at Vadiveeswaram near Nagercoil on January 13, 1933.
- He joined Dinamalar in 1956 and became its editor in 1977.
- He was also behind simplifying the Tamil script. He introduced the Periyar script with fewer alphabets. The government introduced the script in textbooks in 1979.
- His interests in Tamil script reform led him to trace its origin which in turn kindled an interest in numismatics making him travel across the world scouring museums and private collections for coins relating to ancient rulers of South India.

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 and translations.
- The poet, many of whose bhavageetes (lyrical poems) were set to tune and popularised through cassettes.
- Dr. Bhatta translated 50 sonnets of William Shakespeare, poetry and works of T.S. Elliot and Yeats into Kannada.
- He won several awards including Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award, Masti Prashasti and Kannada Rajyotsava Award.

Scientific Tamil scholar Rama Sundaram has passed away

- Rama Sundaram passed away. He is a retired head of the Department of Science Tamil and Tamil Development at Thanjavur Tamil

University and president of the All India Institute of Science Tamil.

- Born on April 1, 1938 in Alawakottai, Ramanathapuram District, he worked as an Adjunct Professor at Chidambaram Annamalai University. He then served as the Director of the Department of Tamil Development at the Thanjavur Tamil University from 1981, as the Professor of Science Tamil and Tamil Development from 1987, and as the Senior Professor from 1997.
- He has authored more than 10 books in publications including the National Book Trust, Sahitya Akademi, Tamil University and other universities. He has also published more than 35 books as an editor. He has translated various scientific texts into Tamil.

Tirath Singh Rawat takes oath as Chief Minister of Uttarakhand

- Tirath Singh Rawat, the BJP Lok Sabha MP from Pauri Garhwal constituency, has been sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.
- He replaces Trivendra Singh Rawat who had stepped down from the post on March 09, 2021.
- Tirath Singh Rawat was administered the oath of office by Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya on March 10, 2021.
- Uttarakhand
- Capital - Dehradun (winter capital), Gairsain (summer capital)
- Governor - Baby Rani Maurya
- National Park (NP) - Jim Corbett NP, Nanda Devi NP, Valley of Flowers NP, Rajaji NP, Gangotri NP, Govind NP.

Kathakali exponent Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair dies in Kerala

- Veteran Kathakali exponent Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair died at his residence at nearby Cheliya in Koyilandi.
- He had been honoured with the Padma Shree in 2017 in recognition of his glorious contribution to the art form.
- His portrayal of Lord Krishna and Kuchela on stage always left the audience spellbound and

his last notable public performance was at the age of 100.

Renowned Padma Bhushan winning painter Laxman Pai passes away in Goa

- Renowned Indian artist and painter Laxman Pai has passed away. He was 95.
- The Goa-based painter was a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honour.
- Apart from this, Pai was honoured with several other prestigious awards, including Padma Shri, Nehru Award and Lalit Kala Akademi Award among others.

P.S.Kumaraswamy Raja

- Poosapati Sanjeevi Kumaraswamy Raja Indian politician and chief Minister of Madras presidency from 6 April 1949 to 10 April 1952 and former Governor of Orissa in the period from 1954 until 1956. He was born in Rajapalayam in Tamil Nadu.

Tanzania's First women president

- Samia Suluhu Hassan, 61 sworn in as Tanzania's first female president.
- Hassan, vice president since 2015, gave a brief and sombre address after she was sworn in as president, becoming the first female head of state in the east African country of 58 million.
- Note - Zanzibar is an autonomous region of Tanzania.

About Tanzania:

- Capital - Dodoma
- President - Samia Suluhu Hassan
- Prime Minister - Kassim Majaliwa
- Currency - Tanzanian Shilling

Former SEBI Chairman Ramakrishna no more

- G.V. Ramakrishna, 91, who was the first chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India.
- An administrator, renowned for his integrity and no-nonsense approach to addressing issues, Ramakrishna was appointed in 1990 as the second chairman of the then two-year-old Securities and Exchange Board. During his tenure, he oversaw the transition of the Board

into a legally empowered markets regulator following the enactment of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.

- Ramakrishna was the minister of economic affairs at the Embassy in Washington in 1972 and India's Ambassador to the European Economic Community (European Union) in 1989
- Ramakrishna he worked at the Finance Ministry and Ministries of Industry, Steel, Coal and Petroleum. He was adviser in the Planning Commission in 1981 and Member in 1994.

1971 Battle of Basantar hero, Lt Gen Pinto (retd) dies at 97

- Lieutenant General WAG Pinto (Retd), a military hero who led an infantry division to a legendary victory in the 1971 India-Pakistan War has passed away in Pune at the age of 97.
- He led the 54 Infantry Division in the Battle of Basantar in the war that gave birth to Bangladesh, leading his troops from the front with the motto he coined "bash on regardless".

Former RBI Deputy Governor KC Chakrabarty passes away at 68

- Veteran banker and former Deputy Governor at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), K.C. Chakrabarty has passed away. He was 68 years old.
- Mr Chakrabarty served as the RBI DG from June 2009 to April 2014 and resigned three months before his term concluded.
- He started his career teaching at the Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

1.5 PLACES IN NEWS

Similipal biosphere reserve

- A massive fire is threatening the Similipal Biosphere-one of the largest biospheres of India-prompting the Odisha government to deploy a big contingent of field-level staff to douse it.
- Similipal National Park is a national park and a tiger reserve in the Mayurbhanj district in the Indian state of Odisha.
- This protected area is part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009.

Gregarious bamboo flowering in Wayanad poses threat. The phenomenon may cause mass destruction of bamboo groves, the mainstay of herbivores

- "Gregarious flowering of bamboo" inside the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS) and the nearby Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Gudalur forest division in Tamil Nadu this year may pose a threat to wildlife in the Nilgiri biosphere, a major tiger and elephant habitat.
- The bamboo groves in the Wayanad forest are the main stay of herbivores in the Nilgiri biosphere during summer. With the advent of the season, migration of wild animals starts from the adjacent sanctuaries in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to Wayanad due to shortage of fodder and water.
- Which grow in more than 500 hectares of the 344.44 sq km of the sanctuary, have fully bloomed, a phenomenon said to occur once in the life cycle of bamboo plants," he added.
- Thorny bamboo (Bamboosa bambos) is a monocarpic (flowering only once) plant belonging to the Poaceae family (grass family), and its flowering cycle varies from 40 to 60 years.

Dal Lake

- Dal is a lake in Srinagar, the capital of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Dal Lake is a misnomer as Dal in Kashmiri means lake.
- It is integral to tourism and recreation in Kashmir and is named the "Jewel in the crown of Kashmir" or "Srinagar's Jewel".

- It is also an important source for commercial operations in fishing and water plant harvesting.
- It covers an area of 18 square kilometres and is part of a natural wetland including its floating gardens.
- The floating gardens, known as "Raad" in Kashmiri, blossom with lotus flowers during July and August.

Suez canal

- The Suez Canal is an artificial sea level waterway running north to south across the Isthmus of Suez in Egypt, to connect the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.
- It was opened for navigation in November 1869.
- The 150-year-old canal was controlled by British and French interests in its initial years, but was nationalized in 1956 by Egypt.
- The canal separates the African continent from Asia.
- It provides the shortest maritime route between Europe and the lands lying around the Indian and western Pacific oceans.
- It is one of the world's most heavily used shipping lanes, carrying over 12% of world trade by volume.
- It provides a crucial link for oil, natural gas and cargo being shipped from East to West.

Kaziranga National Park

- It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 Hectare (ha). It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

Legal Status:

- It was declared as a National Park in 1974.
- It has been declared a tiger reserve since 2007. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.

International Status:

- It was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985.
- It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.

1.6 SPORTS AND GAMES

Indian shuttlers Varun, Malvika clinch gold medals

- Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur and Malvika Bansod produced thrilling performances to emerge champions at the 2021 Uganada International in Kampala.

Neeraj Chopra betters national record

- Neeraj Chopra has already qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, bettered his own national mark of 88.06, achieved at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta.

History

- Born in the village of Khandra in Haryana's Panipat district, Chopra.

Achievements

- In 2015, he set a junior national record with a throw of 68.4m. In the World Under-20 Championships in Bydgoszcz, Poland, Chopra claimed gold and set a world junior record in javelin (800g) with a throw of 86.48m.
- He also claimed gold in the 2016 South Asian Games with a throw that measured 82.23m. In the 2017 Asian Championships in Bhubaneshwar, Chopra added another gold, with a mark of 85.23 m.

Mary Kom appointed chairperson of AIBA's champions and veterans committee

- Six-time world champion boxer Mary Kom has been appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) Champions and Veterans Committee.
- The Committee was formed in December 2020. It consists of most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.

Sarita Mor wins silver at Matteo Pellicone

- Wrestler Sarita More, brand ambassador of Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao campaign, Sonapat, has won a silver medal in the ranking wrestling competition.

- Sarita Mor has brought laurels to the state by bagging a silver medal in the 57 kg category of the Mateo Pelicone ranking wrestling series held in Rome. Sarita defeated Kazakhstan's Altin S 4-1 in the quarter-finals to enter the semi-finals.

Vinesh wins gold

- Star Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat claimed her second gold medal with a dominant win in the Matteo Pellicone ranking series event and reclaimed the top rank in her category.
- The 26 year old World bronze medallist and only Indian woman wrestler to qualify for Tokyo Games.

Swiss Open 2021 final

- Swiss Open 2021 Top seed Carolina Marin steam rolled PV Sindhu in just 35 minutes to win the women's singles title, her third crown of 2021.
- The gulf in class was evident as Marin got the job done in straight games 21-12, 21-5 against the Indian shuttler, who ran out of ideas in Basel.
- Sindhu, who came into the final without dropping a game, could only match the Spaniard in the opening exchanges of the first game after which the latter took the game away from the Indian world no. 7.

Awards received by P V Sindhu:

- P.V.Sindhu honoured with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, the highest sporting honour of India, on 29 August 2016.
- She received Arjuna Award for badminton on 24 September 2013.
- She was awarded with India's fourth highest civilians award Padma Shri Award in 2015.
- Earnings: \$8.5 million, Sindhu was ranked seventh in Forbes' list of "Highest-Paid Female Athletes 2018.

List of medals won by P.V. Sindhu

Olympic Games

- Silver medal at 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games.

World Championships

- Gold medal in 2019 (Women's singles)
- Silver medal in 2018 (Women's singles)
- Silver medal in 2017 (Women's singles)
- Bronze medal in 2014 (Women's singles)
- Bronze medal in 2013 (Women's singles)

Wrestler Bajrang Punia

- In wrestling, World Championship bronze medallist Bajrang Punia has clinched a gold medal by defeating his familiar rival Tugaa Tumur Ochir of Mongolia in the Matteo Pellicone World Ranking Series event in Rome.
- Bajrang defeated Ochir 2-2 by criteria in the final of the 65kg freestyle event and he ranked World No 1.
- This is Bajrang's second consecutive gold medal at the Matteo Pellicone event as he had finished on the top of the series in January 2020 as well.

Background

- In 2020, the Indian wrestler had defeated USA's Jordan Oliver in the final to clinch the gold medal at the tournament.
- Punia had reserved his place in the Tokyo Olympic Games in September 2019 after clinching bronze at the World Championships.

Tiruvallur students won the National Silambam Championship 2021

- The 17th National Level Silambam Competition on behalf of the All-India Silambam Championship was held at Kanyakumari.
- More than 600 children from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal participated. The event was held for boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 10 years.
- Raveen Chakraborty, a 5-year-old boy from Palani, won a gold medal in the Silambam Championship. Nikita, a 6-year-old girl from Palani, won a bronze medal.

Koneru Humpy is BBC's Indian sportswoman of the year

- World rapid chess champion Koneru Humpy has won the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award. BBC director general Tim Davie, hosting the virtual awards ceremony.

- The Lifetime Achievement award went to veteran athlete Anju Bobby George.
- English cricket star Ben Stokes announced the 19 year old Indian Shooter, Manu Bhaker as the winner of the Emerging Player of the Year award category.
- Bhaker, won two golds at the ISSF World Cup in 2018, followed by gold at the Youth Olympics and a Commonwealth Games gold with a record to boot.

Mithali Raj achieves milestone by score 10,000 international runs

- Mithali Raj has become the first Indian Woman cricketer as well as the second international woman cricketer to score 10,000 international runs across all the formats.
- She is the second woman cricketer to achieve this milestone after England's Charlotte Edwards.
- Mithali Raj achieved the milestone during the ongoing 3rd ODI with South Africa.

Vijay Hazare Trophy 2020-21 Final

- Mumbai begins as an overwhelming favourite to beat Uttar Pradesh and claim its fourth Vijay Hazare (50-over) title.

Vijay Hazare

- The Vijay Hazare Trophy, also known as the Ranji One-Day Trophy, was started in 2002-03 as a limited-overs cricket domestic competition involving state teams from the Ranji Trophy plates. It is named after the legendary Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare.
- Tamil Nadu is the most successful team having won the trophy 5 times. Mumbai are the current champions (2020-2021) who won their 4th title beating Uttar Pradesh in the finals.

Dubai Open: Muguruza Champion

- Garbine Muguruza ended a two-year title drought by claiming a maiden Dubai crown with a 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 victory over unseeded Czech Barbora Krejčíková.
- Krejčíková has enjoyed great success in doubles, reaching the number ranking and claiming two women's doubles Grand Slam trophies, as well as three in mixed doubles.

Bhavani Devi- First Indian Fencer to Qualify for Olympics

- The 27-years-old Indian Fencer, Bhavani Devi, has created a history and has become the first Indian fencer to qualify for Olympics in Women's individual Sabre.
- The fencer finds her place in the Tokyo Olympics by the "Adjusted Official ranking method" on March 14, 2021.

Annu Rani rewrites own National mark

- National javelin throw champion Annu Rani moved closer to the elusive Olympic qualification with a 63.24m throw, bettering her own twoyearold mark for a new National record on day one of the 24th Federation Cup.
- The Olympic qualification mark is 64m

Sreeshankar qualifies for Tokyo

- Murali Sreeshankar has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics 2021 in the long-jump event.

Diya Chitale retains title at Junior and Youth National Table Tennis Championships

- Defending champion Diya Chitale retained the youth girls title with a hard-fought win while Swastika Ghosh came-from behind to claim her maiden junior girls crown at the UTT 82nd Junior and Youth National Table Tennis Championships.

Virat Kohli becomes the first player to score 3000 runs in men's T20I

- Indian captain Virat Kohli has 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.
- He also became the third captain in international cricket to score 12000 runs as a captain. He joined legendary captains Ricky Ponting and Graeme Smith in the elite list.

National steeplechase record

- Avinash Sable has made a habit of breaking his own records and setting new benchmarks.

- In the Federation Cup, the steeplechaser set yet another National record, his fifth in three years, while also breaching the Olympic qualification mark, also for the second time.
- Neeraj Chopra, meanwhile bettered his own meet record by almost two metres with a best throw of 87.80m but fell short of a new National mark.
- The other big hope for Olympics, shot-putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, could only manage a best throw of 20.58m, good enough to win but way off the qualifying mark of 21.10m.

Tamil Nadu athletes dominate the Federation Cup

- The track event dominance of Tamil Nadu athletes continued with a double in the 100m hurdles at the 24th Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships. T. Veeramani was the winner in the men's 110m hurdles with a timing of 14.57s, while Tamil Nadu's C. Kanimozhi won the 100m hurdles gold medal.
- Tamil Nadu's Dhanalakshmi created waves on the athletics circuit by defeating reigning Indian 100m record holder Dutee Chand.

Top Indian paddlers book their tickets for Tokyo Games

- India's top singles table tennis players, Sharath Kamal, G. Sathiyam, Manika Batra and Sutirtha Mukherjee, all booked their places in the Tokyo Olympics.

Kamalpreet books record for Olympics

- Kamalpreet Kaur qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in women's discus throw event with a national record attempt of 65.06 metres during the ongoing Athletics Federation Cup. The Olympic qualification benchmark is 63.5 metres.

Yashaswini Wins Gold , Silver For Manu Bhaker

- India's Yashaswini Singh Deswal personified consistency and calmness on her way to winning the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol ahead of the more celebrated Manu Bhaker in the ISSF World Cup.

Anjum qualifies for final

- Anjum Moudgil as the World Championship silver medallist qualified in second place in women's air rifle with a score of 629.6 of the shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad.

Nikhat Zareen, Gaurav Solanki win bronze at Bosphorus Boxing Tournament

- Indian boxers Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and Gaurav Solanki (57kg) ended up with a bronze medal each as both lost their semifinal bouts at the Bosphorus Boxing Tournament in Turkey.

