

CURRENT AFFAIRS : NATIONAL NEWS

Finance Minister inaugurates Chennai Bench of NCLAT

- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs **Nirmala Sitharaman** inaugurated the **Chennai Bench of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** through virtual mode.
- The inaugural ceremony was held in the presence of Shri. Justice Bansi Lal Bhat, Acting Chairperson, NCLAT, Shri Rajesh Verma, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, other members of NCLAT and the National Company Law Tribunals, officers of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Finance as well as members of the Bar.
- The New Delhi Bench of NCLAT is the Principal Bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal established in
- Five new Benches of NCLAT have been announced at **Jaipur, Cuttack, Kochi, Indore and Amaravati**, bringing the total number of Benches to 16 (including the Principal Bench). The NCLAT now functions at a strength of 5 courts, 4 at the Principal Bench in New Delhi and the 5th at NCLAT, Chennai.
- The Chennai Bench of NCLAT shall have jurisdiction to hear the Appeals arising out of the orders passed by the benches of NCLAT having jurisdiction of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Lakshadweep and Puducherry.
- Two Members of NCLAT, New Delhi, Hon'ble Shri. Balvinder Singh, Member (Technical) and Hon'ble. Shri. Justice Venugopal M. have taken charge of the newly constituted Chennai Bench of the NCLAT.

Conservationist joins SC panel on elephant corridor case

- The **Supreme Court** on January 27 appointed conservationist **Nandita Hazarika** as Member of a Technical Committee constituted by it on October 14 last year to hear complaints by landowners against the action taken by the Nilgiris Collector, which included sealing of their buildings and allegations about the "arbitrary variance in acreage of the elephant corridor."
- On October 14, the top court upheld the Tamil Nadu government's authority to notify an 'elephant corridor' and protect the migratory path of the animals through the Nilgiri biosphere reserve.
- The corridor is situated in the ecologically fragile Sigur plateau, which connects the Western and the Eastern Ghats and sustains elephant populations and their genetic diversity.

EC rolls out digital voter I-cards

- The **Election Commission** rolled out the electronic version of the voters' **photo identity card** on the **National Voters' Day**.
- The electronic voter ID cards can be stored on mobile phones and downloaded on personal computers.
- The e-voter card, available in the **PDF format** which cannot be edited, can be self-printed and laminated by the voter when required.
- With its formal launch, electors in poll-bound West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala and Puducherry can use e-voter cards on polling days. Elections are due in these states and the union territory in April-May.
- The e-electoral photo identity card is a non-editable digital version of the electoral photo identity card and can be saved in facilities such as a digital locker as well as can be printed in the PDF format.
- The physical card takes time to print and reach the voter, and the idea is to provide faster delivery and easy accessibility to the document.
- Apart from voter ID cards, Aadhaar card, permanent account number (PAN) card and driving licence are also available in digital mode.

About Election Commission :

- Chief Election Commissioner : Sunil Arora
- Formed : 25 January 1950

- Headquarters : New Delhi

Maharashtra launches jail tourism initiative

- **Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray** launched a '**jail tourism**' initiative of the state government from **Pune's Yerawada prison**, in a move to **help students learn about historical experiences**.
- The initiative was launched on **January 26** via video conferencing.
- Yerawada jail is **150-years-old** where several freedom fighters, including Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Sarojini Naidu and Subhas Chandra Bose had been imprisoned under the British rule.
- The 'jail tourism' was started to make students aware of the history.
- The jail has witnessed many historical events like the Pune-pact that was signed within the premises of this jail.
- In recent times the accused of **26/11 Mumbai blasts Ajmal Kasab** was hanged here on **November 21, 2012.**"

About Maharashtra :

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

Tamil Nadu CM inaugurates Jayalalithaa Memorial

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **Edappadi Palanisamy** inaugurated **Jayalalithaa Memorial at Chennai**.
- The **79 crore** worth grand memorial is built on a nine acre land situated on the shores of the Marina Beach.
- The **phoenix shaped memorial** has a statue of **Jayalalithaa and MGR with an artificial waterfall**.
- The building was completed within a record period of 30 months.
- Scores of AIADMK workers from all districts thronged the city to witness the event.

