

CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL NEWS

Kashmir's 25-yr-old Ayesha Aziz becomes India's youngest female pilot

- **Ayesha Aziz**, the 25-year-old from **Kashmir** who is the youngest female pilot in the country, **acts as a source of inspiration and a beacon of empowerment for numerous Kashmiri women.**
- In the year **2011**, **Aziz** became the **youngest student pilot to get a license at the age of 15** and underwent training to fly a **MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase** the following year.
- She later graduated in aviation from the **Bombay Flying Club (BFC)** and obtained a commercial license in 2017.

MCA amends One Person Companies (OPCs) rules

- The **Ministry of corporate affairs (MCA)** amended the **Companies Rules to revise** the definition of a small company and **to allow non-resident Indians (NRIs)** to incorporate **one person companies (OPCs) in India.**
- Previously NRIs were not allowed to incorporate OPCs. Now any natural person, who is an Indian citizen, whether resident in India or otherwise would be allowed to form an OPC.
- For being considered as a resident in India, the residency period has been proposed to be reduced to **120 days from 182 days for NRIs.**
- Amendments to the Act in 2018, contained provisions for increasing the paid up capital and turnover thresholds for small companies up to Rs 10 crore and Rs 100 crore, respectively.
- The move is expected to lighten the compliance burden of about 200,000 companies

About Ministry of corporate affairs :

- Minister : P.P. Chaudhary
- Headquarters : New Delhi

Punjab CM launches 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain **Amarinder Singh** virtually launched the **'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' mission** as part of the government's campaign to accomplish the goal of **100 per cent potable piped water supply in all rural households by March next year.**
- The Chief Minister also inaugurated one **Mega Surface Water Supply Scheme** covering **85 villages in the Moga district, 144 new water supply schemes for 172 villages, 121 Arsenic, and Iron removal plants.**
- The scheme will benefit more than **6 lakh residents** from 155 villages in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur districts by helping replace groundwater with surface water supply for drinking, besides resolving the problem of arsenic affected habitations.
- The scheme is being funded by the **World Bank, Jal Jeewan Mission of GoI, NABARD, and State Budget.**

- The Chief Minister also formally launched 10 new large multi-village surface water supply schemes at a cost of Rs.1,020 Crore. The scheme will cover 1,018 villages in the water quality affected areas of districts Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, and Tarn Taran.

About Punjab :

- CM : Amarinder Singh
- Governor : VP Singh Badnore
- Capital : Chandigarh

SEC launches its own poll app, eWatch, in Andhra Pradesh

- State Election Commissioner **Ramesh Kumar** launched a software application called **'eWatch' to keep tabs on poll-related irregularities.**
- It was an in-house software application developed at the request of the State Election Commission by **Reliance Jio** for use in the ensuing **gram panchayat elections.**
- Developed exclusively for the election watch, the app comes with features that enable people to interact with the SEC about everything related to the panchayat polls being held in the state after a prolonged conflict between the SEC and the government.
- The e-watch app will be available on **Google Play Store from Thursday**, he added and called upon people to use their franchise with enthusiasm.
- Ramesh Kumar also inaugurated a call center exclusively set up for receiving and resolving election related complaints.

About AP :

- Governor : Biswabhusan Harichandran
- CM : YS Jagan Mohan Reddy

Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles

- Delhi Chief Minister **Arvind Kejriwal** launched the **'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote electric vehicles** and appealed to people to buy such vehicles **to combat pollution in the city.**
- Kejriwal said his government will hire **only electric vehicles for various purposes** in the **next six weeks.**
- In the 'Switch Delhi' campaign, awareness will be created about the benefits of electric vehicles and how it can contribute to making Delhi clean and pollution free.
- Under its electric vehicle policy, the Delhi government has planned extensive subsidies on purchase of electric two-wheelers and four-wheelers, besides waiving road tax and registration charges
- More than 6,000 electric vehicles have been purchased since the policy launch in August 2020. The government has also issued tenders for setting up 100 charging stations across the city,
- The government has fixed an ambitious target of **25 per cent electric vehicles** among total vehicle registrations in **Delhi by 2024**

About Delhi :

- CM : Arvind Kejriwal

HAL to launch unmanned fighter jet

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited NSE 3.79 % (HAL)** unveiled a leap in technology of teaming up **unmanned aircraft and vehicles** with manned jets similar to the US project of skyborg.
- It will enhance **Indian military strike capabilities**
- The technology named **Combined Air Teaming System (CATS)** will have a mother ship, operating from faraway, and four autonomous unmanned aerial vehicles known as CATS Warrior.
- HAL is also developing a high-altitude satellite system. It will be solar energised.
- This asset will be flying unmanned around **70,000 feet** height for around two to three months and will be taking all the information.
- HAL is also developing a high altitude asset with long endurance. It will be flying 50,000 feet for 24 hours and it is also part of CATS programme.

About CATS :

- CATS Warrior with a capacity to carry out strikes stealthily entering 700 kilometres inside enemy territory.
- These unmanned aerial vehicles are capable of autonomous functions and will also have all the manoeuvring capabilities.

About HAL :

- Founder: Walchand Hirachand
- Founded : 23 December 1940, Bangalore

J&K Reorganisation Amendment Bill introduced in Rajya Sabha

- Minister of State for Home Affairs **G Kishan Reddy** introduced the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Rajya Sabha.**
- The bill will replace Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Ordinance of 2021 which merged the J & K cadre of the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, and Indian Forest Service with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territory cadre, also known as AGMUT cadre.
- The President had promulgated the ordinance last month to amend the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.

45th Kolkata International Book Fair to be held in July 2021

- The **45th Kolkata International Book Fair** will be held in **July** this year at the **Central Park Ground of Salt Lake.**
- The Publishers and Booksellers Guild announced that the decision has been taken in view of the Board exams and the ensuing Assembly Elections in **West Bengal.**
- This year the focal theme country is Bangladesh to mark the country's **Golden Jubilee Year of Independence and the Centenary of Bangabondhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.**

- The **125th Birth year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** and Birth Centenary of Satyajit Ray will also be celebrated in the Book Fair. Earlier, the Kolkata International Book Fair was deferred due to the pandemic situation.

PM to inaugurate World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on Feb 10

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **World Sustainable Development Summit 2021** on **10th of February** via video conferencing.
- The theme of the summit is **'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'**.
- The 20th edition of **The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI)** flagship event- the World Sustainable Development Summit, will be held online from 10th to 12th February.
- The summit will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth and the civil society in the fight against climate change.
- Energy and industry transition, adaptation and resilience, nature based solutions, climate finance, circular economy, clean oceans and air pollution, are amongst the range of topics to be discussed during the summit.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Earth Sciences are key partners of the summit.

PM dedicates to nation projects worth Rs 4,700 cr at Haldia in West Bengal

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** dedicated to the nation **four projects** related to **oil, gas and road sector worth rupees four thousand and seven hundred crores at Haldia in West Bengal**.
- The Prime Minister inaugurated three projects, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited BPCL's LPG Import Terminal at Haldia, GAIL's Dobhi-Durgapur Natural Gas Pipeline and NHAI's four lane ROB cum flyover at Ranichak.
- Union ministers Dharmendra Singh , Debasree Chaudhary, Governor of West Bengal Jagdeep Dhankhar were also present on the occasion.

About West Bengal :

- Governor : Jagdeep Dhankhar
- Capital : Kolkata

Uttarakhand glacier burst

- A major accident occurred in **Chamoli in Uttarakhand** due to the **breaking of the glacier**
- The glacier burst took place at the **Rishiganga power project** after a portion of **Nanda Devi glacier broke off in Tapovan area of Joshimath** in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district and damaged the Rishiganga dam on Alaknanda river.
- The **2 MW Rishiganga hydropower** project near Jashimath was completely washed away; the 520 MW NTPC hydro project on the Dhauliganga river near Raini was partially damaged and at least five bridges were impacted by the surge of water that was unleashed, cutting access to a number of villages in the area.
- A multi-agency rescue operation including — Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) — is in full swing to release people still stuck in

the tunnels. The forces have cleared 90 meter stretch of debris in the big tunnel at Tapovan till now, with about 100 meters of clearing still left to do.

About ITBP :

- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Comes Under Ministry of Home Affairs
- Founded : 24 October 1962

About Uttarakhand :

- CM : Trivendra Singh Rawat
- Governor : Baby Rani Maurya

Budget 2021: Agricultural credit target set at Rs. 16.5 lakh crore for FY22

- With the **aim of doubling farmers' income by 2022**, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** announced that the **agricultural credit target** was set at **16.5 lakh crore for FY22**, during Union Budget 2021.
- It is an increase of **10 percent** over the previous year Rs 15 Lakh Crore
- She also announced that the micro irrigation fund would be doubled by Rs.5,000 crore. Operation green scheme will be expanded to include 22 perishable schemes.
- Agriculture infra fund to be increased to Rs.40,000 crore and this will be available to APMCs.
- 1,000 more mandis will be integrated with the electronic national market (e-NAM) to enhance the infrastructure of APMCs.

