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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### China launched a new satellite

- China has launched a new satellite with a camera capable of taking photos of the ground with a resolution of five meters, according to the National Space Administration of China (CNSA). The satellite, called “Ziyuan-1 02E” or “Five Meter 02 Optical Satellite”. Beijing time by a Long March-4C rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Beijing Province. Shanxi (northern China). This is the 39th launch of the Longue Marche-4C rocket and the 403rd launch of the entire Long March series.
- The Ziyuan-1 02E weighs approximately 2.5 kilograms and is equipped with infrared, near-infrared and hyperspectral cameras. The cameras can take panchromatic color images of the Earth.
- The satellite will work with the five-meter optical satellite 01 and will reduce the revisiting time of Chinese territory from three days to two days.

### The first-ever bus-train dual-mode vehicle launched in Japan

- Japan has introduced a minibus lookalike world’s first dual-mode vehicle (DMV) in its town of Kaiyo. The vehicle can run on normal rubber tyres on the road but its steel wheels, which are in its underbelly, descend when it hits the rail tracks. The DMV can carry up to 21 passengers and runs at a speed of 60km/h on rail tracks and can go as fast as around 100km/h on public roads.
- The front tyres are lifted off the track and the rear wheels stay down to propel the DMV onto the railway. This feature of effectively changing into a train-like module easily on a rail track is the first of its kind. Powered by diesel, the small fleet of vehicles comes in different colours. It runs along part of the coast of Shikoku island in southern Japan, connecting several small towns and offering passengers attractive seaside scenery.

### Japan launches huge Inmarsat-6 F1 communications satellite into orbit

- Japan has launched Inmarsat-6 F1, a communication satellite, through a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) H-IIA204 rocket from Japan’s Tanegashima Space Center that will enter geostationary orbit, about 22,240 miles (35,790 kilometres) above the earth. It is developed by the London-based company Inmarsat as a part of its next-generation satellite broadband service. The satellite is 12,060-pound (5,470 kilograms) and is the first of two ‘I-6’ spacecraft.
- Designated H-IIAF45, Inmarsat-6 F1 launch is Japan’s third orbital flight of 2021 and H-IIA’s second mission of the year, marking the 45th flight of the H-IIA vehicle overall.

### Alia Bhatt named PETA India's Person of the Year

- People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has named Bollywood star Alia Bhatt its 2021 Person of the Year. She is an animal lover and often shares pictures with her pets. This year, Alia Bhatt invested in Phool, the company behind Fleather, which is a vegan leather made from discarded temple flowers.
- Her vegan kidswear line, Ed-a-Mamma, also won a 2021 PETA India fashion award for helping to nurture kids’ love for animals and nature. Alia also starred in a pro-adoption

PETA India campaign to help cats and dogs. She has used her position to call for stronger animal protection laws.

### **Docprime launches India's first ABDM integrated Health Locker**

- Docprime tech has launched India's first health locker integrated with Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM). ABDM was launched in August 2020 for developing an integrated digital health infrastructure in the country. ABDM integrated Health Locker will provide users a digital and self-consented health data management system without any charges. It will store and manage health records electronically.
- Users can create digital Health IDs for themselves and for their family members on ABDM integrated Health Locker.

### **Indian-origin philanthropist Dr Imtiaz Sooliman named South African Of The Year**

- Indian-origin philanthropist and founder of disaster relief group 'Gift Of The Givers', Dr Imtiaz Sooliman has won the prestigious South African of the Year Award run by the Daily Maverick newspaper.
- South Africans across the board voted for Sooliman, putting Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo in second place. Zondo heads the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture, which investigates fraud and corruption in the public sector, including state organs.
- Sooliman, in his acceptance speech at the Al Quds Mosque in Cape Town on Friday, called on Muslims worldwide to engage in caring for all communities to change Islamophobic perceptions.

### **With 33 new 'unicorns', India replaces UK to be 3rd top country hosting such enterprises**

- Adding 33 "unicorns" in a single year has helped India displace the United Kingdom to be third in the list of countries that are home to such enterprises valued at over \$1 billion each. The US and China, who occupy the first two ranks, are way ahead, according to the data compiled by Hurun Research Institute.
- US and China are home to 74 per cent of the unicorn universe. The US added 254 unicorns and now totals 487 companies in the coveted list, while China added 74 to take its tally to 301 start-ups having a valuation of over \$1 billion. The UK added only 15 unicorns to take its total to 39, and hence got displaced by India.

### **WADA report: India among world's top three dope violators country**

- India is among the world's top three dope violators country in the world. Indian athletes were involved 152 times in dope-related activities in the year 2019. The report has revealed the latest report published by the World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada), which has put India into the top-three of the world's biggest violators behind Russia (167) and Italy (157). Brazil (78) is at fourth and Iran (70) fifth positions.
- In 2019, 152 (17 per cent of the world total) Anti-doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) were reported in India. The maximum dope offenders are from bodybuilding followed by weightlifting (25), athletics (20), wrestling (10), and boxing.

## Reliance- Most Visible Corporate In Media Says Wizikey Report

- Reliance Industries Ltd, India's largest corporate by revenues, profits and market value, topped the 2021 Wizikey News Score ranking as India's most-visible corporate in the media. State Bank of India is a close second on the ranking, followed by Bharti Airtel, Infosys and Tata Motors. Others on the India list include HDFC at the sixth spot, followed by HDFC Bank, TCS, Maruti Suzuki India, Vodafone Idea and ICICI Bank.
- The highest-ranked state-owned firm is National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC), at rank 13.
- On the global rankings chart for top Multinational Corporations(MNC), Facebook tops the index, followed by Google's Alphabet Inc.

## Leftist Gabriel Boric to become Chile's youngest ever president

- 35-year-old, Gabriel Boric, has won Chile presidential elections, to become the youngest-ever President-elect of Chile. He defeated his opposition Jose Antonio Kast in the elections. Gabriel Boric will assume office in March 2022, will become the youngest president in Chile's history. Official results gave Mr Boric 56% of the votes against Mr Kast's 44%. Mr Kast conceded defeat barely an hour-and-a-half after polls closed, and with around half of ballots counted.
- The president-elect also promised to block a controversial proposed mining project which he said would destroy communities and the national environment. Chile's currency, the peso, plunged to a record low against the US dollar after Mr Boric's victory. Stock markets fell by 10%, with mining stocks performing particularly badly.

## Malta becomes first EU country to legalise cannabis for personal use

- Malta became the first European country to allow limited cultivation and possession of cannabis for personal use, following a vote in parliament. The Maltese parliament voted in favour of the reform last week, with 36 votes in favour and 27 against. Adults will be allowed to grow four plants at home and carry seven grams of cannabis, with smoking in public or in front of children remaining illegal.
- The Netherlands also has a liberal attitude towards cannabis, allowing the sale of small quantities in a policy aimed at managing crime and health risks, though officially it is illegal.
- Cannabis, also known as marijuana among other names, is a psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant. Native to Central and South Asia, the cannabis plant has been used as a drug for both recreational and entheogenic purposes and in various traditional medicines for centuries.

## Global Google trends: 2021

- Google has published its annual overview of key search trends, which provides a somewhat dizzying reminder of all the things that have happened in 2021 – which really feels like it's only lasted for a few months. Google's 2021 Search Trends mini-site includes data on all the key topics of interest, including overall searches and news events. Google's long-time tradition of releasing "Year in Search" annually has become a norm for those who are curious over the most searched topics on the platform.

Overall trending in 2021

Ranking	Overall
1	Australia vs India
2	India vs England
3	Indian Premier League
4	NBA
5	Euro 2021
6	Copa América
7	India vs New Zealand
8	T20 World Cup
9	Squid Game
10	DMX

#### World's Fashion Brand "Patagonia" chooses Khadi Denim for its Apparels

- US-based world's leading fashion brand, Patagonia, is now using handcrafted Khadi Denim fabric for making Denim apparels. Patagonia, through textile major Arvind Mills, has purchased nearly 30,000 meters of Khadi Denim Fabric worth Rs 1.08 crore from Gujarat. The purchase of Khadi Denim by Patagonia has created additional 1.80 lakh man-hours, i.e. 27,720 man-days of work for Khadi artisans.
- In July 2017, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) signed an agreement with Arvind mills Limited, Ahmadabad, to trade Khadi Denim products around the world. Since then, Arvind Mills has been purchasing a large quantity of Khadi Denim fabric every year from KVIC-certified Khadi institutions of Gujarat.

#### China successfully launched "Shijian-6 05" satellites for Space Exploration

- China successfully launched a new group of satellites Shijian-6 05 into space from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China for space exploration and new technology tests. The satellites were launched by a Long March-4B rocket which marked the 400th mission of Long March series carrier rockets. The information about the number of satellites has not been specified. As the message reads, they will be used for space exploration and new technology tests.

#### Germany's Olaf Scholz takes over from Merkel as chancellor

- German lawmakers officially elected Social Democrat, Olaf Scholz as the new chancellor, putting an end to 16 years of conservative rule under Angela Merkel. He will lead a government composed of his Social Democrat Party, the business-friendly Free Democrats and the Greens, a coalition of parties never tried before at the federal level in Germany.



- The 63-year-old, Scholz previously served as vice-chancellor and finance minister during the Merkel administration, was then sworn in as Germany's next chancellor. Olaf Scholz has achieved the necessary majority of at least 369 votes. Based on article 63, paragraph 2 of the German Constitution he is elected chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

#### **World Inequality Report 2022 has been released**

- France-based World Inequality Lab published its report titled "World Inequality Report 2022". This report was authored by Lucas Chancel, who is the co-director of World Inequality Lab. It was coordinated by famed French economist Thomas Piketty. In 2021 the top 10 percent and top 1 percent of the Indian population hold 57 percent and 22 percent of total national income respectively, whereas the share of the bottom 50 percent has gone down to 13 percent.
- The report notes that the top 1 % of India's population owns more than one-fifth of the total national income in 2021.
- The bottom half of the population earns just 13.1 per cent.
- It highlights that economic reforms and liberalization that India has adopted, have mostly benefited the top 1 per cent.

#### **Adama Barrow re-elected The Gambia's President**

- The President of Gambia, Adama Barrow, won the second term as President during Gambia's presidential election by achieving over 53% votes from 50 of 53 constituencies. He defeated his main challenger Ousainou Darboe who won 27.7% of vote. The results of the election were declared by Electoral commission Chairman Alieu Momarr Njai. Adama Barrow's assumption as President 5 years ago ended more than 20 years of the dictatorship of former dictator Yahya Jammeh.

#### **Cambridge Dictionary Word of the Year 2021: 'Perseverance'**

- Perseverance, a word that captures the undaunted will of people across the world to never give up, despite the many challenges of the last 12 months, is Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year 2021. Perseverance has been looked up more than 243,000 times on the website in 2021, the first time it has made a noticeable appearance. NASA's Perseverance Rover made its final descent to Mars on 18 February.

#### **Bangladesh and US kick off bilateral maritime exercise CARAT for a free and open Indo-Pacific**

- US military personnel and Bangladesh Navy (BN) began the 27th annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) maritime exercise virtually from 1 December in the Bay of Bengal. The nine-day exercise focuses on a wide range of naval capabilities and includes cooperative actions that demonstrate the US and Bangladesh's capacity to work together to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.
- CARAT is to promote regional cooperation and build relationships, according to Bangladesh Navy Fleet Commander Rear Admiral S M Abdul Kalam Azad. Since 2011, the Bangladesh Navy has been participating in the CARAT exercise, which is celebrating its 27th anniversary this year.

## **Sweden gets first female prime minister for second time in less than a week**

- The former Finance Minister of Sweden, Eva Magdalena Andersson from the Social Democratic Party (SDP) won her 2nd election and became the 1st female Prime Minister (PM) of Sweden. On 24 November 2021, she was first elected as the PM but later resigned after her coalition partner (Green Party) quit the government and the budget failed to pass. Sweden's Parliament is known as Riksdag. Sweden is the last Nordic country to get a female Prime Minister.
- Magdalena Andersson was born on 23 January 1967. She is a 54-year-old Swedish politician and economist serving as the PM from the Social Democratic Party or SDP.
- She began her political career as a political adviser to then PM Goran Persson in 1996 and then as Director of Planning.
- In 2004 she began to work in the Ministry of Finance as State Secretary.
- She became the head of the SDP on November 4, 2021. She is the second woman leader of the SDP.

## **Barbados parts way with Queen and becomes world's newest republic**

- Barbados has become the World's newest republic, around 400 years after it became a British colony. Barbados is said to have been made a 'slave society by the British. It first became an English colony in 1625. It gained its independence in 1966. Barbados, the Caribbean Island nation, removed Queen Elizabeth II as the head of the state.
- Dame Sandra Prunella Mason took over as the President of Barbados. He was selected to become the first president of Barbados in October 2021. He was selected as President of Barbados, at a joint meeting of both the Houses of Parliament of Barbados. His name was announced by Speaker of the House of Assembly, Arthur Holder.

## **South Korea hopes to build sustainable floating city by 2025**

- South Korea is soon going to get the world's first floating city, to deal with the problem of floods due to rising sea levels. The floating city project is a joint effort by the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habit) and OCEANIX. The city will be built off the coast of Busan in South Korea and is likely to be completed by 2025.
- The floating city will have 'flood-proof infrastructure' and comprise several man-made islands to eliminate the risk of flooding. The self-sufficient city will be specifically designed to withstand natural disasters like tsunamis, floods, and Category 5 hurricanes.

## **Merriam-Webster chooses vaccine as the 2021 word of the year**

- The American publishing company Merriam-Webster has chosen the word "vaccine" as its 2021 Word of the Year. Merriam-Webster is America's most trusted online dictionary for English word definitions, meanings, and pronunciation. It has been declaring the word of the year since 2008. The word "vaccine" saw a 601 percent increase in definition lookups over the year, compared to 2020.

### **NATIONAL NEWS**

#### **PM Narendra Modi launches blockchain-based digital degrees at IIT Kanpur convocation**

- Under the National Blockchain Project, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched blockchain-based digital degrees at the 54th Convocation Ceremony of IIT Kanpur. Later Prime Minister also inaugurated the completed section of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project and the Bina-Panki Multiproduct Pipeline Project. These digital degrees can be verified globally and are unforgeable.
- The blockchain technology being used by IIT Kanpur to award digital degrees has been developed in-house. It is being touted as a revolutionary technology for the education sector. The technology is already being used in the financial sector. The technology has been developed by the institute under the National Blockchain Project.

#### **PM inaugurates Bina (MP)-Panki (UP) Multiproduct pipeline project, Total cost of the project is Rs.1524 crore**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 356 Km long Bina Refinery (Madhya Pradesh)- POL Terminal at Panki (Kanpur, UP) Multiproduct pipeline project ( capacity of 45 million metric tonnes per annum) with an outlay of Rs 1524 crore (Rs. 1227 crores in UP and Rs. 297 crores in MP). The project has been completed and commissioned one month ahead of the approved completion schedule of December 2021 (3 years from PNGRB authorisation) and within the approved cost. It will provide for safe and efficient evacuation of products from Bina Refinery and also improve the availability of products in Eastern U.P, Central U.P., Northern Bihar and Southern Uttarakhand.
- PM has also inaugurated the completed section of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project and undertook a metro ride from the IIT metro station to Geeta Nagar. The entire length of the Metro Rail Project in Kanpur is 32 Km and is being built at a cost of around ₹11,000 crores. PM also attended the 54th Convocation Ceremony of IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Kanpur.

#### **Telangana tops in implementation of Rurban Mission**

- Telangana has secured 1st place among the 34 states and Union Territories that implement the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM). Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have secured 2nd and 3rd place on the list respectively. In the Ranking of the Cluster, among the 295 clusters, the Ryakal cluster of Sangareddy and the Jukkal cluster of Kamareddy in Telangana has secured the 1st and 2nd position respectively. The Aibawk cluster of Aizawl in Mizoram has secured the 3rd position.
- The Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) follows the vision of “Development of a cluster of villages that preserve and nurture the essence of rural community life with focus on equity and inclusiveness without compromising with the facilities perceived to be essentially urban in nature, thus creating a cluster of “Rurban Villages”. The objective of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) is to stimulate local economic development, enhance basic services, and create well planned Rurban clusters.



#### **Haryana's CM Manohar Lal Khattar launched Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam portal**

- The Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the 'Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam portal' and announced to set up the Atal Park & Smriti Kendra in Gurugram, Haryana. The CM also honoured 78 officers and employees for delivering the best services in various fields. He also launched a magazine 'Vyavastha Parivartan Se Susashan' and the 2022 official calendar.
- Now all the problems of the public are being solved easily through CM Window. So far, more than 8.5 lakh issues have been resolved. The government has abolished the practice of remand in the cases of the Revenue Department. Only a maximum of two appeals can be made in this. Apart from this, a run through the system has been implemented to accelerate the file work. The government has abolished the contractual practice in the recruitments made in the departments.

#### **PM Modi launches Rs 11,000 Cr hydropower projects in Himachal**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation of the hydropower projects worth Rs 11000 crore in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. He inaugurated the Sawra-Kuddu Hydro Power Project, a 111 MW Project which has been built at a cost of around Rs 2,080 crore. He also laid the foundation stone of the Renukaji Dam project which has been kept pending for around 3 decades. The 40 MW project will be built at a cost of around Rs 7,000 crore. Other Projects are: Luhri Stage 1 Hydro Power Project and the Dhaulasidh Hydro Power Project, the first hydropower project of the Hamirpur district.

#### **Centre sets up high-level committee to examine possibility of lifting AFSPA from Nagaland**

- The Government of India has decided to constitute a 'five-member' committee to look into the demand for withdrawal of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act "AFSPA" in Nagaland. The committee headed by Vivek Joshi, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, would submit its recommendations within 45 days. Additional Secretary in the Home Ministry Piyush Goyal will be its Member-Secretary. The Chief Secretary and DGP of Nagaland and the DGP of Assam Rifles will be the other members of the committee.
- Vivek Joshi, who is Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, will head the five-member committee while Additional Secretary in the Union Home Ministry Piyush Goyal will be the member secretary of the panel. Other members of the committee are the chief secretary and DGP of Nagaland and the DGP of the Assam Rifles.

#### **NITI Aayog releases fourth edition of state health index**

- NITI Aayog has released the fourth edition of the State Health Index for 2019–20 that provides incremental performance in health outcomes and status. The index is developed by: NITI Aayog, World Bank, and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The report, titled "Healthy States, Progressive India", ranks states and Union Territories on their year-on-year incremental performance in health outcomes as well as their overall status. The index is being compiled and published since 2017. The reports aim to nudge states/UTs towards building robust health systems and improving service delivery.
- Among the 'Larger States', in terms of annual incremental performance, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Telangana are the top three ranking states.

### **CEBR: India expected to become 3rd largest economy by 2031**

- The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) from the United Kingdom has predicted that the Indian economy will become the world's third-largest by the year 2031. In the year 2022, India is set to regain its sixth position in World Economic League Table (WELT) from France, as per CEBR.
- In the year 2020, India's GDP had witnessed a contraction of 7.3% due to the C-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown leading to constraints on economic activity. India has witnessed a large scale spread of infections and has the third-highest death toll worldwide, behind US and Brazil. However, with the help of emergency aid and prompt measures taken by the Indian government, the country has recovered from the second wave of C-19.
- The annual league table also predicted that China will overtake the US to be the largest economy in 2030 (two years later than the forecast in 2021). The world economy is set to surpass \$100 trillion for the first time in 2022.

### **Rajnath Singh inaugurates BrahMos missile manufacturing unit in Lucknow**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has laid the foundation stone of the BrahMos Aerospace cruise missile manufacturing unit in Lucknow. He also laid the foundation of DRDO Defence Technology and Test Centre in Lucknow. BrahMos Project will help in creating 5,500 fresh job opportunities.
- BrahMos is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India and the NPOM of Russia. BrahMos missile derives its name from the Brahmaputra river of India and the Moskva river of Russia.
- All the three wings of the Indian defence forces have already inducted the BrahMos advanced weapon system.
- Recently, India successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the integrated test range of Chandipur.

### **World Sangeet Tansen festival begin in Madhya Pradesh**

- In Madhya Pradesh, the 97th edition of the World Sangeet Tansen festival started in Gwalior. A five-day World Sangeet Tansen festival starts from December 25 to December 30 in the city. The stage of the program has been constructed on the theme of the Siddhanath temple situated in Omkareshwar. Many artists not only from India but also from abroad will participate in the music festival.
- The first seven concerts were held at the stage prepared at the mausoleum of Tansen and the tomb of Mohammad Ghaus. The eighth concert will be held on the banks of the Jhilmil river, in Behat (Birthplace of Tansen) on December 30. The last brief concert will be held at Gwalior Fort on the same day.

### **Stalin goes green by launching 'Meendum Manjappai' scheme**

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has launched the 'Meendum Manjappai' scheme to promote the use of cloth bags by the public and discourage the use of plastic bags. This awareness campaign on using 'yellow' cloth bag or 'manjapai' as it is called in Tamil, is aimed at encouraging the people to return to the use of this eco-friendly bag and discard

the plastic bags. The state government had enforced a ban on the production, use, storage, distribution, transportation or sale of 14 types of plastics with effect from January 1, 2019.

- A government committee has identified the single-use plastic (SUP) items to be banned based on an index of their utility and environmental impact.
- The first category of SUP items proposed to be phased out are plastic sticks used in balloons, flags, candy, ice cream and earbuds, and thermocol that is used in decorations.

### **Gujarat govt launches 'Nadi Utsav' to honour rivers, raise awareness about their protection**

- The Gujarat government on Sunday launched 'Nadi Utsav', or river festival, to honour rivers for their contribution to the development of the state as well as to raise awareness about their protection.
- Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel participated in a state-level launch function at a weir-cum-causeway on Tapi river here, where he worshipped Goddess Tapi with Vedic rituals.
- The state government is committed to building a riverfront on the Tapi river in Surat, Patel said at the function, organised as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', being celebrated across the country, to honour rivers.

### **Indian Army launched ASIGMA messaging app**

- Indian Army has launched a contemporary messaging application named 'ASIGMA' (Army Secure IndiGeneous Messaging Application). It is a new generation web-based application developed entirely in-house by a team of officers of the Corps of Signals of the Army. It works as an alternative to Army Wide Area Network (AWAN) messaging application which has been in service for the past 15 years. The application has been sent out on Army-owned hardware and will cater to the army from this time forward, lending itself to lifetime support with future upgrades.
- The messaging application is designed to meet all futuristic requirements for the army and boasts of an enhanced user experience. It comes with a variety of contemporary features including multi-level security, dynamic global address book, message prioritisation, and tracking, and options to meet the requirements of the army at present. This future-ready messaging application will meet the real-time data transfer and messaging requirements of the Army, especially in the backdrop of the current geopolitical security environment. ASIGMA has been developed in line with the Government of India's, Make in India initiative.

