

## Weekly Current Affairs PDF March 14 to March 20, 2021

### Current Affairs PDF- March 20, 2021

#### INTERNATIONAL

##### World's Largest Floating Solar Farms being built in Singapore

- The largest floating solar farm in the world is being built in Singapore. The country has resorted to set up energy plants off the coasts and reservoirs across it. This floating solar farm is being set up in the light that despite being one of the smallest countries across the world, it is one of the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in India. Thus, to cater to the issue of climate change and to cut the greenhouse gas emission it is building the floating solar farm. This project is being built by Sembcorp Industries.
- Renewable energy is a challenge for Singapore because the country has no rivers for hydro-electricity. The wind is also not that strong to power the turbines. Thus, with the setting up of the floating solar farms, the authorities seek to change that notion. So, this tropical country has turned to solar power. Since, it has little land space, equal to half the size of Los Angeles, the country has decided to set up energy plants off its coasts and on reservoirs.

#### NATIONAL

##### J&K LG Manoj Sinha inaugurates project "Awaam Ki Baat"

- Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, initiated the project "Awaam Ki Baat" – a Radio program by launching its website at Raj Bhavan, Jammu. The half-an-hour long Radio program to be aired every third Sunday of the month (to start from April), is one of the many sequential steps of a broader program aimed at disseminating the progressive steps taken by the government and providing the public with a platform to speak, write and interact with the administration, thereby voicing their suggestions, ideas and creative proposals.

##### KRAS releases First batch of MRSAM Missiles

- The Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS), which is a joint venture between the Kalyani Group of India and Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel, have released the first batch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) kits. The missile was released for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force.
- The release of the MRSAM Missile also marked the KRAS' commitment to delivering more than 1000 MRSAM missile kits to India in near future. These missile sections will then be sent for further and future integration to Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL). The Kalyani Group has infused the "State-of-the-art technology with engineering excellence in the company.
- It is the private sector MSME of India comprising of advanced manufacturing capabilities and facilities which is specially dedicated to addressing the assembly, integration and testing (AIT) of the state-of-the-art weapon systems which are being inducted in India's defence forces. KRAS also address the Maintenance and Repair Operations (MRO) of the major in-service Air Defence Missile System in the Indian Air Force.

## SPORTS

### Hashmatullah Shahidi becomes 1st afghan player to score Test double century

- Afghanistan's Hashmatullah Shahidi became the first batsman from the country to register a double hundred in Test cricket. He got his first double century on Day Two of the second Test against Zimbabwe in Abu Dhabi. He made 200 not out off 443 balls with 21 fours and one six as Afghanistan put up a mammoth 545 for 4 in their first innings.
- Shahidi has played five Tests and 42 ODIs for Afghanistan since making his international debut in an ODI against Kenya. He made his Test debut in Afghanistan's first-ever Test, against India in Bengaluru in 2018. The 26-year-old left-handed batsman has 347 runs from five Tests and 1155 runs from 42 ODIs to his name thus far.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### INS Jalashwa Arrives at Port Anjouan as part of Mission Sagar-IV

- As part of Mission Sagar-IV, Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa arrived at Port Anjouan, Comoros to deliver 1,000 Metric Tonnes of rice. An official ceremony for handing over the food aid from the Government of India to the Government of Comoros. INS Jalashwa, the largest amphibious ship of the Indian Navy, has been specially sent to Comoros due to its large carrying capacity.
- This consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice as food assistance was flagged off to Comoros in the light of a promise made by the Vice President of India, Venkaiah Naidu during his brief visit to Comoros in the month of October 2019. This is the second visit of an Indian Navy ship to the island country within a span of one year. Earlier, as part of Mission Sagar-I, in May-June 2020, the Indian Navy had delivered essential medicines to the nation and had also deployed a specialist medical team to work alongside their counterparts and to render assistance for dengue fever-related emergencies.
- 'Mission Sagar', builds on the excellent relations existing between the two countries and deployment also resonates with the vision of our Prime Minister of Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR' and highlights the importance accorded by India to relations with the countries of the IOR. The operation is being progressed in close coordination with the Ministries of External Affairs, and other agencies of the Government of India.

## OBITUARY

### Tanzanian President John Magufuli passes away

- The President of Tanzania, John Magufuli has passed away following a heart ailment. Popularly nicknamed the "Bulldozer", Magufuli served as the fifth President of Tanzania from 2015 until his death in 2021.
- He first won the presidential election in October 2015 and was sworn in on 5 November 2015. He was re-elected in 2020.

## APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

### Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as chairman of 'Stop TB Partnership Board'

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan has been appointed as the

Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board. He was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by 2025. He will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year.

- The Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB.
- The participation of a wide range of constituencies gives this global body the credibility and the broad range of medical, social and financial expertise needed to defeat TB.
- The Partnership's vision is a TB-free world.
- The appointment of Dr Harsh Vardhan as the Chair of this prestigious global body is a proud recognition of India's political commitment to the eradication of TB.
- Established in the year 2000, the 'Stop TB Partnership' is mandated to eliminate Tuberculosis as a public health problem.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Ordnance Factories' Day in India: 18 March

- The Ordnance Factories' Day is observed on the 18th of March every year. The production of India's oldest Ordnance Factory, which is at Cossipore of Kolkata, was started on the 18th of March, 1802. OFB is the 37th largest defence equipment manufacturer in the world, 2nd largest in Asia, and the largest in India.
- The day is celebrated by displaying the rifles, guns, artillery, ammunition etc in exhibitions all over India. The celebrations start with a parade and the exhibition will also display the photographs of various mountaineering expeditions.
- OFB is referred to as the "Fourth Arm of Defence" and the "Force Behind the Armed Forces" of India.
- OFB is functioning under the Department of Defence Production of the Ministry of Defence.
- The Indian Ordnance Factories supplies products to all three Indian Armed Forces. ie the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air force.
- The Arms and Ammunition, Weapon Spares, Chemicals & Explosives, Parachutes, Leather and Clothing items are being exported to more than 30 countries worldwide.

