NATIONAL

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes first Union Territory to be corona free
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the first state or Union territory in the country to become Covid-19 free with active cases falling to zero in the islands. Health ministry’s website reported that the last four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared cured. The UT had reported a total of 4,932 cases and 62 deaths from the virus.
- The share of Kerala in India’s daily cases crossed 50 per cent for the first time. There were 11,024 fresh cases in the country out of which Kerala alone reported 5,716, 51.8 per cent of the total. The state also has the highest count of active cases at 69,157, out of around 1 lakh 61 thousand in the country.

India hosts Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers’ Conclave
- India hosted Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers’ Conclave on the sidelines of Aero India 2021. The conclave is an initiative to promote dialogue in an institutional, economic and cooperative environment that can foster the development of peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.
- The broad theme of the conclave is ‘Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean’. The conclave is also taking place at a time Indian and Chinese troops are locked in a bitter standoff in eastern Ladakh for the last eight months.

Kerala to Open its First Human Milk Bank
- Kerala will open its first Human Milk Bank (HMB) on February 5, 2021. This is a state-of-the-art facility, and Kerala Health Minister KK Shailaja will open at Ernakulam General Hospital. A milk bank was established with the support of the Rotary Club of Cochin Global.
- After the State Health Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Rotary Club of Cochin Global in 2020, its cost was 3.5 million rupees. The Association of Pediatricians (IAP) will provide trained nursing staff to operate the milk bank.

PM Modi Inaugurates Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the Chauri Chaura incident on February 4 via videoconferencing. February 4, 2021 marks 100 years of the ‘Chauri Chaura’ incident, a landmark event in the country’s fight for independence.
- PM Modi also released a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura incident, to mark the beginning of the event. The state government of Uttar Pradesh has planned a year of celebrations in all 75 districts of the state in the memory of the martyrs.
HAL to develop world’s first high-altitude pseudo satellite

- The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is developing a futuristic high altitude pseudo satellite with a start-up company, to strengthen the country’s military strike capabilities. It is a first of its kind project in the world, where a manned aircraft will operate within the boundary and the unmanned aircraft will enter the enemy zone and can carry out strikes deep inside the enemy territory.
- Capable of autonomous functions, these unmanned aerial vehicles will also have all the manoeuvring capabilities. "It can straightway hit the target at a distance of 700 kilometres or can go to 350 kilometres and come back. It carries ammunition, missiles if needed CATS Alpha.
- The technology has been named Combined Air Teaming System (CATS). It will have a manned aircraft (will be known as mother ship), operating from far away, and four autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles known as CATS Warrior.
- The satellite will be solar energised and become a big asset flying unmanned around 70,000 ft for 2-3 months and taking information.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

S.N. Subrahmanyan appointed as Chairman of the National Safety Council

- The Ministry of Labour & Employment has appointed S.N. Subrahmanyan as the new Chairman of the National Safety Council (NSC) of India for a period of three years. Subrahmanyan is the CEO and Managing Director of L&T Ltd., India’s largest construction company.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation

- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female is observed globally on 6 February. This day is sponsored by the United Nations for their efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003.
- This year theme of International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female: No Time for Global Inaction: Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation.
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women. Girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

HAL inks deal with MIDHANI to develop, manufacture composite raw materials

- The state-owned aerospace and defence company, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hyderabad-based Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI) for development and production of composite raw materials for use in
aerospace. This is the first time that such an MoU has been signed for composite raw materials. The MoU was signed during the Aero India 2021 on February 04, 2021, in Bengaluru.

- Composites raw materials are currently imported since there is no equivalent proven Indian approved/qualified supplier for these raw materials for the aircraft applications.
- These composite raw material, mainly in the form of prepregs, are used in platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH).

**RANKING**

India ranks 53rd in EIU’s Democracy Index

- India’s position has slipped by two places to be placed at 53rd spot in the 2020 Democracy Index, from among 167 countries. The overall score of India is 6.61 in the Index, on a scale of 0-10. India has been classified as a ‘flawed democracy’.
- Democracy Index is the global ranking released by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide.

**BOOKS AND AUTHORS**

Hunter Biden to Release Memoir ‘Beautiful Things’

- United States President Joe Biden’s son, Hunter Biden, is publishing his memoir titled “Beautiful Things”, which narrates about his struggles with addiction and drug abuse. The book is scheduled to be published in the United States on April 6 by Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.
- The 51-year-old Hunter Biden has narrated his personal story about how he was a drug addict from his first sips of alcohol as a child, when he was dealing with the aftermath of a family tragedy, to his crack-cocaine use and how he fixed that problem.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

RBI Monetary Policy: Policy Rate unchanged

- The six-member Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), headed by Governor Shaktikanta Das, has decided to maintain the status quo on policy rate amid sticky rate of inflation. At this point, the repo rate or the rate at which RBI lends to banks stands unchanged at 4 per cent. The reverse repo rate also stayed unchanged at 3.35 per cent. The MPC committee members voted unanimously in favour of the decision.

The key decisions taken in the Monetary Policy Committee meeting are:

- Policy Repo Rate: 4.00%
- Reverse Repo Rate: 3.35%
- Marginal Standing Facility Rate: 4.25%
- Bank Rate: 4.25%
- CRR: 3%
- SLR: 18.00%

RBI Monetary Policy Highlights & Key Decisions:

- The MPC continued to maintain the accommodative stance.
- The MPC has predicted the economic growth rate i.e. GDP growth rate of India at 10.5 per cent
in 2021-22 (FY22).
• This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22.
• The six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das meets every two months to analyze the state of the Indian economy and inflation and address the monetary issues in the country.

