
MANTHAN

A General Awareness Weekly

15th March to 21st March, 2021

PREFACE

Dear Students,

The 'Current Affairs' section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the Week. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfill aspirations.

Happy Reading

Team CL



Career
Launcher

National



Punjab government is going to celebrate the 400th birth anniversary of Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur Ji

- Under the direct supervision of Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, the state government has successfully organised yearlong celebrations on the pious occasion of 550th Parkash Purb of Guru Nanak Dev ji.
- Punjab Government is going to celebrate the 400th birth anniversary of Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur Ji and will make efforts to spread the message of national integration by organising special programs from April 28 to May 1 on 'Guru Teg Bahadur-Hind Di Chadar'.
- The Punjab Tourism and Cultural Affairs Minister Charanjit Singh Channi while addressing a press conference in the presence of ACS Sanjay Kumar and Director Kanwalpreet Kaur Brar said that Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has already released the logo for these programs.
- Mr. Channi said the Theme park being constructed worth Rs. 49 crore at Sri Chamkaur Sahib will be dedicated to people on the occasion of Baisakhi. An additional amount of Rs. 50 crore is also being spent on the beautification of Sri Chamkaur Sahib.
- In a major announcement the Minister said the state government has also proposed to construct a museum at IKG PTU Kapurthala worth Rs. 100 crore to highlight the life and works of Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar.
- The Minister said that the state government is also going to spend Rs. 500 crore on the construction, renovation and upgradation of several memorials this year. He said that memorial dedicated to Bhai Jaita ji at Anandpur Sahib would be completed within this year worth Rs. 26.85 crore.
- 'By September this year, the government will also complete the construction work of Shiri Guru Ravidas memorial worth Rs. 103 crore and development projects of Rs. 32.61 crore will also be done at Bhagwan Valmiki ji Tirath Amritsar' added Channi.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was a ninth of ten Gurus who founded the Sikh religion and he was head of the followers of Sikhism from 1665 until his beheading in 1675. He was born in Amritsar, Punjab, India in 1621 and was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Sikh guru. In 1675 Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed in Delhi on 11 November under the orders of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. According to J.S. Grewal, a scholar of Sikh history, Guru Tegh Bahadur decided to confront the religious persecution of Kashmiri Hindus by the Mughal officials. Sikh holy premises Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi mark the places of execution and cremation of Guru Tegh Bahadur. His martyrdom is remembered as the Shaheedi Divas of Guru Tegh Bahadur every year on 24 November. The fifth Sikh Guru Arjan was arrested under the orders of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir and asked to convert to Islam. He refused, was tortured and executed in 1606 CE. Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and is the first of the ten Sikh Gurus.

First Meeting of BRICS CGETI held under India's Chairship

- The first Meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held under India's Chair ship from 9th till 11th of this month. The theme of BRICS this year is – “BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.
- India presented the calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, which included the priority areas for deliverables, schedule and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on Services Statistics, and the BRICS Trade Fair. Till September, inter sessional deliberations will be carried out to reach consensus amongst the BRICS countries. Russia hosted the most recent 12th BRICS summit on 17 November 2020 virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The deliverables proposed included the action plan based on the document “Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025” adopted during Russian Presidency in 2020 and BRICS Cooperation on Multilateral Trading system including cooperation for the TRIPS Waiver proposal at WTO.

BRICS is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as “BRIC” (China, Brazil, Russia and India), before the induction of South Africa in 2010. In 2009, the first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia. The term “BRIC” is believed to be coined in 2001 by then-chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, Jim O'Neill, in his publication Building Better Global Economic BRICs. But, it was actually coined by Roopa Purushothaman who was a Research Assistant in the original report.

Government launches Mera Ration Mobile App

- Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on March 12, 2021 launched ‘Mera Ration’ Mobile App for those ration card holders who migrate to new places in search of livelihood.
- Currently, 32 States and Union Territories are covered under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) and the remaining four States and UTs are expected to be integrated into the scheme in the next few months.
- The One Nation One Ration Card system covers almost 69 crore National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries in the country. The scheme has proven to be of tremendous value-added service to each NFSA beneficiary during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially migrants, as it allowed them to avail the benefit of subsidised foodgrains.
- The beneficiaries will be able to use the ‘Mera Ration’ app to identify the nearest fair price shop and check details of their entitlement and recent transactions. The android-based mobile application has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

National Food Security Act 2013 (also ‘Right to Food Act’) is an Act of the Parliament which aims to provide subsidized food grains to approximately two thirds of India's 1.2 billion people. It was signed into law on 12 September 2013, retroactive to 5 July 2013. The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA 2013) converts into legal entitlements for existing food security programmes of the Government of India. It includes the Midday Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services scheme and the Public Distribution System. Further, the NFSA 2013 recognizes maternity entitlements. Maternity benefit of not less than Rs.6000 is also provided to pregnant women and lactating mothers. The Midday Meal Scheme and the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme are universal in nature whereas the PDS will reach about two-thirds of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas). Under the act, 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.

World's highest bridge, connecting Kashmir to rest of India

- In a historic moment, the railways has connected the two ends of the main arch of the world's highest bridge on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district which will provide direct connectivity to Kashmir Valley. The iconic bridge will soar 359 metres above the bed of the river and will be 30 metres higher than the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris. The Northern Railway will be completing the most difficult 111-kilometre long section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link by December 2022 which would connect Kashmir to the rest of India through the railway network.

Jammu and Kashmir is a region administered by India as a union territory and consists of the southern portion of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947 and between India and China since 1962. The region of Jammu and Kashmir is separated by the Line of Control from the Pakistani-administered territories of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in the west and north, respectively. Provisions for the formation of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir were contained within the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019**, which was passed by both houses of the Parliament of India in August 2019. The act re-constituted the former state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, 'Jammu and Kashmir' and 'Ladakh', with effect from 31 October 2019. Manoj Sinha is the current Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Girish Chandra Murmu was the first Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir till August 2020.

Twitter launches multi-lingual 'info prompt' ahead of Assembly elections

- With Assembly elections coming up in five States, **micro-blogging platform Twitter announced a dedicated 'information search prompt'** in six languages with the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions to tackle misinformation and provide reliable details related to elections.
- **The U.S.-headquartered firm has also rolled out a multilingual youth discussion series in India 'Democracy Adda'** aimed at driving voter literacy and civic participation among young Indians, along with a video series 'Her Political Journey' that will focus on women political leaders.

Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. Users access Twitter through its website interface or its mobile-device application software ("app"), though the service could also be accessed via SMS before April 2020. **Twitter, Inc. is based in San Francisco, California**, and has more than 25 offices around the world. **Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006** and launched in July of that year.

Tamil Nadu, Haryana institutes get status of national importance

- **The government of India has decided to confer the status of Institutes of National Importance (INI) to two national institutes of food technology located in Haryana and Tamil Nadu.** National Institutes of Food Technology (NIFTEM) at Kundali, Haryana and Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu will be conferred with the special status, said Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
- The Rajya Sabha passed the **National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019** that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.
- **A major amendment in the bill notifies that the chairperson at the institutes will be an expert from the field.** The recognition will help the institutes to improve the standard of their education. Such acknowledgement provides special recognition to the institutes and also grants them funding from the government. **The two food institutes in Haryana and Tamil Nadu will now get the opportunity to collaborate with overseas food institutes.**

Institute of National Importance (INI) is a status that may be conferred on a premier public higher education institution in India by an act of Parliament of India, an institution which "serves as a pivotal player in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region of the country/state". **Institutes of National Importance receive special recognition and funding from the Government of India.**

India commissions Nuclear Missiles Tracking 15,000-tonne Ship INS Dhruv

- **India commissioned the INS Dhruv (codenamed VC 1118) ship**, capable of tracking nuclear missiles and satellites from a distance, into the Navy. **INS Dhruv has been jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and Indian Navy.** The indigenously-developed surveillance ship has been built at Hindustan Ship Yard Ltd in Vishakhapatnam under the Make in India initiative. **This 15,000-tonne ship, which is also one of the largest warships built at an Indian shipyard, has cost nearly Rs 725 crore.**

- This ocean surveillance ship is also equipped with game changer active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars that can help India collect accurate data not just about an enemy nation's missile range and capabilities, but will also track our own strategic missiles that are in the trial stage.
- The sophisticated surveillance systems need 14 MW of power to fire up and that will be generated by INS Dhruv itself. So far, only four other countries — China, France, Russia and the US — have the capabilities that INS Dhruv carries.

The Indian Navy is the naval branch of the Indian Armed Forces. The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Navy. The Indian Navy traces its origins back to the East India Company's Marine which was founded in 1612 to protect British merchant shipping in the region. In 1793, the British East India Company established its rule over eastern part of the Indian subcontinent i.e. Bengal, but it was not until 1830 that the colonial navy was titled as His Majesty's Indian Navy. When India became a republic in 1950, the Royal Indian Navy as it had been named since 1934 was renamed to Indian Navy. Admiral Karambir Singh is the current Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy.

'Agriculture budget' exercise begins in Rajasthan

- The exercise for presenting a separate "agriculture budget", with the emphasis on welfare measures for farmers, has started in Rajasthan in accordance with the announcement made by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the 2021-22 State Budget. The new document will provide for innovations for the benefit of cultivators.
- The Rajasthan legislative assembly passed the state budget with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announcing to implement 'CM Chiranjeevi Yojna' from May 1 in the state under which every family in the state will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs 5 lakh. Gehlot announced renaming of Universal Health Coverage Scheme worth Rs 3,500 crore as CM Chiranjeevi Yojna and said registrations will start from April 1.

Rajasthan literally means "The Land of Kings". Rajasthan is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest by population. Jaipur is the capital city and also known as the Pink City, due to the dominant color scheme of its buildings. On 6 July 2019, UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed Jaipur the "Pink City of India" among its World Heritage Sites. The city is also home to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites Amber Fort and Jantar Mantar. Ashok Gehlot is serving as the current Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Kalraj Mishra is serving as the current Governor of Rajasthan.

Mission Gramodaya launched in Madhya Pradesh

- In Madhya Pradesh, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan have launched the Mission Gramodaya in the state. Under the Gramodaya mission, besides providing housing facilities in rural areas, basic and fundamental infrastructure will also be expanded.

