

Weekly Current Affairs PDF February 07 to February 13, 2021

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INTERNATIONAL

Pakistan Army successfully test-fires Babur cruise missile

- The Pakistan Army conducted a successful test-firing of a short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Babar' on February 11, 2021. This test was the third missile test carried out over the past three weeks.
- The Babur cruise missile IA was launched from Multi Tube Missile Launch Vehicle.
- This missile is capable of hitting land and sea targets with "high precision" up to 450 kilometres away.
- Earlier, Pakistan army conducted a successful test of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile Shaheen-III in January 2021, followed by the 'training launch' of nuclear-capable ballistic missile Ghaznavi in February 2021.

NATIONAL

Odisha To Construct 'COVID Warrior Memorial' in Bhubaneswar

- In order to recognize the sacrifice and services rendered by the Covid warriors who lost their lives fighting the pandemic, the government has decided to construct a Covid Warrior Memorial in Odisha. The Biju Patnaik Park in Bhubaneswar has been selected for this purpose.
- Odisha Health and Family Welfare Department to the Works Department it was also said that the Works Department has been declared as the Nodal Department for construction of the Covid Warrior Memorial. They will engage an architect to finalise the design and structure of the said memorial and take approval from the competent authority.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates 'Jalabhishekam' campaign in Madhya Pradesh

- The state government of Madhya Pradesh has launched a water conservation campaign called 'Jalabhishekam', under which more than 57,000 water structures has been constructed. The campaign was inaugurated by the Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually.
- Water conservation work is being undertaken with public participation and will be helpful in achieving the goal of building self-reliant Madhya Pradesh.
- The Campaign will also fulfil the intention of 'water for every farm and work for every hand'.
- The water structures were created during COVID era by linking the work with the MNREGA scheme.
- These water structures cost over Rs. 2,000 crore and will irrigate 2.50 lakh hectares of land without submerging an inch of land.

ISRO opens satellite testing centre for private sector

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has opened its UR Rao Satellite Centre for testing

satellites developed by the private sector for the first time in its history. Two satellites, developed by the Indian startups SpaceKidz India and Pixxel (incorporated as Sygyzy) were tested at the UR Rao Satellite Centre.

- ISRO also helped these two companies in fixing problems with the solar panels on their respective satellites. So far in its history, the space agency has only taken help in manufacturing and fabrication of various parts of satellites and rockets from the Indian industry. Both these two companies will also test their engines at the Sriharikota spaceport and Thiruvananthapuram rocket centre in coming days.

IMPORTANT DAYS

National Productivity Day 2021

- National Productivity Day is observed every year in India on February 12. The objective of National Productivity Council is stimulating and promoting productivity and quality consciousness across all sectors in the country. The main observance of the day is to encourage all stakeholders in the implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant themes.
- The day is celebrated by the National Productivity Council (NPC) to promote productivity culture in India. National Productivity Council (NPC) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India is a premier institution for propagating productivity movement in India. NPC works for providing solutions towards accelerating productivity, enhancing competitiveness, increasing productivity.

World Radio Day: 13 February

- World Radio Day is celebrated on 13 February each year to recognize radio as a powerful medium, which brings people together from every corner of the globe, to promote diversity and help build a more peaceful and inclusive world.
- The theme of World Radio Day 2021 is “New World, New Radio”.
- On the occasion of World Radio Day 2021 (WRD 2021), UNESCO calls on radio stations to celebrate this event’s 10th anniversary and the more than 110 years of radio through three sub-themes.
- Evolution: The world changes, radio evolves – radio is resilient and sustainable;
- Innovation: The world changes, radio adapts and innovates- radio adapts to new technologies and remains the go-to medium of mobility, accessible everywhere and to everyone;
- Connection: The world changes, radio connects – radio services our society during natural disasters, socio-economic crises, epidemics, etc.

National Women’s Day of India 2021

- In India, the National Women’s Day is observed every year on 13 February to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu. This year Nation celebrates its 142nd Birth Anniversary. She was born on February 13, 1879. She was famous for her nickname ‘Nightingale of India’ or ‘Bharat Kokila’ because of her poems.
- Sarojini Naidu was not only a freedom fighter, but she also became the first woman governor of

the United Provinces, the present Uttar Pradesh. She was one of the forefront leaders who led the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement. She was an important figure in India's struggle for independence from colonial rule.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas' memoir named 'Unfinished'

- Actor-producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas officially turned author with the release of her first book, "Unfinished: A Memoir", which she described as "honest, raw and vulnerable". The end result is a book, published by the Michael Joseph imprint, which covers her dual-continent 20-year-long career as an actor and producer and her work as a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador.
- The memoir promises to offer insights into Priyanka Chopra Jonas' childhood in India, her formative teenage years in the US. Her return to India resulted in the newcomer to the pageant world, against all odds, winning the national and international beauty competitions – Miss India and Miss World – that launched her global acting career.

Jual Oram launches book on economic awareness in India

- Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Defence and MP Jual Oram has launched 'Turn Around India: 2020- Surmounting Past Legacy', a book on creating economic awareness among masses. The book is authored by RP Gupta.
- 'Turn Around India: 2020' is an intimate narrative of Gupta's experiences and how he attained success through sheer hard work and determination. The book provides a practical and viable option for reviving Indian economy for creating new jobs and enlarging public income and also, the structural reforms such as fiscal and monetary stimuli for overcoming economic crisis arising due to pandemic. The book talks about the economic history of India enabling to identify the strengths and weakness and take corrective actions.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

World Bank Signs \$100 million Project with Chhattisgarh

- Indian Govt and Chhattisgarh Govt has signed a \$100 million for CHIRAAG (Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth) project with the World bank. The main purpose is to develop sustainable production systems that allow tribal households in remote areas of Chhattisgarh to practice round-the-year production of diversified and nutritious food.
- The project will be implemented in the southern tribal-majority region of the state where a large population is undernourished and poor. Over 180,000 households from about 1,000 villages in eight districts of Chhattisgarh, will be benefited from this project.