Sharath Kamal, Manika Batra seal Olympic mixed doubles spot

- Indian table tennis duo Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra qualified for the mixed doubles event at the Tokyo Olympics after winning the final at the Asian Olympic Qualification Tournament in Doha, Qatar.

ISSF World Cup 2021

- Indian shooter Divyansh Singh Panwar, the world No. 1 in the men's 10m Air Rifle has won bronze in men's 10m Air Rifle event at the ISSF World Cup 2021 in New Delhi.
- The Indian team bagged the air rifle men's team event with a cumulative score of 1885.9. The USA stood second with score of 1880.8 followed by South Korea with 1880.3.
- The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup 2021 is being held at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi from March 18, 2021. The event will end on March 29, 2021.
- It is the first international event of 2021 by ISSF.
- More than 300 shooters from as many as 43 countries are participating in the World Cup being held in all three disciplines – shotgun, rifle, and pistol.

Aslan Karatsev

- Aslan Karatsev reached milestone in the 2021 ATP Tour season and he beat Lloyd Harris 6-3, 6-2 to claim his maiden ATP Tour title at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.

India's Divyansh Singh Panwar, Elavenil Valarivan Win Gold

- India's Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan won the gold medal in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event at the ISSF World Cup being held in Delhi.
- The India duo shot a combined total of 16 in the gold medal match to finish ahead of Hungarian world number one Istvan Peni and Eszter Denes who managed 10.

Ganemat, Angad win gold at Shooting World Cup

- Indian shooters Ganemat Sekhon and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa bagged the skeet mixed team gold medal at the ISSF World Cup.
- Qatar's Reem A Sharshani and Rashid Hamad claimed the bronze medal.

Aishwary in blistering form, clinches gold

- Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar won the men's rifle 3-position gold while Chinki Yadav beat Rahi Sarnobat and Manu Bhaker for the women's sports pistol gold in the World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range.
- The 20-year-old Aishwary beat a strong field and pushed world No. 1 Istvan Peni to the silver by 0.9 point.

Tokyo Olympics 2021

- The Grand Start of the Olympic Torch Relay in Japan's northeastern prefecture Fukushima marked the beginning of a four month-journey towards the Opening Ceremony of the Tokyo Games on 23 July 2021.
- Iwashimizu Azusa, a key player of the Japanese women's football team that won the World Cup in 2011, was the first runner with the torch.
- The events start from July 23 and end to August 8.

Indian women win 25m sports pistol

- Rahi Sarnobat, Chinki Yadav and Manu Bhaker combined strongly to win the 25 metre sports pistol team gold with a resounding 17-7 victory over Poland in the shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad.

India adds two gold; silver for Vijayveer

- World junior champion Vijayveer Sidhu claimed silver in the shooting World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Range.
- India won two gold. In the mixed rifle 3-position, it was through Sanjeev Rajput and Tejaswini who beat Serhiy Kulish and Anna Ilna of Ukraine 31-29. There was also the men's 50-metre rifle team gold.

Vijayveer Sidhu, Tejaswini win gold

- India's 25m rapid fire pistol mixed team won a gold and silver medal in the ongoing ISSF Shooting World Cup in New Delhi.

- 18-year-old Vijayveer Sidhu and 16-year-old Tejaswini defeated Gurpreet Singh and Abhudnya Patil 9-1 in a gold medal match.

Indian teams trap gold

- Men's and women's teams nailed the elusive trap gold in the shooting World Cup that concluded at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad.
- Shotgun shooters Prithviraj Tondaiman, Lakshay Sheoran and Kynan Chenai ended India's campaign at the ISSF World Cup with a gold medal in the men's trap team event.
- With this India has 15 Gold, 9 Silver, 6 Bronze, totally 30 medals have won by India.

1.7 BOOKS & AUTHORS

My life in full: work, family and our Future

- Padma Bhushan awardee Indra Nooyi, the former CEO of PepsiCo is set to publish her memoir titled "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future". The book will feature both the personal and professional life of Indra Nooyi.

About Indra Nooyi:

- Indra Nooyi, an Indian American, worked at PepsiCo for around 24 years.
- She served as the CEO and Chairman of PepsiCo for 12 years from 2006 to 2018.
- She was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2007 for trade and Industry.

Autobiography of 'Frontier Gandhi' released in English

- The autobiography of freedom fighter 'Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan', titled "The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle" has been released.
- The book is English translation of Khan's autobiography, which was first published in Iranian language Pashto in 1983.
- The English translation of the book is done by former Pakistani civil servant and author Imitiaz Ahmad Sahibzada.

1.8 AWARDS & HONOURS

Amitabh Bachchan to be honoured with 2021 FIAF Award

- Megastar Amitabh Bachchan will be honoured with an award by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).
- The veteran actor will be the first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world's film heritage.

- Head quarters of FIAF : Brussels, Belgium.

Deepika Padukone joins WEF list of Young Global Leader

- Actor Deepika Padukone has joined the list of the Young Global Leaders (YGLs) compiled by the World Economic Forum. The list also includes several Indian citizens and India-origin persons.

- The Forum of Young Global Leaders was founded in 2005 by Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF, to create a world where leaders take responsibility for a sustainable future while meeting increasingly complex and interrelated challenges.

WEF

- President : Borge Brende
- Founded on : 24 January 1971
- Head Quarters : Cologny Switzerland

Tamilisai Soundararajan presented Global Women of Excellence Award

- Lt. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan was presented the Top 20 Global Women of Excellence Award for 2020 at a US event.
- She joined a league of extraordinary women achievers across the world chosen for the award, including US Vice President Kamala Harris.
- The award instituted by the US Congressional Multi Advisory Task Force led by Congressman Danny K. Davis, Representative of Illinois's 7th Congressional district, was presented during the 9th Congressional International Women's Day Gala at Naperville, Illinois.

Kiran Bedi Receives Baton of Honor from President Ram Nath Kovind

- President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind presented a Baton of Honour and a letter of appreciation to former Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi on March 08, 2021.
- The Baton of Honor is decorated with the emblem of the Indian Republic.
- Bedi was recognised for her services to the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Gowsalya Shankar presented with IWOC 2021 Award

- The U.S. Consulate honoured Tamil Nadu based anticaste activist and human rights defender Gowsalya Shankar with the International Woman of Courage (IWOC) Award.
- The of Nomination was handed over to her by U.S. Consul General in Chennai Judith Ravin at an event of 'Courageous Women Inspire a Better World' held .

IWOC

- The International Women of Courage Award, also referred to as the U.S. Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award, is an American award presented annually by the United States Department of State to women around the world who have shown leadership, courage, resourcefulness, and willingness to sacrifice for others, especially in promoting women's rights.

V.S. Natarajan gets lifetime award

- Senior geriatrician V.S.Natarajan was presented with the lifetime achievement award at the Global Congress of Physicians of Indian Origin through a virtual meeting held on February 27 and 28.

Imayam wins Sahitya Akademi Award

- Tamil writer Imayam, who calls himself a writer of the Dravidian movement and captures the stark realities of the caste system and the lives of Maha dalits, won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2020 for his novel Sellatha Panam.
- He wants to dedicate the award to the leaders of the Justice Party and the Dravidian Movement, Periyar, Anna and Kalaigarnar M. Karunanidhi, and Ambedkar.
- He is the first writer from 'Nadu Nadu' Cuddalore, Villupuram and Arcot districts of Tamil Nadu to win the award.
- Born V.Annamalai in Cuddalore district, Imayam has written six novels, six short story collections and a novel. In 2019, his first novel Koveru Kazhuthaikal, translated into English as Burden of Beast, completed 25 years.
- His novel Pethavan poignantly tells the story of the problems faced by a family when their daughter falls in love with a Dalit.
- His latest work Vaazhga Vaazhga is about the loss of innocent lives at political events.

Sahitya Akademi Awards

- Sahitya Akademi award established in 1954, is a literary honour that is conferred annually by Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of letters.
- Award is presented to the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of

the twenty-four major Indian languages recognized by the Akademi (including English).

- Sahitya Akademi award is the second highest literary honour by the Government of India, after Jnanpith award.
- The award is presented in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and a cheque of Rs 1 lakh.

Jagan honours daughter of National Flag creator, presents her Rs. 75 lakh

- Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy felicitated National Flag creator Pingali Venkayya's daughter Ghantasala Seetha Mahalakshmi and his other family members on the occasion of 75 years of the Flag, and announced the launch of Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav in Andhra Pradesh.
- Gandhi has repeatedly stressed the need for a separate national flag for our country. Subsequently, Pingali vengayya made more than 30 different flags and displayed them when Gandhi visited Vijayawada in 1921.

Sahitya Akademi Award for translation goes to K.V. Jeyasri

- Award given for her translation of the Malayalam novel Nilam Poothu Malaranna Naal (The day the land bloomed and blossomed) into Tamil as Nilam Poothu Malarantha Naal.
- K.V. Jeyasri, a Tamil teacher from Tiruvannamalai, has won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 for her translation of the Malayalam novel Nilam Poothu Malaranna Naal (The day the land bloomed and blossomed) into Tamil as Nilam Poothu Malarantha Naal.
- The award includes a cash prize of ₹50,000 and a copper plaque.
- Ms. Jeyasri is currently translating IAS officer K.V. Mohankumar's novel Ushnarasi.
- It is about the communist movement in Kerala and culminates in its capture of power in 1957.

Gandhi Peace Prize for 2019 and 2020 announced

- The Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2019 and 2020 has been conferred on the following:

Year	Winner	Contribution
2019	(Late) His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman	Strengthening relations between India and Oman, and his efforts to promote peace and non-violence in the Gulf region.
2020	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh	Inspiring the liberation of Bangladesh, laying the foundation for the close and fraternal relations between India and Bangladesh, and promoting peace and non-violence in the Indian subcontinent.

Ministry of Sports Decides to Extend "Khelo India" scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26

- The Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju has announced that the Sports Ministry has decided to extend the Khelo India scheme for a period of five years, from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Khelo India

- The scheme was launched in 2016-17, to improve India's sports culture at the grass-root level through organized talent identification, structured sporting competitions and infrastructure development.

67th National Film Awards Announced

- The winner of 67th National Film Awards was announced on 22 March 2021 in New Delhi to honour best of Indian cinema in 2019.
- Most Film Friendly State Award – Sikkim

- Award for Best Book on Cinema – A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema, by Sanjay Suri
- Best Feature Film: Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea (Malayalam)
- Best Actor (shared) : Manoj Bajpayee for Bhonsle (Hindi), and Dhanush for Asuran (Tamil)
- Best Actress: Kangana Ranaut for Panga (Hindi) and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi (Hindi)
- Best Director: Sanjay Puran Singh Chauhan for Bahattar Hoorain (Hindi)
- Best Non-Feature Film: An Engineered Dream (Hindi)

- Best Hindi Film: Chhichhore.

EY Entrepreneur year of the award 2020

- Marico chairman Harsh C. Mariwala was named the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2020.
- He will represent the country at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award in June.
- Marico is one of the largest and most recognizable FMCG (Fast-moving consumer goods) companies in the country.
- It owns brands such as Parachute and Saffola.

1.9 INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Pakistan National Day

- March 23 marks the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution in 1940 at a summit of Muslim leaders in Lahore city in which the subcontinent's Muslim leaders set the agenda for a separate homeland for Muslims.

The Lahore Resolution

- Lahore Resolution adopted at the general session of the muslim league. In 1940 mohammed ali jinnah called a general session of the All India Muslim League in Lahore to discuss the situation that had arisen due to the outbreak of the Second World War and the Government of India joining the war without taking the opinion of the Indian leaders, and also to analyse the reasons that led to the defeat of the Muslim League in the general election of 1937 in the Muslim majority provinces.
- The Resolution was adopted on 24 March with great enthusiasm. The Hindu Press dubbed it as the 'Pakistan Demand', after the scheme invented by Rahmat Ali, an Indian Muslim living at Cambridge.

LoC silent in March

- Indian Army Chief General MM Naravane has evinced hope that the ceasefire reiteration at the Line of Control with Pakistan will stay.

- The reason being no incident of ceasefire violation has happened since the joint announcement and also because it has the Pakistan Army's support.

Bangladesh is celebrating 50th Independence Day

- The 13-day military conflict is one of the shortest wars in history. It ended with a decisive win for India and led to the creation of Bangladesh. India on Wednesday is observing the 50th anniversary of the 1971 war with Pakistan, also known as the Bangladesh Liberation War.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered prayers at the centuries-old Jeshoreshwari Kali temple in Ishwaripur village in southwestern Bangladesh.
- Modi honours Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Gandhi Peace Prize, announces Swarna Jayanti scholarship for youths of Bangladesh and invites 50 entrepreneurs from the neighbouring country to come and invest in India.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays tribute to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex, Tungipara.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina visited the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka.

India and Japan back in new Sri Lanka port project

- Sri Lanka announced it will develop the West Container Terminal (WCT) at the Colombo Port, along with India and Japan.
- The decision comes a month after the Rajapaksa government ejected the two partners from a 2019 tripartite agreement to jointly develop the East Container Terminal (ECT), citing resistance to “foreign involvement”.
- While the High Commission of India had “approved” Adani Ports, which was to invest in the ECT project earlier, Japan is yet to name an investor, according to officially published Cabinet decisions. Neither India nor Japan has officially commented on the offer, or on the said private investment from the countries.

China gives green light for first downstream dams on Brahmaputra

- A draft of China’s new Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), which is set to be formally approved has given the green light for the first dams to be built on the lower reaches of Yarlung Zangbo river, as the Brahmaputra is known in Tibet before it flows into India.

Current issues

- As India and China continue to grow demographically as well as economically amid increased consumption among its citizenry, both nations face water constraints and in a race to develop new projects in order to overcome them.

Brahmaputra:

- It originates under the name of Siang or Dihang, from the Chemayungdung glacier of the Kailash range near the Mansarovar lake. It enters India west of Sadiya town in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Tributaries: Dibang, Lohit, Siang, Burhi Dihing, Tista, and Dhansari.

- It is a perennial river and has several peculiar characteristics due to its geography and prevailing climatic conditions.
- It is flooded twice annually. One flood is caused by the melting of the Himalayan snow in summer and the other due to the monsoon flows.

First ever visit of Indian Naval Ships to the historic port city of Mongla

- The Indian Naval Ships, INS Sumedha—an indigenously built Offshore Patrol vessel, and INS Kulish—an indigenously built guided missile corvette, are on three-day visit to the historic port town of Mongla in Bangladesh from March 8 to 10, 2021.
- This is the first time ever that any Indian Naval Ship is visiting the port of Mongla in Bangladesh.
- The basic aim of this visit is to pay homage to the Bangladeshi and Indian combatants and citizens who laid down their lives during the Liberation War of 1971 against Pakistan.
- The ships will take part in the ongoing Swarnim Vijay Varsh celebrations to commemorate 50 years of Liberation War of 1971 and reiterating the historic Indo-Bangladeshi friendship.

Mizoram, Manipur offers help to Myanmar refugees

- Four Northeast Indian states share the border with Myanmar: Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Manipur.

Arunachal Pradesh

- Capital City – Itanagar
- Chief Minister – Pema Khandu
- Governor – B.D. Mishra
- State Animal – Gayal

Nagaland

- Capital – Imphal
- Governor – Najma Heptulla
- Chief Minister – N. Biren Singh
- National Park – Keibul Lamjao National Park

Mizoram

- Capital – Aizawl
- Governor – PS Sreedharan Pillai
- National Parks (NP) – Murlen NP, Champhai; Phawngpui National Park, Lawngtlai

- Tiger Reserve – Dampa Tiger Reserve, Mamit

About Manipur

- **Capital** - Imphal
- **Governor** - Najma Heptulla
- **Chief Minister** - N.Biren Singh
- **State Flower** - Shirui Lily
- **State Tree** - Uningthou

Indus Commissioners of India, Pakistan to meet in New Delhi on Mar 23-24

- The Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan will meet on March 23 and 24 to discuss a host of issues, including Islamabad's concerns to the design of Indian hydropower projects on the Chenab River.
- This will be the annual meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission. Under the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty, both the commissioners are required to meet at least once a year alternately in India and Pakistan.
- This will also be the first meeting between the two commissioners after the nullification of special provisions under Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The state was later carved into two union territories -- Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Indian delegation will be led by Saxena with his advisors from the Central Water

Commission, Central Electricity Authority and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation.

- The Pakistani delegation will be led by Syed Muhammad Meher Ali Shah, Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters and his eight advisors.