About APMC :

- Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMC) is the marketing board established by the state governments in order to eliminate the exploitation incidences of the farmers by the intermediaries, where they are forced to sell their produce at extremely low prices.
- These markets geographically divide the state.

India's first geothermal power project to be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh

- **India's first geothermal power project** will be established at **Puga village of eastern Ladakh**. **Puga** has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy in the country by the scientists.
- In the first phase of the pilot project, one megawatt (MW) power generation capacity will be generated.
- A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for establishment and implementation of the first phase was signed.
- India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022. The **tripartite MOU** was signed between **ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh**.
- In the first phase, the pilot project implemented by the ONGC-OEC will explore within the depth of 500 metres and it is planned to supply 24 hours free power to 10 neighbouring villages which are not connected with the northern grid for power supply.

- The second Phase is proposed for deeper and lateral exploration of geothermal reservoirs by drilling optimal number of wells and setting up of a higher capacity demo plant in Ladakh. The second phase will be the Research and Development stage or demonstration of the project.
- In the third phase, it is planned to promote joint ventures and commercial projects. Puga is a place where it is uncovered with a potential of more than 100 mw of geothermal energies.

About Ladak :

- Capital : Leh, Kargil

PM to lay foundation stone of various development projects in Assam

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will lay the **foundation stone of various development projects** at **Dhekiajuli in Sonitpur district in Assam**.
- The Prime Minister will launch '**Asom Mala**', aimed at **helping improve state highways and major district roads networks in the state**.
- The programme is unique for its emphasis on effective maintenance through continuous field data collection and its linkage with the Road Asset Management System.
- Asom Mala' will provide quality inter-linkage roads between the National Highways and the rural roads network as well as facilitate seamless multi-modal transportation.
- In addition to that, the Prime Minister will also lay the foundation stone of two medical colleges and hospitals, which are being set up at Biswanath and Charaideo, at a total estimated project cost of over 1100 crore rupees.

About Assam :

- Capital : Dispur
- CM : Sarbananda Sonowal

Himachal Pradesh becomes first State to implement e-cabinet

- **Himachal Pradesh** has become the **first State in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing e-cabinet application**.
- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the first e-cabinet at Shimla.
- The entire process from initiation of a cabinet memo, approval of the cabinet memo through concerned Secretary, Chief Secretary, concerned Minister and finally by Chief Minister to place in the cabinet has been made online.
- It will also be possible to monitor the status of implementation of cabinet decisions more effectively through this application.
- The e-cabinet provides for generation of automatic s through SMS on real time basis for various stages involved in processing cabinet issues like receipt of cabinet memo, finalization of cabinet meeting, advice received on cabinet memo for various levels like Secretaries and Ministers.
- The e-cabinet application is also available as a Mobile App on android devices .
- The new system will bring greater efficiency in the overall process of conducting a cabinet meeting by removing dependencies which arise due to the physical movement of cabinet memos.

Gujarat govt to set up Indian Institute of Skills in Gandhinagar

- In **Gujarat**, the State Government has asked the **Tata group** to start the work on **setting up Indian Institute of Skills- IIS**.
- This was conveyed during a meeting between the high powered team from Tata Group and senior officials of Gujarat Government held in
- IIS is being set up by the Labour and Employment Department of Gujarat along with Tata Group at Nasmed village of Gandhinagar.
- The State Government has allotted around **20 acres of land** for Tatas to start Indian Institute of Skills.
- The foundation stone for the proposed IIS at Nasmed was performed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah who is also Lok Sabha Member from Gandhiagar constituency in Gujarat. Proposed IIS at Nasmed is located in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency.
- The institute is being developed on a Not-for-profit Public Private Partnership mode by the Tata Group along with the state's Labour and Employment Department.

About Gujarat :

- Capital : Gandhinagar
- Governor : Acharya Devvrat
- CM : Vijay Rupani

President Kovind Inaugurates General KS Thimayya Museum In Karnataka

- On Feb 06, 2021, President **Ram Nath Kovind** inaugurated a **museum**, dedicated to the **life of former Army Chief General Kodandera Subayya Thimayya, in Karnataka**.
- Sunny Side, the erstwhile ancestral house of General Thimayya, who served as the Chief of Army Staff from **1957 to 1961**, has been renovated and converted into a museum.
- **General Thimayya** is the **pride of Kodagu** and the memorial museum aims to retell the life-story of the General in an inspiring manner.
- A statue of the General from Kodagu in uniform greets as one enters the museum, which also showcases a slice of Indian military history.
- The museum also acknowledges the contribution of General Thimayya's siblings, including two of his brothers, who too were Army officers, and his wife Nina, who was bestowed with "Kaiser-e-Hind" award in recognition of her work in public service.

About Karnataka :

- Capital : Bangalore
- CM : Yediyurappa
- Governor : Vajubhai Vala

GMR Group inks MoU with Airbus for aircraft maintenance & other airport services

- **GMR Group** has signed a **memorandum of understanding** with **Airbus** (a leading manufacturer of commercial aircrafts) to explore collaboration opportunities across aviation services, technologies and innovation.
- The MoU was **signed at Aero India 2021, Bangalore**.

- As part of the MoU, GMR Group and Airbus will collaborate to explore a broad scope of aviation services, both for commercial and military aircraft to benefit the entire aerospace ecosystem in the country.
- The **main objective** of this partnership will be to explore potential synergies in several strategic areas of aviation services like maintenance, components, training, digital.

About GMR Group :

- Founded: 1978
- Headquarters : New Delhi

India's First Thunderstorm Research Testbed to be established at Balasore in Odisha

- **Odisha's Balasore** will get the country's **first thunderstorm** research testbed, the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.
- The **objective** of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimize human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.
- The thunderstorm testbed will be established in a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** and **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.
- IMD Director-General Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, while speaking with a private television channel, also revealed that a first-of-its-kind monsoon testbed is also being planned near Bhopal.
- Both the projects are in the planning stage and detailed project reports are being made.

About Odisha :

- Capital : Bhubaneswar
- Governor : Ganeshi Lal

About IMD :

- Founded : 1875
- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Comes Under Ministry of Earth Sciences

UP Government Announces 16-Digit Unicode To Identify Landholdings

- The **Uttar Pradesh** government has introduced a system of issuing a **unique 16-digit Unicode** to **mark all kinds of landholdings in the state**.

About the 16 Digit Unicode :

- The Unicode number of the land will be 16 digits with the **first six digits based on the population** of the land, the **next 4 digits determining the unique identity** of the land.
- The digits from 11 to 14 will be the number of the division of the land.
- The last 2 digits will have the details of the category, through which, the agricultural, residential and commercial land will be identified.

Purpose of the Digit Unicode :

- The Unicode will put an end to fake registries of disputed land and the scheme is being implemented across the state.
- The work has started in most of the districts.
- Every piece of land in the state will have its own unique identity from now onwards that would check cases of land disputes and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters.
- While the Unicode assessment for plots has started in all revenue villages, the work of marking the disputed plots in the computerised management system is being done by the revenue courts

About UP :

- Capital : Lucknow
- Governor : Anandiben Patel
- CM : Yogi Adityanath

Skyroot, Bellatrix signs MoU to use latter's orbital transfer vehicle

- **Skyroot Aerospace and Bellatrix Aerospace** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to use the **Orbital Transfer Vehicle** being developed by **Bellatrix Aerospace** in the upper stage of Vikram series of launch vehicles being developed by Skyroot.
- Skyroot and Bellatrix plan to have the **first mission of a Vikram launcher** with an Orbital Transfer Vehicle by 2023.
- The vehicle is expected to help global operators reduce time and costs for launching communication and earth observation satellites.

About OTV :

- An Orbital Transfer Vehicle is a spacecraft that can perform various in-orbit operations including deployment of customer payload to precise orbits, allowing a launch vehicle to deliver satellites to more orbits than what was conventionally possible.
- In simple terms, it is like a taxi in space to take satellites to their operational orbits.

About Skyroot Aerospace :

- Skyroot Aerospace, founded in 2018, is a National Award winning startup building space launch vehicles. It is founded by former ISRO scientists and plans their first launch to Space in 2021.
- Last year Skyroot successfully tested their upper stage engine Raman and Solid fuel demonstrator Kalam-5.

