

Monthly

# G.K. MANIA



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APRIL - 2021



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## **India & The 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting**

Union minister S Jaishankar addressed the 17th edition of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) meet, which was attended by Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. India proposed an initiative to create a connectivity master plan linking countries in South and Southeast Asia, and emphasized on the speedy conclusion of a coastal shipping pact, besides another agreement allowing motor vehicles to ply via member countries. The Member States have finalized the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity which is likely to get adopted at the fifth BIMSTEC Summit. It is worth remembering here that BIMSTEC was constituted in the 1990s and the group remained dormant for many years till it was revived a few years ago as an alternative to the South

Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which despite having the potential, has not been able to move forward due to frictions between India and Pakistan.

## **RBI Is Making News!**

The Reserve Bank of India has extended the term of Mr. R. K. Chhibber, Chairman and Managing Director of the J&K Bank by a further period of six months with effect from 10th April, 2021 or till the appointment of MD & CEO, whichever is earlier in wake of Regulation 30 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. Chhibber was appointed as interim Chairman and Managing Director of J&K Bank on 10th June 2019 and his tenure was last extended in October 2020. Chhibber's association with the bank dates back to 1982 and he played an important role in the growth of the bank at branch and zonal levels. Apart from this, Britannia has appointed former RBI



governor Ujjit Patel as additional director of the company for five years i.e. upto 30th March 2026. Patel was the successor of Raghuram Rajan and had worked in the capacity of the Governor of RBI from 2016 to 2018. Apart from this, former RBI Deputy Governor K C Chakrabarty passed away in Mumbai at the age of 69. The deceased was the deputy governor of the central bank between June 15, 2009 and April 25, 2014 when he left office three months before his term ended.

### **Mallika Srinivasan : Chief of Public Enterprises Selection Board**



Chairman and Managing Director of Tractors and Farm Equipment (TAFE) Limited has been appointed as the chairperson of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) for a period of three years or until the attainment of the age of 65 years after approval of the

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. This appointment is historic as for the first time a private sector specialist has been appointed as the head of the PESB, which is responsible for appointment of top management posts in the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

### **India's Biggest Floating Solar Power Plant**



The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) will set up a floating solar power plant with a capacity of 100 MW at Ramagundam thermal power plant reservoir in Telangana, which will be the country's biggest floating solar power plant. The proposed project will begin in May at an estimated expenditure of around 423 crore rupees. The project will see installation of 4.5 lakh photovoltaic panels in 450-acre area of the reservoir that may be expanded in the future. With this, NTPC will try to reduce its carbon footprints and accelerate its green energy production to 30% of its capacity. It is worth learning here that

besides this, the world's largest solar power plant with 600 MW capacity will be set up on Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh at a cost of Rs. 3,000 crore in 2022-23.

### **'CIISCO', An Innovation For India's First Solar Mission!**

In order to track the huge bubbles of gas threaded with magnetic field lines that are ejected from the Sun in the lower corona where the properties of such eruptions are less known, Scientists have developed a new technique or an algorithm, "CMEs Identification in Inner Solar Corona (CIISCO)". Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) is a technical term for the gas bubble mass ejections from the Sun that cause several disturbances to the space environment and interrupt the forecasting accuracy, disrupt space weather and lead to satellite failures, geomagnetic storms, and power outages. This innovation of scientists will be employed in the first solar mission of India named 'Aditya-L1' meant to observe the lower region of the solar corona and provide new insight into the CMEs properties. This CIISCO was tested on several eruptions observed by space

observatories, including Solar-Terrestrial Relations Observatory, PROBA2/SWAP, and Solar Dynamics Observatory launched by ESA and NASA, respectively. Prior to this, a Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACTus) algorithm was used, which was capable of detecting and characterizing the automatic eruptions in the outer corona of the sun only.

### **Demise of Veteran Actress Shashikala**

Veteran actress Shashikala passed away at the age of 88 in Mumbai. Shashikala Om Prakash Saigal did more than 100 movies. She had started her career with a small role in the 1945 release Zeenat and then went on to appear in popular movies viz. Bimla, Sujata, Aarti, Anupama, Ayee Milan Ki Bela, Waqt, Gumrah, Khubsoorat, Mujhse Shaadi Karogi and Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham etc.. The actress played a remarkable role in the popular television show Son Pari. She was acknowledged with the prestigious Padma Shri award by the Indian government for her unparalleled contribution to the world of cinema and

arts in 2007. She was also honored with the most coveted Lifetime Achievement Award at the V. Shantaram Awards in 2009. Besides these, she also became a proud recipient of two Filmfare awards for her work in Aarti and Gumrah.

### **Mahendragiri Is All Set To Conceive The Second Biosphere Reserve Of Odisha**

The Odisha government has proposed to set up a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri, which is a mountain in the Gajapati district with an altitude of 1,501 metres. The proposed biosphere reserve will cover approximately 470,955 hectares in Mahendragiri, which is the second-highest peak in the state. The hill ecosystem will act as a transitional zone between the flora and fauna of southern India and the Himalayas dubbed as ecological estuaries of genetic diversity. Mahendragiri accommodates 40% of the reported flora of Odisha as well as 388 species of animals. It is worth recollecting here that Similipal Biosphere Reserve is the first biosphere reserve of Odisha.

### **The 66th Filmfare Awards 2021**



The awardees for the 66th annual Filmfare awards were announced recently. The names of winners in different categories are as follows :

- Best Film: Thappad
- Best Actor in a Lead Role (Male): Irrfan Khan (Angrezi Medium)
- Best Actor in a Lead Role (Female): TaapseePannu (Thappad)
- Best Director: Om Raut (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- Best Debut Director: Rajesh Krishnan (Lootcase)
- Best Debut Female: Alaya F (Jawaani Jaaneman)
- Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male): Saif Ali Khan (Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior)
- Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female): Farrokh Jaffar (GulaboSitabo)
- Best Story: Anubhav Sushila Sinha and MrunamayeeLagooWaikul (Thappad)

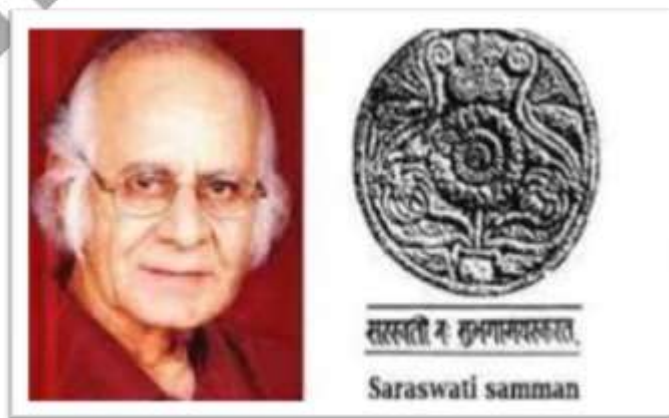
- Best Screenplay: Rohena Gera (SIR)
- Best Dialogue: Juhi Chaturvedi (GulaboSitabo)
- Best Music Album: Pritam (Ludo)
- Best Lyrics: Gulzar (Chhappak)
- Best Playback Singer (male): Raghav Chaitanya – EkTukdaDhoop (Thappad)
- Best Playback Singer (Female): Asees Kaur (Malang)
- Best Film (Critics): Prateek Vats (Eeb Allay Ooo!)
- Best Actor (Critics): Amitabh Bachchan (GulaboSitabo)
- Best Actress (Critics): TillotamaShome (SIR)
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Irrfan Khan

### **India Will Participate In Naval Drill 'La Perouse'**

Indian Navy will take part for the first time in French Naval Exercise 'La Perouse' in Bay of Bengal along with other QUAD member countries from 5th April to 7th April 2021. Australia, Japan and the US will also participate in this exercise. This will further strengthen the strategic relationship between France and India, which has been on an upward trajectory ever since France was supportive of India's nuclear tests in

1998 when most of the western world's first reaction was to impose sanctions. Besides this, the 18th India-French naval exercise, 'Varuna' will also take place this month, which will include the United Arab Emirates as well. It is worth knowing here that France has always maintained an important naval presence in the Indian Ocean headed by a 2-star Admiral called Alindien and was also the first country to appoint an observer at the Indian Ocean Region Information Fusion Centre (IOR-IFC) that was set up by India on the outskirts of the national capital.

### **Dr Sharankumar Limbale : Saraswati Samman 2020 Awardee**



Renowned Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale received Saraswati Samman, 2020 for his book 'Sanatan'. Published in 2018, Sanatan is a



significant social and historical document of the Dalit struggle. With this, Limbale became the first Dalit writer to receive this award worth fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque. Dr SharanKumar Limbale is former head of Nashik's Yashwantrao Chavan Open University and author of 40 books. This Saraswati Samman was instituted by KK Birla Foundation in 1991 and is considered as the most prestigious and highest literary award in India.

### **Demise of Lieutenant General Walter Anthony Gustavo 'Wag' Pinto**

Popular with the name 'Victor of Basantar' for commanding the 54th Division in the Battle of Basantar, Lieutenant General Walter Anthony Gustavo 'Wag' Pinto died at the age of 97 in Pune. He led this battle as Major General on the western front in the Indo-Pak War of 1971. This battle gave birth to Bangladesh, leading his troops from the front with the motto he coined "bash on regardless". He last served as the 8th General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of

the Central Command. It is worth remembering here that the Battle of Basantar was one of the longest ground battles ever fought by the Indian Army that involved 14 days of fierce fighting for which Indian soldiers and officers were awarded a total of 196 gallantry awards. 'Wag' Pinto was awarded the prestigious Param VishishtSeva Medal (PVSM).

### **Demise Of Former RBI Deputy Governor K. C. Chakrabarty**

Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor Kamallesh Chandra Chakrabarty passed away at the age of 69 in Mumbai. The deceased was the deputy governor of the central bank between June 15, 2009 and April 25, 2014 and had left office three months before the end of his term. He had spent nearly 40 years across multiple public sector banks like he had worked in capacities of the Chairman and Managing Director of Punjab National Bank (2007-2009), and CMD of Indian Bank (2005-2007). He was well known for his wit and sharp retorts.

## **Saurabh Garg : The New CEO of UIDAI**



The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of senior bureaucrat and 1991 batch IAS officer Saurabh Garg's appointment as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). He is currently serving in his cadre state Odisha. Besides him, 1991 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre, Sanjeev Kumar has been appointed as the Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI) and a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, Atish Chandra, who is currently the Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India.

## **Retired Dogs Are Now Therapy Dogs!**

The Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) deployed the retired combat canines as "therapy dogs" to help in the early recuperation of personnel undergoing medical treatment and also for their specially-abled children suffering from autism and other spectral disorders. A first batch of five dogs namely Pooja, Tom, Rambo, Rani and Gravey, who were resting in their "retirement home" at the ITBP national training center for dogs and animals at Bhanu near Chandigarh have been inducted for a second innings task of being "therapy dogs" in this novel initiative. The dogs had recently retired after serving various anti-Naxal operations and counter-insurgency grids of the country along with their handlers accompanying the ITBP forces. The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) after thinking about the challenges of life after retirement for the aged and out-of-service four-legged soldiers, which were deployed for various roles in the internal security domain, ranging from detecting hidden explosives to sniffing out terrorists, drugs and assault and guard duties, took this decision during the national conference on police dogs that was conducted by the newly-created cell



for this subject in the Ministry of Home Affairs. So far, these dogs were usually handed over to animal NGOs or kept at a retirement home within the organisation for post-retirement care.

### **Cabinet Approved MoU between PSCs of India & Afghanistan**

The Union Cabinet gave nod to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), India and Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission (IARCSC), Afghanistan to facilitate sharing of experience and expertise of both the parties in the area of recruitment. The MoU covers exchange of information and expertise including books, manuals and other documents which are non confidential in nature and sharing of expertise in the use of Information Technology (IT) for the preparation of written examinations and holding of Computer Based Recruitment Tests and Online Examinations.

### **India came across a 'Double Mutant' virus?**

The Union Health Ministry confirmed the "double mutant" coronavirus variant which comes with the combination of

mutations across the country and the Scientists are checking its efficacy or if it is making COVID-19 more severe. Genome sequencing of virus samples by a consortium of 10 labs in India, 'Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG)' reports the presence of two mutations, E484Q and L452R, in some 200 virus samples from Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab and Gujarat. These two mutations have been identified individually in other variants of SARS-CoV-2 across the globe. They have been associated with reduction in vaccine efficacy and infectivity. The combined effect and biological implication of the variant is yet to be studied.

### **Competency Based Assessment Framework Of CBSE**

On 25th March 2021 Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) introduced a competency - based assessment framework for classes 6-10 for three subjects namely, English (reading), Science, and Maths. Being a part of "CBSE Competency Based Education Project", the framework is meant to replace the existing "rote learning model" in accordance with the new National

Education Policy (NEP) in next 2-3 years. CBSE has collaborated with British Council and three agencies from the UK namely Cambridge, NARIC and Alphaplus for it. In the first phase of assessment, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas and private schools across the country will participate in the programme. This programme will be rolled out to all 25,000 CBSE schools across India by 2024. On 24th March 2021 Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched over 100 comic books created by teachers and students of CBSE schools and curated by NCERT. These comics can be accessed online on DIKSHA web portal ([diksha.gov.in](http://diksha.gov.in)) or via DIKSHA app on any android Smartphone as well as on WhatsApp powered Chatbot that presents a unique opportunity to expand the scope of digital learning.

### **India's first Govt-Run Animal Ambulance Network**

The state government of Andhra Pradesh announced its plan of setting up India's first government-run ambulance network for animals. This decision was taken in order to provide momentum to the animal husbandry and veterinary sector

in the state. Ambulance network is meant to help in reaching out to the distressed animals to provide them proper healthcare. The Animal Husbandry Department has been directed to establish one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at each of the assembly constituencies. The state government has planned to launch a total of 175 mobile ambulances (veterinary) clinics at Assembly Constituency Level on the lines of 108 Services for providing Veterinary services at the doorstep. These mobile ambulances will offer veterinary first aid services along with spot diagnosis and 'Hydraulic Lift' facility to lift animals and shift them to the nearest Government Veterinary Facility in case of emergency. These ambulances will have a 24/7 toll-free call centre.