### **Drinking Water Supply Schemes Of Rs. 164.03 Crore Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission In Uttarakhand**

- Drinking water supply schemes of Rs. 164.03 Crore were approved under Jal Jeevan Mission by Uttarakhand in the State-level scheme sanctioning committee (SLSSC) meeting held on 23rd December, 2021. Of the eight water supply schemes sanctioned, all are multi-village schemes. It will provide tap water connection to more than 9,200 rural homes.
- These eight schemes will benefit 140 villages in Almora, Bageshwar, Dehradun, Nainital and Uttarkashi districts. Masi, Mangurkhal and Jhimar multi-village tap water supply schemes in Almora district will benefit about 20 thousand people living in 68 villages. Shama and Baidamajhera multi-village tap water supply schemes in Bageshwar district will benefit

about 18 thousand people living in 38 villages. Basgaon Loshgyani multi-village tap water supply schmes will provide clean tap water to more than 3 thousand people living in 9 villages of Nainital district. Similarly, Kandari multi-village scheme in Uttarkashi and Motidhar Paniyala scheme in Dehradun will benefit more than 7 thousand people living in 25 villages of these two districts.

#### **Union Minister Arjun Munda launches 'TRIFED Van Dhan' a Pictorial Chronicle of Tribal grit and enterprise**

- Union Tribal Affairs Minister, Arjun Munda today launched 'TRIFED Van Dhan', a Pictorial Chronicle of Tribal grit and enterprise. It documents the work done for the promotion of tribal enterprise in the country and the achievements of tribal entrepreneurs under the Van Dhan Vikas Yojana. He also launched the formation of 14 Honey Farmer Producer Organizations, MIS Portal for MSP for Minor Forest Produces, communication campaign SAMVAAD and promotional videos for promoting TRIBES INDIA.
- Speaking on the occasion in New Delhi, Mr. Munda said Centre is reaching out to tribals through a multidimensional work plan for their upliftment. He stressed the need for effective connection and communication with tribal community. He said the launch of MIS portal will ensure ready availability of procurement data that can help in effective decision making and enhancing overall transparency.

#### **WADA restores NDTL accreditation**

- Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Thursday said that the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has restored the accreditation of the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL), which was suspended in 2019 because of its failure to comply with global standards.
- The NDTL is based in the national capital and can resume testing with immediate effect.

#### **PM Modi announced Covid-19 vaccine for children, Health workers and senior citizens**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the Covid-19 vaccine for children and booster doses for Health workers and senior citizens, amid the Omicron scare. During his address to nation, the Prime Minister urged the people to be cautious while celebrating as coronavirus cases are rising in the country due to highly infectious variant, Omicron. Therefore, from the point of view of precaution, the government has decided that precaution dose of vaccine will also be started for healthcare and frontline workers. It will be started from January 10.
- Children between the age group of 15 to 18 years will be getting the Covid vaccine from January 3, 2022.
- Senior citizens with comorbidities will receive booster doses from January 10, 2022. Citizens above 60 years of age with co-morbidities will also have the option of a precautionary dose of the vaccine on the advice of their doctor.

#### **Niti Aayog launches vernacular innovation programme in 22 languages for entrepreneurs**

- Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission has unveiled Vernacular Innovation Programme, which will enable innovators and entrepreneurs in India to have access to the innovation



ecosystem in 22 scheduled languages by the Centre. This will help in overcoming the barriers of language & empower innovators.

- To get the program rolling, AIM NITI Aayog is launching a train-the-trainer program where it will collaborate with the Design Department of IIT Delhi to coach the VTF in design thinking and entrepreneurship and the adaptation of these subjects in the 22 languages and cultures. Furthermore, industry mentors have joined hands to lend design thinking expertise, and CSR sponsors have agreed to generously support the program. Upon training the task force over the period of December 2021 to April 2022, the ecosystem will be opened to vernacular innovators.

#### **Chalo mobile app and smart card launched for convenient bus travel in Mumbai**

- Maharashtra Tourism and Environment Minister, Aaditya Thackeray has launched the Chalo mobile application (app) and Chalo smart cards to facilitate digital and advance purchase of Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) bus tickets. He also launched the NCMC compliant smart card of BEST as well as new fare schemes for the passengers, one that provided 10 trips at Rs 70 and another called 'Flexifare'.
- Chalo mobile app will allow passengers to buy online bus tickets and have access to bus passes through an e-wallet. A contract worth Rs 85 crore has been given for the maintenance of the Chalo mobile application for six years.

#### **Maiden test of Pralay surface-to-surface missile successful**

- India successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the indigenously-developed, surface-to-surface missile 'Pralay' off the Odisha coast. The solid-fuel, battlefield missile developed by the Defence Research Development Organisation is based on Prithvi Defence Vehicle from the Indian ballistic missile programme. The missile, launched from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island.
- The new missile followed the desired quasi ballistic trajectory and reached the designated target with high degree accuracy, validating the control, guidance and mission algorithms. With a range of 150 to 500 km, 'Pralay' is powered with the solid propellant rocket motor and other new technologies. The missile guidance system includes state-of-the-art navigation and integrated avionics.

#### **Jharkhand passes Bill to prevent mob violence, lynching**

- Jharkhand Assembly has passed the Prevention of Mob Violence and Mob Lynching Bill, 2021, which aims at providing "effective protection" of constitutional rights and the prevention of mob violence in the state. After including one amendment, the Bill was passed and sent to the Governor for his assent. Once notified, Jharkhand will become the fourth state to bring in such a law after West Bengal, Rajasthan and Manipur.
- The bill provides a jail term of three years to life imprisonment and fines of up to ₹25 lakh against those involved in mob lynching leading to "injury or death".
- The Bill defines lynching as "any act or series of acts of violence or death or aiding, abetting or attempting an act of violence or death, whether spontaneous or planned, by a mob on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, language, dietary practices, sexual orientation, political affiliation, ethnicity or any other ground".

- In case of a lynching incident leading to the victim suffering hurt, the convicts will be punished with imprisonment up to 3 years and a fine between ₹1 lakh to ₹3 lakh.

#### **India deploys first S-400 air defence system in Punjab sector, to take care of aerial threats from China, Pak**

- Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed the first squadron of the S-400 air defence missile system in the western Punjab sector which will take care of aerial threats from Pakistan and China. The S-400 air defence system was contracted for by India from Russia in a deal worth around Rs 35,000 crores and five squadrons would be provided to India for tackling air threats from up to 400 km.
- The surface-to-air missile system would give India an edge in South Asian skies as they would be able to take out enemy aircraft and cruise missiles from a 400 km distance.
- The S-400 Triumf air defence system is equipped with four different missiles which can engage enemy aircraft, ballistic missiles, and AWACS planes at 400 km, 250 km, the medium-range 120 km and the short-range 40 km.

#### **UP to launch 'Free Smartphone Yojna' on Dec 25, to dole out 1 lakh smartphones**

- The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh is set to launch the ambitious 'Free Smartphone Yojana' on December 25, which is the birth anniversary of senior BJP leader and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Under the scheme, the state government will distribute smartphones and tablets to final year students of graduation and above.
- On December 25, the chief minister will distribute 60,000 smartphones and 40,000 tablets to the youths. More than 38 lakh youths have registered themselves on the Digi Shakti Portal. Further registration is going on.

#### **Landmark achievement: Jan Dhan accounts surpass the 44-cr mark**

- The total number of beneficiaries under the Centre's financial inclusion scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), has crossed the 44 crore mark. The total number of accounts opened under PMJDY stood at 44.05 crores, with a total balance of ₹1,47,812 crore as on December 8. Uttar Pradesh tops the list with the highest number of accounts followed by Bihar. Since its launch in 2014, the scheme has been steadily expanding its base.
- The PMJDY was launched on August 28, 2014, with an aim to provide universal access to banking facilities to the people in the country. According to the Reserve Bank of India's guidelines, savings and current accounts will be classified as dormant if there are no transactions in the account for two years. The average balance in Jan Dhan accounts hovers at about ₹2,700 across banks.

#### **Odisha CM inaugurates State's longest bridge 'T-Setu' over Mahanadi**

- Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated the state's longest bridge, 'T-Setu', built over the Mahanadi River in Cuttack District, Odisha. The bridge in the shape of the English alphabet 'T' was constructed at a cost of Rs 111 crore. The 4-km-long bridge connecting Gopinathpur in Badamba, Baideswar in Banki to Singhanath Pitha in Cuttack, will cut the distance between Badamba and Banki Baideswar by almost 45 km.

- Chief Minister had laid the foundation stone T-setu on February 28, 2014. But, due to some technical issues, construction work was delayed and started in 2018. The bridge will facilitate communication for some five-lakh people from nearby localities. It will also improve agriculture, business and tourism activities in the area. It will benefit devotees, who are visiting Baba Singhanath's Bali Makar Jatra in Badamba block.

#### **Punjab : Channi gives Jagannath Rath Yatra 'state festival'**

- The Chief Minister of Punjab, Charanjit Singh Channi has declared Lord Krishna Balram Jagannath Rath Yatra as an annual state festival. The announcement for the same was made during flagging off the 25th Shri Lord Krishna Balram Jagannath Rath Yatra. He also announced a grant of Rs 2.51 crore for the Iskcon Temple in Ludhiana, Punjab. Notably, Punjab Government is also developing the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana Research Centre on a 20-acre land in Patiala.
- This was not the first time that the Rath Yatra of Ludhiana set the stage for the elections. Ahead of the 2017 Punjab elections, Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia of AAP participated in the yatra. He also performed 'Maha Aarti' from the stage with party candidates.

#### **PM Modi inaugurated multiple development projects in Goa**

- On the occasion of Goa Liberation Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several development projects worth over 650 crores rupees in Goa. He felicitated freedom fighters and veterans of 'Operation Vijay' at the function. He appreciated Chief Minister Pramod Sawant for keeping the pace of development up in the state.
- The re-development of Aguada Fort Jail Museum at a cost of over Rs 28 crore.
- A super specialty block at the Goa Medical College and Hospital, which has been constructed at a cost of over Rs 380 crores.

#### **DPIIT launched the Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) Hackathon**

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched the Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) hackathon – 'LogiXtics' to crowdsource more ideas that will benefit the logistics industry. The Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) Hackathon – LogiXtics is being organised by NITI Aayog and Atal Innovation Mission.
- It is supported by National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) and NICDC Logistics Data Bank Services Limited (NLDSL).
- ULIP has been designed to enhance efficiency and reduce logistics costs in India by creating a transparent platform that can provide real-time information to all stakeholders.

#### **Manohar Lal Khattar newly opened Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC) Under Karnal Smart City Project**

- Haryana chief minister, Manohar Lal Khattar has opened the new Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC) under the Karnal Smart City project. The new Command and Control Center will enable the functioning of advanced systems such as adaptive traffic control, automatic number plate recognition, detection of red-light violation and speed violation.

- With the inauguration of ICCCT, a slew of smart traffic management systems in the city went alive. Over 500 CCTV cameras at various locations now enable the functioning of advanced systems such as adaptive traffic control, automatic number plate recognition, detection of red-light violation and speed violation.

#### **Gujarat Alkalies & Chemicals Limited (GACL) and GAIL (India) Limited signed a MoU**

- Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Limited (GACL) and GAIL (India) Limited has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up a bioethanol plant with a production capacity of 500-kilo litre per day (KLD) in Gujarat. This MoU was signed on the lines of the roadmap launched by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi for 20% Ethanol Blending in Petrol by 2025 in order to reduce the import of crude oil.
- The estimated project cost is Rs. 1,000 crores and it is expected to generate annual revenue of approximately Rs. 1500 crores. An estimated savings of USD 70 million per year in Foreign Exchange is also expected through this project.

#### **India successfully test-fired new generation ballistic missile 'Agni-P'**

- The nuclear-capable ballistic missile 'Agni Prime' was successfully tested off the coast of Odisha by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Recently, DRDO has successful test-firing of the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile on December 7 was a "significant milestone" in BrahMos' development.
- Agni-P is a new generation upgraded version of Agni class missiles. It's a two-stage canisterized missile with a range of 1,000 to 2,000 kilometres.
- The ballistic missile is half the weight of the Agni 3 and can be launched from the train or road. It can also be stored for longer periods of time and transported throughout the country as per operational requirements.

#### **Tamil Nadu: CM Stalin declares 'Tamil Thaa Vazhthu' as state song**

- Tamil Nadu government has announced 'Tamil Thaa Vazhthu' as the state anthem. It should be sung before the start of any functions in all educational institutions, universities, government offices, and public sector undertakings. The decision comes in the wake of the Madras High Court recently ruling that 'Tamil Thai Vazhthu' is a prayer song and not an anthem. Government Order to this effect has been issued, mandating that all barring the differently-abled persons should remain standing when the 55-second long song is sung.
- The 'Tamil Thai Vazhthu' enjoy official status since 1970. It is the official song of the union territory of Puducherry as well. Jaya Bharata Jananiya Tanujate is the official state anthem of Karnataka and Bande Utkal Janani is the official state anthem of Odisha.

#### **Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. PM Modi also addressed a rally at Railway Ground, Rouza on the occasion. After completion of work, it will become the longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh. It will connect the western and eastern regions of the state. It starts near the Bijauli village in Meerut. It will extend till near the Judapur Dandu village in Prayagraj.



- Ganga Expressway is a 594 Km long Expressway. It will be built at a cost of over Rs 36,200 crore.
- It will pass through Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj districts.
- 35 Km long airstrip for emergency take-off and landing of Air Force planes will also be constructed on the Expressway in Shahjahanpur.

#### **Haryana government Introduced 'Khel Nursery scheme 2022-23'**

- Haryana's Minister of State for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sandeep Singh launched 'Khel Nursery Scheme 2022-23' to promote sports in the state. The players of Haryana have given a new identity to the state at the international level with their sports talent. The state government is always striving to develop new sports talents in the state.
- The scheme promotes sports nurseries that will be started in government, private educational institutions and private sports institutions. The sports nurseries are being opened for the sports included in the Olympic, Asian and Commonwealth Games.

#### **NHPC plans clean energy projects of 27GW in 9 states and Nepal**

- NHPC has plans to set up new hydro and solar projects of more than 27,000 MW capacity in nine states and neighbouring country Nepal, the company's CMD Abhay Kumar Singh said.
- The new capacities would come up in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, Singh.
- NHPC is in talks with some of these states which have shown interest in the projects. Others will also be engaged for the purpose.

#### **Jal Jeevan Mission: Over Rs. 10180 crore allocated to Rajasthan for FY22**

- Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Sunday approved the allocation of Rs 10,180 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission in 2021-22 to Rajasthan, a four-fold increase from Rs 2,522 Crore allocated in 2020-21.
- "To assist the State of Rajasthan, to achieve 'Har Ghar Jal', Union Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat approved Central allocation of Rs 10,180 Crore for Jal Jeevan Mission in 2021-22, a four-fold increase from Rs 2,522 Crore allocated in 2020-21," said Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Of 1.01 crore rural households in the State, 11.74 lakh (11.5 per cent) households had tap water supply as of August 15, 2019, when Jal Jeevan Mission was launched.
- "Since the launch of the mission, 9.65 lakh households (9.5 per cent) have been provided tap water connections in the State of Rajasthan," it said adding that 21.39 (21.1 per cent) lakh rural homes in the State are getting tap water supply in their homes.

#### **Hemant Soren launched SAHAY scheme for maoist-hit areas**

- The Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Hemant Soren has launched a Sports Action toward Harnessing Aspiration of Youth (SAHAY) scheme aimed at nurturing young sporting talents in Maoist-hit districts of the state. This scheme has been launched to curb the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) which affected 19 of the state's 24 districts. Boys and girls in the 14-19

age group from villages to ward level will be registered under the scheme and will be given opportunities to display their skills in basketball, volleyball, hockey and athletics.

- In order to instil a culture of sports and identify talent in the state, CM Hemant Soren had earlier given directions to sports department officials to work on a special sports scheme named Sahay for youth from Naxalite-affected areas. Officials were asked to work extensively to connect youth below the age of 19 with the Jharkhand Sahay Scheme. Under Sahay Yojana, potential sports talent will be identified from the panchayat level and taken to the block level and district level where they will be prepared for national and international sports events.

### **Union Cabinet approved a ₹76,000 crore scheme to boost semiconductor and display manufacturing in the country**

- Union Cabinet approved a Rs 76,000-crore production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for boosting semiconductor and display manufacturing in India. With this, the total amount of production linked incentive (PLI) announced for the electronics sector increase to Rs 2.30 lakh crore.
- This scheme was approved in order to position India as a global hub for hi-tech production, as well as to attract large chip makers. It would also strengthen India's ambitions to be self-reliant in electronics manufacturing and bring huge investments.
- The government will also set up an independent 'India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)', for driving the long-term strategies to develop a sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in India.

### **World's Most Admired Men 2021:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ranked 8th on the list of the world's top 20 most admired men, in a survey carried out by data analytics company YouGov. PM Modi is ahead of Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan and Virat Kohli. The list has been compiled taking feedback from 42,000 people in 38 countries.
- Apart from PM Modi, the other Indian men who, according to the survey, were the most admired in 2021 include Sachin Tendulkar, Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan and Virat Kohli. The list also includes the most admired Indian women of 2021 has Priyanka Chopra, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Sudha Murty.

### **Durga Puja makes it to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list**

- UNESCO has added Durga Puja in Kolkata to its 2021 list of Intangible Cultural Heritage, giving international recognition to the biggest religious festival of the 331-year-old city and the state of West Bengal. The UNESCO's announcement was welcomed by Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) as chief minister Mamata Banerjee is widely recognized as the biggest patron of the festival.
- With the inclusion of Durga Puja, the number of elements in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage from India has increased to 14. As many as 36,946 community Durga Pujas are organised in Bengal. Of these, around 2,500 are held in Kolkata. In recent years, several organisations had urged UNESCO to recognise the festival.

**Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the seventh edition of the India International Science festival begins in Panaji**

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated the seventh edition of the India International Science Festival at Panaji, Goa. The theme of the 4-day science festival is 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' – "Celebrating Creativity, Science, Technology and Innovation for a prosperous India". First India International Science Festival was held in 2015 at IIT Delhi. The main aim of the Science Festival is to bring into use the innovations by the people and develop technology that is affordable to the masses.

**AP-inks-pact-with-fao-icar-on-sustainable-food-systems**

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has signed an agreement with the Andhra Pradesh Government to train the farmers in good farm management practices and sustainable agricultural methods. The FAO apart, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is collaborating on the project.
- FAO will provide training to farmers, Rythu Bharosa Kendram (RBK) staff, officials, and scientists on new technologies in agricultural allied sectors and training to farmers on best cultivation management practices. In 2020, Rythu Bharosa Kendram (RBK) or farmer support centres were set up in AP as part of an effort to weed away fake seeds, pesticides and fertilisers from the markets.

**DRDO successfully tests long-range 'Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo'**

- India has successfully test-fired a long-range Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo (SMART) off the Balasore coast in Odisha. The weapon system is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Navy. The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo.
- The system is a next-generation missile-based standoff torpedo delivery system. During the test, the full range capability of the missile was successfully demonstrated. The system has been designed to enhance anti-submarine warfare capability far beyond the conventional range of the torpedo. This was a textbook launch, where the entire trajectory was monitored by the electro-optic telemetry system, various range radars including the downrange instrumentation and downrange ships. The missile carried a torpedo, parachute delivery system and release mechanisms.

**DM Rajnath Singh inaugurated Swarnim Vijay Parv**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated Swarnim Vijay Parv commemorating 50 years of India's victory in the 1971 war. He inaugurates 'Wall of Fame -1971 Indo-Pak War' at the inaugural ceremony. Swarnim Vijay Parv is an event commemorating the valour & professionalism of the Armed Forces and their contribution to the liberation of Bangladesh in the Indo-Pak 1971 war, at India Gate Lawns in New Delhi on December 12, 2021.
- The event marks the culmination of year-long celebrations of 50 years of India's victory in 1971. The event will be opened to the public after the inauguration. Many dignitaries, including those from Bangladesh, will be present.

**Union Minister Virendra Kumar launched National Helpline against atrocities on SCs, STs**

- Union Minister Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr Virendra Kumar has launched National Helpline against atrocities on SCs, STs. The objective of the helpline, reportedly, is to build awareness about the provisions of the Act that are aimed at ending discrimination and providing protection to all. The Helpline will be available 24-7 on toll-free number – 14566.
- This Service will be available in Hindi, English, and Regional languages of the States. The objective of this helpline is to spread awareness about the provision of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
- All registered complaints will be investigated and all charge sheets filed are prosecuted in the Courts for decision within the given timelines in the Act. A docket number will be given for each complaint received from Victim/Complainant/NGOs regarding non-compliance with The Protection of Civil Rights (PCR) Act, 1955 and the Prevention of Atrocities (POA) Act, 1989.

**MP government organised first drone Mela at Gwalior**

- In Madhya Pradesh, the first drone fair in the country was organised at Gwalior. Gwalior Drone Mela was organised jointly by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Government of India, the Government of Madhya Pradesh, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
- Addressing the youths and farmers present at the “Drone Mela” in Gwalior, MP Chief Minister said that Madhya Pradesh will be made a leading state by using drone technology. Mr Scindia said that five Drone Schools will be opened in Gwalior, Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Satna in Madhya Pradesh.

**Centre Government granted GI Tag to Bihar’s Mithila Makhana**

- The Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) under the Central Ministry of Commerce has accepted the petition to rename Bihar Makhana as Mithila Makhana and has also suggested further changes to the brand logo to better reflect its origins. It also suggested amendments in the brand logo to highlight its origins and protect the product’s Geographical Indications (GI) rights.
- The Sabour based Bihar Agriculture University (BAU) initiated an application on behalf of the Mithilanchal Makhana Utpadak Sangh (MMUS) to name their produce as Mithila Makhana for the welfare of fox nut growers in the Mithila region.

**Maharashtra tops state in the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana**

- Maharashtra has topped the list of states with the maximum number of beneficiaries under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), followed by Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. As many as 6,49,560 beneficiaries were recorded in Maharashtra, followed by Tamil Nadu (5,35,615), Gujarat (4,44,741) and Karnataka (3,07,164). In Maharashtra, the beneficiaries have been provided with a total of Rs 409.72 crore under the scheme to new employees of 17,524 establishments.
- The government had launched ABRY to incentivize employment generation in Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) registered establishments during C-19 for a period



from October 1, 2020, to March 31, 2022. This scheme, being implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), reduces the financial burden of the employers of various sectors/industries and encourages them to hire more workers.