Exim Bank to provide USD 400 mn funding for Maldives

- The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) will provide USD 400 million to the Maldives through Line of Credit (LoC) to fund the Greater Male Connectivity Project. The agreement under the LoC will be effective from January 28, 2021.
- The 6.7 km Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) will be the largest civilian infrastructure project in the Maldives, connecting Male with three neighbouring islands – Villingili, Gulhifahu

and Thilafushi. The Government of India will be funding the implementation of a major connectivity project in the Maldives through a USD 400 million lines of credit and USD 100 million grant.

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NATIONAL

Manasa Varanasi crowned VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020

- Telangana-based Manasa Varanasi has been crowned as the winner of VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020. Manasa Varanasi was crowned by the winner of Miss India 2019, Suman Ratan Singh Rao from Rajasthan.
- The 23-year-old will now represent India at the 70th Miss World pageant in December 2021. Born in Hyderabad, Manasa Varanasi is an engineer by profession and works as a financial information exchange analyst.

PM Modi inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 through video conferencing. The theme of the Summit is 'Redefining our common future: Safe and secure environment for all'. 2021 WSD Summit is the 20th edition of the flagship event organised by 'The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)'.
- The Summit will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth, and the civil society in the fight against climate change. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the Summit.

Vijayanagara officially declared as 31st District of Karnataka

- The Karnataka government issued an official gazette notification to declare Vijayanagara as the 31st district of the state. The new district has been carved out of Ballari and named after the Vijayanagara empire that ruled from this region.
- The Vijayanagara district will have six taluks and its headquarter will be at Hosapete. The other taluks in the new district are Kudligi, Hagaribommana Halli, Kotturu, Hoovina Hadagali, and Harapanahalli. The iconic cluster of monuments at Hampi or Hampe, a UNESCO world heritage site, will be part of the Vijayanagara.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

UAE Hope Probe successfully enters Mars' orbit

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has put a probe called Hope in the orbit around the MARS. UAE has become the fifth country to launch the spacecraft into the orbit of MARS after United States, Soviet Union, Europe and India. With the successful launch of spacecraft in orbit, UAE scientists can now study the planet's atmosphere.
- The space mission will carry the study on daily and seasonal weather cycles and weather events

such as dust storm in the lower atmosphere. It will study how the weather varies in different regions on the MARS.

- The spacecraft had left the Earth seven months ago.
- The spacecraft carries three instruments with it to observe how neutral atoms of Oxygen and Hydrogen leak into space. The hydrogen and oxygen came into the MARS' atmosphere are the remnants from Mars' once abundant water.
- The Hope spacecraft will bring the spectacular, high-resolution, full-disk images of MARS.
- The spacecraft also seeks to study why the planet is losing the hydrogen and oxygen into space.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Epilepsy Day 2021

- The International Epilepsy Day is observed on the second Monday of February every year across the world. In 2021, the International Epilepsy Day was observed on February 08.
- The day is organised jointly by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) to raise awareness about epilepsy and highlight the kinds of problems faced by victims, their friends and family. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder which makes a person go through sudden and recurrent episodes of sensory disturbances.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Koozhangal" Wins Tiger Award at Rotterdam International Film Festival 2021

- The Tamil film "Koozhangal" has won "Tiger" award, at the 50th edition of the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2021. The Tiger award is the top honour of the festival, given for best film. Koozhangal (meaning Pebbles) has been Produced by Nayanthara and directed by Vinod Raj PS.
- This is the second Indian film to win this international award and the first Tamil Film. The first Indian film was "Durga" directed by the Malayalam director Shashidharan. The Tiger Award worth Euro 40,000 cash prize, is shared between the director and producer of the winning film.

Bengaluru Airport Bags ACI World's 'Voice Of The Customer' Award

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BANKING AND ECONOMY

New Development Bank Commits \$100 million in NIIF Fund of Funds

- The New Development Bank (NDB) has committed to invest USD 100 million (Rs 727.6 crore), into the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIF) Fund of Funds (FoF). With NDB's investment, the total commitments secured by the FoF has reached \$800 million (about Rs 5,820 crore). This investment marks NDB's first equity investment into India and its first-ever investment into a Fund of Funds.

- Currently, the Government of India (GoI), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are the investor in the FoF. Now NDB has joined the group. The FoF was established in 2018 with the objective of providing homegrown Indian private equity fund managers access to an India-focused institutional investor that operates at scale.
- The Investments will hugely benefit the Indian economy which is facing difficulties due to pandemic.
- It will also support India's efforts to boost investment in infrastructure.
- NDB's support will further address issues like investment gaps, availability of institutional funding for domestic private equity funds.

PhonePe partners with Axis Bank on UPI multi-bank model

- Digital payments platform, PhonePe has announced that it has partnered with Axis Bank on a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) multi-bank model. The partnership will provide PhonePe users with the option to create and use multiple UPI IDs with Axis Bank's "@axi" handle.
- This collaboration with PhonePe strengthens our commitment towards digitisation of the Indian payment ecosystem. It will help expand our reach to customers and the merchant community while offering secure and seamless payment experiences.
- PhonePe had emerged as the top UPI app in January, processing 968.72 million transactions worth ₹1.92 trillion, according to data by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). PhonePe will also start acquiring merchants with Axis Bank in addition to its partnership with YES Bank. It will help expand our reach to customers and the merchant community while offering secure and seamless payment experiences.

