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INTERNATIONAL

Australia building world’s first platypus sanctuary
- Australian conservationists have unveiled plans to build the world’s first refuge for the platypus, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the duck-billed mammal faces extinction due to climate change.
- The Taronga Conservation Society Australia and the New South Wales State government said they would build the specialist facility, mostly ponds and burrows for the semi-aquatic creatures, at a zoo 391 km from Sydney, by 2022.

NATIONAL

DRDO successfully flight test SFDR technology
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology from the integrated test range (ITR), Chandipur, off Odisha coast. The SFDR technology will help DRDO with the technological advantage to develop long-range air-to-air missiles (AAMs). DRDO began developing SFDR first in 2017 and had conducted successful tests in 2018 and 2019 as well.
- The SFDR is a missile propulsion system being developed primarily by the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) and Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in Hyderabad.
- The High Energy Material Research Laboratory (HEMRL) has developed the nozzle-less booster while the ramjet engine is being developed with Russian assistance.
- The performance of the missile was monitored using the data captured by Electro-Optical, Radar and Telemetry instruments deployed by ITR and confirmed successful demonstration of the mission objectives.

SPORTS

J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Winter National Games
- Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally in the second edition of the Khelo India Winter National Games. J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals. The five-day mega sports event which began on the 26th of February concluded in the famous ski resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir’s Baramulla district. The event was e-inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The second edition of the Khelo India winter games is a major step towards making Jammu and Kashmir a hub of the winter games.
- In the event, more than 1,000 athletes from 27 states and union territories took part.
- The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.
APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS
Mary Kom appointed chairperson of AIBA’s champions and veterans committee

- Six-time world champion boxer Mary Kom has been appointed as the Chairperson of the International Boxing Association’s (AIBA) Champions and Veterans Committee. The 37-year-old was voted to the post by AIBA’s board of directors on March 03, 2021.
- The Committee was formed in December 2020. It consists of the most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.

IMPORTANT DAYS
India to commemorate ‘Chabahar Day’ on 4 March

- The Ministry of External Affairs India had commemorate ‘Chabahar Day’ on March 4 on the sidelines of the Maritime India Summit 2021 being held in New Delhi. The virtual event had see the participation of ministers from Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan. The Summit is being held from March 2-4, 2021.
- The ministerial-level opening session would be followed by two webinar sessions namely the ‘Boosting Business through Trade Promotion and Regional Connectivity’ and ‘Development of Port Infrastructure: Unleashing Opportunities’.
- It is a seaport in Chabahar which is located in south-eastern Iran in the Gulf of Oman. The port serves as the only oceanic port of Iran.
- The port comprises two separate ports namely the Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari. The port was first proposed by the last shah of Iran in the year 1973. The first phase was opened in 1983.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S
India-Sweden Virtual Summit 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has participated in the virtual India-Sweden summit, with the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Lofven. The virtual summit was organised to exchange views on regional and global issues and to discuss the bilateral relations between the two countries. This was the fifth interaction between the two leaders since 2015.
- Both the leaders underlined that the longstanding close relations between India and Sweden were based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, pluralism, equality, freedom of speech, and respect for human rights.
- Prime Minister Modi welcomed Sweden’s decision to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- The leaders also noted the growing membership of the India-Sweden joint initiative – the Leadership Group on Indus-try Transition (LeadIT) that was launched during the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 in New York.
- The two leaders also discussed the Covid-19 situation including the vaccination drive and stressed the need for vaccine equity by providing urgent and affordable access to vaccines across all nations.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Bihari Puraskar 2020 to be awarded to Mohankrishna Bohara
- Bihari Puraskar carries award money of two lakh 50 thousand rupees, a Citation and a Plaque. The award is one of the three literary awards instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991. Named after famous Hindi poet Bihari, the award is given every year for an outstanding work in Hindi or Rajasthani published in the last 10 years by a Rajasthani writer.

WAN-IFRA names The Hindu Group ‘Champion Publisher of the Year 2020’
- The Hindu Group won two golds and two silvers at South Asian Digital Media Awards given by WAN IFRA (World Association of News Publishers), culminating in being named ‘Champion Publisher of the Year’, owing to the highest tally on the points table.
- The awards are presented in recognition of outstanding work done by news publishers, in digital media. The winners were honoured virtually at the Digital Media India 2021 Conference held on March 3, 2021.

RANKING

Indore and NDMC tops Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020
- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has released the final rankings of the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020. The ranking has classified municipalities into two categories based on their population which are: million-plus category and the less than million categories. The Municipal Performance Index will help Municipalities in better planning and management, filling the gaps in city administration, and improving the liveability of cities for its citizens.
  - **Million plus population category**
    - Indore has topped this list, followed by Surat and Bhopal.
  - **Less than a million category**
    - New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.

Municipal Performance Index 2020
- The Municipal Performance Index 2020 has examined the sectoral performance of 111 municipalities. Delhi has been assessed separately for NDMC, and the three Municipal Corporations.
- They have been accessed across five verticals which comprise of 20 sectors and 100 indicators in all totality.
- The five verticals under the Municipal Performance Index are Services, Finance, Policy, Technology and Governance.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

NPCI Partners SBI Payments to launch “RuPay SoftPoS” for Merchants
- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and SBI Payments have partnered to launch
“RuPay SoftPoS” for Indian merchants. The RuPay SoftPoS solution will provide a cost-effective acceptance infrastructure to retailers at a nominal cost. This innovative solution has the capability to transform NFC enabled smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for the retailers.

- RuPay SoftPoS is expected to provide seamless, cost-effective acceptance infrastructure to retailers at a nominal cost, and help deepen the digital payment acceptance among millions of underserved Indian MSMEs.
- RuPay SoftPoS will enable merchants to use their near-field communication (NFC)-enabled smartphones as the point of sale (PoS) terminals and accept payment up to Rs 5,000 through a simple tap and pay mechanism.
- Merchants can convert their existing android smartphone devices into a payment terminal by simply downloading a supported app.
- This solution will revolutionise the way micro and small merchants receive payments and create a demarcated shift in their tendency to deal in cash to accepting secure, contactless digital payments instead.