About Tamil Nadu:

- **Capital:** Chennai
- **Governor:** Banwarilal Purohit
- **Chief minister:** Edappadi K. Palaniswami

Expansion of NALCO plant in Odisha

- Union Minister of Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi has assured that the proposed **brownfield expansion of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO)'s smelter plant** at Angul is very much on track and will be executed on priority.
- The Navaratna PSU has planned to invest around **Rs 30,000 crore by 2027-28** on expansion and diversification.
- Around Rs 22,000 crore will be invested on the expansion of the company's aluminium smelter unit from 0.46 million tonne per annum (MTPA) to 1 MTPA and construction of a 1400-MW feeder captive power plant (CPP) in Angul.

About Odisha:

- **Capital:** Bhubaneswar
- **Governor:** Ganeshi Lal
- **Chief minister:** Naveen Patnaik

Andaman Lt Governor flags off electric buses

- **D K Joshi**, the **Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands** flagged-off a **fleet of electric buses**.

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- The project for **40** electric buses is being executed by **NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited(NVVN Limited)**, a **100% subsidiary of NTPC Limited**, a PSU under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- The introduction of electric buses in the Island union territory will help cut down tailpipe emissions as well as provide comfortable public transport.
- These buses will provide last mile connectivity to NAMMA Metro network.

About NVVN :

- NVVN is developing and providing a complete range of zero emission mobility solutions for various vehicle segments. In order to encourage faster migration to electric vehicles, NVVN is also developing charging infrastructure in multiple cities across the country.
- Founded : 2002

About Ministry of Power :

- Office holder : R K Singh
- Founded : 2 July 1992
- Headquarters : New Delhi

[Uddhav Thackeray inaugurates Zoological Park in Nagpur](#)

- In **Maharashtra**, **Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray** inaugurated **Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park in Nagpur**.
- The park has been **developed by** the State Forest Department and Forest Development Corporation.
- It is spread across an area of 1,914 hectares and includes a wildlife sanctuary, Indian safari, African safari biodiversity park and night safari.
- The park has been opened for the Indian safari.
- Registration can be done on the website wildgorewada.com.

About Maharashtra:

- **Governor:** Bhagat Singh Koshiyari
- **Capital:** Mumbai
- **Chief minister:** Uddhav Thackeray

[Meghalaya selected for Special Award](#)

- The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Meghalaya was selected for a Special Award for **Information Technology applications in Elections** by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**, in the **National Best Electoral Practices Awards-2020**.
- President Ram Nath Kovind virtually conferred the award to Meghalaya **CEO F.R. Kharkongor** at the National Voters' Day Award function held in New Delhi, a statement from the CEO's office informed.

About Meghalaya:

- **Capital:** Shillong
- **Governor:** Satya Pal Malik
- **Chief minister:** Conrad Sangma

[Bharat Parv begins on virtual platform showcasing glory of nation](#)

- **Bharat Parv 2021**, a festival to celebrate the spirit of India has begun on Jan 26, 2021.
- The festival is being organised on a virtual platform bharatparv2021.com this year from Jan 26 to till 31st of January.

- The mega event envisages generating patriotic fervour and showcases **the rich and varied cultural diversity of the country.**
- The **Ministry of Tourism** organizes Bharat Parv every year since 2016 in front of the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Republic Day Celebrations.
- Prasar Bharati has set up its virtual stall which will showcase its efforts towards promoting Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat.

India pledges \$150,000 for UN Peacebuilding Fund for 2021

- **India** has announced a pledge of **\$150,000** to activities of the **Peacebuilding Fund** this year and said that 2021 provides the international community with an opportunity to look at peace-building in a more focused manner.
- India's Permanent Representative to the **UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti.**
- The Peacebuilding Fund has put forth a comprehensive scenario covering a horizon of five years. The Fund requires **5 billion dollars for 2020-2024.**
- The recently concluded 2020 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture provides a framework to strengthen peace building collectively.

PM chairs meeting of PRAGATI

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the meeting of 35th edition of PRAGATI**, the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving Central and State governments.
- In the meeting, **ten agenda** items were taken for review including nine projects and one program.
- Among the **nine projects**, three projects were from the Ministry of Railways, three from Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and one project each from Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Power Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs.
- These **nine projects** have a cumulative cost of **54 thousand 675 crore rupees** concerning the **15 States.**
- **The States** are Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, West Bengal, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

Prime Minister marks NCC rally in New Delhi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the rally of the **National Cadet Corps at Cariappa Ground in Delhi.**
- Defence Minister, Chief of Defence Staff and the three armed services Chiefs will also be present on the occasion.
- The Prime Minister will inspect the Guard of Honour, review March Past by NCC contingents and witness cultural performance during the event.