About Bellatrix Aerospace :

- Bellatrix Aerospace, an IP driven space tech company founded in 2015, is a full-suite solution provider of spacecraft propulsion systems offering both chemical and electric propulsion technologies.

Manipur chief minister launches organic products and Loumicconnect App

- **Manipur** chief minister **N Biren Singh** launched a **new range of packaged organic products** and **Loumi Connect App** apart from distributing Bolero Camper vehicles and nurseries to seven **Farmers Producer Companies (FPCs)**.
- A function organized jointly by Directorate of Horticulture and Soil Conservation and **Eastern Border Areas Development Authority (EBADA)** at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Imphal.
- He also launched Loumi Connect App which would enable connect farmers with Horticulture and Agriculture experts.
- The chief minister also released Illustrative guide booklets on organic farming and **Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER)**.
- The chief minister also informed that Food Park, Nilakuthi, will have a packaging facility soon. He also informed that the state government has already submitted a INR400 crore project proposal for bamboo to the union government.

About Manipur :

- Capital : Imphal
- Governor : Najma Heptulla
- CM : N. Biren Singh

FM Nirmala Sitharaman Initiates 3rd Phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela in Guwahati

- Union Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** on February 6, initiated the ceremonial distribution ceremony of **Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela in Guwahati**.
- It is to be mentioned that as many as **7,46,667 beneficiaries** of tea gardens were covered under the scheme. Notably, the scheme was launched in **Financial Year (FY) 2017-18**.
- The main objective of the scheme **is to incentivize and strengthen the efforts of financial inclusion of the tea tribe community**.
- Further, in the 1st phase of the scheme, Rs. 2500 was credited to 6,33,411 bank accounts of tea garden workers in FY 2017-18 through Direct Benefit Transfer.
- In phase 2, an additional amount of Rs. 2500 was credited to 7,15,979 bank accounts of tea garden workers in FY 2018-19.
- At the phase, Rs.3000 will be credited to 7,46,667 beneficiaries of tea garden workers.

About Assam :

- Capital : Dispur
- CM : Sarbananda Sonowal

Four more states complete ease of doing business reforms

- The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, added **four more states** have completed the reforms in the '**Ease of Doing Business**', as stipulated by the **Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance** as per recent data.
- Four more States are **Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab** .

- These States have become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources and have been granted permission to raise additional **Rs 5,034 crore** through Open Market Borrowings.
- The total number of states that have undertaken the stipulated reforms to facilitate ease of doing business has gone up to
- Earlier, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have also reported completion of this reform.
- On completion of reforms facilitating ease of doing business, these twelve states have been granted additional borrowing permission of **Rs 28,183 crore**.
- The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy,
- In May 2020, the government had decided to link the grant of additional borrowing permissions to states that will undertake the reforms to facilitate ease of doing business
- The four citizen-centric areas for reforms identified were as follows:
- The implementation of the One Nation One Ration Card System
- Ease of doing business reform
- Urban local body or utility reforms
- Power sector reforms
- Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh became the first state to complete three out of four citizen-centric reforms and received additional funds for capital projects. The Department of Expenditure allocated an additional Rs.660 crore to Madhya Pradesh for capital expenditure.

About DPIIT :

- Founded : 1995
- Comes Under Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Madhya Pradesh launches 'SAANS' campaign to reduce infant mortality

- The **health department** in Madhya Pradesh has launched the **Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully ('SAANS')** campaign with the aim of **reducing infant mortality due to pneumonia**.

Purpose :

- **To reduce the death rate** due to **pneumonia** among **infants** a strategy is being chalked out under the Social awareness campaign in which medical staff is being trained.
- Training will be imparted at the community and primary health centres.
- Around **4,000 Health and Wellness Centres** have been set up in Madhya Pradesh for this purpose.
- The State government has also developed training modules in partnership with PGIMER, Chandigarh, and UNICEF, which will be used to enhance the skills of health workers, including doctors and paramedical staff.

About Madhya Pradesh :

- Capital : Bhopal

- CM : Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Jammu and Kashmir govt restores 4G mobile Internet service in entire Union Territory

- The **high speed mobile data services** have been **restored in Jammu and Kashmir**, bringing respite to people affected by the ban, especially students, working professionals and business community.
- The services were suspended on **August 5, 2019** when the central government abrogated the special status of J&K and bifurcated the erstwhile State into two Union Territories.
- The **2G service on mobile phones** was **restored across J&K in January 2020**.
- The high speed mobile data services were restored in twin J&K districts including Ganderbal in Kashmir and Udhampur in Jammu division on a trial basis on August 16, 2020, as part of calibrated easing of restrictions.
- The pre-paid SIM card holder will be given access to internet connectivity only after verification as per norms applicable to postpaid connections.

MSME wing of GoI to cooperate in setting up industries up to 20 crore rupees in Dhanbad

- In **Jharkhand**, the **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME** wing of the Government of India will cooperate in setting up industries up to **20 crore rupees in Dhanbad**.
- The **central government** will give **70 percent amount**, while the remaining **30 percent** is to be borne by the **state government and industrialists**.
- The Central Government has taken initiatives to set up integrated industries, including the automobile section, tools room, and other subsidiary industries in Dhanbad for Rs 20 crore and more.
- This amount will be received by industrialists through clusters. Director MSME D K Sahu in Dhanbad has assured the industrialists to resolve the above issues and problems, and focus upon Prime Minister's vision of Vocal for Local.

About MSME :

- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Founded : 2007
- Joint Secretary : Ateesh Kumar Singh

About Jharkhand :

- Capital : Ranchi
- CM : Hemant Soren

Kerala to gets its first human milk bank

- The southern state of **Kerala** will get its **first human milk bank**. The state-of-the-art facility will be inaugurated by health minister **K K Shailaja** at state-owned **Ernakulam general hospital in Kochi**.
- It is being set up in partnership with **Rotary Club of Cochin Global**.
- The facility will provide breast milk to newborn babies who are deprived of it because of various issues, including the sickness of their mothers.

SALEM INSTITUTE OF BANKING

- According to the state government, **3,600 babies** are born in the general hospital a year and out of those, **600 to 1,000 sick babies** are admitted into the **Neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)**.
- A similar milk bank – the Northeast's first – opened at Guwahati's Satribari Christian Hospital in December last year.
- It was the 15th milk bank in the entire country.

About Kerala :

- CM : Pinarayi Vijayan
- Capital : Thiruvananthapuram
- Governor : Arif Mohammad Khan

About NICU :

- A neonatal intensive care unit, also known as an intensive care nursery, is an intensive care unit specializing in the care of ill or premature newborn infants.
- Neonatal refers to the first 28 days of life. Neonatal care, as known as specialized nurseries or intensive care, has been around since the 1960s

CM Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates first heliport of Assam in Majuli

- **Assam** Chief Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** inaugurated the **first heliport** of the state in **Majuli**
- The heliport having facility for simultaneous landing of three helicopters was constructed at an expenditure of **Rs 50 lakh**.
- The heliport was built with an aim to boost tourism in Majuli, which has a distinct identity as the world's largest river island.
- The state government has also undertaken several projects to strengthen road infrastructure in the river island, and steps are being taken for construction of the bridge connecting Majuli with Jorhat.
- The Assam government made dedicated efforts to put Majuli as an important tourist destination of the world.
- The new heliport would significantly facilitate tourist flow to Majuli.
- The chief minister also laid the foundation for the infrastructure improvement project of Sankarjyoti High School with a financial outlay of Rs 25 lakh.

About Assam :

- Capital : Dispur
- CM : Sarbananda Sonowal

CURRENT AFFAIRS : INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Denmark to build world's first energy island in the North Sea

- The **Denmark** to build **world's first energy** island in the North Sea

- The **€28 billion construction** project is the biggest of its kind in Danish history. The government will hold a 51% stake in the island, with the remainder held by the private sector.
- In that Initial phase will be the size of **18 football fields**, will be linked to hundreds of offshore wind turbines and will supply both power to households and green hydrogen for use in shipping, aviation, industry and heavy transport.
- It will cost around **210 billion Danish crowns (\$33.9 billion)** to build, and is an important part of Denmark's legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 70% by 2030 from 1990 levels, one of the world's most ambitious.
- The move came as the European Union unveiled plans to transform its electricity system to rely mostly on renewable energy within a decade and increase its offshore wind energy capacity **25-fold by 2050**.
- The island, to be located **80 kilometres off Denmark's west coast**, and its surrounding wind turbines will have an initial capacity of 3 gigawatt and be operational around 2033.
- Denmark also has plans for an energy island in the Baltic Sea. The state will hold a controlling stake in both islands.