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**NATIONAL**

**UNGA adopts India-led resolution declaring 2023 as Int’l Year of Millets**

- The UN General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution sponsored by India and supported by over 70 nations declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets. The International Year of Millets is aimed at raising awareness about the health benefits of the grain and its suitability for cultivation under changing climatic conditions. India’s Permanent Mission to the UN also distributed savoury millet snack murukku to all UN Member States.
- The 193-member General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- The resolution titled International Year of Millets 2023’ was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.
- The resolution considers the urgent need to raise awareness of the climate-resilient and nutritional benefits of millets and to advocate for diversified, balanced and healthy diets through the increased sustainable production and consumption of millets.

**SpaceX successfully tests Starship SN10 prototype rocket**

- Elon Musk owned private rocket company, SpaceX successfully tested its Starship prototype rocket “SN10” after two recent failed attempts. SpaceX launched the rocket prototype, to an altitude of 10,000 kilometres and then landed back on the ground. However, the rocket exploded about six minutes after landing. But this test launch is deemed successful because the goal of this launch was to gather information on how the flaps work to control the rocket when it is horizontal as it is falling back to earth.
- The SN10 is an early prototype of the Starship Mars rocket of SpaceX which aims to get people and payloads to the moon, Mars and other distant destinations.
This rocket is also a part of the company’s strategy to phase out its other flight hardware including, the Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy rockets and Dragon cargo and crew capsules, and let Starship shoulder the entire load.

Ease of Living Index 2020 released
- Bengaluru emerged as the top city on the government’s Ease of Living Index 2020 that was released by Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. Pune was second and Ahmedabad was ranked third among 111 cities. A total of 111 cities under the Smart Cities Program, participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020.

**The Ease of Living Index 2020 ranked cities in the following two categories:**
- Million+ populated cities – those with a population of more than a million.
- Less than Million populated cites – those with a population of less than a million.
- No city has been included from West Bengal because of the “data challenge”.

**Million+ category**
- Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in this category.
- This was followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai respectively.

**Less than Million category**
- In this group, Shimla was ranked the highest in ease of living.
- This was followed by Bhubaneshwar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere, and Tiruchirappalli.

Udaipur Science Centre inaugurated at Udaipur in Tripura
- The Governor of Tripura, Ramesh Bais has inaugurated the Udaipur Science Centre, at Udaipur, Tripura. The Udaipur Science Centre has been developed at a cost of Rs 6 crore funded jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Department of Science, Technology and Environment, Tripura Government and with this; the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) has now set-up science centres in all the northeastern states.
- Science Centres play a vital role in developing a scientific temper in society and inculcating a culture of Innovation among the masses, particularly among students.
- The role of NCSM and the Ministry of Culture for the spread of scientific awareness. Udaipur Science Centre is the 22nd Science Centre which has been developed by NCSM and handed over to the State Governments under the Ministry of Culture’s Scheme for Promotion of Culture of Science.
- NCSM will open 4 more new science centres in different parts of India during 2021.

**SPORTS**

Kieron Pollard becomes 3rd Man to Hit 6 Sixes in an over
- Kieron Pollard hit six sixes in an over to guide West Indies to a comprehensive four-wicket win against Sri Lanka in the first game of their three-match T20 series. Pollard joins former India batsman Yuvraj Singh as the only other player to hit six sixes in an over in T20 cricket, and just the third man to hit six sixes in an international match, emulating Herschelle Gibbs (South
Pollard achieved the feat when he hit Sri Lanka’s Akila Dananjaya out of the park 6 times in the 6th over of West Indies’ successful chase in the first T20I at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua. Sri Lanka leg-spinner Akila Dananjaya (3-62) was the unfortunate bowler, pummelled in all directions by Pollard, and this coming after he had taken a hat-trick in his previous over.

Virat Kohli becomes first cricketer to have 100 million followers on Instagram

- India captain Virat Kohli became the first cricketer in the world to have 100 million followers on the social media platform Instagram. The 32-year-old Kohli is also the fourth most followed sportsperson on Instagram.
- Portugal football star Cristiano Ronaldo tops the chart with 265 million followers, ahead of Argentina football captain and FC Barcelona legend Lionel Messi and Brazil’s Neymar, who are second and third in the list with 186 million and 147 million followers respectively. The others in 100 million club are Hollywood actor and former pro-wrestler Dwayne (The Rock) Johnson, American singer-songwriter Beyonce, and Ariana Grande.

Manpreet Vohra Appointed India’s High Commissioner To Australia

- Senior diplomat, Manpreet Vohra has been appointed as India’s next High Commissioner to Australia. Vohra, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, is presently Ambassador of India to Mexico.
- He is expected to take up the assignment shortly. Mr Vohra’s appointment comes at a time India-Australia ties are at an upswing and the two countries are stepping up cooperation particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

National Safety Day: 04 March

- The National Safety Day (NSD) is celebrated every year on 4 March by the National Safety Council (NSC) of India. In 2021, we are observing the 50th National Safety Day. The purpose of the day is to instil a sense of safety awareness among people by providing them with safety, health and environment-related support services.
- The National Safety Day Theme 2021 is “Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety)”.
- The day is also celebrated to mark the foundation of the National Safety Council, which was set up on 4th March 1966 by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. The first National Safety Day was observed in 1972. Additionally, the National Safety Week is celebrated from 4 March to 10 March by organizing week-long safety campaigns.

National Security Day: 04 March

- In India, March 4 is celebrated as National Security Day (Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas) every year, in the honor of the Indian Security Forces. The day aims to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security, who sacrifice their life in maintaining the peace and security of the
people of the country.

- 4 March also marks the day when the National Security Council (NSC) of India was established, in 1966 by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India. The first National Security Day (NSD) was held in 1972.