NSA Ajit Doval speaks with US counterpart

- National Security Adviser **Ajit Doval** had a telephone call with his US counterpart, **Jake Sullivan.**
- **The External Affairs Ministry said NSA Doval** conveyed his best wishes to **NSA Sullivan on his appointment as National Security Advisor.**
- Doval underscored that as leading democracies, with an abiding faith in an open and inclusive world order, **India and the US** were uniquely positioned to work closely on regional and international issues.
- These issues include combating the scourge of terrorism, maritime security, cyber security and peace and stability in the **Indo-Pacific region and beyond.**

Cabinet approves MSP of copra at Rs 10,335 per quintal for 2021 season

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved **Minimum Support Price (MSP) of copra at Rs 10,335 per quintal for 2021** season which is an increase of Rs 375 over 2020 rates.
- The approval is based on recommendations of the
- Briefing the media in Delhi, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said this will benefit millions of farmers engaged in copra farming and impact the farmers of 12 coastal states.

- The MSP for ball copra has increased by Rs.300, to Rs. 10,600 per quintal for the 2021 season from 10,300 per quintal in 2020.

About CACP :

- Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices
- Formed : 1 January 1965
- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Chairman : Vijay Paul Sharma
- First Executive : M L Dantwala

National Marine Turtle Action Plan launched.

- A conservation paradigm for **marine mega fauna and marine turtles**, the **Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** has released '**Marine MegaFauna Stranding Guidelines**' and '**National Marine Turtle Action Plan**' in New Delhi.
- The documents launched contain ways and means to not only promote inter-sectoral action for conservation but also guide improved coordination amongst the government, civil society and all relevant stakeholders on the response to cases of stranding, entanglement, injury or mortality of marine mammals and also conservation of marine turtles.
- These two documents highlight actions to be taken for handling stranded animals on shore, stranded or entangled animals in the sea or on a boat, management actions for improved coordination, reducing threats to marine species and their habitats, rehabilitation of degraded habitats, enhancing people's participation, advance scientific research and exchange of information on marine mammals and marine turtles and their habitats.

Govt. nods release of Rs 1,751 cr to Assam, Arunachal, Odisha, Telangana & UP

- **The High-Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Home Minister Amit Shah** approved Additional Central Assistance of over **one thousand seven hundred 51 crore rupees** under the National Disaster Response Fund, NDRF to five states, which were affected by floods, landslides during **South-West Monsoon-2020** and **hailstorm during Rabi 2019-20**.
- While approving the Additional Central Assistance, Mr Shah said, the Union Government under the leadership of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has resolved to help people of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh who braved these natural disasters.

External affairs Minister discuss his US counterpart

- **External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar** has had a telephonic conversation with US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken.
- **Dr Jaishankar warmly congratulated Secretary Blinken** on his appointment and wished him success in his new responsibilities.
- Both leaders expressed their commitment to consolidate and expand the multi-faceted strategic partnership.
- They appreciated the robust defence and security ties, growing economic engagement, productive health-care collaboration and strong **people-to-people linkages** as its important pillars.

India's GDP – 11 per cent next fiscal – V-Shaped recovery

- The government has said that the country is witnessing a **V-Shaped Economic Recovery** which is a testimony to the resilience and intrinsic strength of its economy.
- It happened due to **Mega Vaccination Drive, Robust Recovery** in the Services Sector and Robust Growth in Consumption and Investment.
- **The Economic Survey tabled in the Parliament projects India's real GDP to record an 11 per cent growth in Financial Year 2021-22** and nominal GDP to grow by 15.4 per cent, the highest since independence.

India and World Bank sign 500 million dollar Programme

- The Government of India and the World Bank signed a **500-million** US dollar **Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Programme (STARS)** to improve the quality and governance of school education in **six Indian states**.
- These include **Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan**.
- Some 250 million students (between the age of six and 17) in 1.5 million schools and over 10 million teachers will benefit from the programme.
- The STARS programme builds on the long partnership between India and the World Bank (since 1994), for strengthening public school education and to support the country's goal of providing Education for All.
- Prior to STARS, the Bank had provided a total assistance of more than three billion US dollars towards this goal.