RBI to conduct bond purchases for Rs 20,000 crore

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that it will purchase four government securities (G-Secs) that amount to ₹20,000 crores. The central bank will purchase it on February 10, 2021, under the open market operations (OMOs). This move was announced in aftermath of the yields that were moving up to touch the intra-day high of 6.1634 per cent recently. The RBI was concerned about the higher government borrowing.
- After the announcement of the OMO purchase was made, the yield on the benchmark 10-year G-Sec slowed down by 3-4 basis points. It now carries a coupon rate of 5.77 per cent as opposed to its previous closing yield of 6.1283 per cent.
- Open Market Operations are the purchase and sale of the Government securities (G-Secs) by RBI from and to the market. The Open Market Operations are conducted with the objective of adjusting the rupee liquidity conditions in the economy. In such operations, when RBI sells the government security in the market banks use to purchase them. When the banks purchase the Government securities, their ability to lend money to the industries, households and other commercial sector gets reduced. Following the reduced surplus cash, the liquidity of the rupee also contracts. This results in contraction of the credit creation or the credit supply. On the other hand, when the RBI purchases the securities, commercial banks find gets surplus cash and this in turn creates more credit in the system.

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NATIONAL

Indian Army lays foundation of 100-foot-high national flag in Gulmarg

- The Indian Army has laid the foundation stone of the tallest 'Iconic National Flag' at the famous ski-resort of Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir. The flag will be on a 100 feet-high pole, the highest Tricolour in the Valley. The Indian Army in collaboration with the Solar Industry India will install the 'Iconic National Flag' at Gulmarg.
- The foundation stone for the iconic national flag was laid by Dagger Division General Officer Commanding (GoC) Major General Virendra Vats along with Bollywood actor-producer Arbaaz Khan and actress Vidya Balan. This iconic Indian national flag will be a first in many ways. The site is expected to become another tourist attraction, among the snow-clad mountains of Kashmir.

Delhi Cabinet Approves 'Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha' Scheme

- The Delhi cabinet has approved "Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha" in which Rs 5,000 will be provided to 1,000 meritorious students of Class 9 in schools of Delhi as a science scholarship. The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level.
- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal termed this as a crucial step for our government to promote excellent and talented students. Delhi government seeks to promote the pursuit of excellence and scientific temper among the children.
- According to the release, the students studying in Delhi schools who have secured more than 60 per cent in Class 8 are eligible for the examination. Students belonging to SC, ST, PH, or OBC category will be given a relaxation of up to 5 per cent of marks.

Tamil Nadu set to create state's 5th tiger reserve

- The Central government has given its approval for the creation of a fifth tiger reserve in Tamil Nadu that will encompass the Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuaries. It will be the 51st Tiger Sanctuary of India.
- The Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve will span the forests of Megamalai wildlife sanctuary and Srivilliputhur grizzled squirrel wildlife sanctuary spread across the districts of Theni, Virudhunagar and Madurai. The 100,000-hectare area is home to a range of mammals and bird species and more than a dozen tigers. Forest officials have noticed 14 tigers regularly in both the wildlife sanctuaries.

India's 1st Thunderstorm Research Testbed to be established in Odisha

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced to set up the first 'Thunderstorm Research Testbed' of the country at Odisha's Balasore district. The main objective of the "Thunderstorm Research Testbed" is to minimise human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.
- The facility will be established in a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research

Organisation (ISRO). Besides this, the IMD has also planned to set up a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed near Bhopal. Currently, both the projects are in the planning stage and detailed project reports are being made.

National Horticulture Fair 2021 begins

- The Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Kailash Choudhry has inaugurated the National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021 on February 08, 2021, in Bengaluru via virtual mode. The five-day-long event has been organised by the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), from February 8 to February 12 at its IIHR campus situated in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru.
- The theme of NHF 2021 is 'Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India'.
- For the first time, the event is being held in hybrid mode, i.e., the participants are allowed to attend the event online as well as offline. The NHF will showcase cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices and processing methods among others. The IIHR is a subsidiary of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR).

SPORTS

Ishant Sharma becomes third Indian pacer to take 300 Test wickets

- Indian fast bowler Ishant Sharma became the sixth Indian and third pacer from the country to take 300 wickets in Test cricket. The 32-year-old Ishant reached the milestone in 98 matches, more than the other Indian bowlers in the club. Ishant reached the landmark when he trapped Dan Lawrence with a delivery that swung back sharply before hitting his pads in England's second innings on the fourth day of the opening Test.
- Besides Anil Kumble (619) and Kapil Dev (434), Ravichandran Ashwin (377 before this game), Harbhajan Singh (417), and Zaheer Khan (311) are the other bowlers from the country who have reached the landmark.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

- International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed globally on 11 February. International Day of Women and Girls in Science to recognize the critical role of women and girls play in science and technology. In December 2015, the United Nations adopted a resolution to celebrate February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. The Day is implemented by UNESCO and UN-Women in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners that aim to promote women and girls in science.
- The 2021 theme of the Day is "Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against C-19".
- In 2016 is the first time it was celebrated. The idea behind this day is to ensure equal participation and involvement of women and girls in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

World Unani Day: 11 February

- World Unani Day has observed every year on 11th February. The main objective of World Unani

Day is to spread awareness about health care delivery through the Unani system of medicine through its preventive and curative philosophy. This day is celebrated every year to mark the birth anniversary of great Unani scholar and social reformer Hakim Ajmal Khan. The first Unani Day was celebrated in 2017 at Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad.

- The Unani system of medicine has a long and impressive record in India. It was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians sometime around the eleventh century.
- It has the largest number of Unani educational, research and health care institutions.
- The Unani system of medicine originated in Greece. Its foundation was laid by Hippocrates.
- The system owes its present form to the Arabs who not only saved much of the Greek literature by rendering it into Arabic but also enriched the medicine of their day with their own contributions.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Robert Irwin wins Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2021

- Robert Irwin, an Australian wildlife photographer, has won the first prize in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award Contest. Robert won the award for the image titled 'bushfire', which is the picture of the devastating Australian Bushfire in 2020, he captured using a drone, near the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York, Queensland. The image shows a line of fire burning in between the bushes, dividing it into parts.
- Irwin's image was chosen from a shortlist of 25 finalists that received a total of 55,486 votes. The Wildlife Photographer of the Year is the largest wildlife photography competition in the world, organised by the Natural History Museum.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life' authored by M Hamid Ansari

- A book titled 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life' has been authored by M Hamid Ansari. Mohammad Hamid Ansari was the vice president of India and chairman of the Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2017. A former diplomat, he served as ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, as high commissioner to Australia and as permanent representative to the United Nations in New York.
- The book is an account of a life of unplanned happenings that took M. Hamid Ansari away from his preferred fancy for academia to professional diplomacy and then be co-opted in public life and catapulted to the second-highest office in the land for two consecutive terms. None of his predecessors, except Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, had experienced this honour.
- Besides chairing the Rajya Sabha and shedding interesting light on some of its functional aspects, Ansari used the vice presidency as a formidable pulpit to express himself candidly on a range of issues at different times in India's changing political landscape.
- Their overarching theme was the need for modern India to re-commit itself to the constitutional principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, to the values of a composite culture, and for correctives in polity relating to identity, security and empowerment of the weaker segments of our society.