**RANKING**

**11th QS World University Rankings 2021 released**

- The 11th edition of the QS World University Rankings was released on March 04, 2021. The QS World University Rankings 2021 ranks the top 1,000 universities from around the world, covering 80 different locations. There are 47 new entrants on the list. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the United States has retained its top position as the best university for the ninth year in a row. Stanford University, the United States and the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom are the second and third best University globally in QS World University Rankings 2021.

**From India:**

- The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay has emerged as the best institution. It is placed at 172 positions. No institute in India is in the top 100.

- Indian Institute of Science (185), Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (193) are the only other universities from India to feature in the top 200.

- In terms of subject, twelve Indian universities and higher education institutions have made it to the top 100, with three Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) making it to the top 50 for their respective subject.

- The 12 universities are IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IISc Bangalore, IIT Guwahati, IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi, and O.P Jindal University


**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**World Bank plans $100-mn guarantee scheme for solar rooftop projects**

- The World Bank plans to introduce a $100-million credit guarantee scheme to boost India’s rooftop solar programme, which has not gained enough traction. The scheme will allow micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to avail concessional debt financing for setting up rooftop solar units.

- The World Bank scheme, along with the State Bank of India (SBI) and the MSME ministry to accelerate the adoption of rooftop solar units, will help MSMEs access credit of around $1 billion. The arrangement will be beneficial for the firms that often do not meet the lending criteria of banks and other financial institutions, with their financial woes been exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic.
SBI Mutual Funds Launches First Overseas Fund

- The State Bank of India (SBI) Mutual Funds has launched its first overseas offering on 1 March 2021. The fund titled SBI International Access — US Equity FOF is an open-ended fund of funds scheme investing in a mutual fund scheme/ETFs that invest in US markets, which are domiciled overseas. The scheme will invest 95-100 per cent of its net assets generally in Amundi Funds – US Pioneer Fund (including ETFs), which invest predominantly in the US markets.

The main features of the scheme include:

- International diversification: Provides international diversification to the portfolio and provides investors with the opportunity to invest in themes not available in the Indian market.
- Lower correlation: Aids in mitigating overall risk by investing in a market that has a lower correlation to Indian markets.
- Currency depreciation: Provide investors with the opportunity to benefit from any depreciation in the Indian currency against the currency of the underlying fund.

Minimum Investment Amount

- The customers interested in the scheme are required to invest at least Rs 5,000 for the first time. However, for additional purchase, the minimum application amount is Rs 1,000.
- There is no upper cap for the investment in this fund.

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INTERNATIONAL

Israel officially receives first ever UAE ambassador

- Israel’s president has formally received the first-ever ambassador from the United Arab Emirates, following last year’s historic agreement between the countries to normalise ties. UAE envoy Mohamed Al Khaja, who arrived in Israel, delivered his credentials to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin at a ceremony in Jerusalem. The UAE was the first country to agree to establish full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state under the Abraham Accords, a pact brokered by former US President Donald Trump.
- The agreement made the UAE only the third majority Arab country to form official ties with Israel, following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan have subsequently joined the Abraham Accords. The agreements broke with the longstanding Arab consensus that there should be no normalisation with Israel until it reaches a comprehensive peace deal with the Palestinians.

NATIONAL

Indigenously developed “Spectrograph” commissioned in Nainital

- Indian Scientists at Aryabhatta Research Institute of observational sciences (ARIES), Nainital, have indigenously designed and developed a low-cost optical Spectrograph named as Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC). It has been commissioned on the 3.6-m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT), in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand.
- The ADFOSC spectroscope is the largest of its kind among the existing astronomical spectrographs in India.
• The ADFOSC spectrograph can locate sources of faint light from distant quasars and galaxies in a very young universe, regions around supermassive black-holes around the galaxies, and cosmic explosions.
• So far, spectroscopes were imported from abroad at high costs. The ‘Made in India’ optical spectrograph is about 2.5 times less costly compared to the imported ones and can locate sources of light with a photon-rate as low as about 1 photon per second.
• The ARIES is an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. It is the largest reflecting telescope in India, as well as in Asia.

Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules 2017
• The Government of India has notified comprehensive amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017, for better resolution of policyholders’ complaints regarding insurance service deficiencies, in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner. This will help in facilitating the resolution of the complaints with respect to the deficiencies in insurance services in a cost-effective and impartial manner on time.
• The Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers. This has now been renamed as the Council for Insurance Ombudsmen.
• Earlier, the scope of complaints to Ombudsmen was limited to only disputes, but now it has been enlarged to include deficiencies in service on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.
• The insurance brokers have also been brought within the ambit of the Ombudsman mechanism. The Ombudsmen has been empowered to pass awards against insurance brokers as well.
• To strengthen the timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the mechanism, policyholders will now be enabled for making complaints electronically to the Ombudsman.
• A complaints management system will be created to enable policyholders to track the status of their complaints online.
• The rules also provide that, the ombudsman can use video-conferencing to hear the cases.

Uttarakhand CM launches “Gharoki Pechan, Chelik Naam” scheme
• Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has launched “Gharoki Paachan, Chelik Naam” (daughter’s name is a home’s identity) programme and development schemes worth Rs 42 crore in Nainital. Initially, the scheme has been launched in Nainital and later is set to be extended to the entire Uttarakhand.
• The government is working towards women empowerment and 32,000 women groups of the state are being linked with self-employment to make them self-reliant. The state government is also set to implement many public welfare schemes for the benefit of the youth.
• As part of the development works, the catchment area of Sukha tal Lake will be revitalized & will undergo a beautification process. The works on the Sukha tal lake will serve as a recharge to Nainital Lake & also add towards tourist attraction at Nainital.

Thaawarchand Gehlot launches “Sugamya Bharat App”
• Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Thaawarchand Gehlot has launched the “Sugamya Bharat App”, through a video conference in New Delhi. The minister also launched a
handbook entitled “Access – The Photo Digest”. The App and the handbook have been developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- It is a Crowdsourcing Mobile Application to enable people with disabilities and even the elderly to register accessibility-related problems
- The aim of the app is to sensitisising and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign which includes the built environment, transportation sector and ICT ecosystem in India.
- This handbook is a collection of photographs from across different States and UTs, to act as a tool and guide for stakeholders, to sensitise them about 10 basic features of accessibility and related good-bad practices in easy to understand pictorial form.

Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV merged into Sansad TV

- The Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Television channels that broadcast the proceedings of the upper and lower Houses of Parliament, respectively, have been merged into a single entity. The new channel has been named the ‘Sansad Television’. This change is effective from March 01, 2021.
- Ravi Capoor, a retired IAS officer of the 1986 batch, has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sansad TV for one year. The decision to change the name was jointly taken by Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

SPORTS

Mumbai City FC win ISL League Football Winners Shield

- Mumbai City FC has scripted a 2-0 triumph over ATK Mohun Bagan (ATKMB) at the GMC Stadium in Goa to bag the ISL League Winners Shield and the coveted AFC Champions League spot that comes with it.
- Mumbai and ATKMB finished level on 40 points, but the former claimed first place with a better head-to-head record. Mumbai City FC became the second-ever Indian club to qualify to the group stages of the AFC Champions League.

Indian shuttlers Varun, Malvika win Uganda International titles

- India’s Varun Kapur and Malvika Bansod clinched the men’s and women’s singles titles respectively at the 2021 Uganda International Badminton tournament in Kampala.
- Varun beat compatriot Sankar Muthusamy 21-18, 16-21, 21-17 in the men’s singles final. Malvika beat compatriot Anupama Upadhyaya in the women singles summit clash 17-21, 25-23, 21-10.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Kuldip Singh takes additional charge as CRPF DG

- IPS officer Kuldip Singh has given an additional charge of CRPF director general (DG) after incumbent chief A P Maheshwarri retires. Kuldip Singh is working as the special DG of its central zone, will hold the additional charge of the CRPF head till “the appointment and joining of the successor or until further orders.
The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the country’s largest paramilitary with an estimated strength of about 3.25 lakh personnel. It is designated as the lead internal security force with its main operational theatres being Left Wing Extremism affected states, counter-terrorist combat in the Kashmir valley and counter-insurgency operations in the northeast.

RANKING

Elon Musk Tops Hurun Global Rich List 2021

- The 10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021 was released, which ranked 3228 billionaires from 2,402 companies and 68 countries. The report showed that despite the C-19 pandemic, the world added 8 billionaires every week in 2020 and 421 in a year, taking their total number to a record 3,288.
- The total wealth of all billionaires across the globe surged 32 per cent, an addition of $3.5 trillion, to take their total wealth to $14.7 trillion, during the period under review. The wealth calculations taken into account is as of January 15, 2021.
- Tesla chief Elon Musk bagged the top spot on the Hurun Global Rich List for the first time after adding a massive $151 billion during the year 2020 to take his net worth to $197 billion.
- Amazon.com Inc CEO Jeff Bezos ranked second with $189 billion in net worth.
- Bernard Arnault, the chief executive of LVMH Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton SE, the world’s largest luxury-goods company ranked third with a net worth of $114 billion.

India in the list

- With 60 Billionaires from the Hurun India Global List 2021, Mumbai became the capital for India’s rich followed by New Delhi (40) & Bengaluru (22).
- Asia’s richest person and Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani is ranked eighth on the Hurun Global Rich List 2021. The total wealth of Ambani surged by 24% to $83 billion (approximately Rs 6.09 lakh crore).
- Apoorva Mehta of Instacard & Nikhil Kamath of Zerodha (both 34 years) became the youngest Indian Billionaires with a net worth of USD 1.7 Billion.
- Gautam Adani of Adani Group (Global Rank – 48)
- Shiv Nadar of HCL (Global Rank – 58)
- Lakshmi N Mittal of ArcelorMittal (Global Rank – 104)
- Cyrus Poonawalla of Serum (Global Rank – 113)

ASIA:

- Zhong Shanshan (Founder of Chinese Bottle Water Maker – Nongfu Spring) with USD 85 Billion became Asia’s Richest person, followed by Mukesh Ambani.
- He also broke into the Hurun Global Rich List 2021 for the 1st time with a rank of 7.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

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

- The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collected in the month of February 2021 is ₹1,13,143 crore of which CGST is ₹21,092 crore, SGST is ₹27,273 crore, IGST is ₹55,253 crore (including ₹24,382 crores collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹9,525 crore (including ₹660 crores collected on import of goods).
• Revenues for February are 7% higher than the GST revenues of February 2019. Revenues from the import of goods were 15% higher than Feb ‘19.

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INTERNATIONAL
Ghana becomes the world’s first nation to receive COVAX vaccines
• Ghana has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative with a delivery of 600,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India. Ghana is among 92 low-and middle-income countries that are receiving vaccines for free through COVAX. Another 90 countries and eight territories have agreed to pay if they choose to receive vaccines through COVAX.
• The vaccines, delivered by UNICEF, arrived at Accra’s international airport and are part of the first wave of C-19 vaccines being sent by COVAX, an international cooperative program formed to make sure low- and middle-income countries have fair access to C-19 vaccines. COVAX is led by the United Nation’s World Health Organization; Gavi, a vaccine group; and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, or CEPI.

UN body recommends Bangladesh graduation from LDC
• The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended the graduation of Bangladesh from the category of Least Developed Country (LDC). Bangladesh has fulfilled the eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability. This is the second consecutive time since 2018 that the CDP has made the recommendation for Bangladesh for graduation from the LDC category. Myanmar and Lao PDR also met the criteria for the 2nd time.
• Bangladesh will get time up to 2026 to prepare for the transition to the status of a developing country. Usually, countries are given three years for transition but this year due to the Corona pandemic, Bangladesh has been given five years for the process. On the other hand, enhanced confidence of international financial bodies, improved credit rating and higher FDI is expected to benefit Bangladesh after the transition period is completed.

