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BUDGET
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The Conclusion of The 51st International Film Festival of India



The 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI), which was held from 16th to 24th January 2021 at Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Panaji, Goa. It was conducted in hybrid mode i.e. 50 films out of 224 films across various categories were screened online. It is worth remembering here that this hybrid mode format of IFFI was first in India as well as in Asia.

The names of different categories and respective winners of the IFFI awards

include Golden Peacock Award for Best Film (Into the Darkness); Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor (Male) (Tzu-Chuan Liu, The Silent Forest); Silver Peacock Award for Best Actor (Female) (Zofia Stafiej, I Never Cry); Silver Peacock Award for Best Director (Chen-Nien Ko, The Silent Forest); Best Debut Director Award (Cassio Pereira dos Santos, Valentina); Special Mention Award (Kripal Kalita, Bridge); Special Jury Award (Kamin Kalev, February); ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Award (Ameen Nayfeh's 200 Meters); Indian Personality of the Year Award (Biswajit Chatterjee) and Lifetime Achievement (Vittorio Storaro (Italian cinematographer)). Organized by the Directorate of Film Festivals under the aegis of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the state Government of Goa along with Entertainment Society of Goa, the festival featured more than 126 films from 60 countries which included 50 Indian premiers, 22 Asian premiers, 7 World premieres and 6 international premiers.

Vijayanagara Became The 31st district

The State government of Karnataka issued a notification demarcating boundaries of the newly-formed Vijayanagara district, which has become the 31st district of the State. Exercising its powers under sub-section (4) of section 4 of the Karnataka Land Revenue Act, 1964, the government carved out Vijayanagara from Ballari district. Vijayanagara has six taluks Hosapete, Kudligi, Hagaribommanahalli, Kotturu, Hoovina Hadagali, and Harapanahalli and among them Hosapete is the headquarters of the new district. And the Ballari district is left with five taluks viz. Ballari, Kurugodu, Siruguppa, Kampli, and Sanduru.

National Horticulture Fair 2021



The Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Kailash Choudhry inaugurated the National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021 on 8th February 2021, in Bengaluru and now

the five-day-long event , which was organised by the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), has concluded at its IIHR campus situated in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru on 12th February 2021. 'Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India' was the theme of this event. In this hybrid mode event the NHF illustrated its cutting edge technologies, crop varieties, pest and disease management practices and processing methods among others.

Maharashtra's 'jail tourism' initiative

The Prison Department of Maharashtra has recently launched its jail tourism initiative beginning with more than 150-year-old Yerawada Central Prison in Pune in order to teach students about its historical experiences. Yerawada jail is the place where numerous freedom fighters, including Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak were imprisoned, Pune-pact was inked within the premises etc. Under this tourism, the visitors will get to see the faasi yard, where Chapekar brothers were executed in 1899 for the assassination of British Plague Commissioner of Pune WC Rand. It is worth remembering that the last execution that the faasi yard witnessed was in November 2012 of Ajmal Kasab, a convict of 26/11 attacks, who was buried inside the prison premises.

Karnataka's Navodaya App

Karnataka government deployed first of its kind initiative via Navodaya App and chose beneficiaries of old age pensioners. It has put pension payments on auto-pilot mode where all persons above 60 years will be automatically selected as beneficiaries of old-age pension based on their annual income. It implemented this model in Udupi and Ballari districts. The government made use of the Aadhaar and income certificates database in this selection. This initiative eyes to end the influence of middlemen in disbursing pension and ensure that it reaches beneficiaries.

The Ongoing Bharat Parv

Bharat Parv began on 26th January 2021 on a virtual platform www.bharatparv2021.com displaying the glory of the nation. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla inaugurated this mega event, which will continue till 31st of January 2021. It is being organized by the Ministry of Tourism and it envisages generation of patriotic fervour and showcases the rich and varied cultural diversity of the country. The festival is featuring themed pavilions of multiple States and Union

Territories showcasing their tourism destinations, cuisine, handicraft and other features. This annual festival was first organized in 2016. Prasar Bharati has also set up its virtual stall dedicated to promotion of Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat. Another media unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Bureau of Outreach and Communication focused on the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi is displaying photos, videos, animation related to Swachh Bharat, Sashakt Bharat, Babu Ke Sapno Ka Bharat'.

The Padma Awards 2021

The Government of India announced the Padma Awards 2021 that included names of 119 recipients on the 25th January 2021 evening. Among the awardees, seven persons will get Padma Vibhushan including former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, sculptor Sudarshan Sahoo and Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan etc. It should be noted that Eminent Singer late S P Balasubramaniam will be awarded this 2nd highest civilian award posthumously. Among Padma Bhushan awardees are former Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Singer K S Chithra,

prominent poet Chandrashekhara Kambara and retired Civil Servant Nripendra Misra, while former Gujarat Chief Minister late Keshubhai Patel , former Assam Chief Minister late Tarun Gogoi and former Union Minister late Ram Vilas Paswan will be honoured with Padma Bhushan posthumously. And around 102 persons will receive Padma Shri that includes Social Worker Sindutai Sapkal, Musician Bombay Jayashri, British film director Peter Brook and Greek Indologist Nicholas Kazanas etc., while Former Governor of Goa late Mridula Sinha, Spanish-Indian Jesuit priest and author late Father Vallés will be given this award posthumously.

The Gallantry Awards 2021

The Government of India announced 455 Gallantry Awards. and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel and others. It includes one Mahavir Chakra, 5 Kirti Chakras, 5 Vir Chakras, 7 Shaurya Chakras, 4 Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 130 Sena Medal (Gallantry), one Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry), 4 Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry), 30 Param Vishisht Seva Medal, 4 Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, 51 Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, 11 Yudh Seva Medal, 3 Bar to Sena Medal (Devotion to

Duty), 43 Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty) including 2 COVID Warriors, 8 Nao Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 14 Vayu Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 3 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) covering one COVID Warrior and 131 Vishisht Seva Medal including 12 COVID Warriors. It is worth knowing here that Colonel B Santosh Babu, the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment, who lost his life during the Galway Valley clash in 2020, will be posthumously awarded Maha Vir Chakra. The names of prominent recipients for Kirti Chakra includes Subedar Sanjiv Kumar of 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment, CRPF Inspector Pintu Kumar Singh, CRPF Head Constable Shyam Narayan Singh Yadav, CRPF Constable Vinod Kumar, who will be posthumously awarded this award, while Deputy Commandant CRPF Rahul Mathur will be awarded Kirti Chakra. For Vir Chakra are Naib Subedar Nuduram Soren of 16 Bihar Regiment, Havildar K Palani of 81 Field Regiment, Naik Deepak Singh of Army Medical Corps 16 Bihar Regiment, and Sepoy Gurtej Singh of 3rd Battalion Punjab Regiment, who will be awarded Vir Chakra posthumously, while Havildar Tejinder Singh of 3 Medium Regiment will be awarded Vir Chakra. For Shaurya Chakra are Major Anuj Sood of 21st

Battalion Rashtriya Rifles, Jammu and Kashmir police inspector Arshad Khan, J&K police Selection Grade Constable GH Mustafa Barah, J&K police Constable Naseer Ahmed Kolie and J&K Special Police Officer Bilal Ahmed Magray, who will be posthumously honored with this award, whereas Rifleman Pranab Jyoti Das of 6th Battalion Assam Rifles and Paratrooper Sonam Tshering Tamang will be awarded Shaurya Chakra.

Rajeev Ranjan : The New Chief Secretary Of Tamil Nadu

Senior IAS officer of 1985 batch, Rajeev Ranjan became the new Chief Secretary Of Tamil Nadu in place of K Shanmugam, who has become the new advisor to Tamil

Nadu government. Ranjan is from Bihar and has held many key portfolios in the State government as well as in the Central government. In the state government, he has served as Collector, Trichy district (1995-1997), Secretary to the departments of Revenue and Industries. Ranjan has also been secretary to Highways and Minor Ports Department, the portfolio which was held by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami . He was also appointed as the Special Secretary of GST Council on September 17, 2018. Ranjan was Secretary to the Union Ministry of Fisheries from March 2020 as well.

Key Highlights of Union Budget 2021-22



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced higher capital expenditure for the FY 2021-22 and focused on providing a major boost to healthcare and infrastructure building.

In her Budget speech, Sitharaman mentioned that this year's budget focused on six pillars-

Health and Wellbeing, Physical and Financial Capital, and Infrastructure, Inclusive Development for Aspirational India, Reinvigorating Human Capital, Innovation and R&D and minimum government and maximum governance.

Key highlights of Union Budget 2021 – 22 :-

- 1.** A new Centre-sponsored scheme Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasthya Bharat Yojana with an outlay of Rs 64,180 crores to boost healthcare infrastructure across the country amid ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.** Senior citizens above 75 years of age, having pension and interest income exempted from filing tax returns
- 3.** A National Faceless Income tax Appellate Tribunal Centre shall be established and all the communication between the Tribunal and the appellant shall be made electronically
- 4.** In order to provide transparent tax appellate mechanism, it is proposed to make the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal faceless and jurisdiction-less
- 5.** For reducing litigation and to give an impetus to the dispute resolution for small taxpayers, a Dispute Resolution Committee is proposed to be constituted.
- 6.** To incentivise digital transactions and to reduce the compliance burden of the person who is carrying almost all of their transactions digitally, it is proposed to increase the limit for tax audit for persons who are undertaking 95 per cent of their transactions digitally from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore
- 7.** Rs 1,000 crore to be provided for welfare scheme for tea workers of Assam & West Bengal especially women and children
- 8.** National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) expanded to 7,400 projects
- 9.** Rs 2,23,846 crore outlay for Health and Wellbeing in Budget Estimates (BE) 2021-22 as against Rs 94,452 crore in BE 2020-21 - an increase of 137 per cent
- 10.** Rs 35,000 crore for COVID-19 vaccine in Budget Estimates 2021-22
- 11.** Rs 64,180 crore outlay over 6 years for PM AatmaNirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana - a new centrally sponsored scheme to be launched, in addition to NHM
- 12.** Rs. 2,87,000 crore over 5 years for Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) to be launched
- 13.** Rs. 1,41,678 crore over 5 years for Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0