## SUMMITS AND MOU'S

### 6th India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum held Virtually

- The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was held virtually. The Forum discussed key issues that contribute towards the transformation of women's lives. At the end of the conference, a joint declaration was also issued highlighting the shared IBSA goals and commitments for achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.
- The India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Cooperation Forum is a unique platform that brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents.
- The meeting was led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
- IBSA is committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being of its citizens and those from other developing nations.

- The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening of multilateralism. IBSA lays efforts in South-South cooperation beyond the conventional areas of exchange of experts and training.

## BANKING AND ECONOMY

### SBI and IOCL to ink India's First Libor Alternative Rate Deal

- The State Bank of India (SBI) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) will sign the first Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) linked external commercial borrowing (ECB) deal. The deal will be signed because the de facto international benchmark reference rate called the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) will no longer work as the benchmark after December 2021.
- The state bank of India highlighted that it will be arranging \$100 million linked to SOFR for 5 years.
- The LIBOR will no longer work as the benchmark after December 2021. Thus, the Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR) and Sterling Overnight Interbank Average Rate (SONIA) are the most potential alternatives.
- But only a few swap deals are linked to these alternatives at the international level. Libor is still used extensively especially for loans that are getting matured within the year.

## Current Affairs PDF- March 19, 2021

### NATIONAL

#### J&K Govt approves setting up of JVC "Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation"

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration has approved the incorporation of a joint venture company (JVC) under the name "Ratle Hydro-electric Power Corporation". To implement the 850 MW Ratle Hydro-Electric Project (HEP) on river Chenab in the Kishtwar district of the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). The JV company has been incorporated between the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and J&K State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDC).
- The equity contributions of NHPC will be 51 per cent and for JKSPDC will be 49 per cent.
- The proposed JVC will have an authorised capital of Rs 1,600 crore with initial paid-up capital of Rs 100 crore.
- The 850 MW Ratle HEP will be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 5,281.94 crore.

#### Gol Forms Experts Committee For Startup India Seed Fund Scheme

- The government has constituted an experts advisory committee for the overall execution and monitoring of the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme. The committee would be chaired by H K Mittal from the Department of Science and Technology. The other representatives of the committee would include members from DPIIT, the department of biotechnology, science and technology, electronics and IT, Niti Aayog, and expert members from the startup ecosystem.
- The committee will evaluate and select incubators for allotment of funds under the scheme,

monitor progress and take all necessary measures for efficient utilisation of funds towards the fulfilment of objectives of the scheme.

- The scheme has been approved for the period of the next four years starting from 2021-22, beginning from April 1, 2021.
- The government has earmarked Rs 945 crore corpus for the scheme, which will be divided over the next four years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.

## APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

### Ajay Mathur takes over as Director General of International Solar Alliance

- Dr Ajay Mathur has assumed office as the Director-General of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) with effect from March 15, 2021. He has been appointed for a period of four years which can be renewed for an additional term. Dr Ajay Mathur has replaced Upendra Tripathy, who completed his term on March 15, after serving as the Director-General since 2017.
- Mathur brings a wealth of leadership and expertise across all key areas of the energy transition, from policy, research, and technology commercialisation to financing, international cooperation and institutional development.
- He is a member of the Prime Minister's Council on climate change.
- He had also served as the Director-General of TERI and also a key Indian climate-change negotiator. He was also the spokesperson for India during the 2015 climate negotiations in Paris.

### M. A. Ganapathy appointed Director General of National Security Guard

- Senior IPS officer, M. A. Ganapathy was on March 16, 2021 appointed Director General of National Security Guard. Ganapathy, a 1986 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Uttarakhand cadre, is currently Director General, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).
- He has been appointed the Director-General, National Security Guard (NSG), from the date of joining the post and up to February 29, 2024 i.e. date of his superannuation.

### Lt Gen DP Pandey takes over as new commander of 15-Corps

- Lt General DP Pandey has taken over the command of strategic Kashmir-based 15 Corps from Lt Gen BS Raju, who has been appointed as the new Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army.
- An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, General Pandey was commissioned into the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment in December 1985 from Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Global Recycling Day 2021: 18 March

- Global Recycling Day is observed every year on March 18 to create awareness among the masses about the rapid pace at which our natural resources are being used. The day also promotes the concept and practice of recycling. Every year, events are organised by environmentalist and activists to promote the cause.

- In 2021, the theme of Global Recycling Day is “Recycling Heroes”. Its main aim is to recognise the people, places and activities that showcase the importance of recycling in preserving natural resources. Recycling has helped in reducing carbon emissions by over 700 million tonnes every year. Notably, over 1.6 million people are employed around the world in the recycling industry. In this decade, the yearly contribution of recycling will increase up to \$400 billion.

## SUMMITS AND MOU'S

### Italy signs International Solar Alliance amended Framework Agreement

- Italy has signed the amended Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) with India. The framework agreement was signed by the Italian Ambassador to India Vincenzo De Luca. ISA is an alliance of over 121 nations that have been initiated by India.
- The European country signed the ISA framework agreement after an amendment to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force on January 08, 2021, opening its membership to all member states of the UN. The amendments of the ISA framework agreement allows all the member states of the United Nations to join the ISA grouping, including those lying beyond the tropics.
- The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP21, in Paris. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.

## RANKING

### New Delhi Ranked as World's most polluted capital city

- New Delhi has been adjudged as the world's most polluted capital city for the third straight year in the 2020 World Air Quality Report by Swiss organisation, IQAir. Globally, New Delhi is ranked as the 10th most polluted city in the world. The topmost polluted city in the world is Xinjiang in China. This is followed by nine Indian cities as the most polluted cities in the world, which are Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar, Bishakh Jalapur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bhiwari.
- The IQAir report measures air quality levels based on the concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles known as PM 2.5, which is measured by ground-based monitoring stations.
- As per the report, India was home to 35 of the world's 50 most polluted cities, spanning 106 countries, which means India continues to feature prominently at the top of the most polluted cities ranking.
- The IQAir report seeks to empower individuals, organizations and communities to breathe cleaner air through information, collaboration and technology solutions.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

### A Book 'Battle Ready for 21st Century' released

- A book titled “Battle Ready for 21st Century” co-edited by Lt Gen AK Singh, Distinguished Fellow CLAWS and Brig Narendra Kumar, Visiting Fellow CLAWS was released by Gen Bipin Rawat. The book lays down the conceptual framework for the strategic management of future conflicts.
- The book “Battle Ready for the 21st Century” has endeavoured to postulate and define emerging

areas of conflict, desired capabilities and doctrinal issues that need careful examination.

