Cabinet approves PLI scheme for telecom sector worth Rs 12,195 crore

- The Union Cabinet approved a Rs 12,195-crore Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for domestic manufacturing of telecom and networking products such as switches, routers, radio access network, wireless equipment and other IoT access devices. Through this decision, the government aims to offset the imports of telecom equipment worth more than Rs 50,000 crore and reinforce it with “Made in India” products both for domestic markets and exports.
- The support under the PLI scheme will be provided to companies manufacturers of specified telecom and networking products in India like Gigabit Passive Optical Networks (GPON), base routers, Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM), Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS/ IPMPLS) and 5G/4G radios.
- The government will soon come up with a PLI scheme to encourage the production of laptops and tablet PCs.

Prime Minister launches ‘Mahabahu-Brahmaputra’ initiative in Assam

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually launched ‘Mahabahu-Brahmaputra’ initiative in Assam. He laid the foundation stone for the Dhubri Phulbari bridge. PM also perform the bhumi puja for the construction of Majuli Bridge in Assam. PM has announced the details stated that the landmark day in the development journey for Assam as Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative is going to be launched.
- Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative is going to be marked with the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations. The Ro-Pax vessel operations will be launched in between the Neamatighat & Majuli, Dhubri-Hatsingimari and North-South Guwahati. This initiative also includes the inauguration of the Inland Water Transport Terminal at Jogighopa. The initiative will also be marked with the inauguration of various tourist jetties at four locations in order to promote the river tourism and employment across the state.

Odisha Govt announced Development Package for Maa Samaleswari Shrine

- The state government of Odisha, under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has launched the development work for the SAMALEI Project (Samaleswari Temple Area Management and Local Economy Initiatives), to offer the divine experience to tourists & devotees. The project involves the development of 108 acres of land in & around the 16th-century shrine of Maa Samaleswari, the presiding deity of western Odisha.
- Odisha Government has announced a package of Rs 200-crore for 2021-22 fiscal for the implementation of the project. The project will be implemented under MoSarkar5T and will focus on the beautification of the temple & economic development of local people. It will include the development of amenities for devotees inside the 12-acre temple premises and
development of four tall heritage welcome gates.

‘Snakepedia’ mobile app launched in Kerala

- A team of scientists, doctors and photographers in Kerala have launched a mobile application named “Snakepedia”, that will present all relevant information on snakes, to help the public as well as doctors in treating snake bites.
- The main aim of the app is to help the public identify snakes, avail proper treatment on time for snakebites, bust myths about snakes, and protect snakes as well as snakebite victims. The android mobile application documents information on snakes with the help of pictures, infographics and podcasts and analyses its first aid, treatment, myths and superstitions.

SPORTS

Manika Batra Wins Singles Title at 82nd National Table Tennis Championship

- India’s top-ranked table tennis player Manika Batra beat Reeth Rishya, 4-2, in the women’s singles final, to win the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship, at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula, Haryana.
- It was Manika’s second Nationals title. She won her maiden national title in 2015 in Hyderabad.

Chris Morris becomes IPL’s most expensive player

- Former Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) superstar and South African all-rounder Chris Morris shattered all records at the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 auction in Chennai. Rajasthan Royals went all-out for the South African all-rounder Morris, buying him for a whopping INR 16.25 crore.
- Morris, who was declared surplus to requirement by the Virat Kohli-led side after the conclusion of the IPL 2020 last year, turned out to be the most expensive player bought in the history of the cash-rich tournament.

OBITUARY

Former Union Minister Captain Satish Sharma passes away

- Veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister Captain Satish Sharma passed away. He served as the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas from 1993 to 1996 in the Narasimha Rao government.
- Captain Satish Sharma was a close aide of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. He was a three-time Lok Sabha MP, representing Rae Bareli and Amethi constituencies and Rajya Sabha member for three terms representing the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Ajai Malhotra becomes first Indian chairperson at UNHRC advisory

- Ajai Malhotra became the first Indian to be elected as the Chairperson of the United Nations Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council. He has been on the Indian team negotiating issues such as biological diversity, climate change, desertification, education, energy, forestry, health, human rights, human settlements, intellectual property, international law, labour, ozone
depletion, sustainable development and trade.

- Malhotra first joined the Indian Foreign Services in 1977. Malhotra has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania.

### IMPORTANT DAYS

**World Day of Social Justice observed globally on 20th February**

- World Day of Social Justice is celebrated annually all over the world on 20 February. The International Labour Organization unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization on 10 June 2008. This year theme of World Day of Social Justice is “A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy”.
- Recognize the need to promote and tackle issues of social justice such as poverty, exclusion, gender equality, unemployment, human rights, and social protections.
- Focus on the goal of achieving full employment and support for social integration.
- Encourage people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication.
- Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.

**World Pangolin Day 2021: 20 February**

- World Pangolin Day is celebrated on the “Third Saturday of February” every year. In 2021, the annual World Pangolin Day is being celebrated on 20 February 2020. It marks the 10th edition of the event.
- The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts. Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in Asia and Africa.