“Platform Scale: For a Post-Pandemic World” authored by Sangeet Paul Choudhary

- A Book titled ‘Platform Scale: For a Post-Pandemic World’ has been authored by Sangeet Paul Choudhary. It is published by Penguin Random House India. It explains the importance of inner workings of platform business models and their ability to scale rapidly. The 1st edition of Platform Scale was published in 2015.
- The book tells how the decade leading up to the C-19 pandemic witnessed the rise of platform business models as they drove stock market gains and extended their influence across the economic and political activity.

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NATIONAL

First Women Team Inducted in CRPF’s CoBRA Commando Unit

- A maiden contingent of 34 CRPF women personnel has been inducted into its specialized jungle warfare commando force CoBRA. The contingent will soon be deployed in the anti-Naxal operations grid of the country. This women’s contingent will undergo pre-induction training for 3 months and then deployed with the units in Naxal violence-affected districts of Chhattisgarh like Dantewada, Sukma, and Bijapur. The members of the 34 CRPF women personnel contingent have been chosen from the 6 all-women battalions of CRPF.
- The first battalion of CRPF numbered 88, was raised this day in 1986 at a CRPF base in Delhi. An all-women brass band of CRPF was also commissioned during the ceremony that was held to mark the 35th Raising Day anniversary of the first women’s battalion of CRPF.

14th International Children’s Film festival concludes in Bangladesh

- The 14th International Children’s Film Festival of Bangladesh (ICFFB) came to an end in Dhaka. A total of 12 awards were presented to the winners at the concluding ceremony. 179 films from 37 countries were shown at various venues during the 7-day long festival organised by the Children’s Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh.
- Apart from Bangladesh, films from India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China among others were shown in the course of the festival. Dutch Film Jackie and Oopjen were awarded the Best International Feature Film Award. Bangladeshi film Maati got The Young Talent Award while Lottery won the Special mention under the Young Talent Award.

Madhya Pradesh launches ‘SAANS’ campaign to reduce infant mortality

- The health department in Madhya Pradesh has launched the Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (‘SAANS’) campaign. The main purpose of the campaign is to reduce the death rate due to pneumonia among infants a strategy is being chalked out under the Social awareness campaign in which medical staff is being trained.
- Training will be imparted at the community and primary health centres.
- Around 4,000 Health and Wellness Centres have been set up in Madhya Pradesh for this purpose.

- The State government has also developed training modules in partnership with PGIMER, Chandigarh, and UNICEF, which will be used to enhance the skills of health workers, including doctors and paramedical staff.

ONGC to establish India's first geothermal field development project in Ladakh

- India's first-ever geothermal power project will be implemented by state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) at Puga village of eastern Ladakh. The project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project, will be implemented in three phases and is planned to commission by the end of 2022.
- A tripartite agreement for this historic geothermal project was signed between Union Territory Administration Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)-Leh and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Energy Centre on February 08, 2021.
- Energy from the project will be used for giving round-the-clock power supplies to neighbouring villages.
- Hot Water from the springs will be used for space-heating
- Constructing hot swimming pools to attract tourists
- The development of geothermal potential will be useful during winter months, as Ladakh's hydropower stations are shut or work at lower efficiencies due to low flow rates.

Ramnath Kovind Inaugurates Museum Dedicated to General KS Thimayya

- President Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated a museum, dedicated to the life of former Army Chief General Kodandera Subayya Thimayya, in Karnataka. General Thimayya served as the Chief of Army Staff from 1957 to 1961. The ancestral house of General Thimayya called "Sunny Side" at Madikeri in Kodagu district of Karnataka has been renovated and converted into a museum.
- A museum celebrating the life of former Army Chief General Kodandera Subayya Thimayya, housing a variety of antique weaponry and war relics.
- A statue of the General from Kodagu in uniform greets as one enters the museum, which also showcases a slice of Indian military history.
- The museum also acknowledges the contribution of General Thimayya's siblings, including two of his brothers, who too were Army officers, and his wife Nina, who was bestowed with "Kaiser-e-Hind" award in recognition of her work in public service.
- Key attractions on the premises of this war memorial include a battle tank, one of those used by the Army during the war with Pakistan in 1971.

Defence Ministry inks pact with BEL to procure ship-borne modern radio system

- The defence ministry has signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to procure a software-defined radio tactical (SDR-Tac) ship-borne system worth over Rs 1,000 crore. The procurement of SDR-Tac (software-defined radio tactical) "will bring strategic depth to the armed forces.
- The SDR-Tac is a four-channel multi-mode, multi-band, 19-inch rack-mountable, ship-borne software-defined radio system to serve ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and ship-to-air voice and data communication for network-centric operations.

OBITUARY

Bollywood actor Rajiv Kapoor passes away

- Bollywood actor and Raj Kapoor's son Rajiv Kapoor passed away. He made his acting debut with 1983 movie Ek Jaan Hain Hum. He gained recognition with his father's last directorial Ram Teri Ganga Maili (1985). Some of his other memorable films include Aasmaan (1984), Lover Boy (1985), Zabardast (1985) and Hum To Chale Pardes (1988). But soon Rajiv also addressed as Chimpu, moved to film direction and production.
- In 1996, Rajiv directed Prem Granth which featured his elder brother Rishi Kapoor in the lead role along with Madhuri Dixit. He ventured into production with brother Randhir Kapoor's directorial Henna in 1991 and also produced Aa Ab Laut Chalen (1999).