14. Rs. 2,217 crore to tackle air pollution, for 42 urban centers with a million-plus population
15. Voluntary vehicle scrapping policy to phase out old and unfit vehicles (After 20 years in case of personal vehicles and 15 years in case of commercial vehicles)
16. Rs 1.97 lakh crore in the next 5 years for Production Linked Incentive scheme (PLI) schemes in 13 Sector
17. Rs 20,000 crore to set up and capitalise a Development Financial Institution (DFI) - to act as a provider, enabler and catalyst for infrastructure financing
18. Rs 5.54 lakh crore capital expenditure in BE 2021-22 - a sharp increase of 34.5 percent over Rs. 4.12 lakh crore allocated in BE 2020-21
19. Rs 1,18,101 lakh crore, highest ever outlay, for Ministry of Road Transport and Highways - of which Rs 1,08,230 crore is for capital
20. Rs 1,10,055 crore for Railways of which Rs. 1,07,100 crore is for capital expenditure
21. Rs 3,05,984 crore over 5 years for a revamped, reforms-based and result-linked new power distribution sector scheme
22. Capital infusion of Rs 1,000 crore to Solar Energy Corporation of India and Rs 1,500 crore to Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency
23. FDI limit in Insurance Sector increased from 49 percent to 74 percent
24. Rural Infrastructure Development Fund to be enhanced to Rs 40,000 crore from Rs 30,000 crore
25. Rs 15,700 crore budget allocation to MSME Sector, more than double of this year's BE
24. An agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess of Rs 2.5 per litre has been imposed on petrol and Rs 4 per litre on diesel. Unbranded petrol and diesel will attract basic excise duty of Rs 1.4 and Rs 1.8 per litre respectively
25. 100 percent Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess on Alcoholic beverages

- Courtesy : (Business World)

The Science City Project Of Assam

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of Rs 184-crore science city project at Tepesia on the outskirts of Guwahati for popularising science and technology at the grassroots. The Centre and the State government will share the total expenditure of the project in 90:10 ratio. The proposed science city will cover an area of 250 bighas of land and roads, drainage system, etc. The main building of the science city alone will cost Rs 110 crore and will be constructed jointly by the National Council of Science Museums. Envisaging Guwahati as the gateway to the entire South East Asia, this infrastructure will be developed at a rapid pace. In addition to this, steps have been taken to set up science centres in all the districts, which will be of equal standard as the Regional Science Centre in Guwahati. Currently, the requisite land has been made available for establishing an ISRO centre at Amingaon and the work on the Biotech Park covering an area of 64 bighas at Amingaon has already been completed.

Demise Of Mata Prasad

Former Arunachal Pradesh Governor Mata Prasad passed away at 95. He was appointed as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh in 1993. Mata Prasad worked as minister in the Congress government in Uttar Pradesh in 1988-89 under ND Tiwari. Mata Prasad represented the party as an MLA from Shahganj (reserved) seat for five terms from 1957 to 1974 and had been a member of the legislative council from 1980 to 1992. Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, party workers, senior Congress leaders, including former MP P L Punia and Amethi MLC Dinesh Singh condoled his death.

Jayant N Khobragade: India's next Ambassador to ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta

An Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1995 batch, Jayant N Khobragade, has been appointed as India's next Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat in Jakarta. Currently, Khobragade is serving as joint secretary at the headquarters of the Ministry in Delhi. The ASEAN is one of the vital influential

groupings within the area, and India and several other different international locations viz. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia. And the US, China, Japan, and Australia are the ASEAN group's dialogue companions.

January 21, 2021 : Statehood Day of Meghalaya, Manipur & Tripura

Meghalaya, Manipur & Tripura celebrated their statehood day on 21st January 2021. The President, Vice President and Prime Minister highlighted and applauded the accomplishments of these states in their messages. Tripura has achieved outstanding progress in various fields. It was initially classified as a Union Territory from November 1956 and had become a full-fledged state with effect from 21st January 1972. Manipur's contribution to national development is remarkable. It is a powerhouse of innovation and sporting talent. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh attended the celebration held at 1st Manipur Rifles Parade Ground in Imphal. The State government handed over ex-gratia of five lakh rupees to the family of late Major Laishram Jyotin of Indian Army,

who expired in a suicide attack on 26th February 2010 at Indian Embassy in Kabul of Afghanistan. Meghalaya is known for its remarkable kindness and spirit of brotherhood and has creative and enterprising youth. It gained its Statehood on 21st January 1972. Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma distributed various awards to those who have excelled in various fields including, sports, arts and culture and social work. Besides these, Gallantry awards were also distributed to police personnel of the Meghalaya Police.

NITI Aayog's Second Edition of India Innovation Index-2020

NITI Aayog released the second edition of the India Innovation Index-2020 that demonstrates the government's continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy. Karnataka emerged as the topper in the Major States category followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu at the second and third spots respectively. In the North East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh stood first followed by Uttarakhand and Manipur. In the Union Territories and Small States category, Delhi stood first followed by Chandigarh at the second spot. Overall India needs to improve the

coordination mechanism among the various Science and Technology institutions of government and the private sector.

The Inauguration of Parakram Diwas

The Government of India decided that the upcoming birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose i.e. 23rd January 2021 will be celebrated as “Parakram Diwas”, which implies Courage Day. Netaji was born on January 23, 1897, and the Central Government as well as the West Bengal Government will start a year-long celebration of this 125th birth anniversary year from January 23, 2021. A brief history of Netaji reveals that he was born in Cuttack to an affluent family. He earned a degree in philosophy and was later selected for the Indian Civil Services, which he refused to join as he did not want to serve the British Government. He had joined the Indian National Congress in 1921 and started a newspaper called “Swaraj”. He also penned a book called “The Indian Struggle” that gave an account of the Indian Independence movement between 1920 and 1942. He had coined the famous term “Jai Hind”

Biswajit Chatterjee : Indian Personality of the Year Awardee



During the ongoing 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India, Goa, veteran actor, producer, director and singer of Hindi and Bengali cinema, Biswajit Chatterjee has been announced the winner of the Indian Personality of the Year Award. It will be presented to him during the National Film Awards in March 2021. The awardee has given an outstanding and memorable performance in films like Bees Saal Baad, Kohra, April Fool, Mere Sanam, Night In London, Do Kaliyaan and Kismat. He was usually featured with renowned actresses like Asha Parekh, Waheeda Rehman, Mumtaz, Mala Sinha and Rajshree. Some of his famous Bengali films include Chowringhee (1968) and Garh Nasimpur with Uttam Kumar and Kuheli and much later, Srimaan Prithviraj

(1973), Jai Baba Taraknath (1977) and Amar Geeti (1983). He had also produced and directed his own film, Kahte Hai Mujhko Raja in 1975. Apart from acting and direction, he has also been a well known singer.

Death Of Legendary Musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan

Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan breathed his last on 17th January 2021 in Mumbai at 89. The departed musician was going to turn 90 on March 3, 2021. He was born on March 3, 1931 in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh to Ustad Waris Hussain Khan, who was the son of celebrated musician Ustad Murred Baksh, while his mother, Sabri Begum, was the daughter of Ustad Inayat Husain Khan, who was the founder of the Rampur-Sahaswan gharana of music. Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan was honored with the Padma Shri in 1991, followed by Padma Bhusan in 2006 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018. He was also the proud recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, the highest Indian recognition given to practicing artistes in 2003.

Economic Times Awards for Corporate Excellence

8th February 2021 led to the announcement of the Economic Times Awards for Corporate Excellence. The names of winners include former HDFC Bank MD Aditya Puri (Lifetime Achievement Award); Preetha Reddy, Vice-Chairperson, Apollo Hospitals and Suneeta Reddy, MD, Apollo Hospitals (Businesswoman of the year award); ICICI Lombard General Insurance (Emerging company of the year award); RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das (Business reformer of the year award); Tata Consultancy Services (Corporate citizen of the year award); Piyush Gupta, CEO, DBS Group (Global Indian award) ;Adar Poonawalla Chief Executive Officer, Serum Institute of India (Entrepreneur of the year award) and Pawan Munjal, Chairman, Hero MotoCorp (Business Leader of The Year award)

Goa : The Fisheries Hub Of India

The Union Fisheries Minister Giriraj Singh broke the news of an investment of ₹ 400 crore in Goa to make this state a fisheries hub of India. It is said to have the potential for highest fish production

across India. The Union government and the state fisheries board will together generate the amount of the investment. Rupees 41.47 crore has already been granted by the Union government to the state for the same. Around 30 fish landing jetties will be created for the fishermen to anchor their boats near their villages. Among other developments, Goa-based CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) has revealed that 200 sq km area in the coastal state is feasible for cage culture i.e. aquaculture production system in which the fish are held in floating net pens. In 72 sq km of this area, 30 lakh cages will be installed for the safe marine cultivation in the fishing sector. Besides this, the central government will also be appointing "Sagar Mitra" for all the 70 fishing villages in Goa

The Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

7th February 2021 spelled a major disaster in form of the glacier burst at the Rishiganga power project after a portion of Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Tapovan area of Joshimath in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. It damaged the Rishiganga dam on Alaknanda river and

had nearly washed away the National Thermal Power Corporation's (NTPC) Tapovan Vishnugad project on Dhauliganga river and Rishi Ganga Power Corporation Ltd's project, that had 520 MW and 13.2 MW, capacities respectively. On 8th February 2021, the death went up to 26, even as operations continued for the second day to rescue about 35 labourers trapped inside the 2.5-km-long Tapovan hydel project tunnel filled with slush and debris. A total of 171 persons, including trapped workers are still missing. The glacial lake outburst flood is said to be the probable cause. It is a type of the outburst flood which occurs when the dam comprising a glacial lake happens to fail.

Renaming of Samagra Shiksha Funded Schools

According to the Ministry of Education the schools and hostels under the Samagra Shiksha scheme will now be renamed after Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The move is expected to create awareness regarding the facility of these residential schools and hostels in difficult areas and inspire these schools to achieve the high standards of quality education. It is worth knowing that the Samagra

Shiksha Scheme is an integrated scheme for school education that extends from the pre-school to class XII to ensure the inclusive and equitable quality education for all at all levels of school education. It was introduced after subsuming three schemes viz. the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the Teacher Education (TE) and the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). Further, the scheme emphasizes on improving the quality of school education by focusing on two T's that is Teacher and Technology.

