



## Current Affairs Supplement

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### Registered/ Corporate Office

#### DELHI

+91- 8920-180-477  
F – 92, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hanuman Mandir Market  
Near Royal Bakery (Metro Gate No. – 3)  
Munrika, New Delhi – 110067

#### MUMBAI

+91-7900-005-077  
401 & 2, Fourth Floor, Krishna Plaza, Above  
Krishna Sweets, Jan Kalyan Bank, Next to  
Ganesh Tower, Shivaji Path Opposite Thane  
Railway Station (W) - 400601

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## National

### Maharashtra CM unveiled the 1st indigenous Metro racks at Charkop Metro Depot

Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Minister of Maharashtra unveiled the first indigenous metro racks for the new Metro line of Mumbai – Metro 2A and 7 at the Charkop Metro Depot, Mumbai, Maharashtra.



- Metro line 2A will run from Dahisar to D N Nagar & it is an 18.58-km-long elevated corridor built at an estimated cost of Rs 6,410 crore, the metro line 7 from Andheri (East) to Dahisar (East) is an 16.47-km-long built at an estimated cost of Rs 6,208 crore.
- The rake was manufactured by **Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML)** and delivered the first 'Made in India' rake from the Bengaluru facility of BEML.
- This metro line will become functional from June 2021.
- The trial run will begin in March 2021 and will continue for a period of 1 month and the commercial operations will commence from May 2021.

### Reliance Jio Becomes World's 5th Strongest Brand; Wechat Tops: Brand Finance's Global 500 2021

i. As per the **Global 500 2021**, an annual report on the most valuable and strongest global brands of **Brand Finance**, **Reliance Jio** has been ranked in **5th** position as **world's strongest brand** with a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91.7 out of 100 and AAA+ brand strength rating.

- Reliance Jio enters the ranking for the 1st time.

ii. The list is topped by WeChat with a BSI score of 95.4 followed by Ferrari with 93.9 BSI score.

iii. Russian bank Sber is spotted in 3rd rank with 92.0 BSI score followed by Coca-Cola with 91.7 BSI score.

### India to emerge as 2nd most Resilient Economy in 2021, Germany tops the list: PHDCCI IER Rankings

According to the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) International Economic Resilience (IER) India is set to emerge as the **2nd** Most Resilience Economy in 2021 among top-10 leading economies showcasing the strong recovery of Indian Economy in the Post COVID-19 era. Germany took the top spot & South Korea took the 3rd spot.



i. Indicators – It is based on 5 Macroeconomic indicators such as Real GDP growth rate, Merchandise export growth rate, Current Account Balance (as percentage of GDP), General Government net lending/borrowing (as percentage of GDP), Gross Debt-to-GDP ratio.

### Pavan C. Lall Authored Book Titled “Yes Man: The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor” Released

**Pavan C. Lall's** new book titled “Yes Man: The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor” provides the details about the rise and fall of one of the India's promising bankers Rana Kapoor and it also questions the banking system, its regulators and the business environment that led to the fall of YES Bank.

The book was published by **HarperCollins**.

#### About the book:

i. The book features the birth of YES Bank in 2004 and its rise as the 4th largest private bank in India, with approved permission to operate in Singapore, London and Dubai.

ii. The book also points out the reckless lending, allegations of bribery and corruption which led to the fall of

the bank.

#### **About Pavan C.Lall:**

- i. Pavan C.Lall hails from Calcutta, West Bengal who pursued his writing in the United States.
- ii. He worked as the associate editor at the Business Standard. has contributed to Fortune India, the Telegraph, the Dallas Business Journal and other publications
- iii. He is the author of “Flawed: The Rise and Fall of India’s Diamond Mogul Nirav Modi”.

#### **“This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad” Memoir of Girish Karnad Translated From Kannada into English**

The English translation of the “This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad” the Kannada book authored by **Girish Karnad** is set to be released on the **83rd birth anniversary** of Girish Karnad, on 19th May 2021 by Fourth Estate, an imprint of HarperCollins Publisher.



- The Kannada book is translated into English by writer and translator **Srinath Perur** and **Girish Karnad**.
- The book is published by **HarperCollins India Publisher**.

#### **About the book:**

- i. The Kannada book was first published in 2011.
- ii. The book showcases his life from early life in Dharwad, engaging in local theaters to his education in Mumbai and as Rhodes scholar in Oxford.
- iii. The book also portrays his life during his career as publisher, his journey in the film industry and his personal life.

#### **About Girish Karnad:**

- i. Girish Karnad was a writer, director, actor and activist. Some of his notable works include, Nagamandala, Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Hittina Hunja.
- ii. He made his debut as an actor in Samskara in 1970 and has acted in more than 90 films in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi.

#### **Awards:**

- i. He received the Padma Shri in 1974 and Padma Bhushan in 1992 for arts.
- ii. He received the Jnanpith Award, India’s highest literary prize, in 1999 for his contributions to literature and theatre.

#### **Dalai Lama’s New Book Titled “The Little Book of Encouragement” Released**

His Holiness The 14th **Dalai Lama** authored a new book titled “**The Little Book of Encouragement**”. The book edited by **Renuka Singh** is published by **Penguin Random House** is set to be released.

#### **About the book:**

- i. The book is a compilation of Dalai Lama’s quotes and ideas to deal with the new realities of the post pandemic world along with how to combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change and his views on Tibet.
- ii. The book also promotes human values, talks about the key to happiness and comments on Sino-India ties.

#### **About Dalai Lama:**

- i. The Dalai Lamas are believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet.
- ii. He was Born as Lhamo Thondup on 6th July 1935 and was officially installed as the 14th Dalai Lama in 1940 and renamed as Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso (Tenzin Gyatso).

iii. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his campaign of over 40 years to end the domination of China in his homeland.

**Books:**

He has authored numerous books which include, Inner World, The Seed of Compassion: Lessons from the Life and Teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, The Life of My Teacher: A Biography of Kyabjé Ling Rinpoché and Happiness.

**PGIMER Launched India's First Amputee Clinic in Chandigarh**

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) launched India's **first Amputee Clinic**, "PGI Amputee Clinic" in Chandigarh. The PGI Amputee clinic was inaugurated by PGIMER Director Prof. Jagat Ram.

**Purpose:**

- To improve the amputation patients, care by providing collection of services in one place with significant coordination.
- This Amputee Clinic aims to unify all the diverse sections in PGIMER with the required upgradation to provide appropriate management to guide the amputees.

**About the Amputee Clinic:****Need for the Amputee Clinic:**

To assess the recovery and co-morbidities of the amputee with a team of occupational therapists and a psychologist.

**Features:**

- Some modalities will be developed under this initiative to expand medical aid for medicine and rehabilitation of amputees who cannot afford the cost.
- The facility comprises specialists from various departments like orthopedics, PMR (Physical and Medical Rehabilitation), occupational/ physiotherapy, prosthetics, psychologists and nursing department.

**Benefits:**

- The amputee clinic will provide complete care to the patient in one place which will ensure a stress and anxiety free rehabilitation process.
- This will also help to develop a comprehensive database which will also provide a platform for future research.
- This will also provide the essential information on the burden, long term complications and issues in rehabilitation of the amputees.

**UP's Shravasti Tops Niti Aayog's Aspirational Districts Ranking in December 2020**

The **Shravasti** district of Uttar Pradesh (UP) topped the Aspirational Districts Ranking of Niti Aayog in December 2020, the ranking is done every month. Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure were the development areas that were considered for the ranking.

- The aspirational district programme was launched in January 2018 with an aim to transform the districts with lesser progress in the key social areas and have identified pockets of under development.

**Rankings:**

Dhalai of Tripura secured the 2nd position followed by Garhwa of Jharkhand, Baksa of Assam and Bokaro of Jharkhand in 3rd, 4th and 5th position respectively.

**Himachal Pradesh Became the First State to Implement e-Cabinet**

Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh inaugurated the first e-cabinet at Shimla. The state became the **first** to implement e-cabinet and make the end-to-end processing of cabinets paperless.

- ii. The **e-cabinet application** for the e-cabinet was developed by the **Department of Information Technology**, Himachal Pradesh. This is the first of its kind electronic platform in India.
- iii. Around **32 cabinet memos** were discussed and processed through this application.
- iv. The entire process of cabinet that is from initiation of the cabinet memo, approval of the memo through the concern secretary, Chief secretary, minister and Chief Minister to place in cabinet were made through online.

**ISRO set to launch Brazil's Amazonia-1 on February 28**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch Brazil's Amazonia-1 through India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)- C51 on February 28, 2021. This also marks ISRO's 1st space mission in 2021. The mission includes Amazonia-1 as the primary payload along with 20 other satellites (Including 3 developed by Indian grown organisations).

**Launch Site-** Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)-SHAR, Sriharikota. It is PSLV-C51 is the 53rd mission of PSLV.

**About PSLV-C51 Mission:**

**Primary Payload** – 'Amazonia-1'

**Secondary Payload** – 'Anand', 'Satish Dhawan' satellite and 'UNITYsat' (3 developed by Indian Organisations).

**About Amazonia-1:**

- Amazonia-1 is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under Department of Space. NSIL is undertaking this mission under a commercial arrangement with Spaceflight Inc. USA.
- Amazonia-1 is an Earth observatory satellite, entirely developed by Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

i. 'Anand' is built by Pixel, an Indian space startup company in Bengaluru.

ii. 'Satish Dhawan Satellite' is developed entirely by Chennai based Space Kidz India.

**PhonePe Partnered with Axis Bank on UPI Multi-Bank**

- i. The digital payment platform PhonePe has partnered with India's third largest bank, Axis Bank on a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) multi-bank model. It will enable the PhonePe users to create and use multiple UPI IDs with Axis Bank's "@axl" handle.
- ii. Until now, the PhonePe's key banking partner was **Yes Bank**.
- iii. This collaboration will also give PhonePe access to the Axis bank's merchant base.

**PM Modi Unveiled Postage Stamps on Diamond Jubilee of Gujarat High Court**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the event organised to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the Gujarat High Court and unveiled the commemorative Postage Stamps to mark the completion of 60 years of





establishment of the High Court of Gujarat on **May 1 2020**. Vikram Nath is the Current Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court.

The event which was scheduled to take place in 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Key People:**

Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister of Law & Justice; Judges of Supreme Court and High Court of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani, Chief Minister of Gujarat along with the members of the law fraternity participated in the event.

#### **Judicial Reforms:**

i. Around 18000 courts in India have been computerized and the Supreme Court's approval on the legal sanctity to tele-conferencing and video conference has created a new momentum to the e-proceedings in the courts.

ii. The e-filing of cases, Unique identification code and QR codes for cases led to the establishment of the National Judicial Data Grid which enables the lawyers and the litigants to get updates about the cases.

**Note** – The Gujarat high court was established on 1st May 1960, as a result of bifurcation of the former State of Bombay into two States of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

#### **Supreme Court stays dismantling of India's first aircraft carrier INS Viraat**

Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde stayed dismantling of the decommissioned India's first aircraft carrier INS Viraat (world's longest-serving warship), was purchased by Shree Ram Group for a sum of ₹38.54 crore at an auction conducted by the Metal Scrap Trade Corporation Limited in July 2020 and was proposed to preserve it as a maritime museum. This aircraft carrier was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987 and decommissioned in 2017.



#### **NVIDIA to Acquire SoftBank Group's Arm Ltd for USD 40 Billion**

US based NVIDIA will acquire UK based Arm Holdings, a designer of chips for mobile phones, from SoftBank Group in a deal worth \$40 billion. This deal was signed in September 2020 & became the largest-ever deal in the semiconductor industry.

#### **Why in News Recently?**

- The acquisition is in news recently because both the British and European competition watchdogs opening "in-depth" investigations into the deal and will look at whether the deal would break any competition rules.

#### **Key Info about Acquisition:**

i. The acquisition is subject to approval by authorities in several jurisdictions, including Britain, China, the United States and European Union (EU).

ii. This acquisition will combine NVIDIA's leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) computing platform with Arm's vast ecosystem to form the foremost computing company for the age of artificial intelligence, accelerating innovation as it expands into large, high-growth markets.

iii. NVIDIA will expand Arm's R&D presence in Cambridge, UK, by establishing a world-class AI research and education center, and building an Arm/NVIDIA-powered AI supercomputer for groundbreaking research

#### **Aarogya Setu App Integrated with CoWIN Portal**

India has integrated its COVID-19 Tracing App 'Aarogya Setu' & COVID-19 Vaccine Registration

platform 'Co-WIN portal (COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network)'. The integration will enable Users to download Vaccination certificates after they have received at least one dose of COVID-19 Vaccination.

#### **Aarogya Setu App:**

- It was launched by the Government of India on April 2, 2020 to track and trace COVID-19 hotspots, providing an indication to local authorities about the spread of the virus & contact tracing through Bluetooth.
- It was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) along with partnership of Private companies.
- The app uses Bluetooth & GPS (Global Positioning System) to trace COVID-19 infections.

#### **CoWIN App & Portal:**

In December 2020, Government of India had announced the launch of CoWIN app and Portal through which the general public can register themselves for COVID-19 Vaccine.

- It was developed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India Office.

#### **Journalist Dan Morain Authored New Book "Kamala's Way: An American Life", a Biography of Kamala Harris, Vice President of USA**

Journalist and author **Dan Morain** has authored his new book titled "**Kamala's way: An American Life**", a biography of Kamala Harris, the first woman vice president of the United States of America. The book is published by **Simon & Schuster**.

##### **About the book:**

- The book is about the journey of Kamala Harris, the daughter of two immigrants in California and the former California Senator and Attorney General who became the first African American and Asian American vice president.
- Dan Morain charts the career of Kamala Harris from her appointment to the State Commission, handling Child molestation cases and homicides for Alameda county district attorney's office, becoming the first woman Attorney General of California to Vice President of the USA.



#### **Nitin Gadkari Launched India's 1<sup>st</sup> Diesel-converted CNG Tractor**

- Union Minister Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) launched India's first-ever diesel tractor converted to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) which was co-developed by Thane, Maharashtra based **Rawmatt Techno Solutions** and **Tomasetto Achille India** as a pilot project.
- It was launched in the presence of Union Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan**, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG); Minister of State (MoS) **Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala**, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) and MoS General (Retd) Dr Vijay Kumar Singh, MoRTH.

#### **RIL Gets world's 1st Carbon-Neutral Oil from Oxy Low Carbon Ventures, US**

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has received **2 million barrels** cargo of '**carbon-neutral oil**' from Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), a division of US oil major Occidental on January 28, 2021 at Jamnagar, Gujarat. It is the world's 1st consignment of carbon-neutral oil and is also the energy industry's 1st major petroleum shipment.





**Purpose:** RIL to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

**Points to be Noted:**

- i. The transaction was arranged in conjunction with Macquarie Group's Commodities and Global Markets group (Macquarie).
- ii. Occidental produced this oil in the US Permian Basin and shipped to RIL using Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Sea Pearl.

**About the Transaction:**

- i. This transaction is regarded as the 1st step to create a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil
- ii. It also acts as a bridge to develop further differentiated petroleum products, net-zero oil, which Occidental aims to produce by capturing and isolating atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> through industrial-scale direct air capture (DAC) facilities and geological isolation.

**Key Info:**

The offsets were sourced from a variety of projects verified under the Verra Verified Carbon Standard meeting eligibility criteria for the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).

**Additional Info**

Occidental was the first U.S. based international energy company to announce an ambition to achieve net-zero GHG emissions associated with the use of its products by 2050.

**Delhi-Dehradun Expressway to feature India's 1<sup>st</sup> & Asia's largest 12 Km Wildlife Protection Corridor**

- i. The upcoming **210 kilometres** long Delhi-Dehradun Expressway (Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Economic corridor) is all set to become India's first highway with 12 km long elevated corridor for the protection of wildlife as it will pass through pristine forest areas. It will also be Asia's largest wildlife corridor.
- ii. The project will be executed under the **Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC)** mode by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).
- iii. Notably, this expressway will reduce the distance between the two cities from 235 km to 210 km, and travel time from the current 6.5 hours to just 2.5 hours i.e reduction of 4 hours.



**PM Launches 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' Programme & lays Foundation Stone for 2 Bridges in Assam**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched the '**Mahabahu-Brahmaputra**' programme & laid the foundation stone for 2 Bridges 'Dhubri-Phulbari' bridge which is set to be **India's Longest Bridge** & 'Majuli' Bridge in Assam.

- The 19.282 Km 'Dhubri Phulbari' 4-lane bridge will connect Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari in Meghalaya. It will be constructed on the River of Brahmaputra.
- 'Majuli' Bridge is an 8 Km long Two-Lane bridge on the River Brahmaputra, it will connect Neematighat (on Jorhat side) & Kamalabari (on Majuli side).

**'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' Programme**

This program will strengthen water connectivity across the region through the waters of the River Brahmaputra & Barak. The Total cost of the programme is INR 3, 231 Crore. The Initiatives Launched under the programme are

- Launch of Ro-Pax vessel operations to reduce travel time.
- Construction of a Permanent Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa, Assam to uninterrupted movement of cargo.

### **Tata Group to Acquire 68% Stake in BigBasket for About Rs 9,500 Crore; Tata Communications Partners with Google Cloud in India**

**i. Tata Group** has signed a deal to acquire **68% stake in bigbasket for about Rs 9,500 crore**. The stake will be acquired by Tata Digital, a subsidiary of Tata Sons. Post acquisition, the enterprise value of BigBasket becomes more than Rs 13,500 crore.

**ii. Tata Communications** has partnered with **Google Cloud in India** to drive cloud adoption and transform Indian businesses.

### **Peter Mukerjea's Book, a Memoir Titled "Star Struck: Confessions of a TV Executive"**

**Peter Mukerjea**, the former CEO of Star India Network, has penned down his memoir titled **"Star Struck: Confessions of a TV Executive"**. The book is a written confession of Peter Mukerjea, a well known media personality who is undertrial for the murder case of Sheen Bora.

The book is published by **Westland Books**, the publishing arm of Amazon.

#### **About the Book:**

**i.** The book is a collection of Peter Mukerjea's experiences in Star India and his journey to becoming the CEO of Star India.

**ii.** The book also features the life events that changed his life over the years.

#### **About Peter Mukerjea:**

**i.** Peter Mukerjea joined Star TV in 1993 and he was promoted as the Executive Vice President in 1997 and later appointed as the CEO of Star India in 1999.

**ii.** He retired from Star India in 2007.

**iii.** He has served as the Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer of INX media from 2007 to 2009 (retired from INX media).

**iv.** He was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in November 2015, in connection with the Sheena Bora Murder case, in which Indrani Mukerjea his former wife is the main accused.



### **VP M Venkaiah Naidu Released a Book, 'Maverick Messiah: A Political Biography of N.T. Rama Rao'**

On Vice President (VP) M Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled, **'Maverick Messiah: A Political Biography of N.T. Rama Rao'**. The non-fiction book is authored by senior journalist, **Ramesh Kandula** and published by **Penguin Random house India**.