NATIONAL
International Yoga festival begins in Rishikesh
• The International Yoga Festival was inaugurated by the Agriculture Minister of Uttarakhand Subodh Uniyal, head of Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad (ABAP) Narendra Giri and Patanjali Yogpeeth chairman Acharya Balakrishna in Rishikesh. The festival is being jointly organised by Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board (UTDB) and Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN).
• Yoga has played a very vital role in boosting immunity especially during the time of Covid. The regular practice of Yoga has helped in keeping the diseases away from the body. Yoga is also a cure for many diseases that are hard to treat using medical science.” The aim of Yoga is not only to keep us fit but also to end the negativity within human beings.
India describes Sri Lanka ‘Priority One’ partner in defence

- Indian High Commission in Colombo has described the island nation of Sri Lanka as its “Priority One” partner in the defence sphere and reiterated the assurance of fullest cooperation in the field of defence and security. The assertion comes at a time when the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) is gearing up for the celebration of its 70th anniversary on 2 March.
- The SLAF is celebrating its 70th Anniversary on March 2 and to commemorate the historical event, a Fly Past and an Aerobatic Display are being organised for the first time in the country at a grand scale. A total of 23 Indian Air force (IAF) and Indian Navy aircraft will also partake in the event. Indian High Commission has called the participation indicative of the growing cooperation, camaraderie and friendship between the armed forces of the two nations.

OBITUARY

Lok Sabha MP Nandkumar Singh Chauhan passes away

- Nand Kumar Singh Chauhan, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh, has passed away.
- He was a six-term MP, who was elected as the Lok Sabha MP for the first time in 1996 and got re-elected in 1998, 1999, 2004, 2014 and 2019.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Matam Venkata Rao assumes Charge as MD & CEO of Central Bank Of India

- Matam Venkata Rao has taken charge as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Central Bank Of India. Rao till now held the position of Executive Director at Canara Bank. His appointment is for a period of 3 years with effect from the date of assumption of office on or after March 1, 2021, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- Rao is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers. He is a post-graduate in agriculture from Sri Venkateshwara Agriculture College, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh takes over as ENC chief

- Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh took over as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of Eastern Naval Command (ENC). He replaces Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain. Atul Kumar Jain has been transferred to New Delhi to assume charge as the Vice Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC).
- Vice Admiral A.B. Singh inspected the ceremonial guard and reviewed platoons of naval personnel drawn from various ships and establishments of the ENC. He was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal in 2011 and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 2016.

Tenure of PC Mody as CBDT Chairman extended for 3 months

- The re-appointment of Pramod Chandra Mody as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has been extended for a further period of three months. He is a 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, was appointed as the CBDT chief in February 2019.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved an extension for a period of three
months with effect from March 1, 2021, to May 31, 2021. Earlier, Mr Mody’s tenure was last extended in August last year for six months.

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**World Hearing Day: 3 March**
- World Hearing Day is held on 3 March each year by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world.

**World Wildlife Day observed globally on 3rd March**
- World Wildlife Day is observed globally on the 3rd of March every year to celebrate the beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora present on earth. World Wildlife Day also raise awareness about the benefits that the conservation of wild fauna and flora provides to people living on earth. The day also reminds us of the need to fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species causing various wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.
- World Wildlife Day will be celebrated in 2021 under the theme “Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet”, as a way to highlight the central role of forests, forest species and ecosystems services in sustaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people globally, and particularly of Indigenous and local communities with historic ties to forested and forest-related areas.

**45th Civil Accounts Day celebrated on 01 March 2021**
- The Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) observes the “Civil Accounts Day” every year on March 01, 2021, since its inception in 1976. The year 2021 marks the 45th Civil Accounts Day celebrations. ICAS is one of the Civil Services of India, under the Department of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance.
- Initially, the ICAS was carved out from the Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA & AS), through the promulgation of an Ordinance amending the C & AG’s (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Amendment Act, 1976.
- Later, the Departmentalisation of Union Accounts (Transfer of Personnel) Act, 1976 was enacted and came into force on 01 March 1976, following which the ICAS celebrates March 1 every year as the “Civil Accounts Day”.
- ICAS helps in the delivery of financial management services for the Government of India, such as payment services, supports the tax collection system, performs government-wide accounting, financial reporting functions, preparation of budget estimates and carries out Internal Audit in civil ministries of the Union Government.
Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates Global Bio India 2021

- The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the second edition of Global Bio-India-2021 in New Delhi through virtual mode. The three-day event will be held from March 01 to 03, 2021, on a digital platform. The purpose of the event is to showcase the strength and opportunities of the biotechnology sector of India at the national as well as international level. The Government of India has a target of building a USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.
- The theme of Global Bio-India-2021: “Transforming lives” with the tag line “Biosciences to Bio-economy”.
- The event is co-organised by the Department of Biotechnology under the Ministry of Science & Technology along with its Public Sector Undertaking, and Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) in partnership with industry association Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India.

39th Agartala International Book Fair begins at Tripura

- In Tripura, the 39th Agartala International Book Fair with the theme “Ek Tripura, Shrestha Tripura” has begun at Agartala. State Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has inaugurated the fair in presence of Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner Md. Jobayed Hossain and other state cabinet ministers and MLAs.
- This book fair helps in building a positive mindset among people and that ensures a positive approach for overall progress in society. Cultural troops coming from Bangladesh, Northeastern States including Sikkim will be performing various cultural events on each day as part of the fair.

Saras Aajeevika Mela opens at Noida Haat

- The Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 is underway at Noida Haat. The fair was inaugurated by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. Narendra Singh Tomar while inaugurating the event highlighted that the Ministry of Rural Development is working to include more women under the Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
- SHGs played a vital role in increasing family income and improving quality of life. More than 300 rural self-help groups and craftsmen from 27 states are participating in the Mela which is being run by the Ministry of Rural Development.