About Denmark :

- Capital : Copenhagen
- Currency : Danish Krone

14th International Children's Film festival concludes in Bangladesh

- The **14th International Children's Film Festival of Bangladesh (ICFFB)** came to an end in
- A total of **12 awards** were presented to the winners at the concluding ceremony.
- **179 films from 37 countries** were shown at various venues during the **7-day long festival organised by the Children's Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh**.
- Apart from Bangladesh, films from India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China among others were shown in the course of the festival.
- **Dutch Film Jackie and Oopjen** was awarded the **Best International Feature Film Award**.
- **Bangladeshi film Maati** got The Young Talent Award while Lottery won the Special mention under the Young Talent Award.

About Bangladesh :

- Capital : Dhaka
- Currency : Bangladeshi taka
- President : Abdul Hamid

South Korea To Build World's Largest Offshore Wind Farm

- **South Korea** unveiled a **5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion)** plan to **build the world's largest wind power plant by 2030** as part of efforts to foster an environmentally-friendly recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The project is a major component of President Moon Jae-in's Green New Deal, initiated last year to **curb reliance on fossil fuels** in **Asia's fourth-largest economy** and make it carbon neutral by 2050
- Moon attended a signing ceremony in the southwestern coastal town of Sinan for the plant, which will have a maximum capacity of **2 gigawatts**.
- The plan is part of the country's Green New Deal that seeks to transition South Korea to a more sustainable energy future.
- It is accelerating the eco-friendly energy transition and moving more vigorously toward carbon neutrality.
- The estimated cost of the project is 48.5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion).
- The project would provide up to 5,600 jobs and help achieve a goal to boost the country's wind power capacity to 16.5 GW by 2030 from 1.67 GW now.
- Till date, the world's largest offshore wind farm is Hornsea 1 in Britain, which has 1.12 GW capacity.

About South Korea :

- President : Moon Jae in
- Capital : Seoul
- Currency : South Korean won

NASA chooses SpaceX to launch \$99M astrophysics mission

- **NASA** has chosen **SpaceX** to provide **launch services** for its **upcoming two-year astrophysics mission** slated to kick off in **June of 2024**.
- The mission is **dubbed Spherex**, which stands for Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, **Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer**.
- Its goal is to **"survey the sky in the near-infrared light,"** which could then help answer questions about the birth of the universe and the development of galaxies.
- SPHEREx will also look for water and organic molecules in areas where stars are formed from gas and dust, as well as disks around stars where new planets could be forming.
- The mission will allow astronomers to collect data on more than 300 million galaxies, and more than **100 million stars in the Milky Way**.
- The small astrophysics spacecraft, SPHEREx, **weighs 329-lb. (178 kilograms)**.
- The mission, which costs around **\$98.8 million** to launch, will take off on a **Falcon 9 rocket** from Space Launch Complex-4E at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

About NASA :

- Headquarters : Washington, United States
- Founder : Dwight D. Eisenhower
- Founded : 1 October 1958

Square Kilometre Array Observatory launched

- A new intergovernmental organisation called **Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) Council** has been formed with the intention of building the **world's largest radio telescope**.

- The council held its **first-ever meeting** to approve the plans and start a **new journey in space exploration**.
- Though it is **headquartered** in the **UK**, SKAO has **members from Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden and the Netherlands**.
- French-born **Dr Catherine Cesarsky** has been **appointed as the first Chair of the SKAO Council**.
- The Indian contingent of over 20 institutions will be led by **Pune-based National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of TIFR**.

Objective of SKAO

- To look into some of the unexplored areas of the universe and seek answers about its history and evolution, study fundamental physics in extreme environments and know about galaxies over cosmic time.
- The telescope will enable astronomers to monitor the sky in unprecedented detail and survey the entire sky much faster than any system currently in existence.

What are radio telescopes?

- Unlike optical telescopes, radio telescopes can detect invisible gas and, therefore, they can reveal areas of space that may be obscured by cosmic dust.
- Significantly, since the first radio signals were detected by physicist Karl Jansky in the 1930s, astronomers have used radio telescopes to detect radio waves emitted by different objects in the universe and explore it.
- According to NASA, the field of radio astronomy evolved after World War II and became one of the most important tools for making astronomical observations since.

So what is significant about the SKA telescope?

- The telescope, proposed to be the largest radio telescope in the world, will be located in Africa and Australia whose operation, maintenance and construction will be overseen by SKAO.
- The completion is expected to take nearly a decade at a cost of over £1.8 billion.
- Significantly, the development of SKA will use the results of various surveys undertaken using another powerful telescope called the Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP), which is developed and operated by the country's science agency CSIRO.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : BANKING NEWS

RBI unveils risk-based internal audit guidelines for select NBFCs, UCBs

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** issued guidelines on **risk-based internal audit (RBIA)** system for select **non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks (UCBs)**.
- NBFCs and UCBs have grown in size and become systemically important, prevalence of different audit systems/approaches in such entities has created certain inconsistency.
- The entities have to implement the RBIA framework by **March 31, 2022**
- This is mainly for **Strengthen the quality and effectiveness of the internal audit system** of selected entities.

SALEM INSTITUTE OF BANKING

- The regulator also specified that RBIA policy shall clearly document the purpose, authority, and responsibility of the internal audit activity, with a clear demarcation of the role and expectations from risk management function and risk -based internal audit function.
- RBI, in its monetary policy statement on December 4, 2020, had announced that suitable guidelines would be issued to large UCBs and NBFCs for the adoption of RBIA to strengthen the internal audit function, which works as a third line of defence.

About RBIA :

- RBIA is an audit methodology that links with an organisation's overall risk management framework and provides an assurance to the board of directors and the senior management on the quality and effectiveness of the organisation's internal controls, risk management and governance-related systems and processes.

About RBI :

- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founder : British Raj
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das

RBI Monetary Policy:repo rate unchanged at 4%

- **The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept its repo rate unchanged at 4 percent while maintaining an 'accommodative stance' as long as necessary at least through the current financial year to the next year.**
- Reverse Repo Rate- 3.35%
- Marginal Standing Facility Rate- 4.25%
- Bank Rate- 4.25%
- CRR- 3%
- SLR- 18.00%.
- This is the first MPC meeting after the presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22. The six-member MPC headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das meets every two months to analyze the state of the Indian economy and inflation and address the monetary issues in the country.
- This month, it began the 3-day bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 3.
- The CPI projection is revised to 5.2 percent for Q4 FY21 and CPI inflation is pegged at 5-5.2 per cent in H1 FY22.
- Shaktikanta Das announced an integrated ombudsman scheme for customer grievance redressal, which will be rolled out by June 2021.

About Monetary Policy Committee :

- Founded : 27 June 2016

About RBI :

- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founder : British Raj

- Governor : Shaktikanta Das

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das :GDP growth projected at 10.5% in FY22

- The **Union Budget 2021**, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** projected a **GDP growth rate of 10.5 percent** for the financial year beginning 1 April.
- RBI projects GDP at 10.5% in FY22.
- The growth outlook has improved significantly and the vaccination drive will help the economic rebound.
- RBI's estimate is in line with the pre-Budget Economic Survey that predicted a 'V-shaped' recovery that said that the Indian economy will rebound with 11 per cent growth in the next financial year.
- The apex bank expects the Indian economy to grow in the range of 8.3 percent to 26.2 percent in the first half of FY22, Followed by 6 percent growth in Q3FY22.

Paypal to shut domestic payment services in India from April 1

- The **California-based global digital payment platform PayPal** has announced that the company has decided to **wind down its domestic payment services in India** with effect from **April 01, 2021**.
- The US-based company will instead focus on enabling more international sales for Indian businesses.
- Moreover, the global customer will be able to pay Indian merchants using Paypal.
- Paypal was one of the payment options on platforms like ticketing services **BookMyShow, MakeMyTrip, and food delivery platform Swiggy**.
- Earlier in December 2020, Financial solutions provider Razorpay had partnered with global digital payments platform PayPal to facilitate international payments for small businesses and freelancers.

About Paypal :

- Founded : December 1998, Palo Alto, California, US
- CEO : Dan Schulman

Federal Bank launches 'FedFirst' savings account scheme for children

- **Federal Bank** has announced the **launch of FedFirst**, a **special savings account scheme for children below 18 years of age**.
- The account helps children develop healthy saving and spending habits, thereby giving them the freedom to save, spend and earn.

About the Account Features :

- The account is designed to enable children to learn the **importance of money management**. The account comes with unique features and offers.
- The account holder is provided with a FedFirst contactless Debit Card with a daily cash withdrawal limit of ₹2,500 and POS/e-com limit of Rs.10,000, in addition to free online facilities including access to internet banking, mobile alerts and email alerts.