- The authors with hands-on experience and domain specialisation have endeavoured to define and suggest the ways and means necessary to secure India from emerging security challenges on land, air, sea, space, cyber domain and even cognitive domain.
- The book is dwelling on future conflicts that India may face and need to build capabilities to dissuade and prevent accidental wars.
- The foreword is written by former Naval Chief Admiral Arun Prakash. Former Chief of the Army Staff Gen NC Vij and Prof Gautam Sen have commented on the book for empirically identifying future security challenges and the need for building capabilities.

### Maharashtra Governor releases e-book titled Dawn Under The Dome

- The Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari released a digital e-book titled Dawn Under The Dome. The digital book depicts the history of the Mumbai General Post Office building. It has been authored by Post Master General of Mumbai Swati Pandey in collaboration with Orchida Mukherjee.
- The book says that three types of Indian stones were used in the construction of the building: the grey basalt with buff trachyte and the Yellowstone from Mumbai's Kurla and Malad respectively and the white stone from Dharandhra.

## BANKING AND ECONOMY

### RBI Imposes Rs 2 Crore Fine on State Bank of India

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of 2 crores on the State Bank of India (SBI) for contravention of certain provisions of Section 10 of the Banking Regulation (BR) Act, 1949. The central bank's specific directions issued to the bank on payment of remuneration to employees in the form of commission. This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested with RBI under the provisions of the BR Act. The penalty is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.
- RBI said the statutory inspection of the bank with reference to its financial position as of March 31, 2017, and March 31, 2018, and the Risk Assessment Reports (RARs) pertaining thereto, and examination of the correspondence with the bank regarding payment of remuneration to its employees in the form of commission, revealed, inter alia, contravention of the provisions of the Act and aforesaid specific directions issued by RBI.

## Current Affairs PDF- March 18, 2021

### INTERNATIONAL

### Kuwait Foreign Minister arrives in India for two-day visit

- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State of Cabinet Affairs of Kuwait Dr Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah arrived India on Wednesday for a two-day visit.
- During his visit, Mohammed Al-Sabah will meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday.

- On March 2, Jaishankar and Al-Sabah had discussed bilateral cooperation and the regional situation between the two countries.
- India recently dispatched a consignment of Indian-made COVID-19 vaccines to assist Kuwait in its fight against the coronavirus.

### WHO declares El Salvador malaria-free

- El Salvador is the first country in Central America to be certified malaria-free by the World Health Organization. WHO grants a certification of malaria elimination when a country proves “beyond a reasonable doubt” that there has been no indigenous transmission of the disease nationwide for the previous three consecutive years.
- El Salvador hasn’t had a malaria outbreak since 1996 and has reported no indigenous cases since 2017. In 1990, the country had 9,000 cases per year, a figure that declined to 26 by 2010. WHO credited El Salvador’s sustained domestic funding for malaria prevention, detection, and treatment for the success.

## NATIONAL

### Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 announced

- The Hurun India Wealth Report, 2020 was released on March 16, 2020. The report identifies a novel household category in India called the ‘New Middle Class’ which accounts for an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum. The report highlights that these households have a major allocation towards physical assets like primary residential property and automobiles. As per the report, the total number of such cumulative households in India stands at 633,000.
- The report further states that there are around 4,12,000 dollar-millionaire households or affluent households across India which are having a net worth of Rs 7 crore. As per the report, the Hurun Rich Listers comprise a wealth of Rs 1,000 crore.
- This category of the report comprises 3000 number of cumulative households in India. The ‘Indian middle class’ has earnings of over Rs 2.5-lakh per annum while they have a net worth of less than Rs 7 crore. The ‘Indian Middle Class’ category accounts for 56400,000 families in India.

### Nokia to Develop New 5G Radio Solutions

- The Finnish telecom equipment maker, Nokia has announced on March 16 that it has partnered with Microsoft, Amazon web services and Google so as to develop a new cloud-based 5G radio solution. This solution will be developed with its radio access network (RNA) technology. This partnership was gone with the objective of developing new business cases.
- RAN is part of a mobile telecommunication system. This system implements radio access technology. RAN resides between a device like a computer, mobile phone or any remotely controlled machine. It also provides a connection with the core network.
- Based on the standard mobile phones and other wireless connected devices are called user equipment, terminal equipment or mobile station etc. The functionality of RAN is typically provided by the silicon chip which resides in both the core network and the user equipment.
- The single handset or phone can be connected to multiple radio access networks simultaneously.

- The Handsets which are capable of this feature are called dual-mode handsets. For example, a handset can commonly support both GSM and UMTS or “3G” radio access technologies. Such devices also transfer the ongoing call across different radio access networks without any disruption to users.

## SPORTS

### Upstox as official partner for IPL 2021

- IPL GC(Indian Premier League Governing Council) announced Upstox, one of India’s leading and fastest-growing digital brokerage firms, as an official partner for IPL, which will begin on April 9th, 2021. This will be a multi-year partnership.
- Founded with the vision of making financial investing easy, equitable, and affordable to all Indian investors, Upstox provides online investments in Stocks, Mutual funds, Digital Gold, Derivatives, and ETFs for both investors and traders. Backed by marquee investors such as Tiger Global, Upstox currently has over 2.8 million customers.

### Dhanalakshmi beats Dutee Chand to win Federation Cup gold

- Sprinter S Dhanalakshmi beat national record holder Dutee Chand to win women’s 100m sprint final in the Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships in Patiala. The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu clocked 11.39 seconds to become the fastest woman of the championships. Odisha-based Dutee clocked 11.58 seconds to be placed in second place.
- Another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran was third in 11.76 seconds. Hima Das was disqualified after a false start. In men’s 100m final category, Gurindervir Singh of Punjab won gold in 10.32 seconds, while Elakkiyadasan Kannada of Tamil Nadu (10.43) and Maharashtra’s Satish Krishnakumar (10.56) were second and third respectively.