**6th Soil Health Card Day Observed on 19 February 2021**

- Every year India observes the Soil Health Card Day on 19 February to commemorate the launch of the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme, and create awareness about the benefits of the scheme. 2021 marks the sixth year of the launch of the SHC Scheme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme on 19th February 2015 at Suratgarh in Rajasthan.
- The scheme aims at issuing soil health cards to farmers every two years so as to provide a basis to address nutritional deficiencies in the soil. The scheme ensures additional income to farmers by an increase in yields and it also promotes sustainable farming.

### BANKING AND ECONOMY

**RBI permits residents to make remittances to IFSCs under LRS**

- The Reserve Bank of India has permitted resident individuals to make remittances under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) to International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in the country. The decision of the RBI is aimed at deepening the financial markets in the IFSCs and providing an opportunity for resident individuals to diversify their portfolios. The RBI has
Top RANKERS

where career starts

reviewed the extant guidelines on LRS and decided to permit resident individuals to make remittances under LRS to IFSCs set up in India under the Special Economic Zone Act, 2005.

- The remittance shall be made only for making investments in IFSCs in securities, other than those issued by entities/companies resident (outside IFSC) in India. Any funds lying idle in the account for a period up to 15 days from the date of its receipt into the account shall be immediately repatriated to domestic INR account of the investor in India.

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NATIONAL

Hyundai Develops Ultimate Mobility Vehicle ‘TIGER X-1’

- Hyundai Motor Company has launched a Transformer-like robocar dubbed as TIGER X-1, that can travel over the most challenging terrains on the Earth as well as on other planets. TIGER stands for Transforming Intelligent Ground Excursion Robot, and the X-1 denotes its experimental status.
- The Ultimate Mobility Vehicle (UMV) TIGER is being developed by Hyundai in partnership with Autodesk and Sundberg-Ferar.
- Tiger is designed as a battery-electric vehicle, comprising of a small pod with four wheels on extendable legs. It will be able to operate as either a four-wheel-drive vehicle or four-legged walking robot.
- The vehicle is unscrewed, meaning that its main use will be to carry payloads over remote and inaccessible locations, and not the people.
- It will help in search and rescue, scientific research, military, or exploratory missions (even on new planets).

HCL Tech inks pact with IIT Kanpur to build up competence in cybersecurity

- HCL Technologies has inked an agreement with the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK) to collaborate in the area of cybersecurity. As part of the pact, the IT company will work with C3iHub, a specialised cybersecurity research centre at IITK. This collaboration will bring together the country’s brightest minds, advanced research capabilities and global resources to develop advanced solutions in the area of cybersecurity.
- HCL and IITK will bring in real-world industry exposure to carry out joint initiatives and research.
- The teams will develop a security framework and solutions for cybersecurity challenges in current and future operational technologies as one of the first areas of interest.
- They will also work together to discover and manage cyber threats, vulnerabilities, and risks for critical infrastructure.

Mamata Banerjee launches ‘Maa’ scheme to provide meals at Rs 5

- West Bengal government launched “Maa” canteens for providing subsidised cooked meals for the poor and the destitute at a nominal cost of ₹5. The govt will give a subsidy of ₹15 and people have to pay ₹5. The kitchen will run by Self-Help Groups (SHG). The government allocated ₹ 100
crores for this project

- The canteens will be open from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. every day. People will get a plate of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry. This new initiative is for common people. Though we give free rations there is still a huge demand for cooked food. Therefore, we are starting these community kitchens.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy conferred SKOCH Chief Minister of the Year Award

- The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been conferred the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award. The Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman, Skoch Group, Sameer Kochhar personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh. The award selection was based on a study of project-level outcomes in various States.
- Similarly, initiatives have been taken across the government to respond to COVID-19 and have shown desirable outcomes. All the above and more is evident in a year-long study of 123 projects from across sectors in Andhra Pradesh. The State has taken several revolutionary measures in the past two years to make governance more efficient and transparent. Innovative measures have been taken across sectors, the credit for which goes to the Chief Minister.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban. The Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan has been launched in 10 cities, which are Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur. The motive of the Jal Jeevan Mission Urban is to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal – 6.
- To ascertain the equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenging process.

SPORTS

Kings XI Punjab renamed as Punjab Kings ahead of IPL auction

- The IPL Franchise, Kings XI Punjab has formally been renamed as Punjab Kings ahead of the Indian Premier League auction. The new brand name and logo of the team was officially released by the management.
- The Punjab-based IPL franchise ‘Punjab Kings’ is co-owned by Bollywood actress Preity Zinta, along with businessman Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman and Karn Paul. The side is currently led by batsman KL Rahul, with former Indian captain Anil Kumble as its head coach.

South Africa’s Faf du Plessis retires from Test cricket

- Former captain of South Africa, Faf du Plessis has announced his retirement from Test cricket. The 36-year-old made his Test debut in November 2012 and played a total of 69 games in the longest format.
- He scored 4163 runs in his Test career, at an average of 40.02, with 10 centuries and 21 fifties.
APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia resigns
- The Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Gakharia has announced his resignation. The 45-year-old Gakharia served as the Prime Minister from 8 September 2019 to 18 February 2021.
- He was stepping down because of disagreements within his own team over the decision to arrest Nika Melia, chairman of the United National Movement opposition party.