#### **Who is N.T. Rama Rao?**

**i.** Nandamuri Taraka (N.T.) Rama Rao (28 May 1923 – 18 January 1996) is widely known as NTR

**ii.** He is an Indian actor, producer, director, film editor and politician who served as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (AP) for 7 years over three terms.

**iii.** He founded the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in 1982.

**iv.** He was the first non-Congress Chief Minister of the state.

#### **Awards:**

He received Padma Shri in 1968 for art among others.

**About Ramesh Kandula:**

Presently he is serving as the CEO & chief editor of Mahaa News, a Telugu news channel, broadcasting

**World's Largest Cricket Stadium Inaugurated in Ahmedabad; Renamed to Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium**

- i. President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind** was on a **2 day visit** to **Gujarat** from February 23 to 24, 2021. As part of his visit, he inaugurated the **World's Largest Cricket Stadium**, the refurbished **Sardar Patel Stadium**, Motera, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, which was renamed as **Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium** on February 24, 2021.
- ii. It is named after the sitting Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. It has been set up by the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA).
- iii. The stadium has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 800 crore and has an accommodation capacity of 1.32 lakh spectators.
- iv. It has taken the top spot from Melbourne Cricket Ground in Australia which can accommodate 90,000 to become the largest cricket stadium in the world
- v. Ahmedabad to become the 'sports city' of India.

**Former Vice President of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari Authors a Book Titled, 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'**

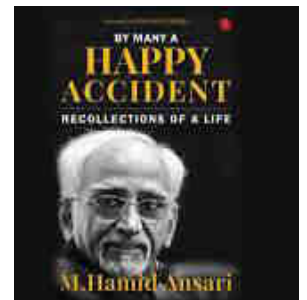
Former Vice President of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari has authored a book titled 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'. The book is published by Rupa Publications.

**Essence of the Book:**

It describes the unplanned happenings that took place in the life of M. Hamid that changed his way from his deferred fancy for academia to professional diplomacy and then co-opted in public life and became the Vice President of India for 2 consecutive terms.

**About Hamid Ansari:****High Post Held**

- i. He was an Indian Foreign Service officer and was the chairman of Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2017.
- ii. He served as the ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.
- iii. He was the high commissioner to Australia and was also the permanent representative to the United Nations in New York.

**India's first Digital University set up in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**

- i. The state government of Kerala, on the line of its Digital Transformation Initiatives announced in Budget 2021, has launched India's first Digital University, Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT) in Technocity at **Mangalapuram** in Thiruvananthapuram by upgrading its two-decade old Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K), a center of excellence in information technologies.
- ii. The Governor of Kerala, Arif Mohammed Khan inaugurated the KUDSIT through videoconferencing.
- iii. The 10-acre University was launched during a function which was virtually presided over by Chief Minister (CM) **Pinarayi Vijayan**. The Governor **Arif Mohammed Khan**, who is also the Chancellor of the Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT) virtually unveiled the



university plaque during the function.

iv. The university is aimed at utilizing the developments in digital technology for social progress and for all individuals.

### India Launches 'Sandes' a Made in India alternative of WhatsApp

India launched an instant messaging app just like **WhatsApp** for government employees called **Sandes** which will be a Made in India alternative of WhatsApp. Developed by **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology the app was initially open to use only to government officers, now it has been released for common public on Apple's App Store. It is an upgrade of **Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS)** app. The Government is also working on another Instant Messaging app called '**Samvad**', it is being developed by Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).

### Goa to become India's First Fisheries Hub with an investment of INR 400 Crore

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Giriraj Singh has stated that the Central Government is set to Invest **INR 400 crore** in Goa to transform the state into **India's First Fisheries Hub**.

- Of the INR 400 Crore Investment, The Union Minister has already sanctioned INR 41.7 Crores to Goa under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (**PMMSY**).
- Goa has the required coastline, inland waterways & saline Khazan lands for producing the large quantity of fish in the country.



### Development of 'Cage Culture'

**CSIR-NIO** (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Institute of Oceanography), Dona Paula, Goa has highlighted the enormous potential of Cage Culture fishing in Goa.

### Indian-American scientist Swati Mohan leads NASA's Mars mission

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Perseverance rover of Mars 2020 mission successfully landed on the surface of Mars.

Notably, its **Guidance, Navigation, and Controls Operations (GN&C)** were handled by Indian-American Swati Mohan.

- She is responsible for the training of the GN&C team, scheduling the mission control staffing for GN&C, as well as the policies/procedures the GN&C uses in the mission control room



### Key Points:

- She completed her bachelor's degree from Cornell University in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, and her M.S. and Ph.D from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Aeronautics/Astronautics.
- During her career with NASA, she has worked on the Cassini mission to Saturn and GRAIL, a pair of formation flown spacecraft to the Moon.

### Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal Laid Foundation of the 1st Skill University of Eastern India in Darrang district

Assam Chief Minister (CM) Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of the **first skill university of eastern India** in Darrang district, Assam. This is the 3rd skill university in India. The university aims to impart training to over 10,000 students in 12 disciplines. It will be built with a cost of Rs 1,000 crore and is

expected to be completed by 2026. It will have understanding with countries like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan and England.

**Note:** The 1st skill university of India is Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU), Gurugram, Haryana

### **Late Former President Pranab Mukherjee's Memoir Titled 'The Presidential Years: 2012-2017' Released**

Late Former **President of India Pranab Mukherjee's** memoir (Authored by Pranab Mukherjee) titled '**The Presidential Years: 2012-2017**' has been released in January 2021. The book was published by **Rupa Publications India**. The book gives an account of how Pranab Mukherjee reshaped the functioning of Rashtrapati Bhavan. During his presidency, he worked with 2 Prime Ministers (PMs) namely, Dr Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi, who is the current PM of India. He was the 13th President of India.

**Memoir** – A Historical account or biography written from personal knowledge.

### **Chenab Bridge – World's Highest Rail Bridge to completed by 2021**

The works on 'Chenab Bridge' which is set to be the World's Highest Rail Bridge are expected to be completed by the end of 2021. The bridge is **1.315 Kms** long with 17 spans and is being constructed at a height of 359 metres (1, 178 feet) over the River Chenab which is 35 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.



- The bridge will connect Bakkal (katra) and Kauri (Srinagar) in the Reasi district of Jammu & Kashmir UT.
- Upon Completion, the estimated height of the bridge will be ~ **1, 178 feet**, which is 53 feet taller than Millau Viaduct in France (At 1, 125 feet it is at present the World's Highest Bridge)
- It is being built by **Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL)** at a cost of INR 12, 000 Crores.
- The Chenab bridge is part of the 111-Km Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project.

### **About Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL):**

**Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)**– Sanjay Gupta

**Headquarters** – Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra

### **India's 1st Undersea Tunnel to come at Mumbai by 2023**

**Two undersea tunnels** are under construction in Mumbai city, as a part of the 10.58 kms long, Mumbai's Coastal Road Project. 2 tunnels each 3-3.2 m wide are constructed for 2.07 km long of which one kilometer is constructed under the seabed.

Notably, this is **India's 1st Undersea Tunnel** which will come to operation by 2023.

i. Constructed at **20m below the seabed**.

ii. Uses 1st of its kind Ventilation system, "Saccardo".

iii. The tunnel will be **connecting North Mumbai with South Mumbai**, as a toll-free path easing up traffic.

### **Some Popular Undersea Tunnels:**

The **Seikan Tunnel in Japan** is the world's longest undersea tunnel, that lies 140m below the seabed.

The **Channel Tunnel connects England with France**, lies 75m below the seabed.



## International

### India ranked 86 in COVID Performance Index, New Zealand tops : Lowy Institute

According to the 'COVID Performance Index : Deconstructing Pandemic Responses' released by Australia based Lowy Institute, India with a score of 24.3 was ranked at 86 out of 98 Countries on basis of its response towards tackling the Pandemic. New Zealand topped the list followed by Vietnam & Taiwan.



- The index is based on public available data till January 9, 2021.
- China was excluded from the rankings due to lack of publicly available data on Testing.

Rank	Country	Average
86	India	24.3
1	New Zealand	94.4
2	Vietnam	90.8
3	Taiwan	86.4

### Ranking of Neighboring Countries:

- Sri Lanka was the top ranked Country in South Asia with a ranking of 10.
- Maldives was ranked at 25, Pakistan at 69, Nepal at 70, and Bangladesh at 84.

### UN World Tourism Organization named 2020 as 'worst year on record'

i. In accordance with the latest United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO) "World Tourism Barometer", the year 2020 was the "worst year on record" as global tourism suffered adversely due to international travel bans implemented to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.

ii. The world saw a global tourism decline of 74% (-74%) which resulted in 1 billion fewer international arrivals than 2019.

iii. The travel ban resulted in an estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues. It is more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis.

iv. On regional front, Asia and the Pacific faced sharpest year-on-year contraction of 84% (-84%). It was followed by the Middle East (-75%) and Europe (-70%).



### About United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO):

Secretary-General– Zurab Pololikashvili

Headquarter– Madrid, Spain



### India slips to 53rd Rank in EIU's Democracy Index 2020; Norway tops the Index

According to the 'Democracy Index 2020' released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), India with a score of 6.61 slipped two places to 53rd Rank (out of 167 countries) in the Index due to decline in Civil Liberties. Norway topped the index followed by Iceland & Sweden.

The handling of Coronavirus Pandemic has led to a further decline of civil liberties in 2020 in India, Asia and other regions of the world.

i. The Rankings are based on 5 Categories

- Electoral Process & Pluralism
- Functioning of Government
- Political Participation
- Political Culture
- Civil Liberties

#### Top 3 Countries:

Rank	Country	Score
53	India	6.61
1	Norway	9.81
2	Iceland	9.37
3	Sweden	9.26



### Denmark is set to Build the World's First Energy Island in North Sea

The Government of **Denmark** approved the plan to build the **world's first energy island** (Artificial island) in the **North Sea** which will produce and store green energy enough to cover the electricity requirement of 3 million households in Europe.

The construction of the island will cost around **210 billion Danish krone** (around Rs.2.4 lakh crore).

#### Energy target of Denmark:

Denmark aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels.

#### Green Energy Island:

i. This is the biggest construction project in the history of Denmark.

ii. The government will hold 51% stake of this island and the remaining 49% will be held by the private sector.

iii. The island will be constructed about 80 kilometers away from the west coast of Denmark and the initial capacity of the surrounding wind turbines will be 3 gigawatts (GW).



- iv. The island is expected to commence operation by 2033.
- v. The potential of the offshore wind in the North Sea is 180 GW which equals all the coal-fired power plants of Europe.

### NASA Launched Space Station Supply Ship to ISS Named After S.S. Katherine Johnson

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched the Space Station Supply Ship, Northrop Grumman's Cygnus capsule named after **S.S. Katherine Johnson**, to the International Space Station (ISS).

The numbers of S.S. Katherine Johnson, a Black NASA mathematician, featured in the 2016 movie "**Hidden Figures**", contributed to the flight of John Glenn on 20th February 1962, who became the first American to orbit the world.

- The launch of this 4-ton shipment for NASA from Wallops Island, Virginia marks the **59th anniversary** of John Glenn's historic launch.
- This is the 15th Supply run of Northrop Grumman for NASA.

### SpaceX announced World's First All Civilian Mission to Space

SpaceX announced its plan for the **World's first** all civilian mission to space, the mission is named **Inspiration4** in recognition of the 4-person crew to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The mission commanded by **Jared Isaacman**, a 37-year-old entrepreneur the founder and CEO of **Shift4 Payments** and accomplished pilot will be launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.



- Every step of the mission will be monitored by SpaceX mission control.
- The spacecraft will orbit the planet every 90 minutes along a customized flight path
- Jared Isaacman has donated the 3 mission seats alongside him, the members will be selected to represent the missions pillar (Leadership, Hope, Generosity, and prosperity).

### Hunter Biden's New Book A Memoir Titled "Beautiful Things"

Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden has authored the memoir titled "Beautiful Things" which is set to be released in April 2021. The book is published by Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

#### About the Book:

- i. The book focuses on the life of Hunter Biden's struggle with substance abuse.
- ii. The book aims to provide hope to the people who can relate to the life events of Hunter Biden.
- iii. The financial terms of the book, written in collaboration with Hunter and journalist Drew Juber were not disclosed.

#### About Hunter Biden:

- i. Hunter Biden is a lawyer and former lobbyist who helped in the first impeachment of former President Donald Trump.
- ii. He joined the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma in 2014, his term on the board expired in 2019.

### Square Kilometre Array – World's Largest Radio Telescope

Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its Maiden Meeting during the meeting they approved the establishment of World's Largest Radio Telescope namely '**Square Kilometre Array**'. The telescope will consist of a vast number of radio receivers which will be positioned in **South Africa and Australia**. SKAO is a 10-member intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy. The members of SKAO are **Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Netherlands and UK**. The headquarters of SKAO is situated at the University of Manchester's Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire, United Kingdom. Radio Telescopes are capable of detecting gas and can reveal areas of space which are hidden by cosmic dust.



### China's Tianwen-1 enters Mars Orbit, Joining UAE's Hope Probe

Chinese Spacecraft '**Tianwen-1**' (Means "Quest for Heavenly Truth") entered the Mars Orbit. It became the World's second one in two days after United Arab Emirates' '**Hope**' Space Probe entered the Mars Orbit on February 9, 2021. The Chinese Spacecraft will probe for signs of ancient life on Mars. USA's National Aeronautics and Space Administration rover called '**Perseverance**' is aiming for a landing on Mars on February 18, 2021.

### With 1% of World's Vehicles, India accounts for 11% of Global deaths in Road Accidents: World Bank report

According to the report 'Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society' released by the World Bank with 1% of World's vehicles, India accounts for 11% of Global Road Accident deaths & 6% of total road crashes.

i. In India, annually around 4.5 Lakh road crashes take place out of which 1.5 Lakh people die.

ii. The World Bank report was prepared in association with **Save LIFE Foundation (SLF)**.

- According to WHO, India topped the world in road crash deaths with more than 400 fatalities per day and witnesses 53 road crashes every hour.
- In the last decade (2011-20), road crashes were the cause of death of 1.3 million people & has injured around 5 million in India.
- 76.2% of people who are killed in road crashes are in the prime working-age i.e 18-45 years.
- The report puts the total value of Crash costs due to accidents at INR 5.96 Lakh Crore or 3.14% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

iii. Road Traffic Injuries (RTIs) is the **8th leading cause of death** globally.

iv. **Male road-users of working age (18-45)** represent the category of Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) in India. They are prone to large number of road crashes & account for more than half of all road crash deaths & serious injuries in India.

### Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's Picture Book 'The Lost Soul', English translation of "Zgubiona dusza" to hit Bookstores

Polish Author and 2018 Nobel Prize winner (Literature) **Olga Tokarczuk**'s latest book '**The Lost Soul**', English translation of "Zgubiona dusza" is set to hit the bookstores. The book is translated by **Antonia Lloyd-Jones** and the illustrations were done by **Joanna Concejo**.

This is the first time that Olga Tokarczuk's prose will be accompanied by illustrations in the form of a picture book.

The book is published by **Seven Stories Press**.

This is also her first book for both children and adults.

**About the book:**

- i. The book is a reflection of the capacity of the individuals to live in peace with themselves, to remain patient, attentiv to the world.
- ii. The book winds together the ideas of Olga Tokarczuk and the drawings of Joanna Concejo which creates a parallel universe of secrets.
- iii. The book is about a man who forgets what makes his heart feel content and moves away from his familiar surroundings and waits for his soul to return.

- “The lost soul” was awarded a special mention of the Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2018.

**About Olga Tokarczuk:**

- i. Olga Tokarczuk hails from Sulechów, Poland, she made her debut as a fiction writer in 1993 with “The journey of the Book-People”.
- ii. She has authored around 8 novels and 2 short story collections.
- iii. Her popular works include Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead: A Novel (translated into English by Antonia Lloyd-Jones), Flights, among others.

**Awards:**

- i. She won the 2018 Nobel Prizes in Literature for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life, the prize was presented to her in 2019.
- ii. She also won the 2018 International Man Booker Award for her novel, Flights, which was translated by Jennifer Croft.

**US officially rejoined Paris Climate Agreement**

The United States of America(USA) formally rejoined the Paris Climate agreement which was adopted by 196 countries in 2015. The new government of America under Joe Biden aims to strengthen the US’s 2030 emission reduction pledge under the pact by 22nd April 2021, Earth day.

Gina McCarthy has been named as the head of a new National Climate Task Force

The US is the biggest historical polluter and 2nd biggest current emitter after China.

European Union nations and India are in 3rd and 4th position.



## Defence

### US Startup bluShift Aerospace launches 'Stardust 1.0' – World's 1st Commercial Rocket powered by Biofuel

United States (US) based Startup **bluShift Aerospace** launched 'Stardust 1.0' from Loring Commerce Centre in **Maine, US**. It is the World's 1st Commercial Rocket launch powered by Biofuel.



- The solid biofuels used in the launch is non-toxic, Carbon Neutral & can be sourced from America

- It uses Nitrous Oxide bubbled with Oxygen as an oxidizer

i. Stardust 1.0 is a launch vehicle which is capable of launching tiny nanosatellites.

- It is 20 Feet Tall & weighs around 250 kg

- It can carry a maximum payload mass of 8 kg

- The rocket carried 3 payloads during the launch

ii. bluShift Aerospace's Rocket Engine is a hybrid of solid and liquid propellant called 'Modular Adaptable Rocket Engine for Vehicle Launch (MAREVL)'.

### What are Biofuels?

Biofuels are obtained from Biomass which can be converted into Liquid Fuels and used as transportation fuels.

### About bluShift Aerospace:

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – Sascha Deri

**Headquarters** – Brunswick, Maine, USA

### Pakistan successfully Test Fires Nuclear Capable Ballistic Missile 'Ghaznavi'

Pakistan's Army Strategic Forces Command (ASFC) successfully Test Fired the Nuclear-Capable Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile '**Ghaznavi (Hatf-III)**'.



- Ghaznavi has a **range of 290 Kms** & can carry both Nuclear & Conventional Warheads

- It was launched by ASFC as part of its Annual Field Training Exercise

i. **Background:**

- It is a Hypersonic Missile developed by National Development Complex (NDC), Pakistan.

- The missile has been tested in both Day & Night modes

ii. On January 20, 2021 Pakistan had test-fired Surface-to-Surface ballistic 'Shaheen III' which has a range of 2,750 Kilometres.

### Indo-US 16<sup>th</sup> Joint Military Exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 20' begins in Rajasthan

i. The 16th edition of an annual joint military exercise between India and the United States (US), "Yudh Abhyas 20" was initiated as a part of defence cooperation at the Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR), near the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan on February 8, 2021. This 12 days long exercise will culminate on February 21, 2021.

ii. The Indian side is represented by the **11th Battalion of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles**, part of the South Western Command while U.S. Army delegation will be represented by the troops of 2nd battalion, 3rd

Infantry Regiment of **1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team** along with respective brigade headquarters.  
**iii.** The US contingent was welcomed by **Brigadier Mukesh Bhanwala**, Commander of the 170 Infantry Brigade of the Indian Army.