### **S Ramann: New CMD Of SIDBI**

The Government of India recently appointed S Ramann as the Chairman and Managing Director of Small Industries and Development Bank of India for a period of three years. The 1991 batch Indian Audit and Accounts Service Officer, S Ramann is currently the CEO of National E-Governance Services Limited, which is the first Information

Utility of India. His name was recommended by the Banks Board Bureau, which is meant to improve governance of Public sector banks by recommending selection of chiefs of government owned banks and financial institutions and helping banks with the strategies to deal with non-performing assets and bad loans.

### **Launch Of Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021**

Bihar emerged as the first state of India to have an ethanol promotion policy under the National Policy of Biofuels, 2018. The minister of State Industries, Syed Shahnawaz Hussain launched this policy. A tripartite agreement has been made among the investors, oil manufacturing companies, and banks, which will be acting as collateral for the secured loans to set up greenfield standalone ethanol manufacturing units in Bihar. The policy permits the extraction of ethanol, which was earlier limited to sugarcane, from surplus quantities of the maize as well. Further, each of the investors will also get an additional government subsidy of 15% of the cost of the plant as well as machinery up to a maximum of Rs. 5 crores, which

will be in addition to the existing incentives under the Bihar Industrial Investment Promotion Policy, 2016. The policy will also directly increase the income of the farmers who have been producing feedstock or raw materials for ethanol manufacturing. Currently, bioethanol blending in petrol in India stands at 6.2% and the government has set a target of 20% of blending by 2030. Bihar produces 12 crore liters of ethanol and stands at the 5th place in ethanol production in the country.

### **Arindam Bagchi : The New Spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs**



1995-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, Arindam Bagchi has been recently appointed as the new Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). He has taken the place of the officer of the 1999 batch of Indian



Foreign Service, Anurag Srivastava, who will now be a joint secretary (north). Prior to this, Bagchi had served as ambassador to Croatia and deputy high commissioner in Sri Lanka, besides having served as director in the Prime Minister's Office. It is worth knowing here that the office of the Official Spokesperson and Joint Secretary (External Publicity) is the interface of the Ministry of External Affairs with the media.

### **Lieutenant Colonel Bharat Pannu Broke Two Guinness World Records**

Indian Army's Lieutenant Colonel Bharat Pannu received his two Guinness World Record certificates for fastest Solo Cycling feats which he performed from October 2020. He created the first record after cycling from Leh to Manali (472 km distance) on October 10, 2020, in just 35 hours and 25 minutes and created a second record when he cycled the 5,942-km-long 'Golden Quadrilateral' route, which links Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, in 14 days, 23 hours and 52 minutes. This cycling event had begun

from India Gate in New Delhi on October 16, and it ended back at the same spot on October 30.

### **Gram Ujala Scheme Launched for Rural Areas**

In order to provide the world's cheapest LED bulbs in the rural areas, the government of India has started the "Gram Ujala Scheme" in Arrah (Bihar), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and western Gujarat. Launched by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Power and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Minister of State, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, R. K. Singh, the Gram Ujalaprogramme will provide LEDs for only Rs 10 each for each household, in exchange for working condition old incandescent bulbs. This scheme is being financed on the basis of carbon credits. It will claim carbon credits under "United Nations' Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)" and carbon credits will contribute to rupees 60 per piece.

## The Announcement Of The 67th National Film Awards



After a delay of almost one year because of Covid-19, the 67th edition of National Film Awards were finally announced. This time, there were total 461 films in the Feature Film category and 220 films in the Non-Feature Film category. In the most film-friendly states, there were entries from 13 states. The names of award and winners are as follows:-

- Most film-friendly state: Sikkim
- Best Book on Cinema: A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema by Sanjay Suri
- (Special mention- Cinema Paharana Manus written by Ashok Rane and Kannada Cinema: Jagathika Cinema Vikasa-PreranePrabhava written by PR Ramadasa Naidu)
- Best Film Critic: Sohini Chattopadhyay

### Non Feature Film Category

- Best Narration: Wild Karnataka, Sir David Attenborough
- Best Editing: Shut Up Sona, Arjun Gourisaria
- Best Audiography: Radha (Musical), Allwin Rego and Sanjay Maurya
- Best On-Location Sound Recordist: Rahas (Hindi), Saptarshi Sarkar
- Best Cinematography: Sonsi, Savita Singh
- Best Direction: Knock KnockKnock (English/Bengali), Sudhanshu Saria
- Best Film on Family Values: OruPaathiraaSwapnam Pole (Malayalam)
- Best Short Fiction Film: Custody (Hindi/English)
- Special Jury Award: Small Scale Societies (English)
- Best Animation Film: Radha (Musical)
- Best Investigative Film: Jakkal
- Best Exploration Film: Wild Karnataka (English)
- Best Education Film: Apples and Oranges (English)
- Best Film on Social Issues: Holy Rights (Hindi) and Ladli (Hindi)
- Best Environment Film: The Stork Saviours (Hindi)

- Best Promotional Film: The Shower (Hindi)
- Best Art and Culture Film: Shrikshetra-Ru-Sahijata (Odia)
- Best Biographical Film: Elephants Do Remember (English)
- Best Ethnographic Film: Charan-Atva The Essence of Being a Nomad (Gujarati)
- Best Debut Non-Feature Film of a Director: Khisa (Marathi)
- Best Non-Feature Film: An Engineered Dream (Hindi)
- Best Odiya Film: Sala BudharBadla and KaliraAtita
- Best Manipuri Film: Eigi Kona
- Best Malayalam Film: KallaNottam
- Best Marathi Film: Bardo
- Best Konkani Film: Kaajro
- Best Kannada Film: Akshi
- Best Hindi Film: Chhichhore
- Best Bengali Film: Gumnaami
- Best Assamese Film: Ronuwa- Who Never Surrender
- Best Action Direction Award
- Best Stunt: AvaneSrimannarayana (Kannada)
- Best Choreography: Maharshi (Telugu)
- Best Special Effects: MarakkarArabikadalinteSimham (Malayalam)
- Special Jury Award: OththaSeruppu Size-7 (Tamil)
- Best Lyrics: Kolaambi (Malayalam)

### Feature Films

- Special Mention: Biryani (Malayalam), JonakiPorua (Assamese), Lata Bhagwan Kare (Marathi), Picasso (Marathi)
- Best Tulu Film: Pingara
- Best Paniya Film: Kenjira
- Best Mishing Film: Anu Ruwad
- Best Khasi Film: Lewduh
- Best Haryanvi Film: ChhoriyanChhoron Se Kam NahiHoti
- Best Chhattisgarhi Film: Bhulan The Maze
- Best Telugu Film: Jersey
- Best Tamil Film: Asuran
- Best Punjabi Film: Rab Da Radio 2

### Best Music Direction

- Songs: Viswasam (Tamil)
- Music Direction: Jyeshthoputro
- Make-Up Artist: Helen
- Best Production Design: Anandi Gopal
- Best Editing: Jersey (Telugu)
- Best Audiography: lewduh (Khasi)



## Best Screenplay

- Original Screenplay: Jyeshthoputri
  - Adapted Screenplay: Gumnaami
  - Dialogue Writer: The Tashkent Files (Hindi)
  - Best Cinematography: Jallikkettu (Malayalam)
  - Best Female Playback Singer: Bardo (Marathi)
  - Best Male Playback Singer: Kesri, Teri Mitti (Hindi)
  - Best Supporting Actress: The Tashkent Files, Pallavi Joshi
  - Best Supporting Actor: Super Deluxe, Vijaya Sethupathi
  - Best Actress: Kangana Ranaut (Manikarnika, Panga)
  - Best Actor: Manoj Bajpayee for Bhonsle and Dhanush for Asuran
  - Best Direction: Bahattar Hoorain
  - Best Children Film: Kastoori (Hindi)
  - Best Film on Environment Conservation: Water Burial
  - Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of Director: Helen (Malayalam)
  - Best Feature Film: Marakkar Arabikadalinte Simham (Malayalam)
- (Courtesy : India Today)

## National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2021 passed by Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha gave nod to the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2021. The Bill amends the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991 which states a framework for the functioning of the Legislative Assembly and the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. This approved Bill has introduced some amendments in certain powers and responsibilities of the Legislative Assembly and the Lieutenant Governor (LG). The amendment bill ensures that the LG is necessarily granted a chance to exercise the power in a selected category of cases, in emergency; LG will be able to make rules in matters which stand outside the preview of the Delhi Legislative Assembly; all executive actions will be expressed to be taken in the name of the Lieutenant Governor among others. Further the Bill will promote the harmonious relations between the legislature and the executive in the national capital. This amendment bill was a technical necessity as the Supreme Court, High court and other forums were discussing the ambiguity at different

times and issuing the orders on the NCT Act 1991. It should be noted that this Bill neither snatches away the powers of the elected government of Delhi nor give additional powers to the Lieutenant Governor of the National Capital. As per the Bill, although the Government will keep consulting the LG as the administrator but in case of any difference of opinion on any matter between LG and the Delhi government, the LG will refer the same to the President of India

### **The Pepsu Muzara Movement**

19th March 2021 recalled the painful memories at Kishangarh village of Mansa district. In the year 1949, in this village, four farmers were killed on this date during the “PepsuMuzara movement”. After India’s Independence some 784 villages of the Patiala Riyasat were named as PEPSU province. PEPSU stands for “Patiala and East Punjab States Union”. It was a state of India, which was the combination of eight princely states in the year between 1948 and 1956. Patiala was the capital and principal city of PEPSU and Shimla, Kasauli, Kandaghat and Chail were also included as a part of PEPSU. And Muzara word is used for the

“landless farmers” who used to work on someone’s land. In the 1930s the farmers worked like slaves under the Patiala Riyasat and Jagirdars, Maharaja and Britishers were illegally seeking the share in the crop of farmers across the villages of Punjab. In the month of October 1948, the Patiala Maharaja had sanctioned one third land of villages to Jagirdars, which was unacceptable to farmers. Later on March 19, 1949 these farmers with the objective of taking ownership rights of land after tilling it for years together, started the PepsuMuzara Movement and confronted the security forces of Maharaja at Kishangarh in which four farmers, one cop and one patwari were killed.

### **Demise of Senior CPI leader C.A. Kurian**

Veteran CPI leader, trade unionist and former Deputy Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly, C.A. Kurian, died of age-related ailments in Munnar at the age of 88. He hailed from Puthuppally in Kottayam district and began his political career as the trade union activist in 1960. Kurian was elected to the state Assembly in the elections held in 1977, 1980 and 1996 from Peermade constituency. He

was a veteran leader of AITUC, the trade union wing of the CPI and had been the chair of Deputy Speaker of the state Assembly during the period of 1996 and 2001. The deceased will be remembered for improving the lives of people living in the hill district of Idukki.

### **18th March :**

#### **The Ordnance Factory Day**

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) celebrated the 220th 'Ordnance Factory Day' on 18th March 2021 to commemorate the foundation of the first Ordnance Factory at Cossipore near Kolkata in 1801. Currently, the Ordnance Factories network has 41 factories divided into five operational divisions of the OFB, and forms a defence production conglomerate with one of the widest range of products worldwide. The Ministry of Defence, which is looking forward to corporatise Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), is facing strong opposition from All India Defence Employees' Federation (AIDEF) of Left unions; Bhartiya Pratiksha Mazdoor Sangh (BPMS), an arm of RSS-affiliate Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh; and Indian National Defence Workers' Federation (INDWF) of the Indian National Trade Union

Congress. And the opposers decided to mark this anniversary as 'Save Ordnance Factories Day'

#### **The Ongoing Poshan Pakhwada**

In order to address nutritional challenges, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is celebrating Poshan Pakhwada from 16th March 2021. The Ministry is employing Food Forestry and organizing Poshan Panchayats in this event, which will continue till 31st March 2021. As part of the celebration, distribution of four saplings of nutrition rich plants per Anganwadi Centre (AWC) in the Aspirational Districts is being done under the supervision of local panchayat and DM/DC by National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB). Besides this, the ministry is also organizing the awareness campaign regarding the malnutrition prevalence and its consequences, food forestry, PoshanVatika, identification of SAM children and its management.

#### **The Spring Equinox**

20th March 2021 brought the Spring Equinox, which is also known as "Vernal Equinox". Equinox implies the two points in a year when the equator is the closest part of Earth to the sun. In the vernal



equinox, the northern and southern hemispheres will share the sunlight equally. It implies that the planet gets 12 hours of daylight and darkness during those days. Spring Equinox technically occurred at 9.37 in the morning. Usually Spring Equinox occurs between 19th and 21st March. It is considered as the first day of the spring according to the astronomical calculation of the seasons. This astronomical spring will end on June 21, 2021 which is called the summer solstice. The date is based on the two equinoxes and solstices. The term solstice means one of the two times of the year when the positioning and tilt of Earth relative to the sun results in the most amount of daylight time or the least amount of daylight time in a single day.

### **India-Bahrain PASSEX Exercise**

Indian Navy and Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq conducted Passage Exercise, 'PASSEX' on March 17, 2021 in the Persian Gulf under Maritime Security Operations, code-named Operation Sankalp that was started in the Gulf region on June 19, 2019, in the backdrop of the attacks on merchant ships in the Gulf of Oman. INS Talwar,

that was deployed for this operation participated in this exercise from Indian side. The exercise enhanced interoperability and strengthened bilateral maritime cooperation between the participants and will reassure diaspora and merchant shipping. Indian Navy carries out the PASSEX exercise with units of friendly foreign navies, while visiting each other's ports or during a rendezvous at sea.