Kiran Bedi Removed As Puducherry Lt Governor
- Kiran Bedi, the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, has been removed from the top position. Tamilisai Soundararajan, the Governor of Telangana, has been given additional charge as the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry till a permanent replacement will be announced.
- The development comes in the backdrop of a major shake-up in the Puducherry Assembly after several Congress legislators resigned ahead of the Assembly elections due this year.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Thaawarchand Gehlot Releases 3rd Edition of Indian Sign Language Dictionary
- The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot released the “3rd edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary, in a virtual event. The 3rd edition of the ISL dictionary contains a total of 10,000 terms. These include the 6000 terms of the first and second edition of the dictionary.
- The terms are of everyday use from academic terms, legal & administrative terms, medical terms, technical terms and agricultural terms.
- The Dictionary has been developed by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- The 1st edition of the ISL Dictionary was launched on 23 March 2018 with 3000 terms.
- The 2nd edition was launched on 27th February 2019, with 6000 terms (including earlier 3000 terms).

Award winning Author Irwin Allan Sealy’s new novel ‘ASOCA’
- Prizewinning writer Irwin Allan Sealy’s new novel ‘ASOCA: A Sutra’, an imagined memoir of Ashoka The Great. The novel will be presented as an imagined memoir of Ashoka The Great, the emperor who ruled most of the Indian Subcontinent and played a pivotal role in the spread of Buddhism from India to other parts of Asia in the 3rd century BC. It will be published by Penguin Random House India.
- Earlier, Penguin had published the thirtieth-anniversary edition of Sealy’s critically acclaimed debut novel The Trotter-Nama and this is the second book by the author to be published by PRH. This book will be released under Penguin’s Viking imprint in July 2021.
INTERNATIONAL

China Overtakes the US as Largest Trading Partner of European Union

- The People’s Republic of China has overtaken the United States (US) as the biggest trading partner of the European Union (EU) in 2020, according to the data by the European Union statistics agency, Eurostat. Britain, which left the European Union in 2020, was the third-largest trading partner for the bloc, behind China and the United States.
- The trade volume of the EU with China reached 586 billion euros ($711 billion) in 2020, compared to 555 billion euros ($673 billion) for the US. Bilateral trade with the UK reached 444.7 billion euros.
- The EU exports to China rose by 2.2 per cent to 202.5 billion euros while imports from China increased by 5.6 per cent to 383.5 billion euros.
- Similarly, EU exports to the United States fell by 13.2 per cent in the same period and imports by 8.2 per cent.
- Exports to the UK fell by 13.2 per cent, while imports dropped by 13.9 per cent.

‘Pahela Phagun’ spring festival celebrated in Bangladesh

- The first day of the spring called ‘Pahela Phagun’ was celebrated in Dhaka, Bangladesh despite the continued shadow of Corona pandemic in the country. Cultural organisations held programmes at different venues in the city to herald the beginning of the spring. Programmes were held at the Suhrawardy Udyan, Nandan Manch of Shilpakala Academy and several other locations.
- The Jatiya Basanta Utsab Udjapan Parishad organized the programme at the Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka. Young women wearing yellow saris and youth dressed in ‘Punjabis’ took part in the festivity. The programme featured dance and musical performances. The traditional programme of ‘Basanta Utsab’ at the Fine Arts faculty in Dhaka university was cancelled since educational institutions have been closed till Feb. 28 by the government due to the Corona pandemic.

NATIONAL

IIT Bombay launches fundraising campaign ‘Cherish IIT Bombay 2021’

- IIT Bombay has launched its first-ever annual fundraising campaign in India, Cherish IIT Bombay 2021. As per information shared by the IIT, the funds will be used for the creation of world-class laboratory complexes, modernization of lecture halls and continuation of awards to attract and retain faculty.
- The donations made to IIT Bombay by corporate bodies and individuals are 100% tax-deductible under section 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act.

Centre Launches new Instant Messaging platform ‘Sandes’

- The National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, has launched an instant messaging platform called “Sandes”. Similar to WhatsApp, the new government instant messaging systems (GIMS) platform can be used for all kinds of
communications by anyone using a mobile number or email id.

- The need to build a home-grown messaging platform was felt by the government to ensure secure communication between people as they worked from home, following the nationwide lockdown imposed to contain the spread of Covid-19.
- The Sandes app is also a part of the government strategy to encourage the use of India-made software so as to build an ecosystem of indigenously developed products.

**IIT Madras-incubated Pi Beam launches PiMo e-bike**

- An IIT Madras- Incubated start-up Pi Beam Electric has recently launched a sustainable electric two-wheeler, dubbed as PiMo. The utility e-bike has been developed for personal and commercial use. It does not require a licence or registration.
- The cost of the electric two-wheeler has been fixed at Rs. 30,000.
- It eliminates fuel costs as it runs on battery. The electric vehicle offers ‘Battery Swapping’, meaning that the drained battery can be exchanged for a fully charged one at designated locations.
- The battery can charge faster than a smartphone and comes with a range of 50 km.
- Pi Beam aims to sell 10,000 vehicles by the end of the financial year 2021-22.