Indus water Treaty - 1960

- The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) between India and Pakistan marks its 61st anniversary.
- The Indus system comprises the main Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. The basin is mainly shared by India and Pakistan with a small share for China and Afghanistan.
- With the partition of India in 1947, waters of Indus rivers system were also divided.
- The sharing formula, devised after prolonged negotiations, sliced the Indus system into two halves. The three 'western rivers' (Indus, Jhelum and Chenab) went to Pakistan and the three 'eastern rivers' (Sutlej, Ravi and Beas) were portioned to India.
- India is allowed to use 20% water of the western rivers for irrigation, power generation and transport purposes.
- IWT granted 3.6 million acre-feet (MAF) of "permissible storage capacity" to India on the western rivers but due to poor water development projects, 2-3 MAF of water easily flows into Pakistan.

1.10 LATEST HISTORICAL EVENTS

Modi flags off padyatra to commemorate salt march

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the foot march to re enact the historic Mahatma Gandhi led Salt March, while launching the 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav', the government's initiative to mark 75 years of India's Independence.
- Prime Minister Modi announced the 75th anniversary celebrations would continue till August 15, 2023.

He reiterated the Five Themes

- Freedom Struggle

- Ideas at 75
- Achievements at 75
- Actions at 75
- Resolves at 75
- The padyatra is being undertaken by 81 persons on April 5. The march from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi in Navsari district, a distance of 386 km, will take them 25 days. It will mark the 91st anniversary of the historic march against the tax on salt imposed by the British in India.

1.10 APPOINTMENTS – WHO IS WHO?

- Shri Matam Venkata Rao was appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Central Bank of India.

CII-TN Council gets a new chairman

- Dr. S. Chandrakumar, founder and executive chairman, Sri Kauvery Medical Care India Ltd, Trichy has been elected chairman of the CII Tamil Nadu State Council for 2021-22.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

- CII is a non-government, not for profit, industry led and industry managed organization, playing a proactive role in India's development process.
- Founded in 1895, India's premier business association has around 9000 members, from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 300,000 enterprises from around 276 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

Indian Economist Ligia Noronha appointed as Assistant Secretary-General of UN

- Leading Indian economist Ligia Noronha has been appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- Noronha will succeed fellow Indian and development economist Satya Tripathi.
- Noronha, who is working with UNEP since 2014, is an economist with over 30 years of international experience in the field of sustainable development.
- Prior to joining the UNEP, Noronha worked at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi as Executive Director (Research Coordination) and as Director of the Division on Resources, Regulation and Global Security.

United Nations

- The United Nations (UN) is an international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States.

- The UN is structured around five principal organs:

- General Assembly
- United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- International Court of Justice
- UN Secretariat.

United Nations Environment Programme

- The UNEP is a leading global environmental authority established on 5th June 1972.
- Functions: It sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for global environment protection.
- Major Reports: Emission Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook, Frontiers, Invest into Healthy Planet.
- Major Campaigns: Beat Pollution, UN75, World Environment Day, Wild for Life.
- Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya.

NABARD's Chairman G.R. Chintala takes charge as Chairman of APRACA

- G.R. Chintala, the Chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), has been sworn in as the new Chairman of APRACA (Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association).
- Chintala has taken over from DPK Gunasekera, who is the Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Ceylon.

NABARD

- Started on: 12 July 1982
- Head Quarters: Mumbai
- Chairman: G.R.Chintala

APRACA

- Asia-Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA) is a regional association that promotes cooperation and facilitates mutual exchange of information and expertise in the field of rural finance.
- Currently, it has a total of 86 institutions in 24 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region that are affiliated with the APRACA as its members.

The General Secretariat of APRACA is located in Bangkok, Thailand.

- APRACA along with NENARACA (Near East – North Africa Agricultural Credit Association) and AFRACA (African Rural and Agricultural Credit Association) were established with the help of FAO following the 1975 World Conference on Agricultural Credit.

Bach re-elected IOC chief

- Thomas Bach was re-elected as president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for a final four year term.
- Bach received unanimous backing in the election in which he was the sole candidate, with 93 of the 94 valid votes from IOC members in favour of his re-election.

International Olympic Committee

- Summer and Winter Olympic Games are organized by the IOC.
- It is a non-governmental sports organization headquartered at Lausanne, Switzerland.
- It was founded by Pierre de Coubertin and Demetrios Vikelas on 23rd June 1894.

Anurag Thakur promoted as captain in Territorial Army

- Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur became the first serving union minister to be promoted as Captain in the Territorial Army as a regular commissioned officer.
- Thakur was promoted to the rank of Captain at 124 Infantry Battalion Territorial Army (Sikh). Thakur announced that it is an honour and pride to be part of the Territorial Army and a part of 124 Sikh Regiment.

Territorial Army

- The modern Territorial Army was inaugurated by the first Indian Governor-General of India, C. Rajagopalachari, on 9 October 1949 after the Independence Territorial Army Act was passed in 1948.
- By 1972, units were either disbanded or converted to Regular Army units with the exception of infantry battalions.

Girish Murmu re-appointed Chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors

- Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), Girish Chandra Murmu has been re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the year 2021. Prior to this, Mr Murmu was elected as Chairman of the Panel for 2020 as well.
- At present, the panel consists of 13 countries which are India, Germany, Chile, China, United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

CAG

- The Constitution of India provides for an independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) in chapter V under Part V.
- The CAG is mentioned in the Constitution of India under Article 148 – 151.
- He is the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department.
- He is the guardian of the public purse and controls the entire financial system of the country at both the levels- the centre and state.
- His duty is to uphold the Constitution of India and the laws of Parliament in the field of financial administration.

Appointment and Term to Constitutional Posts:

- The CAG is appointed by the President of India by a warrant under his hand and seal.
- Term: 6 years or 65 years.

Government Appoints Dr. GP Samanta as new Chief Statistician of India

- The Central Government has appointed Dr. G P Samanta as the new Chief Statistician of India (CSI) for a period of two years. He is India's fourth CSI.
- Currently, Dr Samanta was serving as an adviser in the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Department Of Statistics and Information Management.

- He will replace Kshatrapati Shivaji who was holding additional charge of the post since September 2020.
- Dr. Samanta will also serve as the Secretary in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

New IOB director

- S. Srimathy has taken charge as the executive director of Indian Overseas Bank.
- She was also deputed as the chief vigilance officer of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in July 2018.

Lt Gen B S Raju appointed as the DGMO

- Lt Gen B S Raju, the General-Officer-Commanding of the Srinagar-based Chinar Corps, will be the new Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army.

Ajay Mathur takes over as Director General of International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- Dr Ajay Mathur has assumed office as the
- Director General of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) with effect from March 15, 2021.
- He has been appointed for a period of four years which can be renewed for an additional term.
- Dr Ajay Mathur has replaced Upendra Tripathy, who completed his term on March 15, after serving as the Director General since 2017.

International Solar Alliance

- It is an Indian initiative that was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, France on the side-lines of the Conference of the Parties (COP-21), with 121 solar resource-rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.
- **Objective:** To collectively address key common challenges to the scaling up of solar energy in ISA member countries.

M A Ganapathy appointed as Chief of National Security Guard

- Senior IPS officer M A Ganapathy has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of National Security Guard (NSG) on March 16, 2021.

National Security Guard (NSG)

- The NSG is a counter-terrorism unit that formally came into existence in 1986 by an act of Parliament 'National Security Guard Act, 1986'.
- The idea behind raising such force came in the aftermath of Operation Blue Star (an Indian military action carried out to remove militant religious leader from the Golden Temple, Amritsar) in 1984, Akshardham Temple attack and the assassination of former PM Indira Gandhi, for 'combating terrorist activities with a view to protect states against internal disturbances.'

Kuldiep Singh appointed as Chief of Central Reserve Police Force

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed senior IPS officer Kuldiep Singh as the Director General (DG) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- Singh, a 1986 batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre, is presently the Special DG, CRPF.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of 'Stop TB Partnership Board'

- The Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, has been appointed as the chairman of "Stop TB Partnership Board" on March 18, 2021.
- This appointment was made to recognise his outstanding contribution towards the movement of eradicating Tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025.
- He will be serving the global body for a three-year term from July 2021.
- Stop TB Partnership was established in 2001.
- The organization was established after the meeting of First Session of Ad Hoc Committee on Tuberculosis Epidemic which was held in

London in 1998.

- India has committed to eliminating TB by 2025. India's deadline is five years ahead of global deadline of 2030.

Justice N.V. Ramana set to take over as 48th CJI

- Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde has recommended Justice N.V. Ramana, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, as the next top judge.
- Justice NV Ramana is currently the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court of India. He was previously serving as the Delhi High Court Chief Justice and acting Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court.
- Justice NV Ramana is due to retire on August 26, 2022.

Chief Justice of India

- The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.
- The Supreme Court has ruled that the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) is a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.

Indian-American Doctor Vivek Murthy appointed as US Surgeon General

- The US Senate has voted, 57-43, to confirm the appointment of Indian-American doctor Vivek Murthy as the Surgeon General under US President Biden's administration.
- The 43-year-old Dr Murthy would occupy the position of America's Surgeon General for the second time.
- Dr Murthy was appointed as surgeon general under the Obama administration in 2011 but was fired by former President Trump in 2017.

K. Vijay Raghavan gets one-year extension

- The government has extended the term of Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) K. Vijay Raghavan by a year. Order was issued by the Department of Personnel and Training.
- Dr. Vijayaraghavan, 67, was appointed PSA in 2018 after retiring as Secretary, Department of

Biotechnology.

Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser

- It was set-up in November 1999 by the Cabinet Secretariat.

Objectives:

- To evolve policies, strategies and missions for the generation of innovations and support systems for multiple applications.

UIDAI, FCI get new heads in govt

- Saurabh Garg as the CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), Sanjeev Kumar as Chairman of Airports Authority of India and Atish Chandra as CMD of Food Corporation of India (FCI).
- Prashant Kumar Singh as CEO of Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

Unique Identification Authority of India

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is a statutory authority established on 12 July 2016 by the Government of India under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, following the provisions of the Aadhaar Act 2016.
- The UIDAI is mandated to assign a 12-digit unique identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the residents of India.
- The UIDAI was initially set up by the Government of India in January 2009, as an attached office under the aegis of the Planning Commission.

FCI

- The Nodal Agency in Food Management is Food Corporation of India, which is responsible to procure, store and distribute the foodgrains. FCI is a statutory body established via Food Corporation Act 1964
- Head Quarters - New Delhi

AAI

- Founded in 1995, the Airports Authority of India was created through the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994 under the aegis of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Hence, it is a statutory body.
- The headquarters of the Airports Authority of India is in New Delhi.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- GeM is a one-stop National Public Procurement Portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Central and State Government Departments / Organizations / Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- It was launched in 2016 to bring transparency and efficiency in the government buying process.
- It operates under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



2. POLITICAL SCIENCE

2.1 LATEST COURT VERDICTS

Bureaucrats cannot be State Election Commissioners

- The Supreme Court held that independent persons and not bureaucrats should be appointed State Election Commissioners.

SEC

- The Constitution of India vests in the State Election Commission, consisting of a State Election Commissioner, the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation

of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of all elections to the Panchayats and the Municipalities (Articles 243K, 243ZA).

- The State Election Commissioner is appointed by the Governor.
- As per article 243 (C3) the Governor, when so requested by the State Election Commission, make available to the State Election Commission such staff as may be necessary for the discharge of the functions conferred on the SEC.

2.2 GOVT – WELFARE ORIENTED GOVT SCHEMES, THEIR UTILITY

Janaushadhi Scheme

- The Janaushadhi week is being celebrated across the country from 1st March to 7th March 2021.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in 2008 under the name Jan Aushadi Campaign.
- Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementation agency for PMBJP.
- The Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India works under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
- PMBJP stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.
- It also intends to extend the coverage of quality generic medicines so as to reduce the out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines and thereby redefine the unit cost of treatment per person.
- It will create awareness about generic medicines through education and publicity so

that quality is not synonymous with an only high price.

Cases and articles related to Reservation

- The Constitution Bench will decide on these broad issues:
- **Indira Sowhney Judgement of 1992**, which fixed reservation at 50%, requires a relook by a larger Bench “in the light of subsequent constitutional amendments, judgments and changed social dynamics of the society”.
- **Maratha quota law** is covered by the exemption of “exceptional circumstances” by which reservation can cross the 50% mark.
- **102nd Constitutional Amendment Act** deprives a State legislature of its power to enact a legislation to identify socially and economically backward classes within the State to confer quota benefits to them.
- **Article 342A** abrogates a States’ power to legislate for or classify “any backward class of citizens”, and thereby, affects the federal policy/structure.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

- The finance ministry announced about 55 per cent of the total account holders under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), a flagship scheme of the government to promote financial inclusion, are women.
- As of February 24, 2021, 23.21 crore accounts, out of the total 41.93 crore accounts opened under the PMJDY scheme, belong to women account holders.
- With regard to the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY), it said, about 68 per cent or 19.04 crore accounts with an amount of Rs 6.36 lakh crore (as of February 26, 2021) have been sanctioned to women entrepreneurs under the scheme since its inception.
- The major benefit of PMSSN will be enhanced access to universal and affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources, while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.
- Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi, PMSSN is a non-lapsable reserve fund for Health in the Public Account and Proceeds of share of health in the Health and Education Cess will be credited into it.
- The administration and maintenance of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi is entrusted to the Health Ministry and in any financial year.

PMJDY Scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was launched by Narendra Modi on 28th August 2014. It is a national mission with an aim to provide access to various financial services including Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension, Banking Savings & Deposit Accounts in an affordable manner.

MUDRA Scheme

- Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) is a scheme launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on April 8, 2015 for providing loans up to 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.

Cabinet approves 'PM Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi' as single non-lapsable reserve fund

- The Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a single non-lapsable reserve fund for share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Finance Act, 2007.

Sewer network scheme

- Nearly 8,000 sewer connections have been provided in the added areas under the Metro-water scheme 'Ilanthorum Inaippu'.
- The scheme, which was launched last month facilitates residents to pay a bill in 10 installments in five years after the house service connection is given as part of the underground sewer network.
- Presently, residents from Tiruvottiyur, Ambattur, Valasaravakkam and Sholinganallur had opted for connections under the scheme.
- The project is being undertaken at a cost of ₹50 crore in the first phase. A similar scheme is being executed in core areas under the 'Azhaithal Inaippu' scheme, where sewer connections are provided based on calls from residents.

Government to supply fortified rice through ICDS, Midday Meal scheme from April

- To ensure nutritional security, the government has decided to scale up the distribution of fortified rice and start its supply through Integrated Child Development Services and Mid-Day Meal scheme from April.
- Fortified rice is being distributed via ration shops, also called the public distribution system (PDS), in one district each in six states out of the 15 states identified for implementation of a central scheme on a pilot basis for three months in 2019-20.

- The objective of the scheme was to address anaemia and micro-nutrient deficiency in the country.
- About 65 per cent of India's population consumes rice as a staple food. Fortification of rice is a cost-effective and complementary strategy to increase vitamin and mineral content in diets and a step towards nutritional security and to fight anaemia and malnutrition in the country.

Integrated Child Development Services

- CDS stands for Integrated Child Development Services.
- ICDS was launched in the year 1975.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The Central Government is responsible for programme planning and operating costs while State governments are accountable for programme execution & providing additional nutrition out of their own resources.

Govt invites bids for over 390 air routes under fresh UDAN

- The civil aviation ministry has invited bids for around 392 routes under the regional air connectivity scheme as part of continuing efforts to improve domestic connectivity as well as make flying more affordable.
- Under the Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) regional connectivity scheme, which will complete four years this year, as many as 325 routes and 56 airports have been operationalised.
- These include five heliports and two water aerodromes. On the commencement of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India@75)' launched by the Government of India, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has proposed about 392 routes under UDAN 4.1 bidding process.
- The UDAN 4.1 round is focused on connecting smaller airports, along with special helicopter and seaplane routes.

Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik

- Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) was launched as a regional connectivity scheme under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016.
- It is an innovative scheme to develop the regional aviation market.
- The objective of scheme is to create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes so that flying becomes affordable to the common man even in small towns.
- The scheme envisages providing connectivity to un-served and underserved airports of the country through the revival of existing airstrips and airports. The scheme is operational for a period of 10 years.