### **PM Modi inaugurated the Saryu Nahar National Project in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Saryu Nahar National Project in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh. The project will provide assured water for irrigation to over 14 lakh hectares of land and benefit about 29 lakh farmers, mainly in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya were among those present at the project inauguration programme.
- The project has been completed at a cost of over Rs 9,800 crore, out of which more than Rs 4,600 crore was provisioned in the last four years.
- The project will cater to the problem of water shortage mainly in eastern UP/ Purvanchal with assured water for irrigation.

### **PM Modi inaugurated first phase of the Rs 339 crore Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the first phase of the Rs 339 crore Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project that connects the temple town's two iconic landmarks – Kashi Vishwanath temple and Ganga ghats. Modi offered prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and planted a Rudraksha tree at the premises of the temple. He also offered Ganga Jal, Chandan, ashes and milk to Lord Shiva. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, BJP President J P Nadda and a large number of saints from across the country attended the ceremony.
- The idea behind the project is to ensure that all heritage structures get preserved.
- A total of 23 buildings will be inaugurated in phase 1 of the project.

### **National Education Policy: NITI Aayog and Bharti Foundation announce the launch of 'Convoke 2021-22'**

- NITI Aayog in partnership with Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, launched Convoke 2021-22. Convoke is a National research Symposium that aims at addressing challenges in imparting education and strengthening its quality with a special focus on all teachers, educationists, heads of schools across India. Through Convoke they can now share their micro research papers. These research papers will be analyzed by a panel of Educationists. The shortlisted Research Papers will be presented during the 'National Research Symposium' scheduled in January 2022.
- School Teachers/ Heads/Principals of Government Schools and teachers from the Bharti Foundation network will be encouraged to use research-based solutions through a scientific approach, and showcase their efforts taken at the grass-roots level in improving learning outcomes.
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also recognises and identifies teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process. It recommends that teachers will be recognised for novel approaches to teaching that improve learning outcomes in their classrooms.

### **Himachal Pradesh set up General Category Commission named 'Samanya Varg Aayog'**

- Himachal Pradesh govt announced setting up a Commission for upper castes, on the lines of Madhya Pradesh. The Commission, to be named as 'Samanya Varg Aayog', will be formalised through a legislative enactment in three months' time when the state assembly meets next in February-March 2021 for the budget session of the House. A Scheduled Caste Commission is already in operation in Himachal Pradesh and is chaired by former Shimla MP Virendra Kashyap.
- As per the 2011 population census, Himachal Pradesh has a population of 68.56 lakhs of which 19.29 lakh, which is 25.22 per cent, are SCs, while the other 4 lakhs are STs, which is 5.71 % and other 9.03 lakh are OBCs, which is 13.52%.

### **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka leading states in EV sales: Govt**

- Winter Session of the Parliament, Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, informed the Rajya Sabha on the state of Electric Vehicles (EV) in India. As per the data, India has a total of 870,141 registered EVs, with Uttar Pradesh (UP) holding the top spot with 255,700 registered EVs. UP is followed by Delhi (125,347), Karnataka (72,544), Bihar (58,014) and Maharashtra (52,506) in successive positions.
- The Central Government of India has reduced the Goods & Service Tax (GST) on Electric Vehicles & related products.

### **3rd edition of manohar parrikar vigyan mahotsav being held from 13 December**

- The third edition of the Manohar Parrikar Vigyan Mahotsav will be held on Monday at eight venues in Goa, organising committee chairperson Jose Manuel Noronha said.
- The science festival, named after the late BJP leader and former chief minister, will have former ISRO chairperson Professor K Kasturirangan delivering a lecture on 'Space- A Promising Endeavour' at the National Institute of Oceanography in Dona Paula.
- "This talk will be followed by a virtual lecture on 'Next Generation Antibiotics' by Prof Ada Yonath, Nobel Prize winner for chemistry in 2009. Then Prof Ashutosh Sharma, former secretary of the government of India's Department of Science and Technology, will speak on science and innovation in the new millennium.

### **DRDO successfully tests Extended Range Pinaka at Pokhran Range**

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired Pinaka Extended Range (Pinaka-ER), Area Denial Munitions (ADM), and indigenously developed fuzes. The test was conducted at Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the Odisha coast. A total of 25 enhanced Pinaka rockets were reportedly fired from multi-barrel rocket launchers (MRLs) at several ranges during the test.
- The range version can destroy the target of up to 45 km. At the same time, the flight path of these missiles was tracked by range instruments including telemetry, radar, and electro-optical tracking system deployed by ITR and Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE).

### **India re-elected to international Maritime Organisation council**

- India has been re-elected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council after elections were held at its Assembly in London for the 2022-23 biennium.

- India's election falls under the Category of 10 states with "the largest interest in international seaborne trade", alongside Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The newly elected council will meet formally at the conclusion of the 32nd Assembly for the IMO's 126th session on Wednesday, when it will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for the next biennium

#### **IIT Guwahati established advanced facilities at nanotechnology centre**

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati has established advanced microelectronics and nano-energy facilities at its Centre for Nanotechnology which is the first-of-its-kind in the Northeast, according to officials. The centre, aimed at meeting future challenges and augmenting academic partnerships with industry in nanotechnology, will carry out multidisciplinary translational research in the fields of health care, nano biomaterials, micro and nanoelectronics, nano-energy devices and sensors.
- The institute has been working in the field of nanotechnology since early 2000 and has a proven record in multiple areas of nanoscience and nanotechnology. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the new building last month, the construction of which was funded by the income generated by the existing work on nanotechnology at the institute.

#### **Haiderpur Wetland Uttar Pradesh recognized as 47th Ramsar site in the country**

- The Haiderpur Wetland abutting the Madhya Ganga barrage, about 10 km from Bijnor in western Uttar Pradesh, has been recognised under the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Uttar Pradesh is now home to 9 Ramsar wetlands. The wetland has also been identified under Namami Gange, a central flagship, as a model wetland along the Ganga. With this, there are now a total of 47 such designated areas in the country.
- The Site supports more than 25,000 waterbirds, serves as a breeding site for the near-threatened Indian grassbird and provides refuge to the northern subspecies population of the vulnerable swamp deer during its seasonal flood-driven migration. The Site also regularly supports more than 1% of the population of greylag goose and bar-headed goose.

#### **India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed summit For Democracy'**

- US President Joe Biden is hosting the first of two Summits for Democracy, which takes place virtually between December 9–10. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed the summit saying that 'democratic spirit' and 'pluralistic ethos' are ingrained in Indians. A total of 100 nations participated in this 'Summit for Democracy'.
- Even Ukraine and Taiwan were invited to the summit but Russia and China were not. Both these countries released a joint statement in which they said that the US is displaying a "Cold-War mentality" that will "stoke up ideological confrontation and a rift in the world".

#### **Cabinet approves Ken-Betwa river linking project at cost of Rs 44,605 cr**

- Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers project has been approved by the Union Cabinet, which is chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. At 2020-21 price levels, the overall cost of the Ken-Betwa link project has been estimated at Rs. 44,605 crore. The Union Cabinet has

approved central support for the project in the amount of Rs. 39,317 crore, which includes a grant of Rs. 36,290 crore and a loan of Rs. 3,027 crore.

- The project will be implemented through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) known as the Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA)."
- The project includes the construction of the Daudhan dam across river Betwa from Ken and the transfer of water through a canal connecting the two rivers, Lower Orr project, Kotha barrage- and Bina complex multipurpose project.
- The project will irrigate 10.62 lakh hectares annually, provide drinking water to a population of 62 lakhs, and generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.

#### **Uttarakhand CM launched the 'Milk Price Incentive Scheme' in Dehradun**

- Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami has launched the 'Milk Price Incentive Scheme' in Dehradun. The scheme is aimed to provide incentives benefiting around 53,000 people of Uttarakhand. The state government is targeting to spend INR 444.62 crore to open 500 milk sales centres in Uttarakhand. It is a Direct Bank Transfer (DBT) scheme, the amount under the scheme would go directly into the accounts of the beneficiaries through their linked bank accounts.
- In the Dehradun district, milk production and consumption are completely contradictory. On one hand, the government is making many attempts to enhance milk production, all government claims of promoting products are proving to be fictitious. Despite thousands of hours of labour, milk is not produced in accordance with demand.

#### **Atma Nirbhar Krishak development scheme Approved in UP**

- Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved the Atma Nirbhar Krishak development scheme for boosting the agriculture sector. Atma Nirbhar Krishak development scheme will be implemented from the current financial year. Under this scheme, 1,475 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) will be formed in the next three years in each development block.
- The scheme will provide a long-term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for postharvest management infrastructure and community.
- Rs 1 lakh crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Marketing Cooperative Societies, Self Help Groups, farmers, and joint liability groups.
- All loans will be provided with an interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum up to a limit of Rs 2 crore. The scheme will be funded through the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund(AIF).

#### **NITI Aayog launches the 'e-Sawaari India E- Bus Coalition' in partnership with CESL & WRI India**

- The National Institution of Transforming India (NITI) Aayog launched the 'e-Sawaari India Electric Bus Coalition' in partnership with Convergence Energy Service Ltd (CESL) and World Resources Institute, India (WRI India) and with the support from Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI). The objective of the initiative is to share knowledge of various stakeholders – Central & State Govt. agencies, transit service providers, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), on accelerating the process towards seamless adoption of e-bus services in India.



- Through, e-Sawaari India Electric Bus Coalition, the central-, state-, and city-level government agencies, transit service providers, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), financing institutions, and ancillary service providers will be able to share knowledge and their learnings on e-bus adoption in India.

#### **PM Modi and Russian Prez Vladimir Putin hold 21st India-Russia Annual Summit in New Delhi**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin held the 21st India-Russia Annual Summit to discuss the entire gamut of relations, including regional and global issues. During his visit, India and Russia signed 28 agreements. The leaders discussed on International North-South Transport Corridor and also about the Chennai – Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor (which is under the proposal).
- The visit of the Russian President is a reflection of the country's commitment to its ties with India. This is in need of the moment. Because the ties between India and Russia were buffeted by New Delhi's ties with the US. Also, Russia was getting closer with China on the back of US sanctions, CAATSA and its annexation of Crimea in 2014.

#### **Pune to host joint military exercise with BIMSTEC countries**

- PANEX-21 is a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise. It is to be held for the BIMSTEC countries. The exercise is to be held among the BIMSTEC countries: Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand. The main aim of the exercise is to build regional cooperation in responding to natural disasters. It is to be conducted in Pune from December 20 to December 22.
- The participants of the exercise will be divided into eight syndicates. One syndicate from the participating countries and two from India.
- It will analyse the capabilities of member states in responding to the natural disasters. The countries will share their best practices.

#### **NCW launches 'She is a Changemaker' to improve leadership skills of women**

- National Commission for Women (NCW) has launched a pan-India capacity building programme, 'She is a Changemaker' for women representatives at all levels, gram panchayats to parliament members and political workers including office bearers of National/State political parties. The programme was launched by Ms Rekha Sharma, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women. To improve leadership skills of grassroots women political leaders.
- The official launch of training programmes under the 'She is a Changemaker' series was held in collaboration with Rhambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, Thane, Maharashtra. The three-day capacity building programme for 'Women in Municipal Corporation' will be organised from 7th to 9th December. The capacity building programme will be undertaken in association with region-wise training institutes with an objective to undertake capacity building of women political leaders and improve their decision making and communication skills including, oration, writing, etc.

**Former CEC Sunil Arora invited to join top international democracy body IDEA**

- Former chief election commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora has been invited to join the board of advisers at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, also known as International IDEA. IDEA has a 15-member board of advisers, all of whom are eminent personalities from a wide variety of backgrounds.
- The election commission of India official statement that Sunil Arora has rich leadership experience, knowledge and skills to contribute significantly to the working of the International Institute. Sunil Arora had served as the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner of India from December 2018 to April 2021. It was under his tenure that the 2019 Lok Sabha Elections were conducted.

**EAM S Jaishankar addressed 5th Indian Ocean Conference**

- Union Minister of External Affairs (EAM) Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has visited Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) to attend the 5th Indian Ocean Conference on December 4-5, 2021. The theme of the conference was 'Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic'. The Conference is chaired by Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa & Vice Chairs are S.Jaishankar, Vivian Balakrishnan, Sayyid Badr Bin Hamad Bin Hamoud Al Busaidi.
- The conference is being organised by India Foundation in collaboration with the RSIS Singapore, Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), Sri Lanka, and the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR), UAE.

**GRSE launches first of four Indian Navy Survey Vessels**

- Indian shipbuilder Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) has achieved a new milestone with the launch of the first large survey vessel for the Indian Navy. Called Sandhayak, the vessel is the first in the series of four ships being built under the Survey Vessel Large (SVL) project. It has been built at GRSE.
- Indian State Defence Minister Ajay Bhatt, who was present at the launch ceremony, said that the ship's launch is a new milestone for the country's vision of 'New India' by 2030. In October 2018, the Indian Ministry of Defence and GRSE signed the contract to build the four survey ships. Featuring over 80% indigenous content by cost, the ships are fully designed by GRSE and are being built using 'Integrated Construction' concepts.

**Indian Army contingent departs for Maldives for joint military exercise**

- The 11th edition of Exercise Ekuverin-21 between India and Maldives, held at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives. Ekuverin means "Friends" in the Dhivehi language. It is an Indo – Aryan language. It is spoken in India, Lakshadweep and Maldives. The exercise enhances synergy and inter-operability between the Armed Forces of both nations in terms of understanding transnational terrorism both on land and at sea, conducting Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations and sharing best military practices and experiences.
- Besides rigorous training, the joint military exercise will also include cultural and sports activities to enhance defence cooperation and bilateral relations. The exercise will go a long way in strengthening India's relations with the Maldives amidst emerging security dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region. The Exercise is being conducted between India and Maldives

since 2008. In 2019, the exercise was held in Pune, Maharashtra and in 2018, it was held in the Maldives.

**PM Modi virtually inaugurated thought Leadership Forum**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated a thought leadership forum on FinTech, 'InFinity Forum'. The event was hosted by International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), under the aegis of the Government of India in collaboration with GIFT City and Bloomberg. Indonesia, South Africa and the United Kingdom were the partner countries in the 1st edition of the Forum.
- The Forum focused on the theme of 'Beyond' with various sub-themes. The sub-themes include FinTech beyond boundaries, FinTech beyond Finance, and FinTech Beyond Next, with a focus on how Quantum Computing could impact the nature of the Fintech industry in the future and promote new opportunities.

**PM Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects worth Rs 18000 crore at Dehradun**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects worth Rs 18,000 crore at Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The 7 projects inaugurated consist of initiatives focusing on making travel safer including the 120 MW Vyasi Hydroelectric Project, along with Himalayan Culture Centre in Dehradun.
- The 11 projects for which the foundation has been laid include the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor which will be built at a cost of Rs 8,300 crore. It will have Asia's largest wildlife elevated corridor (12 kilometres) for unrestricted wildlife movement. The expressway will reduce the distance between the two cities from 248 km at present to 180 km.
- PM Modi laid the foundation stone for the Dehradun – Paonta Sahib (Himachal Pradesh) road project, being constructed at a cost of around Rs 1700 crore.

**Amitabh Kant launched Genesys International's digital twin platform of urban**

- Genesys International has launched its pan India program to make the Digital Twin of the entire Urban India. The launch programme was inaugurated by Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog. The creation of this very accurate 3D data will mean a host of applications would open up in high-definition mapping, which was hitherto not possible, for smart cars, e-commerce, logistics, gaming, utilities planning for next-generation networks in telecom, renewable energy and in disaster management and emergency response.
- Moreover, with all the smart city components, the digital twin of cities will put India on the map with advanced cities that are now using this geospatial technology. Genesys has a constellation of advanced sensors in India, consisting of aerial mobile and terrestrial systems capable of imaging at very high speeds and resolution. Genesys has also filed for patents in unique Geocoding for addressing 3D data as well as automated capture of features from 3D Street map imagery.

#### **Delhi's Nizamuddin Basti conservation project wins two Unesco awards**

- Nizamuddin Revival Project, India's project on the holistic urban revitalisation of the historic Nizamuddin Basti community, in New Delhi has won the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2021. The project involves the meticulous restoration of over 20 historic monuments clustered around the 14th-century mausoleum of the revered Sufi saint, Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.
- The settlement around the tomb of Noted Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, who settled in a Delhi village Ghiyaspur located on the tributary of River Yamuna, is known as the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti. The Nizamuddin area comprises the Humayun's Tomb, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti and Sunder Nursery, Batashewala Tomb-Garden Complex, the tomb of courtier poet Khan I Khanan 'Rahim', and the Mughal-period caravanserai of Azimganj Serai.

#### **Hemant Soren launched "Hamar Apan Budget" and a mobile application**

- Jharkhand Chief Minister, Hemant Soren has launched a web portal named 'Hamar Apan Budget' and a mobile application prepared by the state finance Department from the Chief Minister's residential office in Ranchi. Through this portal, the general public of the state can share their suggestions for the 2022-23 budget. The public can give suggestions through Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp and e-mail and also through the app by downloading the 'Hamar Budget' from Google Playstore for Android phones.
- The public could use the hyperlink <https://finance.jharkhand.gov.in/budgetvichar> to register oneself on 'Hamar Apan Price range Portal'.
- The portal requires a Mobile number and e-mail (non-compulsory) to generate OTP.
- After profitable authentication of the OTP, the public can file the suggestion for the desired area in the budget.

#### **2021 India-ITU joint CyberDrill for Indian entities**

- International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Department of Telecommunications operating under the Ministry of Communications conducted a Joint Cyber Drill 2021. The cyber drill was conducted for the Critical Network Infrastructure operators of India. The Critical Network Infrastructure are the systems, assets and networks that are essential to ensure the security of a country.
- It aims to improve the cyber security readiness of India. Also, it aims to improve the protection and incident response capability of the country.
- During the cyber drill, the cyberattacks and information security incidents were simulated. And the participants were trained to defend and respond against such incidents. Thus, the drill helped to test the cyber capabilities of an organisation.

#### **Cyclone Jawad likely to reach north coastal Andhra Pradesh**

- The low-pressure area in the Bay of Bengal is expected to intensify into Cyclone Jawad which is likely to reach the north Andhra Pradesh, south Odisha coasts and Some parts of West Bengal. The storm, once developed, will be called Jawad (pronounced Jowad), as named by Saudi Arabia. After Yaas in May and Gulab in September, this will be the third cyclone headed towards the east coast this year.



- A rotational list of the names of cyclones is maintained by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), with the names specific for each tropical zone. If a cyclone is especially deadly then its name is never used and is replaced by another name. The list has a total of 169 names at present which will be used on a rotational basis.

#### **Nagaland begins Hornbill Festival 2021 celebration at Naga Heritage village, Kisama in Kohima**

- The biggest cultural extravaganza of Nagaland, the Hornbill Festival has kicked off with colorful renditions of traditional music, dances, and contemporary in one roof at Naga Heritage village Kisama. It is the 22nd edition of the Hornbill festival and will be celebrated in 6 districts of Nagaland. More than 282,800 people visited the festival during the 20th edition in 2019, including over 3,000 foreign tourists and at least 55,500 domestic visitors.
- This year's edition of Nagaland's iconic Hornbill Festival, widely hailed as the "festival of festivals", will be held in its traditional format, starting on December 1 after it was held virtually last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The opening ceremony culminated with the flight of the Hornbill- A musical presentation by Task Force for Music and Arts Nagaland.

#### **India joins G20 Troika, to assume G20 presidency on Dec 1 next year**

- India has joined 'G20 Troika' and will work closely with Indonesia and Italy to ensure consistency and continuity of G20's agenda. Apart from India, Troika consists of Indonesia and Italy. India will assume G20 Presidency in December 2022 from Indonesia and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in 2023. Troika refers to the top grouping within G20 that consists of the current, previous, and incoming presidencies (Indonesia, Italy and India).
- Italy hosted the G20 summit during October 30-31 that was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi where India had raised the issue of Afghanistan's future following the takeover by the Taliban.
- Indonesia took over the G20 presidency on December 01, 2021.

#### **Kerala Tourism launches STREET project to enhance visitor experience**

- Kerala Tourism launched the 'STREET' project to promote and take tourism deep into the interiors and rural hinterland of Kerala. The project would help visitors experience the diversity of offerings in these locales. The STREET is an acronym for Sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Experiential, Ethnic, Tourism hubs.
- The STREET project aims to present the unique identity of the state of Kerala before to travellers. It also offers a huge potential for growth in the tourism sector and would bring in significant changes.
- The project will foster mutually beneficial organic relationships between tourism development and the ordinary lives of people in the state of Kerala.

#### **First Indian Young Water Professionals Programme launched virtually**

- The First Edition of the Indian Young Water Professionals Programme was launched virtually. The programme was launched in the presence of the Indian High Commissioner to Australia, Manpreet Vohra; Australian High Commissioner to India, Barry O' Farrell and

Additional Secretary of Ministry of Jal Shakti, Debashree Mukherjee. The program was taken up under National Hydrology Project.

- The India Young Water Professional Programme is unique and different from typical capacity building and training programs. It focuses on the engaged Training and Learning Model.
- 70% of this program is focused on project-based learning by means of Situation Understanding and Improvement Projects (SUIP).
- It also focuses on gender equality and diversity, since sustainable water management can only benefit from the skills and views of all members of society.
- For the first edition of the programme, about 20 participants have been selected, comprising of 10 men and 10 women, from central & state implementing agencies of the National Hydrology Project.

### All India Radio gives opportunity to Young India Voices

- All India Radio has decided to begin a new programme called AIRNxt to offer youth a platform to air their voices as part of the ongoing Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. AIR stations will allow youngsters from local colleges, universities to take part in programming, allowing them to discuss and curate youth-centric shows.
- It added that about 20,000 youth from 1,000 educational institutions will be participating during the next year from every nook and corner of India through 167 AIR stations.
- These shows would encourage the youth to speak about the achievements of the country during the last 75 years of independence and where do they expect the country to reach in various fields.
- This way, the youth can air their big dreams and define the future of India. It is the biggest single theme show on All India Radio involving thousands of youth and hundreds of Educational Institutions across the country. This talent hunt show #AIRNxt will be broadcast in all major Indian languages and dialects.

### First ever Aharbal Festival held in Kulgam

- Kulgam district administration and the Department of Tourism, Jammu & Kashmir organized the 1st ever Aharbal Festival at Kulgam, J & K to promote tourism in Kashmir, particularly at the Aharbal waterfall. Aharbal falls, also known as “Niagara Falls” of Kashmir, is a hill station in the southwestern part of Kashmir Valley in the Jammu and Kashmir.
- The department organized the 1st ever Lolab festival, a one-day festival at Chandigam Lolab in north Kashmir’s Kupwara district, J&K, and Doodhpathri Festival, a 3-day tourism festival at Budgam, J&K, to promote Doodhpathri as an attractive tourist destination.