### Overview of 13th Edition of Aero India 2021

The 13th Edition of the **Biennial Military Exercise** – ‘Aero India 2021: A Big Step Towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ took place at the Yelahanka Air Force Base, Bengaluru, Karnataka from February 3-5, 2021. It was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.



- The event was organized by the Defence Ministry of India, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Air Force, Department of Space & Union Civil Aviation Ministry.
- Aero India 2021 was centered on the theme ‘Conceive, Indigenize, Collaborate’
- It is the **World’s 1st ever Hybrid Aero and Defence Exhibition** (show with both physical and virtual elements)
- It is Asia’s Largest defence and aerospace exhibition.
- Around 601 Exhibitors – 523 Indian & 78 Foreign & 14 Countries participated in the Aero India 2021.

### Pakistan successfully test fires Surface-To-Surface Babur Cruise Missile

**i.** Pakistan successfully test-fired a short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile namely “Babur” from a state-of-the-art Multi Tube Missile Launch Vehicle. The missile is capable of hitting land and sea targets with high precision up to 490 kilometers (about 280 miles) away.

**ii.** Notably, this is Pakistan’s third successful missile test in three weeks.

**iii.** On February 3, 2021, the Pakistan Army successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile “**Ghaznavi**” which can strike targets up to 290 kilometres.



### MDL delivers ‘INS Karanj’ – India’s 3rd Kalvari-Class Submarine to Indian Navy

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) delivered the Third of Six **Kalvari-class submarines** based on ‘**Scorpene Class**’ to the Indian Navy at Mumbai, Maharashtra. The submarine will be commissioned into the Indian Navy in March, 2021 as ‘**INS Karanj**’.

- ‘INS Karanj’ successfully completed its sea trials which began in January, 2018.
- The submarine has been designed by French company ‘The Naval Group’ (formerly known as DCNS) & constructed in MDL, Mumbai under Project 75 (P-75).
- The 2 previous Scorpene-Class Submarines which have been commissioned & are presently operated by the Indian Navy are INS Kalvari (Commissioned in December, 2017) & INS Khanderi (Commissioned in September, 2019).

### Status of 6 Scorpene Submarines:

With 3 Scorpene submarines inducted into the Indian Navy, 3 more submarines are under development/sea trials phase which include INS Vela, INS Vagir & INS Vagsheer is at the stage of outfitting. The delivery of all 6 Submarines is expected to be completed by 2022.



**India, Indonesia Navies conduct 'PASSEX' exercise in Arabian Sea**

The Indian Navy conducted a Bilateral Military Exercise 'PASSEX' (Passage Exercise) with the Indonesian Navy in the Arabian Sea. The main aim of the exercise is to increase interoperability & strengthen the Bilateral Maritime Cooperation between the two navies.

- Indian Navy Ship **INS Talwar** & Indonesian Navy's multirole Corvette **KRI Bung Tomo** participated in the exercise.
- Maritime Cooperation with India & Indonesia is increasing rapidly in the last few years.
- PASSEXs are regularly conducted by Indian Navy with friendly foreign navies while visiting each other's ports or during an engagement at sea.

**PASSEX with other Countries****Russia**

Indian Navy undertook a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from December 4-5, 2020.

**Vietnam**

Indian Navy & Vietnam People's Navy undertook a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) 2020 in the South China Sea from December 26-27, 2020.

**Rajnath Singh Inaugurates 1st of its Kind DRDO SDC for Fire Safety Training**

Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated DRDO Skill Development Centre (SDC) for Fire Safety Training at **Pilkhuwa, Uttar Pradesh**. It is a first-of-its-kind facility in India.

- The facility has been created by Delhi based DRDO laboratory Centre for Fire, Explosive & Environment Safety (CFEES).
- The main objective of the facility is to develop trained human resources, fire safety technology & products for saving human lives & assets.

**About Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO):**

**Chairman** – Dr G Satheesh Reddy

**Headquarters** – New Delhi

## Appointments or Resign/Retired

### **R S Sharma appointed as the CEO of National Health Authority ;Succeeds Indu Bhushan**

Ram Sewak Sharma(R.S. Sharma), former Chairman of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) took charge as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Health Authority (NHA) of India. R.S. Sharma replaced the outgoing CEO Indu Bhushan.

i.NHA, an autonomous body is responsible for implementing Ayushman-Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

ii.R.S.Sharma served as the Chairman of TRAI from 10 August 2015 to 30 September 2020.



### **About National Health Authority (NHA):**

National Health Authority is the successor of National Health Agency, which was functioning as a registered society since 23rd May, 2018.

Reconstituted on **2nd January 2019**.

### **Jeff Bezos to Step Down as CEO of Amazon; Andy Jassy Succeeds Jeff Bezos**

**Jeff Bezos**, the Founder and CEO of Amazon, will step down as the CEO of Amazon in the third quarter **October 2021** and **Andy Jassy**, the lead of Amazon Web Services(AWS), the cloud computing unit of Amazon will take over as the New CEO.

- Jeff Bezos will be taking up the role of **executive chair** of the Amazon's Board of Directors.
- He also stated that he would be focusing on the new products, early initiatives and Philanthropic giving through like Day 1 Fund and the Bezos Earth Fund; Blue Origin, his secretive space venture

### **Amazon and Jeff Bezos:**

i.Jeff Bezos started Amazon Inc as an online bookseller in Seattle in 1994.

ii.According to the Bloomberg's Billionaires Index, with a net worth of around 196 billion USD, Bezos became one of the World richest person.

iii.Amazon has become the leading company in e-commerce, smart homes, internet streaming and cloud computing.

### **BCCI Secretary Jay Shah Elected as the New President of Asian Cricket Council**

**Jay Shah**, secretary of Board of Control for Cricket in India(BCCI) was elected as new President of Asian Cricket Council (ACC) at the Annual General Meeting of ACC which was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Jay Shah(32 years) is the **youngest administrator** to be appointed as the President of ACC.
- He will succeed **Nazmul Hasan Papon**, the Chief of Bangladesh Cricket Board(BCB).

### **2020 Asia Cup:**

i.The 2020 Asia Cup was postponed to June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ii.The tournament which was planned to be organised in Pakistan will be held in Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

### **About Asian Cricket Council (ACC):**

i.ACC was formed on 19th September 1983 as The Asian Cricket Conference in New Delhi.

ii.Founding members of ACC were Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

**Members-** 25 Associations.

**Praveen Sinha IPS of Gujarat Cadre appointed as acting chief of CBI**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed **Praveen Sinha**, 1988 batch IPS officer of Gujarat Cadre, currently serving as the Additional Director of Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI), as the **acting Chief** of CBI. He succeeds Rishi Kumar Sukla who retires on 3rd February 2021 after a 2-year stint.

**About Praveen Sinha:**

- i. He has served in CBI at various capacities like Superintendent of police, Deputy Inspector General, Joint Director and Additional Director between 2000-2021.
- ii. He has also served as the Additional Secretary of Central Vigilance Commission(CVC) during 2015 to 2018.
- iii. He is a member of various reform committees established by the CVC.
- iv. He is a member of the Committee of Reforms in Criminal Laws constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

**About Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI):**

CBI was established as The Special Police Establishment (SPE) in 1941, it was renamed as Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI) in 1963.

**Mario Draghi Named as the New Prime Minister of Italy**

**Mario Draghi**, 73-year-old former President of the European Central Bank, has been named the **new Prime Minister of Italy**. He accepted the request of Sergio Mattarella, President of Italy, to form a new government.

- Mario Draghi will lead the unity government replacing the centre left coalition government of Former prime minister **Giuseppe Conte**.
- He was formally sworn in as the prime Minister of Italy on 13th February 2021.
- Following the premiership of Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in 1993, Lamberto Dini in 1995 and Mario Monti in 2011, this is the 4th time in the past 30 years where a technocratic prime minister has taken charge.

**Ministers of Mario Draghi led Government:**

- i. Daniele Franco, Director General of Bank of Italy will be the New Economy Minister of Italy.
- Vittorio Colao, Former Chief Executive of Vodafone will be the Innovation and technology minister.
- ii. Luigi Di Maio of the Five Star Movement will continue as the foreign minister
- iii. The non-affiliated Luciana Lamorgese will continue as the Interior Minister.
- Roberto Speranza will continue as the Health Minister.

**About Mario Draghi:**

- i. Mario Draghi served as the President of ECB from 2011 to 2019 prior to which he served as the Governor of the Bank of Italy from 2005 to 2011.
- ii. He served as the Vice Chairman and Managing director of Goldman Sachs International, a subsidiary of the American investment bank from 2002 to 2005.
- iii. He served as the director-general of the Italian Treasury from 1991 to 2001.

### Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Appointed as 7th DG of WTO; Becomes the First Woman and First African to Head WTO

i. **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** from Nigeria was appointed as the 7th Director General of the World Trade Organisation(WTO), multilateral trade body. She will hold the position from **1st March 2021 to 31st August 2025**.

ii. She succeeds former Director-General **Roberto Azevêdo** who announced his retirement 1 year before the expiry of his tenure.

iii. With this appointment, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala became the **first woman and the first African to head the WTO**.

iv. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has twice served as the Finance Minister of Nigeria between 2011 and 2015 and she has also served as the Foreign Minister of Nigeria in 2006, the first woman to hold both the positions.

v. She served as the Managing Director of the World Bank.



#### About World Trade Organisation:

WTO deals with the global rules of trade between the countries.

#### Objective:

To ensure that trade flow is as smooth, predictable and free as possible.

**Location**– Geneva, Switzerland

**Established**– 1 January 1995

**Created by**– Uruguay Round negotiations (1986-94)

**Member**– 164 members

### Actor Rana Daggubati Becomes Brand Ambassador of CEAT

**CEAT Limited**, a tyre company of RPG Enterprises(Rama Prasad Goenka Group) has signed in **Actor Rana Daggubati** as its **brand ambassador** to promote the new **‘Puncture Safe’** range of **bike tyres**.

#### Key Info:

i. CEAT has launched ‘Puncture Safe’ range of tyres in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

ii. Rana Daggubati, as part of an integrated marketing campaign in 5 southern states, will feature in the new ads for these tyres to be aired across TV and digital platforms.

iii. The new commercial will also be aired during the ongoing India-England Test series.

#### ‘Puncture Safe’ range

These tyres have a technology that enables it to seal punctures for nails up to 2.5 mm in diameter. It will not lose air by sealing themselves even after being punctured.

#### About Rana Daggubati:

i. Besides being an actor, he is also a producer, television personality, visual effects coordinator, and an entrepreneur.

ii. He acted in Telugu, Hindi and Tamil language films.

iii. His films include, Baahubali: The Beginning(2015), Baahubali 2: The Conclusion-2017(which became the highest grossing Indian film of all time), Ghazi (2017), and Nene Raju Nene Mantri (2017).

### Dr Ajay Mathur Elected as Director-General of ISA; Succeeds Upendra Tripathy

i. **Dr Ajay Mathur** has been named as the new **Director-General** of International Solar Alliance (ISA) following his election at the 1st special Assembly of ISA members that was held virtually on February 15, 2021.



- ii. He succeeds Upendra Tripathy who was in the position since ISA was founded in 2015.
- iii. Prior, being named as the director general of ISA, Dr Ajay Mathur was serving as the director general of The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI)

**About International Solar Alliance (ISA):**

It is a treaty-based intergovernmental organisation launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India and Former President François Hollande of France at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris on 30 November, 2015.

**Headquarters**– Gurugram, Haryana

**Dr. Kiran Bedi Removed as Puducherry LG; Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan Given Additional Charge**

**President of India, Ram Nath Kovind** directed **Dr. Kiran Bedi** shall cease to hold (**Removed**) the office of the Lieutenant-Governor (**LG**) of Puducherry. While, **Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan**, Governor of Telangana, was given **additional charge** as LG of Puducherry. Her appointment is effective from the date she assumes charge of her office.

**Note** – Ms. Soundararajan is the fifth woman to hold the post of Lt. Governor of Puducherry and Chandrawati was the 1st LG of Puducherry.

**About Dr. Kiran Bedi**

**General Info:** She is a retired Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer, social activist and former tennis player.

**Firsts:** She was the first female IPS officer and was the 1st Indian & 1st woman to be appointed as head of the United Nations Police and Police Advisor in the United Nations Department of Peace Operations

**Books:** She has authored many books including, It's Always Possible: One Woman's Transformation of Tihar Prison and Be the Change: Fighting Corruption among others.

**Honours:** Among others she won the following.,

- President's Police Medal for Gallantry in 1979 from President of India for her in preventing violence during Akali-Nirankari clashes
- United Nations Medal in 2004 from United Nations for her Outstanding service

**Usha Rao-Monari of India Appointed as Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of UNDP**

- i. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General appointed **Ms. Usha Rao-Monari of India** as **Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator** of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- ii. She succeeds **Mourad Wahba** of Egypt, who served as the acting associate administrator. He also serves as the UNDP Regional Director for Arab States.
- iii. The previous Associate Administrator of UNDP was **Tegegnework Gettu**.

**About United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):**

**Administrator**– Achim Steiner

**Headquarters**– New York, USA

**Japan's Former Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto Takes Over as 2020 Tokyo Olympic President**

On **Seiko Hashimoto**, seven time Olympian (speed skater and cyclist) who was serving as the Minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games became the president of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

- Seiko Hashimoto resigned from the role of Minister of Olympics as she takes over as the president of 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- She succeeds Former chief **Yoshiro Mori** following his resignation over the condemned sexist remarks.

**About Seiko Hashimoto:****Sports:**

- Seiko Hashimoto a former olympian who represente japan in speed skating at 4 winter Olympic games(1984, 1988, 1992 & 1994) and in Track cycling at 3 Summer Games(1988, 1992 & 1996).
- She won a bronze in the Women's 1500 m speed skating in 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville, France.
- In 1990 she won a medal at the World Championship for speed skate and became the first japanese achieve the feat.

**About 2020 Tokyo Olympic:**

2020 Tokyo Olympic is officially the Games of the **32nd Olympiad**. It is to be held from 23 July 2021 to 8 August 2021.

**Olympic Mascot**– Miraitowa

**Paralympic Mascot**– Someity

**Woochong Um appointed as new Managing Director General of ADB**

- Woochong Um of Republic of Korea was appointed as the new Managing Director General of Asian Development Bank (ADB). He assumed office on 22nd February and will be reporting to Masatsugu Asakawa, President of ADB.
- He will assist the President of ADB to institute the bank wide coherence on various key initiatives and issues.
- He has served as the Director General of the sustainable development and climate change department of ADB and concurrently Chief Compliance Officer since June 2018.

**About ADB:**

ADB is owned by 68 members(49 from Asia and the Pacific and 19 from others)

**President**– Masatsugu Asakawa

**Headquarters**– Metro Manila, Philippines

**Established in** 1966

**Sachin Tendulkar Roped in as Brand Ambassador of Unacademy; also picked up stake in Unacademy**

Former Indian Cricketer **Sachin Tendulkar** signed a strategic partnership with **Unacademy**, India's largest online learning app to pick up small stakes in the platform and he also became its **brand ambassador**.

**Features of the Partnership:**

- As a part of the partnership, Sachin will host a series of live interactive classes which can be accessed by the users of Unacademy at free of cost.
- Sachin will also share his life lessons and experiences with the users of the Unacademy and coach them.
- He will also work with Unacademy in developing a deeper content-led partnership and Unacademy will also work towards developing a deeper content with Sachin in sports learning category.

**President Ram Nath Kovind accepted the Resignation of Puducherry CM, V Narayanasamy**

The notification of the Union Home ministry stated that President Ram Nath Kovind has accepted the



resignation of V Narayanasamy, Chief Minister of Puducherry and his council of Ministers with effect from 22nd February 2021.

- The Congress government led by Narayanaswamy submitted the resignation after losing the floor test held in Puducherry Assembly on 22nd February 2021.
- V Narayanasamy lost the majority in the 33 member house after the resignation of 5 Congress and 1 Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam(DMK) legislators in the past weeks.
- VP Sivakolundhu, speaker of Puducherry Assembly announced that the CM failed to prove the majority and adjourned the house without assigning a day for a further meeting.

#### **President Rule:**

On 24th February 2021, Union cabinet approved to impose President Rule in Puducherry after BJP and its allies did not stake a claim to form a Government in Puducherry.

- According to Article 356, President's Rule can be imposed on any state of India on the grounds of the failure of the constitutional machinery.
- Article 356 of the Constitution of India is based on Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

#### **Former Union Minister Vijay Sampla Assumed Charge as Chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Castes**

- Former Union Minister **Vijay Sampla** assumed charge as **chairman** of 6th National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC) in New Delhi, Delhi.
- Prior to him, Prof.(Dr.) Ram Shankar Katheria was the chairman of NCSC, whose term ended in May 2020.

#### **About National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC):**

**Headquarters**– New Delhi, Delhi

#### **Russian Supermodel Natalia Vodianova Becomes New Goodwill Ambassador of UNFPA**

The United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA), the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency, has appointed **Russian** supermodel **Natalia Vodianova** as its new **Goodwill Ambassador** to tackle stigma and advance women's health

#### **Role**

She will empower women and girls by promoting sexual and rights of them and tackling the stigma and taboos that surround their bodies and health, including menstruation that lead to discrimination and exclusion.

#### **Note:**

She has teamed up with UNFPA over the past 3 years to launch a series of "Let's Talk" events worldwide. This series have mobilised policy makers, civil society and the private sector to address shame, exclusion and discrimination, faced regularly by millions of women and girls.

#### **About Natalia Vodianova:**

- In addition to being a supermodel, she is a philanthropist, and impact investor
- She is nicknamed Supernova.
- In 2004, she founded the Naked Heart Foundation, a philanthropic organization to help children with special needs and their families
- She launched "Elbi", a digital platform to enable people to make micro-donations..

#### **Awards & Honours**

- i. She was given Harper's Bazaar as Inspiration of the Year in 2010.
- ii. She made into the Forbes top models list in 2012
- iii. Mattel created the first Russian Barbie under her name in 2016.
- iv. In 2014 Glamour recognized her as Woman of the Year and awarded her its The Voice for Children award

### Levi's® Announced Actress Deepika Padukone as its Global Brand Ambassador

a premium American denim brand announced Bollywood actress **Deepika Padukone** as its **Global Brand Ambassador**. This strategic partnership highlights the increasing focus of Levi's on women's category.

- Deepika became the first female celebrity to endorse the brand in India.
- As a part of this partnership, Deepika Padukone will work on the new campaign of Levi's which is focused on a new range of fashion fits from Levi's.

### Objective:

To attract a new generations of women consumers with a relevant fashion-forward offering in line with identity of the Brand – quality and comfort.

### Dushyant Chautala, Deputy CM of Haryana Re-elected as President of TTFI

**Dushyant Chautala**, the Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana, was re-elected as the **President** of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI). He was unanimously elected during the 84th Annual meeting of TTFI at Panchkula, Haryana.

- He will hold the post for a period of **4 years**.
- He is the youngest president of any National sports federations in India.
- He would venture to provide opportunities to the youngsters to represent India and their respective states in international and national events.