Current Affairs PDF- February 05, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Reliance sources world’s first ‘carbon-neutral’ oil from United States

• Billionaire Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance Industries Ltd has received the world’s first consignment of ‘carbon-neutral oil’ from Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), a division of United State oil major Occidental. This feat will further help the oil major to accomplish its target of becoming a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

• The Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Sea Pearl containing the carbon-neutral oil from Permian basin, unloaded the cargo at Jamnagar on January 28, 2021. It must be noted that Reliance operates the world’s largest single-location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with a capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year.

• This transaction is the first major petroleum shipment of Reliance, for which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the entire crude lifecycle, including oil extraction, transport, storage, shipping, refining, subsequent use, and combustion, have been offset.

Andy Jassy set to replace Jeff Bezos as Amazon CEO

• Amazon.com Inc founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos has announced that he would step down as CEO of the company and become Executive Chairman in Q3 of 2021, i.e. with effect from July 01, 2021.

• Andy Jassy, who is currently serving as the chief executive of Amazon Web Services (AWS), will replace Bezos as CEO of Amazon. Bezos started the company 27 years ago, on 5 July 1994, as an internet bookseller.

NATIONAL

Ayesha Aziz becomes India’s Youngest Female Pilot at 25

• A 25-year-old Kashmiri woman, Ayesha Aziz, has become the youngest female pilot in the country. She became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 in 2011. The 25 -year-old from Kashmir who is the youngest female pilot in the country acts is a source of inspiration and a beacon of empowerment for numerous Kashmiri women.

• In the year 2011, Aziz became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 and underwent training to fly a MIG-29 jet at Russia’s Sokol airbase the following year. She later graduated in aviation from the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) and obtained a commercial license in 2017.
Gol launches unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of GOBARDHAN activities across the nation.
- Gobardhan aims to positively impact village cleanliness and generate wealth and energy from cattle and organic waste.
- It focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to useful compost, biogas and bio-CNG.
- It will also help in keeping the village clean while increasing the income of farmers and cattle herders.
- It will be hugely beneficial for the country as India is home to the highest cattle population in the world (around 300 million in number) which produces around 3 million tonnes of dung.
- It will encourage farmers to consider dung and other waste not just as waste but as a source of income.
- It will provide many benefits to rural people by keeping villages clean and sanitized, improving livestock health and increasing farm yields.

Punjab CM launches ‘Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai’ mission

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has virtually launched the ‘Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai’ mission as part of the government’s campaign to accomplish the goal of 100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households. The scheme is being funded by the World Bank, Jal Jeevan Mission of Gol, NABARD, and State Budget.
- The scheme will benefit more than 1.6 lakh residents from 155 villages in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur districts by helping replace groundwater with surface water supply for drinking, besides resolving the problem of arsenic affected habitations.
- The Chief Minister also inaugurated one Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme covering 85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.

Aero India 2021 Begins in Bengaluru

- The Aero India 2021 event, country’s premier aerospace and defence exhibition, kick-started at Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru. The 13th edition of the international event touted as the world’s first-ever hybrid aero and defence show will see several aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF), Army, Navy, Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL), and the Coast Guard participating in the show.
- The three-day event will focus on India’s indigenous defence sector capabilities amid buzz around Atmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India campaigns.
- This 13th edition will see a combination of both physical and virtual exhibition with 601 exhibitors, including 523 from India and 78 from 14 foreign countries.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited would exhibit its Aatmanirbhar Formation Flight.
India’s First Amputee Clinic Launched In Chandigarh

- The first of its kind ‘amputee clinic’ in India, has been launched by the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), a premier medical and research institution in Chandigarh. The basic intent of this initiative is to bring an Amputee as a near-normal functional human being in society. This initiative will attempt to provide appropriate management to amputees to guide them in their path to rehabilitation in society and will support patients with counselling and medical facilities during their treatment and recovery.
- ‘PGI Amputee Clinic’ in Chandigarh has been set up with the aim of improving amputation patient care by providing a collection of services under one roof with significant coordination. The clinic will provide social, mental and physical support to its patients.

Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS) Conclave Organised at Bengaluru

- Raksha Mantri, Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the ‘Chiefs of Air Staff (CAS) Conclave’ at Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The two-day conclave has been organised by Indian Air Force, from 3 to 04 February 2021, in a Hybrid Form with extensive use of digital media.
- The Chiefs of Air Staff from about 75 countries would come together on a single platform to exchange their thoughts on current issues related to aerospace power strategy and technological developments.
- The Conclave is a perfect example of India’s Defence Cooperation with other countries working as a diplomatic instrument, giving an opportunity for building bridges of friendship, mutual trust and capacities on a global basis. Promoting transparency in defence cooperation and building areas of common interests in military aviation will be focus areas of the CAS Conclave.

SPORTS

Ashok Dinda announces retirement from all forms of cricket

- Fast bowler Ashok Dinda, has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. The 36-year-old right-handed pacer made his first-class debut for Bengal in 2005 and played for 15 years in Bengal cricket.
- He made his international debut in 2009, in a T20I against Sri Lanka, followed by making his ODI debut in Zimbabwe in 2010. He played 13 ODIs and 9 T20I matches for India. He played 116 first-class matches for Bengal, taking 420 wickets at a bowling average of 28.28.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Centre Appoints Praveen Sinha as interim Director of CBI

- Department of Personnel and Training, under Personnel Ministry, has appointed Praveen Sinha, as the interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), with immediate effect on 03 February 2021. He has been appointed in place of the incumbent chief RK Shukla, whose tenure came to an end on February 03, 2021.
- Sinha, a 1988-batch Gujarat cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, is currently an additional director at CBI, the premier investigating agency of India. Sinha shall look after the duties of Director CBI till the appointment of new director CBI, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
PHDCCI Report: India to emerge as second most resilient economy in 2021