Rajya Sabha Approved Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

Rajya Sabha passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 on 8th February 2021, which will replace Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Ordinance of 2021 that merged the Jammu and Kashmir cadre of the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, and Indian Forest Service with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territory cadre, also known as AGMUT cadre. The President had promulgated the ordinance in January

2021 to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. The event led to a debate among Manoj Jha of RJD, Ashok Siddharth of BSP, Sushil Gupta of AAP, Shamsheer Singh Manhas of BJP, Mir Mohammed Fayaz of PDP, Amar Patnaik of BJD, Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy and the leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Ladakh Will Conceive India's first Geothermal Power Project

The first geothermal power project of India, which is also known as Geothermal Field Development Project will be set up at Puga village of eastern Ladakh. This Puga village has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy as more than 100 mw of geothermal energies have been discovered here by the scientists and the project will be completed in four phases. ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh have signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 6th February, 2021 to set up and implement the first phase. The first phase of the project, which will be implemented by the ONGC-OEC, will lead to the generation of one megawatt (MW) power. In this ONGC-

OEC will explore within the depth of 500 metres. Under the first phase, 24 hours free power supply will be given to 10 neighbouring villages which are not connected with the northern grid to get the power. In the second phase, deeper and lateral exploration of geothermal reservoirs will be done via drilling of the optimal number of wells and a higher capacity demo plant will also be established in Ladakh. This phase of the project will be the Research and Development stage or demonstration of the project. In the third and subsequent phase joint ventures and commercial projects will be promoted.

RBI Monetary Policy Committee Meeting- Key Highlights

The Monetary Policy Committee of the central bank conducted its meeting from February 3 to February 5, 2021, and discussed the current macroeconomic financial developments in India. The committee kept the repo rate unchanged at 4%. The marginal standing facility rate has also been kept unchanged at 4.25%. The bank rate, as well as the reverse repo rate, are also intact like before at 4.25% and 3.35% respectively. The committee pointed out that the Inflation has come

down to the upper tolerance level of 6% for the first time since the covid-19 pandemic breakdown on account of good Rabi Crop, huge Kharif harvest, huge winter supplies of vegetables, and soft poultry demand. The committee has predicted the real GDP growth at 10.5% in 2021-22 and it also informed that improvement in the capacity utilization of the manufacturing sector is 63.3 %.

Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave

The Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave was organized by India on February 4, 2021 during the Aero India 2021 which is said to be the largest Aero show of Asia. The theme of this conclave was "Enhanced Peace, Security, and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean". It was an initiative to promote the dialogue in the institutional, economic and cooperative environment. Issues regarding maritime surveillance and cooperation; marine pollution response activities; sharing the Indian ports with friendly nations; sharing the available resources of the Indian Defence Shipyards and their utilization for the purpose of designing and shipbuilding; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and development of technologies and

capabilities to harness the marine resources and defence Industry cooperation among the IOR countries were discussed at length among the Defence Ministers of Comoros, Maldives, Madagascar, and Iran and High Commissioners and Ambassadors from Australia, Kenya, Myanmar, Kuwait, Mauritius and Seychelles etc. Total 18 countries participated in this conclave.

The Ongoing Aero India 2021

The 13th Aero India 2021 show began on February 3, 2021 in Bengaluru and it will conclude on February 5, 2021. During the Aero show, a deal worth Rs 48,000 crore was signed with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to manufacture the 83 indigenous Teja Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)-73 by 2030. The Aero India Show is also hosting the defence ministers' conclave of countries of the Indian Ocean Region in which 28 countries are participating. Besides this, an Aero India exhibition is also being displayed, which is one of the major exhibitions for the aerospace and defence industries that enables the industry professional to gain the market insights, announce new developments and gain media coverage. Around 600 exhibitors from 80 foreign companies are

showcasing their products using the latest technologies to the potential customers. The Aero India Show is also featuring "India's accomplishments in defence manufacturing".

India's First 'Amputee Clinic'

Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh has launched its 'PGI Amputee Clinic' which is also the first such clinic in India to improve the amputation patient care by providing them a host of services under one roof with significant coordination. This clinic is collective effort of many experts and departments of the institute who urge to provide social, mental and physical support to the patients. This initiative aims to make amputees near normal functional human beings and provide them appropriate management so as to guide them in their path of rehabilitation in society. This clinic will assess the recovery and co-morbidities of amputee patients via a team of occupational therapists and a psychologist who gets involved in patient care immediately. The clinic will ensure that the patients do not fall out of the rehabilitation process because of stress and anxiety.

Kerala's First Human Milk Bank

Kerala will inaugurate its first Human Milk Bank (HMB) on February 5, 2021. This state-of-art facility will be opened at the Ernakulam general hospital by the Health Ministry of Kerala and Rotary Club of Cochin Global at a cost of ₹35 lakh. This human milk bank has a pasteurization unit, deep freezers, refrigerators, sterilizing equipment, RO plant, and computers. The proposed milk bank will ensure the availability of the breast milk for new-born babies who are not breastfed by their own mothers who are sick or deceased or due to insufficient production of breast milk. Statistics reveal that around 3600 babies are born in the general hospital a year and among them, 600 to 1,000 sick babies are admitted into the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and mothers are unable to feed them sufficiently because of low birth-weight of premature babies or babies separated from mothers. Thus, the pasteurized breast milk from the milk bank will fulfil the need.

New Production Plant inaugurated at HAL

The Defence Minister of India, Rajnath Singh did the inaugural ceremony of a new plant covering an area of 35 acres for

the production of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru. This plant is meant to double the production of India's native fighter jet – LCA Tejas to 16 aircraft per year. The HAL has received an order of Rs 48,000-crore from the armed forces, which is said to be the biggest indigenous defence procurement that will give a boost to the Indian aerospace sector. With this India will achieve its target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore in the defence manufacturing soon.

Reliance Jio : The Fifth Strongest Brand Globally



Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's four-year-old telecom venture Reliance Jio has been ranked as the fifth strongest brand globally behind Ferrari and Coca-Cola in the Brand Finance's Global 500 ranking of the strongest brands. Founded in 2016, Jio is the largest mobile network operator

in India and the third-largest mobile network operator in the world, with around 400 million subscribers. It is worth recalling here that in the past Jio had won the 'Best Mobile Operator Service for Consumers' award at the Global Mobile GLOMO Awards 2018; Jio TV app won the 'Best Mobile Video Content' award at GLOMO Awards. It was honored with the 'Most Innovative Company' award by Economic Times. WeChat topped this ranking according to its annual report on most valuable and strongest global brands.

RS Sharma : The New Chief Executive of Ayushman Bharat

The former Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), R. S. Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Ayushman Bharat scheme or the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, which is an insurance scheme of the National Health Authority (NHA). The newly appointed chief executive has taken place of Indu Bhushan, who completed the 3-year tenure as the CEO of Ayushman Bharat. Prior to this appointment, RS Sharma has

worked in the capacity of the head of the Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to combat the Covid-19 and the Covid-19 vaccine delivery technology platform 'Co-WIN'. He has also been a member of the National Expert Group on Covid-19 Vaccine Administration. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is a part of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme of the central government, that offers free healthcare services to 40% of people of the country. Launched on September 23, 2018, in Ranchi, Jharkhand by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the scheme provides a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year. It covers the secondary and tertiary hospitalization in all the private and public hospitals of India.

125th Anniversary of "Prabuddha Bharat"

The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi addressed the 125th anniversary celebration of a monthly magazine of the Ramakrishna Order, 'Prabuddha Bharata' on January 31, 2021. It was organized by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, a branch of the Ramakrishna Math located in

Uttarakhand. P. Aiyasami, B. R. Rajam Iyer, G. G. Narasimhacharya, and B. V. Kamesvara Iyer under the guidance of Swami Vivekananda had founded this magazine in the year 1896. The magazine features the articles and translations by monks, scholars and other writers on humanities and social sciences, is of great significance in spreading the message of the ancient spiritual wisdom of the country. History reveals that the publication of the Prabuddha Bharata in the form of a journal began from Chennai.

India Toy Fair, 2021



The government launched the website of the India Toy Fair, 2021 on February 11, 2021 in New Delhi. The first edition of Indian Toy Fair will take place from February 27 to March 2, 2021. The fair will be organised by the Ministry of Textiles in association with the Ministry of Education and the ministry of commerce and

industry in virtual mode. The fair aims to provide joyful learning for the children via engaging them in teaching, learning and promoting the indigenous toy industry. Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar Centre for Creative Learning (CCL) developed more than 200 toys to exhibit in the fair. Among them are Hydraulic JCB controlled using syringes, Robot made using a DC motor, Periscope to look beyond the wall, Easy learning of geometry through lamps, Explaining textbook trigonometry through a sine wave car. There will be 75 exhibition stalls of the State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Ministry of Education, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL).

The National Non-Communicable Disease Monitoring Survey

The National Non-Communicable Disease Monitoring Survey (NNMS) has been released in India by the Ministry of health, which was conducted for the period of 2017-18. This is said to be the first of its kind of a comprehensive survey on Non-

communicable Diseases (NCD)s that covers the age group of 15-69 years, males and females from the urban and rural areas. According to the report, two in five adults have three or more risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCD) in India and more than one in every four adults and 6.2% adolescents were overweight or obese. The other revelations proclaimed that three out of ten adults had raised blood pressure and 3% had raised blood glucose. The report also illustrates that over two in five adults and one in four adolescents were doing insufficient physical activity. Further, one in every three adults and more than one-fourth proportion of men consumed tobacco and alcohol in the past 12 months.

TCS : The Third Most Valued IT Services Brand Worldwide



According to the Brand Finance's report, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

has been ranked third most-valued IT services brand globally, after Accenture and IBM. Accenture succeeded in retaining its title of world's most valuable and strongest IT services brand with record brand value of USD 26 billion, while IBM kept its second place intact with a brand value of USD 16.1 billion. TCS is making an effort to close the gap with IBM following a healthy 11% brand value increase to USD 15 billion. Besides TCS, three other Indian IT services companies have secured spots in the top-10 globally, namely, Infosys (4), HCL (7) and Wipro (9).

Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)

The Government of India has introduced a new Central Sector Scheme worth Rs 6865 crore called the "Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)". The scheme is said to have a clear strategy and committed resources in order to form and promote 10,000 new FPOs across India. The formation & Promotion of FPOs will be

done with the help of Implementing Agencies like Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC), National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC), Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium Haryana (SFACH), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED), Watershed Development Department (WDD)- Karnataka, Tamil Nadu-Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (TN-SFAC) and Foundation for Development of Rural Value Chains (FDRVC)- Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The scheme aims to double the country's agricultural export by 2022 and it will also cater farmers' need of improved technology facilities, better input, credit, and more markets in order to incentivize them and help them to produce better quality commodities.

PM Addressed World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue 2021



The Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Davos Dialogue of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on January 28, 2021 virtually and delivered his speech on the “Fourth Industrial Revolution- using technology for the good of humanity” theme. This 51st annual meeting of the World Economic Forum aggregated more than 400 the top leaders of the world that contributed in shaping the regional, global, and industry agendas for 2021. This Davos Dialogue 2021 is said to be significant in the light of the “Great Reset Initiative”, which was launched by the World Economic Forum during the 50th annual meeting of WEF that was organised in June 2020.