### Other Appointments:

- i. **Arun Kumar Banerjee** of Uttar Pradesh has been elected as the **Secretary General** of TTFI and Gurpreet Singh has been elected as the Treasurer.
- ii. **Dhanraj Choudhary** has been named as the Chief Executive officer (CEO) and V K Bawa has been named the Chief Financial officer (CFO).
- iii. **Sanjay Singh** from Bihar and **Rajeev P. Bodas** from Maharashtra has been named as the Senior Vice President.

### Government of Assam Appointed World Championship Sprinter Hima Das as DSP

The Government of Assam has appointed World Champion sprinter **Hima Das**, nicknamed '**Dhing Express**' as the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in Assam. The decision of the appointment was taken during the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on 10th February 2021.

- Hima Das was the first ever Indian athlete to win a gold medal in any form of global track event at the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World U20 Championships.
- The Assam Cabinet has also decided to amend the integrated sports policy of Assam by appointing sports persons as Class I and Class II officers in various departments of the state like Police, Excise and Transport.
- The medal winners in the Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games will be appointed as Class- I officers.

## Honours/ Awards

### Uttar Pradesh Adjudged as the Best Tableau Award Among the 32 Participants: Republic Day Parade

i. The Republic Day parade tableau of **Uttar Pradesh** was adjudged as the best tableau among the 32 tableaux that participated in the Parade on 26th January 2021. The theme of the UP tableau was “**Ayodhya: The cultural heritage of Uttar Pradesh**”.

**Kiren Rijju**, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sport presented the awards and prizes to the participants.

ii. The tableau of the **Department of Biotechnology** won the top honours among the 9 tableaux from various ministries, departments, paramilitary forces and Defence Ministry. The tableau represented Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: COVID, the process of vaccine development through various processes.



### “Aatmanirbharta” named Oxford Hindi Word of 2020

The Oxford Languages has named “**Aatmanirbharta or Self-Reliance**” as the Hindi Word of the year 2020 since it validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic. The major success of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign is the large-scale production of the COVID-19 vaccine in India.

- The word was chosen by the advisory panel of language experts: Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell.
- The Oxford Hindi word of the year is chosen to reflect the mood of the year and have a lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.
- In 2017, **Aadhar** was chosen as the **first Hindi Word of the year** and Hindi Word of the Year **2019** was “**Samvidhaan** or the Constitution” and **2018** was “**Nari Shakti** or women empowerment”.

### India’s Rishabh Pant & South Africa’s Shabnim Ismail Won ICC Player of the Month for January 2021

**Indian** cricketer **Rishabh Pant** won the The International Cricket Council (ICC) **Men’s Player of the Month** award for **January 2021** and **South African** cricketer **Shabnim Ismail** won the **ICC Women’s Player of the Month** award for **January 2021**. This is the **first edition** of the ICC Player of the Month Awards.

#### Points to be Noted:

ICC introduced the awards in January 2021, where The ICC Voting Academy that comprises former players, broadcasters, and journalism from across the world and fans will vote to select the winner of the award.

#### Reason of the Award:

**Rishabh Pant**– The wicket keeper and batsman led India to win in 2 tests against Australia by scoring, 97 at Sydney, Australia and 89(unbeaten) at Brisbane, Australia.

**Shabnim Ismail**- For her performance in 3 One Day Internationals (ODIs) and 2 Twenty20 International (T20I) in January 2021. The bowler took 7 wickets in ODI series against Pakistan and also took 5 wickets in the 2nd T20I against Pakistan.

#### About Rishabh Pant:



- i. He became the first batsman for India to get off the mark in Test cricket with a six
- ii. In January 2019, during the fourth Test against Australia, Pant became the wicket-keeper 1st India to score a century in a Test match in Australia.

#### About Shabnim Ismail

- i. She becomes the 1st player, across men's and women's cricket to take 100 wickets in T20Is.
- ii. She is named as one of the fastest female bowlers in the world, with her top recorded speed reaching 128 kilometres per hour (80 Miles per hour-mph).

#### AP CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Received the SKOCH Challenger Award – Chief Minister of the Year Award

- i. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Chief Minister (CM) of Andhra Pradesh (AP) received the **SKOCH Chief Minister of the Year Award**.
- ii. The award of the SKOCH Group was presented to him by Sameer Kochhar, Chairman of SKOCH Group at the Camp office of CM at Tadepalli, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.
- iii. The SKOCH CM of the year Award was given to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy based on the year long study on the government project- level outcomes across different states of India.
- iv. The efforts of the government of AP to make efficient and transparent governance was evident in the study of 123 projects from various sectors in Andhra Pradesh.

#### WCCB received Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2020 from UNEP

- i. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India was selected as one of the winners of the **5th Asia Environmental Enforcement Award, 2020** by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). WCCB has won the award under the Innovation category.
- ii. WCCB was selected as a winner for its contribution against transboundary environmental crime.
- iii. This is the 2nd time for WCCB to win the award in the same category.
- iv. WCCB's initiated an operation WILDNET-II to warn off the potential traders and bring in the offenders.



#### About WCCB:

WCCB was established as Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau in 2007 which was later renamed as Wildlife Crime Control Bureau in 2007 and became operational in 2008. It was formed under Ministry of Environment and Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

#### Hyderabad, Recognised as the '2020 Tree City of the World' by Arbor Day Foundation & FAO

The Arbor Day Foundation and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) has recognised Hyderabad (Telangana) as one of the '2020 Tree City of the World' for its contributions and commitment towards growing and maintaining urban forest.

- Hyderabad became the first and only city in India to be recognised as the 2020 Tree City of the World.
- With the recognition as the 2020 tree city of the world, Hyderabad became a part of the network of cities who recognise the vital role of trees towards building healthy, resilient and happy cities.
- Along with Hyderabad, 51 other cities were recognised as the '2020 Tree Cities of the World', most of which were from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and others.

**About Tree Cities of the World:**

The tree cities of the world is a programme was inaugurated in 2019 by FAO of UN and Arbor Day Foundation.



## Sports

### Domestic Cricket: Tamil Nadu wins 2020-21 Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 competition

Tamil Nadu Cricket Team defeated Baroda in the finals of the 2020-21 Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Competition held at Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad, Gujarat to win the trophy. The 12th Edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy was held from January 10-31, 2021. The Tamil Nadu cricket team was led by Dinesh Karthik.



### Shooting : India tops Medals tally by bagging 11 Medals at First Asian Online Shooting Championship

India's 24-Member Indian Shooting Contingent topped the Medals Tally by bagging 11 Medals – 4 Gold, 2 Silver & 5 Bronze Medals at the First Asian Online Shooting Championship organized by Kuwait Shooting Federation from January 29-30, 2021.

- The Indian Shooters participated in the online competition from the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.
- Around 274 Shooters from 22 members of the Asian Shooting Confederation (ASC) participated in the Competition.

#### Medals:

- Saurabh Chaudhary won the Gold medal in 10m Air Pistol Men's event
- Manu Bhaker bagged Bronze Medal in the 10m Air Pistol Women's event trap event
- Madhya Pradesh's Manisha Kheer bagged the Bronze Medal in the women's Trap event.

#### Indian Medals Tally:

##### Gold Medal

Winner	Category
Saurabh Chaudhary	Men's 10m Air Pistol
Divyansh Singh Panwar	Men's 10m Air Rifle
Kynan Chenai	Men's Trap
Rajeshwari Kumari	Women's Trap

**ICC Announced BYJU's as Global Partner from 2021 – 2023**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced **BYJU's** as its global partner from **2021 to 2023**. Under the 3-year agreement BYJU's will partner all the events of ICC from 2021 to 2023, including the Men's T20 World Cup in India, and the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand.

- Under this partnership BYJU's will have extensive in-venue, broadcast, and digital rights to all ICC events.
- BYJU's became the official jersey partner of Indian Cricket team in August 2019.

**South Africa's Faf du Plessis Announces Retirement from Test Cricket**

Former South African Captain & Batsman Francois 'Faf' du Plessis announced Retirement from Test Cricket format of the game. He is the **only South African Captain** to lead his team to a Test Series victory over Australia in both home (South Africa) & Away (Australia)

- The 36-year-old has played 69 Tests for South Africa & captained the team in 36 Tests.
- Faf has scored 4,163 runs at an average of 40.02 which includes 10 Centuries 21 Half Centuries.
- Faf du Plessis will be playing in Limited over formats of the game like One Day Internationals (ODIs) & Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is).
- He made his Test debut against Australia in 2012.

**Karnataka to host 2nd Edition of Khelo India University Games in 2021**

Karnataka is set to host the 2nd Edition of Khelo India University Games (KIUG) in 2021. The games will be hosted in **Jain University, Bengaluru** and other venues in Karnataka in collaboration with Association of Indian Universities (AIU). KIUG is the largest University level sports competition in India.

- The KIUG 2021 will see the addition of 2 new native sports namely 'Yogasana' & 'Mallakhamb' in the medal events. The total number of medal events/sports will be 19.
- The games will be conducted in the **U-25 age** category in accordance with the World University Games norms.
- The Main Objective of KIUG is to identify & train athletes in the age group of 18-25 years for Olympics & Asian Games.
- KIUG is organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) & Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports along with Association of Indian Universities, Indian Olympic Association & National Sports Federation.
- The 1st Edition of KIUG was held at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar, Odisha in February, 2020.

**Khelo India program:**

- It was introduced to revive sports culture in India by merging Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ahiyan (erstwhile Yuva Krida and Khel Abhiyan), 'Urban Sports Infrastructure scheme' and National Sports Talent Search System Program as a central sector scheme.
- Through this program, talented players will be identified in priority sports disciplines and will be provided annual financial assistance of **5 lakhs** per annum for a period of **8 years**.

### Tennis: Overview of 2021 Australian Open

The **109th Edition** of Australian Open (53rd in Open Era) took place from February 8-21, 2021 at the Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia.

Chronologically, it is the First Grand Slam event (out of 4) of each Year in both the Men's & Women's Tour. It takes place on a **Hard surface** (called as Hard Courts).



- The Tournament is organized by the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

### Winners of 2021 Australian Open

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Daniil Medvedev (Russia)
Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Jennifer Brady (USA)

### Tennis : India's Ankita Raina claims her Maiden WTA doubles title

India's Ankita Raina partnered with Russia's Kamilla Radhikova to defeat the Russian pair of Anna Blinkova & Anastasia Potapova in the final of **Phillip Island Trophy Tennis Tournament** at Melbourne, Australia to win her maiden WTA (Women's Tennis Association) 250 Doubles title. The win made Ankita India's First WTA Champion since Sania Mirza. The win will catapult her to a Ranking of 94 from the current 115 in the WTA Doubles chart. She will become the 2nd Indian player to crack the doubles top-100 since Sania Mirza.

### PM Modi Inaugurates 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games 2021 in Gulmarg, J&K

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the 2nd Edition of Khelo India National Winter Games 2021 in **Gulmarg**, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). The event will take place from February 26-March 2, 2021.

- The 2021 edition of Khelo India Winter games is organized by **J&K Sports Council** & Winter Games Association of J&K under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

### Background

- Khelo India National Winter Games is an **annual event** and was held for the first time in 2020 in two legs at two different venues (Khelo India Ladakh Winter Games, Leh & Khelo India Jammu and Kashmir Winter Games, Gulmarg).

### Rankings

With support from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, J&K administration aims to improve its ranking from 14 in Top Winter sports destinations in the world to Top-5.

### Indian Cricketer Yusuf Pathan announces Retirement from all forms of Cricket

Former Indian Cricketer & All-Rounder Yusuf Pathan has announced retirement from all forms of Cricket at the age of 38. Yusuf Pathan hails from Vadodara (Baroda), **Gujarat**.

- He has represented India in 57 ODIs & 22 T20Is scoring 1046 runs & 46 wickets across the 2 formats.
- He was part of Indian Teams which won the Inaugural ICC T20 World Cup in 2007 (held in South Africa) & Men's 50-over Cricket World Cup in 2011 (held in India).
- He is the **first player** to win 3 IPL Trophies – with Rajasthan Royals (2008), Kolkata Knight Riders (2012, 2014).
- Yusuf holds the record for the **fastest century** (off 37 balls) **by an Indian** in IPL.

## Obituaries

### Oscar Winner Christopher Plummer, Canadian Actor Passed Away at 91

The legendary Canadian Actor **Christopher Plummer**, the star of “The Sound of Music” and the oldest person to win the Oscar Award passed away at the age of 91 at his residence in Connecticut, United States of America. He was born on 13th December 1929 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

#### About Christopher Plummer:

- i. Christopher Plummer has starred in more than 100 films and television roles.
- ii. He made his Broadway debut in “The Starcross Story” and his first feature-film was “Stage Struck” a 1958 drama about the New York theater world.
- iii. He was well known for his works like “The Last Station”, “The Sound of Music”, “The Insider”, “A Beautiful Mind” and “Up” and others.
- iv. He starred in the adaptation of Stephen King’s novel “Dolores Claiborne” in 1995.
- v. He has also acted in William Shakespeare’s Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III, Mark Antony and others.

#### Awards:

- i. At the 84th Academy Awards, Plummer won the Oscar for his performance in the film “Beginners”(2011).
- ii. He won the Emmy Awards in 1977 for “The Moneychangers” and in 1994 for narrating “Madeline,” an animated series based on the children’s books.



### Bollywood Actor Rajiv Kapoor Passed Away at 58

Bollywood Actor, Director and film producer **Rajiv Kapoor** passed away at the age of 58 in Chembur, Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was the son of veteran filmmaker Raj Kapoor and brother of Rishi Kapoor and Randhir Kapoor. He was born on 25th August 1962 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Rajiv Kapoor is also known as “Chimpu”.

#### Rajiv Kapoor:

- i. Rajiv Kapoor made his debut as an actor in the film “Ek Jaan Hain Hum” in 1983.
- ii. His well known works include, Aasman (1984), Lover Boy (1985) and Zabardast (1985).
- iii. Ram Teri Ganga Maili the 1985 film directed by Raj Kapoor is one of his most credited movies.
- iv. He has produced the well known films like “Aa Ab Laut Chalen” and “Henna” and he directed the movie “Prem Granth” in 1996.

### Former MP & Congress leader Captain Satish Sharma, passed away at 73

Captain Satish Sharma, Veteran congress leader and the former Member of Parliament, passed away at the age of 73 in Goa. He was born on 11th October 1947 in Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

#### About Captain Satish Sharma:

- i. Captain Satish Sharma was a professional commercial pilot with Air India.
- ii. He served as the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas from 1993 to 1996 under the premiership of Narasimha Rao.
- iii. He was first elected to Rajya Sabha in 1986 and served as the member of Rajya Sabha from 2004 to 2016.
- iv. As a Rajya Sabha member for 3 terms he represented the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.





- v. He has served as the member of Lok Sabha for 3 terms representing Rae Bareilly and Amethi constituency.
- vi. He represented Amethi in 1991 in Lok Sabha, following the death of Rajiv Gandhi.

## Important Days with theme

### Indian Coast Guard Day 2021 – February 1

i. **Indian Coast Guard Day** is annually observed across India on 1st February which marks the **Raising day** of the Indian Coast Guard.

ii. 1st February 2021 marks the **45th Raising day** of the Indian Coast Guard, Operating under the Defence Ministry.

iii. In 1978 the Indian Coast Guard had only 7 surface platforms, and currently the ICG has 156 ships, 62 aircrafts in its inventory and it is aimed to reach its target force levels of 200 surface platforms and 80 aircrafts by 2025.



### About Indian Coast Guard:

**Director General**– Krishnaswamy Natarajan

**Headquarters**– New Delhi

**Motto**– Vayam Rakshamah

### World Cancer Day 2021 – February 4

i. World Cancer Day is annually observed across the globe on 4th February to create awareness and educate the general public about the stigma around cancer and to reduce the preventable deaths.

ii. The World Cancer Day is a global uniting initiative led by the Union of International Cancer Control (UICC).

iii. The theme of the World Cancer Day for 2019 to 2021 is **“I Am and I Will”**.

iv. The theme of World Cancer Day 2021 is **“I Am and I Will: “Together, all our actions matter”**.

v. The World Cancer Day was established during the World Cancer Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium held in Paris, France on 4th February 2000.

iv. The day also marks the signing of the Charter of Paris Against Cancer by Kōichirō Matsuura, General Director of UNESCO and Jacques Chirac, the French President.

### World Radio Day 2021 – February 13

i. The United Nations World Radio Day (WRD) is annually observed across the globe on **13th February** to celebrate radio as a part of the history of humanity.

2021 marks the **10th edition** of World Radio Day (WRD) and more than 110 year of radio.

ii. The theme of the world radio day 2021 is **“New World, New Radio.”**

iii. The UNESCO marks World Radio Day 2021 with **3 sub themes:**

**Evolution, Innovation, Connection.**

iv. At the 36th session of the UNESCO’s General assembly in 2011, the member states of UNESCO adopted a resolution and proclaimed the 13th February as the World Radio day, which was proposed by Spain.

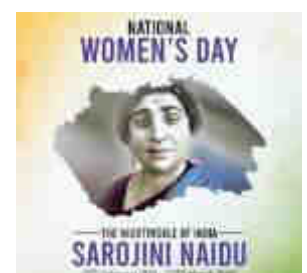


### National Women’s Day 2021 – February 13

i. **National Women’s Day** is annually celebrated across India on **13th February** to honour **Sarojini Naidu**, the **“nightingale of India”**, on her birth anniversary.

ii. The National Women’s day is celebrated to recognise the social, cultural, political and economic achievements of Women.

iii. 13th February 2021 marks the **142nd birth anniversary** of Sarojini Naidu.





## Current Affairs Supplement

February 2021

**Registered/ Corporate Office**

### **DELHI**

+91- 8920-180-477  
F – 92, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Hanuman Mandir Market  
Near Royal Bakery (Metro Gate No. – 3)  
Munrika, New Delhi – 110067

### **MUMBAI**

+91-7900-005-077  
401 & 2, Fourth Floor, Krishna Plaza, Above  
Krishna Sweets, Jan Kalyan Bank, Next to  
Ganesh Tower, Shivaji Path Opposite Thane  
Railway Station (W) - 400601

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## National

### Maharashtra CM unveiled the 1st indigenous Metro racks at Charkop Metro Depot

Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Minister of Maharashtra unveiled the first indigenous metro racks for the new Metro line of Mumbai – Metro 2A and 7 at the Charkop Metro Depot, Mumbai, Maharashtra.



- Metro line 2A will run from Dahisar to D N Nagar & it is an 18.58-km-long elevated corridor built at an estimated cost of Rs 6,410 crore, the metro line 7 from Andheri (East) to Dahisar (East) is an 16.47-km-long built at an estimated cost of Rs 6,208 crore.
- The rake was manufactured by **Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML)** and delivered the first 'Made in India' rake from the Bengaluru facility of BEML.
- This metro line will become functional from June 2021.
- The trial run will begin in March 2021 and will continue for a period of 1 month and the commercial operations will commence from May 2021.