ISRO’s PSLV-C51 launches Brazil’s Amazonia-1 satellite

- India’s Polar rocket has successfully launched Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 other satellites from the spaceport here, in the first mission of the year for space agency ISRO. The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C51 lifted from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SHAR) and first injected into orbit primary payload Amazonia-1. The 637-kg Amazonia-1 which became the first Brazilian satellite to be launched from India is an optical earth observation satellite of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).
After a gap of over one-and-half hours, the co-passenger satellites, including one from Chennai-based Space Kidz India (SKI), which is engraved with a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, were launched subsequently one after another in the space of ten minutes in a textbook launch. SKI’s Satish Dhawan Satellite (SD-SAT) also carried Bhagavad Gita in a Secured Digital card format.

Nirmala Sitharaman attended G20 Central Bank Governors’ meeting

The Finance Minister of India, Nirmala Sitharaman has attended the G20 Central Bank Governors’ meeting. This was the first-ever G20 Central Bank Governors’ meeting that was held under the Italian Presidency. The main aim of the meeting was to discuss policy actions for transformative and equitable recovery along with other issues on the agenda including the global economic outlook, financial sector issues, financial inclusion and sustainable finance. This meeting is a follow-up for the upcoming 2021 G20 Summit, the sixteenth meeting of Group of Twenty, scheduled to take place in Rome, Italy, on 30–31 October 2021.

During the meeting, the finance minister highlighted India’s policy response with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic and the world’s largest inoculation drive with their G-20 counterparts. The G20 Finance Ministers and the Central Bank Governors also held a discussion regarding the implications of climate change on global growth and financial stability.

Indian Women’s League 2020-21 to be hosted in Odisha

All India Football Federation confirms Odisha as the venue for the forthcoming Hero Indian Women’s League 2020-21 edition. This is the fifth edition of IWL, the top division women’s league in India. The Odisha government is a strategic partner of the AIFF (All India Football Federation) as it provides the necessary infrastructure to various men and women age-group teams.

AIFF appreciates Odisha Government’s longstanding partnership with Indian Football wherein the latter have been providing its stadia and State of the Art training facilities to National Teams across various age groups and genders – all in an effort to take Indian Football forward together.

Zero Discrimination Day: 01 March

Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated on 1 March each year by the United Nations and other international organisations. Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated to promote and celebrate everyone’s right, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, etc. Zero Discrimination Day aims to raise the voice for the right to live life with dignity, despite one’s choices, beliefs, profession, education, disability or even illness.

Theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2021: “End Inequalities”.

A butterfly is the symbol of Zero Discrimination Day and it is widely used by people to share their stories and photos as a way to end discrimination and work towards positive transformation. Zero Discrimination Day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was
launched by UNAIDS Executive Director at Beijing after UNAIDS launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on World AIDS Day in December 2013.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Golden Globe Awards 2021 announced

- The Golden Globe Awards 2021 was held to recognise excellence in film, both American and international, and American television. This was the 78th edition of the annual event, which honoured the best in American television, as well as film in 2020 and early 2021, as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.
- American TV series “The Crown” won the most awards for the ceremony with four awards. Late American actor Chadwick Boseman won the Golden Globe award for Best Actor in Drama category, posthumously, for his portrayal of Levee Green in Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom.

Winners in the Film category:
- Best Film – Drama: Nomadland
- Best Film – Musical/Comedy: Borat Subsequent Movie film
- Best Director: Chloe Zhao for Nomadland
- Best Actress – Drama: Andra Day for The United States vs. Billie Holiday
- Best Actor – Drama: Chadwick Boseman for Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom
- Best Actress – Musical/Comedy: Rosamund Pike for I Care A Lot
- Best Actor – Musical/Comedy: Sacha Baron Cohen for Borat Subsequent Movie film
- Best Supporting Actress: Jodie Foster for The Mauritanian
- Best Supporting Actor: Daniel Kaluuya for Judas And The Black Messiah
- Best Screenplay: Aaron Sorkin for The Trial of the Chicago 7
- Best Foreign Language Film: Minari
- Best Animated Feature: Soul
- Best Original Score: Soul
- Best Original Song: ‘Io Si (Seen)’ from The Life Ahead

PM Modi to receive global energy and environment leadership award

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive the CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award during an annual CERAWeek Conference-2021. The award is given to him for his commitment to sustainability in energy and the environment.
- The CERAWeek Conference-2021 will be held virtually from March 1 to 5, 2021. It is an annual international conference that brings together the energy industry leaders, experts, policymakers Government officials, leaders from the technology, energy technology innovators and financial & industrial communities.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A book titled “Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis” by Anindya Dutta

- Anindya Dutta, a banker turned author, penned a new book titled “Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis”, a chronicle of Indian Tennis. Advantage India is a well-researched account of the journey of Indian tennis, with a special section on the Doubles game and on women’s tennis
The book is published by Westland publications.

- The book provides an extensive history of Indian tennis on both men’s and women’s side.
- The book is the result of the detailed research of Anindya Dutta on the data from the archives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and British newspapers from the past 200 years.
- The book features pre-independence players like Mohammed Sleem, the Fyzee brothers, S.M. Jacob and Ghaus Mohammed and tennis icons like Dilip Bose, Sumant Misra, Naresh Kumar and Ramanathan Krishnan.
- This also features Rohan Bopanna and Sania Mirza who transformed Women’s Tennis in India.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**Fino Payments Bank upgraded to scheduled commercial bank status**

- Reserve Bank of India has notified that it has included Fino Payments Bank in the Second Schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. All banks which are included in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 are Scheduled Banks. These banks comprise Scheduled Commercial Banks and Scheduled Co-operative Banks.
- Benefits of being a scheduled bank under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934:
  - Becomes eligible for debts/loans at the bank rate from the RBI
  - Automatically acquires the membership of clearinghouse
  - Rediscount of first-class exchange bills from the RBI

**Scheduled Commercial Banks in India are categorised into five different groups according to their ownership and/or nature of the operation. These bank groups are:**

- State Bank of India and its Associates
- Nationalised Banks
- Regional Rural Banks
- Foreign Banks
- Other Indian Scheduled Commercial Banks (in the private sector)