New Saral Pension scheme offers retirees options

- Insurance regulator IRDAI's Saral pension plan is one such scheme that comes into effect on April 1, 2021. Under the scheme, insurers will pay the policy holders a minimum sum of Rs 1,000/ month, Rs 3,000/ quarter, and Rs 12,000/ year.
- In India, retirement planning is often perceived to begin only in the latter years of a person's career often through making rent-accruing investments in combination with insurance.
- Under the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India's guidelines, the maximum amount that can be paid by insurance firms is not capped. Industry experts say that like other annuity plans, the Saral Pension scheme requires people to pay a lump sum amount at the time of purchasing the policy, and this will then be followed by annuity payments.
- Under the guidelines, the annuity payments are given to the insurer for life, and upon the death of the policy holder, they will be paid to the spouse or the nominee. Saral Pension, as the name suggests, is a simple pension plan that guarantees immediate payments with no dependence on markets and no cap on investments made by the policy holders.

- The minimum age to begin receiving the annuity payments is 40 years and the maximum is 70 years.

Insurance Regulatory and Development

Authority of India

- Founded: 1999
- Headquarters: Hyderabad
- Chairperson: Subhash Chandra Khuntia

Haryana, T.N. institutes get national importance tag

- Rajya Sabha approved a bill that declares two food technology institutes at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu as national institutes.
- The Rajya Sabha passed The National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 by voice vote.
- The Bill declares National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Kundli, and the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur as National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management.
- The law will also create jobs and turn farmers into entrepreneurs. So far, 444 lakh jobs have been created under the Kisan SAMPADA Yojana, and 147 lakh farmers have benefited from this scheme.
- The main aim is to make decisions and collaborate with other world-class institutions which will make them at par with the IIMs and IITs.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana

- In 2016, MoFPI introduced an umbrella Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters or SAMPADA, which was proposed to be implemented with an allocation of ₹6,000 crores for the period of 2016-20.
- In 2017, SAMPADA was renamed as the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY).
- It is a Central Sector Scheme.

Objectives:

- To supplement agriculture.
- To create processing and preservation capacities.
- To modernise and expand existing food processing units with a view to increasing the level of processing.
- To add value leading to the reduction of wastage.

Manipur is the model state for Van Dhan Vikas Program

- Manipur has been announced as the winning state where the Van Dhan Vikas Yojana has proved to be a major source of employment for local tribals.
- The achievement has been attained because of active cooperation and participation of the state government at every level. The program was launched in October 2019.

About Van Dhan Vikas Kendras initiative:

- The initiative aims to promote MFPs-centric livelihood development of tribal gatherers and artisans.
- It mainstreams the tribal community by promoting primary level value addition to MFP at grassroots level.
- Significance: Through this initiative, the share of tribals in the value chain of Non-Timber Forest Produce is expected to rise from the present 20% to around 60%.

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin.

- 10 crore houses completed under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin.

About PMAY- G :

- Ministry: Ministry of Rural Development.
- The erstwhile rural housing scheme Indira Awaas yojana (IAY) has been restructured into Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana –Gramin (PMAY-G) from 01.04.2016.
- PMAY-G aims at providing a pucca house, with basic amenities, to all houseless and those households living in kutchha and dilapidated house, by 2022.
- Target: Construction of 2.95 crore houses with all basic amenities by the year 2022.

Cost sharing

- The cost of unit assistance in this scheme is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio 60:40 in plain areas and 90: 10 for North Eastern and Himalayan States.
- The scheme envisages training of Rural Masons with the objective of improving workmanship and quality of construction of houses while at the same time, increasing availability of skilled masons and enhancing employability of such masons.

Selection of beneficiaries

- Based on housing deprivation parameters of Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), 2011, subject to 13 point exclusion criteria, followed by Gram Sabha verification.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- The scheme was launched by the Union Tourism Ministry with the objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in India.
- These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.
- The scheme was launched in 2015.
- It is a Central Sector Scheme (which means 100% sponsored by the GOI).





3. GEOGRAPHY

3.1 POLICY ON ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

5 New Frog Species in Western Ghats

- Researchers from India and the U.S. have discovered five new species of shrub frogs from the Western Ghats, one of the globally recognised biodiversity hotspots.
- The frogs, belonging to the Old World tree frog family Rhacophoridae.
- Researchers said the new species were identified and found to be distinct based on multiple criteria, such as their external morphology, DNA, calling pattern, behaviour, and other natural history observations.
- According to the researchers, over 80% of the globally known shrub frogs are restricted to the Western Ghats, and most species are known to have narrow geographical ranges.

Killing two birds with one stone

- The authorities in Assam's Hailakandi district are relying on the sparrow to motivate the voters to exercise their franchise on April 1.
- The house sparrow abundant in the region and it has been made the mascot of Hailakandi's SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) programme.
- It will spread awareness about the need to conserve the small bird and also motivate the voters.

Iceland bracing for volcanic eruption

- A volcano that spewed glowing red lava near Iceland's capital Reykjavik after awakening for the first time in 900 years appeared to be subsiding.
- Streams of red lava bubbled and flowed out of a fissure in a valley in Geldingadalur, close to Mount Fagradalsfjall on the Reykjanes peninsula in southwestern Iceland.

Researchers find new butterfly species

- A group of lepidopterists have added a species to the expanding list of butterflies in India. The discovery of the species *Nacaduba Sinhala ramaswamii* Sadasivan, 2021 in the Agasthyamalais in the Western Ghats a decade ago has now found place in the journal of Threatened Taxa.



4. ECONOMICS

4.1 CURRENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

Wipro joins World Economic Forum initiative to advance racial justice, social equality

- Wipro has joined the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Partnering for Racial Justice in Business' initiative to promote a culture of diversity, inclusion, equity and justice for people of all racial backgrounds in the workplace.
- The initiative is aimed towards driving action and accountability for companies to

confront racism at a systemic level, set new global standards for racial justice in business and accomplish necessary policy changes for inclusion and advancement of professionals with under-represented racial and ethnic identities.

World Economic Forum

- President : Børge Brende
- Founded on : 24 January 1971
- Head Quarters : Cologny Switzerland

4.1 NEW ECONOMIC POLICY & GOVT. SECTOR

GST revenue hits ₹1 Lakh-crore for 5th month

- Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in February topped ₹1 lakh crore-mark for a record fifth month in a row, with collections worth ₹1,13,143 crore, indicating a sustained economic recovery and improved tax administration.

GST

- In India, GST Bill was first introduced in 2014 as The Constitution (122nd Amendment) Bill.
- This got an approval in 2016 and was renumbered in the statute as The Constitution (101st Amendment) Act, 2016.
- Central GST to cover Excise duty, Service tax etc, State GST to cover VAT, luxury tax etc.
- Integrated GST to cover inter-state trade.
- Article 246A – States have power to tax goods and services.

GST Council

- Article 279A - GST Council to be formed by the President to administer & govern GST. It's Chairman is Union Finance Minister of

India with ministers nominated by the state governments as its members.

- The council is devised in such a way that the centre will have 1/3rd voting power and the states have 2/3rd.
- The decisions are taken by 3/4th majority.

Anti-dumping tax

- The U.S. Department of Commerce is preparing to tax aluminium sheet exporters from 18 countries including India.
- An anti-dumping tax is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value. Dumping is a process wherein a company exports a product at a price that is significantly lower than the price, it normally charges in its home (or its domestic) market.

India's forex reserves increase by \$689 million to \$584.55 billion

- India's forex reserves increased for the second consecutive week, touching \$ 584.554 billion as of February 26, up by \$689 million.
- The foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Foreign Exchange Reserves:

- Foreign exchange reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.
- It needs to be noted that most foreign exchange reserves are held in U.S. dollars.
- These assets serve many purposes but are most significantly held to ensure that the central bank has backup funds if the national currency rapidly devalues or becomes altogether insolvent.

India's Forex Reserves include:

- Foreign Currency Assets
- Gold
- Special Drawing Rights
- Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

GDP to grow at 11% in FY22

- Crisil announced it expects the Indian economy to grow at 11% in fiscal 2022, after an estimated 8% contraction this fiscal due to the pandemic.

CRISIL (Credit Rating Information Services of India Limited)

- This full-service rating agency is the major credit rating agency in India, with a market share of more than 60%.
- It is offering its services in financial, manufacturing, service, and SME sectors.
- The headquarter of CRISIL is in Mumbai
- The majority stake of CRISIL was held by the world's largest rating agency Standard & Poor's.

HDFC Bank launches 'SmartUp Unnati' for Women Entrepreneurs

- India's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank has launched a dedicated mentoring programme 'SmartUp Unnati', to support women entrepreneurs.
- The initiative has been launched on the occasion of International Women' Day on March 08, 2021.
- The programme is available only to existing customers and will initially target more than 3,000 women entrepreneurs associated with the bank's SmartUp programme.

Cabinet gives nod to Bill for setting up DFI

- The Union Cabinet approved a Bill to set up a Development Finance Institution, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced.
- The government had mentioned in the Budget that it would be setting up a national bank for funding infrastructure and development activity.

Development Finance Institution

- In India, the first DFI was operationalized in 1948 with the setting up of the Industrial Finance Corporation (IFCI).
- These are specialized institutions set up primarily to provide development/ Project finance especially in developing countries.
- These DFIs are usually majority-owned by national governments.
- The source of capital of these banks is national or international development funds.
- This ensures their creditworthiness and their ability to provide project finance in a very competitive rate.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks with Nirmala Sitharaman

- US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has spoken with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during which she appreciated India's role as a critical partner in fighting the Covid pandemic and discussed the global economic outlook.
- This was Yellen's first call with Sitharaman after she became the first woman Treasury Secretary of the United States in January.
- They agreed to work closely through common economic and strategic collaboration in

various multilateral fora, including the G20.

- The five permanent members are the United States, the Russian Federation, France, China and the United Kingdom.

Electoral bonds

- The government notified the electoral bonds scheme on January 2, 2018. It defended the scheme in court and it allowed anonymity to political donors to protect them from “political victimisation”.

Background

- Electoral Bond is a financial instrument for making donations to political parties.
- The bonds are issued in multiples of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 1 lakh, Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore without any maximum limit.

Rajya Sabha passes bill to raise FDI in insurance to 74%

- Rajya Sabha passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to raise the FDI in insurance sector to 74 per cent from the current 49 per cent, despite opposition push to refer the Bill to a standing committee.
- The Act was first amended during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure when 26 per cent FDI was allowed in the insurance sector.
- In 2015, the law was amended further to allow 49 per cent FDI and now the amendment is for allowing 74 per cent.

FDI

- Foreign investment was introduced in 1991 under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), driven by then FM Manmohan Singh.

NGOs received Rs 50,975-crore foreign funding in last 4 years

- NGOs working in India and registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act have received funding of over Rs 50,975 crore from abroad in the last four years with the highest donations of Rs 19,941 crore coming from the United States.

- The foreign contributions are received by 18,000 NGOs from about 130 countries on an average.
- There are around 22,400 NGOs in the country registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

Govt Working To Provide Optical Fibre Connection to 6.5 Lakh Villages

- The government is working to provide optical fibre connection to 6.5 lakh villages, Minister of Communications and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad announced.
- The National Broadband Mission (NBM) was launched on December 17, 2019 with a vision to enable fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide for digital empowerment and inclusion, and provide affordable and universal access to broadband for all.

Chief Economic Adviser

- The disinvestment target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore for 2021-22 was 'imminently achievable,' Chief Economic Adviser KV Subramanian announced the proposed Initial Public Offering (IPO) by LIC itself could garner Rs 1 lakh crore for the government.

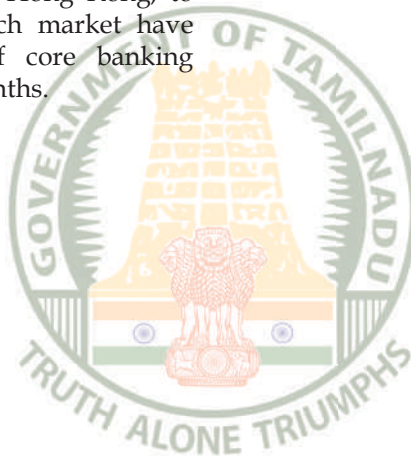
The Rangarajan Committee on disinvestment 1993

- The Rangarajan Committee of 1993 was constituted by the government for making recommendations in context with the disinvestment.
- The committee proclaimed that:
- The units to be disinvested should be identified and disinvestment could be made upto any level, except in defence and atomic energy where the government should retain the majority holding in equity.
- Disinvestment should be a transparent process duly protecting the right of the workers.
- An autonomous body for the smooth functioning and monitoring of the disinvestment programme should be established.

- This recommendation led to the Disinvestment Commission in 1996 as an advisory body having a fulltime chairman and four part-time members. The Commission was required to advise the government on the extent, made, timing and pricing of disinvestment.
- It suggested four modes of disinvestment viz. Trade sale, Strategic Sale, Offer of shares and Closure or sale of Assets.

HDFC Bank Adjudged “India’s Best SME Bank” By Asiamoney

- HDFC Bank has emerged as the ‘India’s Best Bank for SMEs’ at the Asiamoney Best Bank Awards 2021.
- The Asiamoney Best Bank Awards is based upon “Annual Best Banks survey” by a financial magazine based in Hong Kong, to identify which banks in each market have excelled across a range of core banking activities over the past 12 months.





5. SCIENCE

5.1 LATEST INVENTIONS ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

CSIR lab helped develop key molecule for Covaxin

- The Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), a Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) lab played a role in the development of Covaxin, the indigenous vaccine developed by the city based Bharat Biotech International Limited.
- The vaccine has been formulated with 'Algel IMDG', which contains chemically absorbed TLR7/8 as an agonist or an adjuvant onto aluminium hydroxide gel to generate the requisite type of immune responses without damaging the body.

IAF to participate in 70th anniversary celebrations of Sri Lanka Air Force

- The Indian Air Force aerobatic display teams, the fixed wing "Suryakirans" and rotary wing 'Sarang', along with Light Combat Aircraft Tejas arrived at Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 27 Feb 21 on an invitation from the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF). The Suryakirans, Sarang and LCA Tejas will participate in an Air Show at Galle Face, Colombo, scheduled from 03-05 Mar 21 as part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of SLAF.

ISRO lining up launch of India's geo imaging satellite GISAT-1

- The Indian Space Research Organisation is lining up the launch of its geo imaging satellite GISAT-1.
- Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F10) will launch GISAT-1 from the Second Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.
- Weighing about 2268kg, GISAT-1 is the first state of the art agile earth observation satellite

which will be placed in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit by GSLV-F10.

PSLV-C51 Mission

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the primary satellite Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 co-passenger satellites onboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C51) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Sriharikota Range (SHAR)
- In this mission, ISRO launched the first satellite designed, integrated by Brazil - Amazonia-1.
- It is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under the Department of Space.
- Along with Amazonia-1, 18 co-passenger satellites were also launched on Sunday. These include four from IN-SPACe (three UNITYsats from the consortium of three Indian academic institutes and One Satish Dhawan Sat from Space Kidz India) and 14 from NSIL.

Amazonia-1

- The 637-kg Amazonia-1 is the optical earth observation satellite of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), the research unit of Brazil's ministry of science.
- This satellite would further strengthen the existing structure by providing remote sensing data to users for monitoring deforestation in the Amazon region and analysis of diversified agriculture across the Brazilian territory.

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)

- A Government of India company under the Department of Space.
- In order to commercially exploit the products and services emanating from the India Space Programme, the "NewSpace India Limited

(NSIL)" has been incorporated in March 2019, as a wholly-owned Government of India Company.

- Headquarters : Bangalore

Space Kidz India, Chennai

- "Space Kidz India", is an organization creating "Young scientists" for the "Country" and spreading awareness among children for a "borderless world". It creates International experiential learning for students in the field of science, Technology, Art, and Culture.
- We are the 1st organization in the World to have launched Satellites through high school and college students.

Russia launches first Arctic-monitoring Satellite 'Arktika-M'

- The Russian space corporation Roscosmos successfully launched its first satellite to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.
- The satellite called "Arktika-M", was launched on February 28, 2021, onboard Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
- This satellite will help to collect information to solve operational meteorology and hydrology problems, and monitoring the climate and environment in the Arctic region.

China releases high-resolution Mars images from its Tianwen-1 probe

- China's national space agency published high-resolution images of Mars captured by the country's Tianwen-1 probe, which is currently orbiting the Red planet.
- These images include two panchromatic view and one colour image, said the China National Space Administration (CNSA).
- It is estimated that the diameter of the largest impact crater in the images is around 620 meters, state-run Xinhua news agency reported quoting CNSA statement.
- China launched Tianwen-1 on July 23, 2020.
- The spacecraft, consisting of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, entered the parking orbit around Mars on February 24.
- India became the first Asian country to have successfully launched its Mars orbiter mission

Mangalyaan which entered the orbit of the red planet in 2014.