### Reliance Jio Becomes World's 5th Strongest Brand; Wechat Tops: Brand Finance's Global 500 2021

i. As per the **Global 500 2021**, an annual report on the most valuable and strongest global brands of **Brand Finance**, **Reliance Jio** has been ranked in **5th** position as **world's strongest brand** with a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 91.7 out of 100 and AAA+ brand strength rating.



- Reliance Jio enters the ranking for the 1st time.
- ii. The list is topped by WeChat with a BSI score of 95.4 followed by Ferrari with 93.9 BSI score.
- iii. Russian bank Sber is spotted in 3rd rank with 92.0 BSI score followed by Coca-Cola with 91.7 BSI score.

### India to emerge as 2nd most Resilient Economy in 2021, Germany tops the list: PHDCCI IER Rankings

According to the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) International Economic Resilience (IER) India is set to emerge as the **2nd** Most Resilience Economy in 2021 among top-10 leading economies showcasing the strong recovery of Indian Economy in the Post COVID-19 era. Germany took the top spot & South Korea took the 3rd spot.



i. Indicators – It is based on 5 Macroeconomic indicators such as Real GDP growth rate, Merchandise export growth rate, Current Account Balance (as percentage of GDP), General Government net lending/borrowing (as percentage of GDP), Gross Debt-to-GDP ratio.

### Pavan C. Lall Authored Book Titled “Yes Man: The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor” Released

**Pavan C. Lall's** new book titled “Yes Man: The Untold Story of Rana Kapoor” provides the details about the rise and fall of one of the India's promising bankers Rana Kapoor and it also questions the banking system, its regulators and the business environment that led to the fall of YES Bank.

The book was published by **HarperCollins**.

#### About the book:

- i. The book features the birth of YES Bank in 2004 and its rise as the 4th largest private bank in India, with approved permission to operate in Singapore, London and Dubai.
- ii. The book also points out the reckless lending, allegations of bribery and corruption which led to the fall of



the bank.

#### **About Pavan C.Lall:**

- i. Pavan C.Lall hails from Calcutta, West Bengal who pursued his writing in the United States.
- ii. He worked as the associate editor at the Business Standard. has contributed to Fortune India, the Telegraph, the Dallas Business Journal and other publications
- iii. He is the author of “Flawed: The Rise and Fall of India’s Diamond Mogul Nirav Modi”.

#### **“This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad” Memoir of Girish Karnad Translated From Kannada into English**

The English translation of the “This Life at Play: A Memoir by Girish Karnad” the Kannada book authored by **Girish Karnad** is set to be released on the **83rd birth anniversary** of Girish Karnad, on 19th May 2021 by Fourth Estate, an imprint of HarperCollins Publisher.



- The Kannada book is translated into English by writer and translator **Srinath Perur** and **Girish Karnad**.
- The book is published by **HarperCollins India Publisher**.

#### **About the book:**

- i. The Kannada book was first published in 2011.
- ii. The book showcases his life from early life in Dharwad, engaging in local theaters to his education in Mumbai and as Rhodes scholar in Oxford.
- iii. The book also portrays his life during his career as publisher, his journey in the film industry and his personal life.

#### **About Girish Karnad:**

- i. Girish Karnad was a writer, director, actor and activist. Some of his notable works include, Nagamandala, Tughlaq, Hayavadana, Hittina Hunja.
- ii. He made his debut as an actor in Samskara in 1970 and has acted in more than 90 films in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi.

#### **Awards:**

- i. He received the Padma Shri in 1974 and Padma Bhushan in 1992 for arts.
- ii. He received the Jnanpith Award, India’s highest literary prize, in 1999 for his contributions to literature and theatre.

#### **Dalai Lama’s New Book Titled “The Little Book of Encouragement” Released**

His Holiness The 14th **Dalai Lama** authored a new book titled “**The Little Book of Encouragement**”. The book edited by **Renuka Singh** is published by **Penguin Random House** is set to be released.

#### **About the book:**

- i. The book is a compilation of Dalai Lama’s quotes and ideas to deal with the new realities of the post pandemic world along with how to combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change and his views on Tibet.
- ii. The book also promotes human values, talks about the key to happiness and comments on Sino-India ties.

#### **About Dalai Lama:**

- i. The Dalai Lamas are believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be manifestations of Avalokiteshvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the patron saint of Tibet.
- ii. He was Born as Lhamo Thondup on 6th July 1935 and was officially installed as the 14th Dalai Lama in 1940 and renamed as Jetsun Jamphel Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso (Tenzin Gyatso).

iii. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for his campaign of over 40 years to end the domination of China in his homeland.

**Books:**

He has authored numerous books which include, Inner World, The Seed of Compassion: Lessons from the Life and Teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, The Life of My Teacher: A Biography of Kyabjé Ling Rinpoché and Happiness.

**PGIMER Launched India's First Amputee Clinic in Chandigarh**

The Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) launched India's **first Amputee Clinic**, "PGI Amputee Clinic" in Chandigarh. The PGI Amputee clinic was inaugurated by PGIMER Director Prof. Jagat Ram.

**Purpose:**

- To improve the amputation patients, care by providing collection of services in one place with significant coordination.
- This Amputee Clinic aims to unify all the diverse sections in PGIMER with the required upgradation to provide appropriate management to guide the amputees.

**About the Amputee Clinic:****Need for the Amputee Clinic:**

To assess the recovery and co-morbidities of the amputee with a team of occupational therapists and a psychologist.

**Features:**

- Some modalities will be developed under this initiative to expand medical aid for medicine and rehabilitation of amputees who cannot afford the cost.
- The facility comprises specialists from various departments like orthopedics, PMR (Physical and Medical Rehabilitation), occupational/ physiotherapy, prosthetics, psychologists and nursing department.

**Benefits:**

- The amputee clinic will provide complete care to the patient in one place which will ensure a stress and anxiety free rehabilitation process.
- This will also help to develop a comprehensive database which will also provide a platform for future research.
- This will also provide the essential information on the burden, long term complications and issues in rehabilitation of the amputees.

**UP's Shravasti Tops Niti Aayog's Aspirational Districts Ranking in December 2020**

The **Shravasti** district of Uttar Pradesh (UP) topped the Aspirational Districts Ranking of Niti Aayog in December 2020, the ranking is done every month. Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure were the development areas that were considered for the ranking.

- The aspirational district programme was launched in January 2018 with an aim to transform the districts with lesser progress in the key social areas and have identified pockets of under development.

**Rankings:**

Dhalai of Tripura secured the 2nd position followed by Garhwa of Jharkhand, Baksa of Assam and Bokaro of Jharkhand in 3rd, 4th and 5th position respectively.

**Himachal Pradesh Became the First State to Implement e-Cabinet**

Jai Ram Thakur, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh inaugurated the first e-cabinet at Shimla. The state became the **first** to implement e-cabinet and make the end-to-end processing of cabinets paperless.

- ii. The **e-cabinet application** for the e-cabinet was developed by the **Department of Information Technology**, Himachal Pradesh. This is the first of its kind electronic platform in India.
- iii. Around **32 cabinet memos** were discussed and processed through this application.
- iv. The entire process of cabinet that is from initiation of the cabinet memo, approval of the memo through the concern secretary, Chief secretary, minister and Chief Minister to place in cabinet were made through online.

**ISRO set to launch Brazil's Amazonia-1 on February 28**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch Brazil's Amazonia-1 through India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)- C51 on February 28, 2021. This also marks ISRO's 1st space mission in 2021. The mission includes Amazonia-1 as the primary payload along with 20 other satellites (Including 3 developed by Indian grown organisations).

**Launch Site-** Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)-SHAR, Sriharikota. It is PSLV-C51 is the 53rd mission of PSLV.

**About PSLV-C51 Mission:**

**Primary Payload** – 'Amazonia-1'

**Secondary Payload** – 'Anand', 'Satish Dhawan' satellite and 'UNITYsat' (3 developed by Indian Organisations).

**About Amazonia-1:**

- Amazonia-1 is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under Department of Space. NSIL is undertaking this mission under a commercial arrangement with Spaceflight Inc. USA.
- Amazonia-1 is an Earth observatory satellite, entirely developed by Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE).
- i. 'Anand' is built by Pixel, an Indian space startup company in Bengaluru.
- ii. 'Satish Dhawan Satellite' is developed entirely by Chennai based Space Kidz India.

**PhonePe Partnered with Axis Bank on UPI Multi-Bank**

- i. The digital payment platform PhonePe has partnered with India's third largest bank, Axis Bank on a Unified Payments Interface (UPI) multi-bank model. It will enable the PhonePe users to create and use multiple UPI IDs with Axis Bank's "@axl" handle.
- ii. Until now, the PhonePe's key banking partner was **Yes Bank**.
- iii. This collaboration will also give PhonePe access to the Axis bank's merchant base.

**PM Modi Unveiled Postage Stamps on Diamond Jubilee of Gujarat High Court**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the event organised to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the Gujarat High Court and unveiled the commemorative Postage Stamps to mark the completion of 60 years of



establishment of the High Court of Gujarat on **May 1 2020**. Vikram Nath is the Current Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court.

The event which was scheduled to take place in 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Key People:**

Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister of Law & Justice; Judges of Supreme Court and High Court of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani, Chief Minister of Gujarat along with the members of the law fraternity participated in the event.

#### **Judicial Reforms:**

i. Around 18000 courts in India have been computerized and the Supreme Court's approval on the legal sanctity to tele-conferencing and video conference has created a new momentum to the e-proceedings in the courts.

ii. The e-filing of cases, Unique identification code and QR codes for cases led to the establishment of the National Judicial Data Grid which enables the lawyers and the litigants to get updates about the cases.

**Note** – The Gujarat high court was established on 1st May 1960, as a result of bifurcation of the former State of Bombay into two States of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

#### **Supreme Court stays dismantling of India's first aircraft carrier INS Viraat**

Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde stayed dismantling of the decommissioned India's first aircraft carrier INS Viraat (world's longest-serving warship), was purchased by Shree Ram Group for a sum of ₹38.54 crore at an auction conducted by the Metal Scrap Trade Corporation Limited in July 2020 and was proposed to preserve it as a maritime museum. This aircraft carrier was inducted into the Indian Navy in 1987 and decommissioned in 2017.



#### **NVIDIA to Acquire SoftBank Group's Arm Ltd for USD 40 Billion**

US based **NVIDIA** will acquire UK based **Arm Holdings**, a designer of chips for mobile phones, from **SoftBank Group** in a deal worth **\$40 billion**. This deal was signed in September 2020 & became the **largest-ever deal in the semiconductor industry**.

#### **Why in News Recently?**

- The acquisition is in news recently because both the British and European competition watchdogs opening "in-depth" investigations into the deal and will look at whether the deal would break any competition rules.

#### **Key Info about Acquisition:**

i. The acquisition is subject to approval by authorities in several jurisdictions, including Britain, China, the United States and European Union (EU).

ii. This acquisition will combine NVIDIA's leading Artificial Intelligence (AI) computing platform with Arm's vast ecosystem to form the foremost computing company for the age of artificial intelligence, accelerating innovation as it expands into large, high-growth markets.

iii. NVIDIA will expand Arm's R&D presence in Cambridge, UK, by establishing a world-class AI research and education center, and building an Arm/NVIDIA-powered AI supercomputer for groundbreaking research

#### **Aarogya Setu App Integrated with CoWIN Portal**

India has integrated its COVID-19 Tracing App 'Aarogya Setu' & COVID-19 Vaccine Registration

platform 'Co-WIN portal (COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network)'. The integration will enable Users to download Vaccination certificates after they have received at least one dose of COVID-19 Vaccination.

#### **Aarogya Setu App:**

- It was launched by the Government of India on April 2, 2020 to track and trace COVID-19 hotspots, providing an indication to local authorities about the spread of the virus & contact tracing through Bluetooth.
- It was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) along with partnership of Private companies.
- The app uses Bluetooth & GPS (Global Positioning System) to trace COVID-19 infections.

#### **CoWIN App & Portal:**

In December 2020, Government of India had announced the launch of CoWIN app and Portal through which the general public can register themselves for COVID-19 Vaccine.

- It was developed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India Office.

#### **Journalist Dan Morain Authored New Book "Kamala's Way: An American Life", a Biography of Kamala Harris, Vice President of USA**

Journalist and author **Dan Morain** has authored his new book titled "**Kamala's way: An American Life**", a biography of Kamala Harris, the first woman vice president of the United States of America. The book is published by **Simon & Schuster**.

##### **About the book:**

- The book is about the journey of Kamala Harris, the daughter of two immigrants in California and the former California Senator and Attorney General who became the first African American and Asian American vice president.
- Dan Morain charts the career of Kamala Harris from her appointment to the State Commission, handling Child molestation cases and homicides for Alameda county district attorney's office, becoming the first woman Attorney General of California to Vice President of the USA.



#### **Nitin Gadkari Launched India's 1<sup>st</sup> Diesel-converted CNG Tractor**

- Union Minister Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) launched India's first-ever diesel tractor converted to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) which was co-developed by Thane, Maharashtra based **Rawmatt Techno Solutions** and **Tomasetto Achille India** as a pilot project.
- It was launched in the presence of Union Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan**, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG); Minister of State (MoS) **Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala**, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) and MoS General (Retd) Dr Vijay Kumar Singh, MoRTH.

#### **RIL Gets world's 1st Carbon-Neutral Oil from Oxy Low Carbon Ventures, US**

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has received **2 million barrels** cargo of '**carbon-neutral oil**' from Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), a division of US oil major Occidental on January 28, 2021 at Jamnagar, Gujarat. It is the world's 1st consignment of carbon-neutral oil and is also the energy industry's 1st major petroleum shipment.





**Purpose:** RIL to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

**Points to be Noted:**

- i. The transaction was arranged in conjunction with Macquarie Group's Commodities and Global Markets group (Macquarie).
- ii. Occidental produced this oil in the US Permian Basin and shipped to RIL using Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Sea Pearl.

**About the Transaction:**

- i. This transaction is regarded as the 1st step to create a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil
- ii. It also acts as a bridge to develop further differentiated petroleum products, net-zero oil, which Occidental aims to produce by capturing and isolating atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> through industrial-scale direct air capture (DAC) facilities and geological isolation.

**Key Info:**

The offsets were sourced from a variety of projects verified under the Verra Verified Carbon Standard meeting eligibility criteria for the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).

**Additional Info**

Occidental was the first U.S. based international energy company to announce an ambition to achieve net-zero GHG emissions associated with the use of its products by 2050.

**Delhi-Dehradun Expressway to feature India's 1<sup>st</sup> & Asia's largest 12 Km Wildlife Protection Corridor**

- i. The upcoming **210 kilometres** long Delhi-Dehradun Expressway (Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Economic corridor) is all set to become India's first highway with 12 km long elevated corridor for the protection of wildlife as it will pass through pristine forest areas. It will also be Asia's largest wildlife corridor.
- ii. The project will be executed under the **Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC)** mode by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).
- iii. Notably, this expressway will reduce the distance between the two cities from 235 km to 210 km, and travel time from the current 6.5 hours to just 2.5 hours i.e reduction of 4 hours.



**PM Launches 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' Programme & lays Foundation Stone for 2 Bridges in Assam**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched the '**Mahabahu-Brahmaputra**' programme & laid the foundation stone for 2 Bridges 'Dhubri-Phulbari' bridge which is set to be **India's Longest Bridge** & 'Majuli' Bridge in Assam.

- The 19.282 Km 'Dhubri Phulbari' 4-lane bridge will connect Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari in Meghalaya. It will be constructed on the River of Brahmaputra.
- 'Majuli' Bridge is an 8 Km long Two-Lane bridge on the River Brahmaputra, it will connect Neematighat (on Jorhat side) & Kamalabari (on Majuli side).

**'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' Programme**

This program will strengthen water connectivity across the region through the waters of the River Brahmaputra & Barak. The Total cost of the programme is INR 3, 231 Crore. The Initiatives Launched under the programme are

- Launch of Ro-Pax vessel operations to reduce travel time.
- Construction of a Permanent Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa, Assam to uninterrupted movement of cargo.

### **Tata Group to Acquire 68% Stake in BigBasket for About Rs 9,500 Crore; Tata Communications Partners with Google Cloud in India**

**i.Tata Group** has signed a deal to acquire **68% stake in bigbasket for about Rs 9,500 crore**. The stake will be acquired by Tata Digital, a subsidiary of Tata Sons. Post acquisition, the enterprise value of BigBasket becomes more than Rs 13,500 crore.

**ii.Tata Communications** has partnered with **Google Cloud in India** to drive cloud adoption and transform Indian businesses.

### **Peter Mukerjea's Book, a Memoir Titled "Star Struck: Confessions of a TV Executive"**

**Peter Mukerjea**, the former CEO of Star India Network, has penned down his memoir titled **"Star Struck: Confessions of a TV Executive"**. The book is a written confession of Peter Mukerjea, a well known media personality who is undertrial for the murder case of Sheen Bora.

The book is published by **Westland Books**, the publishing arm of Amazon.

#### **About the Book:**

**i.**The book is a collection of Peter Mukerjea's experiences in Star India and his journey to becoming the CEO of Star India.

**ii.**The book also features the life events that changed his life over the years.

#### **About Peter Mukerjea:**

**i.**Peter Mukerjea joined Star TV in 1993 and he was promoted as the Executive Vice President in 1997 and later appointed as the CEO of Star India in 1999.

**ii.**He retired from Star India in 2007.

**iii.**He has served as the Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer of INX media from 2007 to 2009(retired from INX media).

**iv.**He was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation(**CBI**) in November 2015, in connection with the Sheena Bora Murder case, in which Indrani Mukerjea his former wife is the main accused.



### **VP M Venkaiah Naidu Released a Book, 'Maverick Messiah: A Political Biography of N.T. Rama Rao'**

On Vice President(VP) M Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled, **'Maverick Messiah: A Political Biography of N.T. Rama Rao'**. The non-fiction book is authored by senior journalist, **Ramesh Kandula** and published by **Penguin Random house India**.

#### **Who is N.T. Rama Rao?**

**i.**Nandamuri Taraka(N.T.) Rama Rao (28 May 1923 – 18 January 1996) is widely known as NTR

**ii.**He is an Indian actor, producer, director, film editor and politician who served as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh(AP) for 7 years over three terms.

**iii.**He founded the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in 1982.

**iv.**He was the first non-Congress Chief Minister of the state.

#### **Awards:**

He received Padma Shri in 1968 for art among others.

**About Ramesh Kandula:**

Presently he is serving as the CEO & chief editor of Mahaa News, a Telugu news channel, broadcasting

**World's Largest Cricket Stadium Inaugurated in Ahmedabad; Renamed to Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium**

- i. President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind** was on a **2 day visit** to **Gujarat** from February 23 to 24, 2021. As part of his visit, he inaugurated the **World's Largest Cricket Stadium**, the refurbished **Sardar Patel Stadium**, Motera, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, which was renamed as **Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium** on February 24, 2021.
- ii. It is named after the sitting Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi. It has been set up by the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA).
- iii. The stadium has been built at an estimated cost of Rs 800 crore and has an accommodation capacity of 1.32 lakh spectators.
- iv. It has taken the top spot from Melbourne Cricket Ground in Australia which can accommodate 90,000 to become the largest cricket stadium in the world
- v. Ahmedabad to become the 'sports city' of India.