- India will emerge as the second most resilient economy in 2021, as per the International Economic Resilience (IER) Rank, released by industry body, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI). The ranking has been topped by Germany, among the top-10 leading economies. South Korea is at the third position in the list.
- Apart from this, India’s real GDP growth rate is projected to be the highest in the year 2021 among the top-10 leading economies in the world, at 11.5%. It reflects India’s strong “economic resurgence” to the global economic turmoil caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current Affairs PDF- February 04, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Pete Buttigieg becomes first openly gay cabinet secretary confirmed by U.S. Senate

- Pete Buttigieg was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on Tuesday on an 86-13 vote to head the U.S. Transportation Department, the first openly gay U.S. Cabinet secretary confirmed by lawmakers.
- Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, who challenged Joe Biden for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, will oversee aviation, highways, vehicles, pipelines and transit, as well as efforts to ensure safe transportation in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. He will take a key role in a White House effort to dramatically ramp up infrastructure spending.

‘Aatmanirbharta’ named Oxford Hindi word of 2020

- Oxford Languages, the world’s leading dictionary publisher, has named ‘Aatmanirbharta’ as the Hindi word of the year 2020. The Oxford Hindi word of the year is a word or expression that is chosen to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year, and have lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.
- ‘Aatmanirbharta’ means self-reliance. The word was chosen as it “validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic”.

NATIONAL

Rajnath Singh inaugurates HAL’s second Tejas Light Combat Aircraft’s

- Defence minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL) second Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-Tejas production line in Bengaluru, ahead of the upcoming Aero India 2021. The deal to be signed in the next few days with HAL would strengthen the Indian Air Force’s fleet of homegrown fighter jet ‘LCA-Tejas’ and overall combat capability.
- Last month, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had approved the largest indigenous defence procurement deal worth about Rs 48,000 crores to buy 83 LCA Tejas Mark1A fighter jets. The Aero India, which provides a platform for aerospace companies to showcase their products and services is scheduled to be held from February 3 to 5 at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru. During the inaugural day, 41 aircraft including Dakota, Su-30 MKI would participate in the flight display while there would be 63 aircraft on
static display.

Ministry of Education launched ASEAN India Hackathon 2021

- The Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ has addressed the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN India Hackathon 2021 on February 1. The Ministry of Education has launched the ASEAN India Hackathon 2021.
- The ASEAN India Hackathon 2021 is being conducted virtually from February 1 to 3, 2021. The 10 ASEAN countries are - Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.
- The ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon is an initiative by PM Modi and is launched by the Ministry of Education.
- This unique hackathon presents opportunities for India and all the 10 ASEAN countries to improve and strengthen their economic and cultural ties through cooperation in science and technology and education.

SPORTS

Former pacer Merv Hughes inducted into Australian Cricket Hall of Fame

- Former right-arm fast bowler Merv Hughes has been inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame. The 59-year-old played 53 Tests and 33 ODIs for Australia in a career spanning from 1985 to 1994, during which he captured 212 Test wickets and 38 ODI wickets.
- His career-best figures of 8-87 against the West Indies at the WACA in 1988 included the final wicket of a hat-trick spread across three separate overs, two innings and two different days. In 2005, Hughes became a selector for the Australian cricket team, a role he would hold through until 2010.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Ajay Singh re-elected Boxing Federation of India President

- Ajay Singh Says focus will be on training of Tokyo Olympics-bound boxers, grassroots development and women’s boxing.
- Spicejet chairman Ajay Singh defeated Ashish Shelar in a high-profile contest to get re-elected as president of Boxing Federation India for a second term at the general elections held in Gurugram on Wednesday.
- Singh defeated Shelar, former Maharashtra Cricket Association president, 37-27. Hemanta Kumar Kalita was elected secretary general and Digvijay Singh treasurer. The elections were held in the presence of AIBA observer Yury Zaystsev and IOA observer Rakesh Gupta.

Praveen Sinha named acting CBI chief after Shukla’s ‘quiet’ tenure

- The decision was taken as the high powered panel comprising the PM, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde and leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury have not been able to meet to choose the agency’s next chief.
- The Centre on Wednesday appointed the Central Bureau of Investigation’s deputy chief, 1988 batch Gujarat cadre Indian Police Service officer Praveen Sinha, as the acting director of the
federal agency with “immediate effect”, according to an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training.

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**International Day of Human Fraternity: 4 February**
- International Day of Human Fraternity is observed on 4th February globally. International Day of Human Fraternity aims to underline the importance of raising awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance. It also aims to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity.
- This year International Day of Human Fraternity 2021 theme: A Pathway to the Future.

**World Cancer Day: February 4**
- World Cancer Day is observed every year on 4 February by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). The day is celebrated to raise awareness and education about cancer, and pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the disease.
- World Cancer Day 2019-21 theme: ‘I Am And I Will’. Created in 2000, World Cancer Day has grown into a positive movement for everyone, everywhere to unite under one voice to face one of our greatest challenges in history.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**50th Kerala State Film Awards conferred**
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has presented the 50th Kerala State Film Awards 2019 and the J C Daniel Award at a function here. Pinarayi Vijayan released the stamp published in connection with the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK).
- Veteran filmmaker Hariharan, who was conferred with the J C Daniel Award, is an artist who had travelled with cinema for about half a century and made films which went on to become milestones in the annals of Malayalam tinsel town. The film awards were also distributed. Culture Minister A K Balan presided.

