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# MANTHAN

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*A General Awareness Weekly*

*29<sup>th</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2021*

# PREFACE

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**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  
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## National



### CJI SA Bobde recommends Justice NV Ramana as his successor

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde has recommended the name of Justice NV Ramana to the Centre for appointing him as his successor after he demits office on April 23, 2021. The government had asked him to recommend his successor; Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad reportedly sent a letter to Justice Bobde, seeking his recommendation.
- Justice Bobde was sworn in as the 47<sup>th</sup> Chief Justice of India in November 2019, succeeding Justice (retired) Ranjan Gogoi. Traditionally, the sitting chief justice writes a recommendation for his likely successor.
- Justice NV Ramana is the senior most judge in the Supreme Court after CJI Bobde. Born on August 27, 1957, Justice Ramana has tenure till August 26, 2022. Justice NV Ramana was appointed a permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in June 2000. He served as Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court before being elevated to the Supreme Court in February 2014.
- As per the procedures for the appointment of members of the higher judiciary, “the appointment to the office of the Chief Justice of India should be of the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office”.
- As head of the Supreme Court, the chief justice is responsible for the allocation of cases and appointment of constitutional benches which deal with important matters of law. In accordance with Article 145 of the Constitution of India and the Supreme Court Rules of Procedure of 1966, the chief justice allocates all work to the other judges who are bound to refer the matter back to him or her (for re-allocation) in any case where they require it to be looked into by a larger bench of more judges.
- On the administrative side, the chief justice carries out the following functions: maintenance of the roster; appointment of court officials and general and miscellaneous matters relating to the supervision and functioning of the Supreme Court.
- However this convention has been broken twice. In 1973, Justice A. N. Ray was appointed superseding 3 senior judges. Also, in 1977 Justice Mirza Hameedullah Beg was appointed as the chief justice superseding Justice Hans Raj Khanna.

The Supreme Court of India came into being on 28 January 1950. It replaced both the Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council which were then at the apex of the Indian court system. The first Chief Justice of India was Sir H J Kania. Originally, the Constitution of India envisaged a supreme court with a chief justice and seven judges; leaving it to parliament to increase this number. At present, SC is consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges. The motto of the Supreme Court is ‘Yato Dharmastato Jayah’, means "whence law (dharma), thence victory". It is also referred to – as the wheel of righteousness, encompassing truth, goodness and equity. As per the Article 142 of the Constitution, it is the duty of the President of India to enforce the decrees of the Supreme Court and the court is conferred with the inherent jurisdiction to pass any order deemed necessary in the interest of justice. The Supreme Court has replaced the British Privy Council as the highest court of appeal.

## Article 244 (A), its relevance for Assam hill tribes, and the politics

- In a video message, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi promised to implement Article 244 (A) of the Constitution to safeguard the interests of the people in Assam's tribal-majority districts. "The BJP is attacking the culture and traditions of hill tribes by withdrawing Article 244(A). The upcoming Congress government will ensure that Article 244(A) is not diluted and all its clauses are implemented to protect the interests of indigenous people," said Rahul.
- Article 244(A) allows for creation of an 'autonomous state' within Assam in certain tribal areas. Inserted into the Constitution in 1969 by the then Congress government, it also has a provision for a Legislature and a Council of Ministers.
- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution — Articles 244(2) and 275(1) — is a special provision that allows for greater political autonomy and decentralised governance in certain tribal areas of the Northeast through autonomous councils that are administered by elected representatives.
- In Assam, the hill districts of Dima Hasao, Karbi Anglong and West Karbi and the Bodo Territorial Region are under this provision. Article 244(A) accounts for more autonomous powers to tribal areas.

The Sixth Schedule which applies to the Tribal Areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, provides for autonomy in the administration of these areas through Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) and the Regional Councils empowered to make laws in respect of areas under their jurisdiction, which cover land, forest, cultivation, inheritance, indigenous customs and traditions of tribals, etc. and also to collect land revenues and certain other taxes. ADCs are like miniature states having specific powers and responsibilities in respect of all the three arms of governance: Legislature, executive and judiciary. Meghalaya has a unique administrative structure among all Indian states. The entire state — save a tiny area within the capital Shillong — is covered by the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India under Article 244 of the Constitution.

## Rajnath Singh, South Korean Defence Minister inaugurate Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park in Delhi Cantt

- Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and South Korean Defence Minister Suh Wook inaugurated the Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park in Delhi Cantt. This Friendship Park has been built to commemorate the contribution of Indian peacekeepers during the Korean War from 1950 to 53.
- Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Army Chief General M M Naravane, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria were present on the occasion.
- The South Korean minister arrived in India on a three-day visit with a focus on boosting bilateral defence and military cooperation. South Korea has been a major supplier of weapons and military equipment to India.

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is charged with coordinating and supervising all agencies and functions of the government relating directly to national security and the Indian armed forces. The President of India is the ceremonial commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the country. The Indian Armed Forces (including Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Navy) and Indian Coast Guard under the Ministry of Defences are primarily responsible for ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation. A military department was created by the supreme government of the British East India Company at Kolkata in the year 1776. Rajnath Singh is currently serving as the Defence Minister of India. He has been Member of parliament, Lok Sabha two times from Lucknow (Lok Sabha constituency) and once from Ghaziabad (Lok Sabha constituency).

## Arunachal gets first formal indigenous knowledge system school

- With an aim to develop the Northeast, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has inaugurated the state's first formal indigenous language and knowledge system school 'Nyubu Nyvgam Yerko' in East Kameng district. Nyubu Nyvgam Yerko is a traditional institution of the Nyishi community that aims at expanding and securing indigenous traditions, culture and language.
- According to the Chief Minister, the school will help to promote and preserve the culture, tradition, and language of the state. Pema Khandu further applauded Charitable Trust the initiative and express his gratitude towards Pai Dawe for donating the land for the Gurukul type initiative.

Arunachal Pradesh ("land of dawn-lit mountains") is a state in Northeast India. It borders the states of Assam and Nagaland to the south. It shares international borders with Bhutan in the west, Myanmar in the east, and a disputed border with China in the north at the McMahon Line. Itanagar is the state capital of Arunachal Pradesh. B. D. Mishra is a former brigadier of the Indian Army. He is the present governor.

## Cabinet approves MoC signed between India & Japan in Water Resources field

- The Union Cabinet was apprised of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation of Ministry of Jal Shakti and Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan in the field of Water Resources.
- This MoC was signed for development of a long-term cooperation in the field of Water and Delta management, and Water technology in order to increase the exchange of information, knowledge, technology and scientific allied experience, as well as implementation of joint projects between the two countries. This MoC will help achieving water security, improved irrigation facility and sustainability in water resources development.

Ministry of Jal Shakti is a ministry under Government of India which was formed in May 2019 under the second Modi ministry. This was formed by merging of two ministries; Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is currently serving as Union Cabinet Minister in Ministry of Jal Shakti. He is a member of parliament from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) representing Jodhpur in the Lok Sabha.

## President of India gave assent to National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill 2021

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, which enhances the powers of the Lieutenant Governor and limits the elected government's power in Delhi.
- According to the legislation, the "government" in Delhi means the "Lieutenant Governor" and the city government will now have to seek the opinion of the L-G before taking any executive action.
- Rajya Sabha had witnessed massive uproar when the opposition, led by the Congress and the AAP, alleged that the Modi government was trying to bypass the elected Delhi Assembly by bringing an 'unconstitutional' bill to empower the Lt Governor and was practising 'coercive federalism'.
- Union Minister G Kishan Reddy had said the amendments would lead to transparency and clarity in governance in NCT of Delhi and enhance public accountability. While explaining the rationale behind the bill, he said the amendments have been brought to remove ambiguities in the existing Act.
- G Kishan Reddy further said that changes in the law have been sought in the spirit of what has been said in a Supreme Court judgment, adding that there was no political angle and the amendments are on "technical" grounds.

Delhi bordered by Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east. According to the 2011 census, Delhi city proper's population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai. Anil Baijal is the current & 21<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Delhi. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be formally known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Delhi is a Union Territory with a legislature, and it came into being in 1991 under Article 239AA of the Constitution inserted by the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveils new version of 'Exam Warriors' to make them stress free before examinations

- The new version of Exam Warriors written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now available with many new mantras for students as well as parents. It is available at retail stores as well as online. The Exam Warriors module is also available on the NaMo App.
- The new edition of the book has been enriched with valuable inputs from students, parents and teachers. Substantive new parts have been added that would especially interest the parents and teachers.

Narendra Damodardas Modi is an Indian politician serving as the 14<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of India since 2014. He was the Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014 and is the Member of Parliament for Varanasi. He is the first prime minister outside of the Indian National Congress to win two consecutive terms with a full majority and the second to complete more than five years in office after Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

### Bihar first state to have two green towns

- Bihar is set to become the country's first state to have two green energy efficient towns in Rajgir and Bodh Gaya. The towns will start getting solar energy through the first of its kind renewable energy project from 2023.
- After Rajgir and Bodh Gaya, Patna's many important government offices including the governor house, the Patna High Court, the Bihar Museum and the Vidhyut Bhawan would also get round the clock green energy supply being developed with the help of the Solar Energy Corporation of India. To implement this project, the state government has decided to use the land available in Lakhisarai and Bhagalpur district to construct solar energy plants.

Bihar is the third-largest state of India by population, according to the census 2011. It is a land-locked state, although the outlet to the sea through the port of Kolkata is not far away. Nalanda University is located in the town of Rajgir, in the northern Indian state of Bihar. It was a Buddhist center of learning from 427 to 1197 CE. It has been called "one of the first great universities in recorded history. Phagu Chauhan is the current Governor of Bihar. Nitish Kumar is the current Chief Minister of Bihar.