## OBITUARY

### Former Bangladesh PM Moudud Ahmed passes away

- Barrister Moudud Ahmed, who held various political offices for short stints in the Government of Bangladesh, has passed away. He had served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh (1988–1989), Vice President of Bangladesh (1989–1990), Deputy Prime Minister (1976–1978 and 1987–1988), and Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (2001–2006).
- He was also a standing committee member of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

### Audio cassette tape inventor Lou Ottens passes away

- The Dutch inventor of audio cassette tapes, Lou Ottens passed away. Dutch engineer credited with inventing the cassette tape and playing a major role in the development of the first CD. In 1963, Ottens presented the first cassette tape at the Berlin Radio Show electronics fair. After the fair deal signed between Sony and Philips to patent his creation that gained worldwide popularity. Ottens also worked on the CD development project.
- The device that he made was equipped with a directional antenna which he termed as “Germanenfilter” because it was resistant to the jammers used by the Nazi regime. In 1960, Ottens with his team developed the first portable tape recorder and two years later, he

invented CDs.

### Former Union Minister Dilip Gandhi passes away

- Former Union Minister and BJP leader, Dilip Gandhi passed away, due to coronavirus. He had served as the Union Minister of State, Ministry of Shipping from 29 January 2003 to 15 March 2004.
- He won the Lok Sabha elections three times since 1999 from Ahmednagar South constituency in Maharashtra. First in 1999 in 13th Lok Sabha, followed by 15th Lok Sabha in 2009 and then 16th Lok Sabha in 2014.

## BANKING AND ECONOMY

### WEF honours ReNew Power named as Global Lighthouse Network

- ReNew Power has been named to the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Lighthouse Network, which recognises companies using new technologies to achieve environmentally sustainable, community supportive, profitable growth. ReNew Power is an Indian renewable energy company. It has an asset base of over 8 GW, with around 5 GW operational. ReNew Power is one of the two Indian companies to be recognised by the Global Lighthouse Network this year.
- The WEF Global Lighthouse Network is a group of 69 factories that serve as a platform to develop, replicate, and scale innovations, creating opportunities for cross-company learning and collaboration while setting new benchmarks for the global manufacturing community.

### RBI: Image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches by Sep 30

- The Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30 this year. The move is aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service. The Apex bank said that to leverage the availability of CTS and provide a uniform customer experience irrespective of the location of her/his bank branch, it has been decided to extend CTS across all bank branches in the country. To facilitate this, banks will have to ensure that all their branches participate in image-based CTS under respective grids by September 30.
- There's now a new way of clearing cheques more easily and quickly across the UK.
- The Image Clearing System allows banks and building societies to exchange images of cheques instead of moving paper around the country.
- This new approach means you can withdraw money much sooner.

## Current Affairs PDF- March 17, 2021

### INTERNATIONAL

#### India-Finland Virtual Summit 2021

- The India-Finland Virtual Summit was held on March 16, 2021, with the participation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland Ms Sanna Marin. The virtual summit was organised to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral issues as well as other

regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

- The two leaders reviewed the ongoing bilateral engagements and committed to further expand and diversify the relationship across sectors such as trade and investment, innovation, education, emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, and quantum computing.
- The two leaders also discussed the Covid-19 situation including their respective vaccination drives and emphasized the importance of global efforts for urgent and affordable access to vaccines across all nations.
- The leaders exchanged views on regional and global issues, including the India-EU partnership, cooperation in the Arctic region, WTO and UN reforms. Both sides noted the potential for India and Finland to cooperate in undertaking developmental activities in Africa.

## NATIONAL

### Samsung sets up Innovation Lab at DTU

- Samsung India has announced that it has inaugurated a Samsung Innovation Lab at Delhi Technological University (DTU) to focus on collaborative research and training. It has set up the innovation lab under the Samsung Innovation Campus initiative as part of its new #PoweringDigitalIndia vision. With this addition, Samsung now has eight technical labs spread across the country as part of its Samsung Innovation Campus initiative, which was earlier called Samsung Digital Academy.
- As part of the lab, engineers at Samsung R&D Institute, Noida (SRI-N) will work with students and faculty at DTU on collaborative research projects on smartphone domains.
- The students and faculty at DTU will work on domains such as Application Framework, Multimedia, Health and Security, at the lab.
- Projects will focus on technology areas such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Computer Vision. So far, over 200 students have worked with SRI-N engineers on research projects and have received training.
- Collaborative research projects will be open to B.Tech, M.Tech and PhD students at DTU, who will receive certificates for their contribution at the end of each project. Samsung Innovation Campus is the company's global citizenship program that aims to bridge proficiency gaps by skilling students on cutting-edge technology.

## SPORTS

### Virat Kohli becomes first player to score 3000 runs in men's T20

- Indian captain Virat Kohli has breached the 3000-run mark in Twenty20 Internationals with his last shot in the second T20I against England. Kohli's knock of 73 runs, which came off 49 balls, also helped India to level the five-match T20I series.
- He also became the third captain in international cricket to score 12000 runs as a captain. He joined legendary captains Ricky Ponting and Graeme Smith in the elite list.

### UAE's Mohammad Naveed, Shaiman Anwar banned for 8 years from all cricket

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has imposed eight years ban on former UAE players

Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt from all cricket, for trying to fix matches during the T20 World Cup qualifiers in 2019. The ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal had found them guilty of breaching the Anti-Corruption Code in January 2021.

- The bans are backdated to 16 October 2019, when they were provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt matches of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in the UAE. Naveed was the captain and leading wicket-taker. Anwar was the opening bat. Both had long international careers and were well versed in the threat from match-fixers.
- Both have been charged with two breaches each, the first of which is Article 2.2.1, which stands for 'contriving, or being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive or otherwise influence improperly, the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of matches in the upcoming ICC World T20 Qualifiers 2019.'

### Bhavani Devi becomes first ever Indian fencer to qualify for Olympics

- Bhavani Devi became the first-ever Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics. The sabre fencer secured an Olympic spot due to events in the ongoing Fencing World Cup. Hosts Hungary lost in the quarterfinals of the team event, allowing Korea to progress to the semis.
- Therefore, Bhavani Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method. Currently, she is ranked 45th in the world. In 2017 She won India's 1st international gold medal in fencing.