- Additional benefits including reward points, seasonal cashback and promotional offers and deals on dining, hotels, travel, bill payments through their debit card are available.

About Federal Bank :

- Headquarters : Aluva, Kerala
- CEO : Shyam Srinivasan
- Founder : K.P.Hormis
- Founded : 23 April 1931, Nedumpuram

RBI to set up a 24×7 helpline for digital payment services

- **RBI** has announced certain measures of protection of common bank account holders in the Monetary policy statement.
- It includes setting up of **24*7 helpline for digital payment services**, integrated ombudsman scheme, CTS across all bank branches and allowing retail investors to open Gilt accounts with RBI.
- Reports that the government is **encouraging various modes of digital payments**.
- The helpline will, in addition to building trust and confidence, also reduce expenditure on both financial and human resources, otherwise incurred for addressing queries and grievances.
- The major payment system operators would be required to facilitate setting-up of a centralised industry-wide 24×7 helpline for addressing customer queries in respect of various digital payment products and give information on available grievance redress mechanisms by September 2021.
- RBI has decided to move beyond the aggregator model and provide retail investors online access to the government securities market along with the facility to open their gilt securities account.

About RBI :

- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founder : British Raj
- Governor : Shaktikanta Das

RBI to set up expert committee for urban co-op banks

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has decided to set up an **expert committee on Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** involving all stakeholders in order to **provide a medium-term road map to strengthen the sector**, enable faster rehabilitation/resolution of UCBs, as well as examine other critical aspects relating to these entities.
- This follows the provisions of the **Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020** becoming applicable to **Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) with effect from June 26, 2020**.
- The amendments have brought near parity in regulatory and supervisory powers between UCBs and commercial banks in respect of regulatory powers, including those related to governance, audit and resolution.
- The constitution of the committee as well as the terms of reference will be notified separately by the RBI.

India-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 20' commences in Rajasthan

- The India-US joint military exercise "Yudh Abhyas 20" commenced in **Mahajan Field Firing Range of Bikaner district in Rajasthan.**
- This is the **16th edition of annual bilateral** joint exercise of both the armies.
- It will continue till the 21st of this month.
- The previous version of the joint exercise was held at Seattle in the United States.
- About **250 US and 250 Indian army** soldiers are participating in the exercise. Both the armies will share their war-related techniques, skills and experience with each other during this exercise.
- The exercise is one of the largest military training and defense cooperation efforts between India and the United States.
- This exercise is another step in the growing military cooperation between the two countries, which shows the growth in Indo-US relations.
- It is also a sign that both India and the US understand the threat of terrorism and are standing shoulder to shoulder in combating the same.

About Rajasthan :

- Capital : Jaipur
- Governor : Kalraj Mishra

Defence ministry, BEL ink pact to procure ship-borne modern radio system

- **India's Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) have signed a contract for procurement of Software Defined Radio Tactical (SDR-Tac) worth over ₹1,000 crore.**
- The SDR-Tac, jointly designed and developed by Defence Electronics Applications Laboratory (DEAL) of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) through a consortium of domestic agencies and industry, comprising Weapons and Electronics Systems Engineering Establishment (WESEE), BEL, Centre for Artificial Intelligence & Robotics (CAIR) and Indian Navy will bring strategic depth to the Armed Forces.
- The SDR-Tac is a four Channel Multi-mode, Multi Band, 19" Rack mountable, ship borne Software Defined Radio system.
- It is intended to serve ship-to-ship, ship-to-shore and ship-to-air voice and data communication for network centric operations. It supports simultaneous operation of all the four channels covering V/UHF and L Band.

About Ministry of Defence :

- Minister : Rajnath Singh
- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Founded : 15 August 1947

About Bharat Electronics :

- Headquarters : Bangalore

- Founded : 1954

CRPF Inducts Women Commandos Into Elite Anti-Naxal CoBRA Unit

- **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** inducted **women commandos** in its **anti-Naxal Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) unit** which will undergo training and then will be sent to Naxal-hit areas.
- These **34 women personnel** were inducted in the elite CoBRA wing during the **35th Raising Day** of the force's 88th Mahila Battalion, the first all-women battalion in the world.
- According to the CRPF, on the occasion of the 88th all-women battalion Raising Day, these women commandos have been inducted along with the introduction of all Mahila brass bands which will make CRPF the first force to have a women brass band.
- The 34 women personnel from the **6 Mahila Battalions of CRPF** who are joining the COBRA, will undergo a strenuous CoBRA pre-induction training of 3 months, before being sent to Naxal-hit areas of the country.
- Taking another step towards women empowerment, the 88th Mahila battalion of CRPF has the distinction of being the first all-Mahila battalion in the world.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : APPOINTMENTS

IPS officer Praveen Sinha appointed interim CBI chief

- The government has appointed **1998 Gujarat cadre IPS officer Praveen Sinha** as **interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**
- Sinha, who is currently an additional director at the investigating agency, will take charge of the CBI temporarily as the government failed to appoint a new director by the end of the **incumbent chief RK Shukla's tenure**.
- The decision was taken as the high powered panel comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India SA Bobde and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

About Sinha :

- Sinha, who joined the **CBI in 2018**, was earlier an **additional secretary in the Central Vigilance Commission** and served under multiple designations when he was posted in
- He supervised investigations into the coal scam cases and is currently leading the probe into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

About Gujarat :

- Capital : Gandhinagar
- Governor : Acharya Devvrat
- CM : Vijay Rupani

About CBI :

- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Founded : 1 April 1963

Air Marshal GS Bedi AVSM VMVSM takes over as Director General

- **Air Marshal GS Bedi Ati Vishisht Sewa Medal, Vayusena Medal, Vishisht Sewa Medal** took over as **Director General (Inspection & Safety)** at **Air Headquarters** on **01 Feb 21**.
- An alumnus of Defence Services Staff College and National Defence College, the Air Marshal was commissioned in the flying branch of **Indian Air Force in 1984**.
- The Air Marshal has flown a wide variety of fighters and trainer aircraft.
- He has over **3700 hrs** of flying in various challenging sectors.
- He is a Qualified Flying Instructor and a Fighter Combat Leader with vast instructional experience.
- He was awarded with Vishisht Seva Medal on 26 Jan 2010 and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal on 26 Jan 2020 by the President of India.

Ajay Singh re-elected as President of Boxing Federation of India

- **Ajay Singh** has been **re-elected as President of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI)**.
- Singh received **37 votes** while Shelar, who has held many top positions in sport, including the role of President of Maharashtra Cricket Association and Mumbai District Football Association, got 27 votes in the BFI elections.
- Hemanta Kumar Kalita was elected secretary general and Digvijay Singh treasurer.
- The elections were held in the presence of AIBA observer Yury Zaystsev and IOA observer Rakesh Gupta.
- The six-time world champion boxer Mary Kom credited BFI President Ajay Singh for the remarkable performances of the boxers from the country at the global stage in recent years.

About Boxing Federation of India :

- Established : February 25, 1949
- Headquarters : New Delhi

Zoho's Sridhar Vembu appointed to Doval-led National Security Advisory Board

- **Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu** has been appointed to the **reconstituted National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) led by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval**.
- Vembu is one of the **Padma Shri awardees** announced by the government of India this year. He is currently based in Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu, working from the company's office in the village.
- The members of NSAB typically have two-year terms. Other new members in this term include former ISRO Chairman K Radhakrishnan, Anshuman Tripathy, faculty at IIM Bangalore, and Arun K Singh, former ambassador to France and the United States.

About NSAB :

- The National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) consists of a group of eminent national security experts outside of the government.
- Subrahmanyam produced a draft Nuclear Doctrine for the country in 2001, a Strategic Defence Review in 2002 and a National Security Review in 2007.

Praveen Sinha takes over as acting chief of CBI

- **CBI Additional Director Praveen Sinha** took charge as the acting **chief of the agency** after the **superannuation of incumbent Rishi Kumar Shukla**.

About Praveen Sinha :

- A Gujarat-cadre IPS officer of **1988 batch**, Sinha has served in the agency as superintendent of police, deputy inspector general, joint director and additional director in **two stints between 2000 and 2021**.
- Former CBI chief Rishi Kumar Shukla retired after a two year tenure in the agency.
- Sinha who was tasked to revise the crime manual of the agency after 15 years has also served as the additional secretary in the anti-graft watchdog of the country, the Central Vigilance Commission during 2015-18.
- He has served at various places in the state in various capacities from ASP to Additional DG. He has also worked as Deputy Director, ACB, Ahmedabad in 1996. Praveen Sinha has been associated with the investigation of various Supreme Court/High Courts entrusted/monitored scams; major bank frauds and financial crimes, serial bomb blasts etc," CBI spokesperson R C Joshi.