### Supreme Court-appointed committee on farm laws submits its report

- The Supreme Court-appointed committee on the three contentious central farm laws has submitted its report to the apex court in a sealed cover.
- The top court committee comprised of agricultural economists -- Anil Ghanvat, Ashok Gulati, and Pramod Joshi. Bhupinder Singh Mann, president, Bharatiya Kisan Union, and All India Kisan Coordination Committee was also initially part of the committee but resigned later.
- The three-member committee was appointed by the Supreme Court on January 12 for evaluation of the farm laws against which farmers from many states have been protesting. Farmers continue to protest since 26 November last year against the three farm laws -- Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.
- The panel members held their first meeting on January 19 and decided to set up a web portal for farmers to help them share their opinion on the new farm laws. The members have spoken to 85 farmer organisations and other stakeholders to find the solution of the deadlock that has been continuing for more than four months.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the agriculture sector is in need of urgent reform and modernisation and the government has initiated reforms that would free the small farmers from the pressure of middlemen. The Narendra Modi-led NDA government has set a target of doubling farmers' income by 2022. Hundreds of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, are camping near the borders of the national capital demanding that the government repeal the three contentious farm laws. Enacted in September 2020, the three farm laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in India. The protesting farmers, on the other hand, have expressed apprehensions that the new agricultural laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the minimum support price and do away with the mandi (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

### India takes part in second Sherpas meeting of G7, guest countries

- The second meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held. India's G7 Sherpa Suresh Prabhu attended the meeting. The priority issues under UK's G7 Presidency agenda were discussed, including preparations for the COP26 Summit and global health cooperation.

- **India** has been **invited as a guest country of the G7** by the UK this year, along with **Australia, South Korea and South Africa**. In January, the **United Kingdom (UK)** announced that it has invited **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** for the **G7 summit** as a guest. The meet is scheduled to be held in Cornwall from June 11 to 14, 2021.

**Group of Seven is an intergovernmental organisation consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.** The heads of government of the member states, as well as the representatives of the **European Union**, meet at the **annual G7 Summit**. The seven countries involved are also the largest **IMF-advanced economies** in the world. The concept of a forum for the world's major industrialized countries emerged before the 1973 oil crisis.

## Ministry of Jal Shakti to use sensor-based IoT devices to effectively monitor implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to use sensor-based Internet of Things, IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, JJM in more than six lakh villages.
- The Internet of Things, IoT based remote monitoring provides near real-time information without any manual intervention by using sensors. This would not only allow effective monitoring and management on-ground, but also enable real-time visibility to State water supply.
- Jal Jeevan Mission JJM which is a flagship programme of the Government is implemented in partnership with States and Union Territories to provide tap water connection to every rural household by 2024.

The Internet of things (IoT) describes the network of physical objects—“things” or objects—that are embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies for the purpose of connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the Internet. Things have evolved due to the convergence of multiple technologies, real-time analytics, machine learning, commodity sensors, and embedded systems. **Traditional fields of embedded systems, wireless sensor networks, control systems, automation (including home and building automation), and others all contribute to enabling the Internet of things.**

## Special Forces of India, US carry out military exercise in Himachal Pradesh

- **Special forces of India** carried out a joint military exercise with **US Special forces** at **Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh** this month to enhance interoperability between the two sides. ‘**Vajra Prahar**’ is a **Special Forces joint training exercise conducted alternately in India and the US**. These exercises will enable sharing of best practices and experience in areas such as joint mission planning capabilities and operational tactics.
- “The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Indo-US joint special forces exercise 'Vajra Prahar 2021' was conducted at **Special Forces Training School** located at **Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh in March**,”. The joint exercise between the special forces of both the countries is held to share the best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics.

## BIMSTEC finalises Connectivity master plan for Bay of Bengal region

- The virtual meeting of the **Foreign Ministers of Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** grouping finalised a major **Connectivity master plan** for the Bay of Bengal region.
- The seven-member regional grouping namely **India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar** will take up the **Master plan for transport connectivity** for adoption in the next summit of the organisation to be hosted by **Sri Lanka** in a few months from now.
- The meeting also endorsed three **MoUs/agreements relating to convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal matters**, cooperation between diplomatic and training academies and **establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo**.
- The connectivity master plan is the outcome of more than a decade of consultations among the member states. **The study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2007 and 2014, identified 166 connectivity projects** at an estimated cost of **USD 50 billion** out of which **65 projects** were identified as priority projects.

The BIMSTEC is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and South East Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan, and Nepal. The permanent secretariat is in Dhaka. The BIMSTEC member states are among the countries dependent on the Bay of Bengal. BIMSTEC was set up in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration and includes India, Bangladesh, Bhutan Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

### Centre to roll out Unique Land Parcel Identification Number system in country

- Centre will soon roll out a Unique Land Parcel Identification Number system in the country allotting distinct IDs for each land parcel. The system has already been successfully carried out in a number of states on pilot basis.
- In the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number System, there will be a unique ID for each land parcel. The unique ID will be of 14 digits. It would be based on the Geo reference coordinate of vertices of the parcel.
- This would be of international standard and in compliance with the Electronic Commerce Code Management Association standard and Open Geospatial Consortium standards. It will provide compatibility so that all states can adopt it easily. It will enable in keeping the land records always up-to-date. A link of all property transactions would get established
- The system would ensure delivery of citizen services of land records through a single window. It would also ensure sharing of land records data across departments, financial institutions and all stakeholders. Proper land statistics and land accounting through this system will also help develop land banks and lead towards Integrated Land Information Management System.

### Gujarat Assembly passes Freedom of Religion Act 2003 Bill

- Gujarat Assembly has passed the Freedom of Religion Act 2003 Bill that penalizes forcible or fraudulent religious conversion by marriage. The new law has provision for three to 10 years in jail and a fine of up to five lakh rupees if the accused is found guilty.
- Minister of State for Home Pradipsinh Jadeja has said that we have made amendments to Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003. He said, this law will stop people from luring Hindu girls into marriage with the intention of religious conversion. Opposition Congress party opposed the bill in the house. The Bill was passed in the house by majority. Similar 'love jihad' laws have already been enacted in other BJP-ruled states such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Freedom of religion in India is a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 25-28 of the Constitution of India. Modern India came into existence in 1947 and the Indian constitution's preamble was amended in 1976 to state that India is a secular state. However, in S.R Bommai v. Union of India, Supreme Court of India ruled that India was already a secular state from the time it adopted its constitution, what actually was done through this amendment is to state explicitly what was earlier contained implicitly under article 25 to 28. Every citizen of India has a right to practice and promote their religion peacefully.



### World's first Zero-Emission Wind and Hydrogen Power Cargo Ship

- A Norwegian partnership is moving forward with the development of what they are calling the world's first zero-emission cargo ship.
- After a six-month competition, with more than 31 ship owners bidding on the project, the contract for the construction has been awarded. The team expected to complete the design this year so that the vessel can enter service by 2024.
- The ship concept has the project name "With Orca" - Powered by Nature, as a significant part of the energy required to operate the vessel will be harvested directly from nature through two large rotor sails. The plan calls for the vessel to sail mostly in open waters in the North Sea, where wind conditions are optimal for wind-assisted propulsion.
- The wind energy will be in addition to a hydrogen-fueled internal combustion engine. The design concepts, which will be further developed in 2021, call for the hydrogen to be stored aboard the vessel in compressed form.

Norway is a Nordic country in Northern Europe whose mainland territory comprises the western and northernmost portion of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Oslo is the capital and most populous city of Norway. Harald V of the House of Glucksburg is the current King of Norway. Erna Solberg has been Prime Minister since 2013. The krone is the currency of Norway and its dependent territories.

### Russia stages fresh military drills in the Arctic

- Russia is one of five Arctic nations staking their claims in the region, and Moscow has beefed up its military presence there, reopening and modernising several bases and airfields abandoned since the end of the Soviet era.
- Moscow has built a military base on the remote Kotelny Island, part of the New Siberian Islands in the eastern Arctic, and there are other installations including on the Franz-Joseph Land archipelago.
- Russia has also deployed its state-of-the-art S-400 air defence systems. The United States in February sent strategic bombers to train in Norway as part of Western efforts to bolster its military presence in the region.
- For the first time since the 1980s, the US Navy deployed an aircraft carrier in the Norwegian Sea in 2018, and then several other vessels in Russia's economic zone in the Barents Sea the following year.
- The Russian military on March 20 launched massive Arctic manoeuvres near Alexandra Land, part of the Franz Josef Land archipelago, that are expected to include more than 40 separate drills.

Russia or the Russian Federation is a transcontinental country spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is the largest country in the world; covering over 17,125,191 square kilometres (6,612,073 sq mi), consisting of more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area, extending to eleven time zones, and has bordering sixteen sovereign nations. Vladimir Putin is serving as the current President of Russia since 2012, previously being in the office from 1999 until 2008. He was also Prime Minister from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. Russian ruble or rouble is the currency of the Russian Federation. Mikhail Mishustin is serving as Prime Minister of Russia since 16 January 2020.

## Facebook and Google are planning to build new cables under the sea called 'Echo' and 'Bifrost' to connect the US to Singapore and Indonesia

- Facebook and Google are planning to build new subsea cables from the US to Singapore and Indonesia. Facebook has partnered with leading regional and global partners to build two new subsea cables -- Echo and Bifrost -- that will provide vital new connections between the Asia-Pacific region and North America.
- While Google is only investing in Echo, Facebook is investing in both cables. These cables will increase overall transpacific capacity by 70 per cent. Echo and Bifrost will support further growth for hundreds of millions of people and millions of businesses, Facebook said.
- "Echo will run from Eureka, California to Singapore, with a stop-over in Guam, with plans to also land in Indonesia. "Echo will be the first-ever cable to directly connect the U.S. to Singapore with direct fiber pairs over an express route.
- It will decrease latency for users connecting to applications running the Google Cloud Platform (GCP) regions in the area, home to some of the world's most vibrant financial and technology centres."

Alphabet Inc. is an American multinational conglomerate headquartered in Mountain View, California. It was created through a restructuring of Google on October 2, 2015, and became the parent company of Google and several former Google subsidiaries. Larry Page and Sergey Brin announced their resignation from their executive posts in December 2019, with the CEO role to be filled by Sundar Pichai, also the CEO of Google. Page and Brin remain co-founders, employees, board members, and controlling shareholders of Alphabet Inc.

## Militaries of Sri Lanka and Pakistan conduct joint exercise against terrorism

- The militaries of Sri Lanka and Pakistan have conducted a 15-day joint exercise aimed at enhancing bilateral defence relations and sharing the rich experience of two armies against terrorism.
- Titled the 'Ex-Shake Hands,' the exercise was conducted in Saliyapura in North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The exercise had the participation of six officers and 35 other ranks from the Pakistan Army and four officers and 40 other ranks from the Sri Lanka Army.