World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, will inaugurate the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All' theme from 10th to 12th February 2021 through video conferencing. The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) will organize the 20th edition of TERI's flagship event in the form of this World Sustainable Development Summit to bring together a wide number of governments, academicians, business leaders, climate scientists, civil society and youth to combat climate change. The summit will focus on issues ranging from Climate finance, circular economy, Energy & industry transition, adaptation & resilience, nature-based solutions, clean oceans and air pollution. The Speaker of the People's Majlis of Maldives Mohamed Nasheed, Prime Minister of Papua New

Guinea James Marape, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Amina J. Mohammed, President of Guyana Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, and Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar will participate in this event.

Demise Of Former US Secretary of State George Shultz

Former US Secretary of State, George Shultz who significantly shaped foreign policy in the late 20th Century, passed away at the age of 100 in California. He worked in various roles for three former Presidents viz. Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. The list of his accomplishments reveals that his efforts as America's top diplomat from 1982 to 1989 under former President Ronald Reagan led to the full stop of the 40 year-long Cold War that began after World War Two. According to the Hoover Institution, where Mr Schultz served as a

distinguished fellow, the departed statesman had been instrumental in turning the direction of history by using the tools of diplomacy to bring the Cold War to an end. The deceased was a Republican, but more pragmatic than ideological. He had served various federal task forces at the request of former Presidents John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. He was also an informal but influential adviser on foreign policy to Former US President George W Bush.

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

Globe observed the “International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation” on 6th February 2021 on “No Time for Global Inaction, Unite, Fund, and Act to End Female Genital Mutilation” theme. It was meant to spread the awareness and put more efforts to eradicate the Female Genital Mutilation. Introduced in the year 2003 by the United Nations, the day has been trying to amplify the ways and attempts taken to stop the practice of Genital Mutilation and encourage the civil society, government and several organizations to

raise awareness and take actions against Female Genital Mutilation. UNFPA-UNICEF have been working for this cause. It is disheartening to learn that the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is forced on girls aged 4 to 14 years as a ritual. It is a violation of human rights as in this practice, external female genitalia are removed partially or completely causing them physical damage, psychological trauma and irreversible problems. It is worth remembering here that the Zero Tolerance towards the Female Genital Mutilation was first declared by the First Lady of Nigeria and spokesperson for the Campaign Against Female Genital Mutilation, Stella Obasanjo, during the 2003 conference of “Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC)”.

Beginning of Bangladesh Film Festival In Kolkata

The third Bangladesh Film Festival 2021 was inaugurated in Kolkata on 5th February 2021 by the Chief Guest Information Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Hasan Mahmud in presence of Minister for Science and Technology, Government

of West Bengal Bratya Basu, and Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla. In this ongoing 5-day, long festival around 32 Bangladeshi feature films will be displayed. In this film festival 'Hasina-A Daughter's Tale', a film based on the life of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh was featured as the inaugural film. 'Jalaler Golpo', 'Krishnopokkho', 'Oggatonama', 'Rajadhiraj Razzak', 'Under Construction', 'Debi', 'Podmo Patar Jol', 'Abar Boshonto', 'Maya: The Lost Mother', 'Na Dorai', 'Ankhi O Tar Bandhura', 'Fagun Haway', 'Iti Tomari Dhaka', 'Bhuban Majhi' and 'Pora Mon' are being featured during the festival.

India & Bahrain Collaborated For Renewable Energy

India and Bahrain did an agreement to forge deeper engagement in the field of renewable energy. This Joint Working Group's meeting in the field of Renewable Energy was held in virtual format for the first time. It realized the significance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals. Both the governments reported the initiatives that have been taken, progress made and future targets set by their

governments. They made an agreement to share experiences, expertise and best practices in the field of renewable energy and have greater engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation. Both the sides welcomed the available opportunities in the sector. It is worth recalling here that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in July 2018 between the duo for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI)

Transparency International (TI)'s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for year 2020 has been released for 180 countries and territories in which levels of their public sector corruption has been measured using a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 denotes highly corrupt and 100 indicates very clean. This year, New Zealand and Denmark were ranked at first position with scores of 88, while Somalia and South Sudan were ranked lowest at 179th position with scores of 12. India's rank has slipped six places to 86th position with a score of 40.

Construction Of The Lalandar "Shahtoot" Dam

India and Afghanistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding MoU for the construction of the Shahtoot Dam (Lalander Dam) on a tributary of the Kabul river in Afghanistan via video-teleconferencing. The project is a part of the New Development Partnership worth \$ 300 million, between the two nations. External Affairs Minister Dr Jaishankar and Afghanistan Foreign Minister Mr Hanif Atmar were the signatories. The Lalander [Shatoot] Dam is expected to cater the safe drinking water needs of Kabul City, irrigation water to nearby areas, rehabilitate the existing irrigation and drainage network, assist in flood protection and management efforts in the area, and also provide electricity to the region.

WHO dismisses 'lab leak' theory of coronavirus origin in Wuhan, China

A team of the World Health Organization (WHO) after its 12-day visit to China in connection with the origins of Covid-19 in Wuhan, dismissed the theory of a 'lab leak' of the virus. According to the Washington Post, the Danish WHO food

safety expert leading the international team, Peter Ben Embarek, the judgment was based on "long, frank, open discussions with researchers and management" at institutions including the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). He further informed the media that "Our initial findings suggest that introduction through an intermediary host species is the most likely passway and one that will require more studies and more specific targeted research ... The findings suggest that a laboratory incident hypothesis is extremely unlikely to explain the introduction of the virus into the human population."

Myanmar Military Constituted State Administrative Council

The military regime in Myanmar has announced the set up of a new State Administrative Council. It is being headed by the Army Chief General Min Aung Hlaing. The new State Administrative Council has a total of 11 members and among them, 8 members are from the military itself. General Min Aung Hlaing addressed the meeting of the Union Government and announced that the election matters and the measures

regarding the COVID-19 prevention & containment will be prioritized. He also vowed to expose voting frauds. It is worth knowing that the United Nations Security Council held closed consultations to reach a consensus statement on Myanmar developments. According to the press release, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Christine Schraner Burgener has asked the council members to give full support for democracy in Myanmar.

EIU Democracy Index 2020

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) released its report titled “Democracy in sickness and in health?” and also published the Democracy Index 2020 for 167 countries. Norway topped the index and followed by Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada to form the top five. India's overall score fell from 6.9 in 2019 to 6.61 in 2020 in the Index that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide. India was ranked 53rd on this index. The index classified the economies in categories like flawed democracies, full democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes. As per the report 23 countries are full

democracies, 52 are flawed democracies, 35 countries are hybrid regimes while 57 countries are authoritarian regimes out of total 167 countries. India has been placed under flawed democracy along with the U.S., France, Brazil, Belgium and Sri Lanka. Pakistan got 105th position and was classified in ‘hybrid regime’ along with Bangladesh and Bhutan. Afghanistan got 139th position and has been classified as an ‘authoritarian regime’.

Andy Jassy: The New Chief Of Amazon



Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos has stepped down from the CEO role and will be succeeded by Amazon Web Services chief Andy Jassy. The new chief, who has been an Amazon employee for almost 24 years, will now look into the Bezos Earth Fund, the Amazon Day 1 Fund, Blue Origin, The Washington Post and more in

this new role. However, Jeff Bezos will switch over as executive chairman of Amazon's board of directors. Currently, Amazon stands as one of the most valuable companies in the world with a gross valuation of around \$1.6 trillion.

'Stardust 1.0': World's First Commercial Bio Fueled Rocket

US Startup bluShift Aerospace launched the world's first Commercial Rocket powered by biofuel, 'Stardust 1.0'. With this, the new space startup bluShift has introduced a new kind of propellant to the small satellite launching market, with rockets powered by bio-derived rocket fuels. The company made the first rocket launch, which was a low-altitude flight of a small sounding rocket, called Stardust 1.0. It's a single-stage prototype has potential of carrying 18 lbs of payload and is designed to achieve suborbital space. Biofuel differs from traditional fuels as they offer safety benefits during handling, and ecological advantages during production and use. The startup has been working on this solid rocket biofuel since its inception in 2014 with support of grants from the Maine Technology Institute and NASA's Small Business

Innovation Research (SBIR) program to refine its fuel formula and rocket engine design to help it get to this point.

The COVID-19 Performance Index

An Australian think-tank, the Lowy Institute, released 'COVID-19 Performance Index' after evaluating the impact of geography, political systems and economic development in assessing outcomes. Based on six different indicators including confirmed cases and deaths per million people and the scale of testing, this index sought "to gauge the relative performance of countries" in 98 countries in the 36 weeks that followed their hundredth case. In this index, New Zealand and Vietnam emerged as the best performing countries in their response to the pandemic followed by Taiwan, Thailand and Cyprus in the top five. The United States (94th rank) and Brazil (98th) crept at the bottom of the index. It is worth noting that the think-tank did not include China "due to a lack of publicly available data on testing". Sri Lanka emerged as the best responding nation in South Asia with 10th rank, while India grabbed 86th rank, the Maldives spotted at 25th, Pakistan at 69th, Nepal at 70th, and Bangladesh at 84th position.

Kaja Kallas : Estonia's First Female Prime Minister

The leader of the center-right Reform Party, Kaja Kallas, became Estonia's first female prime minister since it regained independence in 1991. The Reform Party won the 2019 parliamentary election in Estonia with 34 MPs in the country's 101-seat parliament, Riigikogu. It is worth knowing here that currently Estonia is the only country in the world where both the president Kersti Kaljulaid and the prime minister are women. Flashback reveals that the two biggest political parties of Estonia, the center-right Reform Party, and the left-leaning center party had cracked a deal on January 24, 2021 to form a government after the previous cabinet, with leader Juri Ratas as PM had collapsed in January 2021 due to the corruption scandal.

China : The Largest Recipient Of FDI

In 2020 China received the largest foreign direct investment as per the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)'s latest report. By attracting \$163 billion inflows in 2020, China has surpassed the United States

that attracted \$134. It is worth recalling here that in 2019, the United States had received \$251 billion in inflows and China received \$140 billion. Further, the report says, overall, the global FDI had dropped by 42% in 2020, attracting an inflow of an estimated \$859 billion as compared to \$1.5 trillion in 2019.

Eruption of Indonesia's most Active Volcano

The most active volcano of Indonesia, Mt Merapi erupted with a river of lava and searing gas clouds and its sound of eruption was audible within 30 kilometers from the point of eruption. The lava and clouds flew for 1,600 meters down its slopes. It is worth remembering here that this was said to be the biggest lava flow of Mount Merapi. Prior to this, the last major eruption of the Merapi happened in 2010 that had claimed the lives of 347 people. Mount Merapi is called the Fire Mountain of Indonesia and Java and it is located on the border between the Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces, Indonesia. Mount Merapi has been erupting regularly since 1548.