**A.R. Rahman presented 'Alert Being Icon Award'**
- Music composer AR Rahman and social activist from Saidapet Hari Krishnan were among the 14 people who were presented the fourth edition of the Alert Being Awards 2020 by the NGO ALERT, for their Good Samaritan work. In his video message, Mr Rahman said ALERT had been doing a brilliant job in empowering a common man to save lives. Hari Krishnan had been appointed by the Greater Chennai Corporation as a district volunteer head for Covid-19 relief work.
- The Alert Being Icon Award for an organisation was presented to the Biocon Foundation founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.
- Thirty COVID-19 warriors were honoured with Alert Being Covid Frontline Warrior for their contribution during the pandemic. Alert Being Awards 2020 received 156 nominations from 15 States and 35 districts across India.
BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Dalai Lama pens new book ‘The Little Book of Encouragement’

- Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has come out with his new book titled ‘The Little Book of Encouragement’, in which he has shared quotes and words of wisdom to promote human happiness. The book has been edited by Renuka Singh and published by Penguin Random House.
- The Little Book of Encouragement contains 130 quotes related to how to deal with the new realities of the panic-stricken world, combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change besides Dalai Lama’s views on Tibet.

Current Affairs PDF- February 03, 2021

INTERNATIONAL

Aung San Suu Kyi detained as army grabs power in Myanmar

- In Myanmar, a military coup was put in place on 1st February 2021, after the country’s military detained State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi along with President Win Myint and other members of the ruling party. Myanmar military (also known as the Tatmadaw), took this step because they declared the November 2020 Myanmar general election results fraudulent, in which Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory in Parliamentary election 2020 to form next Government.
- The military has handed over the power to military chief Min Aung Hlaing and declared a state of emergency for one year. Apart from this, former general Myint Swe would be acting president for the next year. The 2021 coup d’état is the third in Myanmar’s political history. The first two was held in 1962 and 1990.
- A coup (coup d’état) is the removal of an existing government from power, usually through violent means.

UN World Tourism Organization confirms 2020 as ‘worst year on record’

- In accordance with the latest United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO) “World Tourism Barometer”, the year 2020 was the “worst year on record” as global tourism suffered adversely due to international travel bans implemented to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. International arrivals dropped by 74% & worldwide destinations welcomed 1 billion fewer international arrivals than in 2019.
- This collapse in travel represents an estimated loss of $1.3 trillion in export revenues, more than 11 times less during the 2009 crisis. On the regional front, Asia and the Pacific aced sharpest year-on-year contraction of 84% (-84%). It was followed by the Middle East (-75%) and Europe (-70%).
NATIONAL

Smriti Irani inaugurates 8th India International Silk Fair

- The Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal on 31st January 2021. The five days event is being held on the Indian Silk Export Promotion Council’s virtual platform due to COVID-19 pandemic. The fair is considered to be India’s biggest silk fair.
- More than 200 overseas buyers and an equal number of their representatives in India are participating to interact with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products.
- India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk, which are Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.

Uttarakhand sets up Botanical Garden to conserve species of Shivalik range

- In Nainital district of Uttarakhand, a first of its kind botanical garden named ‘Shivalik Arboretum’ has been inaugurated, for conserving over 210 species of trees found in the Shivalik range of Himalayas. Shivalik Arboretum aims to spread nature education among people so that they are able to feel an emotional connect with the trees, and make them more active towards conservation.
- The facility will showcase information like scientific information about particular species, cultural significance, medicinal use, country of origin, type of habitat in which it is found and all possible uses including as timber, dyes or any other peculiar use.
- Some of the trees preserved include Kafal (Myrica esculenta), Buransh, (Rhododendron arboretum), Tejpat (Cinnamomum Tamala) and Sanjeevani (Sellaginella bryopteris).

Venkaiah Naidu Inaugurates National Tribal Festival “Aadi Mahotsav”

- The Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the National Tribal Festival “Aadi Mahotsav” at Dilli Haat, INA, New Delhi. The Aadi Mahotsav 2021 is being organized from February 1-15, 2021. The festival aims to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, the culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.
- The Aadi Mahotsav – A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce – is an annual initiative being organized by TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs since 2017.
- The festival will comprise of display and sale of tribal art and craft, medicine & healers, cuisine and folk performances, in which around 1000 tribal artisans, artists and chefs from more than 20 States of the country shall participate and provide a glimpse of their rich traditional culture.

India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management

- A dedicated Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) has been established at
the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, an institution under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. This was announced by Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Babul Supriyo on the occasion of the World Wetland Day on 2nd February 2021.

- The dedicated CWCM Centre would address specific research needs and knowledge gaps, give a fillip to capacity development and cutting-edge research on wetlands of India, as well as aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of the wetlands.

**OBITUARY**

**Pioneering US actress Cicely Tyson passes away**

- Pioneering US actress Cicely Tyson has passed away. Cicely Tyson, the pioneering Black actor who gained an Oscar nomination for her role as the sharecropper’s wife in ‘Sounder’ & won a Tony Award in 2013 at age 88.
- She touched TV viewers’ hearts in “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman” & won 2 Emmys for playing the 110-year-old former slave.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

**Anish Shah appoint as new chairman of Mahindra Finance**

- Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services has announced the appointment of Anish Shah as the chairman of the board, effective April 2, 2021. Shah is already a director of the company.
- He is the deputy managing director and group CFO of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. Shah takes over from Dhananjay Mungale. Mungale shall continue to be an Independent Director on the Board of MMFSL.