## China approves changes in Hong Kong electoral system, slashes number of elected seats

- The National People's Congress of China unanimously approved the changes to be introduced to the Hong Kong Constitution to reform the electoral system thereby reducing the number of directly elected legislators in Hong Kong. It also delayed the city's elections until December.
- Publicly elected representatives will hold just over one-fifth of seats in Hong Kong's next legislature, down from a majority, under constitutional changes adopted in Beijing.
- Candidates will also be required to pass two rounds of screening with two national security bodies and a Beijing-controlled committee, all vetting hopefuls for patriotism and support for national security before they can face voters. Their reports would be handed to a new vetting committee, whose decisions on qualifying candidates are final and cannot be appealed in court.

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.

## India and USA agree to revamp India-US Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP)

- Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and US Secretary of Energy, Jennifer Granholm have agreed to revamp India-US Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP).

- The two leaders agreed to revamp the India-US SEP to reflect the new priorities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden with **focus on promoting clean energy with low-carbon pathways and accelerating green energy cooperation.**

**Joe Biden is the current and the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. At 78, Biden is the oldest president in US history and only the second Roman Catholic President. A member of the Democratic Party, he served as the 47<sup>th</sup> Vice President from 2009 to 2017 under Barack Obama and represented Delaware in the United States Senate from 1973 to 2009. In January 2017, Barak Obama awarded Biden the Presidential Medal of Freedom with distinction.**

## **Indian Army to participate in Multinational Military Exercise ‘Shantir Ogroshena -2021’ in Bangladesh**

- **Indian Army is being participated in Multinational Military Exercise namely SHANTIR OGROSHENA - 2021 in Bangladesh.**
- **The nine days exercise is being started on the 4<sup>th</sup> of this month to commemorate the birth centenary of Bangladesh Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and mark glorious 50 years of liberation.**
- **Indian Army contingent comprising 30 personnel from the Dogra Regiment is being participated in the exercise along with contingents of Bhutan, Sri Lankan and Bangladesh Armies.**
- **The theme of the exercise is Robust Peace Keeping Operations.** Military observers from the USA, UK, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore will also be in attendance throughout the exercise.

**Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country’s largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16<sup>th</sup> and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh.**

## **India's Credit Line for Bangladesh Covers Nuclear Projects, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant**

- **India would be involved in the development of the transmission lines for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh as part of its credit line for the neighbouring country.**
- **"A significant part of our third line of credit will go to civil nuclear cooperation. Transmission lines of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant will be developed by Indian companies under the line of credit. Value of these transmission lines will be worth over USD 1 billion.**

## **New Slovak government sworn in to end crisis over Russian vaccine**

- **Slovakia's President swore in a new coalition government to end a political crisis triggered by a secret deal to buy Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine.**
- **President Zuzana Caputova appointed the new cabinet led by Prime Minister Eduard Heger two days after the previous government of Igor Matovic resigned.**
- **It was the first European government to collapse due to its handling of the pandemic but the move kept the same four-party coalition in power and avoided the possibility of an early election.**

**Slovakia is a landlocked country in Central Europe. The capital and largest city is Bratislava. Zuzana Caputova is the first woman to hold the presidency, as well as the youngest president in the history of Slovakia, elected at the age of 45. Eduard Heger is serving as the Prime Minister of Slovakia since 1 April 2021. Euro is the official currency of it.**



## WEF's gender gap index: India slips 28 places, ranks 140 among 156 countries

- India has slipped 28 places to rank 140<sup>th</sup> among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia.
- According to the report, India has closed 62.5 per cent of its gender gap till date. The country had ranked 112<sup>th</sup> among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.
- Noting that the decline also took place on the economic participation and opportunity subindex, albeit to a lesser extent, the report said India's gender gap on this dimension widened by 3 per cent this year, leading to a 32.6 per cent gap closed till date.
- Most of the decline occurred on the political empowerment subindex, where India regressed 13.5 percentage points, with a significant decline in the number of women ministers (from 23.1 per cent in 2019 to 9.1 per cent in 2021).
- "Among the drivers of this decline is a decrease in women's labour force participation rate, which fell from 24.8 per cent to 22.3 per cent. In addition, the share of women in professional and technical roles declined further to 29.2 per cent.
- The share of women in senior and managerial positions also remains low: only 14.6 per cent of these positions are held by women and there are only 8.9 per cent firms with female top managers".

The World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland, was founded in 1971 as a not-for-profit organization. It gained formal status in January 2015 under the Swiss Host-State Act, confirming the role of the Forum as an International Institution for Public-Private Cooperation. Klaus Martin Schwab is a German engineer and economist best known as the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum.

## Changes in income tax rules to come into force

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced some changes in the income tax rules, presenting Union Budget 2021-22, which are set to come into force.
- Senior citizens of the age 75 and above with income from pension and interest from fixed deposit in the same bank would be exempted from filing income tax return (ITR). Interest earned on Provident Fund contributions above Rs five lakh in a year will be taxable. In the Budget for 2021-22, the Finance Minister had capped the tax-free interest earned on Provident Fund contributions by employees and employers together to a maximum of Rs two and half lakh in a year.
- She then raised the limit for tax exemption on interest earned on provident fund contributions by employees to Rs five lakh per annum in specified cases. To ease the filing of returns and to facilitate taxpayers, it has been announced that in the fiscal year 2021-22 the individual taxpayers will be given pre-filled ITR forms.
- In order to ease compliance for the taxpayer, details of salary income, tax payments and TDS already come pre-filled in income tax returns. To further ease filing of returns, details of capital gains from listed securities, dividend income, and interest from banks and post offices will also be pre-filled.

**Nirmala Sitharaman** is the current Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of India. She is currently a member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka. Sitharaman formerly served as the Defence Minister of India, thereby becoming India's second female defence minister and also the second female finance minister after Indira Gandhi, and first full-time female Finance Minister. Sitharaman featured in the Forbes 2020 list of 100 most powerful women and ranked the 41<sup>st</sup> in the world.

### HPCL-Mittal first Indian company to buy Guyanese crude Liza

- **The first cargo from new oil producer Guyana to the world's third-largest crude importer, India**, departed this month from a production facility off the South American nation's coast in a vessel chartered by trading firm Trafigura.
- **The cargo was bought by HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, a joint venture between state-run Hindustan Petroleum Corp and steel tycoon L.N. Mittal.** HMEL operates a 226,000 barrel per day (bpd) Bathinda refinery in the northern state of Punjab.

**Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)** is an Indian public sector oil and gas company. It is a subsidiary of ONGC with its headquarters in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Its parent company is ONGC which owns a majority stake in the company. **On 24 October 2019, the company became a Maharatna PSU.**

### Mangal Prabhat Lodha named India's richest real estate developer by Hurun India

- **Despite the COVID-19-led slowdown in the real estate sector, the total wealth of the 100 richest builders in India jumped a full 26 per cent year-on-year to Rs 3,48,660 crore**, according to the GROHE Hurun India Real Estate Rich List 2020.
- According to the report, **Mangal Prabhat Lodha of Macrotech Developers (Lodha Group), having a wealth of Rs 44,270 crore, topped the list for the fourth year in a row.**
- **His wealth increased by 39 per cent in the year 2020. Lodha Group had the highest revenue from operations** among all the real estate developers in India during the pandemic hit year 2020, the list said.
- **He was followed by Rajiv Singh of DLF, who stood second in the GROHE Hurun India Real Estate Rich List with a wealth of Rs 36,430 crore.** Singh registered an increase of 45 per cent in wealth, backed by a 50 per cent rise in DLF's share price.

### Union Bank of India launches "Uni-Carbon Card"

- **Union Bank of India launched "UNI – CARBON CARD", an HPCL co-branded credit card on the Rupay platform of NPCI.**
- **"It is a unique card designed with association one of the largest Public Sector Bank, Union Bank of India and HPCL, a leader in fuel retail and Rupay – India's largest card payment network. It will create an opportunity to create value for the customers."**

**Union Bank of India** is one of the largest Indian government-owned banks of India with 120+ million customers and a total business of US\$106 billion. After the amalgamation with Corporation Bank and Andhra Bank, which came into effect on 1 April 2020, the amalgamated entity becomes the fourth largest bank in terms of branch network. Union Bank of India (Union Bank) was registered on 11 November 1919 as a limited company in Mumbai and was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi.

### Global Wind Report 2021

- **In this special edition of GWEC's 16<sup>th</sup> annual flagship report ahead of the crucial COP26 conference in November 2021, the Global Wind Report 2021 highlights wind power's role on the road to net zero.**
- **2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 GW of new capacity installed – a 53 per cent year-on-year increase – but this growth is not sufficient to ensure the world achieves net zero by 2050.** The world needs to be installing wind power three times faster over the next decade in order to stay on a net zero pathway and avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

- Through technology innovations and economies of scale, **the global wind power market has nearly quadrupled in size over the past decade and established itself as one of the most cost-competitive and resilient power sources across the world.** The companies are currently looking for partners interested in developing production of the biomaterial and commercialising it for global markets.
- **The report has been published by Global Wind Energy Council on March 25, 2021.** The report also warns that in order to achieve the global climate goals and limit global warming to below 2 degrees, it would be important to increase the speed of new wind power installations.
- **India has a new renewable energy target of 175 GW by 2022 which also includes the 60 GW onshore wind energy. Till now 39 GW of wind energy has been installed.**

### Banks to decline Auto Pay Transactions from April 1

- **Banks are likely to decline auto payments from April 1** as all recurring transactions using cards and prepaid payment instruments will now require an additional factor of authentication, as per an RBI circular first issued in December 2020.
- **Transactions above Rs. 5,000 will require an additional one-time password.** A notification will be sent to customers five days before an automatic payment is scheduled and the transaction will go ahead only if approved by the user.
- **If banks decline automatic payments, the users will have to make manual transactions to complete their bill payments.** People use recurring mandates on debit/credit cards to pay for bills and subscription services such as OTT streaming, media, utility and postpaid services.
- Rejection of payment is likely to cause a huge disruption, **with estimates suggesting that transactions worth about Rs. 2,000 crore** could fail from April 1. UPI transactions will, however, remain unaffected by the new rule.