**Dharmendra Pradhan Participates in 11th IEA, IEF, OPEC Symposium**

- The 11th IEA-IEF-OPEC Symposium on Energy Outlooks was held virtually on February 17, 2021, under the patronage of the Minister of Energy of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud. From India, the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan, participated in the symposium.
- The trilateral symposium discussed the long-term outlooks of key producer and consumer countries, apart from the comparative analysis of short, medium, and long-term energy outlooks that OPEC and the IEA published in 2020.

**India joins Iran-Russia’s two-day navy exercise**

- India joined Iran and Russia in the naval exercise dubbed as “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021”, which kicked-off in the northern part of the Indian Ocean. The Chinese navy will also join the exercise. The purpose of the drill is to enhance the security of international maritime trade, confront maritime piracy and terrorism, and exchange information.
- The drill will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles).
- It will include shooting at sea and air targets and liberating hijacked ships, as well as search and rescue and anti-piracy operations.
- The exercise ‘Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt’ is so flexible that any country could join if they wish to do so.

**OBITUARY**

**Indo-Pak War Veteran retired Major General BK Mahapatra passes away**

- War veteran Major General (retired) Basant Kumar Mahapatra, who had participated in major battles including the 1962 Indo-China war, and 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan war, has passed
Hailing from Bhubaneswar in Odisha, Mahapatra was commissioned into armoured corps (Tanks) of the Indian Army as a Combat Officer and was popularly known as ‘Tank Man’. He was conferred with the prestigious Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM).

**Former Bihar-Jharkhand Governor & Jurist M Rama Jois, passes away**
- Noted jurist and a former Governor of Bihar and Jharkhand, Justice (Retd.) M. Rama Jois has passed away.
- The former Rajya Sabha MP, had also served as the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court. He was also a senior advocate in the Supreme Court of India.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

**Assam government appoints Hima Das as DSP**
- Star sprinter Hima Das has been appointed as a Deputy Superintendent of Police by the Assam government. The 21-year-old from Assam, known as ‘Dhing Express’ referring to the town near her native village, is currently training at the NIS-Patiala and will be aiming to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics as the athletics calendar starts in a few days.
- The reigning world junior 400m champion, who won a silver in women’s 400m in the 2018 Asian Games, was also part of the gold-winning women’s 400m relay and mixed 400m relay quartets in the quadrennial event in Jakarta.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**Theodore Baskaran won Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award 2020**
- S. Theodore Baskaran who is a writer, a historian, a naturalist and an activist has won the Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award, 2020. The award was instituted by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation. Theodore Baskaran was chosen for the award in the light of his dedication to the wildlife conservation. He won the award for his writing prowess in English and Tamil contributing towards the conservation discourse. He was also chosen for the award in the backdrop of inspiring the young naturalists.
- Some of his books in the English language include- Dance of the Sarus: Essays of a Wandering Naturalist; Book of Indian Dogs and A Day with the Shama: Essays on Nature.
- Theodore is of the view that any conservation initiative should be in the local language in order to gain momentum as a people’s movement. He was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award (Iyal Virudhu) for his writing on nature in Tamil. The award was given by the Canada Literary Garden in the year 2014 in Toronto.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**ICICI Lombard partners with Flipkart to offer ‘Hospicash’ insurance**
- The e-commerce company Flipkart has partnered with ICICI Lombard to offer its customers the ‘Group SafeGuard’ insurance, a group health insurance policy. The ‘Group SafeGuard’ comes with daily cash benefits starting from Rs 500, and ‘Hospicash’ benefit for Flipkart consumers.
- The product will allow consumers to avail a payout for each day of hospitalisation.
The fixed daily amount will enable consumers to pay for incidental medical or emergency expenses.
The insurance is affordably priced, paperless, and flexible; covering both accidental hospitalisations or planned surgeries/treatment.

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INTERNATIONAL

Preeti Sinha appointed to head United Nations Capital Development Fund
- The UN Capital Development Fund has appointed Indian-origin investment and development banker Preeti Sinha as its Executive Secretary, the highest leadership rank in the institution. She succeeds Judith Karl. He will work with a focus on providing micro-finance assistance to women, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises in under-served communities.
- The New York-based United Nations Capital Development Fund is an autonomous UN organization affiliated with UNDP. It was established in 1966.
- The original mandate of UNCDF: to assist developing countries in the development of their economies by supplementing existing sources of capital assistance by means of grants and loans.
- The organisation provides micro-finance access to the 47 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) of the world, to help them unlock the full potential of public and private finance.

NATIONAL

Rajnath Singh launches e-Chhawani portal for online civic services to Cantt Boards
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently launched an online portal ‘e-Chhawani’ and mobile app, to facilitate ‘ease of living’ and ‘ease of doing’ for the residents of the Cantonment Boards across the country. The ‘e-Chhawani’ portal will provide online municipal services to more than 20 lakh citizens across all 62 Cantonment Boards of India while sitting at home.
- The portal can be accessed at https://echhawani.gov.in/
- The residents of cantonment areas can register their complaints regarding civic issues and even get their documents like trade licence, sewerage connectivity applications through the portal
- Jointly been developed by eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE), and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- A cantonment board is a civic administration body in India under control of the Ministry of Defence. It takes care of mandatory duties such as the provision of public health, water supply, sanitation, primary education, and street lighting etc.