Sri Lanka Withdrew From Tripartite Pact On Colombo Port Terminal



Sri Lanka has withdrawn out of an agreement with India and Japan to develop the deep-sea container terminal i.e. East Container Terminal (ECT) at the Colombo Port. Sri Lanka had signed this tripartite agreement with Japan and India in May 2019 to jointly develop the strategic terminal to counter China's growing influence in the region. In this agreement the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) held a 51% stake and India and Japan together held 49%. This East Container Terminal in Colombo port is being constructed next to a controversial \$500-million Chinese-run container jetty. Recently the Sri Lankan government faced opposition from hardline nationalists within its coalition who are against the sale of national assets to foreigners. Moreover, the Sri Lankan government is looking forward to develop the site "as a wholly-owned container terminal of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority" for US\$800 million.

SpaceX announced First All-Civilian Mission to Space

Elon Musk of SpaceX announced to launch his first all civilian mission to space. SpaceX is planning to launch the first all-commercial astronaut mission in the world named 'Inspiration4' on Falcon 9. The proposed spacecraft will be projected from the Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida and will start orbiting in the fourth quarter of this year. As the name suggests the mission will have four persons in crew and will act as inspiration for supporting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which is planning to accelerate the research advancements and save children worldwide after its multi-billion-dollar expansion. This mission will orbit the Earth every 90 minutes along a customized flight path and the Inspiration4 crew will be imparted commercial astronaut training as well as training on Dragon spacecraft through the orbital mechanics, zero gravity, operating in microgravity and other stress testing.

World Wetlands Day 2021

Like every year World Wetlands Day was observed across the globe on 2nd

February to create awareness about the importance of wetlands and their roles towards humans and the planet. This was the 25th edition of World Wetlands Day, which was celebrated on the "Wetlands and Water" theme. This day was celebrated for the first time in 1997. On this day in the year 1971 adoption of the Conservation of Wetlands was done in Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of Caspian Sea. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for the conservation and optimised use of wetlands and their resources. It enlists the suitable wetlands as the Wetlands of International importance - "the Ramsar List". The land areas which are saturated or flooded with water either permanently or seasonally are known as Wetlands like marshers, ponds, lakes, fens, rivers, floodplains and swamps, saltwater marshes, estuaries, mangroves, lagoons and coral reefs, Fishponds, rice paddies, and saltpans. It is worth learning that the wetlands not only play a major role in the survival of humans as well as 40% of species of different creatures that live or breed in wetlands but it also stores around 30% of the land based carbon

which helps in controlling climate change. On this day in India Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Babul Supriyo announced a set up of a Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) as a part of the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, which is an institution under the Ministry. And the divisional forest department celebrated a bird festival at the Okhla bird sanctuary, the only eco-sensitive zone of Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Currently, there are 42 Ramsar sites in India.

U.K. Visa Route : The Privilege Of Hong Kong Residents

After China dismissed the validity of the British National Overseas passport as a valid travel document or form of identification from January 31,2021, the UK eventually opened the planned visa route and citizenship option for the Hong Kong residents. The Hong Kong residents can now apply for a new visa that offers them an opportunity to become British citizens after Beijing's imposition of a national security law in the Asian financial hub in 2020. Britain and China have been fighting for months about what London and Washington dub as an attempt to

silence dissent in Hong Kong after pro-democracy protests in 2019 and 2020. The U.K. government forecasts the new visa is likely to attract more than 300,000 people and their dependents to Britain.

Russia Signed A Bill To Extend Nuclear Treaty With US

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a bill into law ratifying a five-year extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with the US, which is said to be one of the last major arms reduction treaties signed since the end of the Cold War. The validity period of the New START has been extended by five years to February 5, 2026. Russia and the US had signed this New START in 2010 for the first time. The treaty stipulated limits to the numbers of deployed nuclear warheads and strategic delivery systems by both the nuclear superpowers. It was about to expire on February 5, 2021

Indian-American scientist Bhavya Lal : The New Acting Chief of NASA staff

National Aeronautics and Space Administration has appointed Indian-American Bhavya Lal the acting chief of staff of the US space agency. The new appointee Lal has extensive experience in

engineering and space technology. She has worked as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020. In that tenure she looked into the analysis of space technology, strategy, and policy for the White House office of science and technology policy and national space council, as well as federal space-oriented organisations, including NASA, the department of defence, and the intelligence community.

The New Citizenship Policy Of UAE

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) proclaimed its new citizenship policy in which the government has planned to offer citizenship to a selected group of foreigners, with this, it has become the first Gulf Arab nation that formalized the process of giving expatriates a bigger stake in the economy. The new citizenship policy eyes to attract talent, investment to the UAE to boost the growth and diversify from oil. The aspirants for UAE citizenship are ought to own a property in the UAE. They should have obtained one or more patents approved by the UAE Ministry of Economy or any other

reputable international body. The citizenship will be a privilege for doctors and specialists specialised in a unique scientific discipline or the scientific principles that are highly required in the UAE as well as for those individuals with creative talents or pioneers in the culture and art fields, who are also winners of one or more international awards. The scientists looking for this citizenship should be active researchers in a university or research center and should have practical experience of at least 10 years in the same field. Before this, UAE was offering citizenship to some foreigners in special cases for providing service to the state. It is worth knowing that the foreign residents account for more than 80% of the total population of UAE and thus the residents are the mainstay of UAE's economy for decades.

One Year Emergency In Myanmar

On 1st February 2021 Myanmar Military Tatmadaw announced a one year state of emergency in the Southeast Asian nation of more than 100 ethnic groups. This intervention ended a decade of civilian rule in Myanmar. All powers have been

transferred to the Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing as the leaders have been detained for committing fraud in the national elections held on November 8, 2020, while the Vice President Myint Swe will be serving as the acting President. The State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint along with the other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) have been detained by the military. It is worth recalling here that Aung San Suu Kyi took over as the head of the civilian government in 2015 after a long period of military rule in Myanmar. The tainted elections registered a massive victory for NLD, while the military supported USDP challenged the outcome alleging mismanagement and lack of transparency. It did call for re-election. However, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and 17 Western Embassies in Myanmar had issued a statement urging all to adhere to democratic norms and for the peaceful convening of the parliament to elect the President and the Speakers.

World Leprosy Day 2021

Globe observed the last Sunday of January i.e. 31st January 2021 as the annual World Leprosy Day to raise knowledge about the leprosy and to

propagate the need and importance of eradicating the disease, which is curable. Leprosy also known as Hansen's disease, had been named after a Norwegian physician Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, who proved that leprosy is not a hereditary disease but is caused by a bacterium bacillus *Mycobacterium leprae*. It is an infectious disease which is spread through the droplets either from the nose or mouth when the affected person sneezes or coughs. The incubation period of the disease is usually 5 years but the symptoms of the disease can be seen within 1 year but it could also take 20 years or even more years to occur. Although the disease is curable and treatment at the early stage can prevent any disability, yet the disease has potential of causing a progressive and permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes if left untreated. As per the WHO report, there were 2,08,619 new leprosy cases globally registered in the year 2018 in 159 countries. In India this day is observed on the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi i.e. 30th January.

Elon Musk's New World Record: 143 satellites In One Go!!!

Elon Musk's SpaceX created a new world record by launching 143 satellites on single rocket i.e. Falcon 9 rocket from the

Space Launch Complex 40 at Florida's Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. With this, it has beaten the Indian space agency ISRO's record of deploying 104 satellites in a single launch in February 2017. The launched satellites included commercial and government CubeSats, microsats and 10 Starlink satellites. SpaceX envisages provision of near-global broadband internet coverage all over the world by 2021. Prior to this, it had launched over 800 satellites to orbit of the several thousand to offer broadband internet globally. The agency has offered a very low price of 15,000 dollars per kilogram for each satellite to be delivered to a polar sun-synchronous orbit.

Global Climate Risk Index 2021

NGO based in Bonn, Germany, Germanwatch has released a Global Climate Risk Index. The index analyzed and ranked to what extent nations and regions have been affected by impacts of climate-related extreme weather events like storms, floods, heatwaves, etc in 2019 as well as from 2000 to 2019. In the 16th edition of this index Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Bahamas emerged as the top three most affected countries in 2019 respectively, while between 2000-2019, Puerto Rico,

Myanmar, and Haiti were the countries that were most affected by the impacts of such weather events. In the index, India has been ranked at the seventh position that was most affected by climate change in 201

Extension Of New START Treaty

The US President Joe Biden proposed extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) Treaty by five years that has been welcomed by Russia. This treaty was signed between the United States and Russia in 2010 in Prague (capital of Czech Republic) that became effective in 2011. Earlier this treaty was known as “Measures for the further reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms”, which was meant to decrease nuclear arms production by the signatories. This led to reduction in the number of deployable strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550; submarine-launched ballistic missiles, inter-continental ballistic missile launchers, heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments to 800 and heavy bombers equipped nuclear armaments to 700. This treaty had replaced the Treaty of Moscow, which was also called Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT).

United States Decided To Rejoin UNHRC

The Joe Biden administration in the United States announced to re-join the UN Human Rights Council. In 2018, the US withdrew from the world body’s main human rights because of its disproportionate focus on Israel that received the largest number of critical council resolutions in comparison to other nations. The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken explained that the decision of the Trump administration to withdraw from UNHRC not only failed in bringing any meaningful change but also created a vacuum of US leadership, which the nations with authoritarian agendas have used to their advantage. With this move, Joe Biden administration has recommitted the US to a foreign policy that is focussed on human rights, democracy, and equality and the effective use of multilateral tools is an important element of that vision. It is worth recalling here that prior to this, Joe Biden has also rejoined the World Health Organisation and Paris Climate Accord which the Trump administration withdrew from while he was in office.

Turkey's new Space Program

The President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has unveiled the ambitious 10-year space program of Turkey. The space programme has plans for moon mission, development of internationally viable satellite systems, sending Turkish astronauts as well as Turkish citizens into space with international cooperation, construction of spaceport in collaboration with other nations and creation of a "global brand" with respect to the satellite technology. This programme will act as an instrument for realizing the President's vision to place Turkey in the expanded regional and global role. It is worth knowing here that the Turkish Space Agency came into existence in the year 2018.