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.

### Dubai’s Top Bank is said to raise Gulf’s First Sustainable Loan

- **Emirates NBD PJSC is raising around \$1.75 billion** in the Gulf region’s first sustainability-linked loan to refinance existing debt, according to people with knowledge of the plans.
- **Dubai’s biggest bank has shaved off about 25 to 30 basis points in the overall cost of the three-year loan,** two of the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is private.

### World's first volcano CAT bond launched

- **The world’s first catastrophe bond for volcano-related disasters has been issued on behalf of the Danish Red Cross and was built on collaboration between private and humanitarian sectors with the support of philanthropic foundations, according to Howden Group Holdings.**
- The international insurance group is bolstering the program through its charitable foundation, financial lines and reinsurance divisions. **The CAT bond aims to “mobilize humanitarian assistance from global capital markets, transforming the way disaster aid is activated and deployed,”** according to a release.
- **The goal is to raise \$3 million in capital from investors,** according to Howden, which reported the program will use advanced modeling and blockchain technology to raise funds and release aid more quickly and effectively.

### SBI signs loan agreement of \$1 billion with JBIC, taking total facility to \$2 billion

- **State Bank of India signed a loan agreement of \$1 billion with Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), taking the total facility to \$2 billion, including \$1 billion which was signed last year in October 2020.**

- The loan is intended to **promote smooth flow of funds for the whole range of business operations of Japanese automobile manufacturers in India.**
- **JBIC is a policy-based financial institution, wholly owned by the Japanese government,** with the objective of contributing to the sound development of Japan, the international economy and society.

**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.**

## **Furnishing 6 digits HSN Code or SAC made mandatory for GST taxpayers with more than Rs 5 crore turnover**

- **Government of India has made mandatory that a GST taxpayer having turnover of more than 5 crore rupees in the preceding financial year will have to furnish 6 digits Harmonised System of Nomenclature HSN Code, or Service Accounting Code, SAC on the invoices issued for supplies of taxable goods and services.**
- **A taxpayer having turnover of upto Rs 5 crore in the preceding financial year is required to mandatorily furnish 4 digits HSN code on B2B invoices. Earlier, the requirement was 4 digits and 2 digits. HSN codes for goods at 6 digits are universally common. Therefore, common HSN codes apply to Customs and GST. HSN search facility is available on the GST portal.**
- **Manufacturers and importers or exporters have been commonly using HSN Codes. Manufacturers were furnishing these codes even in the pre-GST regime. Importers and exporters have been furnishing these codes in import or export documents.**
- **Traders would mostly be using HSN codes furnished in the invoices issued to them by the manufacturer or importer suppliers. A large number of GST taxpayers are already furnishing HS codes or SAC at 6 or 8 digits on voluntary basis on the invoices, e-way bills and GSTR 1 returns.**

**The GST tax came into effect from July 1, 2017 through the implementation of One Hundred and First Amendment of the Constitution of India by the Indian government. The tax replaced existing multiple cascading taxes levied by the central and state governments. The GST has a four-tier structure for taxation of services, 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, in line with what has been done for goods. As per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution, the GST Council has to be constituted by the President within 60 days of the commencement of Article 279A. GST Council is headed by Union Finance Minister.**

## **IFSC codes, MICR codes of these PSU banks will change from April 1**

- **The IFSC and MICR code will change for some banks and will remain the same for others. For banks like Union Bank of India, the account number has not changed. Only the IFSC code has changed. You will again need to check with your bank to get clarity on what has changed and what has not.**
- **Accordingly, you will need to change your ECS instructions for loans and other payments such as life insurance and mutual fund investments. If you have taken a loan from the merging banks, the anchor bank will streamline the process.**
- **For some, there could be updated terms and conditions and rates. If you are not intimated yet, follow up with the bank. As far as fixed deposits are concerned, banks will not change the interest rates mid-way. But on renewal, the anchor bank may align the rates with theirs. With most of these merged banks, customers can continue to use their old cards till expiry, following which the new bank's cards would be issued.**

## **India's first cardless ATM facility launched**

- **NCR Corporation, the maker of automated teller machines (ATMs), launched the first interoperable cardless cash-withdrawal (ICCW) solution in collaboration with City Union Bank.**
- **The system is based on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform. The bank has upgraded its 1,500 ATMs with the facility which will be QR code-based.**

**NCR Corporation**, previously known as **National Cash Register**, is an **American software, managed and professional services, consulting and technology company** that also makes **self-service kiosks, point-of-sale terminals, automated teller machines, check processing systems, and barcode scanners**. The company is headquartered in **Georgia, USA**.

### **Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam in UP lists itself at BSE**

- **Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam in Uttar Pradesh listed itself at BSE and successfully raised Rs. 150 Crores** by issuing Municipal Bond on Private Placement Basis using BSEBOND.
- **This is the first ever green bond issuance by any Municipal Corporation in the country**. The money will be used for construction of a tertiary sewage treatment plant at Indirapuram in Ghaziabad.
- The money will be used to fund the project partly which is worth Rs 240 crore. **This treatment plant will enable the sewage water to be usable for industries after treatment.**
- **Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam is the second Municipal Corporation to raise funds in the state of Uttar Pradesh**. Earlier, **Lucknow Municipal Corporation had listed itself at BSE**.

### **World Bank predicts India's real GDP growth for fiscal year 2021-22 to range from 7.5 to 12.5 per cent**

- **The World Bank has raised Indian GDP growth prediction for 2021-22 fiscal to 10.1 per cent from 5.4 per cent projected in January 2021.**
- The international bank said, given the significant uncertainty amid Covid-19 effects on the economy, **the real India GDP growth could be in the range from 7.5 per cent to 12.5 per cent.**
- **The World Bank in its South Asia Economic Focus Spring update report said that it has revised the projection amid a strong rebound in private consumption and investment growth.**
- The international bank noted that **government consumption is expected to rise by about 16.7 per cent during the reported fiscal**. The World Bank, however, sounded a warning as economic activity is well below pre-COVID-19 estimate.
- It said that businesses **need to make up for lost revenue and millions of workers, most of them in the informal sector**, still reel from job losses and falling incomes should be taken care of.

**The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world.** The World Bank Group comprises **five institutions managed by their member countries**. It was established in **1944**, the World Bank Group is **headquartered in Washington, D.C.** **David Robert Malpass is an American economic analyst and former government official serving as President of the World Bank Group since 2019.** **Together, IBRD and IDA form the World Bank**, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. **IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, while IBRD assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries.**



## Inventions/Discoveries

### ISRO Embarking on Replicating NASA Partnership Model in India

- The ISRO is embarking on a mission of a different kind by taking the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) to a much higher, futuristic research orbit.
- The Bengaluru-headquartered space agency is striking a partnership with the IIST — something similar to the JPL- Caltech model in the United States. JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) is federally funded by US space agency NASA and managed by Caltech (California Institute of Technology).
- To coordinate joint research activities between ISRO centres and IIST, akin to the Caltech-JPL model, a dedicated framework has now been put into place, with CBPO (Capacity Building Programme Office) located at ISRO headquarters here as a focal point.
- An Advanced Space Research Group has been created to identify application-oriented research projects of importance to ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) centres and matching with the interests of IIST faculty. An Empowered Overseeing Committee has been constituted to review and approve the proposals.

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.

### Earth Hour Day 2021

- Earth Hour Day was observed all over the world on March 27 at 8:30 p.m. The day holds great significance as it calls for actions on various roles and ways that people can act on to raise awareness about the importance of nature.
- Every year Earth Hour is celebrated with the theme and the theme for 2021 is “Climate Change to Save Earth”. Climate change is one of the biggest concern of people and it is affecting everyone across the globe.
- As the lights dim in homes and cities, Earth Hour will bring people together to put a virtual spotlight on our planet and the role people can play in global efforts for nature.
- Started as a symbolic lights-out event in Sydney in 2007 by WWF and partners, Earth Hour is now one of the world's biggest environmental grassroots movements. Earth Hour, held annually on the last Saturday of March, involves millions of people in over 180 countries and territories turning off their lights to express respect for our world. Every year since 2007, millions of people take part in a global event to raise awareness about climate change.
- Macro Lambertini, Director General, WWF International said that the current socio-economic models are leading to the massive destructions of the environment which is increasing our vulnerability to pandemics, pushing climate change, and placing livelihood at risk. Earth Hour 2021 is a crucial year for mankind as the world needs to put all efforts to recover the loss of the COVID-19 pandemic by placing nature at the center.

## Health Minister approves National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021

- **The Rare Diseases Policy aims to lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases** with increased focus on indigenous research with the help of a National Consortium. **Increased focus of research and development and local production of medicines will lower the cost of treatment for rare diseases.**
- The policy also envisages **creation of a national hospital based registry of rare diseases** so that adequate data is available for definition of rare diseases and for research and development.
- **Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan approved the “National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021”** on 30<sup>th</sup> of March. The policy document has been uploaded on the website of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The policy was finalised after multiple consultations with different stakeholders and experts in the area.

## ITC Windsor becomes world’s first in LEED Zero Carbon

- **Embodying the ethos of Responsible Luxury, ITC Hotels, the world’s largest chain of hotels with the maximum number of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum Certified Properties** has been accorded yet another distinction by the USGBC (United States Green Building Council), making ITC Windsor, Bengaluru the first hotel in the world to achieve the LEED Zero Carbon Certification.
- **LEED Zero encourages a holistic approach for buildings and places, which will contribute to a regenerative future. Sharing the same vision, ITC Hotels decade strong ‘Responsible Luxury’ initiative** seeks to adopt the highest standards of planet positive experiences in its operations.
- **ITC Windsor is powered by its own wind turbine generators and uses innovative energy efficient technologies** such as electrical boiler, induction burners and other renewable energy.

## Uttar Pradesh govt launches unique gift scheme to promote covid vaccination

- **Uttar Pradesh government has launched a unique gift scheme to promote covid vaccination in the state.** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked to make all preparations to deal with the growing number of Corona infection.
- **On the occasion of World Health Day on 7<sup>th</sup> April,** state government conducted a lucky draw for those who have taken the vaccine. In those districts where more than 25,000 beneficiaries have taken both doses of vaccine they will be eligible for this gift scheme. 4 gifts will be given to the beneficiaries after lucky draw. Where more than 25,000 or more than 50,000 beneficiaries have taken both the doses of vaccines, the number of gifts will be increased to 6 and 8.