### IISF 2021: Science Film Festival To Be Part Of 4-Day Event In Goa From December 10

- The 7th edition of the four-day India International Science Festival (IISF) is scheduled to be held in Panaji, Goa, from December 10 to 13, 2021. The festival theme in 2021 is “Celebrating Creativity in Science, Technology and Innovation for Prosperous India”. The first IISF was held in New Delhi in 2015.
- The Goa-based National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is the nodal agency to organise IISF 2021. The festival will be organised

jointly with the Departments of Atomic Energy (DAE), Science and Technology (DST), Biotechnology (DBT), and Space (DoS) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

## SPORTS

### Nitesh Kumar wins double gold at 4th Para-Badminton National Championship in Odisha

- Nitesh Kumar won doubled gold at the 4th Para-Badminton National Championship, which concluded in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Haryana's Nitesh along with his partner Tarun Dhillon defeated World No. 1 Paralympic Games gold medallist Pramod Bhagat and Manoj Sarkar in straight sets 21-19, 21-11 in the Men's doubles finals to win the gold.
- Earlier, Nitesh also won the gold medal in the Men's singles category. World No 1 SL3 Para-Badminton player Parul Parmar from Gujarat also secured gold while Mandeep Kaur from Uttarakhand won Silver and Mansi won bronze.

### Uttar Pradesh Hockey win Junior National Championship 2021

- Uttar Pradesh has crowned the winners of the 11th Junior National Men's Hockey Championship following a 3-1 victory over Chandigarh in the final at Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu. Tournament top scorer Sharda Nand Tiwari opened the scoring for Uttar Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh Hockey maintained its unbeaten record. In the 3rd/4th Place playoff match, the Hockey Association of Odisha edged out Hockey Haryana 3 – 2 in a closely contested affair to clinch 3rd place in the competition.

### Bangladesh beat India to retain SAFF U-19 Women's title

- Bangladesh women team has won the SAFF U 19 Women's Championship by defeating India in the finals. Shaheda Akter Ripa of Bangladesh scored the maximum number of goals in the tournament. She received the 'most valuable player' award. The 2021 SAFF U-19 Women's Championship was the 2nd edition of the SAFF U-19 Women's Championship.
- The tournament was organized from 11 to 22 December 2021 at BSSS Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Dhaka. Five countries have participated in the 2021 SAFF U-19 Women's Championship. Pakistan Football Federation was suspended by FIFA in April 2021 so it didn't participate in this competition.

### Asian Champions Trophy: India beat Pakistan 4-3 in thriller to win bronze, Korea lift title

- India defeated Pakistan 4-3 to secure the bronze medal, while Korea defeated Japan 4-2 to emerge Asian Champions Trophy men's hockey tournament held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The five-nation tournament came to an end with two matches being played on the last day of the game.
- Kanta Tanaka of Japan was declared the best player of the tournament while Suraj Karkera of India was adjudged the best goalkeeper. Jang Jonghyun of Korea was the top scorer with 10 goals in the tournament.

### India's Anahat Singh wins Junior US Open Squash Meet

- Indian teenager Anahat Singh has scripted history by winning the U-15 girls category of the prestigious Junior US Open Squash tournament in Philadelphia. The 13-year-old girl from

Delhi overcame powerhouse Egypt's Jayda Marei in the final match 11-9, 11-5, 8-11, 11-5 played at the Arlen Spectre Centre. More than 850 squash junior players, representing 41 countries, participated in the World's largest junior individuals squash tournament.

#### **Beijing Winter Olympics: Harjinder Singh announced India's Chef de Mission**

- The Indian Olympic Association of India (IOA) has appointed the Ice Hockey Association of India's general secretary, Harjinder Singh, as the Chef de Mission of the country's contingent for the upcoming 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. Singh was the Chef de Mission of the Indian contingent for the 23rd Winter Olympic Games too, which was held in Pyeongchang, South Korea in 2018.
- Harjinder Singh is the general secretary of the Ice Hockey Association and has also led the Indian contingent at the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, where India had two representatives – cross-country skier Jagdish Singh, and six-time Olympian luger Shiva Keshavan.

#### **Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021: India wins 16 medals**

- India concluded the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021 with 16 medals – 4 Gold, 7 Silver, and 5 Bronze, held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Bindyarani Devi was India's only medallist at the World Weightlifting Championships 2021, that was also held parallelly at Tashkent.
- South Korea's Son Young-hee won the gold medal at the world championships with an overall lift of 282kg (122+159). New Zealand's David Liti won the gold medal for a total of 407kg (176+231) followed by Pakistan's Muhammad Nooh Dastgir Butt, who lifted 390kg (165+225).

#### **BWF World Championships | Srikanth loses to Loh Kean Yew, bags silver**

- Shuttler Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian man to win a silver medal at BWF World Championships. In the final, Kidambi was defeated by Singapore's Loh Kean Yew by 21-15, 22-20. This was the first time that a men's player from Singapore won gold at BWF World Championships. The badminton tournament was held from December 12 to 19, 2021 in Huelva, Spain.
- 2021 BWF World Championships is officially known as "TotalEnergies BWF World Championships 2021" for sponsorship purpose. The badminton tournament was held from December 12 to 19, 2021 in Huelva, Spain. Huelva was awarded this event in November 2018, when the announcement was made for 18 major badminton event hosts from 2019 to 2025.

#### **Avani Lekhara won 'Best Female Debut' honour at 2021 Paralympic Sport Awards**

- Indian shooter Avani Lekhara, who has created history by winning India's first Gold medal in Shooting at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, won the "Best Female Debut" honour at the 2021 Paralympic Sport Awards. The Awards were announced by the International Paralympic Committee. She became the 1st Indian woman to win 2 Paralympic medals in a single edition of the Paralympic Games. India won an unprecedented 19 medals at the Paralympic Games including 5 Gold, 8 Silver & 6 Bronze.



### **Sports Minister Anurag Thakur formally inaugurated Khelo India Women's Hockey League**

- Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur formally inaugurated the first-ever national-level Khelo India Women's Hockey League at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi. The winner of the Khelo India Women's Hockey League will get a cash prize of 30 lakhs. In the first phase, total 14 teams will participate in the league and 42 matches will be played from 15 December to 21 December.
- The second and third phases will be organized in early next year. The Sports Authority of India and Hockey India are jointly organizing the first-ever national-level Khelo India league. This is the first big event that will be organized at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium after 2015.

### **David Warner & Hayley Matthews Named ICC Player Of The Month For November**

- Australia opener David Warner and West Indies all-rounder Hayley Matthews have been voted the ICC Players of the Month for November. Warner, nominated for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award alongside Pakistan's Abid Ali and New Zealand's Tim Southee, emerged victorious with the most votes, following his crucial role in Australia's triumph in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021.
- Australian opener David Warner has bagged the ICC Player Of The Month for November. The southpaw has been in scintillating form in recent times. He was the Player of the Tournament as Australia won their maiden T20 World Cup title. He then started the Ashes series with a bang by scoring 94 in the first Test at The Gabba.
- West Indies all-rounder Hayley Matthews secured the Women's Player of the Month award. David Warner scored 289 runs in seven matches in the tournament at a strike rate of 146.70, out of which 209 runs came from four games in November. He scored 89 against West Indies in a Super 12 game against the West Indies which was his highest score of the tournament.

### **BCCI formed a committee for the differently abled cricketers**

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has formed a committee for the differently-abled cricketers of the country. Disability cricketers have welcomed the decision of the BCCI to form a Differently Abled Committee for the differently-abled cricketers. On the basis of the recommendation of the Justice Lodha committee, a board of three former disabled cricketers was being awaited for the last several years. The Proposal was approved by BCCI headed by president Sourav Ganguly & secretary Jay Shah.

### **AIBA becomes IBA as key constitutional amendments approved to secure boxing's Olympic future**

- The International Boxing Association has changed its acronym from AIBA to IBA, promising to adopt a set of governance reforms so as to keep the sport's inclusion at the 2028 Olympics. Boxing, weightlifting and modern pentathlon were all left off the initial list of sports for the 2028 Los Angeles Games and were asked to make changes by the International Olympic Committee.

## **Norway's Magnus Carlsen takes home fifth World Chess Championship title**

- Reigning world chess champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway defended his title and won the FIDE World Championship in Dubai. He beat Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia, securing the one point he needed to cross the seven-point threshold to win the global tournament held at Dubai's Expo 2020 this month in the United Arab Emirates. Carlsen clinched his fifth world championship title. Carlsen wins 60% of the 2 million-euro prize offered by the championship.

## **India claimed 41 medals in 4th Asian Youth Para Games**

- India claimed 41 medals (12 Gold, 15 Silver, 14 Bronze) at the 4th Asian Youth Para Games (AYPG), Asia's biggest event held at Riffa city, Bahrain. The event is organized by the National Paralympic Committee (NPC) of Bahrain with the support of the local government. Over 700 athletes from around 30 countries participated in the event from 2nd to 6th December 2021. The 5th edition of the Asian Youth Para Games 2025 will be hosted by Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Over 700 athletes from around 30 countries participated in the continental youth showpiece event that took place from December 2 to 6. The athletes competed across nine sports – Para athletics, Para badminton, boccia, goalball, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para taekwondo, and wheelchair basketball.

## **Manipur survive penalty shootout to win 21st Senior Women's NFC title**

- Manipur successfully defended their Senior Women's National Football Championship crown after a dramatic penalty shootout win over Railways in the final at the EMS Stadium in Kozhikode, Kerala. After a dearth of goal-scoring chances in regulation and extra time, the match went to penalties with the scores at 0-0. Manipur goalkeeper Okram Roshini Devi produced three saves to give her side their 21st title at this level.

## **Sanket Mahadev Sargar won the gold medal in the Men's 55kg snatch category**

- Sanket Mahadev Sargar won the gold medal in Men's 55 kg snatch category at the ongoing Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021. He created the national record by lifting 113kg in the men's 55kg snatch category. Sargar has also qualified for the upcoming 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.
- Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021 is being held in Tashkent along with World Weightlifting Championships 2021 from December 7 to 17. The Indian Contingent is participating in the Weightlifting Championships as well as the Commonwealth Senior Championships.

## **Canada, U.K. and Australia join U.S. in diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics**

- Canada will join the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics over human rights concerns. The announcement came after the White House, the Australian government and the UK government confirmed diplomatic boycotts of the Winter Games in February to protest Chinese human rights abuses. China has vowed to react with "firm countermeasures." The diplomatic moves by Canada, the U.S., Britain and Australia do not affect their athletes' ability to compete in the games.

- Australia took this decision amid a disagreement with China over several issues, ranging from Australia's foreign interference laws to a move to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.

### **Lewis Hamilton wins inaugural edition of Saudi Arabian GP**

- Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton (Britain) won the inaugural edition of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix (GP), by surpassing Max Verstappen (Netherlands) in the event held at the 30-kilometre (18.6-mile) coastal resort area in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Reema Juffali, has been appointed as an ambassador for the first edition of the Saudi Grand Prix, under the Formula 1 (F1) World Championship.
- Reema Juffali is the 1st Female F1 driver of Saudi Arabia. She is a 29-year-old driver, who has competed in the British Formula 3 championship 2021. She is the first racer to take a lap on the street circuit in Jeddah and also participate in the Williams team car display, dating back to 1979 that is sponsored by Saudi Airlines.

### **Argentina beat Germany to lift Junior hockey world cup**

- Argentina showcased its organised game with great composure to beat six-time champion German side 4-2 and win the title after 16 years in the men's Hockey Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium. Argentina has become the only third team after Germany (six wins) and India (2001, 2016) to win multiple Junior Hockey WC titles. Defending champions India finished fourth in the junior hockey world cup 2021 after losing 1-3 to France in the third-place match.

### **Badminton World Federation: Viktor Axelsen, Tai Tzu Ying named 2021 BWF Player of the Year**

- Denmark's Viktor Axelsen and China's Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying were named Male and Female player of the year 2021 respectively by the Badminton World Federation (BWF). It was the first season-ending award in this category for both Viktor Axelsen and Tai Tzu Ying — the All England champions of 2020. Viktor Axelsen is the Olympic champion and Tai Tzu Ying is the Tokyo Games, silver medallist. Viktor Axelsen was rewarded for his extraordinary run starting from the Barcelona Spain Masters in February 2020.

### **Anju Bobby George the first Indian athlete to win a medal at the world championships**

- Legendary Indian athlete, Anju Bobby George has been bestowed with the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics for grooming talent in the country and for her advocacy of gender equality. In 2016, she formed a sports academy for young girls. Through this, she has helped India advance in sports and also inspire more women to follow in her footsteps. She is also presented with the award for advocating gender equality. Anju, the only Indian to have won a medal in the World Championships with a long jump bronze in the 2003 edition.
- She is a gold medallist in the 2005 IAAF World Athletics Finals.
- She was the first Indian athlete to win a bronze medal in the long jump at the World Championships in Athletics held in 2013 in Paris.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### DRDO conducts demonstration of Controlled Aerial Delivery System

- Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra today conducted a flight demonstration of a Controlled Aerial Delivery System of 500 kg capacity (CADS-500).
- ADRDE, Agra is an R&D laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the flight demonstration is part of a series of activities organised towards celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', commemorating 75 years of Independence.
- The CADS-500 is used for precise delivery of payloads up to 500 kg at a predetermined location by making use of manoeuvrable capabilities of the Ram Air Parachute (RAP). It uses the Global Positioning System for the coordinates, altitude, and heading sensors for the heading information during its flight.

### SpaceX launches 52 Starlink satellites from California base

- A SpaceX rocket carried 52 Starlink internet satellites into orbit from California early on December 18. The two-stage Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from coastal Vandenberg Space Force Base at 4:41 a.m. and arced over the Pacific. The Falcon's first stage returned and landed on a SpaceX droneship in the ocean. It was the 11th launch and recovery of the stage.
- The second stage continued into orbit and deployment of the satellites was confirmed.

### NASA's Parker Solar Probe enters the Sun's atmosphere for the first time

- NASA's Parker Solar Probe has entered the Sun's upper atmosphere for, first time in history. In 2018, launched the Parker Solar Probe aims to unravel the mysteries of the Sun by travelling closer to it. After three years of launching, Parker has finally arrived in the solar atmosphere. Parker Solar Probe has flown through the Sun's upper atmosphere for the first time in history – the corona. The probe sampled particles and magnetic fields there.
- The new milestone marks one major step for Parker Solar Probe and one giant leap for solar science. Just as landing on the Moon allowed scientists to understand how it was formed, touching the very stuff the Sun is made of will help scientists uncover critical information about our closest star and its influence on the solar system.

### India successfully test-fires air version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile

- India successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the integrated test range of Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha. The air version of the missile was test-fired from supersonic fighter aircraft Sukhoi 30 MK-I. BrahMos is a joint venture between DRDO (India) and NPO Mashinostroyeniya (Russia) for the development, production, and marketing of the supersonic cruise missile which has been inducted into the Indian Armed Forces. The missile derives its name from the rivers of Brahmaputra in India and Moskva in Russia.

## OBITUARY

### Greece's former president Karolos Papoulias dies at 92

- Veteran Greek politician Karolos Papoulias, who served as president at the height of the economic crisis of the 2010s, died. Papoulias, a longtime socialist lawmaker and minister,



was close to Andreas Papandreou, the founder of the Socialist PASOK party. He served two terms between 2005 and 2015.

- Papoulias, who was also foreign minister in 1985-89 and 1993-96, was a high-ranking member of socialist PASOK party and a close associate of its late leader and former prime minister Andreas Papandreou.

#### **EO Wilson, Known as 'Father of Biodiversity,' Dies at 92**

- E.O. Wilson, the former Harvard University biologist and Pulitzer Prize winner whose study of ants and human behaviour made him one of the world's most influential scientists and prompted his calls for action to protect millions of species on the planet, has passed away. He was 92. To protect Earth earned him the nickname "Darwin's natural heir".
- He was the author of hundreds of scientific papers and more than 30 books, two of which won him Pulitzer Prizes for nonfiction: 1978's On Human Nature, and The Ants in 1990. The "father of biodiversity," as Wilson was also known, attempted to unify the natural sciences with the humanities and said there was still time to reverse a "sixth extinction" of most species on the planet if environmental degradation was halted.

#### **Grammy-winning musician JD Crowe dies at 84**

- Grammy-winning bluegrass musician J.D. Crowe, whose influential career spanned more than 50 years, has died. He was 84. His son, David, confirmed the death on Saturday to The Associated Press. "We just want to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. As great of a musician as dad was, he was even better husband, father and friend," David said in a brief message. Crowe died Friday of undisclosed causes.

#### **Former SC Judge Justice GT Navavati passed away**

- Former Supreme Court judge, Justice Girish Thakorlal Navavati who headed two inquiry commissions formed to probe into the 2002 Godhra Riots & 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots, passed away. Justice Girish Thakorlal Navavati was 86. He was elevated as the Judge of the Supreme Court of India with effect in March 1995 and he retired as an SC Judge in February 2000.

#### **Captain Varun Singh passed away**

- Group Captain Varun Singh, who was rescued after the helicopter crash that killed Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and 12 others, has passed away. He was being treated for severe burns at a Bengaluru military hospital after he was moved from Wellington in Tamil Nadu's Coonoor. His condition in the last few days continued to be "critical but stable".
- In August this year, Group Captain Varun Singh was conferred the Shaurya Chakra for averting a possible mid-air accident after his Tejas light combat aircraft developed a major technical snag last year. Hailing from Uttar Pradesh's Deoria, Singh's father KP Singh retired from the Indian Army as colonel whereas his brother Lieutenant Commander Tanuj Singh is an officer in the Indian Navy.

### **American fiction writer Anne Rice passed away**

- American gothic-fiction writer Anne Rice, best known for The Vampire Chronicles novel series, passed away. Anne Rice's debut novel, published in 1976, Interview with the Vampire revolves around a vampire named Louis de Pointe du Lac, who narrates the story of his life to a reporter. Her other works: Pandora, Violin, Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt, The Witching Hour etc.

### **Serum Institute of India ED Suresh Jadhav passes away at 72**

- Serum Institute of India's Executive Director Dr Suresh Jadhav has passed away. He played an important role in the development of the Covishield vaccine. He was part of several national and international bodies and organisations. Serum Institute of India is the world's largest vaccine maker. It is the second company to apply for the approval of a vaccine candidate from the Drugs Controller General of India.
- He started his career with a research fellowship of CSIR. He was President of Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN) from 2004 to 2008.

### **CDS Gen Bipin Rawat passes away in a helicopter crash**

- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat has passed away in a helicopter crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu. He was among the 14 people who were on board, including his wife and staff members. Thirteen people have succumbed to the crash, including CDS Rawat, Madhulika Rawat and 11 others. An IAF Mi 17 V5 helicopter with a crew of 4 members carrying the CDS and 9 other passengers met with a tragic accident. Wing Commander Prithvi Singh Chauhan was the pilot of the Mi-17V5.
- General Rawat completed his education at St Edward School, Shimla and is an alumnus of National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla. He was commissioned in the Fifth Battalion of the Eleventh Gorkha Rifles in December 1978 from the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, where he was also awarded the Sword of Honour.
- Academically inclined, he has written numerous articles on national security and leadership, which have been published in various journals.

### **World's Oldest Test Cricketer, Eileen Ash passes away at 110**

- World's oldest Test Cricketer, former English legend, Eileen Ash passed away at the age of 110. The right-arm seamer made her debut to the national side in 1937 against Australia and in a career spanning till 1949, she took 10 wickets in the seven matches she played. Her career was interrupted by the Second World War – she was seconded to MI6, the UK's intelligence service – and retired from the sport in 1949.
- Eileen Ash was given the honour of ringing the bell at Lord's in the Finals of the 2017 ICC Women's World Cup where the host, England have crowned the champions after beating India in a thrilling Finals.

### **Sarada Menon, India's first woman psychiatrist, dies at 98 in Chennai**

- Padma Bhushan Dr Mamballaikalathil Sarada Menon, India's 1st woman Psychiatrist and the longest-serving head of the Institute of Mental Health has passed away. She was born in a

Malayali family in Mangaluru, Karnataka. She was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 1992 for social works.

- Dr M Sarada Menon started her career as a Psychiatrist in the Institute of Mental Health (then known as Government Mental Hospital) in Kilpauk, Chennai in 1959.
- She became the 1st woman Superintendent of the Institute of Mental Health in 1961.

#### **Veteran journalist Vinod Dua passes away at 67**

- Veteran journalist Vinod Dua passed away recently. He was one of the pioneers in Hindi broadcast journalism, worked with Doordarshan to present the youth programme Yuva Manch in the mid-'70s and later with several other television news channels. He was an integral part of NDTV's journey as well. His much-loved food show 'Zaika India Ka' saw him crisscrossing the whole country just for the best taste.
- More recently, he was known for his political commentary in web shows for digital media platforms The Wire and HW News. Mr Dua was honoured with several awards for his contribution to journalism.

#### **Former Tamil Nadu Governor Konijeti Rosaiah passes away**

- Former Governor of Tamil Nadu and former Chief Minister of the unified State of Andhra Pradesh, Konijeti Rosaiah (89-years) passed away. He had served as MLA, MLC, Lok Sabha members. He held several key portfolios including finance, transport, energy in the cabinets headed by Kotla Vijayabhaskara Reddy, Channa Reddy, and YS Rajasekhara Reddy.

#### **Renowned Bangladesh's Professor Rafiqul Islam passes away**

- Renowned scholar and national professor of Bangladesh Professor, Rafiqul Islam passed away. Prof. Rafiqul Islam was one of the greatest scholars on the national poet of Bangladesh Kazi Nazrul Islam. He was honoured with Swadhinta Padak and the Ekushey padak, which is the highest civilian award of Bangladesh. He was a recipient of the Bangla Academy Literary Award. He had written close to 30 scholarly books. Prof. Rafiqul Islam was currently the President of the Bangla Academy.

#### **Padma Shri awardee 'Sirivennela' Seetharama Sastry passes away**

- The renowned Telugu film lyricist and Padma Shri awardee, 'Sirivennela' Chembolu Seetharama Sastry passed away at the age of 66 years. He was born on May 20th, 1955 in Anakapalle village in Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. He launched his first song in the film, 'Janani Janmabhoomi' directed by K Viswanath.
- In 1986 the movie 'Sirivennela' directed by K Viswanath made him famous and also gave him a second name as 'Sirivennela' Seetharama Sastry. He got the first 'Nandi Award for best lyricist for 'Sirivennela', presented by the Andhra Pradesh state government. Filmfare Award for Best Lyricist- Telugu, Padma Shri (2019) and He won 'Nandi' Awards several times.

#### **National Award-winning Choreographer Shiva Shankar passes away due to C-19**

- The renowned National Award-winning choreographer and actor, Shiva Shankar Master passed away in Hyderabad, Telangana. He was born on 7 December 1948 in Chennai, Tamil

Nadu. He was an Indian dance choreographer, worked in South Indian movies. He received the National Award for 'Best Choreographer' for the movie 'Magadheera'.