Kanchoth festival celebrated across J&K's Chenab valley
- The ancient Kanchoth festival, a symbol of ancient Nag culture, was observed with religious fervour and gaiety across Chenab valley region of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.
- The festival is celebrated by locals, mainly Nag followers who believe that on this day of Gouri Tritiya, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati got married and the latter insisted on a throne made of snow as her wedding gift.
Odisha CM Lays Foundation of India’s Largest Hockey Stadium named
- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday laid the foundation stone of India’s largest hockey stadium, Birsa Munda International Hockey Stadium, at Rourkela in Sundergarh district.
- Announcing that the Rourkela stadium will be named after freedom fighter Birsa Munda, the proposed stadium is going to be the most modern field hockey facility designed to host the Hockey World Cup 2023 tournament, said Patnaik.
- The Stadium will be a new benchmark in global stadium design for hockey, offering one of the finest spectator experiences in the world and, with a chaired seated capacity exceeding 20,000, will become the largest Hockey Stadium in India.

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren nod to HC bench at Dumka
- Chief Minister Hemant Soren has approved the proposal related to the formation of a bench of Jharkhand High Court in Dumka district. It is to be known that apart from the main bench in Ranchi of Jharkhand High Court, no bench is functioning in any district of the State.
- With regard to the establishment of the bench of Jharkhand High Court in Dumka district, the then Chief Secretary had directed the building construction department to mark the land. Apart from this, a letter was sent by the Law Department to the Supreme Court and Union Ministry of Law and Justice regarding the jurisdiction of the bench.

Army joins hands with Pune-based foundation to provide quality education in J-K
- Through this MoU, Army will get financial assistance for Army Goodwill Schools and Pariwar School Society.
- Indian Army’s Chinar Corps on Monday entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a Pune-based Indrani Balan Foundation to provide better education facilities to the youths of Kashmir valley.

Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurates Gender Park campus in Kozhikode
- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Gender Park campus in Kozhikode on Sunday. It is an initiative to work towards gender equality and empowerment in the state.
- The Gender Park campus is a 24-acre space that will act as a convergence centre for various projects, cultural and academic engagements.
- Headquartered in the state capital Thiruvananthapuram, with its main campus at Kozhikode, the Gender Park drives policy, research, economic and social initiatives that work for a just and equal society.
- It found standing under the Department of Social Justice and is the first space of its kind in the world. Currently working under the Department of Women and Child Development, it aims to become a premier convergence point for gender-related activities.
- The Gender Park campus is a 24-acre space that will act as a convergence centre for various projects, cultural and academic engagements. The park includes a gender museum, library, convention centre and amphitheater.
Delhi Police receives Best Marching Contingent Trophy-2021
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presented the trophies of best marching contingents of the Republic Day Parade 2021 in New Delhi on February 15, 2021. Jat Regimental Centre bagged the trophy of best marching contingent among the Tri-Services while Delhi Police was adjudged as the best marching contingent among the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and other auxiliary services.
- Brigadier Adarsh K Butail and Subedar Major (Honorary Captain) Virendra received the trophy on behalf of the Jat Regimental Centre and Special Commissioner of Police Robin Hibu and Assistant Commissioner of Police Vivek Bhagat, Commander received the trophy on behalf of Delhi Police. The two contingents were adjudged on the basis of assessment by two panels of judges.

SPORTS
Naman Ojha announces retirement from all forms of cricket
- Former India wicketkeeper-batsman Naman Ojha has announced his retirement, from all formats of cricket. He made his first-class debut for Madhya Pradesh in 2000-01. The 37-year-old from Madhya Pradesh holds the record for the most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy.
- He has also represented India in all three formats, featuring in one Test, one ODI and two T20 Internationals.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
SpaceX launches 19th Starlink mission, misses booster landing
- SpaceX successfully launched 60 more Starlink satellites on February 15 as part of 19th Starlink mission but failed to land Falcon 9 rocket’s reusable first-stage booster.
- SpaceX did not immediately disclose what occurred during the failed landing. Earlier, SpaceX had disclosed that its Starlink satellite internet service has "over 10,000 users in the US and abroad".

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS
Ajay Mathur elected new DG at special assembly of ISA
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr Ajay Mathur as its new Director-General following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members. Dr Mathur replaces Mr Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director-General since the ISA was founded in 2015.
- ISA accelerate the demand for and use of safe, sustainable, and affordable solar energy for all. It aims to mobilize over $1 trillion USD of investment into solar projects by 2030 through focused advocacy, policy and regulatory support, capacity building, and overcoming perceived investment barriers.
**NATIONAL**

**Prime Minister hands over indigenous Arjun Mk-1A tank to Army**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has handed over the indigenous main battle tank Arjun Mk-1A to the Army in a function at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai. Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Mukund Naravane received the model of the tank, designed and developed by Chennai-based Combat Vehicles Research & Development Establishment (CVRDE), a unit of the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).
- A tank made in Tamil Nadu will be used in our northern borders to keep the nation safe. This showcases India’s united spirit — Bharat’s Ekta Darshan,”. The indent for 118 of these tanks would be placed shortly with the Heavy Vehicle Factory (HVF) at Avadi near Chennai.