Madhya Pradesh (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal. Nicknamed the "Heart of India" due to its geographical location in India. Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. The current governor of Madhya Pradesh is Anandiben Patel. Shivraj Singh Chouhan is the current Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

Bihar now first state in country to implement ethanol promotion policy

- Bihar has become the first state in the country to implement an ethanol promotion policy that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains. The Central government has already given permission for direct production of ethanol last December in consonance with National Policy of Biofuels, 2018.
- An investor would get a 15 per cent government subsidy — a maximum of Rs 5 crore — besides exemption from stamp duty, registration and land conversion fees, electricity duty reimbursement and employment and skill development subsidy as already being given under the state government's industrial promotion policy. SC/ST, EBC, women, differently-abled or acid attack survivor investors will be given 15.75 per cent subsidy up to a maximum of Rs 5.25 crore.

National Policy on Biofuels 2018 aims at increasing the utilization of biofuels in the energy and transportation sectors by promoting the production of biofuels from domestic feedstock in the coming decade. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has set an indicative target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol and 5% blending of biodiesel in diesel to be achieved by 2030.

UNDP launches 'Sahi Disha' campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods in rural India

- The UNDP has launched 'Sahi Disha' campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India. The campaign highlights issues and hurdles that impact the opportunities for women in rural India to access jobs and livelihoods and establish enterprises that can help them become more self-reliant.
- The Disha initiative, a five-year collaboration between UNDP and the IKEA Foundation, enabled one million women through skilling and counselling services to access job and livelihood opportunities across five states – Delhi NCR, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' global development network. It promotes technical and investment cooperation among nations and advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life for themselves. The UNDP provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries. The UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states. It is based in New York.

8.76 gigawatt renewable energy capacity added in the country during year 2019-20

- India added 9.7 GW of power generation capacity during April, 2020 to February, 2021 which includes 3.8 GW of conventional energy and 5.9 GW from renewable sources, Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha. In 2019-20, India had added 15.8 GW of power generation capacity including 7.1 GW of conventional sources and 8.8 GW of renewable sources.
- India has committed to generate 40 per cent of its total installed electricity generation capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by the year 2030. From April, 2015 till February, 2021, India has added 117.9 GW of power generation capacity which includes 64.5 GW of conventional source and 53.4 GW from renewable sources.

The Government of India has set a target of installing of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power.

Manipur emerges as the model state for Van Dhan Vikas Yojana

- The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of Minor Forest Produces by establishing Van Dhan Kendras to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-based tribes.
- One major scheme that has contributed to increasing employment and income generation among the tribal population is the Van Dhan tribal start-ups programme, a component of the The 'Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP' Scheme.
- Since its inception as the nodal agency working in the area of tribal upliftment, TRIFED has been implementing several programmes and initiatives. TRIFED is helping tribals generate their livelihood in these distressed times. The focus of these initiatives is to make India self-reliant under the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan, with the motto, Go Vocal for Local Go Tribal – Mera Van Mera Dhan Mera Udyam.

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) launched Van Dhan Samajik Doori Jagrookta Abhiyaan, which is aimed at educating Tribals engaged in gathering Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) in forest areas, on covid-19 response, key preventive behaviour like social distancing, home quarantine, and hygiene tips. TRIFED is a national level cooperative body under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It was established under the Multi-state co-operative societies act 1984 under the former Ministry of Welfare. Arjun Munda is the current Minister of Tribal Affairs.

Indian Navy inducts landing craft utility ship

- Enhancing its amphibious warfare capabilities, the Indian Navy inducted a landing craft utility ship which will be used for a variety of activities like transporting battle tanks and other heavy weapons systems. The eighth and last of the landing craft utility (LCU) mark-IV class ship was commissioned at an event in Port Blair.
- The ship was indigenously designed and built by state-run Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE), Kolkata. The LCU Mk-IV ships are amphibious vessels with a designated primary role of transporting main battle tanks, armoured vehicles, troops and equipment from ship to shore. The ship is manned by a team of five officers and 50 sailors, and is capable of carrying 160 troops in addition.
- “The induction of these ships will contribute to the nation’s maritime security needs and is in consonance with the Prime Minister’s vision of ‘Make in India’ and ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’”.

A Landing Craft Utility (LCU) is a type of boat used by amphibious forces to transport equipment and troops to the shore. They are capable of transporting tracked or wheeled vehicles and troops from amphibious assault ships to beachheads or piers.

New Nagar Van Scheme will help in creation of Urban forests in the cities

- In a message on the occasion of International Day of Forests, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said, the scheme will also fill the gap between the cities and villages in terms of having their own forest cover. India’s age-old tradition of developing and caring for village forests in vicinity of almost every rural patch. Under the Nagar Van Scheme, Urban forests will be developed in 200 cities in its first phase.
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21st March as the International Day of Forests in 2012. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

Indian Railways rolls out first AC 3-tier LHB economy class coach

- The Indian Railways announced that the trial of the first prototype of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) AC three-tier economy class coach has been completed successfully. The coach has been rolled out by the Railways’ coach factory in Kapurthala.
- The Railways also said that the economy coaches will be introduced in all express and mail trains which are currently running LHB coaches except the Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto and Jan Shatabdi trains. The Railways also informed that it has taken numerous steps to add more comfort for the travel of train passengers which include the introduction of vistadome coaches, modernization of existing coaches, changing the lighting and electrical system in the trains and improving the security system of the trains as well.

Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016. The practice of a separate Railway Budget was started by the British in 1924 under the recommendation of a 10-member Acworth Committee headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India, and thus came to end — a 92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets.

UNESCO teams up with Toonz Media, USO India for water conservation programme

- UNESCO has teamed up with USO India and Toonz Media Group for a creative water conservation awareness programme for students.
- The animation videos created by students will be unveiled on March 22, the World Water Day as part of the H₂O oooh! – Waterwise Program for school students conducted in partnership with National Mission for Clean Ganga, United Schools Organization India (USO India), Water Digest magazine and Toonz Media Group.
- The nation-wide water conservation awareness programme was aimed at school students between the age of 6-14 years, who submitted story ideas for animation short films to create awareness about water crisis in India.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the **United Nations (UN)** based in Paris. **Audrey Azoulay** appointed as the **Director-general** of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), becoming the **second female leader of the organization**.

Parliament passed Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill

- **Parliament** has passed the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021**. The **Bill** seeks to **amend the Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957** and provide for removal of distinction between captive and merchant mines.
- The **Bill** empowers the **Central Government** to issue directions regarding composition and utilization of funds maintained by the **District Mineral Foundation**. The **Bill** provides that **captive mines other than atomic minerals** may sell up to **50 per cent** of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
- According to **Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi**, the bill has been brought to reform the mining sector in the country. He pointed out that the country has large reserves of several minerals but only **45 percent** has been **tapped** so far, which results in more dependence on imports.

Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh HC Justice inaugurates 1st virtual court of state

- **Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Justice P.R. Ramachandra Menon** online inaugurated the **first virtual court of the state**. The Chief Justice said that by conducting online proceedings through virtual courts, judges will **save time for other court proceedings** and it is also convenient for the various parties.

Chhattisgarh was formed on **1 November 2000** by partitioning **10 Chhattisgarhi** and **6 Gondi** speaking southeastern districts of **Madhya Pradesh**. It is a **land locked state of India**. The capital city is **Raipur**. **Anusuiya Uikey** is present **Governor of Chhattisgarh**. **Bhupesh Baghel** is serving as the third and **current Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh**.

AIM, NITI Aayog, AWS announce new initiatives to boost innovation, entrepreneurship in India

- **Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and Amazon Web Services** announced **new initiatives** to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India. This will be done by empowering school students with cloud computing skills, and enabling entrepreneurs to **build innovative education technology solutions on the cloud**.
- A Statement of Intent was **signed between NITI Aayog and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited**, which **undertakes the resale and marketing of Amazon Web Services Cloud services in India**. Atal Innovation Mission will **leverage Amazon Web Services Educate**, which is **Amazon's global program** that provides resources for students and educators to accelerate cloud-related learning.
- **This program** will introduce the **fundamentals of cloud computing** such as **cloud storage, virtual compute power, web hosting, artificial intelligence**, machine learning, and virtual reality, to students at **more than 7000 Atal Tinkering Labs**. It will **equip the talented youth of the country with digital and web-based tools that can enhance their creative and innovative capabilities**.

The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** was set up by **NITI Aayog** with an objective to create and encourage an environment of innovation and entrepreneurship across schools, educational organisations, research institutes and industries including MSMEs. With a vision to **'Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators'**, **Atal Innovation Mission** is establishing **Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs)** in schools across India. **ATLs** are created as learning spaces for students between **Class 6 to 12** for them to develop skills and become adept at new technologies such as **artificial design (AI)**, design and computational thinking, adaptive learning, etc. The labs provide education way beyond existing educational pedagogy. In late-February 2020, **ATL** announced a collaboration with **NITI Aayog** and the **National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM)** to launch an introductory course module on **AI**.



Japan's Prime Minister Suga to become first foreign leader to visit Biden

- **Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga** will be travelling to the **United States** to meet **US President Joe Biden**. Suga will become the **first foreign leader to meet the newly-elected US President face-to-face**.
- **Suga will go to the U.S. in the first half of April** and will become the **first foreign leader to meet face-to-face with President Biden**, Chief Cabinet Secretary **Katsunobu Kato** told. The leaders' meeting is intended to show their **strong commitment to a free and fair Indo-Pacific region**, Kato said.

Naruhito is the **Emperor of Japan**. He **acceded to the Chrysanthemum Throne on 1 May 2019**, beginning the **Reiwa era**, following the **abdication of his father, Emperor Akihito**, on **30 April 2019**. He is the **126th monarch** according to **Japan's traditional order of succession**. **Tokyo** is the **capital city of Japan** and **yen** is the **official currency of Japan** and it is the **third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market** after the **United States dollar** and the **euro**.

India, Kuwait to establish Joint Commission to enhance ties

- **India and Kuwait** have **decided to establish a Joint Commission to enhance and deepen the ties of fraternity and friendship and support ways of cooperation in all fields**.
- The **Joint Commission** will be charged with formulating the required basis to **strengthen the relations between the two countries, particularly in the fields of energy, trade, economy, investment, and human resources**. It will be co-chaired by **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar** and his **Kuwait counterpart**.