### **Stephen Sondheim, Titan of the American Musical, Is Dead at 91**

- Veteran composer and lyricist, Stephen Joshua Sondheim has passed away at the age of 91 in Connecticut, United States (US). He received 8 Tony Awards, a Special Tony Award 2008 for lifetime achievement in the theatre. He also received a Pulitzer Prize ('Sunday in the Park'), and an Academy Award for the song 'Sooner or Later'. Also won several awards like eight Grammy Awards, Presidential Medal of Freedom 2015, etc.

## **APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

### **CP Goyal as Director-General of Forests & Special Secretary**

- Indian Forest Service officer, Chandra Prakash Goyal has been appointed as the Director-General of Forests & Special Secretary (DGF&SS), Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change. Goyal, a 1986 batch IFS officer was previously the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest under Uttar Pradesh Department of Forest.
- The Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet approved the appointment of the IFoS officer. He had returned to UP after being on central deputation as Joint Secretary in the Indian Department of Biotechnology.

### **IAS Radhika Jha appointed CEO of Energy Efficiency Services**

- Radhika Jha has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer in state-run Energy Efficiency Services (EESL). EESL is a joint venture between NTPC, Power Grid, Power Finance Corp and REC, working to promote energy efficiency in the country.
- Prior to the new posting, the IAS officer was serving as Secretary to the Government of Uttarakhand for the Education Department. She took charge of the post in July this year and navigated the operational guidelines for resuming classes post COVID. Also, Jha played a key role in formulating a detailed strategy to cover up for the learning loss. Earlier, Radhika Jha also led the Centre's Integrated Power Development Scheme as Executive Director in Power Finance Corp, before moving to the state.

### **Government of India has appointed Atul Kumar Goel as the new MD and CEO of PNB**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of UCO Bank, as MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB) with effect from February 1 next year. Goel will serve as PNB chief until December 31, 2024, which is his attaining the superannuation age. Goel will replace Mallikarjuna Rao, incumbent MD & CEO of PNB. Rao was given a three-month extension that will end on January 31, 2022.
- Meanwhile, the ACC has appointed Soma Sankara Prasad, currently Deputy Managing Director at State Bank of India, as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer in UCO Bank. He will serve as MD & CEO of UCO Bank till the date of attaining the age of superannuation on May 31, 2023.



**Aarati Krishnan: SEBI Member Of MF Advisory Panel**

- Aarati Krishnan, Editorial Consultant with BusinessLine, has been inducted as a member of the Securities & Exchange Board of India's Advisory Committee on Mutual Funds. The committee, chaired by Usha Thorat, former Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank of India, advises SEBI on matters related to mutual fund regulation to ensure investor protection, development of the industry and disclosure requirements. It suggests measures required to be taken to render the legal framework for mutual funds transparent and simple for investors and constituents.
- The committee has 24 members comprising CEOs of leading mutual fund houses as well as representatives from academia, exchanges, consumer interest groups, fund trustees, rating agencies, distribution firms and media.

**Kamlesh Gandhi, CMD of MAS Financial Services has been appointed as Co-Chairman, FIDC**

- Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC) has announced fresh appointments to its board of directors. Kamlesh Gandhi, CMD of MAS Financial Services has been appointed as Co-Chairman, FIDC in addition to Umesh Revankar, CEO and MD of Shriram Transport Finance Group. Sanjay Chamria has resigned as the Co-Chairman and Director, FIDC.
- Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC), which is a representative body of asset and loan financing NBFCs, has announced fresh appointments to its board of directors. Dinanath Dubhashi, MD and CEO, L&T Finance Holdings has been appointed as an additional Director of FIDC. The appointments were approved at a board meeting of FIDC on December 21.

**UAE's Mohammed Ben Sulayem elected as FIA president**

- Mohammed Ben Sulayem of the United Arab Emirates has been elected successor to Jean Todt as the first non-European president of motorsport's world governing body, the International Automobile Federation (FIA).
- The FIA is the governing body for Formula One, the World Rally Championship, World Endurance and Formula E among other series. The 60-year-old Dubai-born former rally driver was standing against British lawyer Graham Stoker, who has been Todt's deputy president for the sport since 2009.

**RBL Bank MD, CEO Vishwavir Ahuja steps aside; Rajeev Ahuja appointed new MD**

- The RBL Bank board has appointed Rajeev Ahuja, who's currently working as the Executive Director at the bank, as interim Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of the bank with immediate effect, subject to the regulatory and other approvals. The board of directors at its meeting has accepted the request of Vishwavir Ahuja, Managing Director and CEO of the bank, to proceed on leave with immediate effect.

**Madhya Pradesh govt appoints new public relations chief**

- The Madhya Pradesh government has appointed Raghvendra Kumar Singh, a 1997-batch IAS officer, as the new principal secretary and commissioner of the state public relations Department.

- As per a government order, Singh, who was the principal secretary and commissioner of Technical Education, has also been made the managing director of Madhya Pradesh Madhyam, a communication platform of the state government.

#### **Private sector IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance appointed H O Suri as new managing director**

- IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance has announced the appointment of HO Suri as its new managing director and chief executive officer. He was the financial advisor, head, internal audit & legal, at the company and the new position took effect from October 1. IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance Company Limited is a 51:49 joint venture between IFFCO and Japan's Tokio Marine Group. The firm offers retail products like motor, health, travel, home and personal accident insurance and corporate insurance products.
- HO Suri began his professional journey in 1982 with Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO). A chartered accountant by profession, he is one of the founder-members of IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance Company in 2000.

#### **Pradeep Kumar Rawat to be India's new envoy to China**

- Senior Indian diplomat Pradeep Kumar Rawat, who is well-versed in negotiating with Chinese diplomats, has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to China. Rawat's appointment comes amid the lingering border stand-off in eastern Ladakh. Rawat is currently the country's envoy to the Netherlands.
- An Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1990 batch, Rawat is currently the country's envoy to the Netherlands. He was joint secretary (East Asia) in the MEA when the Doklam border stand-off took place in 2017. He was involved in the negotiations during the early days before he moved to Indonesia as ambassador.
- Rawat served as India's envoy to Indonesia and Timor-Leste from September 2017 to December 2020. He had earlier served in Hong Kong and Beijing and speaks fluent Mandarin.

#### **Hyundai appoints Unsoo Kim as new MD**

- Hyundai Motor Company has appointed Unsoo Kim as the Managing Director (MD) of Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), starting from 1st January 2022. He will replace Seon Seob Kim (SS Kim), who will lead the Global Operations Division in Hyundai headquarters in Seoul, South Korea. HMIL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of HMC is India's first smart mobility solutions provider and the number one car exporter in India.
- He played a key role in positioning the company as a smart mobility solutions provider and bringing Internet-enabled connected cars and kick-starting the electric mobility journey in India with the launch of Kona, an all-electric SUV.

#### **Uttarakhand government appoints Rishabh pant as state brand ambassador**

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday appointed India batter Rishabh Pant as the state brand ambassador.
- Taking to his Twitter, the Chief Minister wrote in Hindi, "One of the best cricket players of India, idol of youth and Lal Shri Rishabh Pant of Uttarakhand has been appointed by our

government as "State Brand Ambassador" with the aim of encouraging the youth of the state towards sports and public health."

### **Mohit jain elected new president of Indian Newspaper Society**

- Mohit Jain of The Economic Times was elected as president of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) president at its 82nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) held through video conference on Friday. He succeeds Lakshmipathy Adimoolam of Health & The Antiseptic.
- K Raja Prasad Reddy (Sakshi) is the Deputy President, Rakesh Sharma (Aaj Samaj) is the Vice President and Tanmay Maheshwari (Amar Ujala) is the Honorary Treasurer of the Society for 2021-22. Mary Paul is the Secretary-General.

### **Army chief MM Naravane takes charge as chairperson of Chiefs of Staff Committee**

- Army Chief General M.M. Naravane has assumed the charge as the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee that comprises the three service chiefs. The post fell vacant following the death of Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat in the Indian Air Force helicopter crash on December 8. General Naravane has been given the charge, as he is the senior-most among the three service chiefs.
- IAF Air Chief Marshal V.R. Chaudhari and Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar had taken over their respective positions on September 30 and November 30. Before the creation of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff, the senior-most among the three service chiefs used to be the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

### **US President elevated Indian-American political advisor Gautam Raghavan as the head of the WHOPP**

- US President Joe Biden has elevated Indian-American political advisor Gautam Raghavan as the head of the White House Office of Presidential Personnel. White House Presidential Personnel Office (PPO), also written as Office of Presidential Personnel, is the White House office tasked with vetting new appointees. The PPO is one of the offices most responsible for assessing candidates to work at or for the White House.
- A first-generation immigrant, Raghavan was born in India, raised in Seattle and graduated from Stanford University. He is the editor of the book 'West Wingers: Stories from the Dream Chasers, Change Makers, and Hope Creators Inside the Obama White House'.

### **Jasprit Bumrah signs up as Unix Brand Ambassador**

- Unix, an Indian Mobile Accessories manufacturing brand, has signed Indian Cricket Fast Bowler, Jasprit Bumrah as its Brand Ambassador to increase the visibility of their products. The products include wearable mobile electronics such as Chargers, Earphones, Data Cables, Power Banks, Wireless Speakers, Smartphone Batteries, Bluetooth neckbands and TWS are mostly manufactured and marketed across India through distributors.

### **Ravindra Jadeja Appointed as Brand Ambassador of Kinara Capital**

- Bangalore based innovative, fast-growing fintech, Kinara Capital signed the Indian cricketer Ravindra Jadeja, as its official brand ambassador on the occasion of the company's 10th anniversary. Kinara Capital provide loan service to India's MSMEs. Till date, Kinara Capital

has disbursed 70,000 collateral-free loans. With this partnership, Kinara aims to boost its outreach in financing the MSME sector in the country. With a current AUM of INR 1000 crores, Kinara Capital plans to grow 500 per cent by the year 2025.

#### **Oyo appointed SBI's former Chairman Rajnish Kumar strategic group advisor**

- IPO-bound hospitality unicorn Oyo Hotels and Homes (Oyo) has appointed Rajnish Kumar, former Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) as Strategic Group Advisor. In his role, Kumar will advise Oyo's management on short-term and long-term strategy, regulatory and stakeholder engagement, and enhancing the brand of the company globally. He is currently a part of the boards of HSBC Asia Pacific, L&T infotech, Hero Motocorp and BharatPe.

#### **Alka Upadhyaya appointed as chairperson of National Highways Authority of India**

- Centre effects major bureaucratic reshuffle. The Centre has appointed Alka Upadhyaya as chairperson of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). A 1990-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, Upadhyaya is currently Additional Secretary, Department of Rural Development.
- Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has been named chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India, a Personnel Ministry order said.
- Sundeep Kumar Nayak has been appointed as Director-General, National Productivity Council, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade.

#### **Gita Gopinath: From Mysuru to No. 2 Official at IMF, First Indian to Take up the Top Role**

- International Monetary Fund Chief Economist, Gita Gopinath is set to take over from Geoffrey Okamoto as the institution's No. 2 official. It is going to be a historic movement when International Monetary Fund has the female at its first two leading positions. The IMF has done some changes in the roles and responsibilities of the fund's senior management team. In which they introduced deputy managing director for the first time and it is gone to the first female named Indian born economist Gita Gopinath.
- The move comes as a surprise because Gopinath, the first woman to serve as the IMF's chief economist, had said in October she planned to rejoin Harvard University in January to retain her tenured faculty post after three years of public service.

#### **Sambit Patra appointed as chairman of ITDC**

- Sambit Patra has been appointed as the chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. IAS officer, G. Kamala Vardhana Rao will hold the post of managing director of ITDC. The India Tourism Development Corporation is a hospitality, retail, and education company owned by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Tourism. Earlier, Patra had served as an independent Director of ONGC.
- Appointment of Dr Sambit Patra as Part-Time Non-Executive Director & Chairman of ITDC for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.



## **Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Mago takes over as NDC Commandant**

- Lt Gen Manoj Kumar Mago has taken over as the Commandant of National Defence College (NDC), New Delhi. He hails from Ludhiana, was commanding the 10 Corps at Bathinda before being given the assignment at NDC that entails evolving a strategic culture among the country's senior-most officials of the military, the civilian bureaucracy and the Indian Police Service. Lt Gen Mago, who passed out of Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, was commissioned into the 7th Battalion of the Brigade of Guards in 1984. He later commanded 16 Guards.

## **UAE's Ahmed Al Raisi elected Interpol president for 4-year term**

- The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) has elected Inspector General Ahmed Naser Al-Raisi (United Arab Emirates) as its President for a 4-year term at the 89th Interpol general assembly meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey. He replaces Kim Jong Yan from South Korea.
- In the final round, the UAE candidate received 68.9 per cent of votes cast by member countries. As president, Al Raisi's role during his four-year term will be to chair meetings of the executive committee which supervises the implementation of decisions taken at the General Assembly.

## **IMPORTANT DAYS**

### **International Day of Epidemic Preparedness 2021: 27th December**

- The United Nations and World Health Organization marked December 27 as the International day for Epidemic Preparedness. Battered by the Covid-19 pandemic, humans have learned about epidemic preparedness the hard way. In a bid to prepare for future outbreaks and sensitise people about epidemics on all levels. The day was first observed last December when the United Nations General Assembly had emphasised on the need to advocate the importance of the preparedness for, prevention of and partnership against epidemics.
- As per a WHO statement, the need of the hour is to invest in systems that can help detect, prevent and respond to outbreaks that have the ability to disrupt health systems, supply chains and livelihood of especially the poorest countries. The UN also aims at popularising the One Health approach that fosters the integration of plant health, human health and animal health along with other relevant sectors.

### **Madan Mohan Malaviya's Birth Anniversary: 25dec 2021**

- On the 160th anniversary of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's birth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union Ministers, BJP leaders, and politicians, including former Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan, Education Minister Jitu Vaghani, Union Minister BL Verma, and others extended their tributes to the great educationalist and politician on Saturday.
- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari wrote on Koo, "Humble greetings to the founder of Banaras Hindu University Bharat Ratna Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya ji on his birth anniversary."

## **Merry Christmas Day 2021: 25<sup>th</sup> Dec**

- This annual Christmas is celebrated by Christians across the globe, as on this day, Jesus Christ was born in a city called Bethlehem. Christmas is the biggest and most auspicious festival in the Christian faith. Christians across the world visit their nearest Church to prayer which they call The Mass. They ring the bells and light candles as a ritual of worship. Families come together to celebrate this day in remembrance of the people and the love that touched their lives.
- Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, Saint Nick, Kris Kringle, or simply Santa, is a legendary character originating in Eastern Christian culture who is said to bring children gifts on Christmas Eve of toys and candy or coal or nothing, depending on whether they are “naughty or nice”. He resides in the North Pole with his wife, Mrs Claus.

## **Good Governance Day 2021: 25<sup>th</sup> December**

- In India, Good Governance Day (Sushasan Divas) is observed annually on 25th December. On this day nation celebrates the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In keeping with this principle, Good Governance Day has been declared to be a working day for the government.
- The aim to observe this day is to let the students and citizens of the country know about the duties and responsibilities of the government they need to fulfil. Good governance day acts as a reminder to the government about their responsibilities, and the government should be unbiased, transparent, and development-oriented.

## **National Consumer Rights Day 2021: 24th December**

- National Consumer Rights Day is observed every year on December 24. On this day in 1986, the Consumer Protection Act 1986 received Presidential assent and thus came into force. The Act aims to provide consumers with effective safeguards against different types of exploitation, such as defective goods, deficiency in services and unfair trade practices.
- The National Consumer Rights Day was observed for the first time in 1986 under the Consumer Protection Act. It's different from World Consumer Day, which is celebrated annually on March 15. The Consumer Protection Act came into force in 1986. In 2019, the Consumer Protection Act 1986 was revised. Later, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution announced the CPA 2019 bill put to effect on July 20, 2020.

## **Indian National Farmer's Day 2021: 23rd December**

- Kisan Diwas or National Farmers' Day is celebrated across the nation on December 23 to commemorate the birth anniversary of the fifth Prime Minister of India, Chaudhary Charan Singh. He brought farmer-friendly policies and worked towards the welfare of the farmers. He was the fifth Prime Minister of India and served the country as Prime Minister from 28 July 1979 to 14 January 1980.
- In 2001, the government of India declared December 23, the day Chaudhary Charan Singh was born, to be celebrated as National Farmers' Day and for all the right reasons. Chaudhary Charan Singh breathed his last on January 14, 1980.

- A memorial dedicated to him was built at Raj Ghat and is called 'Kisan Ghat.' He played an important role in raising issues of the small and marginal farmers.

#### **National Mathematics Day 2021: 22nd December**

- India observes the National Mathematics Day every year on 22 December since 2012. The day is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. This year nation celebrates his 134th birth anniversary of Ramanujan. The main objective behind the celebration of National Mathematics Day is to make people aware of the development of mathematics and its importance in the growth of humanity.
- The day was announced on 26 February 2012 by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to mark the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan (22 Dec 1887- 26 Apr 1920). 2012 was also observed as National Mathematics Year. Ramanujan had a wealth of ideas that have transformed and reshaped 20th-century mathematics. These ideas continue to shape the mathematics of the 21st century.

#### **Good Governance Week: 20-25 December 2021**

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the Good Governance Week campaign themed "Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur" aimed at showcasing and replicating the best governance practices to the grassroots level. Good Governance Week is being celebrated on 20-25 December as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration.
- During the week-long event, over 700 Districts Collectors will visit Tehsil and Panchayat Samiti Headquarters in order to provide timely grievance redressal and improve service delivery. It is being celebrated by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in collaboration with various other ministries and departments.

#### **International Human Solidarity Day : 20 December**

- International Human Solidarity Day is observed globally on 20 December every year to celebrate unity in diversity and raise awareness about the importance of solidarity. According to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, solidarity is among the fundamental values that are essential to international relations.
- The General Assembly, on 22 December 2005, by resolution 60/209 identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the twenty-first century, and in that regard decided to proclaim 20 December of each year International Human Solidarity Day.

#### **Goa's Liberation Day 2021: 19th December**

- Goa Liberation Day is observed on 19 December every year in India and it marks the day Indian armed forces freed Goa in 1961 following 450 years of Portuguese rule. The year 2021 marks the 60 years of Goa's independence. Goa Liberation Day is marked by an abundance of events and festivities in Goa though this time because of the pandemic the celebrations are expected to be muted. A torchlight procession is ignited from three different locations in the state, eventually all meeting at the Azad Maidan.

- The Portuguese colonised several parts of India in 1510 but by the end of the 19th-century Portuguese colonies in India were limited to Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Anjediva Island.
- The Goa liberation movement, which sought to end Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, started off with small scale revolts.
- On August 15, 1947, when India gained its Independence, Goa was still under the Portuguese rule.

### **World Arabic Language Day 2021: 18<sup>th</sup> December**

- World Arabic Language Day is observed globally on 18th December every year. The Arabic language is one of the pillars of the cultural diversity of mankind. It is one of the most widely used languages in the world, spoken daily by more than 400 million people. The purpose of this day is to raise awareness of the history, culture and development of the language by preparing a program of special activities and events.
- The theme of this year's World Arabic Language Day is "The Arabic Language and Civilizational Communication", and it is considered as a call to reaffirm the important role that the Arabic language plays in building bridges of connection between people on the rise of culture, science, literature and many other fields.

### **National Minorities Rights Day 2021: 18<sup>th</sup> December**

- Every year, December 18 is observed as the Minorities Rights Day to uphold the right to freedom and equal opportunities for the ethnic minorities in India and create awareness about the respect and dignity of the minorities. India has faced many obstacles since the British Rule regarding basic human rights. However, these rights were safeguarded after the independence and people must be made aware of it. Thus we celebrate Minorities Rights Day on 18th December every year.
- The Minority Rights Day 2021 aims to uplift all the minority sections of society and back them to voice their opinion. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, all the sessions, seminars, and debates are likely to take place digitally.

### **International Migrants Day 18<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

- The International Migrants Day is observed globally on 18 December every year. The day is marked by the United Nations, through the UN-related agency International Organization for Migration (IOM). The day is observed to highlight the contributions made by the 272 million migrants, which includes more than 41 million people who are internally displaced persons, and the challenges they face.
- The theme of International Migrants Day 2021 is Harnessing the potential of human mobility.
- On 18 December 1990, the General Assembly acquired a resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, to recognize the contributions made by millions of migrants to the economies of their host and home countries promotes respect for their basic human rights. The day was firstly observed in 1990.



## International Tea Day 2021: 15th December

- International Tea Day is observed every year on December 15 in countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Uganda, India, and Tanzania. It is the second most used drink in the world after water. For some people, tea is an integral part of life which adds rhythm. China is currently the largest exporter of tea. According to a study conducted by the Tea Board of India in 2007, around 80 per cent of the total tea produced in India is consumed by the domestic population.
- The first ITD was held in New Delhi in India in 2005. However, in 2015, the Indian government proposed to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation to expand International Tea Day across the world.
- The reason for the UN celebrating May 21 as International Tea Day is that the season of tea production begins in May in most of the tea-producing countries.

## Vijay Diwas 2021: 16th December

- In India, Vijay Diwas (also called Victory Day) is celebrated every year on December 16. The country is celebrating the 50th Vijay Diwas in 2021. Vijay Diwas is observed to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces' victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war. On this day, we pay homage to all the soldiers who had defended the nation in the war.
- The Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 which began on December 3 lasted for 13 days and officially ended on December 16, after which Pakistan surrendered to India. It was on this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, General AA Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini. The end of the war also resulted in the subsequent secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.

## National Energy Conservation Day 2021: 14th December

- Every year on the 14th of December, National Energy Conservation day is celebrated in India. This occasion has been celebrated since 1991 when is led by the Ministry of power. This day is celebrated to raise awareness regarding the conservation of energy as it is the best way to have a greener and brighter future.
- Energy conservation is a big necessity that is required of our future well-being. It is a practice that everyone should indulge in to make the future of our earth even better. The agenda of celebrating national energy conservation Day is to raise awareness regarding the importance of energy and resources conservation. Conserving energy means wisely using energy rather than indiscriminately misusing it.

## Unicef Day 2021: 11th December

- Every year, UNICEF Day is observed on December 11 to raise awareness about saving children's lives by defending and helping them to fulfil their wishes. The day provides assistance for the health, nutrition, education, and welfare of children during World War II. UNICEF's name was subsequently changed from United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund to United Nations Children's Fund though, it continued to be known by the popular acronym based on the previous title.

- The theme for this year is to help children recover from interruptions and learning losses experienced through pandemics in the last two years.