**Gadkari launches India’s first CNG Tractor**

- Union road transport and highways minister, Nitin Gadkari has launched India’s first-ever diesel tractor, converted to a much cleaner (compressed natural gas) CNG variant. With this, farmers will be able to save more than ₹1 trillion annually on fuel cost, which will help them to improve their livelihood.
- This conversion is jointly done by Rawmatt Techno Solutions and Tomasetto Achille India. The CNG tractor will help farmers to increase their income, by lowering costs and help to create job opportunities in rural India.
- The farmers can save up to 50 per cent on the fuel cost as the current Diesel prices are around 77 rupees per litre whereas CNG is only 42 rupees per kilogram.
- The conversion from diesel to CNG will be beneficial as it is a clean fuel with the lowest carbon and pollutant content. It is also economical as it has zero lead and is non-corrosive, non-dilutive and non-contaminating which helps in increasing the life of the engine.

**Puducherry launches campaign to become Covid-free by February 28**

- In Puducherry, a campaign has been launched titled “Zero Covid by Feb28” to ensure that there are no COVID-19 cases by the end of February 2021, in the union territory. The overall caseload in Puducherry was 39,448 while 38,533 had recovered so far, leaving 258 active cases.
- Under the campaign, all those who had come into contact with people infected with coronavirus would be identified and provided treatment, so that the further spread of the pathogen could be prevented.

**Famous Mandu Festival Begins in Madhya Pradesh**

- The three-day famous “Mandu Festival” began at the historic town of Mandu in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh on February 13, 2021. The festival will culminate on February 15, 2021. The festival is organised by the state government of Madhya Pradesh to showcase each and every aspect of the ancient Mandu city, ranging from food, music, history & heritage, art & craft etc.
- During the festival, the state culture and tourism minister Usha Thakur inaugurated the newly constructed Dino Adventure Park and Fossils Museum in Mandu and construction of Astro Park.
building at a cost of Rs 59 lakh. The Dinosaur Park is the first modern fossil park in India which has 24 eggs and other fossils of dinosaurs on display.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Indian astronomers detect huge optical flare in black hole ‘BL Lacertae’**
- Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding supermassive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae, analysis of which can help trace the mass of the black hole and the source of this emission, the Department of Science and Technology said.
- Blazars or feeding supermassive black holes in the heart of distant galaxies receive a lot of attention from the astronomical community because of their complicated emission mechanism.

**India’s Homegrown App MapMyIndia Ties Up With ISRO**
- India’s homegrown app MapMyIndia ties up with ISRO to build an alternative to Google Maps. The agreement between ISRO and MapmyIndia is suggested to become an alternative to Google maps and similar platforms. The collaboration with MapMyIndia will turn out to be a benefit for users because it will use digital maps of MapmyIndia and satellite imagery and earth observation data of ISRO.
- According to this collaboration the mapping data along with the information regarding pollution, agricultural output, weather, land-use changes, flood and several disasters will be visible to the users. Rohan Verma, CEO of MapmyIndia, called the agreement a path-breaking milestone with the aim of fulfilling the objective of Atamanirbhar Bharat.

**About the app:**
- The app will benefit the Indians because it will ensure the maps according to the true sovereignty of India while depicting the Indian borders as per the Indian government. The Department of Space signed an MoU with CE Info Systems Private Limited, a geospatial technology company owned by MapmyIndia.
- The most exhaustive digital map database of the country was created indigenously over the last 25 years by MapmyIndia covers 7.5 lakh Indian villages, 7500+ cities at the building and the street level which are connected through a road network of almost 63 lakh kilometres.
- ISRO generates earth observations and satellite imagery through its satellite constellation. ISRO will be more responsive in terms of satellite imagery needed by the Indians, required especially during crises and disasters.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

**Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar sworn-in as Chief Justice of Manipur HC**
- Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar has been sworn-in as the Chief Justice of Manipur High Court at Raj Bhavan, Imphal.
- He was appointed as Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur by the President of India. Prior to this, he served as a Judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.
BOOKS AND AUTHORS
Meghna Pant's new book "The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News"

- Award-winning writer, journalist and speaker, Meghna Pant has penned a new book "The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News". The book will be released in April 2021, and soon be seen as a major motion picture under the title Badnam Ladoo.
- The book is about a small-town woman, Ladoo, who scandalizes her conservative family when she decides to use a sperm donor to have a baby while continuing to look for Mr Right. This book takes a humorous and light approach to address an important issue, relevant to every woman in the world, without being belligerent or pedantic.

BANKING AND ECONOMY
RBI constitutes 8-member expert panel for strengthening Urban Co-operative Banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an eight-member expert committee on Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) to examine issues and suggest a roadmap for strengthening the sector. The committee will be chaired by the former RBI Deputy Governor N. S. Vishwanathan.