**INTERNATIONAL**

**Russia launches space satellite Arktika-M on first mission to the Arctic**

- The Arctic has warmed more than twice as fast as the global average over the past three decades and Moscow is seeking to develop the energy-rich region, investing in the Northern Sea Route for shipping across its long northern flank as ice melts.
- The satellite - Arktika-M - successfully reached its intended orbit after being launched from Kazakhstan's Baikonur cosmodrome by a Soyuz rocket, Dmitry Rogozin, the head of Russia's Roscosmos space agency, said in a post on Twitter.
- The Arktika-M will have a highly elliptical orbit that passes high over northern latitudes allowing it to monitor northern regions for lengthy periods.
IAF gifts 1971 war helicopter to Bangladesh, gets F-86 fighter

- Commemorating 50 years of defeating Pakistan in the 1971 war, Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief RKS Bhadauria gifted a legacy Alouette III helicopter to Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and got a legacy F-86 Sabre aircraft as a return gift from Dhaka.
- "To mark the Golden Jubilee of 1971 War of Liberation, IAF chief RKS Bhadauria gifted a legacy Alouette III helicopter to the Bangladesh Air Force. Bangladesh Air Force chief too gifted an F-86 Sabre aircraft that had been restored by BAF after the 1971 war. Both legacy aircraft will find a place of pride in museums on both sides," IAF stated in a tweet.
- The exchange of aircraft took place in Dhaka during the four day trip of Bhadauria to Bangladesh where he visited different airbases and interacted with the top military leadership of that country.

NATIONAL

India deploys Sindhu Netra satellite for keeping eye over Indian Ocean

- In a major boost for the country’s surveillance capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region, India on Sunday successfully deployed the Sindhu Netra satellite in space which will help the Navy and security agencies to monitor suspicious ships operating there.
- “The Sindhu Netra has been developed by the DRDO and has been deployed in space successfully by the ISRO rocket launched on Sunday. The capability will allow us to keep an eye on the areas of our interest from the African region to South China Sea,” top government sources told India Today.
- Sindhu Netra is one of the first in the series of satellites that would help the nation in enhancing its surveillance capabilities on land in areas such as the Ladakh region with China and the border areas with Pakistan.
- Seeking to keep a closer eye on the activities of the Chinese military both near the Indian territory as well as in its depth areas all along the 4,000 kilometre Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Indian security agencies feel there is a requirement of four to six dedicated satellites which can help them keep a check on the adversary’s moves.

PM Modi inaugurates first-ever India Toy Fair 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the first-ever Indian Toy Fair 2021 via video conference during which he urged the country to become ‘Atmanirbhar’ in the toy manufacturing sector. The Ministry of Textiles, in collaboration with other ministries, including the Ministry of Education, has organised the virtual event with an aim to provide joyful learning to children by including them in teaching and learning as well as promoting the indigenous toy industry. The toy fair is divided into five stages — pre-school to Class II, primary, upper primary, secondary and senior secondary.
- The idea of a toy fair emerged from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Mann Ki Baat address on August 30, 2020, where he highlighted the huge potential of the toys market and the opportunities that can be tapped to promote indigenous toys.
- Aimed at providing a platform to states to develop toys reflecting the history, culture and social milieu specific to the states and also to revive traditional and indigenous toys in the lives of
children, the national toy fair claims to also boost the economy by supporting local toy industry under ‘Atmnirbhar Bharat’.

**SPORTS**

Vinesh Phogat beats Vanesa Kaladzinskaya to win gold in Ukraine wrestling event
- India's star wrestler Vinesh Phogat defeated 2017 world champion V Kaladzinskay to win the gold medal at the Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial tournament.
- Up against the world number seven Belarusian, it was not an easy bout for the world number three Indian as the two grapplers kept testing each other with consistent attacks in the sea-saw battle in which Vinesh prevailed.
- Vinesh opened up a 4-0 lead in the 53kg final with a throw which she initiated with a left-leg attack but Kaladzinskay made it 4-4 with her brilliant move.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

Arun Kumar Singh takes charge as Bihar chief secretary
- Kumar, a 1984-batch officer, was due to retire on February 29, 2020 but, the central government had granted him extension twice for two terms of six months each on the state government’s recommendation.
- Kumar had assumed charge as chief secretary of Bihar from May 31, 2018 following the retirement of Anjani Kumar Singh, who is currently the advisor to the chief minister(CM) Nitish Kumar.
- The state government had to appoint Arun Kumar Singh after the Centre, which beached the convention by granting six month extension for successive terms, declined giving fresh extension to Deepak Kumar.
- Kumar will join as principal secretary to the CM on contract, the post of which was created under the cabinet secretary department (CSD) in 2002, from March 1. As per the notification issued by the CSD, terms and condition of his appointment would be notified later.

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

National Science Day: 28 February
- National Science Day is celebrated all over India on 28th February. On this day, Sir CV Raman had announced the discovery of the Raman Effect for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930. The government of India designated 28 February as National Science Day (NSD) in 1986.
- The theme for this year’s National Science Day is ‘Future of STI: Impact on Education Skills and Work’. The National Science Day 2021 aims to motivate the students to gain hands-on experience in the field of science.
- Dr CV Raman was a renowned scientist who had a bachelors’ and masters’ in Physics from the Presidency College in Madras. He took part in numerous science competitions along with the government job. Afterwards, he received a scholarship from the Indian government.

Rare Disease Day: February 28, 2021
- Rare Disease Day is observed every year on the last day of February. This year in 2021 it falls on
February 28, 2021. The day is observed to raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families.

- Rare Disease Day was first launched by European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS) and its Council of National Alliances in 2008.