Mars Size and Distance:

- It is the fourth planet from the Sun and the second-smallest planet in the Solar System.
- Mars is about half the size of Earth.

Previous Mars Missions

- The Soviet Union in 1971 became the first country to carry out a Mars landing.
- The second country to reach Mars's surface is the United State of America (USA). Since 1976, it has achieved 8 successful Mars landings, the latest being the 'Insight' in 2019.
- European Space Agency has been able to place their spacecraft in Mars's orbit through the Mars Express Mission.

India's Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) or Mangalyaan:

- It was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh by Indian Space Research Organisation in November 2013.

Indigenously developed "Spectrograph" commissioned in Nainital

- Indian Scientists at Aryabhata Research Institute of observational sciences (ARIES), Nainital, have indigenously designed and developed a low-cost optical Spectrograph named as Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC).
- It has been commissioned on the 3.6-m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT), in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand.

DRDO successfully flight test SFDR technology

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted successful flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from the integrated test range (ITR), Chandipur, off Odisha coast.
- The success of SFDR technology will enable DRDO to develop long-range air to air missiles.
- The SFDR is a missile propulsion system being developed primarily by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in Hyderabad.

- The High Energy Material Research Laboratory (HEMRL) has developed the nozzle-less booster while the ramjet engine is being developed with Russian assistance.

DRDO

- Chairman: Dr G Satheesh Reddy
- Head Quarters: New Delhi
- Founded on: 1958

Missiles

- Short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile – Prithvi
- Intermediate-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile – Agni
- Short-range low-level surface-to-air missile – Trishul
- Medium-range surface-to-air missile – Akash
- Third generation anti-tank missile – Nag

NASA's Perseverance Drives on Mars' Terrain for First Time

- NASA's Mars 2020 Perseverance rover performed its first drive on Mars March 4, covering 21.3 feet (6.5 meters) across the Martian landscape.
- The drive served as a mobility test that marks just one of many milestones as team members check out and calibrate every system, subsystem, and instrument on Perseverance.
- The drive, which lasted about 33 minutes, propelled the rover forward 13 feet (4 meters), where it then turned in place 150 degrees to the left and backed up 8 feet (2.5 meters) into its new temporary parking space.
- The main tool the science team will use to do close-up examination of the geologic features of Jezero Crater.

ISRO will handle Projects

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced it will be in charge of projects linked to national security and advanced technology such as the forth coming Chandrayaan2 missions and the Gaganyaan mission that plans to send Indian cosmonauts into space.
- The Standing Committee on Science and Technology, led by Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh on whether the NSIL would

“replace” ISRO.

- The NSIL recently coordinated the launch of the Amazonia satellite by Brazil on February 28, its first fully commercial mission that also saw 18 other satellites being launched.

ISRO

- Chairman : K.Sivan
- Head Quarters : Bengaluru
- Founded on : 15 August 1969

ISRO develops radar for joint mission with NASA

- ISRO has completed development of a Synthetic Aperture Radar capable of producing high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the U.S. space agency NASA.
- The mission is targeted to be launched in 2022.

In a first, China launches virus passport

- China has launched a health certificate programme for Chinese international travellers, leading the world in plans for so called virus passports.
- Aim : To help promote world economic recovery and facilitate cross border travel.
- Although the certificate is meant for travel in and out of China, it is currently only available for use by Chinese citizens, and it is not yet mandatory.
- There is also no indication authorities in other countries will use it when Chinese travellers go abroad.

First military exercise in space launched - AsterX

- France has successfully launched the first military exercise in space.
- It will help the country in testing its abilities to protect its satellites as well as other defence equipment from other space forces.
- The exercise has been codenamed 'AsterX' and the German Space force and the US space force have also been participating in it.

India, Japan space agencies

- Indian and Japanese space agencies reviewed cooperation in earth observation, lunar cooperation and satellite navigation, and

also agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in “space situational awareness and professional exchange programme”.

- A bilateral meeting between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) held virtually.
- India and Japan are already working on a joint lunar polar exploration (LUPEX) mission and the two space agencies have been working on the mission that aims to send a lander and rover to the Moon’s south pole around 2024.

Italy

- India and Italy decided to explore opportunities in earth observation, space science and robotic and human exploration.

Australia

- India and Australia signed an amendment to the MoU which will build on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Both countries are also in discussions for Australia to host vital tracking infrastructure to support the Gaganyaan manned space flight mission.

ISRO launches Sounding Rocket ‘RH-560’ to study Altitudinal Variations

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the indigenously made sounding rocket, RH-560, on March 12, 2021, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota Range (SHAR), Andhra Pradesh.
- The aim of this RH-560 is to study altitude variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics.
- The Bengaluru-headquartered space agency, ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called “Rohini series”. Among them the important ones are RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560.

Martian ‘blueberries’ find a parallel on Earth Similar haematite concretions have been found in Kutch, Gujarat

- In 2004, NASA’s Mars exploration rover ‘Opportunity’ found several small spheres on the planet, informally named Martian blueberries. Opportunity’s spectrometers studied the mineralogy and noted they were made of iron oxide compounds called

haematites. This caused excitement, as the presence of haematites suggests that there was water present on Mars.

India’s First Free-Space Quantum Communication Over 300 Metres

- In a first-of-its-kind initiative, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metre, with several technologies developed within the country.
- The demonstration included live video conferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals, at Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad, between two line-of-sight buildings within the campus.

ISRO

- Chairman: K.Sivan
- Founded on :15th August 1969
- Head Quarters: Bengaluru

Pakistan successfully test-fires nuclear-capable ballistic missile Shaheen-1A

- The Pakistan Army successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-1A on March 26, 2021.
- The missile has a range of 900 kilometers.
- Shaheen 1-A is equipped with sophisticated and advanced guidance system, which makes it highly accurate missile system.

Covovax trials begin in India

- The CEO of Serum Institute of India (SII), the world’s largest vaccine maker, Adar Poonawalla, has announced the trials for Covovax, a vaccine jointly to be developed by both SII and US-based biotechnology company Novavax, have finally started in India. Adar said the vaccine has been tested against African and UK variants of COVID-19 and has overall efficacy of 89 per cent.
- The vaccine could be launched by September 2021.

New species of red algae seen in west, south east Indian coast

- Two new species of seaweed have been discovered by a group of marine biologists

from Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. Named *Hypnea indica* (after India) and *Hypnea bullata* (because of the blisterlike marks on its body – bullate).

- While *Hypnea indica* was discovered Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu, and Somnath Pathan and Sivrajpur in Gujarat, *Hypnea bullata* was discovered from Kanyakumari and Diu island of Daman and Diu.

New Bacteria *Methylobacterium ajmalii* Found on ISS Named After Indian Scientist Ajmal Khan

- The new bacterial strains discovered from different locations aboard the ISS.
- The researchers named the novel species as *Methylobacterium ajmalii*, in honour of

the renowned Indian biodiversity scientist, Dr. Ajmal Khan, a former professor at Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu.

- The genome analysis of *Methylobacterium ajmalii* strains revealed the presence of genes that are involved in promoting plant growth.
- The bacterial strains belonging to the family *Methylobacteriaceae*.
- It was isolated from different locations aboard the ISS across two consecutive flights.
- The findings of the study were published in a recent issue of the journal *Frontiers in Microbiology*.

About the Research:

- The research teams were led by Kasthuri Venkateswaran of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

5.2 LATEST DISCOVERIES IN HEALTH SCIENCE

Fourth firm ties up to make Sputnik V

- Russia's sovereign wealth fund RDIF (Russian Direct Investment Fund) announced it had entered into an agreement with Virchow Biotech of Hyderabad to produce up to 200 million doses per year of COVID-19 vaccine Sputnik V in the country.
- Virchow Biotech's capacities will help facilitate global supply of Sputnik V to international

partners of RDIF.

- It is the fourth such agreement RDIF has entered into for producing Sputnik V in India, beginning with the Hetero Group to make 100 million doses.
- The other two are with Gland Pharma (252 million doses) and Stelis Biopharma (200 million doses).

5.3 MASS MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

E-Daakhil portal for consumer grievance redressal operational in 15 states, UTs

- The government on February 26, 2021 said the 'E-Daakhil' portal for consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 states and Union Territories (UTs). The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which came into force from July 20, 2020, has a provision for e-filing of consumer complaints in the consumer commissions and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint. To facilitate the rural consumers for e-filing, common service centres (CSC) has been integrated with the E-Daakhil portal.

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration distributed tablets among auxiliary nursing midwives (ANMs) and launched an application under the national health mission for identification and tracking of beneficiaries.
- The ANMOL application will empower ANMs and frontline health workers in carrying out their day-to-day work efficiently and effectively.

J-K administration launches ANMOL app under national health mission

- The ANMOL application allows ANMs to enter and update records of beneficiaries on real-time basis.

National Health Mission

- National Health Mission (NHM) was launched by the government of India in 2013 subsuming the National Rural Health Mission and the National Urban Health Mission. It was further extended in March 2018, to continue till March 2020.
- The main programmatic components include Health System Strengthening in rural and urban areas for - Reproductive-Maternal-Neonatal-Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A), and Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases.

Some Major initiatives

- Mission Indradhanush – It helped in increasing immunization cover by over 5% in just 1 year.
- Kayakalp Initiative – This was launched with the plan to inculcate hygiene, sanitation, effective waste management, and infection control in public health facilities.
- This initiative has introduced awards which resulted in significant improvement in sanitation standards.

cVIGIL App

- Election commission of India launched a mobile app called cVIGIL.
- A user-friendly and easy to operate Android application, requires an Android smartphone equipped with a camera, good internet connection and GPS access
- It will be operational only where elections are announced. cVIGIL will allow anyone in the election-bound state to report violations of Model Code of Conduct.

World's fastest supercomputer "Fugaku" begins operations

- The world's most powerful supercomputer named "Fugaku", developed by Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN and Fujitsu, has been made available for research work.
- The development of the machine was started about six years ago in 2014 and was completed in May 2020.

cVIGIL

- The poll panel has received as many as 1,120 complaints regarding violation of MCC through c-vigil mobile application, of which, 695 have been resolved and other complaints are being looked into.

About App

- Election commission of India launched a mobile app called cVIGIL.
- A user-friendly and easy to operate Android application, requires an Android smartphone equipped with a camera, good internet connection and GPS access.

SWAYAM

- Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), was launched on July 9, 2017 by the Ministry of Education to provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses.
- This covers all higher education subjects and skill sector courses.
- The objective is to ensure that every student in the country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.
- Academicians from hundreds of institutions throughout the country are involved in developing & delivering Massive open online courses (MOOCs) through SWAYAM in almost all disciplines from senior schooling to Post Graduation.

SWAYAM Prabha

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resources Development to provide 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH across the length and breadth of the country on 24X7 basis.
- It has curriculum-based course content covering diverse disciplines.
- This is primarily aimed at making quality learning resources accessible to remote areas where internet availability is still a challenge.
- The DTH channels are using the GSAT-15 satellite for programme telecasts.

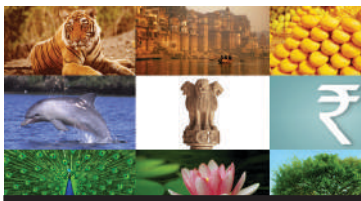
POWERGRID Launches Certified E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT"

- State-owned Power Grid Corporation of India (POWERGRID) has launched an "e-Tendering Portal" called 'PRANIT' to make tendering process more transparent.
- The portal "PRANIT" will involve less paperwork and allow ease of operation, which in turn will make the tendering process more transparent.

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID)

- It is an Indian central public sector unit and a Maharatna company. The company is owned by Ministry of Power. It is headquartered in Gurugram, India.





6. NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENT

Health Minister Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Global Bio India 2021

- The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the second edition of Global Bio-India-2021 in New Delhi through virtual mode.
- The three-day event will be held from March 01 to 03, 2021, on a digital platform.
- Theme 2021 – “Transforming lives” with the tag line “Biosciences to Bio-economy”.
- Purpose -to showcase the strength and opportunities of the biotechnology sector of India at national as well as international level.

Chief Electoral Office

- Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer - Satyabrata Sahoo
- The Election Commission of India nominates or designates an Officer of the Government of the State/Union Territory as the Chief Electoral Officer in consultation with that State Government/Union Territory Administration.

NHAI builds 25.54-km lane in 18 hours, to enter Limca Book of Records

- The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) completed single lane of the four-lane stretch of 25.54 km being developed between Solapur-Vijapur (NH 52) in 18 hours.

NHAI

- National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) was set up under NHAI Act, 1988. It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- It has been entrusted with the National Highways Development Project, along with other minor projects for development, maintenance and management.
- National Highways Development Project (NHDP) is a project to upgrade, rehabilitate

and widen major highways in India to a higher standard. The project was started in 1998.

Govt announces ‘One District One Focus Produce’ programme

- With the aim to boost export of agriculture products, the Centre has identified several products under 15 broad categories, allotting one product for each of the country’s 728 districts so that there is convergence of resources under different schemes of various ministries and also it helps increase farmers’ income.
- The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries, aquaculture, marine sectors across the country after taking inputs from the states, Union Territories and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). For this Initiative, Union government gives 35% fund to the organization.
- There are 36 districts in Tamil Nadu. Kanyakumari, Nagapattinam, Chengalpattu and Ramanathapuram districts have fish products, Thanjavur, Coimbatore has coconuts, Trichy has bananas and Krishnagiri has mangoes. Assistance is available to farmers under schemes like MITH, NFSM, RKVY, PKVY to produce agricultural products.

State’s largest constituency

- Sholinganallur in Chennai

Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV merged into one single entity called Sansad TV

- The Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Television channels that broadcast the proceedings of the upper and lower Houses of Parliament, respectively, have been merged into a single entity.
- The new channel has been named as the

‘Sansad Television’.

- This change is effective from March 01, 2021.
- Ravi Capoor, a retired IAS officer of the 1986 batch, has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sansad TV for one year.

Delimitation Commission gets one-year extension to conclude its task in J&K

- The Delimitation Commission, a panel for redrawing the parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, has got a one-year extension.
- According to section 60 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir shall be increased from 107 to 114.
- With 24 seats in PoK, the effective strength will go up from 83 to 90.

Delimitation Commission

- The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the President of India and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.

Composition:

- Retired Supreme Court judge
- Chief Election Commissioner
- Respective State Election Commissioners

Functions:

- To determine the number and boundaries of constituencies to make population of all constituencies nearly equal.
- To identify seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, wherever their population is relatively large.
- In case of difference of opinion among members of the Commission, the opinion of the majority prevails.
- The Delimitation Commission in India is a high-power body whose orders have the force of law and cannot be called in question before any court.

Bengaluru, Shimla ‘most live able’ cities

- Bengaluru and Shimla were ranked as the most live able in the categories of cities with more than and less than 1 million population

respectively by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry’s Ease of Living Index.

- The Ease of Living Index 2020, in which 111 cities participated during the assessment in 2020 that included citizens’ had Bengaluru at the top, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore and Greater Mumbai in the category of cities with over 1 million population.
- In cities with less than a million population, Shimla topped the list, followed by Bhubaneswar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere and Tiruchirappalli.
- The Ministry also released the Municipal Performance Index 2020, which rated 111 municipalities on their services, finance, policy, technology and governance.
- Indore topped the ranking of municipalities with over 1 million population, followed by Surat and Bhopal, and the New Delhi Municipal Council was the best among civic bodies with under a million population, by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.

Smart Cities Mission

- Smart Cities Mission was launched in 2015 to promote sustainable and inclusive cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of Smart Solutions.

IISc in top 100 list in natural sciences

- The Indian Institute of Science broke into the top 100 in the natural sciences category of the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021
- Three institutions made it to the top 100 the IITs Bombay, Delhi and Madras in comparison to five institutions last year.
- The top-ranked Indian programme globally is the IIT Madras petroleum engineering programme which dropped one place to the 30th rank, followed by mineral and mining engineering at IITs Bombay and Kharagpur, which are ranked at 41st and 44th place in their field.
- The University of Delhi’s development studies

programme is the only other one in the top 50, sliding in at the 50th rank.

QS World University Rankings

- Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) is a leading global career and education network for ambitious professionals looking to further their personal and professional development.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.
- It aims to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price of oil in the world market, in order to avoid fluctuations that might affect the economies of both producing and purchasing countries.
- It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.
- As of 2019, OPEC has a total of 14 Member Countries viz. Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Angola, Ecuador and Venezuela are members of OPEC.