### **The Insurance Amendment Bill 2021**



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced an 'Insurance Amendment Bill 2021' in Rajya Sabha that seeks to amend the Insurance Act to increase the permissible FDI limit from 49% to 74% in insurance companies and allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards. The Bill is an amendment of the Insurance Act, 1938, in which permissible FDI limit in life and general insurance stands at 49% with ownership and

management control with India. The Union Cabinet has already given its approval for amendments in the Insurance Amendment Bill 2021 and as per the new structure, the majority of directors on the board and key management persons will be resident Indians, with at least 50% of directors being independent directors, and specified percentage of profits being retained as a general reserve. It is worth recalling here that in 2015 the government had raised the FDI cap in the insurance sector from 26% to 49%. An increase in FDI is meant to improve life insurance penetration in India. As of the time period between April 2020 to December 2020, India had attracted a total FDI inflow of US\$ 67.54 billion, which was the highest ever for the first nine months of a financial year. The FDI equity inflow increased by 40% in the first 9 months of F.Y. 2020-21 (US\$ 51.47 billion) compared to the year ago period (US\$ 36.77 billion).

### **Artificial Photosynthesis Method: A Way To Capture Carbon**

In order to capture excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, a team of Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research devised

a method of artificial photosynthesis that mimics the Photosynthesis which is the natural process of reducing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. In this method with the help of solar energy the captured carbon dioxide is converted into carbon monoxide (CO), which in turn can be used as a fuel for the internal combustion engines. In the process, the team of scientists followed the same process as in the natural photosynthesis via use of the simple nanostructures. Scientists have designed and fabricated the integrated catalytic system which is based on the metal-organic framework (MOF-808). It has a photosensitizer that can harness the solar power and the catalytic centre.

### **Approval of The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020**

Indian parliament gave nod to The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 that seeks to increase the upper limit for abortions from current 20 weeks to 24 weeks for certain categories of women viz. rape survivors, victims of incest, minors and the differently-abled and removes limits

in the case of substantial foetal abnormalities. This bill also recommends establishment of the state-level Medical Boards to decide if a pregnancy to be terminated beyond 24 weeks in cases of foetal abnormalities. It is an amendment of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. This bill was approved by the Lok Sabha in March 2020 and Rajya Sabha gave its consent in March 2021.

### **Decommissioning Of Two Longest-serving Artillery Systems**

Indian Army de-commissioned two of the longest-serving Artillery systems- the 130mm Self Propelled M-46 Catapult Guns and the 160mm Tampella Mortars at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges. Developed by merger of two existing weapon systems viz. Vijayanta tanks and 130mm M-46 guns, the 130mm Catapult Guns have a range of more than 27 km. It catered the demand of a mobile Artillery gun system to support strike formations on the Western borders, following the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan Wars. The Catapult guns were commissioned into service in 1981 and were employed successfully during several operations. And the 160mm Tampella mortars with a

range of 9.6km were commissioned into the Indian Army's service after the 1962 Sino-Indian War to cater the need for a weapons system to clear high crests of the Northern borders. They were originally imported from the Israeli Defence Forces and were deployed in Hajipir Bowl and the Leepa valley on the LoC for maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Control. They were used in the 1999 Indo-Pak Kargil war.

### **The New DGs**

A 1986 batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre, presently serving as the Special DG of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), has been assigned an additional charge of CRPF Director General (DG) after the retirement of incumbent chief A P Maheshwari. He will serve this additional post till up September 30, 2022 i.e. date of his superannuation. Apart from this, Senior IPS officer of 1986 batch of the Uttarakhand cadre, MA Ganapathy, currently serving as Director General of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security has been appointed as Director General of National Security Guard on Personnel Ministry's order. He will serve the post till February 29, 2024 i.e. date of his superannuation.



## Gautam Adani Topped Bloomberg Billionaires Index.



Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani with a net worth of USD 50 billion created history by becoming the biggest wealth creator across the globe in 2021 ahead of world's richest Jeff Bezos and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. He has recently added a total of USD 16.2 billion to his net worth by acquiring some major airports and ports in India and coal mines in Australia. It is worth learning that shares of all Adani Group companies except one gained as much as 50%. The shares of some of Adani groups like Adani Total Gas have almost doubled while Adani Enterprises increased 90%, Adani Transmission Ltd gained 79%, Adani Power and Adani Ports and Special Economic Zones Ltd gained over 50%, while Reliance Industries Chairman and Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani managed to add just USD 8.1 billion in this year so far.

## Indians Among WEF's 2021 Class of Young Global Leaders



The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the list of 112 Young Global Leaders (YGL) 2021. Indians like ShreevarKheruka, Aditi Avasthi, Srikanth Bolla, Gazal Kalra, Ameya Prabhu, HridayRavindranath, Hitesh Wadhwa and Deepika Padukone were ranked in this list. Among them ShreevarKheruka is Managing Director, Borosil Ltd and member of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO) as well as the Entrepreneur's Organization (EO); Aditi Avasthi is Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Embibe, India's EdTech AI platform; Srikanth Bolla is Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Bollant Industries Pvt Ltd, recycled paper manufacturing and eco friendly packaging consumer product manufacturing company in India; GazalKalra is Co-founder, Rivigo, tech-logistics startup disrupting the large and unorganized industry; Ameya Prabhu is

Managing Director, NAFA Capital. He is also an author, financial services entrepreneur & social worker as well as founder and Managing Partner of UAP Advisors; HridayRavindranath is Global Chief Technology and Information Officer, BT Group Plc. He is one of the youngest CTIOs in the industry and youngest CTIO of BT Group; Hitesh Wadhwa is Vice-President, Strategic Initiatives, Tech Mahindra, a leading provider of digital transformation, consulting and business engineering services and Bollywood Actor Deepika Padukone needs no introduction. It is worth knowing that the Forum of YGL is aligned with the mission of WEF to encourage public private cooperation in global public interest.

### **Molecular Sensor For Identification Of New Cancer Drugs**

Indian researchers from Institute For Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine, Bangalore in collaboration with the Curie Institute in Orsay, France reported development of a molecular sensor, 'tyrosination sensor' that is capable of identifying cancer drugs by

detecting how such chemicals modify microtubules inside living cells. The microtubules that are part of the cytoskeleton, which is a structural network within the cell's cytoplasm alter in response to several chemicals. This research is important as it gives insight about tubulin modifications, which has been a major challenge on account of unavailability of tools that can mark them in living cells. Tyrosination sensor is the first tubulin nanobody that can be used to study the dynamics of microtubule modifications in living cells and can be used for identification of new cancer therapeutic drugs.

### **Retinal Scan Technology For Autism Detection**

A Hong Kong based scientist has devised a method that employs machine learning and artificial intelligence for scanning the retinas of young children in order to detect early childhood autism. The signs of autism usually appear during the first three years of the child. The innovative software analyses the combination of factors like blood vessels and fibre layers in the eye. This technology was tested on 70 children with an average age of 13.

Among them 46 were detected with autism. The success rate of this technology was found to be 95.7%.The commercial version of the technology will be ready by the end of year 2021. Autism is a developmental disorder which is characterized by difficulties of social interaction and communication. It is a condition characterised by a restricted and repetitive behaviour associated with the combination of genetic and environmental factors.

### **SasmitaLanka : UN's Asia Environmental Enforcement Awardee**

Sasmita Lanka became the first official in India to get honored with the United Nations Asia Environmental Enforcement Award. The divisional forest officer in Athgarh, Cuttack was acknowledged under the 'Gender Leadership and Impact' category for busting international ant-eating pangolin smuggling rackets in the network of Athagarh. He played a key role in seizing three pangolins, including a dead one,that were being smuggled to China, Vietnam, and Myanmar for black marketing as well as 28 smugglers. The

pangolin has keratin rich scales that help in aiding breastfeeding and curing asthma or cancer and it is the most trafficked animal in the world. It is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list of threatened species.

### **Painter Laxman Pai Signed Off Canvas Of Life**

Well knownpainter Laxman Pai passed away in Goa at the age of 95. Hailing from Goa's Margao, he studied at Sir J J School of Art in Mumbai and taught at the same college. He also worked in the capacity of the principal of Goa College of Art. His paintings demonstrated his exploration of the stylistics of Indian folk art. He was adept in making visual references as well as partial abstraction in his art work. He was a proud recipient of several prestigious awards like Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Nehru Award and Lalit Kala Akademi Award etc. He also participated in the Goa liberation movement and was barred for his role in the Satyagraha during the Indian freedom struggle.

## **Deepak Mishra: The New Director of ICRIER**



Practice Manager in the World Bank's Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment Global Practice in East Asia and Pacific region, Deepak Mishra has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). He has succeeded Rajat Kathuria who was on the post since 1st September 2012. It is worth knowing that Mishra has also served as the World Bank's country economist for India from 2001-04, working closely with the central government and various state governments like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab. Prior to the World Bank, he served Tata Motors, Federal Reserve Board and University of Maryland.

## **Mathematics & Physics Will No More Be Mandatory For Some Engineering Streams !!!**

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) released new norms for academic year 2021-22 and revealed that the prospective engineering students for streams like Textile, Agriculture or Biotechnology, will not have to mandatorily study maths and physics in Class 12. The AICTE approved process handbook for 2021-22 states that the unreserved students need to score 45% (and reserved category students need to score 40%) in any three subjects from a list of 14 viz. physics, mathematics, chemistry, computer science, electronics, information technology, biology, informatics practices, biotechnology, agriculture, technical vocational subject, engineering graphics, business studies and entrepreneurship for getting admission in undergraduate level. Further, the universities will offer suitable bridge courses such as mathematics, physics, engineering drawing, etc for the students coming from diverse backgrounds to achieve the desired learning outcome of the programme. However, Physics,



Chemistry, and Mathematics will continue to be important subjects for core streams of engineering like mechanical, IT etc.

## **Announcement Of Sahitya Akademi Award 2020**



The National Academy of Letters have announced the names of 20 writers for the “Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 at the annual “Festival of Letters” event. The list covers seven books of poetry, four novels, five short stories, two plays, and one each of memoirs and epic poetry in 20 Indian languages. The names of prominent winners for poetry include Politician-writer M Veerappa Moily (epic poetry titled Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam in Kannada), poet Arundhati Subramaniam (poetry collection When God is a Traveller in English). Other poetry winners are Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), Anamika (Hindi), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Irungbam Deven (Manipuri), Rupchand Hansda (Santali),

and Nikhileswar (Telugu). Novel winners include Nanda Khare (Marathi), Maheshchandra Sharma Gautam (Sanskrit), Imaiya (Tamil) and Sri Hussain-ul-Haque. Short story winners are Apurba Kumar Saikia (Assamese), (late) Dharanidhar Owari (Bodo), (late) Hidayat Koul Bharti (Kashmiri), Kamakant Jha (Maithili) and Gurdev Singh Rupana (Punjab). Winners of the plays include Gian Singh (Dogri) and Jetho Lalwani (Sindhi), while Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay in (Bengali) will get the award for memoir. Venita Coelho has been chosen for the Bal Puraskar for her work, Dead as a Dodo and English author Yashica Dutt for the Yuva Puraskar for her memoir Coming Out As Dalit. The awards for Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani languages will be announced later.

## **Pallav Mohapatra : The Chief of Asset Reconstruction Co India Ltd (ARCIL)**

India's oldest asset reconstruction company, 'Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd (ARCIL)' announced the appointment of Pallav Mohapatra as its Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director. Before this appointment, Mohapatra was the MD and CEO of

Central Bank of India (CBoI) from September 21, 2018, to February 28, 2021 and before that he was serving as Deputy Managing Director, Stressed Assets Management Group, State Bank of India. He has taken place of Vinayak Bahuguna, who headed ARCIL as MD and CEO for five years till June 2020. Established in 2002, ARCIL currently has assets worth ₹12,000 crore under management and Avenue Capital, SBI, IDBI, ICICI, PNB, GIC Singapore etc. are its shareholders.

### **Demise Of Brahma Kumaris' Chief Dadi Hriday Mohini**



Spiritual organisation Brahma Kumaris' Chief Dadi Hriday Mohini passed away at the age of 93 in Mumbai following a brief illness. She was appointed as the chief administrator of the organisation after the death of its former chief Dadi Janki a year ago. The deceased will be remembered for her numerous efforts to

alleviate human suffering and further societal empowerment. She played a key role in spreading the positive message of the Brahma Kumari globally. Her body was brought to the headquarters in Abu Road for public homage and her last rites have been done today.

### **Tirath Singh Rawat : The New CM of Uttarakhand**

The BJP MP from the Pauri constituency, Tirath Singh Rawat has sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand following the resignation of former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat. His oath was administered by Governor Baby Rani Maurya at the Raj Bhawan in Dehradun. The 56-year-old, who brought with him vast administrative and organisational experience was picked among prominent candidates including Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Uttarakhand Minister Dhan Singh Rawat at a meeting of Uttarakhand BJP's legislature party. He served as the chief of the party in Uttarakhand from 2013 to 2015. It is worth knowing here that the ex-CM Trivendra Singh Rawat after his resignation has joined the row of Uttarakhand CMs, who were unable to

complete their five-year tenure. Among the eight Uttarakhand CMs only the late Narayan Dutt Tiwari was able to complete his tenure between 2002 and 2007.

## **The 89th Birth Anniversary Of India's "Satellite Man"**



The tech giant Google celebrated the 89th birthday of renowned Indian professor and scientist Udupi Ramachandra Rao on March 10, 2021 via dedicating a doodle to him. The doodle featured a sketch of Professor Rao with a background of Earth and shooting stars to mark his contributions in the space arena. Rao was an Indian space scientist who served in capacities of the Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation and Chairman of Governing Council of Indian Institute for Space Science and Technology (IIST) at Thiruvananthapuram, Physical Research

Laboratory at Ahmedabad and Nehru Planetarium at Bengaluru. Hailing from a village of Karnataka, he began his career as a cosmic-ray physicist and as a protege of Dr Vikram Sarabhai, the father of India's space program. Rao worked as a professor and conducted experiments on Pioneer and Explorer space probes of NASA and came back to India in 1966 and led the 1975 launch of India's first satellite called "Aryabhata". It is one of the 20 satellites that were developed by him. This was the satellite that transformed rural India by providing advanced communication and meteorological services. The Satellite Man was honored with the Padma Bhushan (1976) and Padma Vibhushan (2017). Besides these, he became the first Indian to get inducted into both the Satellite Hall of Fame, Washington (March 2013) as well as in the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) (May 2016).