### Mumbai City FC beat ATK Mohun Bagan to win their maiden ISL title

- Mumbai City FC has defeated ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the ISL 2020-21 final to lift yet another trophy this year. Mumbai had earlier secured the ISL Shield along with a spot in the AFC Champions League group stage by finishing first in the standings in the regular season.
- Golden Ball Award (Best Player of ISL 2020-21): ATK Mohun Bagan forward Roy Krishna.
- Emerging Indian Player of the Year: NorthEast United midfielder Lalengmawia.
- Golden Boot Award (Top goal-scorer): FC Goa striker Igor Angulo for 14 goals.
- Golden Glove Award (Best Goalkeeper): ATK Mohun Bagan custodian Arindam Bhattacharya for ten clean sheets.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### ISRO launches sounding rocket RH-560 to study attitudinal variations

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched the sounding rocket (RH-560) to study attitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics, at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota Range (SHAR). ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm, according to the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.
- Sounding rockets are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research. They also serve as easily affordable platforms to test or prove prototypes of new components or subsystems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites.

## OBITUARY

### Renowned Padma Bhushan winning painter Laxman Pai passed away

- Renowned Indian artist and painter Laxman Pai has passed away. The Goa-based painter was a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honour.
- The former principal of the Goa College of Art had several laurels under his name including Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Nehru Award, and Lalit Kala Akademi Award.

### Former Boxing Champion 'Marvelous' Marvin Hagler Passed Away

- The former undisputed middleweight boxing legend "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler has passed away. Hagler, the American legend, ruled as the undisputed middleweight champion from 1980 to 1987.
- He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame and the World Boxing Hall of Fame in 1993.

### Noted Kathakali Dancer Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair passed away

- Veteran Kathakali artist Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair has passed away in Kozhikode, Kerala. He was 105-year old. He was awarded Padma Shri in 2017 for his contributions to the dance form of Kathakali.
- Besides this, Chemancheri was also the recipient of several other awards like the Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Award in 1979, the Kerala Kalamandalam award in 2001, Kalaratnam award in 2009, Mayilpeeli award and Sangeet Natak Akademi Tagore award.

## APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Advisor P K Sinha resign

- Former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Advisor in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) P.K. Sinha has relinquished his high-profile position on personal grounds. He was appointed in the PMO first as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) briefly and then as Principal Advisor, a specially created position for him, in September 2019 after the 2019 parliamentary polls. Besides him, two senior officials are serving as Advisors in the PMO: Bhaskar Khulbe and Amarjit Sinha, both 1983 batch retired IAS officials.
- Mr. Sinha is a retired 1977 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre and served in various capacities during the UPA and the NDA regimes. His is the second high profile exit from the PMO after PM's Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra had resigned after the last Lok Sabha polls. Earlier, he was Secretary, Ministry of Power in the government of India and served as Cabinet Secretary for four years from 2015.

## BANKING AND ECONOMY

### NPCI launches UPI-Help on BHIM app for Grievance Redressal

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the umbrella entity for digital payments in India, has launched a new application named "UPI-Help" on BHIM UPI, which will act as a grievance redressal mechanism for the users of the BHIM application. Initially, UPI-Help has

been made live on the BHIM app for the customers of State Bank of India, AXIS Bank, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank. Users of other banks participating in UPI will also be added to UPI-Help soon.

- check the status of the pending transactions,
- raise complaints against transactions that have not been processed
- raise complaints against money that has not reached the beneficiary
- raise complaints against merchant transactions

## Current Affairs PDF- March 16, 2021

### INTERNATIONAL

#### 'Burqa ban' in Sri Lanka

- The Pakistani High Commissioner in Colombo has raised concern over Sri Lanka's recent announcement on outlawing the burqa, noting that such a ban would "injure" the feelings of ordinary Muslims in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.
- Sharing a news report on the development, head of the Pakistani mission Saad Khattak on Monday said in a Twitter thread: "The likely ban on Niqab #SriLanka will only serve as injury to the feelings of ordinary Sri Lankan Muslims and Muslims across the globe. At today's economically difficult time due to Pandemic and other image related challenges faced by the country at international fora, such divisive steps in the name of Security, besides accentuating economic difficulties, will only serve as fillip to further strengthen wider apprehensions about fundamental human rights of minorities in the country."

### NATIONAL

#### First project Genome Mapping in Indian Ocean will be launched

- In the Indian Ocean, the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) will launch the first-of-its-kind project of Genome Mapping.
- Indian Ocean covers about 20% of the Earth's water surface and so is the third largest water body in the world.
- Its objective is to gather samples of genome mapping of microorganisms in the Indian Ocean.
- It is also necessary to understand the biochemistry and the response of the Ocean to climate change, nutrient stress and increasing pollution.
- The cost of the project and duration is Rs 25 crore and will take around three years to complete.
- Samples will be collected by the researchers from several stretches of the ocean at an average depth of about 5 km.
- It is just like gene mapping which is carried out on blood samples collected from humans, the scientists will map these in the bacteria, microbes found in the ocean.
- Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid (DNA) and Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) mapping shows the nutrients present in them and also those lacking in various parts of the ocean.

#### Odisha Farmer's Solar Car Gets Thumbs-Up Online

- An Odisha farmer gained attention of people on social media by generating electric four-

wheeler that runs on a solar powered battery.

- Sushil Aggarwal from Odisha's Mayurbhanj district had built a four-wheeler powered by an 850 Watts motor and 100 Ah/54 Volts of battery.
- After fully charged the vehicle can travel up to 300 km. He told that he had built this car inside a workshop at his home during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- He told that the solar-powered battery took around 8 and a half hours to be fully charged. He further stated that "It is a slow charging battery. Such batteries have a long life, it will last 10 years."
- All the work on his vehicle including motor winding, electrical fitting and chassis work were done in my workshop with the help of two other mechanics and a friend who advised me on electric works," he added.