Founder of Rang Vidushak, Padma Shri Bansi Kaul Passed away

- Founder of Rang Vidushak and theatre director Padma Shri Bansi Kaul passed away. He was born in 1949 in a Kashmiri Pandit family, Bansi Kaul was a Hindi theatre director and the founder of Rang Vidushak, a theatre group and theatre institute in Bhopal.
- He was awarded Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1995 and Padma Shri in 2014. He received Rashtriya Kalidas Samman for the year 2016–17.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Pulses Day: 10 February

- The United Nations designated World Pulses Day is observed every year on 10 February. The day has been established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to recognize the importance of pulses (dry beans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, lupins) as a global food.
- The theme, "Nutritious Seeds for a Sustainable Future," was decided back in 2016 when the year was nominated to be celebrated as International Year of Pulses. Since then, the theme has remained the same from 2019 to 2021.
- In 2018, the UN General Assembly decided to mark 10 February as World Pulses Day. The first WPD was held on February 10, 2019. On 20 December 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/68/231) proclaiming 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP). The celebration of the year, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), increased the public awareness of the nutritional and environmental benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

India and Afghanistan Inks MoU for the construction of the Lalandar "Shatoot" Dam

- India and Afghanistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding MoU over video-conferencing (VTC), for the construction of the Shahtoot Dam (Lalander Dam) on a tributary of the Kabul river in Afghanistan. The project, which costs nearly \$ 300 million, is a part of the New Development Partnership between India and Afghanistan.
- The MoU was signed between External Affairs Minister Dr Jaishankar and Afghanistan Foreign

Minister Mr Hanif Atmar, in the presence of Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Afghanistan President Dr Mohammad Ashraf Ghani.

- The Lalander [Shatoot] Dam would meet the safe drinking water needs of Kabul City, provide irrigation water to nearby areas, rehabilitate the existing irrigation and drainage network, aid in flood protection and management efforts in the area, and also provide electricity to the region.
- This is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the India- Afghanistan Friendship Dam [Salma Dam], which was inaugurated in June 2016.

Skyroot, Bellatrix signs MoU to use latter's orbital transfer vehicle

- Skyroot Aerospace has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bellatrix Aerospace to make use the Orbital Transfer Vehicle, being developed by Bellatrix Aerospace, in the upper stage of Vikram series of launch vehicles, being developed by Skyroot. The vehicle is expected to launch to low earth orbit in 2023 on the Vikram rocket. The vehicle is expected to help global operators reduce time and costs for launching communication and earth observation satellites.
- It is a spacecraft that can perform various in-orbit operations such deployment of customer payload to precise orbits, allowing a launch vehicle to deliver satellites to more orbits than what was conventionally possible.
- In simple words, OTV is like a 'taxi in space' to take small satellites into their operational orbits.
- OTV will offer ride-sharing for small satellites and drop each one of the passengers to their intended slots in space.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

FSSAI caps trans fatty acids to 2% in food products from January 2022

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has restricted the permissible amount of industrial Trans Fatty Acid (TFA) in food products to 2 per cent. The latest amendment will come into effect from January 01, 2022. Currently, the permissible limit for trans fats in food products in 2021 is 3 per cent, cut down from the previous limit of 5 per cent.
- FSSAI has amended the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations, 2011 to put into effect the new Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2021.
- As per the new rule, the food products in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient shall not contain industrial trans fatty acids more than 2% by mass of the total oils/fats present in the product, starting from January 01, 2022.
- Trans fat regulation, that aims to limit the amount of "trans fat", fat-containing trans fatty acids — in industrial food products, has been enacted in many countries.
- These regulations were motivated by numerous studies that pointed to significant negative health effects of trans fat.
- Trans fats are associated with increased risk of heart attacks and death from coronary heart disease.

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INTERNATIONAL

Nigeria's Okonjo-Iweala set to become first female Chief of WTO

- Nigerian economist Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has been chosen as the next Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). She would be the first woman as well as the first African nation to lead the organization.
- Okonjo-Iweala, the former finance minister of Nigeria, will succeed Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down in August 2020.

NATIONAL

Film Karavan 'Bandra Film Festival'

- Online content distribution company FilmKaravan has collaborated with YouTube to launch 'Bandra Film Festival', a digital film festival, later this month with a slate of over 50 films from filmmakers across the country and across multiple genres, languages and formats.
- The festival is aimed at helping filmmakers reach large audiences virtually, while providing film aficionados with access to these films. The Bandra Film Festival will also allow viewers to donate funds to support the films and filmmakers of their choice.
- All donations will go towards supporting the chosen film and filmmakers, who are going through these challenging times.

Four more states complete 'Ease of Doing Business' Reforms

- As per the recent data by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), four more states have completed the reforms in the 'Ease of Doing Business', as stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. The four states are- Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. These states have become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources to the tune of Rs 5,034 crore through open market borrowings.
- Now the total number of state that has undertaken the reforms to promote Ease of Doing Business till now has gone up to 12. The other states are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

Reforms of 'Ease of Doing Business'

- Altogether, these twelve states have been granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 28,183 crore.
- In May 2020, the central government had announced to link grant of additional borrowing permissions to states who undertake the reforms in four citizen-centric sectors to facilitate ease of doing business.
- The four citizen-centric areas for reforms identified were -implementation of one nation one ration card system, ease of doing business reform, urban local body/ utility reforms and power sector reforms.

16th India-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 20' commenced

- The India-US joint military exercise "Yudh Abhyas 20" commenced in Mahajan Field Firing Range of Bikaner district in Rajasthan. This is the 16th edition of an annual bilateral joint exercise of both the armies. It will continue till the 21st of this month.
- The previous version of the joint exercise was held at Seattle in the United States. This exercise is another step in the growing military cooperation between the two countries, which shows the growth in Indo-US relations. It is also a sign that both India and the US understand the threat of terrorism and are standing shoulder to shoulder in combating the same.
- About 250 US and 250 Indian army soldiers are participating in the exercise. Both the armies will share their war-related techniques, skills and experience with each other during this exercise. The exercise is one of the largest military training and defence cooperation efforts between India and the United States.