About CBI :

- Founded : 1 April 1963
- Headquarters : New Delhi
- The CBI director is selected by a committee comprising the prime minister, leader of the opposition in lok sabha and chief justice of India.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : SCHEMES

Delhi Cabinet Approves 'Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha' Scholarship Scheme

- The **Delhi** cabinet approved "**Mukhyamantri Vigyan Pratibha Pariksha**" in which **Rs 5,000** will be provided to **Rs 1,000 meritorious students of Class 9 in schools of Delhi** as a science scholarship.
- The scholarship will provide a boost to science education in secondary classes at the school level.
- According to the release, the students studying in Delhi schools who have secured more than 60 percent in Class 8 are eligible for the examination. Students belonging to SC, ST, PH, or OBC category will be given a relaxation of up to 5 percent of marks.
- In Addition to that The cabinet approved procurement of close to 1200 computers, multi-functional printers, and UPSs for all the schools, branch offices, and district offices under the education department.

About Delhi :

- CM : Arvind Kejriwal

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Set to Become W.T.O.'s First Female Leader

- **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, an economist and former finance minister of Nigeria, appears set to become the next director general of the World Trade Organization.**
- She would be the **first woman and the first African national to lead the organization.**
- Okonjo-Iweala served **twice as Nigeria's finance minister**, spent 25 years at the World Bank as a development economist and now is the chairwoman of the Center for Global Development, according to the center's website.
- She is the former finance minister of Nigeria, succeeding Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down in August 2020.

About WTO :

- Headquarters : Geneva, Switzerland
- Founded : 1 January 1995
- Membership : 164 Member states

Michael Bloomberg Re-Appointed as United Nations Climate Envoy

- United Nations **Secretary-General Antonio Guterres re-appointed** Michael Bloomberg as his **Special Envoy on Climate Ambition and Solutions.**

About Bloomberg :

- Bloomberg was **first appointed UN special envoy** on cities and climate change in **2014 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.**
- Bloomberg would work with governments, companies, cities, and financial institutions to ensure they pledge to cut emissions and commit to net-zero before 2050.
- Bloomberg has previously been appointed to **N. climate envoy positions in 2014 and 2018.**
- Bloomberg will be **global ambassador for the campaigns "Race to Zero" and "Race to Resilience," which rally businesses, cities, and investors to mobilize climate action.**
- Bloomberg is the founder and owner of Bloomberg LP, the parent company of Bloomberg News.
- He would also work to mobilise stronger and more ambitious climate action in the lead-up to 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference in Scotland in November 2021.

About United Nations :

- Secretary General : Antonio Guterres
- Headquarters : New York, United States
- Founded : 24 October 1945, San Francisco, California

Google Cloud appoints Bikram Singh Bedi as Managing Director

- **Google Cloud** has announced the appointment of **Bikram Singh Bedi** as the **Managing Director for its India business.**
- With the current appointment as managing director, Bedi will succeed Karan Bajwa, who was recently elevated as the Vice President of Google's Asia Pacific Cloud.

About Bikram Singh Bedi :

- At Google, Bikram Bedi will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams in this dynamic market.
- Bedi, a senior leader with more than 26 years of leadership experience, will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams in this dynamic market.
- He joined Google Cloud from Indian online grocery delivery startup, Grofers where he served as President Strategy and New Initiatives.
- Prior to that, he set up the AWS business in India and was the head of India and South Asia for six years.
- He also held various leadership positions at IBM and Oracle.
- Bedi was the man who reportedly set up Amazon Web Services in India and led the vertical for six years long.

About Google Cloud :

- Launched : April 7, 2008
- Programming Languages : Python, Java, Go, C++, Ruby

Maharashtra Government Approves Water Conservation Programme

- The **Maharashtra** Cabinet approved the implementation of the Chief Minister **Water Conservation Programme, costing Rs.1,340.75 crore.**
- Under the programme, water sources would be repaired, which will enhance the State's irrigation capacity.
- The period of the programme is from **April 2020 to March 2023,**

About the Scheme :

- Around **7,900 water sources** need repairing to restore water storage and irrigation capacity
- Under the programme, various ponds, and lakes with the irrigation capacity up to 600 hectares would be repaired. Also, repair work of canals due to breakage of its lining will also be undertaken.
- The programme will be undertaken by the soil and water conservation department to restore irrigation capacity of the water sources.
- The canal repair works will also be taken up to stop the wastage of water

About Maharashtra :

- Capital : Mumbai
- Governor : Bhagat Singh Koshyari
- CM : Uddhav Thackeray

PM SVANidhi scheme: Zomato sign MoU to take street food vendors' businesses online

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Zomato for empowering street food vendors** with new

digital technology and to provide greater income-earning opportunities on the food delivery platform.

- As part of Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNidhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme, MoHUA and Zomato will work together to onboard street food vendors on Zomato's food-tech platform,
- This agreement will give street vendors access to thousands of customers and would thus help them in growing their business. MoHUA has also introduced 'PMSVANidhi se Samriddhi'

About MoHUA :

- Minister : Hardeep Singh Puri

About Zomato :

Founder : Deepinder Goyal, Pankaj Chaddah

- Founded : July 2008
- Headquarters : Gurgaon, Haryana

CURRENT AFFAIRS : BOOKS & AUTHORS

Joe Biden's son, Hunter Biden, to release memoir 'Beautiful Things'

- **Hunter Biden, son of President Joe Biden** and an ongoing target for conservatives, has a memoir coming out **April 6, 2021**.
- The book is called "**Beautiful Things**" and will center on the younger Biden's well publicized struggles with substance abuse.
- It is according to Gallery Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster.
- "Beautiful Things" was circulated among several authors and includes advance praise from Stephen King, Dave Eggers and Anne Lamott.

About the Book :

- The 51-year-old Hunter Biden has narrated his personal story.
- It is about how he was a drug addict- from his first sips of alcohol as a child, when he was dealing with the aftermath of family tragedy, to his crack-cocaine use and how he fixed that problem.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : CONFERENCES

First ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021 Concludes

- The first-ever **ASEAN-India Hackathon** concluded on **February 4 with more than 400 students**, mentors, and officials from **10 ASEAN countries** and India participating.
- Hackathon held by Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India is in line with the vision of ASEAN – plan of action on science, technology and innovation (APASTI) 2016-2025.
- From the Ministry of Education, the ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021 aims at enhancing the cooperation between India and ASEAN countries in science, technology, and education

- Mr Pokhriyal and Union Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar attended the award ceremony.

About ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021:

- The participating teams consisted of 330 students and 90 mentors. The students were divided in 54 cross-country teams, where each team consists of six students and two mentors.
- These diverse teams competed on developing the best solution for 11 problem statements provided by various different international organisations and government bodies.

About ASEAN :

- Members : Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam.
- Headquarters : Jakarta, Indonesia
- Founded : 8 August 1967, Indonesia

First India-EU High-Level Dialogue On Trade, Investment Held

- The **first High-Level Dialogue (HLD), co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal** and the European Union Executive Vice-President and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, was held on Feb 05, 2021.
- Commitment to the establishment of this Dialogue was a major outcome of the **15th India-EU Leaders Summit held in July 2020**.
- **Objective** : For ministerial-level guidance towards the bilateral trade and investment relations, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The ministers emphasized the importance of global cooperation and solidarity in a post-COVID-19 era and agreed for further deepening of bilateral trade and investment relationship through a series of regular engagements, aiming at quick deliverables for the businesses in these tough times.
- The ministers also agreed to meet within the next three months, with an objective for reaching consensus on a host of bilateral trade and investment cooperation issues viz. a bilateral Regulatory Dialogue; an India-EU Multilateral Dialogue to explore further possibilities of cooperation; etc.
- They concluded with confidence and commitment towards a renewed India-EU commercial and economic partnership reflecting the full potential of bilateral commercial relations.

About European Union :

- Headquarters : Brussels, Belgium,
- Founded : 1 November 1993, Maastricht, Netherlands

CURRENT AFFAIRS : AGREEMENTS

1st India-Bahrain Joint Working Group meeting in the field of Renewable Energy

- The **1st meeting of the Joint Working Group** in the field of **Renewable Energy** between **India and the Kingdom of Bahrain held On Feb 04, 2021** in virtual format.
- E. Dr. Abdul Hussain bin Ali Mirza, President of Sustainable Energy Authority led the Bahraini delegation.
- The Indian delegation was led by **E. Mr. Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy. H.E. Sh. Piyush Srivastava, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Bahrain also participated in the meeting.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bahrain was signed in July 2018 for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

About the Meeting :

- It was a very productive meeting, in which both sides underscored the importance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals, and presented the initiatives taken, progress made and future targets set by their respective governments as well as opportunities available in this sector.
- Both sides agreed to forging deeper engagement in capacity building and focused cooperation between concerned agencies as well as the private sector of the two countries in this sector, particularly in the field of solar, wind and clean hydrogen.
- The meeting took place in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. It was agreed to hold the next round of JWG meetings at mutually convenient dates, which will be decided through diplomatic channels.