## NAL rolls out two seater trainer aircraft HANSA-NG

- **CSIR’s Bengaluru based research lab National Aerospace Laboratories rolled out a two seater trainer aircraft HANSA-NG that is developed by it.**
- **HANSA-New Generation swadeshi trainer aircraft is retro-modified** with a glass cockpit, bubble canopy design, IFR compliant avionics with smart multi-functional displays, efficient digitally controlled Rotax 912 ISC engine that gives the aircraft superior performance, range and endurance.
- **A MOU was signed between NAL and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Academy to purchase five HANSA NG aircraft** on this occasion.

## Odisha government proposes state’s second biosphere reserve at Mahendragiri

- **The Odisha government has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri, a hill ecosystem having rich biodiversity.** The 5,569-square kilometre Similipal Biosphere Reserve is Odisha’s first such reserve and was notified May 20, 1996.
- **The area of the proposed Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve** is around 470,955 hectares and is spread over Gajapati and Ganjam districts in the Eastern Ghats.
- **The hill ecosystem acts as a transitional zone between the flora and fauna of southern India and the Himalayas,** making the region an ecological estuary of genetic diversities.

## Rainforest destruction went up by 12% in 2020, says report

- The primary forest loss globally was 12% higher in 2020 compared to 2019 and the resulting carbon emissions from this are equivalent to the annual emissions of 570 million cars, or more than double their number on the US roads, the World Resources Institute (WRI) has said in a statement.
- As much as 12.2 million ha tree cover was lost in 2020, which included 4.2 million ha, or an area equal to the Netherlands, from tropical primary rainforests, according to University of Maryland data released on WRI's Global Forest Watch (GFW).

## India's first solar mission to use new technique for tracking eruptions from sun

- Scientists have developed a new technique to track the huge bubbles of gas, threaded with magnetic field lines, which are ejected from the sun disrupting space weather and causing geomagnetic storms, satellite failures, and power outages. The new technique will be used in India's first solar mission Aditya-L1.
- As the ejections from the sun, technically called Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), cause various disturbances of the space environment, forecasting their arrival time is very important. However, forecasting accuracy is hindered by limited CME observations in interplanetary space.
- A software named Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACTus) based on a computer vision algorithm was so far used to detect and characterise such eruptions automatically in the outer corona where these eruptions cease to show accelerations and propagate with a nearly constant speed.

## Mars helicopter, designed by IIT-Madras alumnus Bob Balaram, to fly over Martian skies on April 11

- NASA is targeting now April 11 for the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter to make the historic first attempt at powered, controlled flight of an aircraft on another planet. The decision to push back the date of the launch from April 8 to April 11 was announced by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California.
- The planet's surface receives only about half the amount of solar energy that reaches Earth during its daytime, and nighttime temperatures can drop as low as minus 90 degrees Celsius, which can freeze and crack unprotected electrical components.

## India's healthcare industry expected to reach 372 billion dollar in 2022: NITI Aayog

- India's healthcare industry is expected to reach 372 billion dollar in 2022. The country's healthcare sector has grown rapidly over the last five years, at a compound annual growth rate of around 22 per cent.
- NITI Aayog released a report outlining the range of investment opportunities in various segments of the healthcare sector. This includes hospitals, medical devices and equipment, health insurance, telemedicine, home healthcare and medical value travel.
- Healthcare has become one of the largest sectors of the Indian economy, in terms of both revenue and employment. As per estimates by the National Skill Development Corporation, healthcare can generate 27 lakh additional jobs in India between 2017-22.

## Area in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg named as biodiversity heritage site

- Following the discovery of a rare freshwater fish species there, the Maharashtra government has declared an area at Amboli in Western ghats in Sindhudurg district as a biodiversity heritage site. The notification to convert the locality into a protected area was issued under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's son Tejas Thackeray, who is a wildlife researcher, and his team had discovered the new freshwater fish species — Schistura Hiranyakeshi — near Amboli in Sawantwadi tehsil of Sindhudurg district.



## Sports Personalities in News

### Stephanie Frappart becomes first woman to referee men's World Cup qualifier

- French Referee **Stephanie Frappart** created history became the first female referee to officiate a men's World Cup qualifier during the Netherlands' 2-0 win over Latvia in Amsterdam.
- This is not the first time Frappart created history. In December, she became the female official to take charge of a men's Champions League match.

### Odisha wins Best State for the promotion of Sport

- Odisha has been awarded with the **Best Sports State Of The Decade Award** for promoting sports. The Odisha government got the award for the promotion of sports in the decade 2011-2020. This is Odisha's third Sportstar Aces Awards in a row. It had won the award in 2019 and 2020 as well.

### FIFA women's World Cup 2023 to begin in Auckland and end in Sydney

- The **Women's World Cup in 2023** will be played across 9 cities in New Zealand and Australia as the tournament organisers revealed the venues for the showpiece event.
- The tournament will begin with a match at **Eden Park in Auckland** while the final will be played at **Sydney's Stadium Australia**. The two semifinal matches will be split between Australia and New Zealand.
- It will be the **first-of-a-kind World Cup, co-hosted by members of different confederations**. This World Cup will also be the first to feature 32 teams, up from the 24 that participated in the 2019 women's tournament in France. The U.S. women's national team is the defending champion.

### Taher Merchant to become first Indian participant in 2021 to attempt 4 Desert Ultramarathon Grand Slam

- 38-year-old **Taher**, a father of two girls, will be running the 4 Desert Ultramarathon to support education for underprivileged children. He is set to become the first Indian Participant for 2021 to attempt the **4 Desert Ultramarathon Grand Slam**, a race which comprises of running 250 km across 4 deserts in one calendar year. There are less than 75 individuals worldwide who have accomplished the Grand Slam since its inception.
- This is an annual event of four 250 km races across some of the most beautiful and dangerous desert landscapes in the world— **Namib Race (Namibia)**, **Gobi March (Mongolia)**, **Atacama Crossing (Chile)** and **The Last Desert (Antarctica)**. Each race will have to be completed in seven days.

### Mirabai Chanu to Lead Indian Challenge in women's 49 kg category

- Former world champion **Mirabai Chanu** will lead the Indian challenge in women's 49 kg category at the upcoming **Asian Weightlifting Championships** to be held at Tashkent in Uzbekistan from April 16 to 25. He will compete in the 67 kg. The competition was postponed in 2020 due to the global pandemic and was rescheduled for 2021.

## India's first AC railway terminal in Bengaluru to be inaugurated 'soon' by PM Modi

- **Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway Terminal, situated in Bengaluru's Baiyappanahalli** is set to be **inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Railway Board Suneet Sharma** confirmed after an inspection held at soon-to-be **India's first centralised air-conditioned railway terminal**. The terminal is expected to handle 32 pairs of trains once operations begin.

## Education Minister inaugurates Center for Happiness in Indian Institute of Management

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Union Education Minister **Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'** inaugurated **"Ānandam: The Center for Happiness"** in **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu, virtually**.

## Validity of documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 extended till 30<sup>th</sup> June

- India Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has **extended the validity of documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 till 30<sup>th</sup> June** this year.
- This includes documents such as fitness, permit, driving License and registration. The Ministry has said this step has been taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help citizens in availing transport related services. **This will also ensure that citizens, transporters, and various other organizations, which are operating under this difficult time, do not get harassed or face difficulty.**

## Delhi govt kick-starts establishment of India's first virtual school

- **Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Manish Sisodia presided over a meeting to outline the scope of the Delhi Model Virtual School, a first-of-its-kind virtual school that will strive to provide excellent education to students remotely through personalised teaching-learning, effective assessments and use of cutting edge technology.** It is to be noted that Delhi Government had proposed to establish the virtual school in the budget of FY 2021-22.

## Govt launches All-India Survey of Migrant Workers

- **Government launched the All-India Survey of Migrant Workers and All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey.** Labour and Employment Ministry said, the **objective of the All-India Survey of Migrant Workers is to study the kind of employment-related migration undertaken by workers.**
- The survey will **provide the details of working and living conditions faced by Migrant Workers and impact of COVID 19 on their world of work.** All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey will provide the employment estimates for establishments employing ten or more workers as well as those with employing nine or less workers.
- The survey will **provide crucial data on the changes in employment situation across the selected sectors on a quarterly basis.** The Ministry said, these surveys will plug-in the data gap on various aspects of labour and employment and will aide evidence-based policy making processes.

## Lakshadweep, district Budgam in J-K declared TB free

- **Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union minister for health and family welfare inaugurated "World Tuberculosis Day" celebrations along with Ashwini Kumar Choubey, minister of state, health and family Welfare.**
- Awards were also given to best performing states/UTs based on their State TBI Index. **Lakshadweep (UT) and the district of Budgam (J&K) were declared TB-free.**

## India's First Passenger Train's Engine To Be Installed In Maharashtra

- **The steam engine of the first passenger train that plied between Mumbai and Thane in 1853 will be installed at Thane railway station premises.** The first passenger train in India ran from Mumbai (Bori Bunder) to Thane on April 16, 1853 and covered a distance of 34 km.

## UP emerges as top state in digital transactions: state government

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- **The Uttar Pradesh government claimed that the state has emerged as the number one state in terms of digital transactions.** “Thanks to the sustained and focussed emphasis of the UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on assimilation of technology with the economy, people in the state have embraced digital transactions like nowhere else in India”.
- The government said that **Siddharthnagar and Firozabad will be fully digital by March 2021.** Meanwhile, the state’s **Food and Civil Supply Department has been chosen for “Excellence in Digital Governance” award.** The President will give away this award on December 30.

## Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar participates in Climate and Development Ministerial meet in run up to COP26

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- **Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar participated in the virtual Climate and Development Ministerial meet in the run up to COP26,** the UN Climate Change Conference 2021. He had suggested COP26 presidency to take up discussion on one issue at a time. He expressed happiness that during meet the issue of finance was discussed exclusively.