SPORTS

Rishabh Pant wins inaugural ICC Player of the Month January 2021

- The Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has won the inaugural ICC Player of the Month award 2021. Pant has been honoured for his superlative performances in the two Tests against Australia in January 2021, wherein he scored a 97 at Sydney and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane, leading India to an incredible series win.
- Apart from this, Shabnim Ismail of South Africa has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month following her performances across three ODIs and two T20Is in January 2021. A fast bowler, Ismail took seven wickets in ODI series against Pakistan to gain victory and five wickets in the second T20 International against the same opposition.

Steve Smith claims Allan Border Medal for third time in his career

- Former Australian captain Steve Smith won the third Allan Border Medal of his career at the Australian Cricket Awards for the period 2020-21. The Allan Border Medal recognises the most outstanding male Australian cricketer of the past season as voted by his peers, the media and umpires.
- Apart from this, Beth Mooney bagged Belinda Clarke Award, the top honour for a female player at the Australian Cricket Awards. This is the maiden Belinda Clarke Award for Mooney.

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

- Joe Root, the England captain, sent India on a leather hunt, becoming the first player in history to score a double century in his 100th Test match. In the process, Root also surpassed former Pakistan captain Inzamam-Ul-Haq as the player with the highest individual score playing the

100th Test match of his career.

- Inzamam had hit 184 against India in a Test match in Bengaluru in 2005, which Pakistan had won by 168 runs.

OBITUARY

Indian tennis great Akhtar Ali passes away

- Tennis legend Akhtar Ali, a father figure in Indian tennis, passed away. He represented India in eight Davis Cup ties against Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran, Mexico, Japan and Monaco between 1958 and 1964.
- Born on July 5, 1939, Akhtar made his mark in 1955 when he became the National junior champion and reached the junior Wimbledon semifinals. He played alongside stalwarts like Ramanathan Krishnan, Naresh Kumar, Premjit Lall and Jaidip Mukerjea. Akhtar, who was groomed by former Australian Davis Cup coach Harry Hopman, also played in the Wimbledon and French Open grand slam events. He was the winner of the Asian mixed doubles championship. His last ATP tour outing was against Vijay Amritraj in a clay court match in Bombay on November 11, 1974.

Oscar-winning Canadian actor Christopher Plummer passes away

- Oscar-winning actor Christopher Plummer, who rose to prominence for his critically-acclaimed film 'Sound of Music', has passed away. He won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor at the age of 82 for Beginners (2010), becoming the oldest person to win an acting award.
- The prolific and versatile Canadian-born actor has received various awards for his work, which includes Academy Award, two Primetime Emmy Awards, two Tony Awards, a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and a British Academy Film Award.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Maersk appoints vikash Agarwal as new MD for South Asia,

- Integrated container logistics firm Maersk has appointed Vikash Agarwal as its new Managing Director for South Asia, according to a company release on Monday.
- Agarwal, who moves to Maersk from CEVA Logistics, will join the company on March 1 and work closely with Steve Felder who will step down at the end of March to explore new opportunities within AP Moller – Maersk, it said.
- He will take full charge of the business for the company in South Asia, covering India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives, from April 1.

Michael Bloomberg Re-Appointed as United Nations Climate Envoy

- The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres re-appointed Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions. Bloomberg is the founder and owner of

Bloomberg LP, the parent company of Bloomberg News. He was previously appointed as the U.N. special envoy for climate action between March 2018 and November 2019.

- Bloomberg will work to strengthen the group of governments, companies, cities and financial institutions that are working to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. He would also work to mobilise stronger and more ambitious climate action in the lead-up to 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference in Scotland in November 2021.

Google Cloud appoints Bikram Singh Bedi as MD for India

- Google Cloud has appointed Bikram Singh Bedi as the new Managing Director for its India Business. He will succeed Karan Bajwa, who has been elevated as Vice president for the Asia Pacific (APAC) region cloud operations at Google Cloud. At Google, Bikram Bedi will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams in this dynamic market.
- Google Cloud is also on track to launch its Delhi cloud region in India this year – its second after Mumbai that was launched in 2017.
- Bedi, a senior leader with more than 26 years of leadership experience, will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams in this dynamic market. He joined Google Cloud from Indian online grocery delivery startup, Grofers where he served as President Strategy and New Initiatives. Prior to that, he set up the AWS business in India and was the head of India and South Asia for six years. He also held various leadership positions at IBM and Oracle.

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INTERNATIONAL

Indonesia approves China's Sinovac vaccine for the elderly

- Indonesia has approved Sinovac Biotech's C-19 vaccine for use in the elderly, a letter from the food and drug agency shows, potentially changing the country's strategy which has prioritised its working population first.
- The food and drug agency (BPOM) said in a letter seen by Reuters that it had authorised the use of Sinovac's CoronaVac for the elderly "taking into account the emergency situation of the C-19 pandemic and the limited information on the benefits and safety of that vaccine".
- It was sent to Sinovac's Indonesian partner, state-owned Bio Farma.

South Korea to Build World's Largest Offshore Wind Farm

- President Moon Jae-in-led, South Korea Government has approved a plan to build the world's largest wind power plant in the country by 2030. Currently, the world's largest offshore wind farm is Hornsea 1 in Britain, which has 1.12 GW capacity.
- The project will help to foster an environmentally-friendly recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and fasten the step to achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.
- The estimated cost of the project is 48.5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion).
- The Windpower Plant will be located in the southwestern coastal town of Sinan. It will have a

maximum capacity of 8.2 gigawatts.