### **International Day of Neutrality 2021: 12th December**

- International Day of Neutrality is a United Nations recognized day held on December 12 each year to raise public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations. It was officially declared by a UN General Assembly resolution adopted in February 2017 and first observed on December 12, 2017.
- Neutrality defined as the legal status arising from the abstention of a state from all participation in a war between other states, the maintenance of an attitude of impartiality toward the belligerents, and the recognition by the belligerents of this abstention and impartiality is critically important for the United Nations to gain and maintain the confidence and cooperation of all in order to operate independently and effectively, especially in situations that are politically charged.

### **International Universal Health Coverage Day 2021:12th December**

- International Universal Health Coverage Day is a United Nations' recognized international day celebrated every year on December 12. International Universal Health Coverage Day aims to raise awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage with multi-stakeholder partners. Each year on 12 December, UHC advocates raise their voices to share the stories of the millions of people still waiting for health, champion what we have achieved so far, call on leaders to make bigger and smarter investments in health, and encourage diverse groups to make commitments to help move the world closer to UHC by 2030.
- This year theme of International Universal Health Coverage Day is "Leave No One's Health Behind: Invest in health systems for all."

### **International Mountain Day 2021:11<sup>th</sup> December**

- International Mountain Day is observed globally on December 11 every year. The day is celebrated to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.
- The theme of this year's International Mountain Day (IMD) on 11 December will be sustainable mountain tourism. Sustainable tourism in mountains can contribute to creating additional and alternative livelihood options and promoting poverty alleviation, social inclusion, as well as landscape and biodiversity conservation. It is a way to preserve the natural, cultural and spiritual heritage, to promote local crafts and high-value products, and celebrate many traditional practices such as local festivals.

### **Ministry of Power kickstarts celebration of Energy Conservation Week: 8th to 14th December 2021**

- Ministry of Power is celebrating the Energy Conservation Week from 8th to 14th December 2021 under "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav". Celebration by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency will include three major activities i.e. National Painting Competition for school children, National

Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) for Industries and establishments and National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards (NEEIA) to recognize innovative energy efficiency technologies.

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency has been organising National Level Painting Competitions on Energy Conservation for school children studying in 4th to 10th standard. This year, the themes for the competition are “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Energy Efficient India” and “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav: Cleaner Planet”.

#### **Human Rights Day 2021: 10th December**

- Human Rights Day is celebrated on 10 December annually across the world. This Day came into existence on December 10, 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations. This day is observed every year across the world, as it empowers us all. The day also acknowledges the advocates and defenders of human rights around the world.
- The theme for Human Rights Day 2021 is “EQUALITY – Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights.” This year’s Human Rights Day theme relates to ‘Equality’ and Article 1 of the UDHR – “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

#### **SAARC Charter Day observed on 8th December 2021**

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter Day is observed annually on 8th December to commemorate the adoption of the SAARC Charter. This year marks the 37th anniversary of the regional group. The charter was signed by the Leaders of SAARC Countries Heads of State or Government of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka at the First SAARC Summit held in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- On 8 December 1985, the SAARC Charter was adopted, in Dhaka, during the first summit of the group. The Charter was signed by the leaders of eight South Asian nations- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- As mentioned in its charter, the prime focus of SAARC is to work collectively to promote the welfare of people in the region and to improve their standard of living through social progress and economic development.

#### **Remember the Victims Prevent Genocide 2021: 9th December**

- The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime is observed annually on December 9. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the Genocide Convention and its role in combating and preventing the crime of genocide, as defined in the Convention, and to commemorate and honour its victims.
- 9 December 2021 marks the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, as well as the 73rd anniversary of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”), the first human rights treaty adopted by the General Assembly. The Convention signifies the international community’s commitment to “never again” and provides the first international legal definition of “genocide,” widely adopted at national and international levels. It also establishes a duty for State Parties to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.

## **International Anti-Corruption Day 2021: 09th December**

- International Anti-Corruption Day is observed annually on 9 December to raise public awareness for anti-corruption. The day is observed since the passage of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on 31 October 2003. The 2021 International Anti-Corruption Day seeks to highlight the rights and responsibilities of everyone – including States, Government officials, civil servants, law enforcement officers, media representatives, the private sector, civil society, academia, the public and youth – in tackling corruption. The theme of International Anti-Corruption Day 2021: “Your right, your role: say no to corruption”.
- On 31 October 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General designate the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as secretariat for the Convention’s Conference of States Parties (resolution 58/4). The Assembly also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day, to raise awareness of corruption and of the role of the Convention in combating and preventing it. The Convention entered into force in December 2005.

## **National Armed Forces Flag Day 2021: 7th December**

- National armed forces day is also known as the National flag day of India. The day is every year celebrated and observed on 7th December. The aim to observe this day as the national armed forces day is to collect funds from the people for the betterment of armed forces. To know more about the national armed forces day, candidates are advised to read the article below.
- A committee was set up on August 28, 1949, under the then Defense Minister of India. The committee decided to observe a Flag Day annually on December 7. The aim to celebrate this day as the national flag day Or national armed forces day is to distribute flags amongst the people and collect the funds from them for the betterment of the armed forces. The Defence Ministry of India in 1993 consolidated all the related welfare funds into a single Armed Forces Flag Day Fund.

## **International Civil Aviation Day 2021: 7 December**

- International Civil Aviation Day is celebrated every year on December 7 to recognize the importance of aviation to the social and economic development of the world. The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.
- The Council has decided that from now until 2023, the theme will be: “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development”.

## **Nation remembers BR Ambedkar on his 66th death anniversary in 2021**

- India observes December 6 as Mahaparinirvan Divas every year to mark the death anniversary of Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, who fought for the economic and social empowerment of Dalits in the country. He was popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar



passed away on December 6, 1956. The Union government has decided to celebrate Mahaparinirvan Divas as part of the major commemoration of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

- Bhimrao Ambedkar was born in Madhya Pradesh's Mhow, Ambedkar was the 14th and the last child of his parents. He was primarily an Economist and educationist.
- Babasaheb was also the flag bearer of India's Dalit Activism, is called the chief architect of the Indian Constitution.

### International Volunteer Day 2021: 5 December

- International Volunteer Day (IVD), also called International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development is observed on 5 December every year. International Volunteer Day Theme 2021: "Volunteer now for our common future". The purpose of the day to celebrate the efforts of volunteers and organizations and offer the opportunity to promote volunteerism, encourage governments to support volunteer efforts and recognize volunteer contributions to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at local, national and international levels.
- The International volunteer day was first observed and mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1985. It was observed through Resolution A/RES/40/212 on 17 December 1985. This day offers a chance to individual volunteers, communities, and organizations in order to promote their contributions to the development at the local, national and international levels.

### World Soil Day 2021: 5 December

- World Soil Day is celebrated every year on December 5 to raise awareness of the importance of soil quality for human well-being, food security and ecosystems. World Soil Day 2021 (#WorldSoilDay) and its campaign "Halt soil salinization, boost soil productivity" aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being by addressing the growing challenges in soil management, fighting soil salinization, increasing soil awareness and encouraging societies to improve soil health.
- In June 2013, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Conference unanimously endorsed World Soil Day. It was also adopted officially in the 68th United Nations General Assembly. As a result, World Soil Day was for the First time Officially celebrated on 5th December 2014. The date of 5 December was chosen because it corresponds with the official birthday of the late H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand, who was one of the main proponents of this initiative.

### India & Bangladesh will celebrate Maitiri Diwas on 6 December

- India and Bangladesh have decided to celebrate December 6, the day on which India formally recognized Bangladesh, as "Maitri Diwas" (Friendship Day). During the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in March 2021 to attend the national day of Bangladesh, it was decided to commemorate 6 December as Maitri Diwas (Friendship Day). Ten days before the liberation of Bangladesh, India had recognised Bangladesh on 6 December 1971. India was one of the first countries to establish bilateral diplomatic ties with Bangladesh.
- According to the joint statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, Prime Minister Modi highlighted that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, one of the greatest leaders of

modern times, will be remembered for his courage and indelible contribution to Bangladesh's emergence as a sovereign country.

#### **Indian Navy Day 2021: 04 December**

- In India, December 4 is observed as the National Navy Day every year, to celebrate the achievements and role of the naval force to the country. The theme of Indian Navy Day 2021 is 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' signifying 50 years of India's victory in the Indo-Pakistan war that took place in 1971.
- Indian Navy is a naval branch of Indian armed forces Led by the President of India (commander-in-chief). Back in 1971, during the Indo-Pakistan war, December 4 was chosen to launch Operation Trident against Pakistan. On December 4, the Indian Navy formally entered the war and attacks on Karachi were constantly showering. As we all know because of the Indian Navy the whole country rejoiced with success. The victory over Pakistan made our country proud and respect the Indian Navy even more.

#### **World Day of the Handicapped 2021: 3rd December**

- World Handicapped day also known as the International Day of Persons with disabilities is observed every year on 3rd December globally. The day is marked and observed to support critical issues which are related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The IDPWD day was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The theme of the World Day of the Handicapped 2021 is the Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities. The day is celebrated to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

#### **National Pollution Control Day 2021: 2nd December**

- National Pollution Control Day is observed on 2nd December every year. The day is observed as a national pollution control day to commemorate the lives of the people who died in the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984. The main objective of this day is to educate the people and to make them aware of pollution control acts and industrial disasters. This year will be marked as the 37th national pollution control day. To know more about this day, candidates are advised to read the article below.
- The day is observed in the memory of people who lost their lives in the Bhopal gas disaster. The industrial accident occurred in 1984 when the gas Methyl Isocyanate leaked on the night of December 2–3 and killed thousands.

#### **World Computer Literacy Day 2021: 2nd December**

- World Computer Literacy Day is observed on 2nd December every year all over the world. The day is celebrated as the world computer literacy day to create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities worldwide. The day promotes technological skills, especially in children and women, and aims to inspire them to learn more and make their work easier by the use of computers. To know, more about the World Computer Literacy day candidates are advised to read the below article.

- The day was originally founded by the Indian computer company NIIT to mark its 20th anniversary in 2001. World Computer Literacy Day was first observed and held in the year 2001 on 2nd December. As mentioned above, the day is celebrated to create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities worldwide.

### **BSF Raising Day 2021: December 01**

- The Border Security Force (BSF) is celebrating its 57th Raising Day on 01 December 2021. BSF was formed on December 1, 1965 as a unified central agency after the Indo-Pak and India-China wars for ensuring the security of the borders of India and for matters connected therewith. It is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of the Union of India and stands as the world's largest border guarding force. BSF has been termed as the First Line of Defence of Indian Territories.

## **SUMMITS AND MOU'S**

### **Greater Noida authority inks pact with National Thermal Power Corporation to recycle plastic**

- The Greater Noida authority on Thursday signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) to recycle the plastic waste produced in the city, which will be used as fuel to produce electricity at the corporation's Dadri plant.
- Officials from the Greater Noida authority said it was a challenge to treat the 20 tonne of plastic waste produced daily in the city.
- "We were looking for a solution to handle the plastic waste so that it can be recycled. Now, we are happy since the NTPC will reuse the plastic waste and produce electricity, thereby eliminating the problem of the city to get rid of the plastic waste."

### **GMR subsidiary awarded contract to develop Indonesia's Kualanamu Airport**

- GMR Airports Netherlands B.V., a subsidiary of GMR Airports Limited (GAL), has signed a Shareholders' Agreement (SHA) and Share Subscription Agreement (SSA) with Indonesia's state-owned airport operator Angkasa Pura II for the development and operation of the South East Asian country's Kualanamu International Airport.
- GAL has entered into a 49%-51% partnership with the Indonesian company to operate, develop and expand airport at Medan, one of the largest metropolitan cities in the country, for a period of 25 years.

### **NITI Aayog enters into agreement with UN WFP to diversify food basket in programmes**

- NITI Aayog has signed a Statement of Intent with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP). The partnership focuses on mainstreaming millets and supporting India in taking lead globally in knowledge exchange using the opportunity of 2023 as an International Year of Millets. The government of India observed 2018 as a year of millets.
- The partnership between NITI Aayog and UN WEP focuses to mainstream the millets and supporting India in taking a lead internationally in knowledge exchange amid the recognition of 2023 as an International Year of Millets.
- This partnership also aims to build resilient livelihoods for small farmers and adaptation capacities towards climate change as well as transforming food systems.

- The Statement of Intent focuses on strategic and technical collaboration between both parties, in order to strengthen climate-resilient agriculture for enhanced food & nutrition security across India.

#### **HAL signed contract with BEL for 83 LCA Tejas Mk1A fighters**

- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed a Rs 2,400 crores contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) for the development and supply of 20 types of systems for 83 LCA (Light Combat Aircraft) Tejas Mk1A fighter aircraft programme. The duration of the contract is 5 years i.e., from 2023 to 2028. Notably, this is HAL's biggest order on any Indian company thus boosting the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign. The order for the supply of these systems will be executed by two units of BEL at Bengaluru (Karnataka), and Panchkula (Haryana).

#### **ISRO Inks Deal With 4 Countries For Commercial Satellite Launches In 2021-2023**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has signed six agreements with four countries for launching foreign satellites during 2021-2023. About 132 million Euros would be earned through the launching of these foreign satellites on a commercial basis. The ISRO-Indian space agency, founded in 1969 to develop an independent Indian space program. Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space Dr Jitendra Singh has said that ISRO has launched a total of 342 satellites from 34 countries since 1999.
- ISRO through its commercial arm, New Space India Limited (NSIL), has been launching satellites belong to other countries from Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). Total 124 indigenous satellites have been put into Earth's orbit including 12 student satellites.

#### **TVS Motor and BMW Motorrad tie up For Electric Vehicles Production**

- India's TVS Motor Company will develop electric vehicles (EV) with BMW's motorcycle brand in India, joining a host of Indian automakers that have sought to expand their clean mobility offering. The tie-up comes at a time when new-age start-ups like Ola Electric & Ather are ramping up investment in electric scooters.
- Under the extended scope of the partnership, the companies plan to come up with an electric vehicle platform in addition to the existing internal combustion platform for both global and domestic markets. The first product under the enhanced co-operation, an electric model suited for the urban ecosystem, is expected to make its debut in the next 24 months.

#### **BPCL, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre join hands for green Hydrogen production**

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has tied up with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) to scale-up Alkaline Electrolyze technology for Green Hydrogen production. This is a first of its kind initiative to support India's commitment to achieve renewable energy targets and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Electrolyser plants are presently imported and the collaboration is to "scale-up Alkaline Electrolyser technology for Green Hydrogen production".
- India has set a target to reach net zero emissions by 2070 and towards that objective it is looking to raise the share of renewables in its energy mix to 50 per cent by 2030 from 38



per cent currently. This is a first of its kind initiative to support the country's commitment to achieve renewable energy targets and reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

#### **ISRO signs MoU with OPPO to strengthen R&D of NavIC messaging services**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation has signed an agreement with Chinese smart devices maker Oppo's Indian arm to strengthen the research and development of the NavIC messaging service. The messaging service is mainly used for broadcasting safety-of-life alerts in areas with poor or no communication, particularly in the oceans. Oppo India has its manufacturing unit in Noida and an R&D centre in Hyderabad.
- Both ISRO and Oppo India will exchange technical information of NavIC messaging services to build rapid, ready-to-use, end-to-end application-specific solutions. This will enable integrating NavIC messaging service with the mobile handset platform keeping in mind the need of Indian users.

#### **Karnataka govt signs LoU with UNDP to improve employment opportunities for youth**

- Department of Youth Empowerment & Sports, Government of Karnataka has signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as a part of the State-level initiative 'Code-Unnati' to improve the access to entrepreneurship and employment opportunities among the youths, including women. The initiative involves United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and is supported by SAP India Lab's CSR Strategies will be implemented in 4 districts of Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Dakshina Kannada and Raichuru.
- Fifty colleges, including government pre-university, ITIs, polytechnics and Arts & Science colleges, have already been identified to work with the faculty members and student communities in areas of Training and Capacity Building, Training in the 21st Century & Digital Skills, Entrepreneurship Development, Innovation Challenges, Boot Camps, Corporate Volunteering and Industry Connect.

#### **SBI to sign MoU with Kendriya Sainik Board to support the education**

- State Bank of India (SBI) will sign an MoU with Kendriya Sainik Board to support and educate the children of war veterans, ex-servicemen, and war widows. India's largest bank said it will provide a grant of ₹ 1,000 per month to 8,333 war veterans'. The bank has contributed ₹ 10 crores to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. The Armed Forces Flag Day is celebrated on December 7. According to the statement, the bank has contributed ₹10 crores to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. The Armed Forces Flag Day is celebrated on December 7.

#### **Paytm partners with AWS to offer its startup toolkit to Indian entrepreneurs**

- Paytm, a leading digital ecosystem for consumers and merchants has partnered with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to offer Paytm Startup Toolkit with exclusive payment services to early-stage Indian startups. Paytm will help entrepreneurs to grow businesses with payment, distribution, and growth solutions who are operating in India in the AWS Activate.
- The Paytm Startup Toolkit is a single-stop platform that offers solutions in the domain of payments, payouts, banking and distribution with services including Paytm Payment Gateway, which helps businesses accept digital payments on their website, app; Paytm

Payouts, which helps companies streamline their payments to employees, vendors, distributors and channel partners; and Paytm Payments Bank including nodal banking, which provides truly digital banking.

#### **EU, India to step up Clean Energy and Climate Partnership**

- India and European Union (EU) have agreed to step up their Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. They jointly agreed on a detailed work program until 2023 to implement the 2016 India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. The Panel agreed on increased technical cooperation in energy efficiency, renewable energy, green hydrogen, grid integration, storage, power market design, interconnection, cold chain, and sustainable financing.
- The Panel also agreed to explore further avenues to strengthen India-EU cooperation within the context of the International Solar Alliance. EU expressed its support for the close cooperation between India and the International Energy Agency. India and EU also agreed to exchange closely on clean energy in the frame of G20.

#### **Walmart announces MoU with MP government to train and support MSMEs**

- Walmart and its subsidiary Flipkart have signed an MoU with the Department of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Government of Madhya Pradesh to create an ecosystem of capacity building for MSMEs in Madhya Pradesh. Under this MoU, Walmart, Flipkart, and MSME Department will assist MSMEs to digitize their business and enable them to sell their products through online retail.
- This initiative comes under the Walmart Vridhhi Supplier Development Programme (Walmart Vridhhi), delivered by knowledge partner Swasti, which aims to train around 50000 Indian MSMEs with business skills to become successful as suppliers to Walmart, sellers on global marketplace platforms like Flipkart. Under this programme, Walmart and Flipkart have partnered with various states including Haryana and Tamil Nadu.

### **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

#### **Sahitya Akademi Announces Winners Of Yuva Puraskar, Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021**

- Sahitya Akademi announced its prestigious Sahitya Akademi Awards, Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021 in various languages. According to the board, an engraved copper plate, shawl and an amount of Rs 1 lakh will be given to the main Sahitya Akademi prize winner and an engraved copper plate and an amount of Rs 50,000 each will be given to the Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar.
- The Sahitya Akademi Award 2021 was given in 20 Indian languages, the winner of Gujarati, Maithili, Manipuri, and Urdu languages will be announced at a later date. Seven books of poetry, two novels, five books of short stories, two plays, one book each of biography, autobiography, criticism, and epic poetry have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2021. Author, Namita Gokhale was awarded for her novel Things to Leave Behind.

#### **Global Environment And Climate Action Citizen Award 2021: Viral Desai honoured**

- Viral Sudhirbhai Desai, an industrialist from Surat, who is popularly known as the Greenman or green man of Gujarat has been honoured with the Global Environment and

Climate Action Citizen Award 2021. Among the 28 personalities from 11 countries (which includes the United Kingdom(UK), the United States(US), New Zealand, France, and Malaysia,) who were honoured with this award, Viral Desai was the only Indian to win the honour for climate change.

### **Anukrti Upadhyay's Kintsugi wins the Sushila Devi Award 2021 for the best book of fiction by a woman author**

- Anukrti Upadhyay has won the Sushila Devi Award 2021 for the Best Book of Fiction for her novel, Kintsugi, which was published by the Fourth Estate imprint. The Ratanlal Foundation and the organizing Committee of the Bhopal Literature and Art Festival announced the winner, for this notable award for fiction written by a woman author and published in 2020. This prize has been instituted by the Shri Ratanlal Foundation.
- Anukrti Upadhyay has post-graduate degrees in Management and Literature, and a graduate degree in Law. She writes in both English and Hindi. She stunned readers and critics alike with the twin novellas Daura and Bhaunri in 2019 and delighted Hindi readers with the short story collection Japani Sarai.

### **Greenman Viral Desai Honoured With Global Environment And Climate Action Citizen Award**

- Surat's noted industrialist Viral Desai, popularly known as Greenman for his love for the environment, has been awarded the prestigious Global Environment and Climate Action Citizen Award in Dubai.
- Viral Desai and the other winners were felicitated at Dubai's Atlantis, The Palm, on December 23, with the Bharat Gaurav Samman by Sanskruti Yuva Sansthan. The UAE's Foreign Trade and Economic Development Department's Director-General Sheikh Awad Mohammed Mugrin graced the ceremony with his presence. Twenty-eight prominent personalities from 11 countries, including the UK, the US, New Zealand, France, and Malaysia, were felicitated with the prestigious awards on occasion, but Viral Desai was the only one from India to have won the honour for climate action.

### **Environmentalist Anil Prakash Joshi won Mother Teresa Memorial Award for 2021**

- Environmentalist Dr Anil Prakash Joshi, who was conferred upon the Padma Bhushan this year, has been awarded the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice 2021. Vidyut Mohan, the winner of the Earth shot Prize, and Ridhima Pandey, a young environmental activist from Uttarakhand, were also the recipients of the award.
- The Harmony Foundation identifies a theme each year for the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards and felicitates individuals and organisations who work in the realm of augmenting environmental sustainability. The awardees were felicitated by Dr Abraham Mathai, the founder chairman of the foundation.

### **Jindal Global University won the "Digital Innovation of the Year" award**

- O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU) has won the 'Digital Innovation of the Year Award' in the prestigious Times Higher Education (THE) Asia Awards 2021 for creating a free, cloud-based application to help schools and universities manage data. JGU was the only Indian University to be shortlisted for the "Digital Innovation of the Year".

- The university was awarded under the 'Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year' category for its transformative work in the last 2 years. This award is also a reflection of JGU's commitment to ensure continued education for its students during the ongoing pandemic. In March 2020, we were faced with one of the most unprecedented crises of our time.