Recent Issues

- According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) plus might face sharp demand fall due to a recent surge in crude oil production from the countries like USA, Norway, and Guyana.
- The non-OPEC countries which export crude oil are termed as OPEC plus countries.
- OPEC plus countries include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

International Energy Agency

- It was established in the wake of 1973 (set up in 1974) oil crisis after the OPEC cartel had shocked the world with a steep increase in oil prices.
- It is headquartered in Paris, France
- India became an associate member of the International Energy Agency in 2017.

- Mexico officially became the International Energy Agency's 30th member country in February 2018, and its first member in Latin America.

New Science Centre Inaugurated at Udaipur in Tripura

- The Udaipur Science Centre was inaugurated by Governor of Tripura Ramesh Bais at Udaipur, Tripura.
- The new science centre would enable the students to learn many unknown facts about science.
- It has been developed by the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM).
- Udaipur centre is the 22nd Science Centre which has been developed by NCSM under the Ministry of Culture's Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science.

Panel led by Modi set up for 75th I-Day

- The Centre set up a high level committee for planning the commemoration of the 75th year of Independence in 2022.
- The Ministry notified the formation of the 259-member national committee, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The members of the panel include former president Pratibha Patil, Chief Justice of India SA Bobde, NSA Ajit Doval, 28 chief ministers, artistes like Lata Mangeshkar, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, senior BJP leader LK Advani, almost all Union ministers and several governors.
- The celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to August 15, 2022, on March 12, 2021, which is the 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.

Institute of National Importance tag for National School of Drama

- NSD Society chairman and actor Paresh Rawal has announced, the government is actively considering giving the Institute of National Importance tag to the National School of Drama, as well as re-developing its campus in Delhi.
- The NSD, which has four regional centres in

Varanasi, Bengaluru, Agartala and Gangtok, had received a request from Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha recently for setting up a centre in J&K.

- NSD is planning to collaborate with various eminent theatre directors in the country to produce 75 plays on the theme of freedom struggle and freedom fighters. The details are being worked out in consultation with Ministry of Culture.

Institute of National Importance

- It is an institute 'which serves as a pivotal player in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region of the country/state'.
- Institute of National Importance (INI) is a status that may be conferred on a premier public higher education institution in India by an act of Parliament of India.
- As of 2020, there are 159 institutes, declared as Institutes of National Importance under a distinct Act of Parliament. These INIs include 23 IITs; 15 AIIMs; 20 IIMs; 31 NITs; 25 IIITs; 7 IISERs, 7 NIPERs; 5 NIDs; 3 SPAs; 5 central universities; 4 medical research institutes and 14 other specialized institutes.

India Science Research Fellowship (ISRF) 2021

- Forty scholars from six countries have been awarded with Indian Science Research Fellowship (ISRF) 2021.
- These scholars have been selected on the basis of their research proposal, experience, academic merit and publication record.

Indian Science Research Fellowship

- The Indian Science Research Fellowship is a platform to establish research cooperation and S&T partnerships with neighbouring countries of India.
- The initiative was launched by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in 2015 for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand.

SCI vessel makes history

- This is the first time in the world maritime history that a ship is being sailed by all women officers.

- To commemorate International Women's Day on March 8, 2021, achieved another feat when Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ports, Shipping & Waterways, virtually flagged off the 'All Women Officers' Sailing' on m.t.Swarna Krishna SCI's product carrier from JNPT Liquid Berth Jetty on March 6, 2021

International Maritime Organization

- India joined the IMO in 1959.
- The IMO currently lists India as among the 10 states with the 'largest interest in international seaborne trade'.

Anganwadis

- Only half of government schools and anganwadis have tap water supply, despite a 100day campaign for 100% coverage being launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in October 2020, according to information provided to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources.
- The campaign to provide potable piped water supply for drinking and cooking purposes and tap water for washing hands and in toilets in every school, anganwadi and ashramshala or residential tribal school was launched on October 2, Gandhi Jayanti.

States with 100% tap-water coverage

State
Andhra Pradesh
Goa
Tamil Nadu
Haryana
Telangana
Punjab

Least coverage

State	% of schools with tap water supply
Uttar Pradesh	7.93
West Bengal	10.89
Jharkhand	12.99

India's first 'Transgender Community Desk' opens in Telangana

- The Cyberabad Police has launched India's first-ever Transgender Community Desk' at the Gachibowli Police Station in Hyderabad, Telangana. This desk is the first-of-its-kind gender-inclusive community policing initiatives in the country.
- The desk was formally inaugurated by Cyberabad Police chief VC Sajjanar in a ceremony that was attended by over 200 transgender people.
- It will also be the focal point for all grievance redressal among the transgender community in Cyberabad Commissionerate.

Note

- In 2014, the Supreme Court of India, in the case of the National Legal Services Authority versus Union of India, established the foundation for the rights of transgender persons in India by recognising 'transgender' as a 'third gender' and laying down several measures for prohibition of discrimination against transgender persons and protection of their rights.

Acts

- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020
- The Central Government made the rules under the powers conferred by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- The Act came into effect on 10th January 2020, which is the first concrete step towards ensuring welfare of transgender persons.

'Shop-and-donate' platform launched

- Sethu Foundation launched an e-merchandising programme "Kalpavrisksha: shop and donate" which will have products cultivated and handcrafted by women.
- The first product we will have on our web platform for purchase is Lakadong Turmeric from Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya.

National Human Rights Council

- NHRC of India is an independent statutory body established on 12 October, 1993 as per provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, later amended in 2006.

- NHRC has celebrated its Silver Jubilee (25 years) on October 12, 2018. Its headquarter is located in New Delhi.
- It was established in conformity with the Paris Principles, adopted for the promotion and protection of human rights in Paris (October, 1991) and endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 December, 1993.
- Tamilnadu human rights commission was created in 1997.

Cyber volunteer programme rolled out for 'cyber hygiene promotion

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha that a "cyber volunteer" programme has been rolled out for "cyber hygiene promotion" and the services of volunteers would be utilised by the State police as per requirement.
- The MHA is a cybercrime grievance portal-cybercrime.gov.in, aims to raise a group of "cybercrime volunteers" to flag unlawful content on the Internet. Various groups, including the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), have expressed concern that the programme enables a culture of surveillance and could create potential social distrust by encouraging civilians to report the online activities of other citizens.
- The government had approved the setting up of 1,023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including 389 exclusive POC SO Courts, for expeditious trial and disposal of cases related to rape and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Uttarakhand's Ranikhet gets India's first Forest Healing Centre

- The first-of-its-kind 'Forest Healing Centre' of India has been inaugurated at Kalika near Ranikhet in Uttarakhand.
- The unique centre is based on the concept of making people healthy by bringing them into direct contact with nature.
- Spread over an area of around 13 acres, the centre has been established in a pine-dominated forest, by the research wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department after a detailed study of the revitalising impact of

forests on human health.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' bridge between India and Bangladesh through a video conference on March 09, 2021 to strengthen the connectivity between both the countries, and especially with the north-eastern region of India.
- The Maitri Setu bridge has been built on the Feni river, which lies between Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh.
- The 1.9 Kilometres long bridge will connect Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.
- The bridge has been constructed by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited at a project cost of around Rs. 133 Crore.
- Maitri bridge will also make Tripura as the 'Gateway of North East' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 km from Sabroom.

World's Best Hospitals 2021

- This is the third year that Newsweek has partnered with Statista Inc, the respected global data research firm, to reveal the World's Best Hospitals.
- The 2,000 hospitals named in this list which covers 25 countries, including United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Canada stand out for their consistent excellence, including distinguished physicians, top-notch nursing care and state of the art technology.
- 11 hospitals has been selected as the best hospitals in all over India. In that, Kanchi Kamakoti Child Trust Hospital placed the best in Tamil Nadu.

Floating solar power plant

- The country's biggest floating solar power plant by generation capacity, which is being developed by the NTPC in the reservoir of its thermal plant at Ramagundam in Peddapalli district, Telangana.
- This will be one of the renewable (solar) energy plants being developed by the NTPC

with an installed capacity of 447 MW in the southern region and the entire capacity will be commissioned by March 2023.

PM shops from Tribes India

- Minister Narendra Modi choose to buy products made by tribal women and self-help groups to mark International Women's Day, the Tribes India portal saw the daily average visitor count of 2,200 shoots up to over 30,000 and orders worth almost Rs 1.50 lakh received.
- A long way from Midnapore, 25-year-old Monisha Toda is based in Ooty where she makes the embroidered Toda shawls unique to the Toda tribals of the Nilgiri hills in Tamil Nadu.
- The painting was made by Sarita Dhurvi from Dindori district, Samnapur Tehsil, Madhya Pradesh. Through the vibrant, earthy colours, she depicted the creation of nature. The gond tribal art, practised by the Gond tribe in Madhya Pradesh.

Parliament passes Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- Parliament approved a Bill to amend the arbitration law.
- The Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was passed through voice vote in the Rajya Sabha.
- The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on February 12, 2021.
- The bill will replace an ordinance issued on November 4, 2020. The bill seeks to ensure that all stakeholders get an opportunity to seek unconditional stay on enforcement of arbitral awards where the agreement or contract is "induced by fraud or corruption".

India's first World Skill Centre at Bhubaneswar

- Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first World Skill Centre at Mancheswar Industrial Area on the birth anniversary of legendary Biju Patnaik.
- The World Skill Centre, an 18 storey building is aimed to make Odisha the global capital of trained manpower and is dedicated to different skills and trades.

Self-reliant India is good for world'

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that a "self-reliant India was in the interest of the world" as he expounded the core beliefs in the Bhagavad Gita.
- He is releasing the 'Kindle' version of Swami Chidbhavananda's book on the subject.
- The beauty of the Gita was in its depth, diversity and flexibility, he pointed out. He quoted a peer reviewed journal of cardiology published by the University of Oxford that talks at length about the relevance of Gita during the time of the pandemic.

Praises Tamil diaspora

- He praised the Tamil diaspora for scaling new heights in many sectors and yet carrying the greatness of its culture.

Govt launches 'Mera Ration' app

- To facilitate the 'One Nation-One Ration Card' system in the country, the government Friday launched 'Mera Ration' mobile app to benefit citizens in identifying the nearest fair price shop. This app will benefit especially those ration card holders who move to new areas for livelihoods.
- The app is developed by the government in association with NIC "to facilitate various ONORC related services among National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, FPS dealers and other relevant stakeholders.
- The ONORC, system which was started initially in 4 States in August 2019, has been swiftly rolled out in a very short span of time in 32 States/UTs by December 2020 and the integration of remaining 4 States/UT (Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and West Bengal) is expected to be completed in next few months.
- The system covers nearly 69 Crore NFSA beneficiaries (about 86% NFSA population) in the country and a monthly average of about 1.5-1.6 Crore portability transactions are being recorded under ONORC.

PM to inaugurate 4th Global Ayurveda Festival

- The festival will culminate on March 19.

- The eight-day festival includes international seminar, a global exhibition and business meet and will feature lectures by 35 internationally renowned scientists and over 150 Indian scientists.
- The launch of the National AYUSH Mission of India shows the importance given to Ayurveda. It strengthens Ayurvedic treatment and education. The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the launch of a global center for traditional medicine in India.
- The Prime Minister said that our policy on Ayurveda is in line with the World Health Organization's traditional treatments for 2014-2023.

India ranks 5th in the Fastest Growing Countries 2021

- According to the List of PwCs (Price Waterhouse and Coopers) Report 2021, India ranks 5th in the fastest growing countries.
- After Brexit agreement, England ranks 4th, Japan Ranks 6th and Australia Ranks 7th.

India's first centralised AC railway terminal in Bengaluru

- India's first centralised air-conditioned (AC) railway terminal has been built at Baiyappanahalli in Bengaluru.
- Named after 'Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya' one of the foremost civil engineers, the AC railway terminal.
- It has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 314 crore.
- The Byappanahalli terminal is the third coach terminal named after Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya, sanctioned in 2015-16.
- The Centre will allow residents to fill the National Population Register (NPR) form on their own, through the online mode, a month before the door-to-door enumeration by Census officials starts.
- The National Population Register (NPR) updation exercise will be undertaken alongside Census 2021. It will be conducted by the Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) under

the Home Ministry. Only Assam will not be included, given the recently completed National Register of Citizens (NRC).

National Population Register

- It is a list of "usual residents of the country".
- A "usual resident of the country" is one who has been residing in a local area for at least the last six months, or intends to stay in a particular location for the next six months.

Legal Provisions:

- The NPR is being prepared under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- It is mandatory for every "usual resident of India" to register in the NPR.

Background:

- The data for the NPR was first collected in 2010 along with the house listing phase of Census 2011.
- In 2015, this data was further updated by conducting a door-to-door survey.
- With the use of Aadhaar as the key vehicle for transfer of government benefits in the last few years, the NPR has taken a backseat.

President attends tribal congregation 'Vanvasi Samagam' in Sonbhadra (UP)

- President Ramnath Kovind addressed the tribal congregation Vanvasi Samagam in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh.
- The President visited Chapki area in Babhani Block of Sonbhadra district where he attended the Vanvasi Samagam as Chief guest and inaugurated the newly constructed building of Seva Kunj Ashram.

Statue of Unity crosses 50 lakh visitors

- The 'Statue of Unity' at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district has crossed the mark of 50 lakh visitors since its inauguration in 2018\.
- The statue has emerged as an international tourist destination, offering multiple attractions for all age groups.
- The 182-metre tall statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, billed as the world's tallest and built on the Sadhu Bet islet near the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Kevadia, was inaugurated by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi on October 31, 2018.

World's highest rail bridge in Jammu and Kashmir

- The world's highest rail bridge over the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir is in the last stages of construction.
- The 476 metre-long steel arch, which is set to be the "world's highest" railway bridge in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The rail line is expected to be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower.
- The ₹1,250-crore bridge will be 359 metres above the Chenab river bed
- The overall length of the bridge is 1,315 metres.
- Construction of the first three phases of the project has been completed and the line is in operational use for running of trains between Baramulla-Banihal in Kashmir valley and Jammu-Udhampur-Katra in Jammu region.
- Three agencies; IRCON, KRCL and Northern Railway with extensive experience in the construction of rail lines are involved in this project.

WCD Ministry plans to merge all women helplines

- The Women and Child Development (WCD) Ministry stated that it is looking to merge all women helplines in the country.
- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani held a meeting with top 100 districts with the highest crimes against women and children and 112 aspirational districts and decided that the twin women's helplines 112 (emergency) and 181 (non-emergency) be merged for better response.
- About 54 lakh women were assisted through women helplines across the country.
- Women will be able to dial both helplines but both will be integrated to improve response time. Likewise, child helpline 1098 would see the first interface with a government system.

World Air Quality Report 2020

- New Delhi has been adjudged as the world's most polluted capital city for the third straight year in the 2020 World Air Quality Report by Swiss organisation, IQAir.

- Globally, New Delhi is ranked as the 10th most polluted city in the world.
- The top most polluted city of the world is Xinjiang in China.
- This is followed by nine Indian cities as most polluted cities in the world, which are Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar, Bishakh Jalalpur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bhiwari.

IQ Air report

- The IQAir report measures air quality levels based on the concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles known as PM 2.5, which is measured by ground-based monitoring stations.
- As per the report, India was home to 35 of the world's 50 most polluted cities, spanning 106 countries, which means India continues to feature prominently at the top of the most polluted cities ranking.

India has gained reputation of first, reliable responder: Jaishankar

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced that India had developed a reputation of being the first and reliable responder in the region, stating that the country had provided "Made in India" vaccines for COVID-19 to 72 countries.
- Medicines have been supplied to 150 nations, 82 of them as grants.

Make in India

- Make in India is a Government of India scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 intended to boost the domestic manufacturing sector and also augment investment into the country.

Plan to test anganwadi food by FSSAI

- The Mission POSHAN 2.0 provides for testing of meals and food packets distributed at anganwadis for nutritional standards and quality by FSSAI labs.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, which is the nodal Ministry for implementing the Mission POSHAN, will also partner with the Panchayati Raj Ministry so that FSSAI and the National Institute of Nutrition can train Panchayati Raj functionaries at village

level and anganwadi workers in maintaining and monitoring quality of take-home ration and supplementary nutrition distributed at anganwadis.

FSSAI

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the administrative Ministry of FSSAI.
- Headquarters: Delhi.

Mission POSHAN

- The programme seeks to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- Launched in 2018 with specific targets to be achieved by 2022.