NATIONAL

PM Modi launches Asom Mala in Assam's Sonitpur district

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to visit Assam and West Bengal today, launched the 'Asom Mala' programme in Dhekiajuli of Sonitpur district. As per the PMO, this initiative will boost the state's road infrastructure and contribute to Assam's economic progress and improve connectivity.
- Taking to Twitter, PM Modi wrote earlier, "I will be among the people of Assam tomorrow. At a programme in Dhekiajuli, Sonitpur district, the 'Asom Mala' programme will be launched, which will boost the state's road infrastructure. This initiative will contribute to Assam's economic progress and improve connectivity."

Aakashvani Sangeet Sammelan renamed

- All India Radio, besides its regular music broadcasts, has endeared itself to its classical music listeners by organizing the Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan, in which prominent artistes from across the country perform.
- Speaking on the occasion, Shri Javadekar said "Doordarshan and All India Radio have opened the doors of huge musical treasure of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi to the general public. These recordings are now available on YouTube and the Ministry of I&B is making efforts to reach them to larger audience across the country.
- "Music has many forms and it has power to motivate us. Arya Sangeet Prasarak Mandal could function for 67 years without break because of the blessings of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi. Pandit ji was dear to one and all. The way he performed for shows in foreign countries similarly he performed for people of all the strata of life", reminisced Shri Javadekar on this occasion.
- Pandit Bhimsen Joshi was conferred the Bharat Ratna award in 2009.

Govt allocates ₹16000 crore for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for 2021-22

- Union government has allocated ₹16,000 crores for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) for the fiscal year 2021-22 to boost the safety of farmers' crops and to ensure that maximum benefit of crop insurance reaches farmers.
- "This is a budgetary increase of around ₹305 crore as against the previous fiscal year 2020-21, which reiterates the government's commitment towards the growth of agriculture sector in the country," the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare said in a press statement.

UP govt announces 16-digit Unicode to identify landholdings

- The Uttar Pradesh government has introduced a system of issuing a unique 16-digit Unicode to mark all kinds of landholdings in the state, an official said on Sunday. Every piece of land in the state will have its own unique identity from now onwards that would check cases of land disputes and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters.
- The revenue department will be issuing the Unicode for marking all kinds of agricultural, residential and commercial land and a person will now be able to know the details of the land

with a single click.

- The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the first six digits based on the population of the land, the next 4 digits determining the unique identity of the land. The digits from 11 to 14 will be the number of the division of the land. The last 2 digits will have the details of the category, through which, the agricultural, residential and commercial land will be identified.

Uttarakhand Chamoli glacier burst

- The glacier burst took place at the Rishiganga power project after a portion of Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Tapovan area of Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district on 7th February morning and damaged the Rishiganga dam on Alaknanda river.
- National Thermal Power Corporation's (NTPC) Tapovan Vishnugad project on Dhauliganga river and Rishi Ganga Power Corporation Ltd's project, with a planned capacity of 520 MW and 13.2 MW, respectively, have been nearly washed away.
- Many villages were evacuated as floods swept away five bridges, damaged homes and the nearby NTPC power plant, and washed away a small hydropower project near Rishiganga. National and state disaster response teams have been deployed, as have teams from the ITBP. The Army has sent six columns and the Navy seven diving teams.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NASA Selects SpaceX to launch its SPHEREx Mission

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has selected spaceflight company, SpaceX to launch its SPHEREx Mission. Through this mission, NASA aims to perform an all-sky survey to measure the near-infrared spectra of approximately 450 million galaxies across the universe and 100 million stars inside our Milky Way galaxy.
- The SPHEREx or the Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer (SPHEREx) spacecraft.
- The small astrophysics spacecraft, SPHEREx, weighs 329-lb. (178 kilograms).
- It will be launched to space aboard SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket, in June 2024, from Space Launch Complex 4E at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Square Kilometre Array Observatory launched

- The newly constituted Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council has approved for the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope. The telescope will enable astronomers to monitor the sky in unprecedented detail and survey the entire sky much faster than any system currently in existence. To look into some of the unexplored areas of the universe and seek answers about its history and evolution, study fundamental physics in extreme environments and know about galaxies over cosmic time.

Radio telescopes

- Radio telescopes, unlike optical telescopes, can detect invisible gas and can reveal areas of space that may be obscured by cosmic dust.
- The SKAO telescope will be an array of antennas located in two continents, i.e. Africa and Australia.

- The operation, maintenance and construction of the telescope will be overseen by SKAO.
- The development of the telescope is expected to take nearly a decade at a cost of over £1.8 billion.

SKAO

- SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy.
- The headquartered of SKAO is based in the United Kingdom
- Currently organisations from ten countries are a part of the SKAO, which include Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK.
- French-born Dr Catherine Cesarsky has been appointed as the first Chair of the SKAO Council.
- The Indian contingent of over 20 institutions will be lead by Pune-based National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of TIFR.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

India, EU hold high-level dialogue

- The first India-European Union High-Level Dialogue was co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal from India side and the European Union Executive Vice-President & Trade Commissioner Mr Valdis Dombrovskis, from the EU side. This Dialogue was organised in line with the commitment made at the 15th India-EU Leader's Summit held in July 2020.
- Ministers agreed for further deepening of bilateral trade and investment relationship through a series of regular engagements, aiming at quick deliverable for the businesses in these tough times.
- They also agreed to meet within the next three months, to reach consensus on a host of bilateral trade & investment cooperation issues like bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue to explore further possibilities of cooperation.

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INTERNATIONAL

Paypal to shut domestic payments service in India from April 1

- The California-based global digital payment platform PayPal has announced that the company has decided to wind down its domestic payment services in India with effect from April 01, 2021. The decision has been taken because the company wants to shift its focus on cross-border payments business.
- However, the global customer will be able to pay Indian merchants using Paypal. PayPal was a payments options on many Indian online apps such as travel and ticketing service MakeMyTrip, online film booking app BookMyShow, and food delivery app Swiggy.