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Career  
Launcher

## Principal Scientific Advisor K. VijayRaghavan gets extension

- **The government has extended the term of Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) K. Vijay Raghavan by a year.** Dr. Vijayaraghavan, was appointed PSA in 2018 after retiring as Secretary, Department of Biotechnology. His contract ends on the April 2, but has now been extended until April, 2022.
- **Since the pandemic began, the Office of the PSA has been among the key coordinating agencies with industry, research bodies, health and science ministries to accelerate the development of diagnostics, drugs and vaccines.**
- **The PSA office has also been instrumental in formulating the National Science Innovation and Technology Policy as well as the forthcoming National Research Foundation.**

## Biden Nominates Indian-American Rupa Ranga Puttagunta As Judge Of DC District Court

- **US President Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate Indian-American Rupa Ranga Puttagunta as a federal judge,** among 10 other diverse picks for top judicial positions which include African-American and Muslim American candidates.
- **Among the presidential nominations, 10 are for Federal Circuit and District Court judge posts, and one is for Superior Court Judge for the District of Columbia.** If confirmed by the US Senate, **Judge Puttagunta would be the first Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) woman to serve on the US District Court for the District of DC.**

## Czech Republic's richest man, Petr Kellner, dies in helicopter crash on a skiing trip in Alaska

- **Petr Kellner, the Czech Republic's richest man and founder of investment group PPF, was killed in a helicopter crash on a skiing trip in Alaska.**
- **A helicopter carrying guides and guests on a heli-skiing excursion north of Anchorage slammed into a mountain and then rolled downhill hundreds of feet, killing the pilot and four of the five passengers. Among the dead in the crash was billionaire Petr Kellner, the richest man in the Czech Republic.**



# AWARDS

## Rajnikanth to be honoured with Dada Saheb Phalke Award for the year 2019

- Actor-politician **Rajnikanth** will receive the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2019**, India's highest film honour, **Union Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted**. "Happy to announce Dadasaheb Phalke award for 2019 to one of the greatest actors in the history of Indian cinema **Rajnikant ji**."
- The prestigious **51<sup>st</sup> Dadasaheb Phalke Award** will be **honoured to superstar Rajnikanth**, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister **Prakash Javadekar** announced.
- **Rajnikanth is the 12<sup>th</sup> South Indian to get this award**. Legends like **Dr Rajkumar, Akkineni Nageshwar Rao, K Balachander** have been awarded before. The legendary actor has been **honoured with the Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan in the past**.

**Dadasaheb Phalke Award is India's highest award in cinema. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals. It was first presented in 1969; the award was introduced by the Government of India to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke's contribution to Indian cinema.**

## Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan receives Kalinga Ratna award

- Andhra Pradesh Governor **Biswa Bhusan Harichandan** has been conferred the 'Kalinga Ratna' award for the year 2021.
- The award instituted by **Sarala Sahitya Sansad** was presented to Governor **Biswa Bhusan Harichandan** by **M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India**, during the **600<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Adikabi Sarala Das and 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebrations of Sarala Sahitya Sansad** during the programme held at **Sarala Bhawan**.
- The **Kalinga Ratna award** carried a silver statue of Goddess **Saraswati** and a copper plaque.

## Hyderabad bags three awards in Smart Cities India Expo

- **Hyderabad** has won awards in three different categories at the national level in the **2021 International Exhibition and 6<sup>th</sup> Smart Cities India Expo** by the **India Trade Promotion Organisation**, a Government of India Enterprise. Under the **Green and Clean City** category, the **Rain Garden at Begumpet** was the winner.
- The **Rain Garden project** had the **HMDA taking up the development and beautification of the stormwater drain underneath the Begumpet flyover** at the intersection of **Kukatpally and Yousufguda nalas**. The area proposed for development was about **5 acres of 400 metres in length** with the nala flowing with sewage from upstream.

## Maggie O'Farrell's 'Hamnet' wins book critics award for fiction

- **Maggie O'Farrell's Hamnet**, an imagined take on the death of **Shakespeare's son** from the **bubonic plague**, has won the **National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction**.
- **Hamnet**, an unfortunately well-timed story for the current pandemic, explores the impact of the boy's illness and death on his family. He was **Shakespeare's only son**, and scholars have long speculated about **his influence — if any — on "Hamlet,"** which **Shakespeare worked on in the years following Hamnet's death**.
- **Tom Zoellner's Island on Fire: The Revolt That Ended Slavery in the British Empire** won for nonfiction, and **Amy Stanley's Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World** was the winner in biography. The **autobiography award** went to **Cathy Park Hong for Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning**.

# IMPORTANT DAYS

## World Theatre Day

- **World Theatre Day (WTD)** is an international observance celebrated on **27 March**. It was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute.
- It is **celebrated annually on 27 March** by ITI Centres and the international theatre community. Various national and international theatre events are organized to mark this occasion.

## International Mine Awareness Day 4 April

- On 8 December 2005, the **General Assembly** declared that **4 April** of each year shall be observed as the **International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action**.
- It called for continued efforts by States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries where mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the civilian population, or an impediment to social and economic development at the national and local levels.
- This year, the theme of **International Mine Awareness Day** is 'Perseverance, Partnership, and Progress'. This year, the UN has laid focus to advance the work so that new partnerships can be formed.

## Utkala Dibasa

- **Odisha Day**, also **Odisha Divas** and **Utkala Dibasa**, is celebrated on **1 April** in the Indian state of **Odisha** in memory of the formation of the state as a separate state out of **Bihar and Orissa Province** with addition of **Koraput and Ganjam** from the **Madras Presidency** on **1 April 1936**.

## World Autism Awareness Day 2 April

- The **2021 World Autism Awareness Day** observance addressed these issues through a virtual event that will include moderated panel discussions with individuals on the autism spectrum who have themselves experienced the challenges and seen these new opportunities in the employment market.
- This year, the theme is 'Inclusion in the Workplace: Challenges and Opportunities in a Post-Pandemic World'.

## 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

1. Recently, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and South Korean Defence Minister Suh Wook inaugurated the Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Gwalior Cant (b) Delhi Cant (c) Ambala Cant (d) Agra Cant
2. Recently, India Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the validity of documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 till \_\_\_\_\_ this year.  
(a) 30<sup>th</sup> April (b) 30<sup>th</sup> June (c) 31<sup>st</sup> July (d) 31<sup>st</sup> October
3. Which of the following districts of Jammu & Kashmir was recently declared TB-free?  
(a) Anantnag (b) Ramban (c) Jammu (d) Budgam
4. Recently, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has inaugurated the state's first formal indigenous language and knowledge system school in \_\_\_\_\_ district.  
(a) East Kameng (b) West Kameng (c) Itanagar (d) East Siang
5. Recently, Union Cabinet was apprised of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and \_\_\_\_\_ in water resources field.  
(a) Madagascar (b) Mauritius (c) Japan (d) Seychelles
6. According to the GROHE Hurun India Real Estate Rich List 2020, who among the following topped the list for the fourth year in a row?  
(a) Mangal Prabhat Lodha (b) Rajiv Singh  
(c) Anand Piramal (d) Adi Godrej
7. The first Indian company to buy Guyanese crude Liza is  
(a) Essar Energy (b) Reliance Energy  
(c) Adani Energy (d) HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd
8. In 2021, Earth Hour Day was observed all over the world on:  
(a) 23<sup>rd</sup> March (b) 25<sup>th</sup> March (c) 27<sup>th</sup> March (d) 31<sup>st</sup> March
9. Who among the following became the first female referee to officiate a men's World Cup qualifier?  
(a) Alexandra Culp (b) Stephanie Frappart  
(c) Diana Mapple (d) Georgia Mill
10. Which of the following cities has won awards in three different categories at the national level in the 2021 International Exhibition?  
(a) Hyderabad (b) Pune (c) Bengaluru (d) Chennai
11. Which of the following states has been awarded with the Best Sports State Of The Decade Award for promoting sports?  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Haryana (d) Odisha
12. Which of the following countries along with India recently agreed to revamp Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP)?  
(a) USA (b) Japan (c) China (d) Russia
13. Recently, President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021. As per the new amendment, the expression "Government" referred to in any law to be made by the Legislative Assembly shall mean the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Lieutenant Governor (b) Lieutenant General  
(c) Governor (d) President

14. Recently, Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde has recommended the name of \_\_\_\_\_ to the Centre for appointing him as his successor after he demits office on April 23, 2021.  
 (a) Justice R.F. Nariman (b) Justice Uday Umesh Lalit  
 (c) Justice NV Ramana (d) Justice A.M. Khanwilkar
15. Which of the following banks launched “UNI – CARBON CARD”, an HPCL co-branded credit card on the Rupay platform of NPCI?  
 (a) United Bank of India (b) Union Bank of India  
 (c) Canara Bank (d) Punjab National Bank
16. The new version of Exam Warriors written by \_\_\_\_\_ is now available with many new mantras for students as well as parents.  
 (a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
 (b) President Ramnath Kovind  
 (c) Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal “Nishank”  
 (d) Home Minister Amit Shah
17. Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway Terminal, situated in Bengaluru’s Baiyappanahalli is inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi. It is India’s first\_\_\_\_\_  
 (a) India’s first two way access railway terminal  
 (b) India’s first underground cargo storage railway terminal  
 (c) India’s first 20 waiting lounge railway terminal  
 (d) India’s first centralised air-conditioned railway terminal
18. Recently, Maggie O’Farrell’s \_\_\_\_\_ an imagined take on the death of Shakespeare’s son from the bubonic plague, has won the National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction.  
 (a) Hamnet (b) Special 24 (c) Athello Jin (d) Purpose
19. The ISRO is embarking on a mission of a different kind by taking the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) to a much higher, futuristic research orbit. Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology is located at:  
 (a) Shimla (b) Thiruvananthapuram (c) Mysuru (d) Vishakhapatnam
20. World Theatre Day (WTD) is an international observance celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) 24<sup>th</sup> March (b) 25<sup>th</sup> March (c) 26<sup>th</sup> March (d) 27<sup>th</sup> March
21. Which state is set to become the country’s first state to have two green energy efficient towns?  
 (a) Assam (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Bihar
22. Recently, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ inaugurated “Ānandam: The Center for Happiness” in:  
 (a) Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmadabad  
 (b) Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow  
 (c) Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu  
 (d) Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kolkata
23. Which of the following countries has built a military base on the remote Kotelny Island?  
 (a) Japan (b) Russia (c) Canada (d) Finland
24. Recently, Shaheed Ashfaquallah Khan Zoological Park was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in:  
 (a) Varanasi (b) Prayagraj (c) Gorakhpur (d) Meerut