Kuwait is a **country in Western Asia**. Situated in the northern edge of **Eastern Arabia** at the tip of the **Persian Gulf**, it borders **Iraq** to the north and **Saudi Arabia** to the south. **As of 2016, Kuwait has a population of 4.5 million people: 1.3 million are Kuwaitis and 3.2 million are expatriates. Expatriates account for approximately 70% of the population.** **Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah** is the **Crown Prince of Kuwait**. Aged **80 years**, he is the **oldest Crown Prince in the world**. The **Kuwaiti dinar** is the **currency of Kuwait**.

Britain's cabinet office to set up a "second flagship Head Quarter" in Glasgow

- **Britain's cabinet office** will set up a **"second flagship Head Quarter" in Glasgow** as the government plans to move some of its operations to **Scotland**. The decision comes in **wake of growing support for Scottish independence in recent times**. **Ties between Scotland and the rest of Britain** have been **badly strained by a much-criticised COVID-19 pandemic response and Brexit**, which a majority in **Scotland** opposed.
- **Scottish nationalists** are pushing for an **independence referendum to be held after Scottish parliament election** in **May**, but **British Prime Minister Boris Johnson** has said such votes should happen only once in a generation. **In a referendum in 2014, Scots had voted 55%-45% to remain in the United Kingdom**.
- **Brexit** was the **withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) at the end of 31 January 2020 CET**. To date, the **UK is the first and only country formally to leave the EU, after 47 years of being a member state within the bloc, after having first joined its predecessor, the European Communities (EC), on 1 January 1973**. It continued to participate in the **European Union Customs Union and European Single Market during a transition period that ended on 31 December 2020**.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK or U.K.), or Britain, is a sovereign country in north-western Europe, off the north-western coast of the European mainland. **The United Kingdom includes the island of Great Britain**, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and many smaller islands within the British Isles. **The United Kingdom's capital is London**. **Boris Johnson** has been **Prime Minister of the United Kingdom** and **Leader of the Conservative Party** since July 2019. **Elizabeth II** (Elizabeth Alexandra Mary) is **Queen of the United Kingdom** and **15 other Commonwealth realms**. **Pound sterling** is the official currency of the United Kingdom.

Abu Dhabi's Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities Launches World's First Bachelor Of Tolerance And Coexistence

- **The Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu Dhabi, UAE, has launched the world's first Bachelor of Tolerance and Coexistence, to spread a culture of human fraternity and contribute to sustainable social development.**
- **The degree aims to create graduates with a high level of academic knowledge and practical skills that enable them to spread a culture of tolerance and coexistence.** It includes courses that promote these values, as well as covering the role of media in encouraging a cohesive society, comparative religion and Islam.
- **The new bachelor's degree was adopted at the first meeting of the MBZUH Board of Trustees in January and aims to achieve the university's vision of excellence and leadership, and to establish Abu Dhabi as the capital of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and civilized dialogue.**
- **It follows the United Nations' declaration of 4th February to be International Day of Human Fraternity, in recognition of the historic meeting between Pope Francis and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed el-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi on this date in 2019.** During the meeting, the two religious leaders signed the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.
- **MBZUH, launched in November 2020, is a first-of-its-kind higher education institution, offering programmes in social studies, humanities and philosophy for bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees.**

Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. **Khalifa Al Nahyan** is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum** is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. **United Arab Emirates dirham** is the currency of the United Arab Emirates. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the west and south and by Oman to the east and northeast. The land border with Qatar in the Khawr al Udayd area is a source of ongoing dispute.

Bolivia's former President Jeanine Anez sent to four month jail term

- **Bolivia's former President Jeanine Anez** was sent to **four month jail term**. Investigators are probing allegations that she helped in a coup that led to the removal of longtime leader **Evo Morales** from power in 2019.
- The arrest of the conservative interim leader, who was in power for less than a year after the ouster of leftist Morales, has sparked sharp criticism from **human rights groups and the Organization of American States (OAS)**, who say **judicial channels are being abused for political ends**.

Bolivia is a landlocked country located in western-central South America. **The constitutional capital is Sucre**, while the seat of government and executive capital is La Paz. **The sovereign state of Bolivia is a constitutionally unitary state, divided into nine departments.** **The boliviano** is the currency of Bolivia. **Luis Arce Catacora** is serving as the current President of Bolivia since 2020.

Chinese capital faces largest sandstorm in a decade

- **China's capital Beijing** is facing a heavy sandstorm as the city was covered with a thick brown dust cover due to heavy winds blowing in from northern parts of China, reducing visibility to less than 1,000 meters.

- The China Meteorological Administration announced a yellow, saying that the **sandstorms had spread from Inner Mongolia into the provinces of Gansu, Shanxi and Hebei, which surrounds Beijing.** The meteorological agency called it the “the strongest sandstorm in the past decade” which has reached the level of a strong storm which has smothered the capital and other northern Chinese regions.

China is a country in East Asia and the world’s most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People’s Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People’s Republic of China. National People’s Congress is the national legislature of the People’s Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China’s currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund’s basket of reserve currencies. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line.

Italy signs International Solar Alliance under amended ISA Framework Agreement

- **Italy signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement. The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.**
- **The External Affairs Ministry said, the Framework Agreement was signed by Italy’s Ambassador, Vincenzo De Luca. The signed copies of the Agreement were received by Additional Secretary (ER), as the representative of External Affairs Ministry, which is the depositary of ISA Framework Agreement.**

The International Solar Alliance is a common platform for cooperation among sun-rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. The initiative was launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris at the end of 2015 by the then, President of France and the Prime Minister of India. In January 2016, Narendra Modi, and the then, French President François Hollande jointly laid the foundation stone of the International Solar Alliance headquarters and inaugurated the interim Secretariat at the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gwalpahari, Gurugram, India.

EU adopts ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ to counter China’s growing influence in Europe

- **As China’s increasing aggressiveness to undermine European unity through a ‘divide and rule’ policy continues, the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries have responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing’s influence, known as the ‘Sinatra Doctrine’.**
- **The doctrine would be based on two pillars: continuing cooperation with China in regards to address global challenges such as climate change, combating COVID-19 and regional conflicts, while also strengthening the European Union’s (EU) strategic sovereignty by protecting technological sectors of its economy, according to EU Reporter. This ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ is being seen by scholars as a threat and a blowback to China’s growing influence in the CEE.**

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. The EU has developed an internal single market through a standardised system of laws that apply in all member states in those matters, and only those matters, where members have agreed to act as one. A monetary union was established in 1999, coming into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 EU member states which use the euro currency. Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician and physician who has been the President of the European Commission since 1 December 2019. Charles Michel is a Belgian politician serving as President of the European Council since 2019.

Tanzania’s ‘Bulldozer’ president and Covid-19 sceptic dies at 61

- **Tanzania’s President John Magufuli, admired by followers for his hostility to corruption and waste but regarded by foes as an irascible authoritarian intolerant of dissent and sceptical about COVID-19, has died.**
- **He was nicknamed “The Bulldozer” for his fondness for massive public works and a reputation for pushing through policies despite opposition – a hard-charging leadership style that won support from many Tanzanians.**

Tanzania is a country in East Africa within the African Great Lakes region. Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, is in northeastern Tanzania. Dodoma is the national capital of Tanzania. The shilingi is the currency of Tanzania. Samia Suluhu Hassan is serving as the current President of Tanzania.

India ranks 139 out of 149 countries in World Happiness Report

- **India has been ranked 139, out of 149 countries evaluated, in the World Happiness Report 2021, which has been collated slightly differently due to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.**
- **The annual report, released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, measures subjective well-being by relying on three main indicators: life evaluations, positive emotions, and negative emotions.**
- **To measure life evaluations, the Gallup World Poll, which remains the principal source of data for the report, asks people to evaluate their current life using the image of a ladder, with the best possible life for them as a 10 and worst possible as a 0.**
- **According to the report, life evaluations provide the most informative measure for international comparisons because they capture the quality of life “in a more complete and stable way than emotional reports based on daily experiences.”**
- **For the third year in a row, Finland has placed at the top of the list as the happiest country in the world, with Denmark coming in second, followed by Switzerland, which pushed Norway out of the top three this year.**
- **Finland was able to defend its title of the world's happiest country as the overall rankings, according to the report, “remained very similar to last year.” The other countries that scored high on the rankings include Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, and the Netherlands. The United States has been ranked 19, five spots behind Canada, while people in Afghanistan remained the least happy. In the World Happiness Report 2020, India was ranked 144 out of 156 countries surveyed.**
- **Besides the happiest countries, the World Happiness Report also looked at the places where people are the unhappiest. This year, Afghanistan was named the unhappiest place in the world, followed by South Sudan and Zimbabwe.**

The World Happiness Report is an annual survey by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations. It looks at the state of global happiness in 156 countries, ranking countries using the Gallup World Poll and six factors: levels of GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom and corruption income. The World Happiness Report was originally launched in 2012.

In world's first, thieves in UK to wear GPS tags to control crimes

- **In a first such experiment across the world, burglars, thieves and robbers in the UK will be made to wear GPS tags in a bid to stop them from recommitting any offence.**
- **According to the new rules, convicts who have been jailed for a year or more will be tied up with a GPS tag on release, allowing authorities to track their movements 24/7.**
- **As over half of those convicted of theft and burglary recommit a crime within a year and about 80 per cent of cases resulting in no suspect being identified, the Ministry of Justice said the new rules will add to police's arsenal extra intelligence to nab such people.**

Tanzania's Samia Suluhu Hassan sworn in as first female President

- **Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as Tanzania's first female President after the sudden death of John Magufuli from an illness shrouded in mystery.**
- **Under the constitution, Hassan will serve the remainder of Magufuli's second five-year term, which does not expire until 2025. She is the only other current serving female head of state in Africa alongside Ethiopia's President Sahle-Work Zewde, whose role is mainly ceremonial.**
- **A stalwart in the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), she was named Magufuli's running mate in the 2015 presidential campaign.**

South Africa has world's most dangerous roads; India in fourth place: Study

- **South Africa** has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in while **India** came in at **fourth place**, according to a research study undertaken by international driver education company **Zutobi**.
- Among the list of **56 countries** in the study, **Thailand** came in **second position** and the **US** took up **third spot**. The **safest roads in the world** can be found in **Norway**, with its Scandinavian neighbour **Sweden** having the third safest roads while **Japan** took second place, according to the study.
- These factors included estimates on the number of road traffic deaths per 100,000 population; the percentage of car occupants who use a seat-belt when travelling in the front of a vehicle; and the proportion of road traffic deaths which have been attributed to alcohol consumption over the national legal limit. These estimates were based on the **World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory data repository**.