Role of the Committee
- Assess the regulatory measures taken by the RBI and other authorities in respect of UCBs and their impact over the last five years to identify key constraints and enablers in fulfilment of their socio-economic objective.
- Review the current regulatory approach and recommend suitable measures to strengthen the sector.
- Suggest effective measures for faster rehabilitation and resolution of UCBs and assess the potential for consolidation in the sector

Other members
- Harsh Kumar Bhanwala: Former Chairman of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
- Mukund Chitale: Chartered Accountant
- NC Muniyappa and RN Joshi: retired Indian Administrative Service officers
- MS Sriram: IIM Bengaluru Professor
- Jyotindra Mehta: President of the National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies
- Neeraj Nigam: Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Regulation, RBI

ICICI Lombard launches Corporate India Risk Index

- Private general insurer ICICI Lombard has launched the ‘Corporate India Risk Index’. This is intended to be a unified, standardised corporate risk index that spans industries and companies. This will help companies understand the level of risk that their business is facing and also assist in developing a successful risk aversion plan.
- It has worked with consulting firm Frost and Sullivan to develop the risk measurement tool.
India accounts for 11 per cent of global death in road accidents: World Bank

- With only 1 per cent of the world’s vehicles, India accounts for 11 per cent of the global death in road accidents, the highest in the world, according to a report by the World Bank.
- The country accounts for about 4.5 lakh road crashes per annum, in which 1.5 lakh people die.
- "India tops the world in road crash deaths and injuries. It has 1 per cent of the world’s vehicles but accounts for 11 per cent of all road crash deaths, witnessing 53 road crashes every hour; killing 1 person every 4 minutes," the report said.
- In the last decade, 13 lakh people died and another 50 lakh got injured on Indian roads, it said.

US-Russia Extends New START Arms Reduction Treaty

- The United States has extended the "New START" nuclear disarmament treaty with Russia for a period of five years. The New START, which stands for Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation.
- The new strategic arms reduction treaty was formally signed on April 8, 2010, and after ratification, entered into force on 5 February 2011. The New START treaty was set to expire on February 5, 2021, but both the parties have further extended it for five more years, till February 2026.

NATIONAL

11th edition of ‘Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav to be inaugurated at Cooch Behar

- The Governor of West Bengal Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar in the presence of Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel will inaugurate the 11th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav on 14th February, 2021 at Cooch Behar Palace at Cooch Behar in West Bengal.
- The Ministry of Culture is mandated with the task of preservation, promotion and propagation of Indian Culture, both tangible and intangible which inter-alia includes traditional folk dances and art forms, performing arts and rich tribal heritage. It organizes cultural programs, festivals and theatrical performances to fulfill this mandate.

PM launches five developmental projects in Kerala, several crores worth projects in Tamil Nadu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Sunday and inaugurated a slew of projects including the extension of Chennai Metro Rail Phase 1 and a Discovery Campus for IIT Madras. Mr. Modi also launched five projects in Kerala that would energise the growth projectory of the country.
- In Kerala, the Prime Minister dedicated to nation, the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), launched the Ro-Ro vessels to be operated between Bolghatty and Willingdon Island and inaugurated the Sagarika International Cruise Terminal.
Skill ministry launches fellowship programme in partnership with IIMs
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) programme in partnership with nine Indian Institutes’ of Management (IIM) across India. Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey chaired the event on ‘Transforming skilling through strategic partnerships under SANKALP’ and rolled out the MGNF and other initiatives.
- The two-year government-funded programme has been launched under the World Bank loan assisted programme SANKALP (Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion).
- The selected fellows under the programme will be given a stipend of about Rs 50,000 per month during the first year and Rs 60,000 per month during the second year.
- Initially, the fellows will be imparted training by the nine top IIMs of the country and after that, the fellows will work on strengthening the District Skill Committees and the District Skill administration.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS
Tata Motors appoints Marc Llistosella as new CEO & MD
- Tata Motors Limited has appointed Marc Llistosella as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD). The appointment of Llistosella will be effective from July 1, 2021.
- He will replace current CEO & MD of Tata Motors, Guenter Butschek, who had expressed his desire to relocate to Germany at the end of the contract for personal reasons. Llistosella is the former president and CEO of Fuso Truck and Bus Corp. and head of Daimler Trucks in Asia.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S
ISRO announces BHUVAN, option to Google Maps
- Indian Space Research Organisation and location and navigation technology solutions provider MapmyIndia announced an initiative to partner together to offer India's best, and fully indigenous, mapping portal, and geospatial services.
- It combines the power of MapmyIndia’s digital maps and technologies with ISRO’s catalogue of satellite imagery and earth observation data, according to MapmyIndia’s CEO and Executive Director, Rohan Verma.
- He termed it a path-breaking milestone in India’s journey towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat, wherein Indian users would not be dependent on foreign organisations for maps, navigation, and geospatial services, and leverage made-in-India solutions instead.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION
SERB announces Women Excellence Award 2021 in Science on the International Day of Women
- The SERB Women Excellence Award that has been conferred on them provides a grant of Rs. 15 lakhs for a period of three years to the awardees to pursue their research ideas.
- The award given by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) supporting basic research in the frontier areas of science and engineering, was launched in the year 2013. It is a one-time award given to women
scientists below 40 years of age who have received recognition from any one or more of the National Academies such as Young Scientist Medal, Young Associateship, etc.