About Bahrain :

- Capital : Manama
- Currency : Bahraini dinar
- PM : Salman, Crown Prince of Bahrain

201 MoUs Signed: Aero India 2021 Concludes

- A total of **201 MoUs**, product launches, and technology transfers were concluded at the **Bandhan ceremony** held on the last day of **Aero India 2021** at **Yehalanka, Bengaluru** on February 05, 2021.
- Over **600 exhibitors attended physically while 108 in** virtual mode.
- And then around 3,000 Business-2-Business meetings were conducted.
- Conclave of Defence Ministers of **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**
- **Theme:** 'Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'.
- The first ever IOR Defence Ministers' Conclave was attended by ministers and delegates from 26 IOR countries.
- A conclave of Chiefs of Air Staff was also organised to pursue the objectives of collaborative security for the region and beyond.
- The 6th India-Russia Military Industrial Conference, iDEX 'Start-up Manthan' was also held.
- Aero India 2021 would help in achieving the target set by the ministry to achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 crore, including exports of Rs 35,000 crore in aerospace and defence goods & services by the year 2024.

Karnataka govt sign Memorandum of Understanding with 34 Aerospace and Defence firms

- **Karnataka** has benefitted from the **Aero India** show that concluded in **Bengaluru**.
- The State Government signed **Memorandum of Understanding** with **34 Aerospace and Defence firms** with an investment prospect of **2464 crore rupees** that can generate **6462 direct employment opportunities**.
- The agreements signed during the Aero India Show will encourage aerospace and defence equipment manufacturers to set up bases in the state.
- Karnataka has a vibrant aerospace and defence sector manufacturing ecosystem contributing over 65 percent of defence and aerospace exports in the country
- The state Industrial policy of 2020-25 provides several incentives and regulatory reforms related to land access and labour market regulations.

About Karnataka :

- CM : Yediyurappa
- Capital : Bangalore

HAL inks deal with MIDHANI to develop, manufacture composite raw materials

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** and **Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI)** have signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for **development and production of composite** raw materials during the **Aero India 2021 in Bengaluru on February 04, 2021**
- This is the **first time** that such an MoU has been signed for composite raw materials.
- The MoU was signed by Chairman and Managing Director, HAL Shri R Madhavan and Chairman and Managing Director, MIDHANI Dr S K Jha in the presence of other senior officials.
- Composites raw materials, mainly in the form of prepregs used in platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) are currently imported.
- The usage of composites in aerospace is going to exist and increase, particularly for fighter aircraft/helicopters because of its inherent advantages over metallic raw materials.
- In addition, similar requirements exist for other aerospace and defence programmes, including those of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL).

About HAL :

- Founder : Walchand Hirachand
- Founded : 23 December 1940
- Headquarters : Bangalore

About Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited :

- Headquarters : Hyderabad
- Founded : 1973

About ISRO :

- Headquarters : Bangalore
- Founder : Vikram Sarabhai
- Director : Kailasavadivoo Sivan

About DRDO :

- Founded : 1958
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Reliance receives world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from US

- **Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd** has sourced the **world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil'** from the US as it looks to become a **net zero-carbon company by 2035**.
- The **Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC)** Sea Pearl containing the carbon-neutral oil unloaded the cargo at **Jamnagar on January 28**.
- This transaction is a first step in the creation of a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil.
- It is also a bridge to the development of a further differentiated petroleum product, net-zero oil, which Occidental intends to eventually produce through the capture and sequestration of atmospheric CO₂ via industrial-scale direct air capture (DAC) facilities and geological sequestration.
- Reliance, which operates the world's largest single location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with capacity of **2 million tonnes a year**, got 2 million barrels of consignment Permian basin.
- This transaction, which was arranged in conjunction with Macquarie Group's Commodities and Global Markets group (Macquarie), is the energy industry's first major petroleum shipment for which greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the entire crude lifecycle, well head through combustion of end products, have been offset.

About Reliance Industries Limited :

- CEO : Mukesh Ambani
- Founder : Dhirubhai Ambani
- Founded : 8 May 1973, Maharashtra
- Headquarters : Mumbai

CURRENT AFFAIRS : RANKING

India slips two places to 53rd spot in EIU's 2020 Democracy Index

- **India slipped two places to 53rd position** in the **2020 Democracy Index's global ranking**, according to The **Economist Intelligence Unit**.
- India is ranked higher than most of its neighbouring countries. India's overall score fell from 6.9 in 2019 to **61 in the Index** that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 167 countries.
- **Norway has topped** the Index. Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada are the top five countries in the list.

- Out of 167 countries, the Democracy Index classifies 23 countries as full democracies, 52 as flawed democracies, 35 as hybrid regimes and 57 as authoritarian regimes. India has been classified as a 'flawed democracy' along with countries.

About EIU :

- Headquarters : London , United Kingdom
- Founded : 1946

CURRENT AFFAIRS : AWARD

50th Kerala State Film Awards Conferred

- **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** presented the **2019 Kerala State Film Awards and the J C Daniel Award at a function here.**
- Pinarayi Vijayan released the stamp published in connection with the **International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK).**
- Veteran filmmaker Hariharan, who was conferred with the J C Daniel Award, is an artist who had travelled with cinema for about half a century and made films which went on to become milestones in the annals of Malayalam tinsel town.
- K Jayakumar, poet-lyricist and former chief secretary, received the JC Daniel Award on behalf of Hariharan.
- The film awards were also distributed.
- In that Culture Minister A K Balan presided.

About International Film Festival of Kerala :

- Artistic Director : Bina Paul
- Hosted by : Kerala State Chalachitra Academy

About Kerala :

- CM : Pinarayi Vijayan
- Capital : Thiruvananthapuram

CURRENT AFFAIRS : SPORTS NEWS

ICC nominates Rishabh Pant for Men's Player of the Month award

- **India's wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant** has been nominated for the **ICC Men's Player of the Month** award along with England skipper Joe Root and Ireland's Paul Stirling.
- The **International Cricket Council** announced the nominees for the inaugural **Player of the Month Awards** which will **recognise and celebrate the best performances from both male and female cricketers** across all forms of international cricket throughout the year".
- The **23-year-old Pant played** two Tests against Australia where he scored a 97 at Sydney to ensure a draw before an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane that led India to a historic series-clinching win.

- In January, Root played two Tests against Sri Lanka, where he scored a 228 and 186 and led his team to a **2-0 Test series victory**.
- The third nominee in the category, Stirling played two ODIs against the UAE and three ODIs vs Afghanistan, where he scored three centuries.

About ICC :

- Chairperson : Greg Barclay
- CEO : Manu Sawhney
- Headquarters : Dubai, UAE
- Founded : 15 June 1909

Joe Root becomes first batsman to score 200 in 100th Test

- **Joe Root**, the England captain, sent India on a leather hunt, becoming the **first player in history to score a double century in his 100th Test match**.
- Root, who was unbeaten on **128 overnight, batted on against India on Day 2 in Chennai** and notched up the fifth double century of his career – second in three Tests.
- In the process, Root also surpassed former Pakistan captain Inzamam-Ul-Haq as the player with the highest individual score playing the 100th Test match of his career. Inzamam had hit 184 against India in a Test match in Bengaluru in 2005, which Pakistan had won by 168 runs.
- His record stood for 15 years before being broken by Root, who reached his double-century with a six off R Ashwin, the second time he hit the off-spinner over the ropes.

Drass Red win 13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship

- In **Kargil Ladakh**, **Drass Red** has won the **13th CEC Cup Ice Hockey Championship** beating Hockey Club Chiktan team in the Final match.
- The **1st Women CEC Ice Hockey Cup 2021** was lifted by **Shakar Chiktan Team** defeating Wakha Mulbekh Team.
- 32 Men teams and 5 Women Teams participated in the tournament which was organized by the District Youth Services & Sports.

Steve Smith wins third Allan Border Medal, Beth Mooney bags maiden Belinda Clarke Award

- Former captain **Steve Smith** claimed his **third Allan Border Medal** while **Beth Mooney** bagged her **maiden Belinda Clarke Award**, the top two honours of the Australian Cricket Awards.
- Smith was honoured for his performances in all three formats of the game, while Mooney bagged the recognition in the Australian women's game for the first time.
- The awards were decided by a voting process for the period 2020-21.