## **March 10 : The First National Gestational Diabetes Mellitus Day**

Diabetes in Pregnancy Study Group in India (DIPSI) instituted 10th March as the

National Gestational Diabetes Mellitus Day and with that India became the first nation of the globe to declare the Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) Day in the world. GDM is also known as Hyperglycemia in Pregnancy (HIP) and the Asian Research and Training Institute for Skill Transfer (ARTIST); World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) & Federation of Obstetric & Gynecological Societies of India (FOGSI) collaborated with the DIPSI to start a nationwide campaign GDM,

which is required to be tackled at the womb level. It has been found that in India among the 3 million women, who develop GDM, in 5-10 years after pregnancy, 30 percent of them have a tendency to develop Type 2 Diabetes, further adding to the number of diabetics in the country. It is disheartening to learn that India is called "Diabetes Capital of the World" and it is to be rechristened as "Diabetes Care Capital of the World."





## **Facebook & Google Connecting Southeast Asia With America**



In order to increase data capacity and improve the internet authenticity across the trans-pacific by about 70%, Facebook and Google announced their plan to put two undersea Internet cables named "Echo" and "Bifrost" in collaboration with regional telecommunication companies. These will be the first two cables to go through a new diverse route crossing the Java Sea and will connect Southeast Asia's Singapore and Indonesia to North America. "Echo" will be built in partnership with Alphabet's Google and Indonesian telecommunications' company XL Axiata and it will be completed

by 2023. "Bifrost", will be built in partnership with Telin, a subsidiary of Indonesia's Telkomsel, and Singaporean conglomerate Keppel and it will be completed by 2024.

## **Norway Will Conceive World's First Ship Tunnel**

1,700 metres long, 37 meters high and 26.5 metres wide Stad Ship Tunnel underneath the mountains in Norway's Stadhavet peninsula will be constructed from 2022 till 2025-26 at an estimated expenditure of more than \$315 million. The proposed Ship Tunnel will be the world's first ship tunnel. This project is meant to help ships navigate through the rough and treacherous Stadhavet Sea in north western Norway. With this, the ships will not have to wait for days for the harsh weather conditions to improve and rough tides in the Stadhavet Sea to subside before transiting the area.

## **China-Iran “Strategic Cooperation Pact”**

China and Iran inked a 25-year “strategic cooperation pact” on March 27, 2021. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif in Tehran were the signatories of this deal. This pact is said to be effective in deepening relations as well as establishment of a blueprint for so called “reciprocal investments in the fields of transport, ports, energy, industry and services.” It has been done under the latest expansion of Beijing's flagship trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative. It is worth knowing here that China is Iran's leading trade partner and was one of the biggest buyers of Iranian oil before former US president Donald Trump reimposed sweeping unilateral sanctions in 2018 after abandoning a multilateral nuclear agreement with Tehran.

## **The Global Gender Gap Report 2021**

The World Economic Forum released a Global Gender Gap Report 2021 covering 156 countries across the globe. In this report Iceland, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, Rwanda, Sweden, Namibia,

Lithuania, Ireland and Switzerland emerged as top 10 gender-equal countries worldwide. In a stark contrast where Iceland has topped the index as the most gender-equal country in the world for the 12th time, Afghanistan crept as the worst-performing country with 156th rank in the report. India has slipped 28 places to rank 140, while last year its rank was 112th among 153 countries. In context to South Asia, India emerged as the third-worst performing country. India's neighbours, Bangladesh achieved the 65th rank globally and emerged as the best performer in South Asia, Nepal (106th), Pakistan (153rd), Bhutan (130th) and Sri Lanka (116th).

## **Expiry Of H-1B Visa Ban**

US President Joe Biden's administration allowed the expiry of H-1B Visa ban notification, which gave a huge sigh of relief to thousands of Indian IT professionals. The validity of this ban lapsed on 31st March 2021. It was issued by former US President Donald Trump in June 2020 suspending entry of applicants for several temporary or non-immigrant visa categories, including H-1B to the US and this ban was extended till

March 31, 2021. Trump did that in wake of the pandemic that continued to disrupt American lives, and high levels of unemployment and job loss and serious economic challenges to workers across the US.

### **World's First Covid-19 Vaccine For Cats & Dogs!**



Russia's agriculture safety watchdog Rosselkhoznadzor registered the 'Carnivac-Cov' vaccine for cats and dogs, which is said to be the world's first covid vaccine for animals. Moreover, this vaccine is efficient against virus mutations as well. The immunity rendered by this inoculation will last for six months after vaccination. The mass production of the coronavirus vaccine for animals is expected to start soon. In context to humans, Russia already has three COVID-19 vaccines for humans and among them the Sputnik V is the most well-known of all.

### **Methylobacteriumajmalii: The New Bacteria On ISS**

As per the recent issue of the journal, Frontiers in Microbiology, the newly discovered bacteria in the International Space Station (ISS) that can help in creating the "fuel" to help plants withstand stressful situations in space has been named as 'Methylobacteriumajmalii' after renowned Indian biodiversity scientist, Dr Ajmal Khan, a former professor at Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu. Methylobacteriumajmali are genetically closely related to Methylobacteriumindicum. The discovery opens the possibility of astronauts growing their own vegetables as per a new study by researchers based at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory(JPL), among other institutions.

### **Russia Is Making The News Headlines**

Russia's lower house of parliament, State Duma gave nod to a constitutional amendment bill that states that the limit of two presidential terms applies to the incumbent head of state, but without taking into account his previous terms.



Thus, the bill grants Putin the possibility of beginning his presidency from scratch in 2024 and holding the office for two more terms until 2036. The bill is waiting for approval of the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, and then to be signed by Putin into law. Apart from this, Russia is doing a lot in the space sector. Earlier this month, Russia successfully launched 38 foreign satellites from 18 countries including South Korea, Japan and Germany via Soyuz-2.1 a carrier rocket from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. Among them was a satellite named the Challenge-1, which was the first satellite made completely in Tunisia by the Telnet telecommunications group. Prior to that, Russia deployed the Giant Space Telescope, "Baikal-GVD", which is said to be one of the biggest underwater space telescopes of the world in Lake Baikal to observe the smallest known particles called neutrinos. It has been submerged to the depth of 750-1300 meters across the four kilometres from the shore of Lake Baikal, which is a rift lake located in the southern Siberia, Russia.

## **March 24 : World Tuberculosis Day 2021**



Globe observed 24th March 2021 as World Tuberculosis Day on 'The Clock is Ticking' theme, which conveys that the Covid 19 pandemic has delayed the progress of curing TB and the world is running out of time to act on the commitments made by global leaders to end TB. Tuberculosis is a contagious infection that is caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* that mainly attacks the lungs, but it can attack other parts of the body as well like kidney, spine, and brain. This day was observed for the first time on March 24th, 1982, which was the 100th anniversary of Dr Robert Koch's presentation, who discovered the Tuberculosis Bacillus virus. In context to India, a recent India TB Report 2021 highlights a 24% year-on-year fall in registration of tuberculosis cases in 2020. Amid the ongoing covid-19 pandemic-led



disruptions and lockdowns, an estimated 18.05 lakh TB cases were registered in India. The credit goes to the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme as well as to some government initiatives like Nikshay Ecosystem, NikshayPoshan Yojana, TB HaregaDeshJeetega Campaign and Saksham Project that had closed the gap on missing TB cases. Earlier this month the Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, was appointed as the chairman of "Stop TB Partnership Board" for a three-year term from July 2021 in recognition of his outstanding contribution towards the movement of eradicating TB from India by 2025. As of latest, Lakshadweep (UT) and District of Budgarn (J&K) have been declared TB Free and Himachal Pradesh topped amongst Indian states with a population of more than 50 Lakhs to end Tuberculosis.

### **The SCO Joint Anti-terrorism Exercise**

The news of participation of India, China and Pakistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Joint Anti-terrorism Exercise, "Pabbi-Antiterror-2021" came from the 36th meeting of the Council of the Regional

Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), which was held in Tashkent. It is meant to improve cooperation among the competent authorities of the SCO member states viz. India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan in identifying and suppressing channels that finance terrorist activities. Headquartered in Tashkent, RATS is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against terrorism, separatism and extremism. It is worth remembering here that SCO is an economic and security bloc in which India and Pakistan were admitted as full members in 2017 and China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are its founding members.

### **World's First Volcano Cat Bond**

The Danish Red Cross launched the first of its kind catastrophe bond worth \$3 million for the volcano-related disasters in collaboration with the several financial firms like Plenum Investments, Schroder Investment Management and Solidum Partners etc. to enable the disaster relief agency to facilitate quick aid to victims of the eruption of 10 named volcanoes in Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador,

Guatemala, Indonesia and Mexico. It should be noted that Catastrophe bonds provide investors high yields, but do not pay out if a named catastrophe occurs. The bond covers areas prone to hurricanes and typhoons. According to the organization's statement, the Danish Red Cross has worked with insurance group Howden, with risk modelling by Mitiga Solutions and blockchain technology from Replexus.

### **The Permanent Indus Commission of India & Pakistan**

The arch enemies India and Pakistan held their first meeting in three years of a "Permanent Indus Commission" from 23rd March 2021 to 24th March 2021 regarding the water rights on the Indus River. In this meeting India justified its stand on the designs. The PakalDul Hydro Electric Project (1,000 MW) on the Marusudar river, a tributary of the Chenab river, in Kishtwar district in Jammu and Kashmir as well as the Lower Kalnai project in Kishtwar and Doda districts have been proposed. The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) calls for the two commissioners to meet at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan. Flashback reveals that this

Permanent Indus Commission was established under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. This water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan, which was inked by the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru and the President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan in Karachi on September 19, 1960, is backed by the World Bank. The treaty has the provision of using the available water in the Indus River and its tributaries involving the waters of three Eastern Rivers namely, Beas, Ravi and Sutlej.

### **The Ongoing Canada- US Arctic Air Defence Drills**

Planned in February 2020, Canada & the US started their week-long Arctic Air Defence Drills on 20th March 2021, which will continue till 26th March 2021. The drill is meant to modernize the network of defence satellites and radar in the Arctic. As per the information of the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD), members of the 148 Fighter Wing, Minnesota national Guard are participating in this drill at Thule Air Base, which is the United States Space Force's northernmost base, located 1,207 km north of the Arctic Circle and

1,524 km from the North Pole on the northwest coast of the island of Greenland. It is worth remembering that Thule Air Base is the US Armed Forces' northernmost installation.

### **31st March : International Transgender Day of Visibility**

LGBTQ community worldwide observed the International Transgender Day of Visibility on 31st March 2021. On this occasion, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and the LGBTQ Task Force co-hosted a panel, "Fierce, Fabulous and Fighting for Our Lives: A Conversation with Transgender and Non-Binary Young People", that featured Josie Totah, Kate Sosin, Schuyler Bailar, Nico Craig, Ve'ondre Mitchell and Lala Shanks, who discussed the experiences of trans and non-binary young people, how they're reacting to the news cycle and attacks on the trans community in statehouses across the globe. Instituted in 2009 by Rachel Crandall, a Michigan-based transgender activist and the Executive Director of Transgender Michigan, the day was meant to spread awareness to celebrate the successes of transgender and gender-nonconforming people and

their determination to live openly and authentically despite of the everyday risks that they face. The day called for giving up of the violence and discrimination that many transgender and non-binary people, especially trans women of color and Black trans women are facing. Earlier this week, the HRC held the first-ever Trans Justice & Advocacy Summit, as a part of HRC's Trans Justice Initiative to build ties between HRC, the community and local stakeholders who, together, can make a meaningful difference in the lives of transgender and non-binary people. Besides this, the Transgender Day of Remembrance (or TDOR) is being held every year on 20th November to memorialize the transgender people who have lost their lives as a result of anti-transgender violence.

### **Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu : Kosovo's Youngest President**

38-year-old Vjosa Osmani-Sadriu has been elected as President of the Southeastern European nation Kosovo and with this, she has become the youngest president of the country as well as the Balkan nation's second female leader in the post-war period. She has

taken charge from Acting President GlaukKonjufca and has taken place of Hashim Thaci, who had resigned after facing charges for war crimes and crimes against humanity at a special court based in The Hague. Although her role as Kosovo's president is largely ceremonial, she will also play a significant role in foreign policy as well as the commander of the armed forces. The history of Kosovo reveals that it became independent in 2008 and is recognized by more than 100 countries except Serbia or Serbian allies like Russia and China.

### **Demise of Nawal El Saadawi**

Famous Egyptian feminist author, Nawal El Saadawi signed off the book of life at the age of 89. She was also a renowned physician, psychiatrist as well as activist who defended women's rights and fought strongly against the widespread practice of female genital mutilation. The deceased was also jailed and persecuted and received threats from conservatives throughout her life for her daring opinions. Besides that, she was also the founder and president of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, co-founder of the Arab Association for

Human Rights as well as founder of a feminist magazine called "Al-Moawgaha" (which translates to "The Confrontation") in 1981. "Women & Sex" and "Memoirs from a Women's Prison" are among her most popular books.

### **Mark Rutte Again Became PM Of The Netherlands!**



Dutch PM Mark Rutte registered victory for the fourth consecutive term in the Netherlands in the nation's March 2021 General Elections and with that he became European Union's third-longest serving leader. And Rutte's conservative VVD party scored the fourth consecutive victory with 35 seats out of the Dutch parliament's 150 seats, which is two more than in the previous election. Rutte is looking forward to form a coalition with the party that won the second-highest votes- the centrist, pro-European



D66 party led by former diplomat Sigrid Kaag. He has vowed to revive the nation after the coronavirus pandemic. It is worth remembering here that Mark Rutte has been the Prime Minister of the Netherlands since October 2010.