### Kalanamak Rice Festival to be held in UP

- After the grand success of the Strawberry Festival in Jhansi and the Jaggery Festival in Lucknow, the Uttar Pradesh state government is organising a three-day 'Kalanamak Rice Festival' in Siddharthnagar district from March 13.
- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in his sustained efforts of creating new income opportunities for the farmers, has stressed on promoting the localised production and providing them with a market.
- Kala Namak Rice, grown in this region, is One District One Product (ODOP) of some Eastern UP districts.

## SPORTS

### Vijay Hazare Trophy: Prithvi Shaw Becomes First Player to Score 800 Runs

- Mumbai skipper and opening batsman Prithvi Shaw answered his critics in a strong fashion as he became the first player to register more than 800 runs in a single edition of the Vijay Hazare Trophy – the domestic one-day tournament of India. Shaw, who was dropped from India's Test squad after his twin failures in Australia, achieved the feat in the ongoing final between Mumbai and Uttar Pradesh at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi.
- Carrying his blistering form, Shaw played a blinder of a knock – 73 off 39 balls – in the final to provide Mumbai dominant start in the 313 chase against UP. In eight matches of Vijay Hazare Trophy, the 21-year-old scored 827 runs at a staggering average of 165.40 and strike-rate of 165.40.

### Ultimate Battle Founder- An Online eSports Platform

- Founder of Ultimate Battle is Tarun Gupta. It is an online eSports platform where gamers can test their mettle against others without paying a fee. India is still small in this segment, gamers need platforms that can give them competitive exposure to improve their skills.
- Therefore, Ultimate Battle invites and encourages players to try popular eSports titles of all kinds against other players. It is a complete product of India and it does not charge players money to participate in competitive gaming through the platform.

**eSports titles of today and tomorrow**

- Ultimate Battle consists of PC gaming titles like DOTA 2, FIFA 20, CS:GO (Counter Strike: Global Offensive) and the PC version of PUBG. Also, mobile titles like Garena Free Fire and Doodle Army 2: Mini Militia.
- According to Tarun Gupta, “With Ultimate Battle, our vision was to bring eSports to the forefront, organise events and celebrate gaming in all its glory.” He also added that “the platform also serves as a go-to platform to kickstart one’s career in the competitive circuit. All the eSports athletes will get essential exposure and a platform where they can enhance their tactical skills, strategies & coordination”.
- This platform provides players multiple avenues to win rewards or recognitions in the form of eSports Tournaments. Rewards are in the form of cash prizes and ‘UB Coins’. These coins that players win are then redeemable as in game items, Google play credits, merchandise and more.
- He also said that the involvement of upcoming technologies like AR and VR and their role in shaping the future of eSports. Hopefully in the near future VR-based competitive games will be developed and hit the mainstream.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Consumer Rights Day 2021

- It is celebrated on 15 March across the world annually to spread awareness about the rights of consumers and their needs.
- A special message was sent by President John F Kennedy to the US Congress on 15 March, 1962 and so the day was inspired by him. In the message he formally addressed the issue of consumer rights. To do so, he was the first leader.
- The history behind the World Consumer Rights Day is that the first consumer movement was observed in 1983 and since then every year it is observed to mobilize an action on important issues and campaigns.
- The theme of World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is 'Tackling Plastic Pollution'. It will raise awareness and engage consumers globally to adopt and promote more sustainable practices. The last year theme was 'The Sustainable Consumer'. This year the campaign will also focus on the central role that consumer advocates governments and businesses can play in tackling the global plastic pollution crisis.

### National Vaccination Day: March 16

- The National Vaccination Day, (also called the National Immunization Day), is celebrated every year on March 16 in India, to convey the importance of vaccination to the entire nation. The prime purpose behind the celebration of National Vaccination Day is to make all people aware of arming against polio and eradicating it completely from the world. In 2021, the National Vaccination Day is important as the country has started its biggest Covid-19 immunization programme.
- The day was first observed in the year 1995. It was in 1995 that India started the Pulse Polio Programme and the first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given. According to the World Health Organization, immunization is a process through which an individual’s immune system becomes fortified against foreign harm causing agent.

## AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

### Sahitya Akademi Award 2020

- The National Academy of Letters have announced the names for the “Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 on March 12, 2021. The names were announced during the opening of annual “Festival of Letters” event.
- The award will be bestowed upon the politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhati Subramaniam along with other 20 writers. Subramaniam have won the award for her poetry collection called “When God is a Traveller” in English. Veerappa Moily has been named for his epic poetry called “Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam” in Kannada language. The list comprises of seven books of poetry, five short stories, four novels, two plays, and one memoir and one epic poetry in 20 Indian languages. The awards for Nepali, Malayalam, Odia and Rajasthani Languages will be announced later.

### Gowsalya Shankar nominated for International Woman of Courage 2021 Award

- The U.S. Consulate honoured Tamil Nadu-based anti-caste activist and human rights defender Gowsalya Shankar with a nomination for the International Woman of Courage (IWOC) Award in the city.
- The IWOC Award Certificate of Nomination was handed over to her by U.S. Consul General in Chennai Judith Ravin at an event ‘Courageous Women Inspire a Better World’ held in the city. Ms. Gowsalya was U.S. Mission India’s nominee for the 2021 U.S. Secretary of State’s IWOC Award, which honours women who have demonstrated exceptional courage, strength, and leadership in acting to improve the lives of others.
- Malini Parthasarathy, Chairperson, The Hindu, and V. Suresh, National General Secretary of the People’s Union of Civil Liberties, also spoke on the theme of courageous women.

### Grammy Awards 2021 Announced: Check the list of Winners

- The 63rd edition of the annual Grammy Awards ceremony was held in Los Angeles on March 14, 2021. The 2021 Grammy awards recognized the best recordings, compositions, and artists of the eligibility year, between September 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020. The award is presented by The Recording Academy to recognize achievements in the American music industry. Beyonce received the most nominations with nine, as well as the most awards with four.