**Nguyen Phu Trong re-elected as Chief of Vietnam for 3rd term**

- The ruling Communist Party of Vietnam has re-elected its 76-year-old General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong for a third five-year term. He is serving the post since 2011. Trong was granted an exemption to contest in the election, though he was above the age limit of 65. The General Secretary is the highest office within the Communist Party of Vietnam. Trong also holds the position of the President of Vietnam since 2018.
- Vietnam has a communist government, which means that the country does not have a single strongman at the apex. There are four main leaders that collectively run the show which includes: The Communist Party general secretary, the prime minister, the president and the chair of the National Assembly.
Ford joins hand with Google to offer cloud-based data services

- Ford Motor Co has joined hands with Alphabet Inc’s Google to cooperate in software, artificial intelligence and cloud computing, to develop new consumer services and modernize internal operations. The automaker will deploy Google artificial intelligence technology to improve the efficiency of vehicle development, supply chain and manufacturing operations.
- The Dearborn, Michigan-based automaker has entered into a six-year partnership with the tech giant, under which it will incorporate the Android operating system of the Google into its Ford and Lincoln vehicles starting in 2023. The customers of Ford will get built-in Google apps, including its map and voice technology.

Current Affairs PDF- February 02, 2021

NATIONAL

Lucknow metro becomes first to sanitise coaches using UV rays

- Lucknow Metro has become the 1st metro in the country to use ultraviolet rays to sanitise train coaches. For this, the LMRC has procured UV sanitization apparatus from M/s FB TECH, an Indian firm in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC) has taken inspiration from the New York Metro’s experiment to sanitise trains with UV lamp rays.
- The apparatus, which was certified by the Defence Research and Development organisation (DRDO) in October 2020, sanitizes the entire coach in just seven minutes. However, in order to keep the train bacteria-free, the LMRC is sanitising each coach for 15 minutes.
- This is the same apparatus which was also used by the medical industry to sanitise cinema halls and medical equipment at the peak of the coronavirus pandemic in India.
- This apparatus is operated through a remote and has a switch on/off button.
- The radiation starts after a minute of pressing the on button. In addition, the initiative is economically cheaper than sanitization through manual mode.

Maharashtra tops justice delivery in India Justice Report 2020

- The second edition of the India Justice Report, India’s only ranking of states on delivery of Justice to people, announced. Maharashtra once again at the top of the 18 Large and Mid-sized states (with a population of over one crore each) in the 2nd Edition of the India Justice Report, an initiative of Tata Trusts, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Punjab, and Kerala.
- Through a rigorous 14-month quantitative research, the India Justice Report 2020 once again tracks the progress states have made incapacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver services to all. It takes account of latest statistics and situations as they existed prior to March 2020. It brings together otherwise siloed statistics from authoritative government sources, on the four pillars of Justice delivery—Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid.
Sports Minister Rijiju launches anti-doping reference material
- Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports, Kiren Rijiju has launched a breakthrough Reference Material for use in chemical testing in the field of anti-doping. A reference material jointly synthesised by the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Guwahati.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NDTL and NIPER Guwahati was signed in August 2020 which proposes to synthesize 20 rarely available Reference Materials (RMs) during a period of 3 years.
- This Reference Material (RM), has been identified by NDTL as one of the rarely available RMs globally and would be used to strengthen anti-doping measures in all World Anti Doping Agency (WADA)-accredited laboratories.

SPORTS

Tamil Nadu Beat Baroda to claim Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy
- Tamil Nadu beat Baroda in the final to win the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy 2020-21. The tournament was the twelfth edition of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and was played at Sardar Patel Stadium (Motera Stadium), Ahmedabad. The Player of the match title was won by Manimaran Siddharth (Tamil Nadu) who picked 4 wickets, conceding 20 runs. They needed 121 runs to win, which they achieved in 18 overs with 7 wickets.
- Tamil Nadu team was lead by Dinesh Karthik (captain). This is the second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) title for Tamil Nadu and their first title in 13 years. The team claimed their first SMAT title in 2006-07, that too under Karthik’s captaincy.

India top medals tally at first Asian Online Shooting Championship
- The Indian shooting contingent has topped the medals tally in the first-ever Asian Online Shooting Championship, organised by Kuwait Shooting Federation. The 24-member Indian shooting contingent won total 11 medals, which included four gold medals, two silver and five bronze medals. 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries took part in the competition.

List of Indian Medalist:
Gold
- Saurabh Chaudhary – men’s 10m air pistol
- Divyansh Singh Panwar- men’s 10m air rifle
- Kynan Chenai – men’s trap
- Rajeshwari Kumari – women’s trap
Silver
- Arjun Babuta – men’s 10m air rifle
- Shreyasi Singh – women’s trap
Bronze
- Manu Bhaker – women’s 10m air pistol
- Sarabjot Singh – men’s 10m air pistol
- Deepak Kumar – men’s 10m air rifle
- Prithviraj Tondaiman – men’s trap
• Manish Keer – women’s trap

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Indian-American Bhavya Lal appointed Acting Chief of Staff of NASA

- Indian-American Bhavya Lal was appointed by NASA as the Acting Chief of Staff of the US space agency. She served as a member of the Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team for the agency and oversaw the agency’s transition under the administration of President Joe Biden. Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.
- Bhavya Lal led the analysis of space technology, strategy, and policy for the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and National Space Council, as well as federal space-oriented organisations, including NASA, the Department of Defence, and the intelligence community.
- Lal is an active member of the space technology and policy community, having chaired, co-chaired, or served on five high-impact National Academy of Science committees.
- She served two consecutive terms on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Federal Advisory Committee on Commercial Remote Sensing and was an External Council member of NASA’s Innovative Advanced Concepts Program and the Technology, Innovation and Engineering Advisory Committee of the NASA Advisory Council.