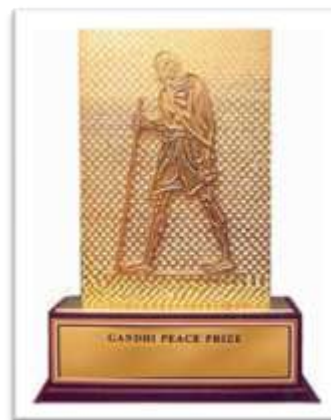
### **March 22: World Water Day 2021**



Globe observed the annual World Water Day on March 22 on “Valuing Water” to highlight the importance of water and raising awareness about the water crisis that the world faces. The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution for this on December 22, 1992, and this was observed for the first time in 1993. The day focussed to support the achievement of sustainable development goal (SDG) 6 i.e. “water and sanitation for all by 2030.” A United Nations Water Development report was released on this occasion to recommend policy directions to several countries on how to deal with the water crisis. In India Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ campaign in which a memorandum of

agreement (MOA) was signed between the Jal Shakti ministry and the government of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh for starting the Ken-Betwa Link project, which is the first river-linking project in India under which water from surplus area will be carried to water-scarce areas like Bundelkhand , districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh by interlinking rivers. The construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers will be done to provide annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectare and drinking water to about 62 lakh people and will also help in generation of 103 MegaWatt of hydropower.

### **The Gandhi Peace Prize 2019 & 2020**



In order to pay tribute to the Gandhian Ideals, the government of India conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize upon

the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for the year 2020 and upon late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman for the year 2019. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose birth centenary celebrations are going on in Bangladesh, was the first President as well as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, later. The “Father of the Nation” or “Mujib” was assassinated on August 15, 1975. And Sultan Qaboos, was the longest-reigning leader of the modern Arab world. The Gandhi Peace Prize was launched in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Mohan Das Gandhi to acknowledge the contributions of the individuals and institutions in the political, social and economic transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian ideals. The amount of one crore rupees in cash is the prize money of the award and it is open to all the persons regardless of their race, nationality, gender or creed.

### **Bill Nelson : The NASA Administrator Nominee**

Former astronaut Bill Nelson has been nominated for the post of Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) by US President

Joe Biden. He served in the US Army Reserve during the Vietnam War before entering politics. He was the second sitting member of Congress to fly to space after Jake Garn in January 1986. He also played the role of a payload specialist on the Columbia Space Shuttle. He chaired the Space Subcommittee in the US House of Representatives for six years. He started his political career by serving in the Florida House of Representatives from 1972 to 1978 and later served in the US House of Representatives from 1979 to 1991. He has worked in the capacity of US Senator from Florida for three consecutive times from 2001 to 2019. He was appointed to serve on NASA's advisory council in May 2019. He has spent almost 40 years in service of the public office.

### **What Made Turkey Withdraw From The Landmark Treaty Protecting Women From Violence ?**

Turkey withdrew from a landmark European treaty “Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence”. The move created a shock wave across the globe as Turkey was the very first nation to sign this treaty a decade ago in

2011 at a committee of ministers meeting in Istanbul and the convention bears the name of its largest city. It was unanimously ratified in 2012 by the Turkish Parliament and was enforced in 2014. However, as per some lawyers, the treaty is still alive waiting for parliament's approval for withdrawing the support system. Some officials from Erdogan's Islam-oriented party argued in the favour of the move that the convention is inconsistent with Turkey's conservative values as it encourages divorce and undermines the traditional family unit. Moreover, the treaty promotes homosexuality through the use of categories like gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, which poses a threat to Turkish families. The nation is facing a massive protest from women lawmakers of the opposition party, who denies to recognize the decree and calls it another "coup" on parliament and an usurpation of the rights of 42 million women. It is worth knowing here that recently President Erdogan had introduced an action plan for human rights which also includes the fight against domestic violence and violence against women.

## **US Opened Doors For undocumented immigrants!**

US House approved the "American Dream and Promise Act of 2021" bill with 228-197 votes, to create a pathway to citizenship for millions of undocumented immigrants, some migrant farmworkers and children whose parents immigrated legally to the country. Besides this, the bill will also grant green cards for several immigrants who have fled war or natural disasters and are residing in the US with a temporary protected status. The Bill has provision of accommodating a total 4.4 million people according to the Migration Policy Institute. The term 'Dreamers' refers to people who came to the US as undocumented minors and who received temporary protections under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (Daca) program. President Joe Biden welcomed the move as a critical first step in reforming the country's immigration system. The bill will undo Trump's hardline immigration policies.

## **The "Freedom Pineapple" Campaign**

In order to protest against the politically-driven ban on the import of pineapples from Taiwan by China, the Foreign Minister of Taiwan, Joseph Wu launched

a “Freedom Pineapple” campaign on Twitter. Moreover, the Taiwanese pineapples have also become a political symbol in the region after the ban. It is worth knowing here that the Chinese government has banned the import of Pineapples from Taiwan just before the beginning of the season of pineapple as the imports done in the previous instances had been contaminated with pests. After the implementation of the ban, the Taiwanese government had asked its citizens and other diplomatic allies to increase their consumption of “Freedom Pineapples” and promised to provide financial assistance to farmers who will undergo losses because of the ban.

### **Spain Legalised Euthanasia**

Spain’s parliament legalized euthanasia for terminally-ill or gravely-injured patients via 202 votes in favour and 141 against and two abstentions in the 350-seat chamber. With this, Spain became the fourth European nation to decriminalise assisted suicide or euthanasia after the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. The Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s government, was forced to draft this law

on account of public pressure generated by several high-profile cases like Ramon Sampedro whose plight was immortalised in the Oscar-winning 2004 film "The Sea Inside". Ramona Maneiro, who was a friend of Sampedro's was arrested for helping him die but was not prosecuted because of lack of evidence, hailed the move as a victory "for those who can benefit from it" and "for Ramon". Supported by leftwing and centrist parties, the legislation permits anyone with a "serious or incurable illness" or a "chronic or incapacitating" condition to request help dying, to avoid the "intolerable suffering". The patient must be a Spanish national or a legal resident and must be "fully aware and conscious" when they make the request, which must be submitted twice in writing, 15 days apart.

### **French diplomat Arnault Is Now UN Chief’s Personal Envoy On Afghanistan**

UN chief Antonio Guterres appointed French diplomat Jean Arnault as his personal envoy on Afghanistan and regional issues. With this, Arnault will have the authority to liaise with regional countries on his behalf to support



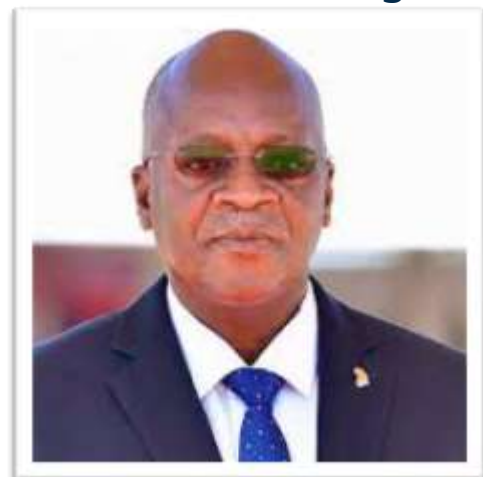
negotiations between Kabul and the Taliban and implement any agreements done between them. The appointment of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan and Regional Issues showed the continued commitment of the United Nations towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan. Arnault has 30 years of experience in international diplomacy focusing on peace settlements and mediation, with an extensive background in United Nations missions in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, including Afghanistan.

### **Adoption Of 'Sinatra Doctrine'**

The Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member nations have accepted the "Sinatra Doctrine" to counter the increasing China's aggressiveness to undermine the unity of the European Union via the divide and rule policy. The doctrine advocates continuation of cooperation with China for addressing the global challenges like covid-19, climate change & regional conflicts as well as strengthening the strategic sovereignty of European Union by protecting the technological sectors of its economy. This doctrine was the name

which the Soviet government of Mikhail Gorbachev used to describe their policy to permit the neighbouring Warsaw Pact states to determine their internal affairs. Apart from this, recently the European Union blacklisted Chinese officials for human rights abuses against Uighur Muslim minority. EU ambassadors approved the travel bans and asset freezes on four Chinese individuals. Although the sanctions seem symbolic, yet the adoption marks a significant hardening in the EU's policy towards China. It is worth remembering that this is the first sanction against Beijing since an EU arms boycott in 1989 following the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

### **Demise Of Tanzania President John Magufuli**



Tanzania's President John Magufuli died of heart disease in capital Dar es Salaam

at the age of 61. He was Tanzania's first president to die while in office. Magufuli won the October 2015 presidential election and was re-elected for a second term with 84% of the vote in the 2020 elections. His political journey reveals that he was first elected as a Member of Parliament in 1995, he served in the Cabinet of Tanzania as Deputy Minister of Works (1995 to 2000), Minister of Works (2000 to 2005), Minister of Lands and Human Settlement (2006 to 2008), Minister of Livestock and Fisheries (2008 to 2010), and again as Minister of Works for a second time (2010 to 2015). He reduced government corruption and spending and at the same time invested in Tanzania's industries. He was accused of having had increasingly autocratic tendencies seen in restrictions on freedom of speech and a crackdown on members of the political opposition. He earned the nickname "The Bulldozer" because of his reputation for pushing through policies despite opposition. Now Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan will be sworn in as the new president and will serve the remainder of Magufuli's five-year term which he started in 2020. Samia Suluhu Hassan will be Tanzania's first female president. In the past she has

served the U.N.'s World Food Programme and held several government posts prior to becoming Tanzania's first female vice president in 2015.

## Global Recycling Day



18th March 2021 was observed as the annual Global Recycling Day on "Recycling Heroes" theme worldwide. It was meant to create awareness among the masses about the rapid pace at which our natural resources are being used and promote the concept and practice of recycling. The day proclaimed "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover Is The New Mantra" and highlighted the people, places and activities that display the importance of recycling in preserving natural resources. It is worth knowing that Recycling has helped in reducing carbon emissions by more than 700 million tonnes annually and around 1.6 million people are employed around the world in the recycling industry.

## **Italy Signed International Solar Alliance Agreement**

Italy has joined the International Solar Alliance Agreement following the latest amendment to the framework agreement of ISA that opened the membership of the alliance to all the member states of the United Nations. The Ambassador of Italy Vincenzo De Luca was the signatory of this agreement and the agreement was received by the External Affairs Ministry that functions as the depository of the International Solar Alliance framework agreement. Apart from this, Ajay Mathur has assumed the role of Director General of International Solar Alliance for four years which can be renewed for an additional term. He was elected to the post in February 2021 by the Special Assembly of the ISA. He took the place of Upendra Tripathy, who was the Director General since 2017. Mathur holds rich experience across all key areas of energy transition, from policy, research, and technology commercialisation to financing, international cooperation and institutional development.

## **Singapore Conceived World's Largest Floating Solar Farms**

Singapore is building the world's largest floating solar farm in bid of establishing energy plants off the coasts and reservoirs. Although Singapore is one of the smallest countries across the world, yet it is one of the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters. Thus, Sembcorp Industries is building this project to address the issue of climate change and cut the greenhouse gas emission. It is worth knowing that the domain of renewable energy is a challenge for Singapore as the country lacks rivers for hydro-electricity and wind is also not strong enough to power the turbines, yet it is endeavouring a mega project of setting up of the floating solar farms on account of its tropical location and is trying to redefine its renewable energy stance.

## **Jeff Bezos Topped Forbes' Annual Billionaire List**

The 35th edition of Forbes World's Billionaires list that has been prepared using stock prices and exchange rates from March 5, 2021 was released on April 06, 2021. The list encompasses a record-breaking 2,755 billionaires. The

Amazon.com Inc founder, Jeff Bezos has topped the list for the fourth consecutive year with USD 177 billion. He was followed by Elon Musk (Tesla, SpaceX, USD 151 billion), Bernard Arnault (LVMH, USD 150 billion), Bill Gates (Microsoft, USD 124 billion) and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook, USD 97 billion) to complete the top five. India's richest billionaire Mukesh Ambani stood at 10th position with a total net worth of USD 84.5 billion.

### **SIPRI's Arms Transport Report**

Stockholm-based defence think-tank, SIPRI has put out its latest arms transport report which reveals that in the period between 2016 to 2020, the United States (accounted 37% of the global total export), Russia, France, Germany and China emerged as the five largest arms exporters and they collectively accounted for 76% of all exports of major arms. Further, Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China emerged as the five largest arms importers and they collectively received 36% of all imports of major arms. And this volume of international transfers of major arms was 0.5% lower than in 2011–15 as well as 12% higher than in 2006–10. It is

worth knowing here that between 2011–15 and 2016–20 Russian arms exports decreased by 22% and China's export decreased by 7.8%. On the other hand, the arms exports by France and Germany increased by 44 % and 21 % respectively. Asia and Oceania were the top recipients of arms accounting for 42% of global arms imports. They were followed by the Middle East (33%), Europe (12%), Africa (7.3%) and America (5.4%). India's import of arms decreased by 33% between 2011-15 and 2016-20 and this drop in Indian arms was the result of the country's complex procurement processes combined with an attempt to reduce its dependence on Russian arms.

### **AEG12 Mosquito Protein**

The researchers from the US National Institutes of Health have discovered that a mosquito protein called 'AEG12' strongly inhibits the family of viruses which have potential of causing dengue, yellow fever, Zik and this discovery is significant as it could lead to treatments against life-threatening viruses. This study which was published online in PNAS, reveals that AEG12 destabilizes the viral envelope, breaking its protective covering. Although the protein



proved ineffective against viruses that do not have an envelope and cause pink eye and bladder infections, yet the findings could lead to therapeutics against viruses that affect millions of people around the world.