- The women scientists selected for the awards include Dr. Shobhna Kapoor, Assistant Professor at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, working in the area of Chemical Biology with expertise in ‘Host-Pathogen Interactions and Membrane Biology, Chemical Biology and Biophysics’.

**BOOKS AND AUTHORS**

**Peter Mukerjea pens memoir ‘Starstruck: Confessions of a TV Executive’**

- Former media baron Peter Mukerjea has come out with his memoir ‘Starstruck: Confessions of a TV executive’. The book is presented as a recollection of his experiences in the satellite television industry in India and the changes it has gone through over the years.

- Mukerjea is the former chief executive of Star India. Through this book, he has shared his journey, to highlight and showcase the plenty of mistakes made and the plenty of lessons learnt over almost three decades. It must be remembered that Mukerjea was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in November 2015 in connection with the Sheena Bora murder case.

**Current Affairs PDF- February 14, 2021**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**Mario Draghi sworn in as prime minister of Italy**

- The former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi has been sworn in as Italy’s prime minister at the head of a unity government called on to confront the coronavirus crisis and economic slump.

- Draghi, a respected figure at home and internationally, managed to convince almost all of the country’s main parties to support his government, with leaders from the far-right League and populist Five Star Movement (M5S) adopting more moderate, pro-European tones in recent days.

**India Gifts 2000 Tonnes Of Rice To Syria To Strengthen Food Security**

- India has gifted 2000 metric tonnes of rice to Syria with an aim to strengthen food security in the middle eastern country.

- The first consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice was handed over by India Ambassador to Syria, Hifzur Rahman to the Minister of Local Administration and Head of Supreme Relief Committee Hussain Makhlof on Thursday, Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Friday.

- The remaining 1000 metric tonnes of rice is expected to reach Syria on February 18. The rice is being supplied in response to a request from the Syrian government for emergency humanitarian assistance.
Karim Khan: UK lawyer elected chief prosecutor at ICC
- Karim Khan, 50, currently heads a United Nations investigation into war crimes committed by the Islamic State group in Iraq.
- The ICC is the only permanent body investigating crimes against humanity.
- Mr Khan won the votes of 72 out of 123 countries in the second round of voting, and will begin his nine-year term at the court in the Hague in June.

Rashmi Samant First Indian Woman To Head Oxford Students' Union
- Rashmi Samant has made history by becoming the first Indian woman to head the Oxford Students' Union. An alumnus of Karnataka's Manipal Institute of Technology, Ms Samant in her LinkedIn profile says she is "a sustainable energy enthusiast who believes in effective policymaking and energy equality for healing the deteriorating climate of the world".
- Ms Samant won the students' union election with 1,996 votes, more than all her opponents put together, the university said in a post on its website.
- In her manifesto, Ms Samant promised to "tackle the institutional homophobia and transphobia", "decolonisation of the syllabi" and "remove all statues proven to be imperialist, including Christopher Codrington".

National
35 children's books in Parag Honour List for 2021
- Thirty-five books for children and young adults across fiction, non-fiction and poetry genres by authors like Vinod Kumar Shukl, Jerry Pinto, Nandini Nayar and Nandita Da Cunha in English and Hindi feature in the Parag Honour List 2021. Currently in its second edition, this annual list by the Parag Initiative of Tata Trusts features best of children’s books published in the past one year.
- The list was launched Saturday by actor Soha Ali Khan, who said such curated reading lists can support educators, librarians and parents to know about the best Indian children’s books being published each year. For this edition, Parag received books from 26 Indian publishers, published between October 2019 and September 2020. The PHL jury members were Arundhati Deosthale, Gurbachan Singh and Suneeta Mishra (Hindi) and Arvind Gupta, Prachi Kalra and Samina Mishra (English).

India's first dolphin research centre to start soon in Patna
- The society for the long-awaited National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) is likely to be formed within a month, officials said.
- Last year, chief minister Nitish Kumar had laid the foundation stone of the centre and the fund for the building was also sanctioned to the building construction department (BCD), but things could not move beyond that.
- Principal secretary, department of forest and environment, Dipak Kumar Singh said that there were some issues with Patna University on the society formation, but that has now been sorted out. “The society will be formed within a month. The construction of the building in Patna University will also get underway soon. Fund has already been sanctioned,” he added.
- With Prime Minister Narendra Modi also announcing Project Dolphin last year on the lines of Project Tiger to focus on both river and sea dolphins, the centre has acquired more importance. The project also got in-principle approval at the first meeting of the National Ganga Council (NGC), headed by the PM.

**Muskan becomes the youngest zila parishad chairman in himachal pradesh**
- While the pandemic-induced lockdown left many graduates in a rough patch with lack of employment opportunities, a 21-year-old woman in Himachal’s Bilaspur district has made it to the limelight by becoming one of the youngest candidates to get elected to a Zila Parishad Chairperson’s post.
- Like most colleges, Muskan’s college located in Kala Amb in Sirmaur district shut when the Covid-19 pandemic broke out last year. When Muskan returned home to Barmana in Bilaspur she decided to contest the local polls and to everyone’s astonishment she emerged victorious.