## Grammy Awards 2021:

Sl. No.	Category	Winner
1.	Album Of The Year	"Folklore" by Taylor Swift
2.	Record Of The Year	"Everything I Wanted" by Billie Eilish
3.	Best New Artist	Megan Thee Stallion
4.	Best Rap Album	"King's Disease" by Nas
5.	Best R&B Album Winner	"Bigger Love" by John Legend
6.	Best Rap Song	"Savage" by Beyoncé, Shawn Carter, Brittany
7.	Best Country Album	"Wildcard" — Miranda Lambert
8.	Song Of The Year	"I Can't Breathe" by Dernst Emile II, H.E.R. and Tiara Thomas
9.	Best Rock Album	"The New Abnormal" by The Strokes
10.	Best Rock Song	"Stay High" by Brittany Howard, songwriter (Brittany Howard)
11.	Best Dance/Electronic Album	Bubba by Kaytranada
12.	Producer of the Year, Classical	David Frost
13.	Best Music Video	Brown Skin Girl by Beyoncé, Blue Ivy & WizKid
14.	Best Country Song	Crowded Table by Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby & Lori McKenna
15.	Best Folk Album	All the Good Times
16.	Best Comedy Album	Black Mitzvah by Tiffany Haddish

## Current Affairs PDF- March 15, 2021

### INTERNATIONAL

#### India, Pakistan Indus Commissioners set to meet on March 23-24

- Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan are set to meet on March 23-24 in New Delhi.
- Pradeep Kumar Saxena, Commissioner (Indus), who will lead the Indian delegation in the

meeting, “The annual meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) will be held on March 23-24 in New Delhi.”

- “We are committed towards full utilisation of India’s rights under the treaty and believe in amicable solution of issues through discussion.
- This will be the first meeting of Indus Commissioners after a gap of two and a half years. The last meeting of the India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) was held in Lahore, Pakistan from August 29-30, 2018.

## NATIONAL

### JK Govt. Approves Rs. 2 Lakh Interest-free Loan For Urban Housing ( PMAY-U) Beneficiaries

- Manoj Sinha, approved the proposal of the Housing & Urban Development Department to provide interest-free loan up to Rs. 2 lakhs to the urban houseless economically weaker section beneficiaries under Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) component of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna-Urban (PMAY-U).
- The beneficiaries under Beneficiary Led Construction component of PMAY (U) have experienced the difficulty in mobilizing their contribution as they come from economic weaker sections and have to contribute higher share as compared to other States/UT, as a result of which the construction of dwelling units under this component of PMAY(U) could not achieve the desired targets.
- The beneficiaries of this component have demanded enhancement of assistance in their favour so that they can complete their houses within the targeted date of the Mission. In view of practical difficulties faced by the beneficiaries in arranging financial resources, the Govt. agreed to provide interest subsidy to all the eligible beneficiary. The interest-free loan will be an additional benefit, over and above the financial assistance of Rs. 1.66 lakhs which is already being provided to the beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna-Urban , with this the beneficiaries can now avail Rs.3.66 lakh for construction of their dwelling units under this component of PMAY(U).

### INS Jalashwa arrives in Comoros with 1,000 metric tonne rice

- Indian naval ship Jalashwa arrived at the port of Anjouan, Comoros on Sunday to deliver 1,000 metric tonne of rice.
- The consignment has come as a fulfilment of the grant announcement made during the visit of Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu to Comoros in October 2019, according to a statement by the Indian Embassy in Madagascar and Comoros.
- The 1000 metric tonnes of rice will be received by Foreign Minister of Comoros, Dhoihir Dhoulkamal, in a ceremony today which will be attended by Ambassador Abhay Kumar through a video conference.

### Railways' parcel management system to be extended to 523 locations

- The Indian Railways (IR) new parcel management system (PMS) is adding a total of 523 locations in phases, from the present 84, to provide a “vast network of stations” for transportation of small consignments.

- In a statement, the transportation services are being used by small businesses and traders to move merchandise from production centres and bigger cities to place of business in a “fast, reliable and cheap manner.
- As per the statement, Phase II will take total locations to 143 and by Phase III, the computerised PMS will have 523 locations.

### Centre announces new scheme for tourist vehicle operators

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new scheme, under which any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an "All India Tourist Authorisation/Permit" via online mode. It will be issued, after relevant documents are submitted and fees deposited, in 30 days of submission of such applications.
- The new set of rules, to be known as, "All India Tourist Vehicles Authorisation and Permit Rules, 2021", will be applicable from April 1, 2021. All existing permits will continue to be in force during their validity.

### Supreme Court seeks govt.'s response on plea against Places of Worship Act

- The Supreme Court has asked the government to respond to a plea challenging the Places of Worship Act enacted in 1991.
- A notice is issued by a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde to the Union Ministries of Home, Law and Culture on a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay against various provisions of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act of 1991.
- The petition said Sections of the Act that dealt with the bar on legal claims were against the principles of secularism.

#### About the law

- It was passed in 1991 by the P V Narasimha Rao-led Congress government. The law seeks to maintain the “religious character” of places of worship as it was in 1947 except law Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute case that was already in court. The law was brought in at the peak of the Ram Mandir movement after one year before the demolition of the Babri Masjid.
- Home Minister S B Chavan in introducing the law said in the Parliament that it was adopted to curb the communal tension.

## SPORTS

### Rashid Khan creates record for bowling most overs in a Test

- Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan on Sunday created the record for bowling the most number of overs in a single Test in the 21st century.
- The spinner bowled a total of 99.2 overs in the second Test between Zimbabwe and Afghanistan at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi. Rashid Khan bowled 596 balls in the match.
- This is the most number of overs bowled by a bowler in a Test since 1998. In 1998, Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan had bowled 113.5 overs (683 balls) against England at The Oval.
- In the first innings against Zimbabwe, Rashid returned with the figures of 4-138 from 36.3 overs while in the second innings, the spinners bowled 62.5 overs. The second innings saw Rashid

Khan at his best as he returned with seven wickets and conceded 137 runs.

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## BANKING AND ECONOMY

### India holds world's 4th largest forex reserve

- India's foreign-exchange reserves surpassed Russia's to become the world's fourth largest, as the South Asian nation's central bank continues to hoard dollars to cushion the economy against any sudden outflows.
- Reserves for both countries have mostly flattened out this year after months of rapid increase. India pulled ahead as Russian holdings declined at a faster rate in recent weeks.
- India's foreign currency holdings fell by \$4.3 billion to \$580.3 billion as of March 5, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday, edging out Russia's \$580.1 billion pile. China has the largest reserves, followed by Japan and Switzerland on the International Monetary Fund table.
- India's reserves, enough to cover roughly 18 months of imports, have been bolstered by a rare current-account surplus, rising inflows into the local stock market and foreign direct investment.