SBI Card appoints Rama Mohan Rao Amara as MD & CEO

- SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd (SBI Card) has appointed Rama Mohan Rao Amara as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for a period of two years. Rao is a veteran banker, with a successful career spanning over 29 years at SBI, the credit card company. Prior to taking charge at SBI Card, he was the Chief General Manager, SBI Bhopal Circle.
- Earlier this week, Ashwini Kumar Tewari had resigned from the post of MD and CEO of SBI Card owing to his appointment as the Managing Director of State Bank of India (SBI).

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wetlands Day: 02 February

- The World Wetlands Day is observed every year on February 2 globally. The day aims to raise awareness about the crucial role played by wetlands for people and our planet. The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2021 is ‘Wetlands and Water’. 2021 marks 50 years of the Convention on Wetlands.
- The day is celebrated to mark the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997.
- Wetlands are a habitat for a dense variety of plant and animal species and also rich with the biodiversity which is declining according to the researcher’s estimates. These are the land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either perennially or seasonally.
- Coastal wetlands: mangroves, estuaries, saltwater marshes, lagoons etc.
- Inland wetlands: marshes, fens, lakes, swamps, rivers, floodplains and ponds.
• Human-made wetlands: Fish ponds, salt pans, and rice paddies.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**PNB Restricts Withdraw of Money from non-EMV ATMs**

• Punjab National Bank (PNB) has decided to restrict its customers from withdrawing money from non-EMV automated teller machines (ATMs) with effect from 01 February 2021, in an attempt to check frauds, related to money transactions. This restriction will apply to both, financial and non-financial transactions. To overcome this, PNB will introduce OTP based systems for withdrawing cash.

• Non-EMV ATMs are those which reads data through magnetic strips and do not hold the ATM card during the transaction.

**Other major decision**

• PNB has also decided to replace the old IFSC and MICR codes. This means that the old codes will not work after March 31, 2021.

• Customers will have to get a new code from the bank

• This decision has been taken due to merger of Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India on 1st April 2020.

**Union Budget 2021-22 is being presented by FM Nirmala Sitharaman**

• Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman is presenting the Union Budget 2021 for the 3rd time in a row. The Union Budget is the yearly financial report estimating the income and expenditure presented to outline future policies to be adopted by the government for sustainable growth and development. The Economic Survey 2020-21 was released on 29th January 2021 by the Chief Economic Advisor of India, Krishnamurthy Subramanian. According to the survey, India’s economy could contract 7.7 per cent in the financial year that ends on March 31.

• Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman concluded her Budget speech at 12.50 pm. In February 2020, FM Nirmala Sitharaman spoke for a record 162 minutes — two hours and 42 minutes — in Lok Sabha. FM Sitharaman only had two pages of her Budget speech unread, when she appeared uneasy and her Budget speech was cut short.

**The key highlights from the Union Budget 2021-22:**

• Total COVID-19 support measures amount to 13 per cent of GDP and total COVID-19 support measures by government and RBI amounts to Rs 27.1 lakh crore. The ‘Aatmanirbhar’ Packages accelerated India’s rate of reform.

• India has two COVID-19 vaccines available and we expect two more vaccines soon. India currently also has one of the lowest death rate and active cases in the world. India’s economic contraction is due to a global pandemic. The government is fully prepared to support and facilitate economic reset.

• Three times has a Budget followed contraction in the economy. Vision for Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Part-A of the Budget speech. ‘Aatmanirbharta’ consists of doubling farm income and strong infrastructure. It consists of good governance and women empowerment. Proposals for the FY22 Budget rests on 6 pillars.
First of six pillars Aatmanirbhar Yojana in addition to the National Health Mission introduce the Aatmanirbhar Health Yojana with an outlay of Rs 64,180 crore over six years. This will strengthen the National Centre for Disease Control. Besides this, the government will also set up 15 Health Emergency Centres.

Jal Jeevan Mission with an outlay of Rs 2.87 lakh crore to cover houses and to be implemented over five years. Budget 2021 will also launch Mission Poshan 2.0. Besides this, the launch of urban ‘Swacch Bharat Mission’ 2.0 with an outlay of Rs 1.42 lakh crore has been made.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced voluntary vehicle scrapping policy. Vehicles to undergo fitness test – which is 20 years for passenger vehicles and 15 years for commercial vehicles. Further details of the scrappage policy to be announced shortly.

Fitness testing for both PVs and CVs a positive move to create not only employment opportunities but a move that will ensure a cleaner environment as part of the Health Infrastructure pillar. This will also boost demand for more cleaner vehicles.

The government has set an ambitious target of building infrastructure in the country. But funding these infrastructure projects would have posed a steep challenge because of the revenue constraints and the stress on the loan books of banks. FM Sitharaman is likely to announce a dedicated development financial institution to facilitate the financing of greenfield infrastructure projects.

Rs 35,000 crore to be allocated for further funds for COVID-19 vaccines. we will provide more for COVID-19 vaccines if required. The private sector may be kept out of vaccination efforts it appears, a disappointment for them. At a blended cost of Rs255/dose (in the first phase), that will cover 2 doses of the vaccine for 68.6 crore people in FY22.

Government has committed Rs 1.97 lakh crore for Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) covering 13 sectors. Further, 7 textile parks will be launched for over three years.

RBI cancels licence of Kolhapur-based Shivam Sahakari Bank

According to RBI, the licence of Maharashtra-based Shivam Sahakari Bank has been cancelled as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Maharashtra has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. With the cancellation of licence the process of paying the depositors as per the DICGC Act, 1961 will be set in motion.

As per the data submitted by the Kolhapur-based bank, more than 99 per cent of the depositors are fully insured by Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). The bank with its present financial position would be unable to pay its present depositors in full.