It aims to reduce:

- Stunting and wasting by 2% a year (total 6% until 2022) among children.
- Anaemia by 3% a year (total 9%) among children, adolescent girls and pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)

- The Federation of Indian Export Organisations represents the Indian entrepreneurs spirit of enterprise in the global market. It was set up in 1965.
- It is an Apex body of the export promotion councils, community boards and development authorities in India.
- It provides the crucial interface between international trading community of India & the Central and State Governments, financial institutions, ports, railways and all engaged in export trade facilitation.

ChildLine under Ministry of Home Affairs

- The proposal to shift Childline 1098, the national helpline for children, from the

administrative control of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) to Ministry of Home Affairs, has drawn flak from child rights activists in Tamil Nadu.

- ChildLine 1098 is an initiative for rescuing and assisting children in distress. It is operated by the ChildLine India Foundation, which is a nodal agency of the Ministry of WCD.

Poshan Pakhwada Being Celebrated from 16th to 31st March

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is celebrating the Poshan Pakhwada from March 16 to March 31, 2021.
- The Department of Women & Child Development or the Social Welfare Department will be the nodal department to look after the Poshan Pakhwada across the states and Union Territories.

Poshan Pakhwada 2021

- The key focus areas of the Pakhwada are to address the nutritional challenges using the Food Forestry and to organize the Poshan Panchayats.
- Under it, the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) working under the Ministry of AYUSH, will distribute 4 samplings of the nutritional rich plants to each of the Anganwadi Centers.

Poshan Abhiyaan

- The Poshan Abhiyaan was launched on March 8, 2018 by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

Nirbhaya Fund

- Government of India has legislated various child centric Acts such as the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act (CPCR) 2005, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJ Act) for protection and promotion of child rights.

About Nirbhaya fund:

- The Rs 1,000 crore Nirbhaya Fund was announced in Union Budget 2013 by the then Finance Minister P Chidambaram.
- The corpus was to be utilised for upholding

safety and dignity of women.

- Ministry of Women and Child Development apart from several other concerned ministries were authorised to work out details of structure, scope and application of this fund.
- The Fund is administered by Department of Economic Affairs of the finance ministry.

Global Hunger Index

- The Global Hunger Index (GHI) report, which has placed India at 94th (out of 107 countries) rank in 2020.
- India's ranking had improved from 102 in 2019 to 94 in 2020.

About Global Hunger Index:

- Annual Report: Jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe.
- It was first produced in 2006. It is published every October. The 2020 edition marks the 15th edition of the GHI.

Government ropes in 12 institutions to evaluate impact of National Food Security Act

- The government informed Parliament that it has roped in 12 monitoring institutions for 2020-23 to assess the impact of the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- Minister of State for Food Danve Raosaheb Dadarao announced that During 2018-20, about 26 institutions and universities were engaged as monitoring institutions for conducting the evaluation of the implementation of the NFSA in states and Union Territories.
- The NFSA, passed in 2013, provides for the supply of subsidised foodgrains through ration shops up to 75 per cent of the rural population and up to 50 per cent of the urban population, which as per Census 2011, comes to a maximum of 81.35 crore persons.

Woman swims from Talaimannar to Arichalmunai

- 47-year-old Hyderabad-based woman named Shyamala Goli became the world's second female to swim across the 30-mile long Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka.
- She swam for 13 hours and 43 minutes

from Talaimannar in northern Sri Lanka to Dhanushkodi in India to create the record.

NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India)
- Planning has been in Indian psyche as our leaders came under influence of the socialist clime of erstwhile USSR. Planning commission served as the planning vehicle for close to six decades with a focus on control and command approach.
- Planning Commission was replaced by a new institution – NITI Aayog on January 1, 2015 with emphasis on 'Bottom -Up' approach to envisage the vision of Maximum Governance, Minimum Government, echoing the spirit of 'Cooperative Federalism'.

Administrative Skelton

- Chairperson: Prime Minister
- Vice-Chairperson: To be appointed by Prime-Minister
- Governing Council: Chief Ministers of all states and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- Regional Council: To address specific regional issues, Comprising Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors Chaired by Prime Minister or his nominee.
- Adhoc Membership: 2 members in ex-officio capacity from leading Research institutions on rotational basis.
- Ex-Officio membership: Maximum four from Union council of ministers to be nominated by Prime minister.

Galathea Bay National Park

- Galathea National Park is a National Park located in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is located on the island of Great Nicobar in the Nicobar Islands.
- Meeting on January 5, 2021, the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) denotified the entire Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary to allow for the port there.
- Galathea Bay as one of the 'Important Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Areas' and 'Important Marine Turtle Habitats' in the country. It is included in Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)-I,

the zone with maximum protection.

- "Zero extent" Ecologically Sensitive Zone (ESZ) for the Galathea NP to allow use of land in the south-eastern and south-western part of the island for the NITI Aayog plan.
- The October 2020 draft notification for this zero extent ESZ had ironically listed out in great detail the park's ecological uniqueness that it is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, houses a range of forest types, has one of the best-preserved tropical rainforests in the world.

Ken-Betwa: First River Linking project

- The interlinking of the rivers will destroy the Panna Tiger Reserve located in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

Ken Betwa River Linking Project

- The River interlinking project aims to divert the surplus water from Ken river in Madhya Pradesh to Betwa river in Uttar Pradesh. This is being done with the objective of irrigating the drought-prone Bundelkhand region across the districts of Jhansi, Lalitpur, Banda & Mahoba districts in UP and Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur & Panna districts in MP. This project is one among the 30 rivers interlinking projects across the country.

PM Modi launches 'Catch the Rain' campaign to be funded by MGNREGA

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign on the occasion of World Water Day for conserving water.
- PM urged that every penny of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) funds be spent on rain water conservation till the monsoon arrives.
- The 'Catch the Rain' campaign will be implemented across the country, in both rural and urban areas from March 22 to November 30, 2021 (the pre-monsoon and monsoon period in the country).
- The main aim of the campaign is to take water conservation at grass-root level through people's participation and urge stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures

suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata, to ensure proper storage of rainwater.

MGNREGA

- Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (or, NREGA No 42, later renamed as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" or MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'.
- This act was passed in September 2005 under the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.
- Uttar Pradesh has become the top state in the country to provide employment to the workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme MGNREGA.

Bihar becomes first state to have Ethanol Promotion Policy

- Bihar has become the first state of the country to have its own ethanol policy called Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021.
- The Policy was approved by the Central government in December 2020 in consonance with National Policy of Biofuels, 2018 and subsequently by National Biofuel Co-ordination Committee.
- The ethanol promotion policy would pave the way for making Bihar an ethanol hub and investors' coveted destination.
- The policy would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains, which was restricted to sugarcane.

Andhra to launch India's First Govt Run Animal Ambulance Network

- The state government of the Andhra Pradesh has decided to set up "India's first government-run ambulance network" for animals.

Asia's largest Tulip Garden

- Asia's largest tulip garden, situated on the banks of the Dal Lake, Jammu and Kashmir is all set to be thrown open for the visitors.
- Tulip garden, located at the foothills of Zabarwan range in Jammu and Kashmir.

Parliament passes Bill to set up

National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

- The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill-2021 was passed by the Rajya Sabha, is aimed at providing long-term funding to infrastructure projects including in transport, energy, water, sanitation, telecommunication education sector. The Lok Sabha had passed the Bill.
- The Act (bill) gives space to private institutions to come up for which we give tax benefits for first five years and for this institution (NaBFID), we are giving tax benefits for 10 years.
- About 7,000 projects have been identified under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) with a projected investment of Rs 111 lakh crore during 2020-25.
- NIP, a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens, will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy by Financial Year 2025.

West Bengal tops in Facebook political ad

- Among the four states and one union territory that are going to polls from March 27, West Bengal emerged as the topper in spending for political advertisements on Facebook this year, according to data available with the social media platform.
- Besides West Bengal, assembly elections will be held in three other states Assam, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and in the union territory of Puducherry.
- During the period, political parties of West Bengal spent about Rs 3.74 crore on poll-related campaigns which fall under Facebook's advertisement category of 'social issues, election or politics'.
- West Bengal is followed by Tamil Nadu (Rs 3.3 crore), Assam (Rs 61.77 lakh), Kerala (Rs 38.86 lakh) and Puducherry (Rs 3.34 lakh) during the period, as per the data.

Vizag gets mobile water and Water

Knowledge Centre

- The Hyderabad-based startup, Maithri Aquatech has set up the world's first mobile water-from-air kiosk and 'Water Knowledge Centre' in the smart city of Visakhapatnam.
- This initiative is supported by Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health) an alliance between USAID and SWN (Safe Water Network).
- The kiosk will provide clean 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 as well as surface water resources.
- The kiosk will also function as a Water Knowledge Resource Centre (WRKC) by creating awareness and imparting necessary information to members of the local underserved communities as well as nearby schools on the benefits of good water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices.

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

- It was Constituted under Companies Act, 2013.

Functions:

- It hears appeals against the orders of:
- NCLT under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC).
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.
- The Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Composition:

- The President of the Tribunal and the chairperson and Judicial Members of the Appellate Tribunal shall be appointed after consultation with the Chief Justice of India.

Right to Information Act

About the RTI Act, 2005:

- It sets out the rules and procedures regarding citizens' right to information.
- It replaced the former Freedom of Information Act, 2002.
- This act was enacted in order to consolidate the

fundamental right in the Indian constitution 'freedom of speech'. Since RTI is implicit in the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19 of the Indian Constitution, it is an implied fundamental right.

7th annual summit of NATHEALTH

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan, addressed the 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH in virtual mode on March 26, 2021.
- The summit focused on 'Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era'.
- The summit the minister reiterated the commitments of government for fulfilling goal of Health for all. He noted that, "Health for All" is a top priority for current Government and to institutionalize the approach towards this goal, government has launched the "National Health Policy" in 2017. The primary vision of policy-framework is to attain highest possible level of health and well-being for all irrespective of all age groups.
- Government also launched Ayushman Bharat program with the objective of providing Universal Free Access to primary health care, promoting health and wellbeing.

Pradhan Mantri Atma Nirbhar Swasthya Yojana

- This scheme was launched with the aim of strengthening health systems to meet challenges of covid-19 pandemic and future pandemics. It also seeks to strengthen the expanding & building robust IT enabled surveillance systems in order to track and contain spread of diseases.

Cargo traffic at 12 major ports falls for 11th month

- India has 12 major ports under the control of the central government - Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), V. O. Chidambaram, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).
- Cargo handling at Kamarajar Port (Ennore) nosedived 23.29 per cent during April-February to 22.23 MT.

BIS licence is must for packaged drinking water companies

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) announced that from April 1, the BIS licence will become a “pre-condition” for manufacturers of packaged drinking water and mineral water to obtain or renew the FSSAI licence.
- According to the regulations, manufacturers need to display both the FSSAI licence number as well as the BIS Certification mark on their labels.
- Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations 2011 state that no person should manufacture, sell or exhibit for sale, packaged drinking water and mineral water except under the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification mark.

Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary

- Over a lakh migratory water birds arrived at the Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh in winter 2020-21.
- Location: Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh.
- In 1994, the Government of India declared it a “Wetland of National Importance”.
- Pong Dam Lake was declared as Ramsar Site in November 2002.

Over 4 crore rural households provided with tap water supply under Jal Jeevan Mission

- Over 4 crore rural households in the country have been provided with tap water supply since the Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in August 2019, the Jal Shakti Ministry.
- 7.24 crore households (38 per cent), that is, more than one-third of the rural households are getting potable water through taps.
- Goa has become the first state in the country to provide 100 per cent tap water supply followed by Telangana and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15, 2019, with the aim to provide tap water supply to every rural home by 2024, the Jal Jeevan Mission has reached a new milestone of providing over 4 crore rural

households with tap water supply.

Jal Jeevan Mission

- Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024.
- JJM focuses on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level.

Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012

- It was enacted to protect the children from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.
- It defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as a matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child.

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Government approves issuance of electoral bonds from April 1-10

- Amidst assembly elections in four states and a Union territory, the government approved issuance of the 16th tranche of electoral bonds which will be open for sale from April 1 to 10. Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency in political funding. However, Opposition parties have been raising concerns about alleged opaqueness in funding through such

bonds.

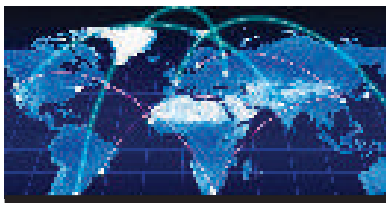
- The 29 specified SBI branches are in cities such as Kolkata, Guwahati, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Patna, New Delhi, Chandigarh, Shimla, Srinagar, Dehradun, Gandhinagar, Bhopal, Raipur, Mumbai, and Lucknow. The sale of the first batch of electoral bonds took place from March 1-10, 2018.

Electoral Bond

- Electoral Bond is a financial instrument for making donations to political parties.
- The bonds are issued in multiples of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 1 lakh, Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore without any maximum limit.
- State Bank of India is authorised to issue and encash these bonds, which are valid for fifteen days from the date of issuance.
- These bonds are redeemable in the designated account of a registered political party.
- The bonds are available for purchase by any person (who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India) for a period of ten days each in the months of January, April, July and October as may be specified by the Central Government.

'Heart of Asia' conference

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar arrived in Tajikistan's capital to attend a key conference on Afghanistan, where representatives from around 50 countries and international organisations would discuss building regional consensus around the peace process in the war-torn country.
- The 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) ministerial conference is part of the Istanbul Process - a regional initiative on security and cooperation for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan - that was launched on November 2, 2011 in Turkey.
- The development comes in the backdrop of understanding the resumption of the 2003 ceasefire between Pakistan and India, reached at the end of February and the meeting held on Indus water sharing after a gap of two years.



7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Chinese cyber attack

- Chinese state-sponsored threat Actor group known as Red Echo is targeting Indian Power sector's Regional Load Dispatch Centres (RLDCs) along with State Load Dispatch Centres (SLDCs).
- Chinese group "Red Echo", which has been identified as responsible for the Mumbai outage, they had been warned by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's (MeitY's) Cyber Emergency Response Team (India) (CERT-in) about the threat from malware called "ShadowPad" in November 2020.
- NCIIPC informed [Power Ministry] through a mail dated 12th February, 2021 about the threat by Red Echo through a malware called Shadow Pad.

Renewable Energy MoU with France

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave ex-post facto approval to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and France on renewable energy cooperation.
- It covers technologies relating to solar, wind, hydrogen and biomass energy.
- This MoU will help in the development of technological know-how in the field of Renewable Energy and thereby aid the process of attaining the ambitious target of 450 GW of installed Renewable Energy capacity by 2030.

India-Sweden Virtual Summit 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the virtual India-Sweden summit with the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Lofven.
- The virtual summit was organised to exchange views on regional and global issues and to discuss the bilateral relations between the two countries.

- This was the fifth interaction between the two leaders since 2015.

UN report

- The United Nations has released a study on food waste called the Food Waste Code 2021. Globally, 9.31 crore tonnes of food wasted in 2019. Of these, 61 percent were wasted from homes, 26 percent from restaurants and 13 percent from retail.
- 2019 in Indian homes in that category 6.80 crore tonnes Food is wasted on a scale. In India, it is estimated that an individual consumes 50 kg of food per year. The United States consumes 59 kg of food per person per year and China consumes 64 kg of food per person per year. Overall, 17 percent of the world's food is wasted.
- According to the United Nations Environment Program, food waste is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions and can reduce pollution by reducing food waste.

United Nations

- The United Nations (UN) is an international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States.
- The UN is structured around five principal organs:
- General Assembly
- United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- International Court of Justice
- UN Secretariat.

Czech envoy calls on Prince of Arcot

- The Ambassador of the Czech Republic to India in Delhi, Milan Hovorka, made a courtesy call on the Prince of Arcot Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali in Amir Mahal.

- The Ambassador was keen to promote education in India, particularly joint venture programmes with the leading educational institutions in Tamil Nadu.

Czech Republic

- President: Miloš Zeman
- Prime Minister: Andrej Babiš
- Capital: Prague
- Currency: Czech Koruna

India stands out in terms of vaccine policy

- India has been at the forefront in fighting the coronavirus pandemic announced by Chief Economist of the IMF Gita Gopinath announced as she hailed the country for playing a very important role during the crisis by manufacturing and shipping the COVID-19 vaccines to several nations.

IMF

- The formation of the IMF was initiated in 1944 at the Bretton Woods Conference.
- IMF came into operation on 27th December 1945 and is today an international organization that consists of 189 member countries. Headquartered in Washington, D.C.,
- IMF focuses on fostering global monetary cooperation, securing financial stability, facilitating and promoting international trade, employment, and economic growth around the world. The IMF is a specialized agency of the United Nations.