The Upcoming BioAsia 2021

The 18th BioAsia event will be held between February 22, 2021 to February 23, 2021 on 'Move the Needle' theme. This year, the event will be focussed on Covid-19, pharma, medtech and global health. BioAsia 2021 will provide a platform to the investors, researchers, start-ups, conglomerates and health care representatives from across the globe to

discuss the important topics and needs of the evolving Life Science industry. Among the expected sessions of the event, the prospects of Medical Technologies that is becoming the next big opportunity for India will be discussed at length. In context to India it is worth learning that the medical technologies have tremendous potential to accelerate the journey for India from being an importer to a large-scale exporter. The event will also lead to a review on the supply chain resilience, access to innovative medicines and innovation & research. It will also boost India's Biotechnology Sector, which is currently the third largest biotechnology destination in the Asia Pacific region.

India & EU's First Maritime Security Dialogue



India and European Union conducted their first maritime security dialogue on 20th January 2021 in a virtual format.

Director Joanne Balfoort on the European Union External Action Service side and Joint Secretary Sandeep Arya on the Indian side presided over this meeting in which developments in the maritime security environment, regional cooperation activities, developments of mutual interest, and opportunities for cooperation between the two nations were discussed at length. The dialogue sought to develop mutual understanding and cooperation opportunities between India and the EU in the maritime security domain as another factor of the strategic partnership between the two sides consistent with the India-EU Roadmap to 2025.

UN's Resolution On Safeguarding Religious Sites

The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution titled "Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites". The resolution criticizes offenses against religious sites and symbols as well as forcible conversions of religions; dismisses the use of violence to express a point of view (related to protecting religious practices)

and condemns acts of violence that destroy religious sites across the globe. It seeks to remind the universality of religious sites and the mapping of religious sites worldwide. It encourages respect for the people all over the world irrespective of their faith, history and culture, and cooperation among member countries.

The LongOps Project of UK & Japan

The United Kingdom and Japan recently collaborated for the LongOps Project worth 12 million Euros (Rs 120 crores). Under this collaboration, the scientists from Japan and the UK will develop new and safe technologies to dismantle old nuclear facilities like the Joint European Torus, Fukushima among others that were severely damaged by tsunamis and earthquakes. As this project will employ long-reach robotic arms so it has been named as "LongOps Project". The project is meant to decrease the risks to human health and speed up decommissioning of nuclear reactors that are non-operational. Besides this, the project will also look into automating parts of the nuclear fusion power generation process.

The 1776 Commission Report

The White House recently released a report of the 1776 Commission, which was established by ex-President Trump when he was lagging behind the president-elect Joe Biden during the US President Election 2020. It is an eighteen-member advisory commission constituted of conservative politicians and activists. The commission has identified racism, progressivism, and identity politics as the major challenges for the United States of America. It refers to American politician John Calhoun, who held important positions including Vice President of the US (1825-1832), as the leading forerunner of identity politics. Identity Politics is about political positions based on the perspectives and interests of social groups. It covers social organizations based on social class, age, caste, culture, sex. This 1776 Commission was a counter to the 1619 project, which is a collection of essays on African American history of the last 400 years. The 1619 project explored the contribution of the black community towards nation-building and gives an account of the period between the era of slavery and modern times.

Michael Bloomberg Is Again UN Climate Envoy

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres re-appointed Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions. He was appointed to this post for the first time between March 2018 and November 2019. Now in the second innings, he will work to strengthen the group of governments, companies, cities and financial institutions that are working to reach carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement goals. He has been assigned the task of mobilising stronger and more ambitious climate action in the lead-up to 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference in Scotland in November 2021. It is worth knowing that Bloomberg is the founder and owner of Bloomberg LP, the parent company of Bloomberg News.

Nigeria's Okonjo-Iweala : The First Female Chief Of WTO

Nigerian economist Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has been chosen as the next Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and with this, she has become the first woman, first African and her country

Nigeria has become the first African nation to lead the organization. She has taken the place of Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down in August 2020. Previously, she has also served in the capacity of the Managing Director of the World Bank. She has been the former finance minister of Nigeria for two times as well as the first female Foreign Minister of her nation. It is worth remembering here that founded on 1st January 1995, the World Trade Organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Establishment Of Square Kilometre Array Observatory

A new intergovernmental organisation, Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) has been launched. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, it is the world's second intergovernmental organisation that is dedicated to radio astronomy. Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK are a part of the SKAO. Soon after its establishment, a new Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council was constituted that green flagged the set up of the world's largest radio telescope,

'SKAO telescope', which will be an array of antennas located in two continents, i.e. Africa and Australia. The proposed telescope worth more than £1.8 billion will enable astronomers to monitor the sky in unprecedented detail and survey the entire sky much faster than any current existing system. It is worth remembering that unlike optical telescopes, the radio telescope can detect invisible gas and can reveal areas of space that may be obscured by cosmic dust. SKAO telescope will explore some of the unexplored areas of the universe and seek answers about its history and evolution, study fundamental physics in extreme environments and learn about galaxies over cosmic time.

Is Article 19 of the United Nations Charter Partial?

Iran and six other countries viz. Niger, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic and Libya have lost their voting rights in the United Nations General Assembly on account of their unpaid dues under command of Article 19 of the United Nations Charter. However, three other countries such as Comoros, Somalia, Sao

Tome and Principe will be allowed to vote despite their missing dues. Article 19 of the UN Charter snatches the voting rights of member countries if they have arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the UN. The Charter does provide two years of the grace period. But, if the arrears are pending for more than two years, then the voting rights are suspended. It is worth knowing that Iran owes 16.2 million USD to the United Nation, while the US is the highest contributor of the UN with 22% contribution, China (12%), Japan (8.574%) and Germany (6.090) %. India is one among the thirty-four United Nations members to pay the budget dues on time and in January last year, India paid 23, 396, 496 USD to the United Nations. It should be noted that the UN Budget is revised in every three years via “Scales of Assessment” formula.

World’s First Energy Island In Denmark

Denmark approved a plan to construct the first energy field island of the world at 80 kms off the west coast of Denmark in the North Sea. The proposed artificial island will be equal to the size of the 18

football fields and will be used to produce and store enough green energy. It will be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines to meet the electricity demands of around 3 million European households. It will also be employed to supply green hydrogen that will be used in heavy transport, shipping, aviation and industry. The project will cost around 210 billion Danish crowns.

Joe Biden : The 46th President Of USA



US President-elect Joe Biden took oath as the 46th President on his 127-year-old family Bible, which was held by his wife, Dr Jill Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris sworn in as the 49th Vice-President of the United States on 20th January 2021 on the West front of the US Capitol building. Ms Harris created history by becoming America's first woman, first Black and first person with South Asian roots to take the office of the Vice President.

India-France Ex Desert Knight-21 Exercise

Bilateral Air exercise ' Ex Desert Knight-21' between India and France started at Air Force Station in Jodhpur on 20th January 2021. Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT), A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and approximately 175 personnel from French squad and Mirage 2000, Su-30 MKI, Rafale, IL-78 Flight Refuelling Aircraft, AWACS and AEW&C aircraft from Indian side are participating in this exercise, which will continue till 24th January 2021. It is worth knowing that recently under the Indo-French Defence Cooperation, the French Air and Space force and the Indian Air Force conducted six editions of air exercise called "Garuda" and this Ex-Desert Knight 21 is being held in addition to the Garuda series exercise. It should be remembered that the two nations also conduct defence exercises like Exercise Shakti (between their Armies) and Exercise Varuna (between their Navies).

Nazhat Shameem Khan : The New UN Human Rights Council President

Fiji's ambassador in Geneva, Nazhat Shameem Khan, who is considered a rights champion, has been elected as the new President of the UN Human Rights Council. The council picked Fiji in first-ever presidential vote with 29 out of 47 votes. She has served as the council's vice president in 2020. She succeeded in getting an edge over two other candidates from the UN's Asia-Pacific regional group of countries viz. Bahrain's ambassador Yusuf Abdulkarim Bucheeri and his counterpart from Uzbekistan, Ulugbek Lapasov. Bahrain's envoy got 14 votes and Uzbekistan's received four. It is worth knowing that the council's presidency rotates every year between the regions and the candidate is typically agreed upon by consensus within each regional group.

Yoweri Museveni Became Uganda's President For The Sixth Time

The 76-year-old National Resistance Movement (NRM) leader, Yoweri Museveni has won the Presidential election of the Republic of Uganda for the sixth consecutive time. With this, he has

become one of Africa's longest-serving presidents, as he had been on the post since 1986. In the presidential election for 2021, Museveni secured 58.64% of the total votes cast, while his rival Robert Kyagulanyi, a pop star and politician better known as Bobi Wine, grabbed just about 35% of the total votes.

Russia Took Exit From The Open Skies Treaty

Russia also announced its exit from the Open Skies Treaty (OST) putting the basket of blame over the United States that accused Russia of non-compliance with OST protocols, blaming Moscow of obstructing surveillance flights on its territory, while misusing its own missions for gathering key tactical data. It is worth recalling here that America had left the treaty on 22 November 2020. The Open Skies Treaty is an accord between more than 30 countries that permits participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states. This treaty was first proposed in 1955 by former US President Dwight Eisenhower as a means to de-escalate tensions during the Cold War. It is said to be a landmark treaty,

which was signed in 1992 between NATO members and former Warsaw Pact countries after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It came into effect in 2002 and had 35 signatories, including key players US and Russia, along with one non-ratifying member (Kyrgyzstan). This treaty is meant to build confidence among members through mutual openness, thus reducing the chances of accidental war. Under the treaty, a member state can undertake aerial imaging over the host state after giving notice 72 hours before, and sharing its exact flight path 24 hours before and the information gathered regarding troop movements, military exercises and missile deployments, has to be shared with all member states.

Britain Invited India For G7 Summit

The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to attend the upcoming G7 Summit of June 2021 as a guest. The G7 is made up of the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the US and the EU and it is said to be the only forum where the world's most influential and open societies and

advanced economies are brought together for close-knit discussions. With this invitation, Prime Minister Johnson used the first in-person G7 summit in almost two years to ask leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to utilize the opportunity to recover from coronavirus, uniting to make the future fairer, greener and more prosperous. He also praised India for its efforts regarding the production of coronavirus vaccine terming India as 'pharmacy of the world'.

US National Rifle Association Filed For Bankruptcy

In order to avoid being investigated by the New York Attorney General, the United States National Rifle Association filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code. Past reveals that the New York Attorney General had sued the National Rifle Association in August 2020 regarding allegations that the top executives of the association diverted millions of dollars for their personal trips. The United States Rifle Association is a non-profit organisation that came into existence as an outcome of the American civil war. Veterans General George Wingate and Colonel William C Church in 1871 constituted it in line with the British

National Rifle Association that was formed a year and a half earlier. It is meant to promote and encourage rifle shooting on scientific basis and is said to be the most influential pro-gun organisation in the US.