Current Affairs PDF- February 01, 2021

National

Smriti Irani inaugurates 8th India International Silk Fair

Textiles Minister Smriti Irani today inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal. The fair is considered to be India’s biggest silk fair, being held under one roof on Indian Silk Export Promotion Council’s virtual platform. The five days event is being held virtually due
Speaking on the occasion, Mrs Irani said that more than 200 overseas buyers have already registered and equal number of their representatives in India will be interacting with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products. She called upon the exhibitors and overseas buyers to take part in this initiative to celebrate the beauty and vibrancy of Indian silk.

India has long history of silk production and is the 2nd largest producer of Silk. India is the only country in the world which produces all the four major varieties of silk - Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.

India’s First ‘Gender Park’ in Kerala’s Kozhikode

The Kerala government is all set to launch Rs 300 crore three-tower ‘Gender Park’ in Kozhikode. The park will become functional on the occasion of the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II). The park will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, in between February 11-13 that will also mark the inauguration of the second edition of ICGE-II.

The gender park was established with the aim of creating relevant interventions so as to address a range of gender-based issues. It includes both off-campus and on-campus activities and other projects that work to empower the individuals and communities.

The gender park was established by the government of Kerala in 2013. It is an initiative that works towards gender equality and empowerment in Kerala. The headquartered for the initiative is in the capital of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram.

However, the main campus is at Silver Hills, Kozhikode. The campus has an area of 24-acre. The park has been set with its main focus on gender justice.

The platform will provide an environment for policy analysis, research, capacity development, advocacy, economic and social initiative. The park will be operational under the Department of Social Justice. This space is first of its kind across the world.

BCCI cancels Ranji Trophy 2020-21 for first time

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided not to conduct the Ranji Trophy in 2020-21. This will be the first time in 87 years since its inception in 1934-35, that India’s premier first-class cricket national championship will not be held in 2020-21 domestic season.

Instead on Ranji Trophy, BCCI has decided to conduct the Vijay Hazare Trophy 50-over tournament and Senior Women’s One Day tournament after the completion of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament.

Facebook appoints henry moniz as its first cco

Henry Moniz, who has been the chief compliance officer and chief audit executive at media company ViacomCBS Inc., will join Facebook on Feb. 8 to lead the company’s global compliance team, according to Facebook. He will be the first person to hold the compliance chief title at
RS Sharma appointed as new CEO of Ayushman Bharat Scheme
- The National Health Authority (NHA) has appointed RS Sharma as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of country’s flagship public health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat, also called Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. He would replace Indu Bhushan, who is serving as the Chief Executive of the Ayushman scheme since its inception in 2018.
- RS Sharma, a former chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai), who would take charge of the NHA from February 1.
- Ayushman Bharat, a flagship scheme of Government of India, was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This initiative has been designed to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its underlining commitment, which is to “leave no one behind.”
- Ayushman Bharat is an attempt to move from sectoral and segmented approach of health service delivery to a comprehensive need-based health care service. This scheme aims to undertake path-breaking interventions to holistically address the healthcare system (covering prevention, promotion and ambulatory care) at the primary, secondary and tertiary level. Ayushman Bharat adopts a continuum of care approach.

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah takes over as President of ACC
- Jay Shah, the incumbent Secretary of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been appointed as the new President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). He is the youngest person ever to be appointed to the office. He replaces Nazmul Hussain, Chief of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) who was the previous chief of the ACC.
- The ACC is Asia’s regional administrative body and it currently consists of 24 member associations. ACC is responsible for organizing the Asia Cup tournaments. The 2020 edition of the Asia Cup was postponed to June this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pakistan was to originally host the tournament but the tournament is now expected to be held in either Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

Obituary
Nobel Prize Winner Paul Crutzen passes away
- The Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul J. Crutzen, has passed away. He won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1995, jointly with Mario J. Molina and F. Sherwood Rowland, for their work in atmospheric chemistry, particularly concerning the formation and decomposition of ozone. He was known for his work on the ozone layer and climate change and for popularizing the term ‘Anthropocene’ to describe a proposed new era when human actions have a drastic effect on the Earth.

Important Days
Indian Coast Guard to celebrate 45th Raising Day
- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will celebrate its 45th Raising Day today, February 1.
According to an official release by the Ministry of Defence, the ICG has played a significant role in securing the Indian Coasts and enforcing regulations within the maritime zones of India. The ICG seized contraband worth Rs 1,500 crore and ten illegal foreign fishing boats with 80 miscreants in the Indian exclusive economic zone in 2020. A country’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is an area extending from the coastline to 200 nautical miles in the sea, wherein it has exclusive rights to fish, drill and also conduct other economic activities.

World Leprosy Day 2021: 31 January
- World Leprosy Day is observed around the world on the last Sunday of January every year. This year World Leprosy Day held on 31 January. The day is celebrated to raise global awareness of this deadly ancient disease and call attention to the fact that it can be prevented, treated and cured.
- This year theme of World Leprosy Day 2021 is “Beat Leprosy, End Stigma and advocate for Mental Wellbeing”.
- The day was initiated in 1954 by French philanthropist and writer, Raoul Follereau, as a tribute to the life of the Mahatma Gandhi who had compassion for people afflicted with leprosy.

India ranks 10th in ‘Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index’
- India ranked 10th out of 11 Asia Pacific countries in a newly-launched health index to measure the progress towards personalised healthcare. Singapore (1st), Taiwan (2nd), Japan (3rd) and Australia (4th) also performed well in overall readiness. These include Policy Context, Health Information, Personalised Technologies and Health Services.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report “Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index” measures the readiness of 11 health systems across the region—Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand—in adopting personalised healthcare, enabling the right care to be tailored to the right person at the right time.
- The ‘Personalised Health Index’ measures performance against 27 different indicators of personalised health across four categories called “Vital Signs”.