Zutobi is an international driver's education company with driving courses in the **United States**, **United Kingdom**, **Australia**, **Sweden**, and **Germany** and **France**. The courses are tailored to the specific traffic laws and regulations in each country or state.

EU joins India's disaster resilient infrastructure initiative

- The **27-member European Union** has joined **India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative**, following its endorsement of the charter of the CDRI earlier.
- Launched by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in 2019 at the **UN Climate Change Summit**, the **CDRI** is an international platform involving public and private sector, aiming to promote resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks while supporting sustainable development.

The **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** is an international coalition of countries, **United Nations (UN) agencies**, **multilateral development banks**, the private sector, and academic institutions, that aims to promote disaster-resilient infrastructure. It was launched by the **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** at the **2019 UN Climate Action Summit** in **September 2019**. CDRI was first proposed by **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** during the **2016 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction** held at **Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi**. Modi's "experience in dealing with the aftermath of the 2001 Gujarat earthquake" as the Chief Minister led him to the idea.

Operation Sankalp: Indian Navy undertakes Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force

- **Indian Navy** undertook **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** with **Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq** in the **Persian Gulf** under **Operation Sankalp**.
- "Enhancing interoperability & strengthening bilateral Maritime cooperation, **Reassuring Diaspora & merchant shipping INS Talwar Mission Deployed for Op Sankalp, undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf** on 17 Mar 2021,".
- PASSEXs are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other's ports or during a rendezvous at sea. **Maritime Security Operations, code-named Op Sankalp** was initiated in the **Gulf region** on **June 19, 2019**, in the aftermath of the attacks on merchant ships in the **Gulf of Oman**.

Bahrain is a sovereign state in the **Persian Gulf**. **Manama** is the **capital and largest city** of Bahrain. **Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa** is the **heir apparent and first deputy Prime Minister** of the Bahrain. The **dinar** is the **currency** of Bahrain. The kingdom shares maritime borders with **Iran, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia**.



Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 introduced in Rajya Sabha

- The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeking increase in the FDI limit to 74 per cent in the domestic Insurance Companies was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the bill which aims at amending the Insurance Act, 1938. The FDI limit in the Indian Insurance companies at the moment stands at 49 per cent.
- The Union Finance Minister had already made the proposal to enhance the FDI limit in the sector in her General Budget for Financial year 2021-22. The legislation seeks to achieve the objective of Government's Foreign Direct Investment Policy of supplementing domestic long-term capital, technology and skills for the growth of the economy and the insurance sector, thereby enhancing insurance penetration and social protection.

Insurance in India refers to the market for insurance in India which covers both the public and private sector organisations. It is listed in the Constitution of India in the Seventh Schedule as a Union List subject, meaning it can only be legislated by the Central Government only. The insurance sector has gone through a number of phases by allowing private companies to solicit insurance and also allowing foreign direct investment. India allowed private companies in insurance sector in 2000, setting a limit on FDI to 26%, which was increased to 49% in 2014. Since the privatisation in 2001, the largest life-insurance company in India, Life Insurance Corporation of India has seen its market share slowly slipping to private giants like HDFC Life, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance and SBI Life Insurance Company.

Uber Grants UK Drivers Worker Status in World First

- Uber is granting its UK drivers worker status, with benefits including a minimum wage - a world first for the US ride-hailing giant. Uber said its drivers would also get holiday pay and a pension. Weeks after a top court ruling that could shake up Britain's wider "gig economy" of 5.5 million people, Uber said its drivers would also get holiday pay and a pension.

Uber Technologies, Inc., commonly known as Uber, is an American technology company. Its services include ride-hailing, food delivery (Uber Eats), package delivery, couriers, freight transportation, and, through a partnership with Lime, electric bicycle and motorized scooter rental. The company is based in San Francisco and has operations in over 900 metropolitan areas worldwide. It is one of the largest firms in the gig economy. In 2009, Uber was founded as Ubercab by Garrett Camp, a computer programmer and the co-founder of StumbleUpon, and Travis Kalanick, who sold his Red Swoosh startup for \$19 million in 2007.

Nazara to become first gaming firm to list on Indian exchanges

- Mumbai-headquartered Nazara Technologies became the first gaming company to list its shares on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), in the world's second-most populous country. Founded by Nitish Mittersain in 1999, the diversified gaming and sports media platform counts marquee Indian investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, IIFL Special Opportunities Fund, Turtle Entertainment GmbH, Seedfund2 International, and Good Game Investment Trust as its key backers. Nazara was incorporated over two decades ago in 1999.

RBI asks banks to implement image-based Cheque Truncation System in all branches by Sep 30

- Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30 this year. The move is aimed at faster settlement of cheques resulting in better customer service. Last month, the RBI had announced pan-India coverage of CTS by bringing all bank branches under the image-based clearing mechanism.
- The Apex bank said that to leverage the availability of CTS and provide uniform customer experience irrespective of location of her/his bank branch, it has been decided to extend CTS across all bank branches in the country. To facilitate this, banks will have to ensure that all their branches participate in image-based CTS under respective grids by September 30.

The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1 April 1935 to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled “The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution” and presented to the Hilton Young Commission. The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton–Young Commission. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-headed government nationalised 14 major commercial banks. Upon Indira Gandhi’s return to power in 1980, a further six banks were nationalised. The first Governor of the RBI was British banker Osborn Smith and C.D. Deshmukh was the first Indian Governor of RBI. Shashikant Das is the current Governor of RBI.

Government of India to launch ‘Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra’ portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors

- Government of India will soon launch ‘Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra’ portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
- In order to further strengthen efforts to promote domestic investments, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is in the process of finalising the ‘Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra’ digital portal. The portal is in testing phase and the final version will be ready for launch by 15th May this year. The webpage will also be available in regional languages and mobile App in due course.

In world-first trial, Japan-Australia venture starts producing hydrogen from dirty coal

- A Japanese-Australian venture has begun producing hydrogen from brown coal in a A\$500 million (\$390 million) pilot project that aims to show liquefied hydrogen can be produced commercially and exported safely overseas. The plan is to create the first international supply chain for liquefied hydrogen and the next big step will be to ship a cargo on the world’s first liquefied hydrogen carrier.
- Australia, already dominant in global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade, is hoping liquefied hydrogen will give it a greener market for its coal and gas. Run by Kawasaki Heavy Industries and located in the state of Victoria, home to a quarter of the world’s known brown coal reserves, the project is key to helping Japan meet its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- The world’s fifth-largest energy consumer aims to boost its annual hydrogen demand tenfold to 20 million tonnes by 2050, equivalent to about 40% of its current power generation. Brown coal is considered the lowest rank of coal due to its relatively low energy content and has fuelled some of Australia’s dirtiest power stations, some of which have already shut or are slated for closure.

ReNew Power becomes world’s first clean energy firm to enter WEF’s Global Lighthouse Network

- Renewable energy firm, ReNew Power has entered the World Economic Forum’s (WEF) list of companies recognised for using new technologies to achieve sustainable growth. It added that it is the world’s first clean energy company and one of the only two Indian firms to be recognised by the WEF’s Global Lighthouse Network this year.
- The Lighthouse Network is a cross-sector international network of 69 companies – from technology, heavy industry, consumer products, healthcare, and energy sectors – recognised for use of technology to grow their bottom line, without increasing their environmental footprint.

Deutsche Bank executes world's first green hedge with Continuum

- **Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd**, a subsidiary of Continuum Green Energy (Continuum), have **executed the world's first green hedging transaction**, with a **second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework**.
- The green hedge, he explained, manages the currency exposure, **ensuring the underlying green projects are financially sustainable**, while ensuring investors receive their returns on the green bond.
- **Sustainability is a core pillar in Deutsche Bank's transformation strategy** and the bank is committed to supporting clients as they transition for the zero carbon economy. Last year in **Asia Pacific Deutsche Bank structured Asia's first currency hedge linked to sustainability key performance indicators**. This hedge structure was **assessed and approved against Deutsche Bank's Sustainable Finance Framework**.

Deutsche Bank AG is a German multinational investment bank and financial services company headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany, and dual-listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange.

Cabinet approves setting up Development Finance Institution

- **Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up Development Finance Institution (DFI)** with an **initial capital infusion of 20 thousand crore rupees**. DFI is expected to raise long-term funds for infrastructure development projects in the country.
- **The initial grant to the DFI will be 5 thousand crore rupees** and additional increments of grants will be made **within the limit of 5 thousand crore rupees**. The Government is also planning to issue some securities to this Institution by which the cost of funding will come down and all this will help DFI leverage initial capital which draws funds from various sources.

633,000 'New Middle Class' households In India: Hurun India report

- **Hurun India Wealth Report 2020** released has **identified a novel household category in India – the 'New Middle Class' – with an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum**.
- These households, the report says, have major allocation towards physical assets such as primary residential property and automobiles. **Hurun India pegs the total number of such cumulative households in India at 633,000**.
- According to Hurun, **there are 412,000 dollar-millionaire households / affluent households in India with a net worth of at least Rs 7 crore**. **Hurun Rich Listers have a wealth of Rs 1,000 crore**, the report says, and **pegs the number of such cumulative households in India at 3,000**.
- At the other end of the spectrum is the 'Indian middle class' that has **earnings of over Rs 2.5-lakh per annum and a net worth of less than Rs 7 crore**. "It is estimated that around **56400,000 families in India** fall under this category," findings of the Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 suggest.
- Region-wise, **the top 10 states are home to 70.3 per cent of millionaire households** in the country. **Maharashtra, the report said, has the highest number of millionaires (56,000), followed by Uttar Pradesh (36,000), Tamil Nadu (35,000), Karnataka (33,000) and Gujarat (29,000)**. City-wise, Mumbai is home to most millionaires (16,933), followed by Delhi (16,000), Kolkata (10,000), Bengaluru (7,582) and Chennai (4,685).