List of 2021 Australian Cricket Awards:

- Belinda Clark Award: Beth Mooney. Votes: Beth Mooney 60, Meg Lanning 58, Georgia Wareham 50.

- Male One Day International Player of the Year: Steve Smith. Votes: Steve Smith 28, Aaron Finch 23, Adam Zampa 19.
- Female International Twenty20 Player of the Year: Beth Mooney. Votes: Beth Mooney 30, Alyssa Healy 18, Ash Gardner, Megan Schutt and Georgia Wareham 16.
- Male International Twenty20 Player of the Year: Ashton Agar. Votes: Ashton Agar 19, Aaron Finch 14, David Warner 13.
- Men's Test Player of the Year: Pat Cummins. Votes: Pat Cummins 16, Josh Hazlewood 9, Marnus Labuschagne 8.
- Women's One Day International Player of the Year: Rachel Haynes. Votes: Rachel Haynes 11, Meg Lanning 10, Georgia Wareham 6.

Rishabh Pant and Shabnim Ismail voted ICC Player of the Month for January 2021

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced the winners of the **inaugural ICC Player of the Month Awards** which recognise and celebrate the best performances from **both male and female cricketers** across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.
- India's **Rishabh Pant won the ICC Men's Player of the Month for January 2021** for his performances in the **two Tests against Australia where he scored a 97 at Sydney** and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane that led India to a historic series win against arch-rivals Australia.
- South Africa's Shabnim Ismail was named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for January 2021 for her performances across three ODIs and two T20Is during the month.
- Ismail took seven wickets in the victorious ODI series against Pakistan, before taking five wickets in the second T20I against the same opposition.
- Pant has been honored for his superlative performances in the two Tests against Australia in January 2020, wherein he scored a 97 at Sydney and an unbeaten 89 at Brisbane, leading India to an incredible series win.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : DAYS

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation Observed On 06 February

- Every Year On **Feb 06** , **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation** is Observed.
- It was first held in **2003**.
- **Theme of 2021 is No time for global inaction: unite, fund and act to end FGM/C**
- It is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day to eradicate **female genital mutilation (FGM)**.

Aim :

- To amplify and direct the efforts on the elimination of this practice.

Purpose :

- To promote the elimination of female genital mutilation, coordinated and systematic efforts are needed, and they must engage whole communities and focus on human rights,

gender equality, sexual education and attention to the needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : OBITUARIES

Former New Zealand all-rounder Bruce Taylor passes away at 77

- **Former New Zealand all-rounder Bruce Taylor**, the only player to score a century and take a five-wicket haul on test debut, has died at the age of 77, the country's cricket board (NZC).
- Taylor, who had never scored a **first-class century** before, achieved the feat against India at **Kolkata in 1965**.
- Walking out at number eight, he struck 105 with the bat before registering figures of 5-86 with the ball.
- He also scored New Zealand's fastest test century in a game against West Indies in 1969 before the record was broken by Daniel Vettori 36 years later.
- Taylor played 30 tests for New Zealand, picking up 111 wickets and scoring 898 runs.

Ram Teri Ganga Maili actor Rajiv Kapoor passes away

- **Bollywood actor and Raj Kapoor's son Rajiv Kapoor** passed away in Mumbai. He was 58.
- Rajiv Kapoor, who was also a film producer and director, was the youngest son of the legendary Raj Kapoor, and the brother of Randhir Kapoor and Rishi Kapoor, all actors and filmmakers. Rishi Kapoor died last year.
- Rajiv Kapoor, who made his debut in Bollywood with the 1983 film Ek Jaan Hain Hum, was best known for the 1985 blockbuster Ram Teri Ganga Maili. He was last seen in Zimmedaar.
- He also acted in films like Mera Saathi and Hum To Chale Pardes , among others. The actor, known by the nickname "Chimpu", turned a film producer with the 1991 film Henna starring Rishi Kapoor. He also backed other home productions like Prem Granth and Aa Ab Laut Chalen.
- He was set to make a Bollywood comeback after nearly three decades with Ashutosh Gowariker and Bhushan Kumar's joint production, a sports drama titled Toolsidas Junior, co-starring Sanjay Dutt.

India tennis legend Akhtar Ali passes away

- **Akhtar Ali**, a former Davis Cup coach and a legendary figure in Indian tennis, **passed away**.
- Akhtar, **father of India's current Davis Cup coach Zeeshan Ali**, was 83 and breathed his last in Kolkata.
- He represented India in eight Davis Cup ties against Pakistan, Malaysia, Iran, Mexico, Japan and Monaco between 1958 and 1964.
- He played alongside stalwarts like Ramanathan Krishnan, Naresh Kumar, Premjit Lall and Jaidip Mukerjea.
- Akhtar, who was groomed by former Australian Davis Cup coach Harry Hopman, also played in the Wimbledon and French Open grand slam events. He was the winner of the Asian mixed doubles championship.

- His last ATP tour outing was against Vijay Amritraj in a clay court match in Bombay on November 11, 1974.
- Born on July 5, 1939, Akhtar came up the hard way, and by sheer dint of merit emerged as one of the pioneering figures of Indian tennis.
- In 1955, he got to the semifinals of the Wimbledon Juniors.
- He also played in the Wimbledon and French Open grand slams. But Akhtar's real legacy was as a coach.
- He was the coach of the Indian national tennis team from 1966 till 1993, and had guided India to two Davis Cup finals (1966 and 1974). He was conferred the **Arjuna Award in 2000 for lifetime contribution to tennis.**

Former US Secretary of State George Shultz dies at 100

- **Former US Secretary of State, George Shultz** who significantly shaped foreign policy in the late 20th Century, has died at the age of 100.
- He served three former Presidents – **Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan – in various roles.**
- His efforts as America's top diplomat from 1982 to 1989 under the former President Ronald Reagan helped lead to the conclusion of the four decade long Cold War that began after World War Two.
- He worked on various federal task forces at the request of former Presidents John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson.
- He was an informal but influential adviser on foreign policy to Former US President George W Bush.

'The Sound Of Music' Star & Oscar Winner Christopher Plummer Passes Away At 91

- **Christopher Plummel**, known for his popular role as **Captain von Trapp in The Sound of Music**, has passed away at **91**.

About Christopher Plummel :

- **The Canada-born** actor had kicked off his career on stage, making his Broadway debut in 1954.
- Plummel then made his film debut with **Sidney Lumet's Stage Struck in 1958.**
- He received various awards for his work, which includes Academy Award, two Primetime Emmy Awards, two Tony Awards, a Golden Globe Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award, and a British Academy Film Award.
- He won his **first Oscar (for supporting performance)** for his act in Beginners, released in 2011, becoming the oldest to win an acting academy Award. His other Oscar nomination was for All the Money in the World, released in 2017, after he had replaced Kevin Spacey.
- He is the only Canadian and one of the few performers globally to have received the Triple Crown of Acting, which are Academy Award, Emmy Award, and Tony Award.
- He won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor at the age of 82 for Beginners (2010)
- Some of his other well-known works include Spike Lee's Malcolm X (1992), Terrence Malick's The New World (2005) Rian Johnson's Knives Out (2019), and Todd Robinson's The Last Full Measure (2019).

Founder of Rang Vidushak, theatre director Padma Shri Bansi Kaul Passed away

- Founder of **Rang Vidushak** and **theatre director Padma Shri Bansi Kaul**, 71, passed away.
- Born in 1949 in a Kashmiri Pandit family, Bansi Kaul was a Hindi theatre director and the founder of Rang Vidushak, a theatre group and theatre institute in Bhopal.
- He was awarded **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1995** and **Padma Shri in 2014**.
- He received Rashtriya Kalidas Samman for the year 2016-17.
- Christopher Plummer, actor of **'The Sound of Music' fame**, dies at 91

Pioneering US actress Cicely Tyson Passes away

- **Pioneering Hollywood actress Cicely Tyson** – who was known for portraying strong African-American characters – has died aged 96.

About Cicely Tyson :

- Tyson won **two Emmys** for her performance in the **1974 civil rights-era film The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman**.
- She also became the **first black woman** to take on a main role in the TV drama **East Side/West Side in the 1960s**.
- Tyson was nominated for a best actress Oscar and Golden Globe in 1973 for Sounder, about a family of poor black sharecroppers in the midst of the Great Depression in 1933 Louisiana.
- The Tony Awards also nominated her in 2013 for lead actress for the play The Trip to Bountiful, about an unhappy, elderly woman desperate to visit her girlhood home before she dies.
- Tyson also appeared in 2011 film The Help and TV shows including 1977's Roots, season four of House of Cards and the recent How to Get Away with Murder, which starred Viola Davis.

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