Microsoft launches its new Taj Mahal inspired Engineering Hub
- Tech major Microsoft has launched its new India Development Center (IDC) facility in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The new centre will serve as a leading hub for driving advanced engineering and innovation. The centre will build on Microsoft’s commitment to tap India’s world-class engineering talent and create solutions for a global impact.
- IDC NCR is the third development centre of Microsoft in India after Bengaluru and Hyderabad. The IDC NCR workspace architecture is inspired by the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.
• The IDC NCR facility will collaborate with Microsoft teams globally to build products and services for driving digital innovation. The centre will provide opportunities for engineering talent in the areas of Business & Productivity tools, AI, Cloud & Enterprise, Core Services, and the new Gaming division.
• The IDC NCR workspace architecture is inspired by the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world. The structure is a unique amalgamation of the latest Microsoft technologies and locally sourced materials.
• The intricate artwork by local artisans and graphics inspired by India’s rich cultural heritage elevate the aesthetics of the office. Its stunning marble inlays, vaulted doorways, arches, and marble domes created by stonemasons and carpenters, are a tribute to the country’s historical and rich craftsmanship.

Environment Minister releases National Marine Turtle Action Plan
• National Marine Turtle Action Plan has been recently released by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in New Delhi. The Ministry also released the ‘Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines’ along with the Marine Turtle Action Plan.
• National Marine Turtle Action Plan and Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines have been released acknowledging the need for a conservation paradigm for marine turtles and marine megafauna.
• At the launch, the minister called for conserving both floral and faunal diversity including marine biodiversity.
• Both these documents include the ways and measures to promote inter-sectoral action for conservation.
• The documents also provide guidance for enhanced coordination amongst the government, all relevant stakeholders, and civil society on the response to cases of entanglement, stranding, injury, or mortality of marine mammals. All of them should also have better coordination to chalk out plans for the conservation of marine turtles.

Prakash Javadekar launches 2021 as Indo-French Year of the Environment
• The Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change Prakash Javadekar has launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment, along with Barbara Pompili, the French Minister for Ecological Transition in New Delhi. The basic objective of this partnership is to strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions in favour of global environment protection and give them greater visibility.
• This collaboration and the Indo-French Environment year will be held under the Ministry of Ecological Transition, in association with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs along with the support of the Embassy of France in Delhi and its partners from the French side.
• The Indo-French Year of the Environment is the Indo-French partnership on Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change and other allied areas to be undertaken throughout 2021.
• The Indo-French Year of the Environment will be implemented over the period 2021-2022.
Science & Technology

ISRO to launch city college's academic satellite
- ISRO chairman K Sivan is likely to inaugurate the ‘SriShakthiSat’ ground station at Sri Shakthi Institute of Engineering and Technology in Coimbatore. The station will help monitor the satellite developed by the institute, which is set to be launched by the ISRO. A satellite communication lab was established in the college in 2010.
- The satellite can detect fire and leaks on underground pipelines and collect info on bank thefts. ISRO is expected to launch this satellite, along with two other satellites built by JPR Institute, Chennai & GH Raisoni College of Engineering, Maharashtra.

Obituary

Oscar winning-actor Cloris Leachman passes away
- Oscar winning-actor Cloris Leachman has passed away. The late star was known as one of Hollywood’s most prolific performers having won an Academy Award, a Golden Globe, and eight Primetime Emmy Awards.
- Leachman’s character Phyllis in The Mary Tyler Moore Show, which she claimed was close to her own persona, brought the actress two Emmys as a featured actress in a series during the mid-’70s and made Leachman a household name. Leachman also won a supporting actress Oscar for a far different character, an embittered small-town housewife in Peter Bogdanovich’s The Last Picture Show.

Malayalam singer Somadas passes away
- Popular Malayalam singer Somadas Chathannoor died of a cardiac arrest on Sunday. The 42-year-old singer, a native of Chathannur of Kollam passed away at 3am on Sunday.
- He was receiving treatment at Government Medical College Hospital Kollam following complications arising out of COVID-19, the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Although he had recovered and tested negative for the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 had caused an infection to his kidneys.

Appointment & Resignation

Senior IAS officer Rajeev Ranjan is new Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary
- Senior IAS officer Rajeev Ranjan was named as the next chief secretary by the Tamil Nadu government on Sunday.
- He will be replacing K Shanmugam who will be retiring from the post but will continue as an advisor to the government for a year. Last week, the Union government had approved the repatriation of the IAS officer to his parent cadre on the state government’s request.

Banking & Economics

Airtel announces 5G ready network in Hyderabad
- Bharti Airtel took an edge by becoming the first telecom operator in India to demonstrate 5G services successfully. Bharti Airtel announced that it orchestrated live fifth-generation (5G) service over a commercial network in Hyderabad.
Bharti Airtel explained that it used state of the art dynamic spectrum sharing so as to operate both 4G and 5G networks in the same spectrum block.

One of India’s major telecom companies managed to do this atop the existing spectrum in the 1800 MHz band through the Non-Stand Alone (NSA) network technology.

Airtel claimed that it took only a few seconds to download a full-length film during its demonstration of the 5G network.

The company said that the 5G network could deliver ten times the speed and latency attained previously with 100 times the concurrency when compared to the technology in use.

The government is conducting the auction of 2,251 MHz of spectrum through the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) at a reserve price of Rs 3.92 trillion from March 1, 2021.

The government has not included the spectrum in the 3,300-3,600 MHz bands recommended for 5G by the telecom operators.