India observes Second Protein Day on 27 February

- In India, February 27th is celebrated as the National Protein Day, to create awareness about protein deficiency and encourage people to include this macronutrient in their diet. The day was launched by the 'Right to Protein', a national-level public health initiative on February 27, 2020. This year theme of National Protein Day is “Powering with Plant Protein”.
- 2021 marks the second year for this nutritional awareness milestone in India by ‘Right to Protein’.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

DU, Singapore Fine Arts Society sign MoU on collaboration in Indian music

- The Delhi University's Faculty of Music and Fine Arts and the Singapore Fine Arts Society (SIFAS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for "cultural, academic and research collaboration agreement in Indian music".
- The MoU was signed at a two-day international webinar, "Traditional Music in Different Cultures: Opportunities and Challenges in the Changing Global Scenario", hosted by the Delhi University's Department of Music on February 25 and 26.
- "The MoU will expand the cultural and institutional footprint of both the prestigious musical institutions with a rich historical background – SIFAS commencing its glorious music journey in 1949, and the Department of Music taking its first step towards musical excellence in 1960," an official statement.
- "The teachers and students of SIFAS will get an opportunity to perform at the University of Delhi, and vice versa,".

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INTERNATIONAL

Russian supermodel Vodianova is new UN goodwill ambassador

- Russian supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova has become a United Nations goodwill ambassador, to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.
- She will be a campaigner for the UN Population Fund, which now calls itself the UN”s sexual and reproductive health agency, known as UNFPA.

NATIONAL

Attukal pongala festival held in 2021

- Attukal Pongala 2021 is being celebrated on Saturday, February 27. It is a ten-day-long festival
that is celebrated at Kerala’s Attukal Bhagavathy Temple situated in Thiruvananthapuram.

- The all-women congregation was declared the largest gathering of women by Guinness World Records in 2009.

39th Agartala International Book Fair begins in Tripura

- In Tripura, the 39th Agartala International Book Fair with the theme “Ek Tripura, Shrestha Tripura” has begun at Agartala.
- State Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated the fair yesterday evening in presence of Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner Md. Jobayed Hossain and other state cabinet ministers and MLAs.
- While addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said a book fair helps in building a positive mindset among people and that ensures a positive approach for overall progress in society.
- Cultural troops coming from Bangladesh, Northeastern States including Sikkim will be performing various cultural events on each day as part of the fair.

SPORTS

R. Vinay Kumar announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- Former India international and Karnataka captain, R Vinay Kumar has announced retirement from all forms of cricket. The “Davangere Express” after running for 25 years and passing so many stations of cricketing life, has finally arrived at the station called retirement.
- Vinay, a medium-pacer, represented India in one Test, 31 ODIs and 9 T20Is between 2010 and 2013. Vinay retires as a domestic giant of Indian cricket having taken 504 first-class wickets in 139 matches that included 26 five-wicket hauls and five 10-wicket hauls in a match. With the bat, he scored 3311 runs including two centuries and 17 half-centuries. In 141 List A matches, the 37-year-old took 225 wickets at 24.39 and scored 1198 runs including four half-centuries.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Remembering Vinayak Damodar Savarkar on his 55th death anniversary

- Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was born May 28, 1883, at Bhagur village of Nashik district in Maharashtra. Veer Savarkar died on February 26, 1966, in Bombay. He was a nationalist and one of the most important figures of the Hindu Mahasabha (“Great Society of Hindus”), a Hindu nationalist organization and political party.
- Veer Savarkar was a freedom fighter, politician, lawyer, writer, social reformer, and institutor of Hindutva ideology. He got the nickname 'Veer' at the age of 12 after performing a bravery act.
- During his student days in London (1906-10), Savarkar assisted a group of Indian revolutionaries in techniques of assassination that his associates learned from expatriate Russian revolutionaries in Paris.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

SBI joins JPMorgan’s blockchain payments network

- State Bank of India has tied up with JPMorgan to use the US bank’s blockchain technology to
speed up overseas transactions. The tie-up is expected to reduce SBI customers’ transaction costs and time taken for payments. SBI has joined Liink, a new blockchain-based interbank data network developed by JPMorgan. By integrating the technology, the bank expects to reduce transaction costs and improve cross-border payments for its customers.

- Liink is a peer-to-peer network and ecosystem operating under the umbrella of JPMorgan’s blockchain- and digital-currency-focused business, dubbed Onyx.
- Piloted in 2017, the product was originally referred to as Interbank Information Network and rebranded as Liink in October 2020.
- The Liink solution has enlisted more than 400 financial institutions and corporations in 78 countries, including 27 of the world’s top 50 banks. The network has around 100 live banks on the network, including both state-owned and private institutions.

**NPCI enables UPI AutoPay live on music streaming platform ‘Gaana’**

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced that UPI AutoPay has now gone live on Gaana. Its integration with UPI AutoPay has made Gaana the 1st player in the Media & Entertainment industry to roll out the innovative e-mandate feature on UPI. The introduction of UPI AutoPay will empower Gaana’s users to experience a smooth and seamless mechanism of renewing their subscriptions.
- Customers can enjoy premium, uninterrupted streaming of their choicest music, podcasts and radio without having to remember about the subscription renewal date. The strategic role played by Paytm and Juspay as payment aggregators will create a superior transaction experience for the customers. Based on the mandate, the subscription amount will be deducted automatically on the authorized date without entering UPI PIN.

**AU Small Finance Bank has named Sharad Goklani as President & CTO**

- AU Small Finance Bank has named Sharad Goklani as its new President & CTO. He was earlier associated with Equitas Small Finance Bank as its EVP & Chief Technology Officer. As a part of his new appointment, Goklani will be based in Jaipur Rajasthan. Prior to Equitas, he was associated with Bharti Airtel and Bharti Telesoft. He holds a Master degree in computer application from Jaipur University.
- AU was started 25 years ago by Sanjay Agarwal, a merit holder Chartered Accountant and a first-generation entrepreneur.
- As per the official website, it was founded in Jaipur in 1996 as Au Financiers, a non-deposit taking Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC), it effectively worked on funding economic growth, especially for the under-served and un-served low & middle-class individuals.
- Au Financiers converted into AU Small Finance Bank in April 2017 after receiving the license from RBI.