India's IT firms to collaborate with Finland

- **Information technology majors Wipro and Tech Mahindra are collaborating with Finnish companies to develop 5G and 6G technologies for use in India**, besides other markets.
- **The tech company, Nokia has already started working in the rural areas of India so as to expand the 5G applications**. This was announced after the Indian Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Finland hold a virtual summit on March 16, 2021.
- **Finland has been a pioneer in technologies such as 2G, 3G and 4G**. So, the Indian tech companies namely **Wipro and Tech Mahindra are working with the companies and institutes in Finland** to further the collaboration and expansion of 5G technology and evolution of the 6G technologies.

SBI and IOCL ink \$100 million first SOFR linked deal in the ECB market

- The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) had inked the first deal in the external commercial borrowing (ECB) market using the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR). SBI and Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) have inked a \$100 million deal for five years.
- SOFR is the new alternative benchmark rate which will replace LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate), which is the existing benchmark rate. SOFR will replace LIBOR by end of 2021. The sunset has been triggered by the decision of Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in the UK not to compel contributing banks for LIBOR calculation after December 2021.

On April 1, 2017, the State Bank of India, which was India's largest bank, merged with five of its associate banks (State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore), and with the Bharatiya Mahila Bank. Dinesh Kumar Khara is the current chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). Imperial Bank of India was the oldest and the largest commercial bank of the Indian subcontinent, and was subsequently transformed into State Bank of India in 1955.

India leads m-cap gains in top markets

- Indian stocks gained the most among the world's top 10 nations by market value this fiscal, underscoring the strength of the rally that remained unshaken by covid-induced turmoil and economic uncertainties.
- India's aggregate market capitalization soared 88% in dollar terms this fiscal year, showed data from Bloomberg. Despite the sharp rise, India remained at the eighth position among countries with a market capitalization of \$2.8 trillion.
- The US, with a market capitalization of \$45.83 trillion, and China at \$10.57 trillion saw an aggregate market capitalization expansion of 67% and 52%, respectively, from April 2020 so far. Canada (\$2.89 trillion) saw a growth of 78%, while Saudi Arabia (\$2.53 trillion) made the lowest gain of 28% among the top 10 markets.

India slips to 56th in house price index: Report

- India's ranking stood at 56th globally in terms of home price appreciation, down 13 notches from 43rd in the same quarter last year, according to the report, which said as much as 89 per cent of the countries and territories saw prices going up in 2020.
- The Knight Frank global house price index tracks the movement in mainstream residential prices across 56 countries and territories worldwide using official statistics.

Mobile Seva Appstore

- India's first indigenously developed Appstore, 'Mobile Seva Appstore' hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services. "The government also noted that there has to be a proper Indian App Store for hosting apps free of cost in the initial stages".

Rating agency Moody's projects India's GDP to grow by 12 % this year

- American business and financial services company Moody's Analytics has projected India's GDP to grow by 12% in 2021.
- Battered by the coronavirus pandemic, Indian economy is officially projected to contract 8% in FY21, in its worst show in more than four decades. However, most professional forecasters have projected double-digit growth for India in FY22, considered mostly a statistical rebound than a V-shaped recovery.

Moody's Investors Service, often referred to as Moody's, is the bond credit rating business of Moody's Corporation, representing the company's traditional line of business and its historical name. Moody's Investors Service provides international financial research on bonds issued by commercial and government entities. Moody's, along with Standard & Poor's and Fitch Group, is considered one of the Big Three credit rating agencies. Moody's was founded by John Moody in 1909 to produce manuals of statistics related to stocks and bonds and bond ratings. It is headquartered in New York.



Inventions/Discoveries

Artificial photosynthesis to provide solutions for carbon capture and conversion

- **Scientists have found a method to mimic nature's own process of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere**, namely photosynthesis, to capture excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- **This artificial photosynthesis (AP) harnesses solar energy and converts the captured carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide (CO)**, which can be used as a fuel for internal combustion engines.
- In artificial photosynthesis (AP), **scientists are essentially conducting the same fundamental process in natural photosynthesis but with simpler nanostructures**. However, there are plenty of hurdles to overcome as a successful catalyst to carry out AP.
- **A team of Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research**, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, designed and **fabricated an integrated catalytic system based on a metal-organic framework (MOF-808) comprising of a photosensitizer (molecules which absorb light and transfer the electron from the incident light into another nearby molecule)** that can harness solar power and a catalytic centre that can eventually reduce CO₂.
- The scientists have **immobilized a photosensitizer, which is a chemical called ruthenium bipyridyl complex ([Ru(bpy)₂Cl₂]) and a catalytic part which is another chemical called rhenium carbonyl complex ([Re(CO)₅Cl])**, inside the nanospace of metal-organic framework for artificial photosynthesis.
- Both these molecular entities stay in close proximity in the **confined nano-space of a porous metal-organic framework system resulting in excellent CO₂ uptake capability at room temperature**. This synthetic strategy empowers efficient solar light-driven photocatalysis.
- **The developed catalyst exhibited excellent visible-light-driven CO₂ reduction to CO with more than 99% selectivity**. The catalyst also oxidizes water to produce oxygen (O₂). The photocatalytic assembly, when assessed for CO₂ reduction under direct sunlight in a water medium without any additives, showed superior performance of CO production. Being heterogeneous, the integrated catalytic assembly can be reused for several catalytic cycles without losing its activity.

Hemiandrus jacinda: insect named after New Zealand Prime Minister

- **New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, has received what may be her greatest accolade yet: a large insect named in her honour.**
- A new species of weta – a giant flightless cricket that is endemic to New Zealand – has been **named Hemiandrus jacinda for being Labour-party red in colour and "long-limbed"**.

ISRO launches sounding rocket RH-560

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a sounding rocket to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics from Sriharikota spaceport.**

- **ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm, according to the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.**

ISRO is the space agency of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. ISRO was formed in 1969. ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan is current the chairperson of the ISRO. Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) or Sriharikota Range (SHAR) is a rocket launch centre operated by ISRO. It is located in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

Pakistan is world's second most polluted nation: Report

- **Bangladesh ranks first in the list released by World Air Quality Report 2020. India ranks better than Pakistan in the third position.** The list includes names of 106 nations across the globe.
- **The report said South Asia is the most polluted region of the world with Bangladesh, India and Pakistan sharing 42 of the 50 most polluted cities worldwide.** The 2020 World Air Quality Report is based on PM2.5 data from 106 countries that has been measured by ground-based monitoring stations.

In a first, India set to explore uranium reserves in Arunachal

- **Indian authorities are looking for uranium reserves just three kilometres from the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh in a first-ever such exercise.**
- **The exploration was taken up in Aalo of West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, about 619 meters from ground level.** Uranium is used for producing nuclear energy which is considered clean energy.

22 of world's 30 most polluted cities are in India

- **Twenty-two of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally.**
- **The report is prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, in the form of the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', which has released globally.** The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15 per cent from 2019 to 2020. It said that despite the improvement, **Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.**
- **Besides Delhi, the 21 other Indian cities among the 30 most polluted cities in the world are Ghaziabad, Bulandshahar, Bishakh Jalalpur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow, Meerut, Agra and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, Bhiwari in Rajasthan, Faridabad, Jind, Hisar, Fatehabad, Bandhwari, Gurugram, Yamuna Nagar, Rohtak and Dharuhera in Haryana, and Muzaffarpur in Bihar. As per the report, the top most polluted city is Xinjiang in China followed by nine Indian cities.**

New plant species found in Chittoor

- **A team of botanists has recently stumbled upon a new rattlepod species in the Sadasivakona grove area of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh, which is part of the southern Eastern ghats.** The discovery has been published in the latest edition of the noted international journal Phytotaxa.
- **During their field study, botanists P. Sivaramakrishna and P. Yugandhar from Sri Venkateswara University and Lalji Singh, Scientist-E from the Botanical Survey of India, Andaman and Nicobar regional centre, came across the species growing in the pasture lands in Sadasivakona.**
- **Named as Crotalaria lamelliformis, the ascending herb is unique for its distinct features such as adpressed white hairs beneath the lower surface of leaves, inflorescence short-terminal racemes, 6-8 bright yellow flowers, unequal calyx lobes, anterior two sepals fused and standard petal sub-orbicular with short claw surrounded by white cottony hairs.**

Singapore builds floating solar farms in climate fight

- **Thousands of panels glinting in the sun stretch into the sea off Singapore, part of the land-scarce city-state's push to build floating solar farms to cut greenhouse gas emissions.** It may be one of the world's smallest countries, but the prosperous financial hub is among the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in Asia.

- One newly built solar farm **spreads out from the coast into the Johor Strait, which separates Singapore from Malaysia.** The 13,000 panels are anchored to the seabed and can produce five megawatts of electricity, enough to power 1,400 flats for an entire year.
- **Under development at Tengeh Reservoir is a far bigger project** – once completed later this year, the 122,000-panel solar farm will be one of the **biggest in Southeast Asia covering an area the size of 45 football pitches.**

Russia deploys giant space telescope in Lake Baikal

- **Russian scientists launched one of the world’s biggest underwater space telescopes to peer deep into the universe from the pristine waters of Lake Baikal.** The deep underwater telescope, which has been under construction since 2015, is designed to observe neutrinos, the smallest particles currently known.
- **Dubbed Baikal-GVD, the telescope was submerged to a depth of 750-1,300 meters (2,500-4,300 feet), around four kilometres from the lake’s shore.** Neutrinos are very hard to detect and water is an effective medium for doing so. The floating observatory consists of strings with spherical glass and stainless steel modules attached to them.