**Former Vice President of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari Authors a Book Titled, 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'**

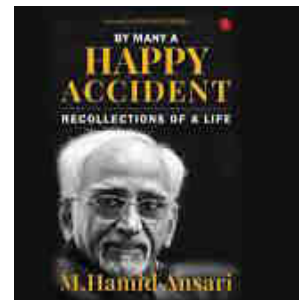
Former Vice President of India Mohammad Hamid Ansari has authored a book titled 'By Many a Happy Accident: Recollections of a Life'. The book is published by Rupa Publications.

**Essence of the Book:**

It describes the unplanned happenings that took place in the life of M. Hamid that changed his way from his deferred fancy for academia to professional diplomacy and then co-opted in public life and became the Vice President of India for 2 consecutive terms.

**About Hamid Ansari:****High Post Held**

- i. He was an Indian Foreign Service officer and was the chairman of Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2017.
- ii. He served as the ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Afghanistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.
- iii. He was the high commissioner to Australia and was also the permanent representative to the United Nations in New York.

**India's first Digital University set up in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**

- i. The state government of Kerala, on the line of its Digital Transformation Initiatives announced in Budget 2021, has launched India's first Digital University, Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT) in Technocity at **Mangalapuram** in Thiruvananthapuram by upgrading its two-decade old Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management Kerala (IIITM-K), a center of excellence in information technologies.
- ii. The Governor of Kerala, Arif Mohammed Khan inaugurated the KUDSIT through videoconferencing.
- iii. The 10-acre University was launched during a function which was virtually presided over by Chief Minister (CM) **Pinarayi Vijayan**. The Governor **Arif Mohammed Khan**, who is also the Chancellor of the Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology (KUDSIT) virtually unveiled the



university plaque during the function.

iv. The university is aimed at utilizing the developments in digital technology for social progress and for all individuals.

### India Launches 'Sandesh' a Made in India alternative of WhatsApp

India launched an instant messaging app just like **WhatsApp** for government employees called **Sandesh** which will be a Made in India alternative of WhatsApp. Developed by **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology the app was initially open to use only to government officers, now it has been released for common public on Apple's App Store. It is an upgrade of **Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS)** app. The Government is also working on another Instant Messaging app called '**Samvad**', it is being developed by Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT).

### Goa to become India's First Fisheries Hub with an investment of INR 400 Crore

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Giriraj Singh has stated that the Central Government is set to Invest **INR 400 crore** in Goa to transform the state into **India's First Fisheries Hub**.

- Of the INR 400 Crore Investment, The Union Minister has already sanctioned INR 41.7 Crores to Goa under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (**PMMSY**).
- Goa has the required coastline, inland waterways & saline Khazan lands for producing the large quantity of fish in the country.



### Development of 'Cage Culture'

**CSIR-NIO** (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Institute of Oceanography), Dona Paula, Goa has highlighted the enormous potential of Cage Culture fishing in Goa.

### Indian-American scientist Swati Mohan leads NASA's Mars mission

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Perseverance rover of Mars 2020 mission successfully landed on the surface of Mars.

Notably, its **Guidance, Navigation, and Controls Operations (GN&C)** were handled by Indian-American Swati Mohan.

- She is responsible for the training of the GN&C team, scheduling the mission control staffing for GN&C, as well as the policies/procedures the GN&C uses in the mission control room



### Key Points:

- She completed her bachelor's degree from Cornell University in Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering, and her M.S. and Ph.D from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Aeronautics/Astronautics.
- During her career with NASA, she has worked on the Cassini mission to Saturn and GRAIL, a pair of formation flown spacecraft to the Moon.

### Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal Laid Foundation of the 1st Skill University of Eastern India in Darrang district

Assam Chief Minister (CM) Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of the **first skill university of eastern India** in Darrang district, Assam. This is the 3rd skill university in India. The university aims to impart training to over 10,000 students in 12 disciplines. It will be built with a cost of Rs 1,000 crore and is



expected to be completed by 2026. It will have understanding with countries like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan and England.

**Note:** The 1st skill university of India is Shri Vishwakarma Skill University (SVSU), Gurugram, Haryana

### **Late Former President Pranab Mukherjee's Memoir Titled 'The Presidential Years: 2012-2017' Released**

Late Former **President of India Pranab Mukherjee's** memoir (Authored by Pranab Mukherjee) titled '**The Presidential Years: 2012-2017**' has been released in January 2021. The book was published by **Rupa Publications India**. The book gives an account of how Pranab Mukherjee reshaped the functioning of Rashtrapati Bhavan. During his presidency, he worked with 2 Prime Ministers (PMs) namely, Dr Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi, who is the current PM of India. He was the 13th President of India.

**Memoir** – A Historical account or biography written from personal knowledge.

### **Chenab Bridge – World's Highest Rail Bridge to completed by 2021**

The works on 'Chenab Bridge' which is set to be the World's Highest Rail Bridge are expected to be completed by the end of 2021. The bridge is **1.315 Kms** long with 17 spans and is being constructed at a height of 359 metres (1, 178 feet) over the River Chenab which is 35 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.



- The bridge will connect Bakkal (katra) and Kauri (Srinagar) in the Reasi district of Jammu & Kashmir UT.
- Upon Completion, the estimated height of the bridge will be ~ **1, 178 feet**, which is 53 feet taller than Millau Viaduct in France (At 1, 125 feet it is at present the World's Highest Bridge)
- It is being built by **Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd (KRCL)** at a cost of INR 12, 000 Crores.
- The Chenab bridge is part of the 111-Km Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project.

### **About Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL):**

**Chairman & Managing Director (CMD)**– Sanjay Gupta

**Headquarters** – Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra

### **India's 1st Undersea Tunnel to come at Mumbai by 2023**

**Two undersea tunnels** are under construction in Mumbai city, as a part of the 10.58 kms long, Mumbai's Coastal Road Project. 2 tunnels each 3-3.2 m wide are constructed for 2.07 km long of which one kilometer is constructed under the seabed.

Notably, this is **India's 1st Undersea Tunnel** which will come to operation by 2023.

i. Constructed at **20m below the seabed**.

ii. Uses 1st of its kind Ventilation system, "Saccardo".

iii. The tunnel will be **connecting North Mumbai with South Mumbai**, as a toll-free path easing up traffic.

### **Some Popular Undersea Tunnels:**

The **Seikan Tunnel in Japan** is the world's longest undersea tunnel, that lies 140m below the seabed.

The **Channel Tunnel connects England with France**, lies 75m below the seabed.

## International

### India ranked 86 in COVID Performance Index, New Zealand tops : Lowy Institute

According to the 'COVID Performance Index : Deconstructing Pandemic Responses' released by Australia based Lowy Institute, India with a score of 24.3 was ranked at 86 out of 98 Countries on basis of its response towards tackling the Pandemic. New Zealand topped the list followed by Vietnam & Taiwan.



- The index is based on public available data till January 9, 2021.
- China was excluded from the rankings due to lack of publicly available data on Testing.

Rank	Country	Average
86	India	24.3
1	New Zealand	94.4
2	Vietnam	90.8
3	Taiwan	86.4

### Ranking of Neighboring Countries:

- Sri Lanka was the top ranked Country in South Asia with a ranking of 10.
- Maldives was ranked at 25, Pakistan at 69, Nepal at 70, and Bangladesh at 84.

### UN World Tourism Organization named 2020 as 'worst year on record'

i. In accordance with the latest United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO) "World Tourism Barometer", the year 2020 was the "worst year on record" as global tourism suffered adversely due to international travel bans implemented to contain the COVID-19 outbreak.

ii. The world saw a global tourism decline of 74% (-74%) which resulted in 1 billion fewer international arrivals than 2019.

iii. The travel ban resulted in an estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues. It is more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis.

iv. On regional front, Asia and the Pacific faced sharpest year-on-year contraction of 84% (-84%). It was followed by the Middle East (-75%) and Europe (-70%).



### About United Nations World Tourism Organization (UN-WTO):

Secretary-General– Zurab Pololikashvili

Headquarter– Madrid, Spain



### India slips to 53rd Rank in EIU's Democracy Index 2020; Norway tops the Index

According to the 'Democracy Index 2020' released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), India with a score of 6.61 slipped two places to 53rd Rank (out of 167 countries) in the Index due to decline in Civil Liberties. Norway topped the index followed by Iceland & Sweden.

The handling of Coronavirus Pandemic has led to a further decline of civil liberties in 2020 in India, Asia and other regions of the world.

i. The Rankings are based on 5 Categories

- Electoral Process & Pluralism
- Functioning of Government
- Political Participation
- Political Culture
- Civil Liberties

#### Top 3 Countries:

Rank	Country	Score
53	India	6.61
1	Norway	9.81
2	Iceland	9.37
3	Sweden	9.26



### Denmark is set to Build the World's First Energy Island in North Sea

The Government of **Denmark** approved the plan to build the **world's first energy island** (Artificial island) in the **North Sea** which will produce and store green energy enough to cover the electricity requirement of 3 million households in Europe.

The construction of the island will cost around **210 billion Danish krone** (around Rs.2.4 lakh crore).

#### Energy target of Denmark:

Denmark aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels.

#### Green Energy Island:

- i. This is the biggest construction project in the history of Denmark.
- ii. The government will hold 51% stake of this island and the remaining 49% will be held by the private sector.
- iii. The island will be constructed about 80 kilometers away from the west coast of Denmark and the initial capacity of the surrounding wind turbines will be 3 gigawatts (GW).



- iv. The island is expected to commence operation by 2033.
- v. The potential of the offshore wind in the North Sea is 180 GW which equals all the coal-fired power plants of Europe.

### NASA Launched Space Station Supply Ship to ISS Named After S.S. Katherine Johnson

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched the Space Station Supply Ship, Northrop Grumman's Cygnus capsule named after **S.S. Katherine Johnson**, to the International Space Station (ISS).

The numbers of S.S. Katherine Johnson, a Black NASA mathematician, featured in the 2016 movie "**Hidden Figures**", contributed to the flight of John Glenn on 20th February 1962, who became the first American to orbit the world.

- The launch of this 4-ton shipment for NASA from Wallops Island, Virginia marks the **59th anniversary** of John Glenn's historic launch.
- This is the 15th Supply run of Northrop Grumman for NASA.

### SpaceX announced World's First All Civilian Mission to Space

SpaceX announced its plan for the **World's first** all civilian mission to space, the mission is named **Inspiration4** in recognition of the 4-person crew to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. The mission commanded by **Jared Isaacman**, a 37-year-old entrepreneur the founder and CEO of **Shift4 Payments** and accomplished pilot will be launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.



- Every step of the mission will be monitored by SpaceX mission control.
- The spacecraft will orbit the planet every 90 minutes along a customized flight path
- Jared Isaacman has donated the 3 mission seats alongside him, the members will be selected to represent the missions pillar (Leadership, Hope, Generosity, and prosperity).

### Hunter Biden's New Book A Memoir Titled "Beautiful Things"

Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden has authored the memoir titled "Beautiful Things" which is set to be released in April 2021. The book is published by Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

#### About the Book:

- i. The book focuses on the life of Hunter Biden's struggle with substance abuse.
- ii. The book aims to provide hope to the people who can relate to the life events of Hunter Biden.
- iii. The financial terms of the book, written in collaboration with Hunter and journalist Drew Juber were not disclosed.

#### About Hunter Biden:

- i. Hunter Biden is a lawyer and former lobbyist who helped in the first impeachment of former President Donald Trump.
- ii. He joined the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma in 2014, his term on the board expired in 2019.

### Square Kilometre Array – World's Largest Radio Telescope

Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council held its Maiden Meeting during the meeting they approved the establishment of World's Largest Radio Telescope namely '**Square Kilometre Array**'. The telescope will consist of a vast number of radio receivers which will be positioned in **South Africa and Australia**. SKAO is a 10-member intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy. The members of SKAO are **Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Netherlands and UK**. The headquarters of SKAO is situated at the University of Manchester's Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire, United Kingdom. Radio Telescopes are capable of detecting gas and can reveal areas of space which are hidden by cosmic dust.



### China's Tianwen-1 enters Mars Orbit, Joining UAE's Hope Probe

Chinese Spacecraft '**Tianwen-1**' (Means "Quest for Heavenly Truth") entered the Mars Orbit. It became the World's second one in two days after United Arab Emirates' '**Hope**' Space Probe entered the Mars Orbit on February 9, 2021. The Chinese Spacecraft will probe for signs of ancient life on Mars. USA's National Aeronautics and Space Administration rover called '**Perseverance**' is aiming for a landing on Mars on February 18, 2021.

### With 1% of World's Vehicles, India accounts for 11% of Global deaths in Road Accidents: World Bank report

According to the report 'Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society' released by the World Bank with 1% of World's vehicles, India accounts for 11% of Global Road Accident deaths & 6% of total road crashes.

i. In India, annually around 4.5 Lakh road crashes take place out of which 1.5 Lakh people die.

ii. The World Bank report was prepared in association with **Save LIFE Foundation (SLF)**.

- According to WHO, India topped the world in road crash deaths with more than 400 fatalities per day and witnesses 53 road crashes every hour.
- In the last decade (2011-20), road crashes were the cause of death of 1.3 million people & has injured around 5 million in India.
- 76.2% of people who are killed in road crashes are in the prime working-age i.e 18-45 years.
- The report puts the total value of Crash costs due to accidents at INR 5.96 Lakh Crore or 3.14% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

iii. Road Traffic Injuries (RTIs) is the **8th leading cause of death** globally.

iv. **Male road-users of working age (18-45)** represent the category of Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) in India. They are prone to large number of road crashes & account for more than half of all road crash deaths & serious injuries in India.

### Nobel laureate Olga Tokarczuk's Picture Book 'The Lost Soul', English translation of "Zgubiona dusza" to hit Bookstores

Polish Author and 2018 Nobel Prize winner (Literature) **Olga Tokarczuk**'s latest book '**The Lost Soul**', English translation of "Zgubiona dusza" is set to hit the bookstores. The book is translated by **Antonia Lloyd-Jones** and the illustrations were done by **Joanna Concejo**.

This is the first time that Olga Tokarczuk's prose will be accompanied by illustrations in the form of a picture book.

The book is published by **Seven Stories Press**.

This is also her first book for both children and adults.

**About the book:**

- i. The book is a reflection of the capacity of the individuals to live in peace with themselves, to remain patient, attentiv to the world.
- ii. The book winds together the ideas of Olga Tokarczuk and the drawings of Joanna Concejo which creates a parallel universe of secrets.
- iii. The book is about a man who forgets what makes his heart feel content and moves away from his familiar surroundings and waits for his soul to return.

- “The lost soul” was awarded a special mention of the Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2018.

**About Olga Tokarczuk:**

- i. Olga Tokarczuk hails from Sulechów, Poland, she made her debut as a fiction writer in 1993 with “The journey of the Book-People”.
- ii. She has authored around 8 novels and 2 short story collections.
- iii. Her popular works include Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead: A Novel (translated into English by Antonia Lloyd-Jones), Flights, among others.

**Awards:**

- i. She won the 2018 Nobel Prizes in Literature for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life, the prize was presented to her in 2019.
- ii. She also won the 2018 International Man Booker Award for her novel, Flights, which was translated by Jennifer Croft.

**US officially rejoined Paris Climate Agreement**

The United States of America(USA) formally rejoined the Paris Climate agreement which was adopted by 196 countries in 2015. The new government of America under Joe Biden aims to strengthen the US’s 2030 emission reduction pledge under the pact by 22nd April 2021, Earth day.

Gina McCarthy has been named as the head of a new National Climate Task Force

The US is the biggest historical polluter and 2nd biggest current emitter after China.

European Union nations and India are in 3rd and 4th position.



## Defence

### US Startup bluShift Aerospace launches 'Stardust 1.0' – World's 1st Commercial Rocket powered by Biofuel

United States (US) based Startup **bluShift Aerospace** launched 'Stardust 1.0' from Loring Commerce Centre in **Maine, US**. It is the World's 1st Commercial Rocket launch powered by Biofuel.



- The solid biofuels used in the launch is non-toxic, Carbon Neutral & can be sourced from America
  - It uses Nitrous Oxide bubbled with Oxygen as an oxidizer
- i. Stardust 1.0 is a launch vehicle which is capable of launching tiny nanosatellites.

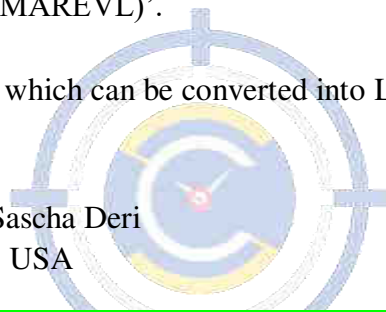
- It is 20 Feet Tall & weighs around 250 kg
  - It can carry a maximum payload mass of 8 kg
  - The rocket carried 3 payloads during the launch
- ii. bluShift Aerospace's Rocket Engine is a hybrid of solid and liquid propellant called 'Modular Adaptable Rocket Engine for Vehicle Launch (MAREVL)'.

#### What are Biofuels?

Biofuels are obtained from Biomass which can be converted into Liquid Fuels and used as transportation fuels.

#### About bluShift Aerospace:

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – Sascha Deri  
**Headquarters** – Brunswick, Maine, USA



### Pakistan successfully Test Fires Nuclear Capable Ballistic Missile 'Ghaznavi'

Pakistan's Army Strategic Forces Command (ASFC) successfully Test Fired the Nuclear-Capable Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile '**Ghaznavi (Hatf-III)**'.



- Ghaznavi has a **range of 290 Kms** & can carry both Nuclear & Conventional Warheads
- It was launched by ASFC as part of its Annual Field Training Exercise

#### i. Background:

- It is a Hypersonic Missile developed by National Development Complex (NDC), Pakistan.
  - The missile has been tested in both Day & Night modes
- ii. On January 20, 2021 Pakistan had test-fired Surface-to-Surface ballistic 'Shaheen III' which has a range of 2,750 Kilometres.

### Indo-US 16<sup>th</sup> Joint Military Exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 20' begins in Rajasthan

- i. The 16th edition of an annual joint military exercise between India and the United States (US), "Yudh Abhyas 20" was initiated as a part of defence cooperation at the Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR), near the India-Pakistan border in Rajasthan on February 8, 2021. This 12 days long exercise will culminate on February 21, 2021.
- ii. The Indian side is represented by the **11th Battalion of Jammu and Kashmir Rifles**, part of the South Western Command while U.S. Army delegation will be represented by the troops of 2nd battalion, 3rd

Infantry Regiment of **1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team** along with respective brigade headquarters.  
**iii.** The US contingent was welcomed by **Brigadier Mukesh Bhanwala**, Commander of the 170 Infantry Brigade of the Indian Army.

### Overview of 13th Edition of Aero India 2021

The 13th Edition of the **Biennial Military Exercise** – ‘Aero India 2021: A Big Step Towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ took place at the Yelahanka Air Force Base, Bengaluru, Karnataka from February 3-5, 2021. It was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.