25. The Banks are likely to decline auto payments from \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) April 1 (b) May 1 (c) June 30 (d) July 15
26. Which of the following companies has partnered with leading regional and global partners to build two new subsea cables -- Echo and Bifrost -- that will provide vital new connections between the Asia-Pacific region and North America?  
 (a) Facebook (b) Amazon (c) Tesla (d) Reliance
27. Recently, Petr Kellner died in helicopter crash on a skiing trip in Alaska. He was the richest person of:  
 (a) Czech Republic (b) Iceland (c) Finland (d) Poland
28. India would be involved in the development of the transmission lines for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in \_\_\_\_\_ as part of its credit line for the neighbouring country.  
 (a) Bangladesh (b) Nepal (c) Bhutan (d) Sri Lanka
29. Recently, Indian Government has extended the term of Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) \_\_\_\_\_ by a year.  
 (a) Amit Panghal (b) R. Himayath (c) K. Vijay Raghavan (d) R Balasunder
30. Odisha Day, also Odisha Divas and Utkala Dibasa, is celebrated on:  
 (a) 27<sup>th</sup> March (b) 31<sup>st</sup> March (c) 1<sup>st</sup> April (d) 3<sup>rd</sup> April
31. The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement, CECPA will come into force between:  
 (a) India and Maldives (b) India and Thailand (c) India and Mauritius (d) India and Singapore
32. Name the Indian-American who was nominated by the US president as judge of DC District Court.  
 (a) Rupa Ranga Puttagunta (b) Deepa Mehta  
 (c) Manisha Anandita Mahajan (d) Anita Maheshwari
33. In the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India has been ranked \_\_\_\_\_ among 156 countries.  
 (a) 112<sup>th</sup> (b) 119<sup>th</sup> (c) 128<sup>th</sup> (d) 140<sup>th</sup>
34. Recently, the second meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held. India's G7 Sherpa \_\_\_\_\_ attended the meeting.  
 (a) Suresh Prabhu (b) Amitabh Kant (c) Deepak Raheja (d) Aravind Panagariya
35. Recently, NITI Aayog released a report outlining the range of investment opportunities in various segments of the healthcare sector. India's healthcare industry is expected to reach \_\_\_\_\_ dollar in 2022.  
 (a) 212 billion (b) 372 billion (c) 458 billion (d) 569 billion
36. Which of the following Indian banks signed a loan agreement of \$1 billion with Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)?  
 (a) Punjab National Bank (b) State Bank of India (c) Bank of Baroda (d) Union Bank of India
37. According to the World Resources Institute (WRI), primary forest loss globally was \_\_\_\_\_ higher in 2020 compared to 2019.  
 (a) 6% (b) 8% (c) 10% (d) 12%
38. Recently, CSIR's Bengaluru based research lab National Aerospace Laboratories rolled out a two seated trainer aircraft \_\_\_\_\_ that is developed by it.  
 (a) HANSA-NG (b) VARUN-JH (c) PAWAN-KL (d) SWAN-MK
39. The 2021 World Autism Awareness Day is observed on:  
 (a) 30<sup>th</sup> March (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> April (c) 5<sup>th</sup> April (d) 8<sup>th</sup> April

40. The first hotel in the world to achieve the LEED Zero Carbon Certification is  
 (a) ITC Windsor, Bengaluru (b) The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai  
 (c) Crowne Plaza Gurgaon (d) Vivanta By Taj, New Delhi
41. Recently, the first ever green bond was issued by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Gorakhpur Nagar Nigam (b) Pune Nagar Nigam  
 (c) Bhopal Nagar Nigam (d) Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam
42. Recently, Government of India launched the \_\_\_\_\_ and All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey.  
 (a) All-India Survey of Migrant Workers  
 (b) All-India Survey of Cottage Industry Workers  
 (c) All-India Survey of Seasonal Workers  
 (d) All-India Survey of Small Industry Workers
43. Which of the following state / union territory government's kick-starts establishment of India's first virtual school?  
 (a) Puducherry (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Delhi (d) Haryana
44. Government of India has made mandatory that a GST taxpayer having turnover of more than 5 crore rupees in the preceding financial year will have to furnish \_\_\_\_\_ Harmonised System of Nomenclature HSN Code.  
 (a) 4 digits (b) 5 digits (c) 6 digits (d) 8 digits
45. Name the ministry that has decided to use sensor-based Internet of Things, IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, JJM in more than six lakh villages.  
 (a) Ministry of Jal Shakti (b) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
 (c) Ministry of Labour and Employment (d) Ministry of Panchayati Raj
46. Recently, the joint military exercise titled as the 'Ex-Shake Hands' was conducted between:  
 (a) Afghanistan and Pakistan (b) Mauritius and Maldives  
 (c) Seychelles and Malaysia (d) Sri Lanka and Pakistan
47. Recently, According to Union Budget 2021-22 Interest earned on Provident Fund contributions above \_\_\_\_\_ in a year will be taxable.  
 (a) Rs three lakh (b) Rs five lakh  
 (c) Rs seven lakh (d) Rs eleven lakh
48. Recently, the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Indo-US joint Special Forces exercise 'Vajra Prahar 2021' was conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Rajasthan (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Punjab (d) Uttarakhand
49. Which of the following state governments has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri, a hill ecosystem having rich biodiversity?  
 (a) Odisha government (b) Jharkhand government  
 (c) Madhya Pradesh government (d) Chhattisgarh government
50. Who will receive the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2019, India's highest film honour?  
 (a) Kamal Hassan (b) Rajinikanth (c) Jeetendra (d) Mala Sinha
51. The Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar participated in the virtual Climate and Development Ministerial meet in the run up to COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference 2021. COP26 will be held in:  
 (a) Lisbon (b) Milan (c) Glasgow (d) Madrid

52. In the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number System, there will be a unique ID for each land parcel. The unique ID will be of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 8 digits (b) 10 digits (c) 12 digits (d) 14 digits
53. The Indian Army will participate in Multinational Military Exercise namely 'SHANTIR OGROSHENA -2021' in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Malaysia (b) Indonesia (c) Bangladesh (d) Myanmar
54. The IFSC and MICR code changed for some banks from April 1<sup>st</sup>. An MICR code is a \_\_\_\_\_ code that uniquely identifies the bank and branch participating in an Electronic Clearing System (ECS).  
(a) 6-digit (b) 8-digit (c) 9-digit (d) 11-digit
55. Recently, NCR Corporation, the maker of automated teller machines (ATMs), launched the first interoperable cardless cash-withdrawal (ICCW) solution in collaboration with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) City Union Bank (b) Utkarsh Small Finance Bank  
(c) Bank of Baroda (d) Punjab National Bank
56. NASA is targeting for the \_\_\_\_\_ Mars Helicopter to make the historic first attempt at powered, controlled flight of an aircraft on another planet.  
(a) Integrity (b) Ingenuity (c) Mercer (d) Univert
57. Recently, following the discovery of a rare freshwater fish, the Maharashtra government has declared an area at Amboli in Western ghats in \_\_\_\_\_ district as a biodiversity heritage site.  
(a) Kolhapur (b) Chandrapur (c) Satara (d) Sindhudurg
58. Which of the following state governors has been conferred the 'Kalinga Ratna' award for the year 2021?  
(a) Biswa Bhusan Harichandan (b) Anandiben Patel  
(c) Anusuiya Uikey (d) Phagu Chauhan
59. The FIFA women's World Cup 2023 will be held in:  
(a) Japan (b) Australia and New Zealand  
(c) Russia (d) USA and Canada
60. International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is observed every year on:  
(a) 31<sup>st</sup> March (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> April (c) 4<sup>th</sup> April (d) 6<sup>th</sup> April
61. Who among the following approved the "National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021"?  
(a) Shri Ramnath Kovind (b) Shri Narendra Modi  
(c) Shri Amit Shah (d) Dr. Harsh Vardhan
62. Who will lead the Indian challenge in women's 49 kg category at the upcoming Asian Weightlifting Championships to be held at Tashkent in Uzbekistan?  
(a) Sukirti Kandpal (b) Mirabai Chanu  
(c) Anandita Mathir (d) Anita Bhatia
63. India National Maritime day is observed every year on:  
(a) 1<sup>st</sup> April (b) 2<sup>nd</sup> April (c) 5<sup>th</sup> April (d) 9<sup>th</sup> April
64. Recently, World Bank has raised Indian GDP growth prediction for 2021-22 fiscal to \_\_\_\_\_ per cent from 5.4 per cent projected in January.  
(a) 7.5 (b) 8.2 (c) 9.7 (d) 10.1

65. Recently, The virtual meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Bay of Bengal Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping finalised a major Connectivity master plan for the Bay of Bengal region. At present, how many members are there in BIMSTEC?  
(a) 4 (b) 5 (c) 7 (d) 9
66. The first Indian Participant for 2021 to attempt the 4 Desert Ultramarathon Gland Slam is  
(a) Anumpam Luthra (b) Hitesh Deshmukh (c) Taher Merchant (d) Jayesh Shah
67. Which of the following state governments recently claimed that the state has emerged as the number one state in terms of digital transactions?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Odisha (d) Jharkhand
68. Name the article which allows for creation of an 'autonomous state' within Assam in certain tribal areas and inserted into the Constitution in 1969.  
(a) Article 144(A) (b) Article 214(A) (c) Article 284(A) (d) Article 244(A)
69. Which of the following countries President Zuzana Caputova recently appointed the new cabinet led by Prime Minister Eduard Heger?  
(a) Slovenia (b) Slovakia (c) Lithuania (d) Latvia
70. Which of the following state governments has launched a unique gift scheme to promote covid vaccination in the state recently?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Odisha (d) Jharkhand



## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. **b** Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and South Korean Defence Minister Suh Wook inaugurated the Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park in Delhi Cant.
2. **b** India Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has extended the validity of documents related to Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 till 30<sup>th</sup> June this year.
3. **d** Awards were also given to best performing states/UTs based on their State TBI Index. Lakshadweep (UT) and the district of Budgam (J&K) were declared TB-free.
4. **a** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has inaugurated the state's first formal indigenous language and knowledge system school in East Kameng district.
5. **c** The Union Cabinet was apprised of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation of Ministry of Jal Shakti and Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan in the field of Water Resources.
6. **a** Mangal Prabhat Lodha of Macrotech Developers (Lodha Group), having a wealth of Rs 44,270 crore, topped the list for the fourth year in a row.
7. **d** The cargo was bought by HPCL-Mittal Energy Ltd, a joint venture between state-run Hindustan Petroleum Corp and steel tycoon L.N. Mittal.
8. **c** Earth Hour Day was observed all over the world on March 27 at 8:30 p.m. The day holds great significance as it calls for actions on various roles and ways that people can act on to raise awareness about the importance of nature.
9. **b** French Referee Stephanie Frappart created history became the first female referee to officiate a men's World Cup qualifier during the Netherlands' 2-0 win over Latvia in Amsterdam.
10. **a** Hyderabad has won awards in three different categories at the national level in the 2021 International Exhibition and 6<sup>th</sup> Smart Cities India Expo by the India Trade Promotion Organisation, a Government of India Enterprise.
11. **d** Odisha has been awarded with the Best Sports State Of The Decade Award for promoting sports.
12. **a** Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and US Secretary of Energy, Jennifer Granholm have agreed to revamp India-US Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP).
13. **a** As per the new amendment, the expression "Government" referred to in any law to be made by the Legislative Assembly shall mean the Lieutenant Governor.
14. **c** Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde has recommended the name of Justice NV Ramana to the Centre for appointing him as his successor after he demits office on April 23, 2021.
15. **b** Union Bank of India launched "UNI – CARBON CARD", an HPCL co-branded credit card on the Rupay platform of NPCI.
16. **a** The new version of Exam Warriors written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now available with many new mantras for students as well as parents.

- 17. d** Sir M Visvesvaraya Railway Terminal, situated in Bengaluru's Baiyappanahalli is inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Railway Board Suneet Sharma confirmed after an inspection held at soon-to-be India's first centralised air-conditioned railway terminal.
- 18. a** Maggie O'Farrell's Hamnet, an imagined take on the death of Shakespeare's son from the bubonic plague, has won the National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction.
- 19. b** Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology is a government-aided institute and deemed university for the study and research of space science, located at Valiamala, Nedumangad, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. It is the first university in Asia to be solely dedicated to the study and research of Outer space.
- 20. d** World Theatre Day (WTD) is an international observance celebrated on 27 March.
- 21. d** Bihar is set to become the country's first state to have two green energy efficient towns in Rajgir and Bodh Gaya.
- 22. c** In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated "Ānandam: The Center for Happiness" in Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu, virtually.
- 23. b** Moscow has built a military base on the remote Kotelny Island, part of the New Siberian Islands in the eastern Arctic, and there are other installations including on the Franz-Joseph Land archipelago.
- 24. c** The Ashfaquallah Khan Zoological Park was inaugurated in Gorakhpur, the Assembly constituency of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The zoo houses as many as 153 wild animals from 31 species.
- 25. a** Banks are likely to decline auto payments from April 1 as all recurring transactions using cards and prepaid payment instruments will now require an additional factor of authentication, as per an RBI circular first issued in December 2020.
- 26. a** Facebook has partnered with leading regional and global partners to build two new subsea cables -- Echo and Bifrost -- that will provide vital new connections between the Asia-Pacific region and North America.
- 27. a** Among the dead in the crash was billionaire Petr Kellner, the richest man in the Czech Republic.
- 28. a** India would be involved in the development of the transmission lines for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh as part of its credit line for the neighbouring country.
- 29. c** The government has extended the term of Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) K. VijayRaghavan by a year.
- 30. c** Odisha Day, also Odisha Divas and Utkala Dibasa, is celebrated on 1 April in the Indian state of Odisha in memory of the formation of the state as a separate state out of Bihar and Orissa Province with addition of Koraput and Ganjam from the Madras Presidency on 1 April 1936.
- 31. c** India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement, CECPA will come into force.
- 32. a** Biden Nominates Indian-American Rupa Ranga Puttagunta As Judge Of DC District Court.
- 33. d** India has slipped 28 places to rank 140<sup>th</sup> among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia.
- 34. a** The second meeting of the Sherpas of G7 and guest countries was held. India's G7 Sherpa Suresh Prabhu attended the meeting.
- 35. b** India's healthcare industry is expected to reach 372 billion dollar in 2022.

- 36. b** State Bank of India signed a loan agreement of \$1 billion with Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), taking the total facility to \$2 billion, including \$1 billion which was signed last year in October 2020.
- 37. d** The primary forest loss globally was 12% higher in 2020 compared to 2019 and the resulting carbon emissions from this are equivalent to the annual emissions of 570 million cars, or more than double their number on the US roads, the World Resources Institute (WRI) has said in a statement.
- 38. a** CSIR's Bengaluru based research lab National Aerospace Laboratories rolled out a two seated trainer aircraft HANSA-NG that is developed by it.
- 39. b** World Autism Awareness Day is an internationally recognized day on 2 April every year, encouraging Member States of the United Nations to take measures to raise awareness about people with autistic spectrum disorders including autism and Asperger syndrome throughout the world.
- 40. a** ITC Windsor, Bengaluru the first hotel in the world to achieve the LEED Zero Carbon Certification.
- 41. d** Ghaziabad Nagar Nigam in Uttar Pradesh listed itself at BSE and successfully raised Rs. 150 Crores by issuing Municipal Bond on Private Placement Basis using BSEBOND. This is the first ever green bond issuance by any Municipal Corporation in the country. The money will be used for construction of a tertiary sewage treatment plant at Indirapuram in Ghaziabad.
- 42. a** Government launched the All-India Survey of Migrant Workers and All-India Quarterly Establishment-based Employment Survey.
- 43. c** Chief Minister and Education Minister Manish Sisodia presided over a meeting to outline the scope of the Delhi Model Virtual School, a first-of-its-kind virtual school that will strive to provide excellent education to students remotely through personalised teaching-learning, effective assessments and use of cutting edge technology.
- 44. c** Government has made mandatory that a GST taxpayer having turnover of more than 5 crore rupees in the preceding financial year will have to furnish 6 digits Harmonised System of Nomenclature HSN Code, or Service Accounting Code, SAC on the invoices issued for supplies of taxable goods and services.
- 45. a** The Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to use sensor-based Internet of Things, IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, JJM in more than six lakh villages.
- 46. d** Titled the 'Ex-Shake Hands,' the exercise was conducted in Saliyapura in North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The militaries of Sri Lanka and Pakistan have conducted a 15-day joint exercise aimed at enhancing bilateral defence relations and sharing the rich experience of two armies against terrorism.
- 47. b** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced some changes in the income tax rules, presenting Union Budget 2021-22, which are set to come into force. Interest earned on Provident Fund contributions above Rs five lakh in a year will be taxable.
- 48. b** "The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Indo-US joint special forces exercise 'Vajra Prahar 2021' was conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh in March,".
- 49. a** The Odisha government has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of the state at Mahendragiri, a hill ecosystem having rich biodiversity.
- 50. b** Actor-politician Rajinikanth will receive the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2019, India's highest film honour, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted. "Happy to announce Dadasaheb Phalke award for 2019 to one of the greatest actors in the history of Indian cinema Rajnikant ji.

- 51. c** The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, is the 26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change conference. It is scheduled to be held in the city of Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the United Kingdom.
- 52. d** In the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number System, there will be a unique ID for each land parcel. The unique ID will be of 14 digits.
- 53. c** Indian Army will participate in Multinational Military Exercise namely SHANTIR OGROSHENA -2021 in Bangladesh.
- 54. c** An MICR code is a 9-digit code that uniquely identifies the bank and branch participating in an Electronic Clearing System (ECS).
- 55. a** NCR Corporation, the maker of automated teller machines (ATMs), launched the first interoperable cardless cash-withdrawal (ICCW) solution in collaboration with City Union Bank.
- 56. b** NASA is targeting now April 11 for the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter to make the historic first attempt at powered, controlled flight of an aircraft on another planet.
- 57. d** Following the discovery of a rare freshwater fish, the Maharashtra government has declared an area at Amboli in Western ghats in Sindhudurg district as a biodiversity heritage site.
- 58. a** Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan has been conferred the 'Kalinga Ratna' award for the year 2021.
- 59. b** The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup is scheduled to be the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, the quadrennial world championship for women's national football teams organised by FIFA. The tournament will be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand, during a reserved period in the FIFA Women's International Match Calendar between 10 July and 20 August 2023.
- 60. c** On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly declared that 4 April of each year shall be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.
- 61. d** Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan approved the "National Policy for Rare Diseases 2021" on 30<sup>th</sup> of March.
- 62. b** Former world champion Mirabai Chanu will lead the Indian challenge in women's 49 kg category at the upcoming Asian Weightlifting Championships to be held at Tashkent in Uzbekistan from April 16 to 25.
- 63. c** On 5<sup>th</sup> April every year in India National Maritime day is observed because on this date in 1919 navigation history was created SS Loyalty, the first ship of The Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd journeyed to the United Kingdom.
- 64. d** The World Bank has raised Indian GDP growth prediction for 2021-22 fiscal to 10.1 per cent from 5.4 per cent projected in January.
- 65. c** The seven-member regional grouping namely India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar will take up the Master plan for transport connectivity for adoption in the next summit of the organisation to be hosted by Sri Lanka in a few months from now.
- 66. c** Taher Merchant to become first Indian participant in 2021 to attempt 4 Desert Ultramarathon Grand Slam.
- 67. a** The Uttar Pradesh government claimed that the state has emerged as the number one state in terms of digital transactions.

- 68. d** Article 244(A) allows for creation of an 'autonomous state' within Assam in certain tribal areas. Inserted into the Constitution in 1969.
- 69. b** Slovakia's president swore in a new coalition government to end a political crisis triggered by a secret deal to buy Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine.
- 70. a** Uttar Pradesh government has launched a unique gift scheme to promote covid vaccination in the state. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked to make all preparations to deal with the growing number of Corona infection.



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