India & Bahrain join hands for Renewable Energy

- The first India-Bahrain Joint Working Group meeting in the field of Renewable Energy was held in a virtual format on February 04, 2021, for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy. The Indian delegation was led by Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Joint Secretary,

Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation.

- Both sides also agreed to forge deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.

World's First 'Energy Island' to be built by Denmark

- The Government of Denmark has approved a project to build the world's first energy island, in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to meet the electricity needs of three million households in European countries. The hub will strengthen the integration of Europe's power grids and increase renewable electricity production necessary for a climate-neutral Europe.
- The energy hub will serve as an offshore power plant gathering and distributing green electricity from hundreds of wind turbines surrounding the island directly to consumers in countries surrounding the North Sea. It is the long-term ambition to be able to store green electricity on the island, convert it to liquid green fuel, and send it via subsea cables to Denmark and neighbouring countries.

Facts about the energy islands:

- The artificial island will offer the best opportunities to expand the project, for example by building a harbour and facilities for storage and conversion of green electricity from the nearby wind turbines in the sea.
- The first-of-its-kind giant island will be as big as 18 football pitches (120,000sq m).
- A broad coalition of Danish parties have decided to establish two energy hubs and associated offshore windfarms. One as an artificial island in the North Sea and one at the Danish island Bornholm.
- An energy hub serves as a hub that collects electricity from the surrounding offshore windfarms and distributes the electricity between countries connected via the electricity grid.
- Furthermore, the abundance of offshore wind energy can be used to produce climate-friendly fuels for shipping, aviation, heavy industries, or heavy-duty vehicles.
- The two hubs initial capacity will be 5 GW triple the current installed offshore capacity in Denmark. Later they will be expanded to provide a capacity of 12 GW in total.
- The deal also established a final phase-out date of fossil extraction by 2050 and laid out plans for a just transition of impacted workers.
- Denmark is currently the largest oil producer in the EU, and it is the biggest producer worldwide to establish a final phase-out date so far.

NATIONAL

Railways to run Kisan Special trains from Agartala to Howrah

- The North East Frontier Railway (NFR) has decided to run Kisan Special trains from Agartala to Howrah and Sealdah from February 11, for the benefit of the farmers and transporters of NE Region. Kisan Special Train will leave from Agartala at 1915 hours once a week on Thursday and will reach Sealdah on Saturday.

- The train will have stoppages at Dharmanagar, Badarpur, Lumding, Guwahati, Kamakhya, Goalpara, New Bongaigaon, New Alipurduar, New Coochbehar, New Jalpaiguri, Malda Town, Khaltipur, Bardhaman and Bandel for loading/unloading, a statement issued by NF Railway.

IRCTC launches its online bus booking services

- The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) has launched its online bus booking services that went live for the service of the nation on January 29, informed IRCTC on Friday.
- "IRCTC under the leadership of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution is gradually moving towards firmly positioning itself as the first government 'One Stop Shop Travel Portal' of the country," read a statement issued by IRCTC.

Modi to launch infra project in west Bengal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit West Bengal tomorrow to launch key infra projects ahead of the state elections. This is Modi's second visit to the state in a matter of two weeks. He visited the state capital on January 23 to celebrate Parikrama Diwas commemorate Netaji's birthday.
- "These projects are in line with Prime Minister's vision of Purvodaya, of driving growth of the eastern India," the PMO said.
- On Sunday, Modi will inaugurate an LPG import terminal built by the state-run BPCL. "It will cater to the growing requirement of LPG in West Bengal and other states in eastern and north-eastern India."

Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles

- Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal has launched the 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles and appealed to people to buy such vehicles to combat pollution in the city. Kejriwal said his government will hire only electric vehicles for various purposes in the next six weeks.
- In the 'Switch Delhi' campaign, awareness will be created about the benefits of electric vehicles and how it can contribute to making Delhi clean and pollution-free.
- Under its electric vehicle policy, the Delhi government has planned extensive subsidies on purchase of electric two-wheelers and four-wheelers, besides waiving road tax and registration charges.
- More than 6,000 electric vehicles have been purchased since the policy launch in August 2020. The government has also issued tenders for setting up 100 charging stations across the city.
- The government has fixed an ambitious target of 25 per cent electric vehicles among total vehicle registrations in Delhi by 2024.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

RBI to Set up Committee on Urban Co-op banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will set up an expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks

(UCBs). The committee, involving all stakeholders, will provide a medium-term road map for strengthening the sector, enable faster resolution/rehabilitation of UCBs.

- Along with enabling faster resolution of UCBs, the committee will also examine critical aspects related to the urban co-op banks.
- The provisions of the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020 have become applicable to Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) from June 26, 2020.
- The amendments have brought near parity in supervisory and regulatory powers between UCBs and commercial banks in respect of regulatory powers, including those related to governance, audit, and resolution.
- The members of the committee and its terms of reference have not been notified yet. It will be informed separately by the RBI.

Federal Bank launches 'FedFirst' savings account scheme for children

- Federal Bank has announced the launch of "FedFirst", a special savings account scheme for children below 18 years of age. The account helps children develop healthy saving and spending habits, thereby giving them the freedom to save, spend and earn.
- The account is designed to enable children to learn the importance of money management. The account comes with unique features and offers.
- The account holder is provided with a FedFirst contactless Debit Card with a daily cash withdrawal limit of ₹2,500 and POS/e-com limit of ₹10,000, in addition to free online facilities including access to internet banking, mobile alerts and e-mail alerts.

RBI: India's GDP growth projected at 10.5 per cent for FY22

- In the last bi-monthly monetary policy meet for the current, the Reserve Bank of India projected India's GDP growth rate at 10.5 per cent for the fiscal year 2021-22. The growth outlook has improved significantly, and the vaccination drive will further boost the economic rebound.
- The apex bank expects the Indian economy to grow in the range of 8.3 per cent to 26.2 per cent in the first half of FY22, followed by a 6 per cent growth in Q3FY22. The central bank's projection is lower than that of the Economic Survey that projected India to grow at a rate of 11 per cent in the coming fiscal.