## **US Is India's Second Biggest Oil Supplier After Iraq**



India's imports from the United States rose 48% to a record 545,300 barrels per day (bpd) in February 2021 in comparison to January 2021, accounting 14% of India's overall imports last month. The United States surpassed Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier in February 2021. The study reveals that this happened on account of cheaper U.S. crude purchases to record levels to offset Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) supply cuts because of lower U.S. crude demand. The imports from Saudi Arabia fell by 42% on account of its voluntary extra 1 million bpd output cut on top of an agreement by OPEC and its allies to

maintain lower production. It is worth remembering here that Iran still continues to be the top oil seller to India despite a 23% decline in purchases to a five-month low of 867,500 bpd.

## **Grammy Awards 2021**



The 63rd edition of Grammy Awards, 2021 were organised in Los Angeles. The names of the winners are Rapper Megan Thee Stallion (Best New Artist), Taylor Swift, 'folklore' (Album of the Year); Billie Eilish, 'Everything I Wanted' (Record of the Year); H.E.R., Dernst Emile II and Tiara Thomas, 'I Can't Breathe' (Song of the Year, for songwriting); Beyonce, 'Brown Skin Girl' (Best Music Video); The Strokes, 'The New Abnormal' (Best Rock Album); James Taylor's Unfollow the Rules (Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album); Andrew Watt (Producer of the Year (non-classical)); Joker (Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media); Watermelon by Harry

Styles (Best pop solo performance); Rain on Me by Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande (Best pop duo/group performance); Bigger Love by John Legend (Best R&B album); Anything For You by Ledisi (Best traditional R&B performance); It is what it is by Thundercat (Best progressive R&B album); Better Than I Imagined by Robert Glasper, Meshell Ndegeocello & Gabriella Wilson (Best R&B song); Savage by Megan Thee Stallion featuring Beyonce (Best rap performance plus Best rap song); King's Disease by Nas (Best rap album); Lockdown by Anderson .Paak (Best melodic rap performance); American Standard by James Taylor (Best traditional pop vocal album); No Time to Die by Billie Eilish (Best song written for visual media); Jojo Rabbit (Best compilation soundtrack for visual media); Twice as Tall by Burna Boy (Best global music album); 10% by Kaytranada featuring Kali Uchis (Best dance recording); Bubba by Kaytranada (Best dance/electronic album); Stay High by Brittany Howard (Best rock song); Fetch the Bolt Cutters by Fiona Apple (Best alternative music album); Bum-Rush by Body Count (Best metal performance); Stay High by Brittany Howard (Best rock

song); When My Amy Prays by Vince Gill (Best country solo performance); 10,000 Hours by Dan + Shay & Justin Bieber (Best country duo/group performance); Wildcard by Miranda Lambert (Best country album); Crowded Table by Brandi Carlile, Natalie Hemby & Lori McKenna (Best country song); More Guitar Stories by Jim "Kimo" West (Best new age album); Secrets Are the Best Stories by Kurt Elling Featuring Danilo Perez (Best jazz vocal album); All Blues by Chick Corea, Soloist Track From: Trilogy 2 (Chick Corea, Christian McBride & Brian Blade) (Best improvised jazz solo); Trilogy 2 by Chick Corea, Christian McBride & Brian Blade (Best jazz instrumental album); Data Lords by Maria Schneider Orchestra (Best large jazz ensemble album); Four Questions by Arturo O'Farrill & The Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra (Best Latin jazz album) and Movin' On by Jonathan McReynolds & Mali Music (Best gospel performance/song)

### **'World Air Quality Report, 2020'**

Swiss organisation, IQAir, released 'World Air Quality Report, 2020' in which Xinjiang city in China emerged as the top

most polluted city followed by nine Indian cities viz. Ghaziabad (second most polluted), Bulandshahar (third), Bishakh (fourth), Jalalpur (fifth), Noida (sixth), Greater Noida (seventh), Kanpur (eighth), Lucknow (Ninth) and Bhiwari(tenth). It is disheartening to learn that twenty-two of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally. This global cities ranking report is based on concentration of lung-damaging airborne particles called PM 2.5 data from 106 countries.

### **China Is In Headlines**

In order to lead national economic and social development and achieve the long-range objectives, the National People's Congress (NPC), the Communist Party-controlled legislature of China approved the 14th five-year plan (2021-25) unveiling a number of key strategic projects like construction of the first dam in Tibet on the lower reaches of the YarlungZangbo or Brahmaputra, a Sichuan-Tibet railway line near the India border, and a push for self-sufficiency in emerging industries like Artificial Intelligence (AI). Apart from this, China has also approved sweeping changes for

Hong Kong's electoral system that will render Beijing-appointed politicians a greater power in running the Special Administrative Region (SAR) through a newly expanded Election Committee of 1,500 members.

### **India - Japan Collaborations**

National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) & Japan Railway Track Consultant Co. Limited (JRTC) inked a Memorandum of Understanding for Track works in the 237-km stretch between Vadodara & Vapi in Gujarat for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) dubbed as Bullet Train Project. This is said to be India's First Bullet Train Project, which will be completed at an estimated cost of INR 1.08 Lakh Crore. JRTC will provide design & drawing of major High-Speed Rail (HSR) track components such as RC Track bed, track slab arrangement & Continuous Welded Rail (CWR) forces. The MoU will ensure the transfer of technology from the Japanese high-speed rail system to India. Apart from this, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Japanese space agency, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) reviewed the robotic Lunar mission, 'Lunar Polar

Exploration (LUPEX)' mission that is expected in 2024. Much like Chandrayaan-2, it is about sending a lander and rover on the Moon's south pole region. The Lupexmission will demonstrate new surface exploration technologies related to vehicular transport and lunar night survival for sustainable lunar exploration in the polar regions. The mission will employ lunar features for matching algorithms along with navigational equipment from JAXA's Smart Lander for Investigating Moon mission, and the rover will carry instruments from both the space agencies.

### **Pregnancy A Crime : A New Nail Of Covid Whip**

In a stark contrast, on one hand where the laws for women have improved in some nations, there exist nations that still have legal limits on economic opportunities for women. The Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to an increase in violence against women and is reinforcing gender inequality in several nations. World Bank Chief Economist Carmen Reinhart while discussing how COVID-19 has made it even harder for

women to escape poverty, revealed a shocking fact that in around 38 to 40 nations across the globe the pregnant women are fired from their jobs. Citing a report of last year, she informed that for the first time in more than 20 years, extreme poverty is expected to rise with a high share of women becoming poor. She further informed that women on average have three-quarters of the laws of men.

### **Mahamadou Issoufou Claimed Africa's Top Prize**

The incumbent President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, has been honored with the world's largest leadership prize, worth \$ 5 million, "2020 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership". With this, he has become the sixth winner of this most coveted Prize since its institution in 2006. Sudanese billionaire Mo Ibrahim's foundation conferred this award upon him to promote good governance in the world's poorest continent. The 69-year-old President has decided to step down from the post in April 2021, after serving two terms in office. It implies that Niger will



have the first democratic transition between elected leaders since it became independent from France more than 60 years ago. He took charge of the Presidential office in 2011 for the first time and was then re-elected in 2016. He shall be remembered as the man who helped Niger drop the "coup-prone West African country" tag.

### **Fugaku: The World's most Powerful Supercomputer**

After six long years of toil and labour, the Japanese scientific research institute RIKEN and Japanese multinational information technology equipment and services company Fujitsu succeeded in developing the world's most powerful supercomputer "Fugaku", which is all set for research use. This has been developed with the aim of making the device core of the computing infrastructure of Japan. The supercomputer was tested for the particular projects to fight COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020. The Research Organization for the Information Science and Technology (RIST) of Japan will

employ this innovation for some 74 projects in the financial year 2021.

### **Military Exercise In Space!**

In order to test its ability to defend its satellites as well as other defence equipment from attack amid the growing competition between the world powers in Earth's orbit, France conducted its first military exercise codenamed 'AsterX' in space from 8th March 2021 to 12th March 2021. The German Space and US Space Force agencies had also joined France forces in this exercise. The exercise commemorated the first French satellite that was launched in the year 1965. According to the Head of France's newly created Space Command Michel Friedling, a series of events appear and pose threats or crisis situations against the space infrastructure. France monitored dangerous space objects as well as threats to its own satellite from other foreign powers with a considerable space force. This was the first space exercise for the French army as well as for the entire Europe. It is worth recalling

here that the announcement of this Space Command of France was done in 2019 and it aims to have 500 personnel by the year 2025. Investment by France in the space program is likely to reach 4.3 billion euros over the budget period of 2019-2025.

### **Ivory Coast Is In The News**

The incumbent Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Hamed Bakayoko died of cancer. He was brought to the throne in July 2020 after the sudden death of his

predecessor, Amadou Gon Coulibaly. He was a former media executive who turned to politics and played an important mediation role in Ivory Coast's civil war during the first decade of the century. Now President Alassane Ouattara, has named Patrick Achi as interim prime minister in place of Bakayoko, who was serving as the chief of defence staff of the country. Besides this, TeneBirahima Ouattara, the younger brother of the president, has been named interim defence minister.



## **MithaliRaj : The First Indian Woman Cricketer to score 10,000 International Runs**



The veteran Indian woman cricketer Mithali Raj became the first Indian woman cricketer (and second woman cricketer at the international level) who completed 10,000 international runs in all the cricket formats as well as the first woman cricketer to complete 7,000 ODI runs. She reached the 7,000-run milestone in her 213th match during the fourth ODI of the ongoing five-match series against South Africa at Lucknow. She scripted the record by scoring a boundary off Anne Bosch in the 28th over of Indian innings in this match. In the past, she was honored with the Arjuna Award (2003) and Padma Shri (2015).

## **News From ISSF shooting World Cup**

On 25th March 2021 India won gold in the women's 25m pistol team event and this Indian team was composed of Chinky Yadav, Manu Bhaker and RahiSarnobat. On 24th March , Yadav, Bhaker and Sarnobat won the individual final by winning all the medals on offer. India also clinched a silver in the 50m rifle 3 positions team event by virtue of the trio Anjum Moudgil, Shreya Saksena and GaayathriNithyanadam. Prior to this , on 22nd March 2021, India won the mixed team gold medals in both the 10m air pistol and 10m air rifle events. Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker bagged mixed team gold medal in the 10m air pistol event after Divyansh Singh Panwar and ElavenilValarivan claimed the gold medal in the 10m mixed air rifle event. It is worth noting here that on the same day YashaswiniDeswal won the first gold for India in the Women's 10M Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup

Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun. She amassed 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal with 236.7 points.

### **Dhanalakshmi Won Federation Cup gold**



Sprinter S Dhanalakshmi defeated the national record holder Dutee Chand to win the 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 and became the fastest woman of the championships, while Odisha-based Dutee clocked 11.58 seconds to grab the second place. And another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran came third after clocking 11.76 seconds. In men's 100m final category, Gurindervir Singh of Punjab bagged gold with 10.32 seconds,

followed by Elakkiyadasan Kannada of Tamil Nadu (10.43) and Maharashtra's Satish Krishnakumar (10.56), who grabbed second and third spots respectively.

### **Official Recognition Of Indian Style Wrestling Association**

The Indian Style Wrestling Association of India got official recognition of 'National Sports Federation' (NSF) by the Sports Ministry of government of India. The Indian Style Wrestling Association of India was established in 1958. After this recognition, it will receive funds and support from the government. It will be able to enjoy the privileges and benefits like rail concessions etc. as enjoyed by other federations. It is worth knowing here that the government recognition of Indian Style Wrestling Association of India was not renewed after the introduction of new scheme of annual recognition from the year 2010, because of its failure to incorporate the provisions of National Sports Development Code, 2011.



## **Bhavani Devi Became First Indian Fencer To Qualify For Olympics**



India's international sabre fencer Chadalavada Anandha Sundhararaman Bhavani Devi from Chennai created history by becoming the first fencer from India to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. Earlier also, she had made history by becoming the first Indian to win a gold medal at the senior Commonwealth Fencing Championship 2018 in Canberra in the sabre event. Before that she won 2 Gold Medals, one each at the 2012 Commonwealth Championship, Jersey and the 2014 Tuscany Cup, Italy. In the 2014 Asian Championship under 23 category in the Philippines she won the Silver medal and became the first Indian to do so. In 2015, she was among 15 athletes selected for 'Go Sports Foundation' for Rahul Dravid Athlete

Mentorship Programme. The 27-year-old, world number 42 will participate in the Tokyo Olympics starting July 23, 2021 to August 8, 2021, which will be followed by the Paralympics from August 24, 2021 to September 5, 2021.

## **Sharath Kamal, The First Indian paddler Who qualified For Tokyo Olympics**



The veteran Achanta Sharath Kamal became the first Indian paddler to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games after getting an edge over Pakistan's Muhammad Rameez by 11-4, 11-1, 11-5, 11-4 in the second men's singles round-robin match in the South Asia group of the Asian Olympic qualifiers at the Asian Olympic Qualification tournament in Doha. The upcoming Tokyo Olympics will be his fourth appearance at the Games. Before this match, Kamal had lost his opening match with 9-11, 13-15, 11-5, 11-7, 12-10, 9-11, 8-11 to compatriot Gnansekaran Sathiyam.

## **Nethra Kumanan: The First Indian woman sailor to qualify for the Olympics**

The 23-year-old NethraKumanan, from Chennai booked her very first Olympics ticket by topping the Laser Radial race at the Mussanah Open Championship in Oman, which is an Asian and African qualifying event. The Laser Radial is a classification in dinghy sailing i.e. a single handed boat sailed by one person. The hull weight in Laser Radial was 59kg, the hull length was 4.23m and beam length was 1.37m. Kumanan succeeded in doing this on the penultimate day of the competition after finishing the ninth and tenth rounds. With this, Kumanan became the first Indian woman sailor at the Olympics as well as the first from India to earn the right to be there by winning a qualifying event.