#### **IIT-Roorkee Bags First Position In "Most Innovative Institutions" Category By CII**

- IIT Roorkee has been selected by the prestigious Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for the Industrial Innovation Awards. IIT Roorkee bagged the first position under the Most Innovative Research Institutions category this year. Last year, IIT Roorkee was adjudged as 'The Most Innovative Institute of the Year' for its innovation quotient.
- Visco-elastic Energy Dissipating Link Elements for Earthquake resistant housing construction by Prof. Pankaj Agarwal, Dr Amit Goyal, Dr Nidhin and Mr Naveen, all from the Department of Earthquake Engineering.
- Nitrogen-Doped Reduced Graphene Oxide (N-rGO) for High-Performance Supercapacitor from Prof. Anil Kumar and Dr Sahil Thareja from the Department of Chemistry.
- Novel hybrid adsorbent for simultaneous removal of arsenic and fluoride from contaminated water by Prof. Prasenjit Mondal, Dr Vineet, Rahul, Hemant, Dr Lokendra and Shubhi, all from the Department of Chemical Engineering.

#### **SAIL receives prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021**

- Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL), under the Ministry of Steel, has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021 for successive three years. The Award is given to organizations for significant achievements in Environment Management by Environment Foundation (WEF) since 1998.
- The company's environmental protections measures are focused on adopting various environmental measures including, upgrading of pollution control facilities, water conservation efforts with the aim to achieve Zero Liquid Discharge, efficient handling of different solid wastes (viz. process waste, hazardous waste, canteen/township waste), carbon sequestration through afforestation, eco-restoration of the mined-out area and etc.

#### **TiE Global Summit Awards: KM Birla named Global Entrepreneur of the Year**

- Aditya Birla Group's chairman, Kumar Mangalam Birla has received the Global Entrepreneur of the Year Award- Business Transformation from The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) based out of Silicon Valley. Birla is the first Indian Industrialist to receive the award for global entrepreneurship along with top global business leaders Satya Nadella, Elon Musk, and Jeff Bezos. The awardees were selected by an independent jury chaired by Venture Capitalist, Tim Draper, Founder, Draper University.

#### **Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton received his knighthood from Prince Charles at Windsor Castle**

- Lewis Hamilton has picked up a new title only days after losing one on the track. The seven-time Formula One champion received a knighthood at Windsor Castle, London. Hamilton gets the honorary title of "Sir" after being knighted by the Prince of Wales for services to



motorsports. Three other F1 drivers have been knighted: Jack Brabham, Stirling Moss and Jackie Stewart. Hamilton is the first to be awarded while still competing in the sport.

#### **Azim Premji got Dr. Ida S. Scudder Oration award**

- Azim Premji, founder chairman of Wipro Limited and founder of Azim Premji Foundation is this year's recipient of the 10th annual Dr Ida S. Scudder Humanitarian Oration, jointly established by Christian Medical College Vellore (CMC) and the U.S.-based Vellore CMC Foundation. The award is presented to Mr Premji in recognition of his contributions to society.
- Established in 2001, the Foundation has contributed immensely towards education, runs Azim Premji University in Bengaluru and also supports several not-for-profit organisations with financial grants. The Foundation also funded organisations in the field of healthcare.

#### **India's Harnaaz Sandhu becomes Miss Universe 2021**

- Actor-model Harnaaz Sandhu made history as she was crowned Miss Universe 2021 beating contestants from 80 countries, 21 years after India last brought home the title. While Paraguay's Nadia Ferreira, 22, finished second, South Africa's Lalela Mswane, 24, came third.
- Only two Indians before Ms Sandhu have won the title of Miss Universe — actors Sushmita Sen in 1994 and Lara Dutta in 2000. The 70th edition of the event was held in Eilat, Israel, where the 21-year-old bagged the coveted pageant.

#### **Mathematician Neena Gupta wins 2021 Ramanujan Prize**

- Indian Mathematician Neena Gupta has received the 2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians from Developing Countries for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra. Professor Neena Gupta, a mathematician at the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Kolkata. She is the third woman to receive Ramanujan Prize, which was first awarded in 2005 and is administered by Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics jointly with Dept Science and Technology and International Mathematical Union.
- After graduating with mathematics honours from Bethune College, Kolkata, in 2006, Neena Gupta went on to complete her post-graduation from the Indian Statistical Institute.
- Following her post-graduation, Professor Gupta pursued her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in algebraic geometry and in the year 2014 went on to publish her first research paper on Zariski's 'cancellation problem'. Her paper received an award and was widely recognised by other mathematicians.

#### **Balkrishna doshi to receive 2022 RIBA royal gold medal for architecture**

- The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has announced that Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi will be the recipient of the 2022 Royal Gold Medal. The distinction, approved by Her Majesty The Queen and awarded each year since 1848, is given to architects or practices in recognition of a lifetime's work and the impact on the evolution of the field and the built environment.

- With a career spanning over six decades, Balkrishna Doshi has had a paramount influence in shaping the architecture of India through a pioneering interplay of modernism and vernacular that translated into projects that celebrate local culture, context and craft.
- One of the most renowned Indian architects, the 2018 Pritzker Laureate has forged a distinct architectural philosophy and expression, informed both by modernist values and local traditions.

#### **IIT-Kanpur Scientist Bags "Young Geospatial Scientist" Award for Developing Indian Geoid Model**

- Ropesh Goyal from IIT-Kanpur won the 'Young Geospatial Scientist' award in recognition of his unique contribution to developing the Indian Geoid Model and computation software. Member of Space Commission, Government of India, and former ISRO Chairman AS Kiran Kumar presented the award to Goyal during the inaugural event of the DigiSmart India 2021 conference hosted by the Geospatial World.
- The 'Young Geospatial Scientist' award and a gold medal have been presented every year since 2011 to promising scientists below 35 years of age in memory of Rachapudi Kamakshi, a strategic analyst with a strong inclination towards geography and geospatial studies. The Rachapudi Kamakshi Memorial Trust is an organisation founded to help and encourage students and young and talented individuals with great ideas and research work in the field of geospatial sciences.

#### **Nilmani Phookan Jr & Damodar Mauzo wins Jnanpith Award for years 2020,2021**

- Assamese poet Nilmani Phookan Jr won the 56th Jnanpith Award and Konkani novelist Damodar Mauzo won the 57th Jnanpith Award. The country's highest literary award, the Jnanpith is bestowed on writers for "their outstanding contribution to literature". Jnanpith Award is a literary award presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith organization to Indian writers every year. This was instituted in 1961 and is given only to Indian writers who write in Indian languages and English.
- Phookan is a Sahitya Akademi and Padma Shri awardee. Based out of Guwahati, he is a poet of renown and has written Surya Henu Nami Ahe Ei Nodiyedi, Gulapi Jamur Lagna, and Kobita. Phookan was awarded the Padma Shri in 1990 and received the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2002. Phookan is the third Assamese writer to have received the Jnanpith. The previous awardees were Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya in 1979 and Mamoni Raisom Goswami in 2000.

#### **Eminent Indian-American mathematician Nikhil Srivastava, has been jointly selected for the inaugural \$5,000 Ciprian Foias Prize**

- Indian-American mathematician, Nikhil Srivastava, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley along with Adam Marcus and Daniel Spielman were awarded the First Ciprian Foias Prize in Operator Theory by the American Mathematical Society (AMS). Adam Marcus holds the Chair of Combinatorial Analysis at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland. Daniel Spielman is a Sterling Professor of Computer Science, a professor of statistics and data science, and a professor of mathematics.
- The \$5,000 award has been given to Nikhil Srivastava for his work in developing and introducing techniques to understand the characteristic polynomial of matrices, including

iterative sparsification. Nikhil Srivastava has earlier jointly won the George Polya Prize in 2014, and the Held prize in 2021 making this his third major award. He is an associate professor of mathematics at UC Berkeley.

### President's Colour Award ceremony organised by HP Police

- Himachal Pradesh Police has conducted the 'President's Colour Award' ceremony at Shimla's historic Ridge Ground. The Governor bestowed the 'President's Color Award' to the State Police on this occasion. Director-General of Police Sanjay Kundu received the award on the behalf of state police. The Chief Guest was Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, while Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur was also there as a special guest. Himachal Pradesh Police is India's eighth state police force to receive this honour.
- 'President Colour' is a special achievement, demonstrating that the state police ranks highly in the service of humanity, as well as performance, professionalism, integrity, human rights protection, and other factors.

### Bihar bagged gold medal in the 40th India International Trade Fair

- Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal has inaugurated the 40th edition of the India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2021 at Pragati Maidan in Delhi. It was organized by the India Trade Promotion Organisation with 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' as the theme and to further promote the idea of 'Vocal for Local'. Bihar is the partner state for the 40th IITF and the focus states are Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- The Bihar pavilion won the 6th gold medal by showcasing the state's art and cultural richness through handicrafts like Madhubani, Manjusha arts, terracotta, handlooms, and other indigenous products of the state at IITF 2021. Piyush Goyal listed five pillars of India as Economy, Exports, Infrastructure, Demand, and Diversity.

## RANKING

### ARIIA rankings: IIT Madras bags No. 1 spot for third consecutive year

- IIT Madras has bagged the first position in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2021, for the third consecutive year, under the category of CFTIs/ Central Universities/ Institute of National Importance (Technical). The third edition of the ARIIA ranking was dominated by the IITs in the centrally funded institution category. Seven IITs are on the top-10 list. IIT-Madras is followed by IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Kanpur, and IIT Roorkee. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru bagged the sixth position in the category.
- In the state and deemed to be universities category, Panjab University (Chandigarh) topped the ranking followed by Delhi Technological University, and Netaji Subhas University of Technology (Delhi).
- In the government engineering colleges category, the College of Engineering in Pune stood first, followed by PSG College of Technology in Tamil Nadu, and LD College of Engineering in Gujarat.

#### **Gujarat tops in composite Good Governance Index 2021**

- Good Governance Index 2021 was launched by Union Minister Amit Shah on the occasion of the Good Governance Day on 25 December 2021. GGI 2021 was prepared by the Department of Administration Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG). The GGI 2021 framework covered 10 sectors and 58 indicators. The aim of the Good Governance Index is to create a tool that can be used uniformly across the states for assessing the impact of various interventions that are taken up by Central and State Governments.
- Good Governance Index is an implementable and comprehensive framework that assesses the state of Governance across the Indian States and Union Territories enabling ranking of States and districts.

#### **India fourth most affected country by spam calls in 2021**

- Spam call rates in India have spiked again, with the country moving up in global rankings from 9th position to 4th position owing to a significant increase in sales and telemarketing calls in 2021, according to the latest insights by callerID, spam detection and blocking company, Truecaller. The upward movement is a direct result of a significant increase in sales and telemarketing calls, which in India make up about 93.5% of all spam calls. The report also showed that one particular company, the identity of which Truecaller did not reveal, was responsible for making over 202 million spam calls in 2021, which translates to about 27,000 calls on an hourly basis.
- The top three countries in the world with maximum spam based calls were Brazil, Peru and Ukraine. Interestingly, the USA dropped from 2nd place in 2020 to 20th in 2021, owing to stringent government regulations.

#### **India Ranked 66th at the Global Health Security Index 2021**

- As per the Global Health Security (GHS) Index 2021, the world's average overall GHS Index score was reduced to 38.9 (out of 100) in 2021, from a score of 40.2 in the GHS Index, 2019. GHS Index is developed in partnership with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security at the Bloomberg School of Public Health.
- India ranked 66 out of 195 countries with an overall Index score of 42.8 and along with a change of -0.8 from 2019. The United States of America (USA) ranked 1st on the index with a score of 75.9 followed by Australia and Finland.

#### **India Skills Report 2022 : Maharashtra Retains Top Position in the list of States**

- The 9th edition of India Skills Report (ISR) 2022, released by Wheebox, Maharashtra has retained the top position in the list of states with the highest pool of employable talent followed by Uttar Pradesh and Kerala. The theme of ISR 2022 – 'Rebuilding and Reengineering the Future of Work'. India Skills Report is a full-fledged report about the future of work, education, and skilling to match the talent demand and supply in a growing India.
- Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are the 3 states that have a higher job demand.
- Pune is the city with the most highly employable resources with 78% of the test takers scoring above 60 per cent.

#### **Top Five States with Highest Employability:**



Rank	State	Employability %
1	Maharashtra	66.1
2	Uttar Pradesh	65.2
3	Kerala	64.2
4	West Bengal	63.8
5	Karnataka	59.3

#### Fortune India's Most Powerful Women 2021 : Nirmala Sitharaman

- Fortune India released the list of most powerful women in India 2021 in which Union Minister, Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman ranked 1st. She is followed by Reliance Foundation Chairperson and Goodwill Ambassador Nita Ambani in 2nd position, and Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization (WHO) at 3rd.

Rank	Name	Position
1	Nirmala Sitharaman	Union Ministry, Ministry of Finance
2	Nita Ambani	Reliance Foundation Chairperson and Goodwill Ambassador
3	Soumya Swaminathan	Chief Scientist, World Health Organization (WHO)
4	Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw	Executive Chairperson, Biocon
5	Suchitra Ella	Co-founder and Joint MD, Bharat Biotech Ltd

#### IFFCO ranks first among top 300 cooperatives in the world

- The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has been ranked 'number one Cooperative' among the top 300 cooperatives in the world. The ranking is based on the ratio of turnover over the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. It signifies that IFFCO is contributing significantly to the GDP and economic growth of the nation. The 2021 edition of the 10th Annual World Cooperative Monitor (WCM) report, withholding its position from the 2020 edition.
- The 2021 WCM report is published by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (Euricse). WCM is a project designed to collect robust economic, organizational, and social data about cooperatives worldwide.
- The report is the 10th annual one and explores the economic and social impact of the largest cooperatives and mutual worldwide, providing a ranking of the top 300, sector rankings, and an analysis of responses to the current global challenges: Covid and climate change.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

### A new book by the former Indian Army Chief Gen. Nirmal Chander

- A new book by former Indian Army Chief of Staff Gen. Nirmal Chander Vij (ret) claims to offer a “full picture” of the conflicts in Jammu and Kashmir and the way forward. The book published by HarperCollins India, the book of General Vij, The riddle of “Kashmir: the quest for peace in a troubled land”.
- In the book, General Vij argues that the conflicts in Jammu and Kashmir are “symptomatic of Indo-Pakistani rivalry” after the partition, and contextualizes the issue by beginning the book with a summary of the history of the region. General Vij had been Director General of Military Operations during the Kargil War. After his retirement in 2005, he was founding vice president of the National Disaster Management Authority and director of the think tank Vivekananda India Foundation.

### Book ‘Bachelor Dad’ authored by Tusshar Kapoor

- Tusshar Kapoor has written his first book titled ‘Bachelor Dad’. The actor became a single father to son Lakshya Kapoor via surrogacy in 2016. He has shared his journey of being a single father in the new book. The actor has shared his journey of the ‘slightly unconventional road to fatherhood’ in his debut book, Bachelor Dad. On the cover of the book, he can be seen carrying his son.
- Announcing the book, Tusshar wrote, “I WROTE A BOOK! Becoming a father has been one of the most cherished moments of my life and my first book, Bachelor Dad, talks about how I took a slightly unconventional road to fatherhood.”

### A book on Yogi Adityanath “The Monk Who Transformed Uttar Pradesh” released

- The book titled “The Monk Who Transformed Uttar Pradesh: How Yogi Adityanath Changed UP Waala Bhaiya’ abuse to a Badge of Honour”, authored by Shantanu Gupta. A new book chronicles how Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath transformed the state in various aspects like law and order, connectivity, education, health infrastructure, and overall growth. The book underlines the journey of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, from being born in Uttarakhand to becoming a Nath Panthi saint, to CM of Uttar Pradesh.
- Gupta’s previously authored books include “BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY: Past, Present and Future: Story of the World’s Largest Political Party” (2019) and “The Monk Who Became Chief Minister” (2017).

### Book ‘Gandhi Topi Governor’ released by Vice President of India

- Vice President of India M Venkaiah Naidu has released the Telugu book titled ‘Gandhi Topi Governor’ by Padma Awardee Dr Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad, Chairman, Official Language Commission, Andhra Pradesh. The book chronicles the life of Barrister Idpuganti Raghavendra Rao. I R Rao was a prominent freedom fighter, Legislator and the Governor of the Central Provinces in the British Administration.

**Book “Rewinding the first 25 years of MeitY! authored by SS Oberoi**

- The book titled ‘Rewinding of First 25 years of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology’ authored by S S Oberoi, the former adviser at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) was launched by Ajay Prakash Sawhney, Secretary of MeitY. The book consists of life experience, challenges working as an advisor under the MeitY. He was the first head of the Software Development Agency and the first adviser of Information Technology.

**Book “Watershed : How We Destroyed India’s Water And How We Can Save It” authored by Mriduala Ramesh**

- Mriduala Ramesh, the founder of Sundaram Climate Institute, which works on water and waste solutions and the angel investor in cleantech start-ups, has authored a new book titled “Watershed: How We Destroyed India’s Water And How We Can Save It”. Mriduala Ramesh is the author of “The Climate Solution” and she writes regularly on climate issues. She is also a member of the board of trustees of World Wildlife Fund (WWF), India, and chairperson of the board of governors at the National Institute of Technology, Andhra Pradesh (AP).

**Autobiography titled 'At Home In The Universe' by Bala Krishna Madhur released by R.C. Sinha**

- An autobiography titled ‘At Home In The Universe’ by Bala Krishna Madhur was released by R.C. Sinha, IAS (Rtd), advisor to the Ministry of Road Development in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The book is the autobiography of B K Madhur, a former Chief Executive Officer at DHFL Property Services Ltd, and one of the key personalities in establishing Dewan Housing. The book offers an inside view into the policy environment in the 1980s and 1990s in the Housing Finance Sector. The book consists of early life hardships, experiences and life lessons of the author.

**Book ‘The Midway Battle: Modi’s Roller-coaster Second Term’ authored by Gautam Chintamani**

- Vice President (VP) M. Venkaiah Naidu launched a book titled ‘The Midway Battle: Modi’s Roller-coaster Second Term’ authored by Gautam Chintamani and published by Bloomsbury India at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas, New Delhi. The book mentioned the political scenario of India. It marks the second tenure of the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Midway Battle shed light on the various legislations like the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, triple talaq, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as well as farming laws.

**Book on ‘Public Service Ethics’ authored by Prabhat Kumar**

- The Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu launched ‘Public Service Ethics- A Quest for Naitik Bharat’ authored by Prabhat Kumar, published by IC Centre for Governance, at Upa-Rashtrapati Nivas, New Delhi. The book highlights the multiple dimensions element of human character, the practice of ethical principles as a way of life. It marked the importance of accountability, integrity, transparency and trustworthiness of the public governance system.
- Prabhat Kumar was an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the 1963 batch, Uttar Pradesh (UP) cadre. Prabhat Kumar is an Indian politician and retired civil servant. He served

as the Cabinet Secretary between 1998 and 2000. On the creation of Jharkhand in November 2000, he was made the first Governor.

**Book titled “1971: Charge of the Gorkhas and Other Stories” released**

- A new book that unearths true stories of the 1971 Indo-Pak war, ‘1971: Charge of the Gorkhas and Other Stories, written by Rachna Bisht Rawat, was released. The book includes, from the story of the flight lieutenant who went missing after his plane crashed inside Pakistan to the ‘last khukri attack’ in modern military history.
- Rachna Bisht Rawat is the author of six books by Penguin Random House India, including the bestsellers The Brave and Kargil. She lives in Gurugram with Hukum the bright-eyed, bushy-tailed golden retriever; an eclectic collection of books and music; and Manoj Rawat, the man in olive green, who met her when he was a gentleman cadet at the Indian Military Academy and offered to be her comrade for life.

**Book ‘Democracy, Politics and Governance’ authored by Dr A. Surya Prakash**

- Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu on the 72nd anniversary of the adoption of the ‘Constitution of India’ released a book titled “Democracy, Politics and Governance” in English and ‘Loktantr, Rajniti and Dharm’ in Hindi at an event in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi. The book was authored by Dr A. Surya Prakash.
- This book is a collection of articles about the social, political, and economic issues that impacted India’s politics and governance. Dr A. Surya Prakash is a Vice Chairman, Executive Council of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and also a veteran journalist.

**Book “Indian Innings: The Journey of Indian Cricket from 1947” authored by Ayaz Memon**

- A book titled ‘Indian Innings: The Journey of Indian Cricket from 1947’ authored by Ayaz Memon released. It is an anthology of Indian Cricket and marked several insights of Indian cricket of the last 70 years. The book has covered the era of veteran cricketers K N Prabhu to P N Sundaresan and Dicky Rutnagar to Ramachandra Guha and Suresh Menon, those years of famous victories consist of experiences about World Cups, various Test cricket, etc.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**India welcomes Egypt as member of New Development Bank of BRICS**

- Egypt added as the fourth new member of BRICS New Development Bank. Bangladesh, UAE, and Uruguay joined BRICS New Development Bank in September 2021. Membership expansion enables New Development Bank to position itself as a premier development institution for emerging economies. BRICS New Development Bank is a multilateral bank that was established by Brazil, Russia, China, India, and South Africa to finance sustainable development and infrastructure projects.

**Real GDP likely to sustain 9% growth rate in FY22 & 23: Icra**

- ICRA Credit rating agency has expected India’s real gross domestic product (GDP) will grow with 9% rate in fiscal years 2022 and 2023. The Indian economy has grown at 8.4 percent in the second quarter of the current fiscal year. ICRA said the growth momentum is not enough to confirm a change in the Monetary Policy stance in the February 2022 review.



The Future Expectation Index continued to display optimism because of improving the overall economic situation.

#### **Axis Bank is 2nd largest in PoS machines in India**

- Axis Bank has become the second-largest merchant-acquiring bank in the country, leapfrogging two spaces during 2021 by installing over two lakh card-swipe machines during the year. This is part of the bank's 'Axis One' strategy where it approaches the customers by offering its entire gamut of products instead of a standalone service.
- Axis Bank's strategy to increase the number of merchants is to offer the latest in technology to them and address pain points. For instance, the bank installs Android PoS machines and has also come out with a printer-less compact machine. On the agenda are bring-your-own-device (BYOD) solutions that will enable the use of regular smartphones with an attachment for accepting cards.

#### **IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of 'Green Fixed Deposits'**

- IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of 'green fixed deposits', whereby the deposit proceeds will be used to finance projects and firms supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A green deposit is a fixed-term deposit for investors looking to invest their surplus cash reserves in environmentally friendly projects. These deposits will be offered to both retail & corporate customers.
- The Bank will use the proceeds from these deposits to finance a wide array of sectors falling under the SDG category including, energy efficiency, renewable energy, green transport, sustainable food, agriculture, forestry, waste management and greenhouse gas reduction.
- The interest on the Green deposit remains attractive with an additional benefit of 50 basis points for senior citizens. In all ways, it is similar to a regular bank deposit but in addition, depositors will be issued a 'Green' certificate as well as an 'Assurance' certificate confirming the end-use of deposit proceeds at the end of the financial year."