Gibraltar ‘first nation in world’ to vaccinate entire adult population

- **The tiny British overseas territory — famed for its Rock of Gibraltar — has become the “first nation in the world” to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19.**
- Located on the Iberian Peninsula on Spain’s south coast, with an area of just 2.6 square miles and 33,701 residents, **Gibraltar reached the milestone as First Minister Fabian Picardo thanked the UK for its contribution to the vaccine rollout.**

IIT Kharagpur & University of Manchester launch dual award PhD programme

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur and The University of Manchester have launched a dual award PhD programme.** While IIT Kharagpur has already established similar programmes with universities in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, **this is the first time such a joint programme has been set up with a British university.**
- The PhD programme, which will **represent the next phase of the strategic partnership of the two leading institutes in India and the UK,** will also serve to consolidate and build on existing research collaborations across a number of thematic areas including environmental geochemistry, biomaterials and Industry 4.0.

India to conduct airborne radar surveys of Himalayan glaciers

- **India plans to conduct airborne radar surveys to estimate the thickness of Himalayan glaciers,** with a pilot study to be **conducted in Lahaul-Spiti basin of Himachal Pradesh.** Once the pilot project is done, similar studies will be conducted in Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra sub-basins.
- The development assumes **significance given the importance of glaciers in India’ river systems and the 500 million lives they sustain downstream in the Indo-Gangetic plains.**
- They are also important from the energy security standpoint and have a strategic imperative. **This also comes in the backdrop of India being one of the most vulnerable country for extreme weather events, ranking 20th on Climate Risk Index (CRI).**
- Also, the country was recently witness to a human tragedy when several people lost their lives, **after a glacier near Raini village above Rishiganga river in Uttarakhand burst in February.**



Sports Personalities in News

Tokyo Olympics 2021: Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer to qualify for the Games

- Tamil Nadu's Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi scripted history as she became the first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games. Bhavani secured a spot for the Tokyo Olympics at the World Cup in Hungary.

Abu Dhabi-owned Mumbai City wins first Indian Super League title

- Mumbai City has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title just over a year after being taken over by the owners of English Premier League giants Manchester City.
- India midfielder Bipin Singh scored a 90th-minute winner to edge out three-time winners ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final played behind closed doors in Goa.

Kapil Dev inducted as Professional Golf Tour of India board member

- Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI). Kapil Dev, who captained India to World Cup glory in 1983, said he would work for the development of golf in the country.

Government to set up Winter Sports Institute in Gulmarg

- Youth Affairs & Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has said that the government is working to set up a Winter Sports Institute in Gulmarg, Kashmir.

India's first pro league for kho kho

- India's first professional kho kho league — Ultimate Kho Kho League — is set to begin later this year. Teams will comprise under-18 men from all states across India registered under the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI).
- Player drafts are scheduled for the middle of this year and franchise owners will be offered a bank of over 150 Indian players, based on their performance and scores in Nationals and the recently concluded high performance training camp in February.
- Kho Kho is a popular tag game invented in Maharashtra, India. It is played by teams of 12 nominated players out of fifteen, of which nine enter the field who sit on their knees (Chasing Team), and 3 extra (Defending Team) who try to avoid being touched by members of the opposing team.

Yashaswini Deswal wins 1st gold medal for India in Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final

- Yashaswini Deswal bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range. Deswal accumulated 238.8 points to lead in her category. Another Indian shooter Manu Bhaker won a silver medal with 236.7 points.

MISCELLANEOUS

India's first online entrepreneurship programme for kids comes to Jaipur

- **Motion Education**, under the astute leadership of edupreneur **Nitin Vijay**, has developed a futuristic entrepreneurship e-programme for kids aged between 8-16 years. Considering the safety and convenience for young students, the programme will be delivered **digitally in Jaipur effective first quarter of the financial year**.
- This innovative course is strategically designed to align with the objectives of PM Modi's three flagship programmes viz., Startup India, Skill India, and Digital India. **The planned e-Programme in Jaipur aims to bring out the city's talents**, which will help the pink city emerge as the reservoir of entrepreneurs.

Bangladesh renames Ministry of Information as Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

- The government of Bangladesh has decided to rename the Ministry of Information to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The gazette notification for the change in name has been issued after getting the approval from the President.

PM Modi expresses grief over demise of Kathakali maestro Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has expressed grief over demise of Kathakali maestro **Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair**. Saddened by the demise of Kathakali maestro, **Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair**. His passion towards Indian culture and spirituality was legendary. He made exceptional efforts to groom upcoming talent in our classical dances. My thoughts are with his family and admirers.

Sanjaya Baru's book to tell inside story of India's power elite

- **Sanjaya Baru**, former advisor to **Manmohan Singh**, will take readers from the corridors of Parliament to Delhi's hidden durbars as he tells the "untold story" of Indian society in his new book.
- In "India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution", to be released in April by **Penguin Random House India** under its **Viking imprint**, **Baru** will unveil the emerging dynamics of the power elites in contemporary India.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Principal Advisor in PMO P.K. Sinha resigns

- Former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Advisor in the **Prime Minister's Office (PMO) P.K. Sinha** has **relinquished his high-profile position on personal grounds.**

Gurdeep Singh of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party takes oath as Senator

- **Gurdeep Singh** from the ruling **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party** took the oath as a **Senator**, becoming the **first turban-clad Sikh representative** in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament.
- **Mr. Singh**, from the party of **Prime Minister Imran Khan** became the **first turban-clad Sikh representative from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan's Senate** on March 3. He defeated rival candidates on a minority seat by a huge margin in the election to the upper chamber of Parliament.

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of international body Stop TB Partnership Board

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare **Dr Harsh Vardhan** has been **appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board**. He was **appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by 2025.**
- **Dr Harsh Vardhan** will serve a **three-year term, commencing from July this year**. The **Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB.**
- The participation of a wide range of constituencies gives this global body the credibility and the broad range of medical, social and financial expertise needed to defeat TB. **The Partnership's vision is a TB-free world.**
- The appointment of **Dr Harsh Vardhan** as the Chair of this prestigious global body is a proud recognition of India's political commitment to the eradication of TB. **Established in the year 2000, the 'Stop TB Partnership' is mandated to eliminate Tuberculosis as a public health problem.**

Indra Nooyi's memoir, 'My Life in Full', will be released

- **Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi** has a **memoir coming out this fall that her publisher is calling an "unvarnished take"** on her rise to becoming one of the world's most powerful women.
- **"My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future"** will be published Sept. 28.

AWARDS

Pritzker Prize 2021 awarded to Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal

- **Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal** have been announced as the winners of the prestigious **Pritzker Architecture Prize for 2021**. The French architecture duo have championed considerate, sustainable architecture since they set up their practice in Paris in 1987. It followed joint work in Niamey, Niger, where Vassal relocated for a period of time to practise urban planning.
- **It was in Niger that they created their first built project together** – a straw hut, constructed with locally sourced bush branches. Returning to Paris, they have since completed a slew of critically acclaimed work, such as Latapie House in Floirac (1993) and House in Cap Ferret (1998), both in France; and a wealth of multi-family housing schemes, in their home country and abroad, including two apartment buildings in Mulhouse (2005 and 2015).
- The **Pritzker Architecture Prize** is awarded annually “to honor a living architect or architects whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture”. **Founded in 1979 by Jay A. Pritzker and his wife Cindy, the award is funded by the Pritzker family and sponsored by the Hyatt Foundation. It is considered to be one of the world’s premier architecture prizes, and is often referred to as the Nobel Prize of architecture.**

Ambassador of India to Thailand receives King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award for ICAR

- **Ambassador of India to Thailand Suchitra Durai** received the prestigious **King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research**. Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives of Thailand **Dr. Chalermchai Srion** conferred the award in a Ceremony held at Bangkok.
- The international recognition was announced by the Food and Agriculture Organization, **Rome on the eve of World Soil Day - 2020 in view of the ICAR’s excellent contributions in Soil Health Awareness on the theme Stop soil erosion, save our future during the last year.**
- **The ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh organized** a wide array of several programmes with great fervour and enthusiasm for the school students, farming community and general public.
- The Institute organized a massive awareness campaign **for preserving SOIL - Our Mother Earth to commemorate the World Soil Day including March-Past and distribution of promotional materials on soil health to the participants.**

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020

- **Politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhathi Subramaniam is among 20 writers** who will be bestowed with the **Sahitya Akademi Award 2020**. The national academy of letters announced the names on **12 March** during the opening day of its annual Festival of Letters event.
- **While Subramaniam won the award for her poetry collection When God is a Traveller in English, Moily was named for his epic poetry titled Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam in Kannada.**
- The list includes seven books of poetry, four novels, five short stories, two plays, and one each of memoirs and epic poetry in 20 Indian languages. The awards for Malayalam, Nepali, Odia and Rajasthani languages will be announced at a later date, the Akademi said in a statement.
- **Apart from Subramaniam, the others who won the award in poetry include Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), Anamika (Hindi), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Irungham Deven (Manipuri), Rupchand Hansda (Santali), and Nikhileswar (Telugu).**
- **The award, which will include a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and an amount of Rs 1,00,000, will be presented at the award presentation function, which will be held at a later date.**

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Happiness 20 March

- **The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution of 12 July 2012 proclaimed 20 March the International Day of Happiness**, recognizing the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.
- It also **recognized the need for a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication**, happiness and the well-being of all peoples.
- **The resolution was initiated by Bhutan, a country which recognized the value of national happiness over national income since the early 1970s and famously adopted the goal of Gross National Happiness over Gross National Product.**
- **Theme of International Day of Happiness** for the current year 2021 is, **‘Keep Calm, Stay Wise, Be Kind’**. This theme of Happiness Day 2021 focuses upon three basic factors of attaining happiness.

World Sparrow Day

- **World Sparrow Day is a day designated to raise awareness of the house sparrow and then other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations, observed on 20 March.**
- It is an international **initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France)** and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.
- **Theme The theme for this year’s ‘World Sparrow Day’ is ‘I Love Sparrows’** and is inspired with the hope that more people will celebrate the relationship between people and sparrows by making them remember the bond they share as people have lived in harmony with these little birds for 10,000 years.