## **Conclusion of Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships 2021**

The 2021 All England Open (officially known as the Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships 2021) was organized by Badminton England from March 17 to 21, 2021 at Arena

Birmingham in England. The winners of this second tournament of the 2021 Badminton World Federation (BWF) are Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia (Men's Singles Title); Japan's Nozomi Okuhara (Women's Singles Title); Japanese pair of Yuta Watanabe & Hiroyuki Endo (Men's Doubles Title); Japanese pair of Mayu Matsumoto & Wakana Nagahara (Women's Doubles Title) and Japanese pair of Yuta Watanabe & Arisa Higashino (Mixed Doubles title)

## **India Won The T20I Series By 3-2**



India won the 5th T20I cricket match in Narendra Modi Stadium on 20th March 2021 after defeating England by 36 runs and thereby claimed the series by 3-2. In this fifth match England won the toss and elected to bowl. India posted 224/2, which is said to be the highest-ever total by India against England in T20Is on account of Rohit Sharma's blistering 64

off just 34 balls, Skipper Virat Kohli's unbeaten 80, Suryakumar Yadav's 32 off 17 balls and Hardik Pandya's unbeaten 39. In reply England wound up at 188 for 8 in 20 overs. Dawid Malan scored 68 and Jos Buttler posted 52 runs among the England squad.

### **Virat Kohli : The First cricketer to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International matches**

14th March 2021 became a red letter day for Indian skipper Virat Kohli who has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International cricket. He did this feat in his 87th T20I match against England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. Kohli's knock of 73 runs, which came off 49 balls, also helped India to level the five-match T20I series in Ahmedabad after losing the opening game by eight wickets. This was India's second T20 International match in which India defeated England by seven wickets. India made 166/3 in 17.5 overs. Prior to this, the Indian bowlers restricted England to 164 for six in 20 overs. In context to Kohli's this record, it is worth knowing here that New

Zealand's Martin Guptill is second on the list of leading run-getters in T20I cricket with 2,839 runs in 99 matches.

### **Ashwin & Beaumont : The ICC Players of Month February 2021**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) bestowed the ICC Player of the Month award for February 2021 to Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. Ashwin was chosen among England captain Joe Root and West Indies' Kyle Mayers for this award. Ashwin played a vital role with bat and ball as India claimed a 2-1 lead over England in their four-match Test series in February before eventually winning the series 3-1 in March 2021. He emerged as the highest wicket-taker in the series with 32 scalps and scored a century in the second Test in Chennai. Besides him, England opener Tammy Beaumont has been presented the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for February 2021. Beaumont played three ODIs in February against New Zealand where she passed half century in each of these, totalling 231 runs. She got an edge over her teammate Natalie Sciver and New Zealand's Brooke Halliday for this award.



## Thomas Bach Again Became The International Olympic Committee President



67 year old German lawyer and former Olympic fencer, Thomas Bach has been re-elected as the International Olympic Committee President. Bach is a popular, long-standing figure within the IOC, who received unanimous backing in the election for IOC president in which he was the only candidate, with 93 of the 94 valid votes from IOC members in favour of his re-election. It is worth recalling here that he was elected an IOC member at the age of 37 and played a series of significant roles within the organisation before being initially elected its ninth president in September 2013. He had succeeded Belgian Jacques Rogge for his opening term. As per the IOC rules introduced in 1999, Bach's second term will last four years i.e. till 2025.

## New Zealand & Australia Will Host FIFA Women's World Cup 2023



The 2023 Women's World Cup will begin with a match in Eden Park in Auckland, New Zealand and will conclude in Sydney's Stadium Australia. This Women's World Cup will be played across Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth in Australia as well as in Dunedin, Hamilton and Wellington in New Zealand and a detailed schedule for the event will be announced later this year. The two semifinal matches will be split between these two nations. This will be the first-of-a-kind World Cup, co-hosted by members of different confederations. Also this World Cup will be the first to feature 32 teams, up from the 24 that participated in the 2019 women's tournament in France. It is worth recalling here that the U.S. women's national team is the defending champion.



## Lewis Hamilton Won Season-Opening Grand Prix , Bahrain GP



Mercedes star Lewis Hamilton got an edge over Red Bull's Max Verstappen to

win the Bahrain Grand Prix. They were followed by Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes), Lando Norris (McLaren) and Sergio Perez (Red Bull) at third, fourth and fifth positions respectively. Lewis Hamilton got his bid for an eighth world title off to a thrilling start with this victory. He claimed a record-stretching 96th Formula One victory as well as surpassed Michael Schumacher's record of 5,111 for the most laps led in F1 history.



## Current Affairs

1. Matam Venkata Rao became MD & CEO of .....  
(a) State Bank of India                      (b) ICICI Bank                      (c) HDFC Bank  
(d) Axis Bank                      (e) Central Bank of India
2. National Horticulture Fair 2021 was held in .....  
(a) Assam                      (b) Dehradun                      (c) Delhi  
(d) Bengaluru                      (e) Kolkata
3. India gifted 2000 tonnes of rice to ..... to strengthen food security.  
(a) Afghanistan                      (b) Nigeria                      (c) Rwanda  
(d) Korea                      (e) Syria
4. Which of the following introduced India's first health insurance plan with up to 100 percent return on premium?  
(a) Magma HDI Health Insurance  
(b) Max Bupa Health Insurance  
(c) Aditya Birla Health Insurance  
(d) Star Health Insurance  
(e) Manipal Cigna Health Insurance
5. Mamata Banerjee launched the 'Maa' scheme to provide meals at Rs .....  
(a) 5                      (b) 6                      (c) 7  
(d) 8                      (e) 9
6. Top officer Arun Kumar Singh has been appointed as.....Chief Secretary.  
(a) Assam                      (b) Uttar Pradesh                      (c) Madhya Pradesh  
(d) Rajasthan                      (e) Bihar

7. Which of the following state governments has recently launched Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Utthan Yojana to benefit one lakh poor families having lowest family income?  
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Uttar Pradesh  
(d) Bihar (e) Odisha
8. Amazon India announced its first Manufacturing Line in India at .....  
(a) Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Pune  
(d) Kolkata (e) Chennai
9. Dr VishakhaShivdasani launched an Ebook Titled "COVID and Post-COVID Recovery: DoctorVee's .....-Point Plan."  
(a) 5 (b) 6 (c) 7  
(d) 8 (e) 9
10. Tourism of ..... introduced Night Safari.  
(a) Gujarat (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Karnataka  
(d) Maharashtra (e) Tamil Nadu
11. .... has been appointed as Chairperson of International Boxing Association (AIBA) champions and veterans committee.  
(a) Mohamed Ali Qamar (b) Mary Kom (c) Shiva Thapa  
(d) Dingko Singh (e) Laishram Sarita Devi
12. The Chairman Rajya Sabha has accorded recognition to former Minister of Railways and ....., Mallikarjun Kharge as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha.  
(a) Law and Justice (b) Shipping (c) Tourism  
(d) Labour and Employment (e) Road Transport and Highways
13. India won the Anthony de Mello Trophy after defeating .....  
(a) England (b) Australia (c) West Indies  
(d) New Zealand (e) Zimbabwe

14. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated POWERGRID's 320 kV 2000 MW Pugalur (Tamil Nadu) - Thrissur (.....) High Voltage Direct Current project.
- (a) Karnataka (b) Kerala (c) Andhra Pradesh  
(d) Telangana (e) None
15. Madhya Pradesh's ..... has been renamed as Narmadapuram.
- (a) Mandala (b) Narsinghpur (c) Hoshangabad  
(d) Raisen (e) Khandwa
16. .... launched Business Kisht Suraksha cover.
- (a) Reliance General Insurance Co.  
(b) SBI General Insurance Company Ltd  
(c) HDFC ERGO General Insurance  
(d) Tata AIG General Insurance Company Ltd  
(e) United India Insurance Company Ltd
17. Which of the following IPL teams has been renamed ahead of the IPL season 2021?
- (a) Mumbai Indians (b) Chennai Super Kings  
(c) Kolkata Knight Riders (d) Royal Challengers Bangalore  
(e) Kings XI Punjab
18. .... Payments launched 'RuPaySoftPoS'.
- (a) HDFC (b) ICICI (c) SBI  
(d) Federal (e) Yes
19. Which of the following won 'Champion Publisher of the Year 2020' award of global organisation of the world's press, World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA)?
- (a) The Tribune (b) The Telegraph (c) Deccan Herald  
(d) The Indian Express (e) The Hindu Group



20. Scientists observed a space hurricane over ..... layer of the Earth's atmosphere for the first time.  
(a) Ionosphere (b) Thermosphere (c) Mesosphere  
(d) Stratosphere (e) Troposphere
21. National Security Day was celebrated on ..... March 2021.  
(a) 1<sup>st</sup> (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> (c) 3<sup>rd</sup>  
(d) 4<sup>th</sup> (e) 5<sup>th</sup>
22. Prakash Javadekar inaugurated Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in .....  
(a) Andaman and Nicobar Islands (b) Chandigarh  
(c) Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, (d) Delhi  
(e) Lakshadweep
23. Former .....Governor Anshuman Singh passed away.  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Jharkhand (c) Chhattisgarh  
(d) Rajasthan (e) Bihar
24. The Home Minister released a book 'Rashtra Pratham – 82 varshonkiSwarnim Gatha' , which is about the glorious history of .....  
(a) Border Security Force (BSF)  
(b) Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)  
(c) Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)  
(d) National Security Guard (NSG)  
(e) Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)
25. AshisGhatak wrote a book titled "Louiz Banks, A symphony of Love", which is about Indian composer Louiz Banks who composed the iconic song of ....., Mile Sur MeraTumhara.  
(a) 50s (b) 60s (c) 70s  
(d) 80s (e) 90s

26. Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed the inaugural session of which edition of Techbharat 2021?  
(a) First (b) Second (c) Third  
(d) Fourth (e) fifth
27. Vijay Sampla took charge as Chairman of National Commission for .....  
(a) Scheduled Castes (b) Scheduled Tribes  
(c) Other Backward Class (d) Physically Challenged  
(e) Economically Weaker Section
28. Which of the following states celebrated its foundation day on 22nd March 2021?  
(a) Bihar (b) Gujarat (c) Odisha  
(d) Madhya Pradesh (e) Jharkhand
29. In the Vijay Hazare Trophy Prithvi Shaw became the first cricketer to amass .....runs in single edition in March 2021.  
(a) 500 (b) 600 (c) 700  
(d) 800 (e) 900
30. Which of the following topped the World Happiness Report released on occasion of International Happiness Day on 20th March?  
(a) Norway (b) Sweden (c) Denmark  
(d) Switzerland (e) Finland
31. Mohamed Bazoum won the presidential runoff election in .....  
(a) Burkina Faso (b) Ghana (c) Mali  
(d) Mauritania (e) Niger
32. Lt Gen Manjinder Singh took over as Chief of Staff of ..... Command.  
(a) Eastern (b) Western (c) Northern  
(d) Southern (e) Central

33. Who among the following was honored with the Dada Saheb Phalke Award for the year 2020?
- (a) Madhavan (b) Kamal Haasan (c) Rajinikanth  
(d) Genelia D'Souza (e) None
34. India was ranked .....in International Intellectual Property Index which was released in March 2021.
- (a) 36<sup>th</sup> (b) 37<sup>th</sup> (c) 38<sup>th</sup>  
(d) 39<sup>th</sup> (e) 40<sup>th</sup>
35. Justice NV Ramana will become the .....Chief Justice of India on 24th April 2021.
- (a) 45<sup>th</sup> (b) 46<sup>th</sup> (c) 47<sup>th</sup>  
(d) 48<sup>th</sup> (e) 49<sup>th</sup>
36. Irakli Garibashvili became the new Prime Minister of .....
- (a) Armenia (b) Belarus (c) Georgia  
(d) Kazakhstan (e) Mongolia
37. World Sparrow Day 2021 was observed on ..... March?
- (a) 20<sup>th</sup> (b) 21<sup>st</sup> (c) 22<sup>nd</sup>  
(d) 23<sup>rd</sup> (e) 24<sup>th</sup>
38. Former .....chief Ramakrishna passed away in Chennai at age 91.
- (a) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)  
(b) Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)  
(c) Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA)  
(d) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)  
(e) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

39. Yusuf Pathan, who played 57 ODIs and .....T20Is for India announced retirement from all forms of cricket.  
(a) 20 (b) 21 (c) 22  
(d) 23 (e) 24
40. Padma Shri ..... poet Vishnunarayanan Namboothiri passed away.  
(a) Telugu (b) Tamil (c) Malayalam  
(d) Odia (e) Konkani
41. Indian-American Vivek Murthy will be the ..... Surgeon General of the US.  
(a) 20<sup>th</sup> (b) 21<sup>st</sup> (c) 22<sup>nd</sup>  
(d) 23<sup>rd</sup> (e) 24<sup>th</sup>
42. Supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova of ..... has become the new UN goodwill ambassador.  
(a) China (b) Russia (c) Kyrgyzstan  
(d) Tajikistan (e) Iran
43. In the recent past, researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal 'Dickinsonia' in .....  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Jharkhand (c) Chhattisgarh  
(d) Rajasthan (e) Bihar
44. Recently India and ..... worked on the hird Joint Space Mission.  
(a) Italy (b) France (c) Germany  
(d) Denmark (e) Sweden
45. Who among the following has been honored with the 2020 Maharashtra Bhushan award of Maharashtra Government?  
(a) Udit Narayan (b) Asha Bhosle (c) Sonu Nigam  
(d) Alka Yagnik (e) Shaan



46. Jasmine Harrison from ..... became the youngest woman to row the Atlantic Ocean.  
(a) USA (b) UK (c) Australia  
(d) Sweden (e) Denmark
47. Dushyant Chautala got re-elected as President of .....  
(a) All India Football Federation  
(b) Athletics Federation of India  
(c) Hockey India  
(d) Table Tennis Federation of India  
(e) Judo Federation of India
48. The Government of India has launched a homegrown app 'Mobile Seva App Store' that has more than ..... live apps of several domains and categories of public services to counter google.  
(a) 500 (b) 600 (c) 700  
(d) 800 (e) 900
49. Hindi Writer Prof. Sharad Pagare was conferred Vyas Samman 2020 worth ..... Lakh rupees.  
(a) One (b) Two (c) Three  
(d) Four (e) Five
50. International Children's Book Day was observed on ..... April.  
(a) 1<sup>st</sup> (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> (c) 3<sup>rd</sup>  
(d) 4<sup>th</sup> (e) 5<sup>th</sup>



# ANSWERS



- 1.(e)** Matam Venkata Rao became MD & CEO of Central Bank of India for a period of 3 years. Before this, he held the position of Executive Director at Canara Bank. It is worth remembering that Rao is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers.
- 2.(d)** The Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) organized the National Horticulture Fair 2021 at its IIHR campus situated in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru on 'Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India' theme. The fair featured cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices and processing methods among others. The IIHR is a subsidiary of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- 3.(e)** India gifted 2000 tonnes of rice to Syria to strengthen food security. Recently, the first consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice was handed over by Indian Ambassador to Syria, Hifzur Rahman to the Minister of Local Administration and Head of Supreme Relief Committee Hussain Makhoul.
- 4.(c)** A non-banking financial services company, Aditya Birla Health Insurance introduced India's first health insurance plan with up to 100 percent return on premium. It presents 'DigiShield', first-of-its-kind fully customizable term plan and the newly designed version of its flagship product 'Activ Health' will inspire customers to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- 5.(a)** Mamata Banerjee launched the 'Maa' scheme to provide meals at Rs 5. The kitchen will run by Self-Help Groups (SHG). The government has allocated ₹ 100 crores for this project.