United Nations: India has the largest diaspora in the world

According to the recently released report "International Migration 2020 Highlights" of the United Nations, the Indian diaspora is the largest in the world as more than 18 million people from India were living outside India as of 2020. India's diaspora in UAE is 3.5 million, Saudi Arabia (2.5 million) and US (2.7 million). Besides them, the other countries hosting a large number of migrants from India are Oman, Australia, Kuwait, Canada, Qatar, Pakistan and UK. Other than India, Mexico, China, Russia and Syria. It is also worth knowing that India also experienced the largest gain in migrant population between 2000 and 2020 viz. ten million. In this context, India was followed by Syria, Venezuela, China and Philippines. Some of the countries whose migrant population increased during this period are Armenia, Pakistan, Tanzania, Ukraine etc.



Rishabh Pant : The fastest Indian wicket-keeper to record 1000 Test runs



19th January 2021 turned out to be a red letter day for India as well as Indian Batsman Rishabh Pant as India retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and Pant surpassed MS Dhoni to become the fastest Indian wicket-keeper to record 1000 Test runs in the longest format of the game during the fourth and final Test at Gabba, Brisbane. Pant accomplished this in 27 innings, scoring at an average of 40.04, while Dhoni had taken 32 innings to reach the milestone. Besides Pant and Dhoni, there are five other Indian stumpers viz. Farokh Engineer (36

innings), Wriddhiman Saha (37 innings), Nayan Mongia (39 innings), Syed Kirmani (45 innings) and Kiran More (50 innings), who touched the 1000-run milestone in Test cricket. It is also worth remembering that currently, South Africa's Quinton de Kock holds the record for being the fastest wicket keeper batsman to reach 1000 runs in Test matches in 21 innings followed by Dinesh Chandimal (22 innings), Jonny Bairstow (22 innings), Kumar Sangakkara (23 innings) and AB de Villiers (23 innings).

The First Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sports Festival

The Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju inaugurated the first edition of annual Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sports Festival at Padum in Zaskar of Kargil district. The Ladakh UT Administration is organizing this 13-day festival to promote Zaskar as a winter tourists' destination. The main features of this festival are Ice Climbing, trekking on frozen Zaskar River, Ice Hockey, snow

sculpture and ethnic food festival. The Ministry will provide sports facilities in all regions of Ladakh and will promote Ladakh as a centre for Ice Hockey and will soon open a centre for archery and polo in the region.

Indians In World Junior Rankings of BWF

Varun Kapur, Samiya Imad Farooqui along with four other Indians have confirmed Top-10 ranks in the latest world junior rankings of Badminton World Federation (BWF). Starting 2021 on a high note, Varun climbed four places ahead in the men's rankings. He had a great run in 2020 as he picked his sixth junior title when he booked the XII Portuguese International-2020 on his name in November 2020. A U-15 Asian Badminton Championship winner, Samiya took a six-spot jump as the youngsters achieved their career-best junior rankings and grabbed the World No. 2 rank. She has been one of the consistent performers at the junior circuit. In the women singles category, Tasnim Mir (4), Treasa Jolly (8) and Aditi Bhatt (10) earned a place in the Top-10, while in the women's doubles category, Treasa (8), Tanisha Crasto (9) and Aditi (9) are among the Indians who are placed in Top-10.

India Retained Border-Gavaskar Trophy



On 19th January 2021, India defeated Australia in the Brisbane test and sealed the 4-match series by 2-1. India successfully chased the 328-run target by virtue of Rishabh Pant's brilliant unbeaten 89, Shubman Gill 91, and Cheteshwar Pujara's 56 run knock in the second innings. This win of India is said to be historic as amateur injured players of India succeeded in defeating Australian team at its fortress Gabba in 32 years. Rishabh Pant was adjudged as the Man of the match. Thus, India retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Test series between India and Australia). With this win, India moved to the top spot of the ICC World Test Championship rankings. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) acknowledged this memorable effort of the team with announcement of a team bonus worth Rs. 5 crore.

Ishant Sharma : The Sixth Indian Bowler To Take 300 Wickets In Test Cricket

February 8, 2021 became a red day for veteran fast bowler Ishant Sharma, who became the sixth Indian bowler to take 300 wickets in Test cricket in his 98th test against England at Chennai. Sharma's 300th Test wicket came in form of Dan Lawrence, whom he plumed for an lbw dismissal. Anil Kumble (619), Kapil Dev (434), Ravichandran Ashwin (377), Harbhajan Singh (417) and Zaheer Khan (311) are other Indian bowlers , who took more than 300 wickets in tests in the past.

Ajay Singh Has Again Become President of Boxing Federation of India



Ajay Singh has been re-elected as President of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) after defeating former Maharashtra sports minister Ashish Shelar in the polls on 3rd February 2021.

Singh garnered 37 votes while Shelar, who has held many top positions in sport, including the role of President of Maharashtra Cricket Association and Mumbai District Football Association, got just 27 votes in the BFI elections. The six-time world champion boxer Mary Kom credited BFI President Ajay Singh for the remarkable performances of the boxers at the global level in the recent years.

BCCI canceled Ranji Trophy 2020-21 for first time

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided not to conduct the Ranji Trophy in 2020-21 for the first time in 87 years since its inception in 1934-35. It is worth remembering here that Mumbai have won India's premier first-class cricket national championship for the most number of times i.e. 41 including 15 back-to-back wins from 1958-59 to 1972-73. Now instead of Ranji Trophy, BCCI will conduct the Vijay Hazare Trophy 50-over tournament and Senior Women's One Day tournament as well as U-19 tournaments after the completion of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament. The decision has been taken on the pretext of the coronavirus pandemic and the feedback from the state cricket bodies.

Joe Root : The First Batsman To Score 200 in 100th Test



English captain Joe Root became the first player in history to score a double century in his 100th Test match on 6th February 2021. Root, who was unbeaten on 128 overnight, batted on against India on Day 2 in Chennai and scored the fifth double century of his career as well as the second in three Tests. With this, he also surpassed former Pakistan captain Inzamam-Ul-Haq as the player with the highest individual score playing the 100th Test match of his career. Inzamam did this feat by posting 184 against India in a Test match in Bengaluru in 2005, which Pakistan had won by 168 runs.

Denmark Clinched Men's World Handball title

Denmark defeated Sweden by 26-24 to win a second successive men's world handball title in Cairo on January 31, 2021. It happened by virtue of Mikkel

Hansen, who scored seven goals and goalkeeper Niklas Landin Jacobsen, who had saved 15. Denmark had won this title in 2019 for the first time. The Danes are also the reigning Olympic champions after defeating France in the 2016 final. In this championship Sweden on second spot was followed by Spain, which defeated France by 35-29 with eight goals from Alex Dujshebaev.

ICC Nominated Rishabh Pant And Two Others For Men's Player of the Month award

The International Cricket Council announced the nominees for the inaugural Player of the Month Awards to "recognize and celebrate the best performances from both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year". Indian wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has been nominated for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award along with England's skipper Joe Root and Ireland's Paul Stirling. Pant had played two Tests against Australia and scored a 97 at Sydney to ensure a draw before an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane that led India to a historic series-

clinching win. Root played two Tests against Sri Lanka in January and scored 228 and 186 and led his team to a 2-0 Test series victory. And Stirling played two ODIs against the UAE and three ODIs against Afghanistan and scored three centuries.

India Topped The First Asian Online Shooting Championship

The Indian shooting team has topped the medals tally in the first-ever Asian Online Shooting Championship, which was organised by Kuwait Shooting Federation. The 24-member Indian shooting contingent fetched a total of 11 medals, which included four gold medals, two silver and five bronze medals. Around 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries participated in the competition. Among the Indian gold winners are Saurabh Chaudhary (men's 10m air pistol), Divyansh Singh Panwar (men's 10m air rifle), Kynan Chenai (men's trap) and Rajeshwari Kumari (women's trap). The names of Silver winners include Arjun Babuta (men's 10m air rifle) and Shreyasi Singh (women's trap). And the names of Bronze winners include Manu Bhaker (women's 10m air pistol), Sarabjot Singh

(men's 10m air pistol), Deepak Kumar (men's 10m air rifle), Prithviraj Tondaiman (men's trap) and Manish Keer (women's trap)

Tributes To Former India Davis Cup tennis team coach Akhtar Ali

Former Indian tennis coach Akhtar Ali passed away at the age of 81 in Kolkata. He represented India in Davis Cup between 1958 and 1964 and was National tennis team coach from 1966 to 1993. Under his guidance, the Indian team with Krishnan, Mukerjea, Premjit Lall and S.P. Misra reached the Davis Cup final in 1966. India repeated the feat in 1974 with the team featuring Vijay and Anand Amritraj, Shashi Menon and Jasjit Singh. The deceased was honored with the Arjuna Award in 2000 for his lifetime contribution to tennis. He had also won the National squash championship in 1968. He was father of India's current Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali. Akhtar shaped many careers, including that of the legendary Leander Paes apart from his own son Zeeshan. His coaching also influenced Vijay Amritraj and Ramesh Krishnan.

The Introduction of ICC Player of the Month awards



The International Cricket Council (ICC) aired an announcement about the 'ICC Player of the Month' awards to acknowledge the best performances of male and female cricketers across all three forms of international cricket. For this, first the ICC Awards Nominations Committee will determine three nominees for each of the cricketing formats based on their on-field performances and overall achievements during that month. Then along with fans registered with the ICC, former players, journalists and broadcasters from worldwide constituting an ICC Voting Academy will vote for the ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month. The awards will be presented from February 2021 onwards.

Jorden Van Foreest : Winner Of Tata Steel Masters Chess Tournament

Jorden van Foreest booked the Tata Steel Masters title on his name. The 21-year-old Jorden van Foreest has become the first Dutch winner of Wijk aan Zee since Jan Timman won it 36 years ago in 1985. It could have been another Dutchman, Anish Giri, but Jorden won their playoff in Armageddon mayhem on the same day the 11th seed crossed 2700 for the first time.



The 18-year-old Russian player Andrey Esipenko also crossed 2700 as he finished 3rd, on the same score as Fabiano Caruana and 17-year-old Alireza Firouzja, who was furious when the arbiters tried to move his game to another board before the playoff. Magnus Carlsen defeated MVL, but still finished in his lowest place since he first played Wijk aged 16.

Former World Heavyweight Boxing Champion Leon Spinks Passed Away

Leon Spinks, who had bagged Olympic gold and then shocked the boxing world by defeating Muhammad Ali to win the heavyweight boxing title in only his eighth pro fight, breathed his last in US on February 5, 2021 at the age of 67.