References:

The Hindu
The Economics Times
Indian Express
Press Information Bureau of India
The Times of India
Business Standard
News on AIR
Hindustan Times

QUESTIONS

- The first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games is
(a) Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi
(b) Anamika Singh Durgapal
(c) Chanda Devraja Durga Devi
(d) Neelima Mishra
- Name the Politician-writer who is among 20 writers who will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.
(a) Naveen Jindal (b) Yashwant Sinha (c) Shashi Tharoor (d) M Veerappa Moily
- Indian Government will soon launch _____ portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
(a) 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mondal Mitra'
(b) 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra'
(c) 'Atmanirbhar Industry Friend'
(d) 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mandal'
- Recently, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched _____ for the benefit of those ration card holders who move to new places in search of livelihood.
(a) My Ration My App (b) Mera Ration Mobile App
(c) Mera Ration Mera Adhikaar App (d) Hamara Ration Hamara Adhikaar
- Who has become the first turban-clad Sikh representative in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament?
(a) Gurdayal Singh Dhillon (b) Amrik Singh
(c) Gurdeep Singh (d) Jasmeet Singh
- Who is to be first foreign leader to visit US President Joe Biden?
(a) Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b) Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
(c) Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (d) Russian President Vladimir Putin
- The first Indian gaming company to go public is
(a) Nazara Technologies Ltd (b) Muskan Technologies Ltd
(c) Tikana Technologies Ltd (d) Hazara Technologies Ltd
- Recently, Ambassador of India to Thailand Suchitra Durai received the prestigious King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization on the behalf of the _____.
(a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (b) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
(c) BARC (d) ICRISAT
- The theme of BRICS 2021 is:
(a) "BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus"
(b) "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for development, integration and industrialization"
(c) "BRICS partnership - a driving force of global development"
(d) "BRICS partnership for global stability, security and prosperity"
- Recently, ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called _____ series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560.
(a) Rucnit (b) Ruchi (c) Rohini (d) Roshani
- Recently, which of the following teams has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title?
(a) Mumbai City (b) East Bengal
(c) Chennaiyin (d) ATK Mohun Bagan

12. Recently, The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeking increase in the FDI limit to _____ per cent in the domestic Insurance Companies was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.
 (a) 51 (b) 60 (c) 74 (d) 100
13. Britain's cabinet office will set up a "second flagship Head Quarter" in _____.
 (a) Southampton (b) Cardiff (c) London (d) Glasgow
14. Recently, The Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in _____ has launched the world's first Bachelor of Tolerance and Coexistence.
 (a) Jakarta, Indonesia (b) Manila, Philippines (c) Abu Dhabi, UAE (d) Karachi, Pakistan
15. Recently, A Japanese-Australian venture has begun producing hydrogen from _____.
 (a) Blue Coal (b) Brown Coal (c) White Coal (d) Red Coal
16. The Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by _____ this year.
 (a) June 1 (b) July 31 (c) September 30 (d) October 31
17. In a major development Indian authorities are looking for uranium reserves in _____ in a first-ever such exercise.
 (a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Sikkim (c) West Bengal (d) Odisha
18. Recently, India's first online entrepreneurship programme for kids comes to _____.
 (a) Mumbai (b) Jaipur (c) Kochi (d) Ahmadabad
19. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over demise of Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair. He was a renowned:
 (a) Kathakali maestro (b) Kuchipudi maestro (c) Bharatnatyam maestro (d) Lavani maestro
20. Recently, Legendary cricketer _____ was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
 (a) Sunil Gavaskar (b) K Srikanth (c) Rahul Dravid (d) Kapil Dev
21. "My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future" is a memoir of:
 (a) Shikha Sharma (b) Indra Nooyi (c) Nita Ambani (d) Rekha
22. The world's highest rail bridge on the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir's _____ district will provide direct connectivity to Kashmir Valley.
 (a) Srinagar (b) Jammu (c) Reasi (d) Anantnag
23. Recently, the exercise for presenting a separate "agriculture budget", with the emphasis on welfare measures for farmers, has started in _____.
 (a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Kerala
24. Recently, The Rajya Sabha passed the National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes in:
 (a) Punjab and Uttar Pradesh (b) West Bengal & Bihar
 (c) Haryana & Tamil Nadu (d) Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh
25. Recently, Jeanine Anez was sent to four month jail term. She was the former President of:
 (a) Slovenia (b) Lithuania (c) Bolivia (d) Latvia
26. Deutsche Bank and _____, have executed the world's first green hedging transaction?
 (a) China Banking Corporation (b) Softbank
 (c) Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd (d) Royal Bank of Scotland

27. Recently, Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up Development Finance Institution (DFI) with an initial capital infusion of _____ thousand crore rupees.
 (a) 6 (b) 9 (c) 12 (d) 20
28. According to a report prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, in the form of the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', which has released globally. Which is the most polluted city globally?
 (a) Jaipur (b) Gwalior (c) Delhi (d) Karachi
29. India's first professional kho kho league — Ultimate Kho Kho League — is set to begin later this year. How many players play in Kho Kho?
 (a) 6 (b) 9 (c) 12 (d) 18
30. With Assembly elections coming up in five States, micro-blogging platform Twitter announced a dedicated 'information search prompt' in _____ languages with the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions.
 (a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 6 (d) 9
31. India is all set to commission the _____ ship, capable of tracking nuclear missiles and satellites from a distance, into the Navy.
 (a) INS Dhruv (b) INS Diwakar (c) INS Teer (d) INS Samsheer
32. Recently, John Magufuli nicknamed "The Bulldozer" died. He was the President of:
 (a) Niger (b) Tanzania
 (c) Dominic Republic of Congo (d) The Gambia
33. Recently, The government of Bangladesh has decided to rename the Ministry of Information to the _____.
 (a) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
 (b) Ministry of Broadcasting
 (c) Ministry of Technology and Broadcasting
 (d) Ministry of Foreign Information and Broadcasting
34. Which of the following European countries recently signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement?
 (a) Italy (b) Germany (c) Poland (d) Finland
35. Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 released has identified a novel household category in India – the 'New Middle Class' – with an average savings of _____ per annum.
 (a) Rs 10-lakh (b) Rs 15-lakh (c) Rs 20-lakh (d) Rs 30-lakh
36. According to data from Bloomberg, India remained at the _____ position among countries with a market capitalization of \$2.8 trillion.
 (a) Third (b) Fifth (c) Eighth (d) Tenth
37. Which of the following banks had inked the first deal in the external commercial borrowing (ECB) market using the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR)?
 (a) Canara Bank (b) Union Bank of India (c) State Bank of India (d) Punjab National Bank
38. Recently, A team of botanists has stumbled upon a new rattlepod species in the Sadasivakona grove area of _____.
 (a) Eastern Ghats (b) Western Ghats (c) Malwa Plateau (d) Godavari River basin
39. In "India's Power Elite: Caste, Class and Cultural Revolution", book to be released in April 2021 is authored by:
 (a) Manmohan Singh (b) Shashi Tharoor (c) A K Antony (d) Sanjaya Baru

40. Who among the following have been recently announced as the winners of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize for 2021?
 (a) Shivendra Singh and Sushma Singh
 (b) Thomas Edward and Michelle Ann
 (c) Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal
 (d) Tim Claudters and Ann Maria
41. The Rajasthan legislative assembly announced to implement _____ from May 1 in the state under which every family in the state will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs 5 lakh.
 (a) 'CM Chiranjeevi Yojna' (b) 'CM Ayushman Yojna'
 (c) 'CM Rogmukt Yojna' (d) 'CM Kaaldeva Yojna'
42. Which of the following states launched the Mission Gramodaya recently?
 (a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
43. Which of the following states has become the first state in the country to implement an ethanol promotion policy that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains?
 (a) West Bengal (b) Bihar (c) Haryana (d) Uttar Pradesh
44. Recently, The UNDP has launched _____ campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.
 (a) 'San Marg' (b) 'Sahi Rasta' (c) 'Suvidha' (d) 'Sahi Disha'
45. Who has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board?
 (a) Dr Harsh Vardhan (b) Shri Narendra Modi (c) Prakash Javadekar (d) Ramnath Kovind
46. Which of the following has responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing's influence, known as the 'Sinatra Doctrine'?
 (a) ASEAN (b) SAARC (c) European Union (d) BASIC
47. Which of the following companies is granting its UK drivers worker status, with benefits including a minimum wage - a world first for the US ride-hailing giant?
 (a) MERU (b) OLA (c) Cincinati (d) Uber
48. In a first unique experiment across the world, burglars, thieves and robbers in the _____ will be made to wear GPS tags in a bid to stop them from recommitting any offence.
 (a) UK (b) USA (c) Argentina (d) France
49. The International Day of Happiness is celebrated across the world every year on:
 (a) 17th March (b) 19th March (c) 20th March (d) 23rd March
50. Recently, Scientists have found a method to mimic nature's own process of reducing _____ in the atmosphere, namely photosynthesis.
 (a) Carbon dioxide (b) Oxygen (c) Methane (d) Carbon monoxide
51. Recently, a total of _____ renewable energy capacity has been added in the country during the year 2019-20.
 (a) 8.76 gigawatt (b) 9.86 gigawatt (c) 10.28 gigawatt (d) 12.98 gigawatt
52. Since its inception as the nodal agency working in the area of tribal upliftment, _____ has been implementing several programmes and initiatives.
 (a) TRIFED (b) Union Tribal Ministry (c) Uthan (d) TRIJAL
53. Recently, Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as first female President of:
 (a) Uganda (b) Liberia (c) Tanzania (d) The Gambia