- 6.(e)** Top officer Arun Kumar Singh has been appointed as Bihar Chief Secretary. He is a 1985-batch officer, who has replaced incumbent Deepak Kumar who retired a year ago after completing his year-long extension.
- 7.(b)** Haryana has recently launched MukhyamantriAntyodayaParivarUtthan Yojana to benefit one lakh poor families having lowest family income to mark the 644th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas. The selection of the families will be done through ParivarPehchan Patra portal.
- 8.(e)** Amazon India announced its first Manufacturing Line in India for production of electronic devices at Chennai by the end of 2021. It has tied up with Contract Manufacturer Cloud Network Technology, a subsidiary of Foxconn for the manufacturing process.
- 9.(b)** Dr VishakhaShivdasani, a medical doctor with a fellowship in nutrition and specialized in treating obesity, diabetes, dyslipidemias etc. launched an Ebook Titled "COVID and Post-COVID Recovery: DoctorVee's6-Point Plan."
- 10.(b)** Tourism of Madhya Pradesh introduced Night Safari in the three national parks viz. the Bandhavgarh National Park, Kanha National Park and Pench National Park. The night safari can be booked on the Wildlife Safari Reservation portal, which is operated by the forest department of the state.
- 11.(b)** Mary Kom has been appointed as Chairperson of International Boxing Association (AIBA) champions and veterans committee. The committee comprises the world's most respected boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.
- 12.(d)** The Chairman Rajya Sabha has accorded recognition to former Minister of Railways and Labour and Employment, Mallikarjun Kharge as the Leader of

the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha. He is Leader of the Indian National Congress Party in the Rajya Sabha. Kharge was named Congress leader in the House to succeed Ghulam Nabi Azad whose term has ended.

- 13.(a)** India won the Anthony de Mello Trophy after defeating England in the 4th Test Match held at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, Gujarat and with this, it won the Test series by 3-1 and retained the Anthony de Mello Trophy. Ravichandran Ashwin was declared the Player of the Series. This trophy was already with the Indian Team as they had championed the Test Series, which was held in 2016-17.
- 14.(b)** The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated POWERGRID's 320 kV 2000 MW Pugalur (Tamil Nadu) - Thrissur (Kerala) High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) project. This is the first HVDC interconnection of Kerala with National Grid that will facilitate transfer of huge quantum of power to cater the growing power demands of the State. This is also the first time the VSC converter technology has been introduced in the Country for transmission.
- 15.(c)** Madhya Pradesh's Hoshangabad has been renamed as Narmadapuram. It is a historic move as Narmada is the lifeline of Madhya Pradesh. It is worth knowing Hoshangabad was so far named after an attacker Hoshang Shah
- 16.(c)** HDFC ERGO General Insurance has launched the "Business Kisht Suraksha" cover, which is said to be a unique cover that aims to protect the balance sheet of Microfinance Institutions (MFIs), financial institutions and banks if any catastrophe or a natural disaster occurs
- 17.(e)** Kings XI Punjab has been renamed as 'Punjab Kings' ahead of the IPL season 2021. The Punjab squad has been a part of the Indian Premier League since its inaugural season in 2008. It is co-owned by Bollywood actor Preity Zinta, along with businessman Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman and Karn Paul.



- 18.(c)** SBI Payments and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched 'RuPaySoftPoS' for millions of Indian merchants. This technology is expected to help in transforming the NFC enabled smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for retailers. RuPaySoftPoS will provide economical acceptance infrastructure to retailers at nominal cost. Merchants will be able to convert their existing android smartphone devices into a payment terminal by simply downloading a supported app and this will revolutionize the way micro and small merchants receive payments and create a demarcated shift in their tendency to deal in cash to accepting secure, contactless digital payments instead.
- 19.(e)** The Hindu Group won 'Champion Publisher of the Year 2020' award of global organisation of the world's press, World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA). It won two golds and two silvers at South Asian Digital Media Awards. The awards recognize outstanding work done by news publishers in digital media.
- 20.(a)** Scientists of the USA, Norway, China and the United Kingdom observed and produced the image of a space hurricane that occupied the Ionosphere of the Earth's atmosphere for the first time. They used the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) satellites and a 3D magnetosphere modelling. The hurricane composed of plasma with multiple spiral arms was detected over the North Pole. It was spinning in an anticlockwise direction. It was of speed of up to 2,100 metres per second.
- 21.(d)** National Security Day was celebrated on 4th March 2021 to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, paramilitary forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security, who sacrifice their life in maintaining the peace and security of the people of the country. On 4th March 1966 the National Security Council (NSC) of India was established by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India and the first National Security Day (NSD) was held in 1972.

- 22.(e)** Prakash Javadekar inaugurated Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in Lakshadweep and evaluated the major innovative initiatives of the Union Territory's Forest and Environment Department for comprehensive development of UT, without compromising its commitment to nature.
- 23.(d)** Former Rajasthan as well as Gujarat Governor Anshuman Singh passed away. He was a retired Justice who served as the Governor of Rajasthan from January 1999 till 2003. Prior to that, he was appointed as the Governor of Gujarat state in 1998.
- 24.(b)** The Home Minister released a book 'Rashtra Pratham – 82 varshonkiSwarnim Gatha', which is about the glorious history of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) since its inception in 1939 and it has detailed and thoroughly researched accounts of CRPF's journey, challenges, successes, and sacrifices.
- 25.(e)** AshisGhatak wrote a book titled "Louiz Banks, A symphony of Love", which is about Indian composer Louiz Banks who composed the iconic song of 90s, Mile Sur MeraTumhara. This book was published on the occasion of the composer's 80th birthday and traces the journey of the musician from clubs of Calcutta to International acclamation.
- 26.(b)** Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed the inaugural session of the second edition of Techbharat 2021. Laghu Udyog Bharati and IMS Foundation have organized this 2nd edition of the conclave bringing together stakeholders from the HealthTech&Edutech sector to nurture resourceful partnerships and boost growth in the sectors.
- 27.(a)** Vijay Sampla took charge as Chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) in New Delhi. Vijay Sampla has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014 to 2019. The Commission works not only to ensure justice to the SCs but also remains proactive to prevent any form of injustice to the Community.

- 28.(a)** Bihar celebrated its 109th foundation day on 22nd March 2021. On this day, Bihar was carved out of Bengal by the British government in 1912. It is the third-largest state by population across India.
- 29.(d)** In the Vijay Hazare Trophy Prithvi Shaw became the first cricketer to amass 800 runs in single edition in March 2021. He achieved the feat en route to his 73-run knock against Uttar Pradesh in the summit clash of the 2021 season at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi.
- 30.(e)** Finland topped the World Happiness Report released on occasion of International Happiness Day on 20th March, which was celebrated on the “Happiness for All, Forever” theme. It was followed by Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Norway. India was ranked 139th. Afghanistan emerged as the most unhappy country, followed by Zimbabwe (148), Rwanda (147), Botswana (146) and Lesotho (145).
- 31.(e)** Mohamed Bazoum won the presidential runoff election in Niger. Bazoum secured 55.7% of the vote, ahead of rival Mahamane Ousmane (44.3%) as per the election commission.
- 32.(b)** Lt Gen Manjinder Singh took over as Chief of Staff of Western Command. He is an alumnus of Sainik School Kapurthala, National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy, who was commissioned into 19 Madras Regiment on 20 December 1986. He had an illustrious career of more than 34 years and played important roles during his Command appointments in varied sensitive operational sectors and High Altitude
- 33.(c)** Rajinikanth was honored with the 51st Dadasaheb Phalke award for the year 2020. He is one of the greatest actors in the history of Indian cinema, who has been awarded for his contribution as actor, producer and screenwriter.

- 34.(e)** India was ranked 40th in the 9th edition of the International Intellectual Property Index which was released in March 2021. It has scored 38.4 out of 100 on 50 intellectual property-related indicators viz. basis of patent, commercialisation of IP assets, copyright policies and ratification of international treaties etc. The US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) evaluated Intellectual Property rights across 53 global economies.
- 35.(d)** Justice NV Ramana will become the 48th Chief Justice of India (CJI) on 24th April 2021. Currently, Justice Ramana is the senior-most judge in the SC of India. Current CJI SA Bobde had recommended his name.
- 36.(c)** Irakli Garibashvili became the new Prime Minister of Georgia. Garibashvili pledged to create a long-term development strategy for Georgia and the essential work of the government to ably manage the pandemic and accelerate the focus on rebuilding the economy while continuing to strengthen Georgia's security and democratic institutions.
- 37.(a)** World Sparrow Day 2021 was observed on 20th March to highlight how citizens from different walks of life are making amazing differences and expressing their love for sparrows. It is an international initiative started by the Nature Forever Society in India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world. The Nature Forever Society was founded by an Indian conservationist named Mohammed Dilawar.
- 38.(a)** Former Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chief Ramakrishna passed away in Chennai at age 91. Ramakrishna started as a biochemist in his hometown Bangalore, joined the IAS in 1952. Ramakrishna was the minister of economic affairs at the Embassy in Washington in 1972 and India's Ambassador to the European Economic Community (European Union) in 1989.



- 39.(c)** Yusuf Pathan, who played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is for India announced retirement from all forms of cricket. He made his international debut in 2007. He was part of the Indian team that won the ICC T20 World Cup 2007 and ICC Cricket World Cup 2011. He scored 810 ODI runs and 236 T20I runs for India.
- 40.(c)** Padma Shri Malayalam poet Vishnunarayanan Namboothiri passed away. He was also honored with the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Kendra Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, Vallathol Award, Odakkuzhal Award and the Mathrubhumi Literary Award, among others. He was also a noted scholar of language and the Vedas, as well as an orator.
- 41.(b)** Indian-American Vivek Murthy will be the 21st Surgeon General of the US. Earlier also he had served under the Barack Obama administration from 2014 to 2017.
- 42.(b)** Supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova of Russia has become the new UN goodwill ambassador to promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies. She will be a campaigner for the UN Population Fund dubbed as UNFPA.
- 43.(a)** In the recent past, researchers have discovered three fossils of the earliest known living animal 'Dickinsonia' in the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters, about 40 km from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. It is a 550-million-year-old fossil. The fossils can be identified from the white leaf-like patches with a central vertebra (central midrib) and connecting veins, while one fossil is 17 inches long, the other two are much smaller. This discovery is published in a journal, Gondwana Research.
- 44.(b)** Recently India and France worked on the third Joint Space Mission. Both countries entered into multiple domains in the human spaceflight programme. Moreover, France is also the largest partner of India in Space. The two nations have worked on the two joint missions namely the 'Megha-Tropiques' which was launched in the year 2011 and the 'SARAL-Altika' which was launched in the year 2013.

- 45.(b)** Asha Bhosle won the 2020 Maharashtra Bhushan award of Maharashtra Government, which is the state government's highest honour. A committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray decided to select Bhosle for the award for the year 2020.
- 46.(b)** Jasmine Harrison from the UK became the youngest woman to row the Atlantic Ocean. The 21-year-old British woman from Thirsk, North Yorkshire achieved the feat by finishing top in the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, organized by Atlantic Campaigns. She is a swimming instructor and bartender by profession, who travelled 3,000 miles (4,828km) across the Atlantic Ocean in 70 days, 3 hours and 48 minutes.
- 47.(d)** The current Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana, Dushyant Chautala got re-elected as President of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) for a period of four years. He was elected unanimously during the 84th annual meeting of the TTFI. He was first elected as President of the TTFI in January 2017 and with that he became the youngest President in the history of TTFI.
- 48.(e)** The Government of India has launched a homegrown app 'Mobile Seva App Store' that has more than 900 i.e. precisely 965 live apps of several domains and categories of public services to counter google. This Indian App Store will be available for free of cost in the initial phases. It has been created on the basis of service-oriented architecture and cloud-based technologies to provide a hosting platform for Indian mobile application developers.
- 49.(d)** Hindi Writer Prof. Sharad Pagare was conferred Vyas Samman 2020 worth Four Lakh rupees for his novel 'Patliputru Ki Samragi.' This Vyas Samman was instituted in 1991 by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years.
- 50.(b)** The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), an international non-profit organization observed International Children's Book Day on 2nd April to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children's books. The theme of celebration this year was the "The Music of Words."