- The event was organized by the Defence Ministry of India, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Air Force, Department of Space & Union Civil Aviation Ministry.
- Aero India 2021 was centered on the theme ‘Conceive, Indigenize, Collaborate’
- It is the **World’s 1st ever Hybrid Aero and Defence Exhibition** (show with both physical and virtual elements)
- It is Asia’s Largest defence and aerospace exhibition.
- Around 601 Exhibitors – 523 Indian & 78 Foreign & 14 Countries participated in the Aero India 2021.



### Pakistan successfully test fires Surface-To-Surface Babur Cruise Missile

**i.** Pakistan successfully test-fired a short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile namely “Babur” from a state-of-the-art Multi Tube Missile Launch Vehicle. The missile is capable of hitting land and sea targets with high precision up to 490 kilometers (about 280 miles) away.

**ii.** Notably, this is Pakistan’s third successful missile test in three weeks.

**iii.** On February 3, 2021, the Pakistan Army successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile “**Ghaznavi**” which can strike targets up to 290 kilometres.



### MDL delivers ‘INS Karanj’ – India’s 3rd Kalvari-Class Submarine to Indian Navy

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) delivered the Third of Six **Kalvari-class submarines** based on ‘**Scorpene Class**’ to the Indian Navy at Mumbai, Maharashtra. The submarine will be commissioned into the Indian Navy in March, 2021 as ‘**INS Karanj**’.

- ‘INS Karanj’ successfully completed its sea trials which began in January, 2018.
- The submarine has been designed by French company ‘The Naval Group’ (formerly known as DCNS) & constructed in MDL, Mumbai under Project 75 (P-75).
- The 2 previous Scorpene-Class Submarines which have been commissioned & are presently operated by the Indian Navy are INS Kalvari (Commissioned in December, 2017) & INS Khanderi (Commissioned in September, 2019).

### Status of 6 Scorpene Submarines:

With 3 Scorpene submarines inducted into the Indian Navy, 3 more submarines are under development/sea trials phase which include INS Vela, INS Vagir & INS Vagsheer is at the stage of outfitting. The delivery of all 6 Submarines is expected to be completed by 2022.



**India, Indonesia Navies conduct 'PASSEX' exercise in Arabian Sea**

The Indian Navy conducted a Bilateral Military Exercise 'PASSEX' (Passage Exercise) with the Indonesian Navy in the Arabian Sea. The main aim of the exercise is to increase interoperability & strengthen the Bilateral Maritime Cooperation between the two navies.

- Indian Navy Ship **INS Talwar** & Indonesian Navy's multirole Corvette **KRI Bung Tomo** participated in the exercise.
- Maritime Cooperation with India & Indonesia is increasing rapidly in the last few years.
- PASSEXs are regularly conducted by Indian Navy with friendly foreign navies while visiting each other's ports or during an engagement at sea.

**PASSEX with other Countries****Russia**

Indian Navy undertook a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from December 4-5, 2020.

**Vietnam**

Indian Navy & Vietnam People's Navy undertook a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) 2020 in the South China Sea from December 26-27, 2020.

**Rajnath Singh Inaugurates 1st of its Kind DRDO SDC for Fire Safety Training**

Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated DRDO Skill Development Centre (SDC) for Fire Safety Training at **Pilkhuwa, Uttar Pradesh**. It is a first-of-its-kind facility in India.

- The facility has been created by Delhi based DRDO laboratory Centre for Fire, Explosive & Environment Safety (CFEES).
- The main objective of the facility is to develop trained human resources, fire safety technology & products for saving human lives & assets.

**About Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO):**

**Chairman** – Dr G Satheesh Reddy

**Headquarters** – New Delhi



## Appointments or Resign/Retired

### **R S Sharma appointed as the CEO of National Health Authority ;Succeeds Indu Bhushan**

Ram Sewak Sharma(R.S. Sharma), former Chairman of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) took charge as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Health Authority (NHA) of India. R.S. Sharma replaced the outgoing CEO Indu Bhushan.

i.NHA, an autonomous body is responsible for implementing Ayushman-Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

ii.R.S.Sharma served as the Chairman of TRAI from 10 August 2015 to 30 September 2020.



### **About National Health Authority (NHA):**

National Health Authority is the successor of National Health Agency, which was functioning as a registered society since 23rd May, 2018.

Reconstituted on **2nd January 2019**.

### **Jeff Bezos to Step Down as CEO of Amazon; Andy Jassy Succeeds Jeff Bezos**

**Jeff Bezos**, the Founder and CEO of Amazon, will step down as the CEO of Amazon in the third quarter **October 2021** and **Andy Jassy**, the lead of Amazon Web Services(AWS), the cloud computing unit of Amazon will take over as the New CEO.



- Jeff Bezos will be taking up the role of **executive chair** of the Amazon's Board of Directors.
- He also stated that he would be focusing on the new products, early initiatives and Philanthropic giving through like Day 1 Fund and the Bezos Earth Fund; Blue Origin, his secretive space venture

### **Amazon and Jeff Bezos:**

i.Jeff Bezos started Amazon Inc as an online bookseller in Seattle in 1994.

ii.According to the Bloomberg's Billionaires Index, with a net worth of around 196 billion USD, Bezos became one of the World richest person.

iii.Amazon has become the leading company in e-commerce, smart homes, internet streaming and cloud computing.

### **BCCI Secretary Jay Shah Elected as the New President of Asian Cricket Council**

**Jay Shah**, secretary of Board of Control for Cricket in India(BCCI) was elected as new President of Asian Cricket Council (ACC) at the Annual General Meeting of ACC which was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Jay Shah(32 years) is the **youngest administrator** to be appointed as the President of ACC.
- He will succeed **Nazmul Hasan Papon**, the Chief of Bangladesh Cricket Board(BCB).

### **2020 Asia Cup:**

i.The 2020 Asia Cup was postponed to June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ii.The tournament which was planned to be organised in Pakistan will be held in Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

### **About Asian Cricket Council (ACC):**

i.ACC was formed on 19th September 1983 as The Asian Cricket Conference in New Delhi.

ii.Founding members of ACC were Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

**Members-** 25 Associations.

**Praveen Sinha IPS of Gujarat Cadre appointed as acting chief of CBI**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed **Praveen Sinha**, 1988 batch IPS officer of Gujarat Cadre, currently serving as the Additional Director of Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI), as the **acting Chief** of CBI. He succeeds Rishi Kumar Sukla who retires on 3rd February 2021 after a 2-year stint.

**About Praveen Sinha:**

- i. He has served in CBI at various capacities like Superintendent of police, Deputy Inspector General, Joint Director and Additional Director between 2000-2021.
- ii. He has also served as the Additional Secretary of Central Vigilance Commission(CVC) during 2015 to 2018.
- iii. He is a member of various reform committees established by the CVC.
- iv. He is a member of the Committee of Reforms in Criminal Laws constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

**About Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI):**

CBI was established as The Special Police Establishment (SPE) in 1941, it was renamed as Central Bureau of Investigation(CBI) in 1963.

**Mario Draghi Named as the New Prime Minister of Italy**

**Mario Draghi**, 73-year-old former President of the European Central Bank, has been named the **new Prime Minister of Italy**. He accepted the request of Sergio Mattarella, President of Italy, to form a new government.



- Mario Draghi will lead the unity government replacing the centre left coalition government of Former prime minister **Giuseppe Conte**.
- He was formally sworn in as the prime Minister of Italy on 13th February 2021.
- Following the premiership of Carlo Azeglio Ciampi in 1993, Lamberto Dini in 1995 and Mario Monti in 2011, this is the 4th time in the past 30 years where a technocratic prime minister has taken charge.

**Ministers of Mario Draghi led Government:**

- i. Daniele Franco, Director General of Bank of Italy will be the New Economy Minister of Italy.
- Vittorio Colao, Former Chief Executive of Vodafone will be the Innovation and technology minister.
- ii. Luigi Di Maio of the Five Star Movement will continue as the foreign minister
- iii. The non-affiliated Luciana Lamorgese will continue as the Interior Minister.
- Roberto Speranza will continue as the Health Minister.

**About Mario Draghi:**

- i. Mario Draghi served as the President of ECB from 2011 to 2019 prior to which he served as the Governor of the Bank of Italy from 2005 to 2011.
- ii. He served as the Vice Chairman and Managing director of Goldman Sachs International, a subsidiary of the American investment bank from 2002 to 2005.
- iii. He served as the director-general of the Italian Treasury from 1991 to 2001.

### Nigeria's Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Appointed as 7th DG of WTO; Becomes the First Woman and First African to Head WTO

i. **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala** from Nigeria was appointed as the 7th Director General of the World Trade Organisation(WTO), multilateral trade body. She will hold the position from **1st March 2021 to 31st August 2025**.

ii. She succeeds former Director-General **Roberto Azevêdo** who announced his retirement 1 year before the expiry of his tenure.

iii. With this appointment, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala became the **first woman and the first African to head the WTO**.

iv. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has twice served as the Finance Minister of Nigeria between 2011 and 2015 and she has also served as the Foreign Minister of Nigeria in 2006, the first woman to hold both the positions.

v. She served as the Managing Director of the World Bank.



#### About World Trade Organisation:

WTO deals with the global rules of trade between the countries.

#### Objective:

To ensure that trade flow is as smooth, predictable and free as possible.

**Location**– Geneva, Switzerland

**Established**– 1 January 1995

**Created by**– Uruguay Round negotiations (1986-94)

**Member**– 164 members

### Actor Rana Daggubati Becomes Brand Ambassador of CEAT

**CEAT Limited**, a tyre company of RPG Enterprises(Rama Prasad Goenka Group) has signed in **Actor Rana Daggubati** as its **brand ambassador** to promote the new **'Puncture Safe'** range of **bike tyres**.

#### Key Info:

i. CEAT has launched 'Puncture Safe' range of tyres in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

ii. Rana Daggubati, as part of an integrated marketing campaign in 5 southern states, will feature in the new ads for these tyres to be aired across TV and digital platforms.

iii. The new commercial will also be aired during the ongoing India-England Test series.

#### 'Puncture Safe' range

These tyres have a technology that enables it to seal punctures for nails up to 2.5 mm in diameter. It will not lose air by sealing themselves even after being punctured.

#### About Rana Daggubati:

i. Besides being an actor, he is also a producer, television personality, visual effects coordinator, and an entrepreneur.

ii. He acted in Telugu, Hindi and Tamil language films.

iii. His films include, Baahubali: The Beginning(2015), Baahubali 2: The Conclusion-2017(which became the highest grossing Indian film of all time), Ghazi (2017), and Nene Raju Nene Mantri (2017).

### Dr Ajay Mathur Elected as Director-General of ISA; Succeeds Upendra Tripathy

i. **Dr Ajay Mathur** has been named as the new **Director-General** of International Solar Alliance (ISA) following his election at the 1st special Assembly of ISA members that was held virtually on February 15, 2021.



- ii. He succeeds Upendra Tripathy who was in the position since ISA was founded in 2015.
- iii. Prior, being named as the director general of ISA, Dr Ajay Mathur was serving as the director general of The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI)

**About International Solar Alliance (ISA):**

It is a treaty-based intergovernmental organisation launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India and Former President François Hollande of France at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris on 30 November, 2015.

**Headquarters**– Gurugram, Haryana

**Dr. Kiran Bedi Removed as Puducherry LG; Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan Given Additional Charge**

**President of India, Ram Nath Kovind** directed **Dr. Kiran Bedi** shall cease to hold (**Removed**) the office of the Lieutenant-Governor (LG) of Puducherry. While, **Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan**, Governor of Telangana, was given **additional charge** as LG of Puducherry. Her appointment is effective from the date she assumes charge of her office.

**Note** – Ms. Soundararajan is the fifth woman to hold the post of Lt. Governor of Puducherry and Chandrawati was the 1st LG of Puducherry.

**About Dr. Kiran Bedi**

**General Info:** She is a retired Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer, social activist and former tennis player.

**Firsts:** She was the first female IPS officer and was the 1st Indian & 1st woman to be appointed as head of the United Nations Police and Police Advisor in the United Nations Department of Peace Operations

**Books:** She has authored many books including, It's Always Possible: One Woman's Transformation of Tihar Prison and Be the Change: Fighting Corruption among others.

**Honours:** Among others she won the following.,

- President's Police Medal for Gallantry in 1979 from President of India for her in preventing violence during Akali-Nirankari clashes
- United Nations Medal in 2004 from United Nations for her Outstanding service

**Usha Rao-Monari of India Appointed as Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of UNDP**

- i. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General appointed **Ms. Usha Rao-Monari of India** as **Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator** of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- ii. She succeeds **Mourad Wahba** of Egypt, who served as the acting associate administrator. He also serves as the UNDP Regional Director for Arab States.
- iii. The previous Associate Administrator of UNDP was **Tegegnework Gettu**.

**About United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):**

**Administrator**– Achim Steiner

**Headquarters**– New York, USA

**Japan's Former Olympics Minister Seiko Hashimoto Takes Over as 2020 Tokyo Olympic President**

On **Seiko Hashimoto**, seven time Olympian (speed skater and cyclist) who was serving as the Minister for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games became the president of the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

- Seiko Hashimoto resigned from the role of Minister of Olympics as she takes over as the president of 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- She succeeds Former chief **Yoshiro Mori** following his resignation over the condemned sexist remarks.

**About Seiko Hashimoto:****Sports:**

- i.Seiko Hashimoto a former olympian who represente japan in speed skating at 4 winter Olympic games(1984, 1988, 1992 & 1994) and in Track cycling at 3 Summer Games(1988, 1992 & 1996).
- ii.She won a bronze in the Women's 1500 m speed skating in 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville, France.
- iii.In 1990 she won a medal at the World Championship for speed skate and became the first japanese achieve the feat.

**About 2020 Tokyo Olympic:**

2020 Tokyo Olympic is officially the Games of the **32nd Olympiad**.It is to be held from 23 July 2021 to 8 August 2021.

**Olympic Mascot**– Miraitowa

**Paralympic Mascot**– Someity

**Woochong Um appointed as new Managing Director General of ADB**

- i. Woochong Um of Republic of Korea was appointed as the new Managing Director General of Asian Development Bank (ADB). He assumed office on 22nd February and will be reporting to Masatsugu Asakawa, President of ADB.
- ii.He will assist the President of ADB to institute the bank wide coherence on various key initiatives and issues.
- iii.He has served as the Director General of the sustainable development and climate change department of ADB and concurrently Chief Compliance Officer since June 2018.

**About ADB:**

ADB is owned by 68 members(49 from Asia and the Pacific and 19 from others)

**President**– Masatsugu Asakawa

**Headquarters**– Metro Manila, Philippines

**Established in** 1966

**Sachin Tendulkar Roped in as Brand Ambassador of Unacademy; also picked up stake in Unacademy**

Former Indian Cricketer **Sachin Tendulkar** signed a strategic partnership with **Unacademy**, India's largest online learning app to pick up small stakes in the platform and he also became its **brand ambassador**.

**Features of the Partnership:**

- i.As a part of the partnership, Sachin will host a series of live interactive classes which can be accessed by the users of Unacademy at free of cost.
- ii.Sachin will also share his life lessons and experiences with the users of the Unacademy and coach them.
- iii.He will also work with Unacademy in developing a deeper content-led partnership and Unacademy will also work towards developing a deeper content with Sachin in sports learning category.

**President Ram Nath Kovind accepted the Resignation of Puducherry CM, V Narayanasamy**

The notification of the Union Home ministry stated that President Ram Nath Kovind has accepted the



resignation of V Narayanasamy, Chief Minister of Puducherry and his council of Ministers with effect from 22nd February 2021.

- The Congress government led by Narayanaswamy submitted the resignation after losing the floor test held in Puducherry Assembly on 22nd February 2021.
- V Narayanasamy lost the majority in the 33 member house after the resignation of 5 Congress and 1 Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam(DMK) legislators in the past weeks.
- VP Sivakolundhu, speaker of Puducherry Assembly announced that the CM failed to prove the majority and adjourned the house without assigning a day for a further meeting.

#### **President Rule:**

On 24th February 2021, Union cabinet approved to impose President Rule in Puducherry after BJP and its allies did not stake a claim to form a Government in Puducherry.

- According to Article 356, President's Rule can be imposed on any state of India on the grounds of the failure of the constitutional machinery.
- Article 356 of the Constitution of India is based on Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

#### **Former Union Minister Vijay Sampla Assumed Charge as Chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Castes**

- Former Union Minister **Vijay Sampla** assumed charge as **chairman** of 6th National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC) in New Delhi, Delhi.
- Prior to him, Prof.(Dr.) Ram Shankar Katheria was the chairman of NCSC, whose term ended in May 2020.

#### **About National Commission for Scheduled Castes(NCSC):**

**Headquarters**– New Delhi, Delhi

#### **Russian Supermodel Natalia Vodianova Becomes New Goodwill Ambassador of UNFPA**

The United Nations Population Fund(UNFPA), the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency, has appointed **Russian** supermodel **Natalia Vodianova** as its new **Goodwill Ambassador** to tackle stigma and advance women's health

#### **Role**

She will empower women and girls by promoting sexual and rights of them and tackling the stigma and taboos that surround their bodies and health, including menstruation that lead to discrimination and exclusion.

#### **Note:**

She has teamed up with UNFPA over the past 3 years to launch a series of "Let's Talk" events worldwide. This series have mobilised policy makers, civil society and the private sector to address shame, exclusion and discrimination, faced regularly by millions of women and girls.

#### **About Natalia Vodianova:**

- In addition to being a supermodel, she is a philanthropist, and impact investor
- She is nicknamed Supernova.
- In 2004, she founded the Naked Heart Foundation, a philanthropic organization to help children with special needs and their families
- She launched "Elbi", a digital platform to enable people to make micro-donations..

#### **Awards & Honours**

- i. She was given Harper's Bazaar as Inspiration of the Year in 2010.
- ii. She made into the Forbes top models list in 2012
- iii. Mattel created the first Russian Barbie under her name in 2016.
- iv. In 2014 Glamour recognized her as Woman of the Year and awarded her its The Voice for Children award

### Levi's® Announced Actress Deepika Padukone as its Global Brand Ambassador

a premium American denim brand announced Bollywood actress **Deepika Padukone** as its **Global Brand Ambassador**. This strategic partnership highlights the increasing focus of Levi's on women's category.

- Deepika became the first female celebrity to endorse the brand in India.
- As a part of this partnership, Deepika Padukone will work on the new campaign of Levi's which is focused on a new range of fashion fits from Levi's.

### Objective:

To attract a new generations of women consumers with a relevant fashion-forward offering in line with identity of the Brand – quality and comfort.

### Dushyant Chautala, Deputy CM of Haryana Re-elected as President of TTFI

**Dushyant Chautala**, the Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana, was re-elected as the **President** of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI). He was unanimously elected during the 84th Annual meeting of TTFI at Panchkula, Haryana.



- He will hold the post for a period of **4 years**.
- He is the youngest president of any National sports federations in India.
- He would venture to provide opportunities to the youngsters to represent India and their respective states in international and national events.