54. In the latest World Happiness Report 2021, India is ranked at:
(a) 122 (b) 126 (c) 131 (d) 139
55. Recently, The _____ European Union has joined India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative, following its endorsement of the charter of the CDRI earlier.
(a) 14-member (b) 18-member (c) 24-member (d) 27-member
56. Which of the following countries ranks first in the list released by World Air Quality Report 2020 for world's most polluted nation?
(a) Pakistan (b) India (c) Bangladesh (d) Myanmar
57. Recently, American business and financial services company Moody's Analytics has projected India's GDP to grow by _____ in 2021.
(a) 6% (b) 8% (c) 10% (d) 12%
58. Which of the following has become the "first nation in the world" to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19?
(a) Finland (b) Malta (c) Gibraltar (d) Mozambique
59. Which of the following IIT's along with The University of Manchester have launched a dual award PhD programme recently?
(a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi
(b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras
(c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur
(d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur
60. India's first indigenously developed Appstore _____ hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services.
(a) 'Mobile Seva Appstore' (b) 'Mobile Vistar Appstore'
(c) 'Mobile Sarthakta Appstore' (d) 'Mobile Suvidha Appstore'
61. Recently, Lok Sabha has passed the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill 2021. The Bill provides that captive mines other than atomic minerals may sell up to _____ of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
(a) 30 per cent (b) 40 per cent (c) 50 per cent (d) 60 per cent
62. Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court _____ online inaugurated the first virtual court of the state.
(a) Justice M.N Parmaweshwara
(b) Justice Deepak Mahajan
(c) Justice P.R. Ramachandra Menon
(d) Justice L.N. Lakshmikanth
63. Recently, India and _____ have decided to establish a Joint Commission to enhance and deepen the ties of fraternity and friendship and support ways of cooperation in all fields.
(a) Turkey (b) Afghanistan (c) Kuwait (d) Iran
64. Which among the following has teamed up with USO India and Toonz Media Group for a creative water conservation awareness programme for students?
(a) UNESCO (b) UNGA (c) UNICEF (d) Amnesty International
65. Recently, The Indian Railways announced that the trial of the first prototype of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) AC _____ class coach has been completed successfully.
(a) one-tier economy (b) two-tier economy
(c) three-tier economy (d) four-tier economy

66. Recently, Atal Innovation Mission, _____ and Amazon Web Services announced new initiatives to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India.
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
(c) NITI Aayog (d) Flipkart
67. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed _____ as the International Day of Forests in 2012.
(a) 15th March (b) 18th March (c) 20th March (d) 21st March
68. According to a research study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi, which of the following countries has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in?
(a) Oman (b) South Africa (c) Jordan (d) Mexico
69. Recently, Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with _____ Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.
(a) Royal Oman Naval Force (b) Royal Jordan Naval Force
(c) Royal Bahrain Naval Force (d) Royal Brunei Naval Force
70. Recently, _____ bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range.
(a) Yashaswini Deswal (b) Shantipriya Mahajan (c) Supriya Janak (d) Anandita Karnapal



ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a Tamil Nadu's Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi scripted history as she became the first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games.
2. d Politician-writer M Veerappa Moily, poet Arundhati Subramaniam are among 20 writers who will be bestowed with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020.
3. b Government will soon launch 'Atmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra' portal for handholding and facilitation of domestic investors.
4. b Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched Mera Ration Mobile App for the benefit of those ration card holders who move to new places in search of livelihood.
5. c Gurdeep Singh from the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party took the oath as a Senator, becoming the first turban-clad Sikh representative in the upper house of Pakistan's Parliament.
6. c Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga will be travelling to the United States to meet US President Joe Biden.
7. a Billionaire investor Rakesh Jhunjunwala-backed Nazara Technologies Ltd will become the first Indian gaming company to go public.
8. a Ambassador of India to Thailand Suchitra Durai received the prestigious King Bhumibol World Soil Day - 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
9. a The theme of BRICS this year is –“BRICS at 15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.
10. c ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560.
11. a Mumbai City has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title just over a year after being taken over by the owners of English Premier League giants Manchester City.
12. c The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeking increase in the FDI limit to 74 per cent in the domestic Insurance Companies was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.
13. d Britain's cabinet office will set up a “second flagship Head Quarter” in Glasgow as the government plans to move some of its operations to Scotland.
14. c The Mohamed Bin Zayed University for Humanities in Abu Dhabi, UAE, has launched the world's first Bachelor of Tolerance and Coexistence.
15. b A Japanese-Australian venture has begun producing hydrogen from brown coal in a A\$500 million (\$390 million) pilot project that aims to show liquefied hydrogen can be produced commercially and exported safely overseas.
16. c Reserve Bank of India has asked banks to implement the image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in all branches by September 30 this year.
17. a Indian authorities are looking for uranium reserves just three kilometres from the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh in a first-ever such exercise.
18. b India's First Online Entrepreneurship Programme for kids comes to Jaipur.

- 19. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over demise of Kathakali maestro Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair. Saddened by the demise of Kathakali maestro, Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair.
- 20. d** Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev was inducted as one of the board members of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
- 21. b** Former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi has a memoir coming out this fall that her publisher is calling an “unvarnished take” on her rise to becoming one of the world’s most powerful women. “My Life in Full: Work, Family and Our Future” will be published Sept. 28.
- 22. c** The world’s highest rail bridge on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir’s Reasi district, which will provide direct connectivity to Kashmir Valley is in the last stages of construction.
- 23. b** The exercise for presenting a separate “agriculture budget”, with the emphasis on welfare measures for farmers, has started in Rajasthan in accordance with the announcement made by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the 2021-22 State Budget.
- 24. c** The Rajya Sabha passed the National Institutes of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 that confers the status of national importance on two food technology institutes at Kundli in Haryana and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.
- 25. c** Bolivia’s former President Jeanine Anez was sent to four month jail term.
- 26. c** Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd, a subsidiary of Continuum Green Energy (Continuum), have executed the world’s first green hedging transaction, with a second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework.
- 27. d** Union Cabinet has approved a bill to set up Development Finance Institution (DFI) with an initial capital infusion of 20 thousand crore rupees.
- 28. c** Twenty-two of the world’s 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally.
- 29. c** It is played by teams of 12 nominated players out of fifteen, of which nine enter the field who sit on their knees (Chasing Team), and 3 extra (Defending Team) who try to avoid being touched by members of the opposing team.
- 30. c** With Assembly elections coming up in five States, micro-blogging platform Twitter announced a dedicated ‘information search prompt’ in six languages with the Election Commission of India and State Election Commissions.
- 31. a** India is all set to commission the INS Dhruv (codenamed VC 1118) ship, capable of tracking nuclear missiles and satellites from a distance, into the Navy.
- 32. b** Tanzania’s President John Magufuli, admired by followers for his hostility to corruption and waste but regarded by foes as an irascible authoritarian intolerant of dissent and sceptical about COVID-19, has died aged 61.
- 33. a** The government of Bangladesh has decided to rename the Ministry of Information to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- 34. a** The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN. Italy signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement.
- 35. c** Hurun India Wealth Report 2020 released has identified a novel household category in India – the ‘New Middle Class’ – with an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum.

- 36. c** India remained at the eighth position among countries with a market capitalization of \$2.8 trillion.
- 37. c** The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) had inked the first deal in the external commercial borrowing (ECB) market using the new Secured Overnight Financing Rate (SOFR).
- 38. a** A team of botanists has recently stumbled upon a new rattlepod species in the Sadasivakona grove area of Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh, which is part of the southern Eastern ghats.
- 39. d** Sanjaya Baru, former advisor to Manmohan Singh, will take readers from the corridors of Parliament to Delhi's hidden durbars as he tells the "untold story" of Indian society in his new book.
- 40. c** Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have been announced as the winners of the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize for 2021.
- 41. a** The Rajasthan legislative assembly passed the state budget by a voice vote with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announcing to implement 'CM Chiranjeevi Yojna' from May 1 in the state under which every family in the state will get medical insurance benefit of up to Rs 5 lakh.
- 42. c** In Madhya Pradesh, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan have launched the Mission Gramodaya in the state.
- 43. b** Bihar has become the first state in the country to implement an ethanol promotion policy that would allow investors to directly make ethanol from maize, molasses, broken rice and rotten grains.
- 44. d** The UNDP has launched 'Sahi Disha' campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.
- 45. a** Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board.
- 46. c** As China's increasing aggressiveness to undermine European unity through a 'divide and rule' policy continues, the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries have responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing's influence, known as the 'Sinatra Doctrine'.
- 47. d** Uber is granting its UK drivers worker status, with benefits including a minimum wage - a world first for the US ride-hailing giant.
- 48. a** In a first such experiment across the world, burglars, thieves and robbers in the UK will be made to wear GPS tags in a bid to stop them from recommitting any offence.
- 49. c** The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution of 12 July 2012 proclaimed 20 March the International Day of Happiness, recognizing the relevance of happiness and well-being as universal goals and aspirations in the lives of human beings around the world and the importance of their recognition in public policy objectives.
- 50. a** Scientists have found a method to mimic nature's own process of reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, namely photosynthesis, to capture excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- 51. a** A total of 8.76 gigawatt renewable energy capacity has been added in the country during the year 2019-20.
- 52. a** Since its inception as the nodal agency working in the area of tribal upliftment, TRIFED has been implementing several programmes and initiatives.
- 53. c** Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as Tanzania's first female President after the sudden death of John Magufuli from an illness shrouded in mystery.

- 54. d** India has been ranked 139, out of 149 countries evaluated, in the World Happiness Report 2021, which has been collated slightly differently due to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.
- 55. d** The 27-member European Union has joined India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative, following its endorsement of the charter of the CDRI earlier.
- 56. c** Bangladesh ranks first in the list released by World Air Quality Report 2020.
- 57. d** American business and financial services company Moody's Analytics has projected India's GDP to grow by 12% in 2021.
- 58. c** The tiny British overseas territory — famed for its Rock of Gibraltar — has become the “first nation in the world” to vaccinate its entire adult population against COVID-19.
- 59. d** Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur and The University of Manchester have launched a dual award PhD programme.
- 60. a** India's first indigenously developed Appstore, 'Mobile Seva Appstore' hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public services.
- 61. c** The Bill provides that captive mines other than atomic minerals may sell up to 50 per cent of their annual mineral production in the open market after meeting their own needs.
- 62. c** Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Justice P.R. Ramachandra Menon online inaugurated the first virtual court of the state.
- 63. c** India and Kuwait have decided to establish a Joint Commission to enhance and deepen the ties of fraternity and friendship and support ways of cooperation in all fields.
- 64. a** UNESCO has teamed up with USO India and Toonz Media Group for a creative water conservation awareness programme for students.
- 65. c** The Indian Railways announced that the trial of the first prototype of Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) AC three-tier economy class coach has been completed successfully.
- 66. c** Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, and Amazon Web Services announced new initiatives to strengthen the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India.
- 67. d** The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21st March as the International Day of Forests in 2012.
- 68. b** South Africa has been ranked as the world's most dangerous country to drive in while India came in at fourth place, according to a research study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi.
- 69. c** Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp.
- 70. a** Yashaswini Deswal bagged the first gold medal for India in the Women's 10 Meter Air Pistol final of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range.