He had concluded his career 26-17 with three draws and 14 knockouts, but struggled to try and recapture the fame that came early in his career in one of the most shocking upsets in boxing history. Spinks had an edge over Ali by decision in a 15-round fight in 1978 to win the title.

Demise of Legendary New Zealand All-rounder Bruce Taylor

Former New Zealand all-rounder Bruce Taylor died at the age of 77. Taylor had played 30 Tests for New Zealand, and was the only player to have scored a century and taken a five-wicket haul on Test

debut. Taylor had scored a first-class century against India at Kolkata in 1965. Taylor was New Zealand's 108th Test cricketer, who came to bat at number 8, the left-handed batsman attacked the Indian bowlers and played a 105-run innings from 158 balls.

Death of Former West Indies fast bowler Ezra Moseley

Former West Indies pacer, Ezra Moseley died in a road accident. He was 63 years old, who had played two Tests in 1990 and also nine ODIs between 1990 and 1991.



He was banned following the rebel tour of South Africa in 1982-83. He had played two Tests for West Indies against England in 1990 and took 6 wickets and he took 8 wickets in 9 ODIs. The deceased had made his first-class debut for English county Glamorgan in 1980 before playing for Barbados and in South Africa for Eastern Province and Northern Transvaal.



Current Affairs

1. Shivan became MD and CEO of
(a) Axis Bank (b) Catholic Syrian Bank (c) City Union Bank
(d) DCB Bank (e) Dhanlaxmi Bank
2. The book 'The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor' involves a story about Bank.
(a) SBI (b) ICICI (c) HDFC
(d) YES (e) IDBI
3. Shrishti Goswami became one-day CM of
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Andhra Pradesh
(d) Kerala (e) Bihar
4. The Union Budget 2021-2022 has eased compliance requirement of small companies by revising their definition under Companies Act, 2013 by increasing their thresholds for paid up capital from "not exceeding Rs. 50 Lakh" to "not exceeding Rs.....".
(a) 60 lakh (b) 75 lakh (c) 1 crore
(d) 2 crore (e) 2.5 crore
5. Global Conclave '..... Looks Ahead' was inaugurated on 1st February 2021.
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu
(d) Andhra Pradesh (e) Telangana
6. Who among the following launched "Shramshakti" Portal?
(a) Ravi Shankar Prasad (b) Thaawar Chand Gehlot
(c) Arjun Munda (d) Prakash Javadekar
(e) Santosh Kumar Gangwar

7. Which of the following nations topped in scientific publications ?
(a) USA (b) UK (c) China
(d) Japan (e) Germany
8. According to the Union Budget 2021-2022, the Indian economy have reduced from 2.24 lakh crore nominal GDP to Rs lakh crore
(a) 1 (b) 1.25 (c) 1.50
(d) 1.85 (e) 1.94
9. Who among the following won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy?
(a) Border Security Force (BSF)
(b) Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
(c) Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)
(d) National Security Guards (NSG)
(e) Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)
10. Which of the following Ministries won the Prestigious SKOCH Challenger Award for “Best Performance in E-Governance”?
(a) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
(b) Ministry of Law and Justice
(c) Ministry of Science and Technology
(d) Ministry of Education
(e) Ministry of Minority Affairs
11. Indo-..... joint military exercise ‘Yudh Abhyas’ started on 8th February 2021 in Rajasthan.
(a) U.S. (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Russia
(d) Canada (e) Iraq

- 12.** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) has identified religious places to carry the interventions in order to ensure zero tolerance towards child labour.
- (a) 40 (b) 50 (c) 60
(d) 75 (e) 100
- 13.** Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) issued USD 500 million Senior Unsecured USD Bonds for more thanyears
- (a) 5 (b) 10 (c) 15
(d) 20 (e) 25
- 14.** Startup India Seed Fund worth Rs crore will become operational from April 1, 2021.
- (a) 550 (b) 765 (c) 850
(d) 900 (e) 945
- 15.** The Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, announced during the Union Budget 2021 presentation that the Government has proposed a “Mega Investment Parks scheme”.
- (a) Energy (b) Textile (c) Leather
(d) IT (e) Food
- 16.** Who among the following released a book titled 'A textbook of Urban Planning and Geography' written by Dr. Sameer Sharma?
- (a) Narendra Modi (b) Amit Shah (c) Venkaiah Naidu
(d) Nirmala Sitharaman (e) Hardeep Singh Puri
- 17.** Which of the following states launched ‘Udyam Sarathi App’ for Youths ?
- (a) Uttarakhand (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Uttar Pradesh
(d) Bihar (e) Gujarat

- 18.** Shyam Srinivasan of Bank became Business Standard Banker of the Year.
- (a) SBI (b) ICICI (c) HDFC
(d) Federal (e) BoB
- 19.** Prakash Javadekar launched 2021 as Indo-..... Year of the Environment.
- (a) Spanish (b) American (c) Australian
(d) Italian (e) French
- 20.** Ayesha Aziz became India's Youngest Female Pilot at the age of
- (a) 21 (b) 22 (c) 23
(d) 24 (e) 25



ANSWERS



- 1.(e)** Shivan became MD and CEO of Dhanlaxmi Bank. Shivan, who is from Pallakad, Kerala, has over 37 years experience in State Bank of India (SBI) and worked in functional areas like commercial banking.
- 2.(d)** The book 'Yes Man — The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor' authored by Pavan C Lall involves a story about YES Bank. It sheds light on the journey of value creation and callous destruction by YES Bank's co-founder and former Managing Director and promoter Rana Kapoor
- 3.(b)** A nineteen-year-old Haridwar-based student, Shristi Goswami became one-day CM of Uttarakhand on the occasion of National Girl Child Day. The student of BSc Agriculture, who lives in Daulatpur village administered from Gairsain, the summer capital of the state, and reviewed various schemes run by the state government that include Atal Ayushman Scheme, Smart City project, Homestay Scheme by the tourism department, and other development projects.
- 4.(d)** In the Union Budget 2021-2022 has eased compliance requirements of small companies by revising their definition under Companies Act, 2013 by increasing their thresholds for paid up capital from "not exceeding Rs. 50 Lakh" to "not exceeding Rs. 2 Crore" and turnover from "not exceeding Rs. 2 Crore" to "not exceeding Rs. 20 Cr".
- 5.(a)** Global Conclave 'Kerala Looks Ahead' was inaugurated on 1st February 2021. It sought to lay down the roadmap for long-term development in Kerala. On

this occasion Nobel winner and economist Joseph Stiglitz and Soumya Swaminathan, who is Chief Scientist of World Health Organisation also addressed the inaugural session.

- 6.(c)** The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda has launched a National Migration Support Portal “ShramShakti”. The portal will help the government in smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers. The portal will address the data gap and empower migrant workers who generally migrate in search of employment and income generation.
- 7.(c)** **China** topped in scientific publications. It was followed by the USA and India. It is worth knowing that India recorded the fastest average annual growth rate of publications between 2008 and 2018 with 10.73 %.
- 8.(e)** According to the Union Budget 2021-2022, the Indian economy have reduced from 2.24 lakh crore nominal GDP to Rs **1.94** lakh crore. This reduction in the size of the economy was due to the lower revenue growth and higher expenditure in the year 2020 because of coronavirus pandemic. The fiscal deficit for 2021-2022 was estimated to be 6.8% of the GDP.
- 9.(c)** Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy. ITBP has won the Championship trophy after defeating Ladakh in the finals in Gulmarg. This championship was held at an altitude of 8,694-feet and temperatures below freezing point.
- 10.(e)** **Ministry of** Minority Affairs won the Prestigious SKOCH Challenger Award for “Best Performance in E-Governance” as well as 3 Gold Awards for its initiatives viz. “Eco-Rehabilitation of tribal villages through Innovative design

in water management using Ice-stupa”, “Swasthya: Tribal Health and Nutritional Portal” and the Performance Dashboard “Empowering Tribals Transforming India” . These have brought improvement in areas of education, health and livelihood.

- 11.(a)** The 16th edition of Indo-US joint military exercise ‘Yudh Abhyas’ started on 8th February 2021 near the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan. It aimed at enhancing the interoperability and cooperation between the two armies. The 11th battalion of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles, who are part of the South Western Command represented Indian side, while the 2nd battalion troops, 3rd Infantry Regiment of 1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team, along with the respective brigade headquarters represented American side.
- 12.(b)** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has identified **50** religious places to carry the interventions in order to ensure zero tolerance towards child labour. NCPCR also informed that multi-stakeholders including the anti-human trafficking unit, representatives from NGOs/CSOs, child welfare police officers and religious trust & groups shall work in collaboration to undertake the interventions.
- 13.(b)** Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) issued USD 500 million Senior Unsecured USD Bonds for more than **10** years on 29.01.2020 through the issuance of USD denominated Bonds under ‘Reg S route’ with a fixed maturity of 16.05.2031. This is the longest tenor bond issuance from India since the start of the year. The bonds have a fixed coupon of 3.35% p.a. with inside the fair value of PFC’s secondary bonds.

- 14.(e)** Startup India Seed Fund worth Rs 945 crore will become operational from April 1, 2021 to 2025. Fund Scheme will provide financial assistance to startups, and will be disbursed through selected incubators.
- 15.(b)** The Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, announced during the Union Budget 2021 presentation that the Government has proposed a “Mega Investment Textile Parks scheme (MITRA)”. The scheme will turn the textile industry globally competitive. This will help in creation of a world class infrastructure with plug and play facilities. This in turn will create global champions in exports
- 16.(c)** Vice President Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled 'A textbook of Urban Planning and Geography' written by Dr. Sameer Sharma, who is Director General and CEO of the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs
- 17.(c)** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath has launched the ‘Udyam Sarathi App’ on the 71st Foundation Day of the state i.e. 24 January 2021. The app will enable the youths to get every information related to self-employment and the job industry, across the state. The theme of this year’s foundation day was ‘Respect for self-reliant Uttar Pradesh, women young farmers, development of all’.
- 18.(d)** Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Shyam Srinivasan of Federal Bank became Business Standard Banker of the Year for 2019-20. The award was given for his bank’s consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed large stress on asset quality, registered losses, or even invited regulatory actions.

- 19.(e)** The Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar launched 2021 as Indo-**French** Year of the Environment. The objective of this partnership is to strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions in favour of global environment protection and give them greater visibility.
- 20.(e)** Ayesha Aziz became India's Youngest Female Pilot at the age of **25**. She is Kashmiri woman, who became the youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15 in 2011. She was trained to fly a MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase the following year. She later graduated in aviation from the Bombay Flying Club (BFC) and obtained a commercial license in 2017.