### Other Appointments:

- i. **Arun Kumar Banerjee** of Uttar Pradesh has been elected as the **Secretary General** of TTFI and Gurpreet Singh has been elected as the Treasurer.
- ii. **Dhanraj Choudhary** has been named as the Chief Executive officer (CEO) and V K Bawa has been named the Chief Financial officer (CFO).
- iii. **Sanjay Singh** from Bihar and **Rajeev P. Bodas** from Maharashtra has been named as the Senior Vice President.

### Government of Assam Appointed World Championship Sprinter Hima Das as DSP

The Government of Assam has appointed World Champion sprinter **Hima Das**, nicknamed '**Dhing Express**' as the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in Assam. The decision of the appointment was taken during the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on 10th February 2021.

- Hima Das was the first ever Indian athlete to win a gold medal in any form of global track event at the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World U20 Championships.
- The Assam Cabinet has also decided to amend the integrated sports policy of Assam by appointing sports persons as Class I and Class II officers in various departments of the state like Police, Excise and Transport.
- The medal winners in the Olympics, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games will be appointed as Class- I officers.

## Honours/ Awards

### Uttar Pradesh Adjudged as the Best Tableau Award Among the 32 Participants: Republic Day Parade

i. The Republic Day parade tableau of **Uttar Pradesh** was adjudged as the best tableau among the 32 tableaux that participated in the Parade on 26th January 2021. The theme of the UP tableau was “**Ayodhya: The cultural heritage of Uttar Pradesh**”.

**Kiren Rijiju**, Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sport presented the awards and prizes to the participants.

ii. The tableau of the **Department of Biotechnology** won the top honours among the 9 tableaux from various ministries, departments, paramilitary forces and Defence Ministry. The tableau represented Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: COVID, the process of vaccine development through various processes.



### “Aatmanirbharta” named Oxford Hindi Word of 2020

The Oxford Languages has named “**Aatmanirbharta or Self-Reliance**” as the Hindi Word of the year 2020 since it validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic. The major success of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign is the large-scale production of the COVID-19 vaccine in India.



- The word was chosen by the advisory panel of language experts: Kritika Agrawal, Poonam Nigam Sahay and Imogen Foxell.
- The Oxford Hindi word of the year is chosen to reflect the mood of the year and have a lasting potential as a term of cultural significance.
- In 2017, **Aadhar** was chosen as the **first Hindi Word of the year** and Hindi Word of the Year **2019** was “**Samvidhaan** or the Constitution” and **2018** was “**Nari Shakti** or women empowerment”.

### India's Rishabh Pant & South Africa's Shabnim Ismail Won ICC Player of the Month for January 2021

**Indian** cricketer **Rishabh Pant** won the The International Cricket Council (ICC) **Men's Player of the Month** award for **January 2021** and **South African** cricketer **Shabnim Ismail** won the **ICC Women's Player of the Month** award for **January 2021**. This is the **first edition** of the ICC Player of the Month Awards.

#### Points to be Noted:

ICC introduced the awards in January 2021, where The ICC Voting Academy that comprises former players, broadcasters, and journalism from across the world and fans will vote to select the winner of the award.

#### Reason of the Award:

**Rishabh Pant**– The wicket keeper and batsman led India to win in 2 tests against Australia by scoring, 97 at Sydney, Australia and 89(unbeaten) at Brisbane, Australia.

**Shabnim Ismail**- For her performance in 3 One Day Internationals (ODIs) and 2 Twenty20 International (T20I) in January 2021. The bowler took 7 wickets in ODI series against Pakistan and also took 5 wickets in the 2nd T20I against Pakistan.

#### About Rishabh Pant:



- i. He became the first batsman for India to get off the mark in Test cricket with a six
- ii. In January 2019, during the fourth Test against Australia, Pant became the wicket-keeper 1st India to score a century in a Test match in Australia.

#### About Shabnim Ismail

- i. She becomes the 1st player, across men's and women's cricket to take 100 wickets in T20Is.
- ii. She is named as one of the fastest female bowlers in the world, with her top recorded speed reaching 128 kilometres per hour (80 Miles per hour-mph).

#### AP CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Received the SKOCH Challenger Award – Chief Minister of the Year Award

- i. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Chief Minister (CM) of Andhra Pradesh (AP) received the **SKOCH Chief Minister of the Year Award**.
- ii. The award of the SKOCH Group was presented to him by Sameer Kochhar, Chairman of SKOCH Group at the Camp office of CM at Tadepalli, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh.
- iii. The SKOCH CM of the year Award was given to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy based on the year long study on the government project- level outcomes across different states of India.
- iv. The efforts of the government of AP to make efficient and transparent governance was evident in the study of 123 projects from various sectors in Andhra Pradesh.

#### WCCB received Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2020 from UNEP

- i. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India was selected as one of the winners of the **5th Asia Environmental Enforcement Award, 2020** by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). WCCB has won the award under the Innovation category.
- ii. WCCB was selected as a winner for its contribution against transboundary environmental crime.
- iii. This is the 2nd time for WCCB to win the award in the same category.
- iv. WCCB's initiated an operation WILDNET-II to warn off the potential traders and bring in the offenders.



#### About WCCB:

WCCB was established as Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau in 2007 which was later renamed as Wildlife Crime Control Bureau in 2007 and became operational in 2008. It was formed under Ministry of Environment and Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

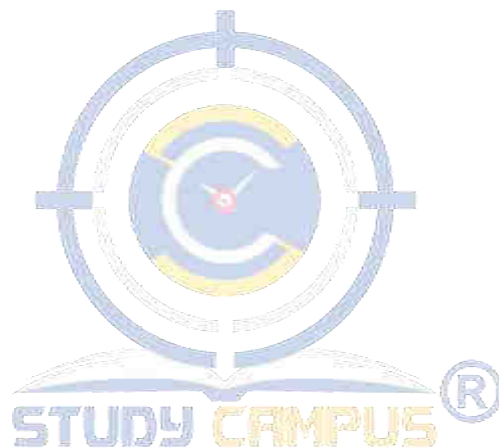
#### Hyderabad, Recognised as the '2020 Tree City of the World' by Arbor Day Foundation & FAO

The Arbor Day Foundation and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) has recognised Hyderabad (Telangana) as one of the '2020 Tree City of the World' for its contributions and commitment towards growing and maintaining urban forest.

- Hyderabad became the first and only city in India to be recognised as the 2020 Tree City of the World.
- With the recognition as the 2020 tree city of the world, Hyderabad became a part of the network of cities who recognise the vital role of trees towards building healthy, resilient and happy cities.
- Along with Hyderabad, 51 other cities were recognised as the '2020 Tree Cities of the World', most of which were from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and others.

**About Tree Cities of the World:**

The tree cities of the world is a programme was inaugurated in 2019 by FAO of UN and Arbor Day Foundation.



## Sports

### Domestic Cricket: Tamil Nadu wins 2020-21 Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 competition

Tamil Nadu Cricket Team defeated Baroda in the finals of the 2020-21 Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Competition held at Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad, Gujarat to win the trophy. The 12th Edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy was held from January 10-31, 2021. The Tamil Nadu cricket team was led by Dinesh Karthik.



### Shooting : India tops Medals tally by bagging 11 Medals at First Asian Online Shooting Championship

India's 24-Member Indian Shooting Contingent topped the Medals Tally by bagging 11 Medals – 4 Gold, 2 Silver & 5 Bronze Medals at the First Asian Online Shooting Championship organized by Kuwait Shooting Federation from January 29-30, 2021.

- The Indian Shooters participated in the online competition from the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.
- Around 274 Shooters from 22 members of the Asian Shooting Confederation (ASC) participated in the Competition.

#### Medals:

- Saurabh Chaudhary won the Gold medal in 10m Air Pistol Men's event
- Manu Bhaker bagged Bronze Medal in the 10m Air Pistol Women's event trap event
- Madhya Pradesh's Manisha Kheer bagged the Bronze Medal in the women's Trap event.

#### Indian Medals Tally:

##### Gold Medal

Winner	Category
Saurabh Chaudhary	Men's 10m Air Pistol
Divyansh Singh Panwar	Men's 10m Air Rifle
Kynan Chenai	Men's Trap
Rajeshwari Kumari	Women's Trap



**ICC Announced BYJU's as Global Partner from 2021 – 2023**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced **BYJU's** as its global partner from **2021 to 2023**. Under the 3-year agreement BYJU's will partner all the events of ICC from 2021 to 2023, including the Men's T20 World Cup in India, and the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in New Zealand.

- Under this partnership BYJU's will have extensive in-venue, broadcast, and digital rights to all ICC events.
- BYJU's became the official jersey partner of Indian Cricket team in August 2019.

**South Africa's Faf du Plessis Announces Retirement from Test Cricket**

Former South African Captain & Batsman Francois 'Faf' du Plessis announced Retirement from Test Cricket format of the game. He is the **only South African Captain** to lead his team to a Test Series victory over Australia in both home (South Africa) & Away (Australia)

- The 36-year-old has played 69 Tests for South Africa & captained the team in 36 Tests.
- Faf has scored 4,163 runs at an average of 40.02 which includes 10 Centuries 21 Half Centuries.
- Faf du Plessis will be playing in Limited over formats of the game like One Day Internationals (ODIs) & Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is).
- He made his Test debut against Australia in 2012.

**Karnataka to host 2nd Edition of Khelo India University Games in 2021**

Karnataka is set to host the 2nd Edition of Khelo India University Games (KIUG) in 2021. The games will be hosted in **Jain University, Bengaluru** and other venues in Karnataka in collaboration with Association of Indian Universities (AIU). KIUG is the largest University level sports competition in India.

- The KIUG 2021 will see the addition of 2 new native sports namely 'Yogasana' & 'Mallakhamb' in the medal events. The total number of medal events/sports will be 19.
- The games will be conducted in the **U-25 age** category in accordance with the World University Games norms.
- The Main Objective of KIUG is to identify & train athletes in the age group of 18-25 years for Olympics & Asian Games.
- KIUG is organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) & Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports along with Association of Indian Universities, Indian Olympic Association & National Sports Federation.
- The 1st Edition of KIUG was held at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar, Odisha in February, 2020.

**Khelo India program:**

- It was introduced to revive sports culture in India by merging Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ahiyan (erstwhile Yuva Krida and Khel Abhiyan), 'Urban Sports Infrastructure scheme' and National Sports Talent Search System Program as a central sector scheme.
- Through this program, talented players will be identified in priority sports disciplines and will be provided annual financial assistance of **5 lakhs** per annum for a period of **8 years**.

### Tennis: Overview of 2021 Australian Open

The **109th Edition** of Australian Open (53rd in Open Era) took place from February 8-21, 2021 at the Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia.

Chronologically, it is the First Grand Slam event (out of 4) of each Year in both the Men's & Women's Tour. It takes place on a **Hard surface** (called as Hard Courts).



- The Tournament is organized by the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

### Winners of 2021 Australian Open

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Daniil Medvedev (Russia)
Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Jennifer Brady (USA)

### Tennis : India's Ankita Raina claims her Maiden WTA doubles title

India's Ankita Raina partnered with Russia's Kamilla Radhikova to defeat the Russian pair of Anna Blinkova & Anastasia Potapova in the final of **Phillip Island Trophy Tennis Tournament** at Melbourne, Australia to win her maiden WTA (Women's Tennis Association) 250 Doubles title. The win made Ankita India's First WTA Champion since Sania Mirza. The win will catapult her to a Ranking of 94 from the current 115 in the WTA Doubles chart. She will become the 2nd Indian player to crack the doubles top-100 since Sania Mirza.

### PM Modi Inaugurates 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games 2021 in Gulmarg, J&K

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the 2nd Edition of Khelo India National Winter Games 2021 in **Gulmarg**, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). The event will take place from February 26-March 2, 2021.

- The 2021 edition of Khelo India Winter games is organized by **J&K Sports Council** & Winter Games Association of J&K under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

### Background

- Khelo India National Winter Games is an **annual event** and was held for the first time in 2020 in two legs at two different venues (Khelo India Ladakh Winter Games, Leh & Khelo India Jammu and Kashmir Winter Games, Gulmarg).

### Rankings

With support from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, J&K administration aims to improve its ranking from 14 in Top Winter sports destinations in the world to Top-5.

### Indian Cricketer Yusuf Pathan announces Retirement from all forms of Cricket

Former Indian Cricketer & All-Rounder Yusuf Pathan has announced retirement from all forms of Cricket at the age of 38. Yusuf Pathan hails from Vadodara (Baroda), **Gujarat**.

- He has represented India in 57 ODIs & 22 T20Is scoring 1046 runs & 46 wickets across the 2 formats.
- He was part of Indian Teams which won the Inaugural ICC T20 World Cup in 2007 (held in South Africa) & Men's 50-over Cricket World Cup in 2011 (held in India).
- He is the **first player** to win 3 IPL Trophies – with Rajasthan Royals (2008), Kolkata Knight Riders (2012, 2014).
- Yusuf holds the record for the **fastest century** (off 37 balls) **by an Indian** in IPL.



## Obituaries

### Oscar Winner Christopher Plummer, Canadian Actor Passed Away at 91

The legendary Canadian Actor **Christopher Plummer**, the star of “The Sound of Music” and the oldest person to win the Oscar Award passed away at the age of 91 at his residence in Connecticut, United States of America. He was born on 13th December 1929 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

#### About Christopher Plummer:

- i. Christopher Plummer has starred in more than 100 films and television roles.
- ii. He made his Broadway debut in “The Starcross Story” and his first feature-film was “Stage Struck” a 1958 drama about the New York theater world.
- iii. He was well known for his works like “The Last Station”, “The Sound of Music”, “The Insider”, “A Beautiful Mind” and “Up” and others.
- iv. He starred in the adaptation of Stephen King’s novel “Dolores Claiborne” in 1995.
- v. He has also acted in William Shakespeare’s Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III, Mark Antony and others.

#### Awards:

- i. At the 84th Academy Awards, Plummer won the Oscar for his performance in the film “Beginners”(2011).
- ii. He won the Emmy Awards in 1977 for “The Moneychangers” and in 1994 for narrating “Madeline,” an animated series based on the children’s books.



### Bollywood Actor Rajiv Kapoor Passed Away at 58

Bollywood Actor, Director and film producer **Rajiv Kapoor** passed away at the age of 58 in Chembur, Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was the son of veteran filmmaker Raj Kapoor and brother of Rishi Kapoor and Randhir Kapoor. He was born on 25th August 1962 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Rajiv Kapoor is also known as “Chimpu”.

#### Rajiv Kapoor:

- i. Rajiv Kapoor made his debut as an actor in the film “Ek Jaan Hain Hum” in 1983.
- ii. His well known works include, Aasman (1984), Lover Boy (1985) and Zabardast (1985).
- iii. Ram Teri Ganga Maili the 1985 film directed by Raj Kapoor is one of his most credited movies.
- iv. He has produced the well known films like “Aa Ab Laut Chalen” and “Henna” and he directed the movie “Prem Granth” in 1996.

### Former MP & Congress leader Captain Satish Sharma, passed away at 73

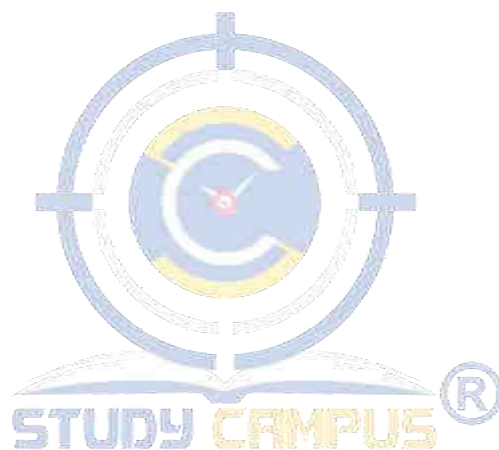
Captain Satish Sharma, Veteran congress leader and the former Member of Parliament, passed away at the age of 73 in Goa. He was born on 11th October 1947 in Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

#### About Captain Satish Sharma:

- i. Captain Satish Sharma was a professional commercial pilot with Air India.
- ii. He served as the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas from 1993 to 1996 under the premiership of Narasimha Rao.
- iii. He was first elected to Rajya Sabha in 1986 and served as the member of Rajya Sabha from 2004 to 2016.
- iv. As a Rajya Sabha member for 3 terms he represented the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.



- v. He has served as the member of Lok Sabha for 3 terms representing Rae Bareilly and Amethi constituency.
- vi. He represented Amethi in 1991 in Lok Sabha, following the death of Rajiv Gandhi.



## Important Days with theme

### Indian Coast Guard Day 2021 – February 1

**i. Indian Coast Guard Day** is annually observed across India on 1st February which marks the **Raising day** of the Indian Coast Guard.

**ii.** 1st February 2021 marks the **45th Raising day** of the Indian Coast Guard, Operating under the Defence Ministry.

**iii.** In 1978 the Indian Coast Guard had only 7 surface platforms, and currently the ICG has 156 ships, 62 aircrafts in its inventory and it is aimed to reach its target force levels of 200 surface platforms and 80 aircrafts by 2025.



### About Indian Coast Guard:

**Director General**– Krishnaswamy Natarajan

**Headquarters**– New Delhi

**Motto**– Vayam Rakshamah

### World Cancer Day 2021 – February 4

**i.** World Cancer Day is annually observed across the globe on 4th February to create awareness and educate the general public about the stigma around cancer and to reduce the preventable deaths.

**ii.** The World Cancer Day is a global uniting initiative led by the Union of International Cancer Control (UICC).

**iii.** The theme of the World Cancer Day for 2019 to 2021 is **“I Am and I Will”**.

**iv.** The theme of World Cancer Day 2021 is **“I Am and I Will: “Together, all our actions matter”**.

**v.** The World Cancer Day was established during the World Cancer Summit Against Cancer for the New Millennium held in Paris, France on 4th February 2000.

**iv.** The day also marks the signing of the Charter of Paris Against Cancer by Kōichirō Matsuura, General Director of UNESCO and Jacques Chirac, the French President.

### World Radio Day 2021 – February 13

**i.** The United Nations World Radio Day (WRD) is annually observed across the globe on **13th February** to celebrate radio as a part of the history of humanity.

2021 marks the **10th edition** of World Radio Day (WRD) and more than 110 year of radio.

**ii.** The theme of the world radio day 2021 is **“New World, New Radio.”**

**iii.** The UNESCO marks World Radio Day 2021 with **3 sub themes:**

**Evolution, Innovation, Connection.**

**iv.** At the 36th session of the UNESCO’s General assembly in 2011, the member states of UNESCO adopted a resolution and proclaimed the 13th February as the World Radio day, which was proposed by Spain.



### National Women’s Day 2021 – February 13

**i.** **National Women’s Day** is annually celebrated across India on **13th February** to honour **Sarojini Naidu**, the **“nightingale of India”**, on her birth anniversary.

**ii.** The National Women’s day is celebrated to recognise the social, cultural, political and economic achievements of Women.

**iii.** 13th February 2021 marks the **142nd birth anniversary** of Sarojini Naidu.