Singapore Tops Economic Freedom Index 2021

- Singapore has topped the global ranking in the Economic Freedom Index 2021, for second year in a row, published by US conservative think-tank, The Heritage Foundation
- The overall score of Singapore increased by 0.3 points to 89.7 in this edition, primarily due to an improvement in the score for government spending.
- The index has covered 184 countries in the study and the period of study is July 2019 to June 2020.

India in the index

- India has been placed at 121 position in the index, with a score of 56.5 out of 100. India is put under “Mostly Unfree category”
- Among Asia-Pacific countries, India ranks 26 out of 40 countries.

China and Russia Inks MoU to jointly build Lunar Space Station

- The space agencies of China and Russia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on behalf of their national governments, to jointly construct a lunar space station that will be open to all countries.
- Dubbed as the “International Scientific Lunar Station (ISLS)”, the centre will be a “complex of experimental and research facilities” created on the moon’s surface and/or in orbit of the moon.
- The goal of setting up ISLS is strengthening research cooperation and promoting the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes in the interests of all mankind.
- The MoU was officially signed between the Chinese space agency, China National Space Administration (CNSA) and the Russian space agency Roscosmos, on March 09, 2021.

First Quad summit

- As the US, India, Australia and Japan are set to hold their first Leaders' Summit of Quad.
- The four countries will do things that are "conducive" to regional peace and stability instead of the "opposite".
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his Japanese counterpart Yoshihide Suga will attend the virtual summit, which is the first conclave of the top leaders of the Quadrilateral alliance.

About Quad:

- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a “free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.

- In November 2017, India, the US, Australia and Japan gave shape to the long-pending “Quad” Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).

Air bubble pact

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced the Rajya Sabha that the government wanted to expand the “air bubble” arrangement with more countries, and the priority would be Saudi Arabia, Kuwait in the west and Japan, China and Singapore in the east.
- Under the air bubble scheme, commercial airlines from specific countries are allowed to travel to and from India on a limited basis an arrangement that was solely reserved for the Air India under the Vande Bharat mission as fullscale international commercial air operations are yet to resume after the COVID19 restrictions were implemented last year.

About Air Bubble Transport:

- Air Bubble is the term coined during COVID-19 times. It means that airlines of both countries in an arrangement will be permitted to fly passengers both ways but alluded to the fact that restrictions imposed by India’s home ministry and the foreign countries could mean only those who clear these checks will be able to travel out or in.

IRENA

- The COVID-19 crisis offers an unexpected opportunity for countries to decouple their economies from fossil fuels and accelerate the shift to renewable energy sources, says the World Energy Transitions Outlook report, brought out by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- It estimated that by 2050, 90% of total electricity needs would be supplied by renewable, followed by 6% from natural gas and the remaining from nuclear.

About IRENA

- It is an intergovernmental organization mandated to facilitate cooperation, advance knowledge, and promote the adoption and

sustainable use of renewable energy.

- It is the first international organisation to focus exclusively on renewable energy, addressing needs in both industrialized and developing countries.
- It was founded in 2009 & its statute entered into force on 8 July 2010 and is headquartered in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- IRENA is an official United Nations observer.

India –Finland Virtual Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a virtual summit with his Finland counterpart Sanna Marin.

Background

- Capital of Finland- Helsinki
- President of Finland- Sauli Niinistö

Economic Relation

- Finland was the 60th largest trade partner of India across world while it was 10th largest within the European Union.
- India was the 23rd largest trade partner of Finland and the fifth largest within Asia.

India, Portugal extends support for UNSC membership

- Inter-Parliamentary Union President Duarte Pacheco addressed Members of Parliament at the Central Hall and thanked India for its support for Portugal's election to the IPU.
- The Inter-Parliamentary Union formed in 1889, is one of the oldest and largest international Parliamentary body consisting of more than 179 members.
- Pacheco, a Member of Parliament of Portugal, was recently elected as the President of IPU, an international organization of national parliaments, for a three-year term from 2021 to 2023. He is visiting India at the invitation of the Parliament of India.

UN Security Council

- The Security Council was established by the UN Charter in 1945. It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.
- The other 5 organs of the United Nations are—the General Assembly, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, and the

Secretariat.

- Its primary responsibility is to work to maintain international peace and security.
- The council has 15 members: the five permanent members and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms.
- The council is headquartered at New York.

World's Largest Floating Solar Farms being built in Singapore

- The largest floating solar farm of the world is being built in Singapore. The country has resorted to set up the energy plants off the coasts and reservoirs across it.
- It is one of the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in India.
- To cater to the issue of climate change and to cut the greenhouse gas emission it is building the floating solar farm. This project is being built by Sembcorp Industries.

Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum

- The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was held virtually on March 16, 2021.
- The event was chaired by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI, led by Smt Smriti Zubin Irani.
- The meeting witnessed participation of Ministers and officials responsible for Women Affairs of IBSA Countries.

Need to build resilient systems to provide solutions for sustainable use of water: India at UN

- Implementation of the Water-Related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda" convened by President of the General Assembly Volkan Bozkir, Minister of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation) Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said that there is no doubt that in the journey to achieve the 2030 Agenda, water supply and sanitation have to be the center of the global efforts.
- Water being critical to life on earth, also plays a seminal role in the social, economic, and environmental evaluation of the world

towards a sustainable future. Nearly 1.1 billion people lack access to water, with 2.7 billion people facing water scarcity for at least one month every year.

- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 specifically addresses access to water and sanitation. The UN General Assembly has declared 2018 to 2028, the Water Action Decade, which also addresses the increased global pressure on water resources, and exacerbated risk of droughts and floods.

Mission

- 'The Clean India Mission', launched in 2014 to achieve universal sanitation, became the world's biggest sanitation campaign with the construction of 110 million toilets in only six years resulting in an open-defecation free India.

Indo-Pacific strategic partnership

- US Secretary of Defence Lloyd J Austin, who arrived in New Delhi met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and conveyed Washington's "strong desire" to further enhance the strategic partnership for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Prime Minister and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval also participated during the discussion.

International Atomic Energy Agency

- The IAEA was created in 1957.
- It is an Independent International Organization that reports annually to the United Nations General Assembly.
- The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- In 2005, it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work for a safe and peaceful world.
- Headquarter: Vienna, Austria.

Indian-Israeli collaboration testing oral COVID vaccine

- An Indian-Israeli collaboration has reportedly developed an oral vaccine for COVID-19, one that can be swallowed like a pill instead of being injected, as is the norm. A preliminary

test in animals showed that the vaccine produced the expected antibodies that confer protection.

- Premas Biotech, a Gurugram-based biotechnology firm, and Oramed Pharmaceuticals, a Jerusalem headquartered company, have a long-standing collaboration on developing new drug delivery techniques.
- The nascent COVID-19 vaccine candidate is a "protein-based VLP (Virus Like Particle) vaccine candidate" that generates "triple protection" against the SARS CoV-2 virus, i.e., it is able to target the spike, membrane, and envelope proteins of the coronavirus.
- Oravax, the company developing the vaccine, is a joint venture between Premas and Oramed.

India abstains in UNHRC vote on Sri Lanka

- India abstained from a crucial vote on Sri Lanka's rights record at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.
- The resolution on 'Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka' was adopted after 22 states of the 47-member Council voted in its favour.

UNHRC

- The UNHRC is a United Nations body established in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- Aim: To promote and protect human rights around the globe. Apart from that, the UNHRC also investigate alleged human rights violations in countries.
- Members: The council has 47 members elected for a 3-year term. 5 Regional groups elect these 47 members.
- Head Quarters: Geneva, Switzerland.

Kerala's TB eradication programme bags award

- Kerala's tuberculosis eradication programme has won national honour as the state bagged the Union government's award for reducing the prevalence of the disease through various systematic initiatives.
- The disease control was made possible in

the southern state through various projects including "Akshaya Kerala" under the "My Tuberculosis Free Kerala" scheme implemented by the state Health Department.

World's first Ship Tunnel to be built in Norway

- The Norwegian Coastal Administration has received the green signal to start working on the construction of world's first tunnel, being built exclusively for ships.
- The tunnel is dubbed as "Stad Ship Tunnel" and would be built under the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway.
- The 1.7 km tunnel will be able to handle ships of up to 16,000 tonnes and give ships a safer passage through the treacherous Stadhavet Sea.

India, Pakistan and China to participate exercise "Pabbi-Anti-Terror 2021"

- The member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), including India, Pakistan and China, will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise named "Pabbi-Anti-Terror 2021" in later 2021.
- The exercise will be hosted by Pakistan at its premier anti-terrorism centre in Pabbi in Nowshera district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- It would be the first time that Indian forces will travel to Pakistan for any military exercise.
- The decision to hold "Pabbi-Antiterror-2021" was announced during the 36th meeting of the Council of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on 18 March.
- RATS is a permanent organ of the 8-member bloc-SCO to promote cooperation of member states against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- It is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation.
- It's creation was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai (China) by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of

Uzbekistan.

- The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.

India, US to resume homeland security dialogue

- India and the US announced they will re-establish the Homeland Security Dialogue focused on issues such as cybersecurity, emerging technology, and violent extremism.
- A discussion between US secretary for homeland security Alejandro Mayorkas and Indian ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu.
- An initiative of the Obama administration, the first India-US Homeland Security Dialogue was held in May 2011.
- The second India-US Homeland Security Dialogue was held in Washington DC in 2013 between Napolitano and the then home minister Sushilkumar Shinde.

India ranks 40th on International Intellectual Property Index 2021: GIPC

- India has been ranked 40 among 53 global economies in the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index 2021.
- The annual IP Index 2021 was released on March 23, 2021 by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC).
- This is ₹the ninth edition of the IP index released by the GIPC.
- Categories include: Patent, Copyrights, Trademarks, Design Rights, Trade Secrets and Market Access, Commercialization of IP Assets, Enforcement, Systematic Efficiency, and International Treaties.
- In 2020 also, India ranked 40th among 53 economies.

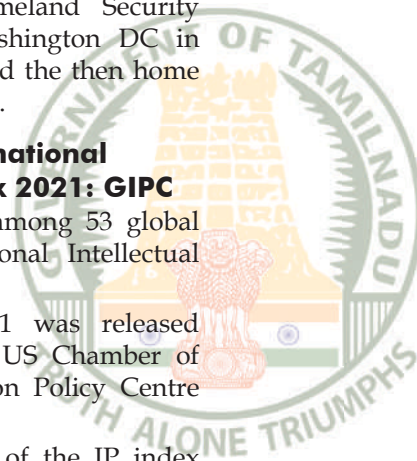
Indo-Korean friendship park in Delhi

- An India South Korea friendship park was jointly inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of National Defence of South Korea Suh Wook at Delhi cantonment.
- The park has been built to commemorate the contribution of Indian peacekeeping force

during the Korean war of 1950-53.

New Zealand becomes only second country after India to pass Miscarriages Bereavement Leave Law

- The Bill allows mothers and their partners the right to paid leave following a miscarriage or still birth, without having to tap into sick leave.
- Employees will get three days leave when a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth.
- With this, New Zealand has become only the second country in the world to do so.
- India is the only other country in the world with similar legislation that provides leave for miscarriage and stillbirth.





8. TAMILNADU AFFAIRS

Thirukkural

- The Director of the Tamil Development Department and the World Tamil Research Institute announced that they plan to translate Thirukkural into Hebrew.

Learn to Write education program

- 100% attendance is compulsory for writing the literacy test in the Learn to Write Movement.

Learn to Write education program

- Based on the letters of the Central Government in view and the results of the Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting held on 21.10.2020, in Tamil Nadu, based on the 2011 Census, with a view to imparting basic literacy to illiterate persons above the age of 15 years who are completely illiterate.
- Under the Tamil Nadu Literacy Initiative, the Non-School and Adult Education Directorate is planning to implement a new adult education program called 'Karpom Ezhuthuvom Movement' in all districts under the 60:40 funding of the Central and State Governments.

Postal vote

- For the first time in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, the Election Commission of India has allowed the casting of postal votes for elderly voters aged over 80, the differently-abled, and those who have tested positive for COVID-19
- Electors should fill up a 12-D consent form when officials visit their residences.
- Within five days of the notification of the election schedule, officials will visit the residences of persons failing in the three categories after preparing a list and ask them whether they want to cast their votes through postal ballots.

- If they choose the option, they will be provided with a 12-D consent form for casting votes

Saksham 2021 Awards for Oil & Gas Conservation

- The New Delhi-based Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) launched a month long pan-India campaign "SAKSHAM 2021 (Sanrakshan Kshamata Mahotsav)' from January 16, 2021 to February 15 2021 to create awareness about the adverse impact of fossil fuels on health and environment, and to convince the consumers of fossil fuels to Switch towards cleaner fuels
- ts and Oil Companies for Oil & Gas Conservation

Best Overall Performance Award for State Govt.	Category-I (Big State)	Tamil Nadu
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Fourth rank in ease of living

- Chennai has secured the fourth rank in the ease of living among 49 cities in the million plus category.
- The city stood 14th in the previous survey. Chennai's total score in the ease of living is 62.61 out of 100.
- In the Citizen Perception Survey, it has ranked third. It has ranked high in overall safety and security.
- Chennai is ranked 18th. In the municipal performance index, which measures governance, planning, technology, finance and services. It is ranked third in finance, 17th in services, 18th in technology, 44th in planning and 25th in governance.
- Chennai is better ranked in affordable and quality education, recreational facilities and

safety of women. Affordable housing has been an area of concern. Coimbatore has improved its rank from 25th to seventh.

Report

- The Municipal Performance and Ease of Living Indices 2020, issued by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Details of 11 documents to vote for the legislature

- The House of Representatives says the Legislature can vote on any of the 11 documents in the House of Commons.
 1. Passport
 2. Driving license
 3. Employee Identity Card issued by Central and State Government Departments and Public Sector Undertakings
 4. Nationalized Banks and Postal Saving Account Book with photo
 5. Permanent Account Number Card issued by the Central Government
 6. National People's Registration Identity Card
 7. Card issued under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
 8. Insurance card issued by the Labor Welfare Department
 9. Pension document with photograph
 10. Official Identity Card issued to members of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary States
 11. You can use any of the contents of the card.

Launch of Legal Development Seat at Thanjavur Sastra University

- Thanjavur Shastra Direct University Law Department has started a seat for law and its development.
- Supreme Court Judge Rohingya Nariman inaugurated the seat for the law and its development.
- The event, chaired by former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court MN Venkatasalaiah, was attended by Advocate CS Vaithyanathan, Attorney General KK Venugopal, former

Attorney General K Parasaran and Shastra Direct University Vice Chancellor S Vaithiyasubramaniam.

Postal dak adalat to be held on March 19

- The Department of Posts will conduct a Dak Adalat at its Anna Road Head Post Office on March 19.
- Residents may send their grievances by post or email to doannaroadhpo.tn@indiapost.gov.in. on or before March 16.

20,000 crore fund for Blue revolution

- Rs 20,000 crore investment for blue revolution in maritime states including Tamil Nadu
- Central Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairy Minister Pratap Chandra Sarangi has announced that over Rs.20,000 crore.
- To increase foreign exchange through seafood exports and protect the fishing community, National Fisheries Policy - 2020 has been formulated.

Tamil Nadu has highest revenue deficit among poll-bound States

- Tamil Nadu has the highest revenue deficit at ₹65,994 crore (as per revised budget estimate for 2020-21), among poll-bound States, according to a report.
- In terms of size of the economy, Tamil Nadu's economy is the largest (third largest in India), followed by West Bengal (sixth), Kerala (11th), Assam (17th) and Puducherry (26th).
- At ₹19 lakh crore, Tamil Nadu accounts for 9% of India's economy.
- According to the report, Assam has witnessed the highest average economic growth of 8.6% during the four-year period to FY20.
- West Bengal and Puducherry's economy grew on par with the national average, while at 6.3% Kerala's economic growth.
- The services sector accounted for 51% or over half of the Tamil Nadu's economic output, followed by industry 38% and agriculture at 11% for FY21.
- Tamil Nadu's economic growth averaged 8% during FY16-2020, above the national average

of 6.7%.

- The unemployment rate in Tamil Nadu in February 2021 was 4.8%, lower than the national average of 6.9%.
- The unemployment rates in other four States were also below the national average.

Revenue Deficit

- Primary Deficit is Fiscal Deficit net of Interest Payment. It is the difference between Fiscal Deficit and Interest payment.
- Revenue deficit is the excess of revenue expenditure over revenue receipts.
- It indicates the Borrowing requirements of the government for the purpose other than interest payment.