## Current Affairs PDF- March 14, 2021

## INTERNATIONAL

### PM Modi Virtually Attends First Quad Summit 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japan Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga come together for the first QUAD Summit. The meeting was held virtually during which the four participants will exchange views on different areas of cooperation like maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, C-19, emerging and critical technologies, maritime security, and climate change.

- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations are planning to counter China by cooperating and pool their resources to fund new production technologies and development projects. The world leaders talked about the cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and its development. President Biden also said that they are launching a new pact for the manufacturing of C-19 vaccines.
- QUAD is also known as the Asian NATO. It is an informal strategic forum comprising India, the United States, Japan, and Australia. The forum is maintained by semi-regular summits, military drills and information between member countries. The idea of QUAD was first brought up by the then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe back in 2007. Since then the representatives from the member countries have met regularly and worked together. However, this was the first-ever meeting between the national heads of the QUAD countries.

## NATIONAL

### India Chaired the First Meeting Of BRICS CGETI

- Under the chairship of India, the First Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held from 9th March 2021 to 11th March 2021. The 2021 theme of the BRICS is “BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.
- India presented the calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, this includes the priority areas for deliverables, schedule and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on Services Statistics, and the BRICS Trade Fair. A series of presentations on the proposed deliverables during India’s chairship under the BRICS CGETI track was made in a separate session by the concerned departments of the government of India.

#### **The proposal delivered:**

- Action plan based on the document “Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025” adopted during the Russian Presidency in 2020.
- BRICS Cooperation on Multilateral Trading system including cooperation for the TRIPS Waiver proposal at WTO;
- Framework for Consumer Protection in E-Commerce;
- Non-Tariff Measures (NTM) Resolution Mechanism;
- Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) Working Mechanism;
- Co-operation framework for the protection of Genetic Resources and Traditional Knowledge
- BRICS Framework on Co-operation in Professional Services.

### Himachal CM inaugurates Swarnim International Shivratri Fair

- The famous Swarnim International Shivratri Fair has begun with Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur formally launching it at the historic Paddal ground, Himachal Pradesh. Thousands of people dressed in their traditional attire participated in the procession carrying their local deities dancing all the way up to Paddal ground.
- Over 150 deities participated in the ‘Jaleb’, the traditional Shobha Yatra from almost all parts of the district. Earlier, the Chief Minister participated in the Pagri Ceremony and performed Puja at Shri Raj Madhav Rai Temple. Chief Minister felicitated the people of the State on the auspicious occasion of International Shivratri festival, which was being celebrated this year as Swarnim International Shivratri Fair to mark glorious fifty years of Statehood.

## DoT Launches Online Certificate Course on 5G Technology

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has launched a new online certificate course on 5G technology to be conducted by the National Telecommunications Institute for Policy Research, Innovation and Training (NTIPRIT), which is the training institute of DoT. The course, which will be conducted from 9 March 2021 onwards, is 36 hours long and will be conducted over a period of 12 weeks every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Participants will also be allowed to record the session if they happen to miss it.
- DoT hopes that this course would act as a capsule programme for learning overall 5G technology from the perspective of Policymaking. The following topics will be covered under the course:

## Govt to launch "Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra Portal"

- The commerce and industry ministry has stated that the central government is working to develop a portal called "Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra Portal" for information dissemination, hand-holding, and facilitation of domestic investors. The portal Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra is currently in the testing phase. It will be launched by May 1, 2021. The ministry is also working on a webpage which will be available in regional languages and mobile app.
- This portal is being developed in order to strengthen efforts to promote domestic investments. It is being developed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
- The portal will help in providing daily updates on several things including the policies and new initiatives by the central and state governments, information regarding the approvals, licenses, clearances several schemes & incentives. It will also be providing information regarding the manufacturing clusters and land availability.
- The portal will provide its support to the investors throughout their business journey and will help them in getting all the information ranging from finding the investment opportunity, exploring incentives & taxes which are applicable to their businesses, raw material availability, sources of funding, training, tender information and management requirement.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### Govt launches Mera Ration Mobile App

- In order to facilitate the 'One Nation-One Ration Card' system in the country, the government has launched 'Mera Ration' mobile app to benefit citizens in identifying the nearest fair price shop. This app will benefit especially those ration card holders who move to new areas for livelihoods. The app is developed by the government in association with NIC "to facilitate various "One Nation-One Ration Card" related services among the National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries, particularly migrant beneficiaries, fair price shop dealers and other relevant stakeholders.
- With the help of the app, the beneficiaries can easily check details of food grain entitlement, recent transactions and the Status of their Aadhaar seeding.
- The migrant beneficiaries can also register their migration details with the help of the application. Beneficiaries can also enter their suggestions or feedback.

- Implementation of the One Nation-One Ration Card system ensures availability of ration to beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes, especially the migrant workers and their families, at any fair price shop (FPS) across the country.

### APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

#### Pallav Mohapatra appointed MD & CEO of ARCIL

- Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd (Arcil) has announced the appointment of Pallav Mohapatra as its Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director. Prior to the appointment, Mohapatra was the MD and CEO of the Central Bank of India. Before being elevated as MD and CEO of CBol, he was Deputy Managing Director, Stressed Assets Management Group, State Bank of India.
- Vinayak Bahuguna headed Arcil as MD and CEO for five years till June 2020. Arcil, which was set up in 2002, currently has assets under management (in non-performing loans) of ₹12,000 crore.

### BOOKS AND AUTHORS

#### PM Narendra Modi Launches Kindle Version Of Bhagavad Gita

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavananda's 'Bhagavad Gita' via video conferencing. The event has been organised to commemorate the sale of over 5 lakh copies of the Swami Chidbhavanandaji's Bhagavad Gita. Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.
- Chidbhavananda Ji was devoted to India's regeneration. He noted that Swami Vivekananda's Madras lectures inspired Swami Chidbhavananda Ji to put the nation above everything else and serve the people.