#### **RBI releases report on trend and progress of banking in India**

- India's central bank, RBI has released the latest iteration of its annual report on the financial performance of the country. In its report, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) details that, despite the devastation caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in India, the financial performance of banks has improved, citing a fall in the gross non-performing asset ratio for scheduled commercial banks (SCBs).
- The report, titled 'Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India,' also showed how a rise in profitability of SCBs in 2020-21 was driven less by an increase in income but more via reductions in expenditure.
- The gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) ratio of SCBs fell from 8.2 per cent at the end of March 2020 to 7.3 per cent in March 2021. This decreased further to 6.9 per cent at the end of September 2021.

## **Indipaisa partners with NSDL Payments Bank to launch a new Fintech platform targeting India's flourishing 63 million SME sector**

- Indipaisa has signed a partnership agreement with NSDL Payments Bank to launch Financial Technology (Fintech) solutions targeting India's 63 million Small & Mid-sized Enterprise (SME) sector. To empower SME owners & operators to provide facilities and services that help them grow businesses, comply with government tax laws and build a sustainable future.
- Indipaisa's mission is to empower SME owners and operators to take charge of their finances as well as give them facilities and services that help them grow their businesses, comply with government tax laws, and build a better future for their families.
- Indipaisa plans to introduce multiple financial products and services customized from the ground up to match the specific needs of Indian SME owners and operators.

## **HDFC Bank wins coveted CII award for 'Most Innovative Best Practice' for financial inclusion**

- HDFC Bank has been named under 'Most Innovative Best Practice' at the coveted Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Digital Transformation Award 2021 or CII DX Award 2021. It will be recognized for the HDFC's efforts in world-class financial inclusion in Village Level Executive (VLE) centres along with the Government of India's Common Service Centres (CSC).

## **Paytm Payments Bank, MoneyGram partner to offer international remittance directly to Paytm Wallet**

- Paytm Payments Bank has partnered with MoneyGram, a peer-to-peer remittance company to enable international fund transfer directly to Paytm Wallet. Under the Partnership, MoneyGram users abroad can now transfer money to any full Know Your Customer (KYC)-compliant Paytm wallet. MoneyGram transactions in India received digitally stands at nearly 50 per cent of all transactions received in the country. This is MoneyGram's first mobile wallet partnership in India.
- MoneyGram transactions in India received digitally currently represent nearly 50 per cent of all transactions received in the country. The number of transactions sent directly to bank accounts is up about six times from just under 10 per cent two short years ago.

## **Federal Bank and Vayana Network bagged the 'Most Effective Bank-Fintech Partnership' award**

- Vayana Network, one of India's largest trade finance platforms, and Federal Bank, a leading Private Sector Bank have been awarded the 'Most Effective Bank-Fintech Partnership: Agile and Adaptable' at the IBSi-Global Fintech Innovation Awards 2021. The award was conferred in recognition of Vayana Network's partnership with Federal Bank, for automating and simplifying Supply Chain Finance. This year, the Innovation Awards attracted global attention with over 190 participants from 48 countries.
- Federal Bank partnered with Vayana Network to provide a seamless onboarding experience to dealers through their unique 'Full Stack' tech infrastructure – that facilitates end to end digital solution including client supply chain account set up, monitoring, digital authentication of documents on the transaction platform and notification to customers at every step.

#### **NPCI partners with UdeMy Business to upskill employees**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has signed a partnership agreement with UdeMy Business, to encourage innovative learning and skill development for employees of NPCI. The 3-year partnership with UdeMy Business will offer courses on in-demand skills such as tech, domain, behavioural, and leadership skills to all NPCI employees. Through the mission 'Talent Development for All' of NPCI, it provides capacity-building programmes in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Blockchain, Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), Robotic Process Automation (RPA), etc.
- Under its vision of 'Talent Development for All', NPCI is betting big on the capability building of its employees and has increased its budget for Learning & Development (L&D) by seven times. The three-year association with UdeMy Business will offer courses on in-demand skills such as tech, domain, behavioural, and leadership skills to all NPCI employees, who will now be able to access challenging assignments to enable experiential learning.

#### **Wipro to acquire cybersecurity provider Edgile for \$230 million**

- Wipro has signed an agreement to acquire Edgile, a transformational cyber security consulting provider, for \$230 million. Founded in 2001, Edgile is recognised by security and risk leaders for its business-aligned cyber security capability, deep understanding of the changing regulatory environment and enabling cloud transformations that help secure the modern enterprise. It has an onsite workforce of 182 employees.
- Together, Wipro and Edgile will develop Wipro CyberTransform, an integrated suite that will help enterprises enhance boardroom governance of cyber security risk, invest in robust cyber strategies, and reap the value of practical security in action.

#### **IOCL acquires 4.93 per cent equity stake in Indian Gas Exchange**

- Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has announced that it has acquired a 4.93 per cent equity share in Indian Gas Exchange Limited – the country's first automated national level gas exchange. The Board of Indian Oil at its meeting held on 20 December 2021 has accorded approval for the acquisition of 36,93,750 equity shares of the face value of Rs. 10/- each equivalent to 4.93 per cent of the share capital in Indian Gas Exchange Limited (IGX).
- The acquisition of an equity stake in IGX is a strategic opportunity for the country's top oil refiner to become part of India's natural gas market. IGX is a subsidiary of the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX). Indian Gas Exchange is the country's first automated national level gas exchange, that ensures transparent price discovery in natural gas and facilitates the growth of natural gas in India's energy basket.

#### **CCI approves Tata Group's acquisition of Air India**

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of a shareholding in Air India by Talace Private Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Sons. The regulator also approved stake acquisition by Talace in Air India Express and Air India SATS Airport

Services along with the acquisition of shares in Air India. Currently, Air India is wholly owned by the government.

- Air India SATS Airport Services is engaged in providing ground handling services at airports in Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mangaluru and Thiruvananthapuram. It also provides cargo handling services at Bengaluru airport.
- Air India, along with AIXL, is primarily engaged in the business of providing domestic scheduled air passenger transport service, air cargo transport services and international scheduled air passenger transport service.

### India registers highest-ever annual FDI inflow of 81.97 billion

- India has registered the highest ever annual Foreign Direct Investment inflow of \$ 81.97 bn in 2020-21. FDI inflows in the last seven financial years is over \$ 440 bn, which is nearly 58 % of the total FDI inflow in the last 21 financial years. The top five countries from where FDI Equity Inflows were received during 2014-2021 are Singapore, Mauritius, USA, Netherland & Japan.

### RBI imposes penalty on ICICI Bank and PNB for rule violations

- A penalty of Rs 1.8 crores has been imposed on Punjab National Bank (PNB) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), while ICICI Bank has been fined Rs 30 lakh for deficiencies in regulatory compliances. According to a statement issued by the central bank, PNB was found guilty of contravening provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, related to pledge of shares by it.
- In the case of ICICI Bank, the RBI said that after conducting a statutory inspection for supervisory evaluation of the bank, it found non-compliance with directions related to levy of charges for non-maintenance of minimum balance in saving accounts. The RBI however made it clear that in both the cases, penalties were levied on deficiencies in regulatory compliances and it was not a pronouncement on the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the banks with their respective customers.

### WhatsApp adopts 500 villages in India to promote digital payments

- WhatsApp has announced the Digital Payments Utsav for 500 villages in India. WhatsApp's Digital Payments Utsav is a pilot program that promotes digital payments to empower individuals and businesses and is meant as a project to further the cause of financial inclusion. The aim is to empower villagers with access to digital payments via the 'payments on WhatsApp'.
- WhatsApp announced the Digital Payments Utsav – a pilot program that is going to adopt 500 villages in Karnataka and Maharashtra in an effort to “accelerate financial inclusion”.
- Digital Payments Utsav took off on October 15 this year in the Kyathanahalli village in the Mandya district of Karnataka.
- Here on-ground facilitators helped familiarise villagers with various aspects of digital payments including how to sign up for UPI, set up a UPI account, and also told them about the best practices to be safe while using digital payments online.



## **ADB approves \$112 million loan for Assam Skill University**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$112 million loan to strengthen skills education and training through the establishment of the Assam Skill University (ASU). The Loan will create a path for skill development to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Assam's economy and industries. An additional \$1 million grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction will support the introduction of technologies for smart campus management, integrated teaching, learning, and career development management.
- The project will help develop the ASU's management and operating systems, business models, and faculty and staff, and support the design and construction of environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient university campus and facilities to ensure efficient and sustainable operations.

## **Paytm Launches EdTech Platform 'Wealth Academy' to Train Traders, Investors**

- Paytm, which got listed in bourses last month, has announced the launch of Paytm Wealth Academy, a tech-powered educational platform. The launch of the wealth academy is initially on the Paytm Money app, the wealth management app owned by Paytm's wholly-owned subsidiary Paytm Money. Paytm Wealth Academy will initially be available to select users, followed by a complete rollout.
- The Paytm Wealth Academy will allow users to learn trading and financial concepts at their own pace at their level of comfort. The platform offers a wide catalogue of courses and webinars along with personalized recommendations for users, curated to complement their existing knowledge.
- Paytm Wealth Academy is an educational platform designed to make financial learning intuitive and self-driven. For the first time, highly customizable courses are being offered, allowing users to start their learning journey from any stage. This will allow new traders to establish a ground-up understanding of financial concepts and also encourage experienced traders to stay updated with advanced trading strategies.

## **Wholesale inflation surges to 14.23% in November, highest in the current series**

- Producers' inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) has reached an all-time high in the current series at 14.23 per cent in November. This is the eighth successive month of double digits WPI (mainly due to the hardening of prices of mineral oils, basic metals, crude petroleum and natural gas). Wholesale Price-based Index (WPI) inflation base year is 2011-12. Also, the spike is highest since April 2005.

## **LIC introduced Dhan Rekha plan savings life insurance plan**

- The Life Insurance Corporation of India has launched a new non-linked, non-participating, individual savings life insurance plan called Dhan Rekha, it offers special premium rates for female lives. The plan is also allowed for the third gender adding that all benefits under the plan are fully guaranteed. There are special premium rates for female lives. The plan is allowed to Third Gender. All Benefits under the plan are fully guaranteed.
- Under this plan, the minimum sum assured is Rs 2 lakh, with no upper restriction on the maximum sum assured.

- Depending on the policy term, the minimum age to enter ranges from 90 days to 8 years.
- Depending on the policy term, the maximum age at the entrance can range from 35 to 55 years old.

#### **Bank of Baroda launches bob World Wave, a wearable payment solution**

- Bank of Baroda (BoB) has launched a solution for digital banking payments, named bob World Wave. Wearable technology is witnessing the rise of tremendous interest across the world and lenders are using this opportunity to adopt the more convenient and cashless digital payments systems. This is an innovative solution, intended to perfectly deliver preventive health actions as well as easier payment transactions.
- Bank's on the go wearable payment solution, bob World Wave is designed to ensure convenient and seamless digital payments by our customers. It is anticipated that 10% of the small ticket payments will be made via wearable devices in the next two years."
- The bob World Wave wearable device will allow customers to monitor their SpO2, body temperature, heart rate and blood pressure.

#### **RBI enforces 20-digit LEI for cross-border deals above Rs 50 crore**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) mandatory for cross-border transactions for capital or current account transactions of Rs 50 crore and above, from October 1 next year. The LEI is a 20-digit number used to uniquely identify parties to financial transactions worldwide to improve the quality and accuracy of financial data systems.
- The identifier norm has been introduced in a phased manner for participants in the over the counter (OTC) derivative, non-derivative markets, large corporate borrowers, and large value transactions in centralised payment systems. Starting October 1, 2022, banks will have to obtain the 'LEI' number from the resident entities (non-individuals) undertaking any capital or current account transactions. For LEI holders, it would be mandatory to furnish the number in all transactions irrespective of the transaction size.

#### **Karnataka Bank bags two DigiDhan Awards from MeitY**

- Karnataka Bank has been conferred with two DigiDhan awards instituted by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The awards were given during Digital payment Utsav in New Delhi. The award recognized banks for achieving the target with the highest percentage in BHIM-UPI transactions under the private sector bank category consecutively for two years 2019-20 and 2020-21. Karnataka Bank has always stood ahead of the time in adopting the latest digital technology to its products in order to provide best in class service to our customers.

#### **Bharti Airtel launched 'Airtel India Startup Innovation Challenge'**

- Bharti Airtel and Invest India, National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency jointly launched 'Airtel India Startup Innovation Challenge' for Startups to develop solutions in 5G, IoT. Under the Startup Innovation Challenge, early-stage technology companies are being invited to demonstrate differentiated solutions in areas such as 5G, Cloud computing, the Internet of Things (IoT), and digital entertainment.

- The winners of the challenge will win Rs 3.5 lakh, first runner-up Rs 2.5 lakh and second start-up Rs 1 lakh. The top 10 start-ups will also be able to leverage Airtel's Digital Innovation Lab for three months. Select start-ups will be offered the opportunity to onboard onto the Airtel Startup Accelerator Program. The top 10 will also be given an Airtel Office Internet plan for a year.

#### **Federal Bank has joined hands with Star Health and Allied Insurance Co Ltd**

- Federal Bank has entered into a Bancassurance partnership with Star Health and Allied Insurance Co Ltd as a corporate agent to provide health insurance products for the Bank's 8.90 million customers across India. The Bank's customers can avail benefits of Star Health's retail products and group affinity products through the bank's various distribution channels which help the customers to address their complete financial needs under one roof.
- It is a partnership between a bank and an insurance company that would enable them to offer insurance products to the bank's customers.

#### **Paytm Payments Bank gets RBI nod for scheduled bank status**

- Paytm Payments Bank has been given the scheduled bank status by the Reserve Bank of India. The bank has been included in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 and the approval will help it to bring more financial services and products. The bank supports 33.3 crore Paytm Wallets and enables consumers to make payments at over 87,000 online merchants and 2.11 crore in-store merchants.
- The bank can explore new business opportunities, including participation in government and other large corporations issued requests for proposals, primary auctions, fixed-rate and variable rate repos, and reverse repos.
- Besides, it can participate in Marginal Standing Facility and will be eligible to partner in government-run financial inclusion schemes.
- The inclusion of Paytm Payments Bank in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, will help us innovate further and bring more financial services and products to the underserved and unserved population in India.

#### **Microsoft launches cybersecurity skilling programme in India; aims to train over 1 lakh people by 2022**

- Microsoft has launched a cybersecurity skilling program with the goal of training over 1 lakh learners by 2022 to address the skills gap and prepare India's workforce for a career in cybersecurity. The program is meant to give students hands-on experience with security, compliance, and identity fundamentals.
- Courses will be conducted by Microsoft in collaboration with its strategic partners Cloud that, Koenig, RPS, and Synergetics Learning.
- This tie-up is part of Microsoft's global skilling program, which aims to help 25 million individuals learn new digital skills throughout the world.
- In India, almost 3 million individuals have been trained through this project.

## **City Union Bank-NPCI launch 'RuPay On-the-Go' contactless wearable solution**

- City Union Bank (CUB), in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and its manufacturing partner Sessaasai, has announced the launch of RuPay On-the-Go contactless wearable keychain for its debit card customers. This contactless wearable keychain will be part of their daily lifestyle and enable customers to tap and make cashless payments securely.
- This On-the-Go solution allows the bank's customers to carry payment cards on their keychains, making for fast and convenient payments up to ₹5,000 at all Rupay-enabled point of sale devices (PoS) without entering a PIN.
- This would increase digital payment behaviour among customers, especially the younger generation and students, by enabling faster check out and less waiting in queue with features to set the spending limit, enable/disable usage through net banking, and CUB's All-in-One mobile app.

## **RBI Monetary Policy: Repo rate unchanged at 4% for the 9th consecutive time**

- The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das kept the repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent for the ninth consecutive time while maintaining an 'accommodative stance' as long as necessary. The reverse repo rate will continue to be 3.35 per cent. The central bank had last revised the policy rate on May 22, 2020, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting the interest rate to a historic low. The meeting was held between December (6 to 8). The remaining will take place in February (7 to 9, 2022).

## **PNB launches android app for differently-abled employees**

- Punjab National Bank (PNB) launched the PNB Pride-CRMD module tool, an android-based application for differently-abled employees to monitor and effectively follow up with the special mention account (SMA) borrowers. The Pride-CRMD module has built-in TalkBack software that allows the visually impaired to access the system freely and to interact with customers by tapping on their phones.
- Punjab National Bank emphasized the abilities of differently-abled staff members and the utilization of their skills in the conceptualization of PNB warriors and implementation of PNB Pride.

## **Goldman Sachs has estimated India's GDP growth at 9.1 per cent in 2022**

- Wall Street brokerage, Goldman Sachs has estimated India's GDP growth at 9.1 per cent in 2022. After India's economy contracted by a sharp 7 per cent in 2020, Goldman Sachs pegged the economy to grow at 8 per cent in 2021 and 9.1 per cent in 2022. It earlier estimated India's economic growth to 11.1 per cent in the fiscal year to March 31, 2022.

## **IDFC FIRST Bank debuts with India's first standalone metal debit card**

- IDFC FIRST Bank announced the launch of FIRST Private Infinite, the country's first-ever standalone metal debit card, in partnership with Visa. FIRST Private Infinite is a lifetime free card designed specifically for customers who are part of the Bank's FIRST Private program, premium savings and wealth offering. The FIRST Private program offers an unrivalled



banking and investment experience to customers and comes with a range of exceptional investment, banking, lifestyle and wellness benefits.

- IDFC FIRST Bank offers a comprehensive digital savings account solution that includes a seamless online account opening process, video KYC and a new-age digital platform for mobile and net banking with an easy-to-navigate user interface. The Bank's digital wealth management solutions are available to customers on the mobile app and net banking platform which offer unique features such as a 'Consolidated Investment Dashboard'.

#### **Gujarat has surpassed Maharashtra to become India's leading manufacturing hub**

- Gujarat has left behind Maharashtra to become the country's leading manufacturing hub, according to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Gujarat saw its Gross Value Addition (GVA) in manufacturing grow by 15.9 per cent annually between FY12 to FY20 to stand at Rs 5.11 lakh crore, data shows. GVA is an economic metric that measures the supply of goods and services in an economy.
- Meanwhile, Maharashtra's annual growth rate stood at nearly half of Gujarat's at 7.5 per cent for the same time period and its GVA for manufacturing stood at Rs 4.34 lakh crore in FY20. Maharashtra is still the leading provider of services in India, with the state's services GVA growing by 12.6 per cent annually, standing at Rs 15.1 lakh crore in FY20.

#### **ADB approved \$500-million loan to India to help improve the quality of school Education**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$500 million loan to the Government of India to help improve the quality of the country's school education and mitigate the impact of the Covid-19) pandemic on students' learning. The loan supports the Integrated Scheme for School Education (Samagra Shiksha) and the new Exemplar School Initiative of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to improve education quality by focussing on inclusive and equitable learning outcomes.
- About 1,800 government schools will be transformed into exemplar schools in Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand. Exemplar schools will demonstrate quality learning environments and effective learning, which will become a model for replication in other government schools across the country.

#### **S&P projected India's GDP growth forecast at 9.5% in FY22**

- S&P Global Ratings has retained the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast of India unchanged at 9.5 percent for the financial year 2021-22 (FY22) and 7.8 per cent for the year ending FY23. GDP growth projection of India was revised for FY 24 to 6 per cent from 5.7 percent estimated earlier. Rising inflation is a pressure point, unlike elsewhere in emerging Asia, but external demand continues to support growth, S&P noted.

#### **DBS revises India's FY2023 growth forecast by 100 bps to 7%**

- The Singapore-based DBS Bank's economic research team has revised India's FY23 growth forecast upwards to 7 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) (CY2022 6.5 per cent) from 6 per cent earlier. The DBS team assessed that into FY23, beyond the thrust from reopening gains, precautionary savings and sectoral normalisation to pre-pandemic levels, Capex generation is likely to be the next driver in raising and maintaining growth on a higher plane.

#### **RBI appoints three-member panel to advise Reliance Capital administrator**

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) superseded the Board of Directors of Reliance Capital Ltd (RCL), a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), by exercising its power conferred under Section 45-IE (1) of the RBI Act, 1934. RCL is promoted by Anil Dhirubhai Ambani's Reliance Group. In this regard, the apex bank has appointed Nageswar Rao Y (Ex-Executive Director, Bank of Maharashtra) as the Administrator of the company under Section 45-IE (2) of the RBI Act. The reason behind this is the defaults made by RCL for various debt obligations payments and serious governance concerns.
- The Central Bank will also apply to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for appointing the administrator as the Insolvency Resolution Professional. Reliance Capital will become the third non-banking financial company to go under the insolvency procedure after DHFL and Srei Group companies. A part of Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group, Reliance Capital has repeatedly failed to repay its debt obligations.

#### **India1 Payments deploys over 10,000 White Label ATMs**

- India1 Payments has crossed a milestone on deploying 10000 white-label ATMs, which was called as "India1ATMs". India1 Payments is IPO-bound and is promoted by the Banktech Group of Australia. It was formerly known as BTI Payments. India1 ATM has become the second-largest white label ATM brand on semi-urban and rural areas. With the deployment of 10000 ATMs, India1 Payments has become the largest player in this segment.
- The Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) which are set up, owned and operated by non-bank entities are known as "White Label ATMs" (WLAs). Non-bank entities which are incorporated in India, under the Companies Act 1956, are allowed to run WLAs. Non-bank entities are allowed to set up WLAs across India, after getting authorisation from the apex bank, under the Payment & Settlement Systems (PSS) Act, 2007.

#### **HSBC India launches recycled PVC plastic credit card**

- HSBC India has launched India's 1st credit card made from recycled PVC (Polyvinyl chloride) plastic. The cards have been introduced in partnership with global cards manufacturer IDEMIA to gradually eliminate single-use PVC plastic. The cards are made from 85 per cent recycled plastic and each card will save 3.18gm of plastic waste in addition to helping lower overall carbon emission.
- The card was launched as a part of a new program launched by HSBC Group to introduce sustainable cards across all its global locations to support its global commitments to sustainability and a net-zero in its operations by 2030.

#### **LIC gets RBI approval to hike stake in KMB to 9.9%**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given its approval to Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) to raise its stake in private lender Kotak Mahindra Bank to 9.99 per cent. Currently, LIC holds 4.96% stake in the private lender. Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited has received an intimation from LIC stating that the RBI had granted its approval to LIC, for increasing its holding in the Bank up to 9.99 per cent of the paid-up equity share capital of the Bank.

- The approval of the central bank will be valid for one year. As per RBI norms, prior approval of the RBI is required to increase the stake in private banks beyond 5 per cent.
- LIC is one of the biggest institutional investors in India's stock market and has a stake in a number of private and public sector banks. LIC has a stake in as many 24 scheduled commercial banks, data from Capitaline shows.