Farooq Khan reviews functioning of One-Stop-Centres for women

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Adviser to Lieutenant Governor Farooq Khan reviewed the functioning of **One-Stop-Centres for women** in the UT during a meeting at Civil Secretariat, Jammu.
- The Mission Director of **Integrated Child Protection Services (ICPS)** gave a detailed powerpoint presentation and apprised the Adviser about the working of the centres as well difficulties being faced by them while performing their duties.
- **Aim:** To help the women affected by violence in private and public spaces, within the family, community or at the workplace.
- **Main objective of One-Stop-Centres:** To facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including medical, legal, psychological and counseling support under one roof to fight against any forms of violence against women.

About J&K:

- **Capital:** Jammu(winter) , Srinagar(summer)
- **Lieutenant governor:** Manoj Sinha

J&K: Over 22 lakh people applied for golden card

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, **over 22 lakh people** have so far applied for the **golden card under** newly launched **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (ABPMJAY) SEHAT scheme** in various districts across the Union Territory.
- Before the launching of **SEHAT scheme**, only people in the deprived category under the socio-economic census could have availed the facility, however, under SEHAT scheme every J&K resident is being covered under **Rs 5 lakh health insurance**.

India's First 'Gender Park' inaugurated in Kozhikode, Kerala

- The **Kerala government's Gender Park in Kozhikode** will become **functional from next month**, coinciding with the second edition of the **International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II)**.
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the **February 11-13 ICGE-II** and the Gender Park.
- He will also lay the foundation of the **International Women's Trade and Research Centre (IWTRC)** that envisages a secure and sustained ecosystem for women entrepreneurs and a space for them to market products.
- Along with this Park, a Gender Museum, Gender Library, Convention Centre and an Amphitheatre will also be launched at the event.

About the Gender Park :

- It is the **first space of** its kind in the world.

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- Currently working under the Department of Women and Child Development, it aims to become a premier convergence point for gender-related activities,” the website mentions.
- Built with an aim to establish an ecosystem for women entrepreneurs, the Gender Park will also see the launch of a Gender museum, Gender library, a convention centre and an amphitheatre which, according to KK Shailaja, will form the first phase of the park.
- The overall cost of establishing the park is around **Rs 300 crore. spread over 24 acre land.**

About Kerala :

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

Uttarakhand Sets up Shivalik arboretum

- An arboretum showcasing the floral diversity of the **Shivalik hills** was inaugurated at **Jeolikot in Nainital district.**
- It is Mainly for conserving over **210 species of trees** found in the **Shivalik range of Himalayas.**
- One of the unique features of the “Shivalik Arboretum” inaugurated by noted environmental activist **Ajay Rawat** is that the trees standing there introduce themselves to visitors.
- Shivalik Arboretum **aims** to spread nature education among people so that they are able to feel an emotional connection with the trees, and make them more active towards conservation.
- The facility will showcase information like scientific information about particular species, cultural significance, medicinal use, country of origin, type of habitat in which it is found and all possible uses including timber, dyes or any other peculiar use.
- The tree species include Kaphal (myrica esculenta), Toon (toona ciliata), Tejpat (cinamomum tamala), Banj oak (quercus leucotrichophora) and Buransh (rhododendron arboreum).
- Some exotic tree species like Queensland Kauri Pine (agathis robusta), Atlas Cider (cedrus Atlantica) and Montezuma Cypress also stand at the arboretum. PTI ALM HDA

About Uttarakhand :

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

Venkaiah Naidu to inaugurate National Tribal Festival ‘Aadi Mahotsav’

- **Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate Aadi Mahotsav**, a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the National Capital.
- It will continue till **15th Feb.**
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry said, the Aadi Mahotsav – A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine and Commerce is a successful annual initiative that was commenced in 2017.
- The festival was an attempt to familiarise the people with the rich and diverse craft, culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.

Smriti Irani inaugurates India International Silk Fair

- **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair** on Virtual Portal.
- **India** has long history of silk production and is the **2nd largest producer of Silk.**
- India is the only country in the world which produces all the **four major varieties of silk – Mulberry, Eri, Tassar, and Muga.**
- The fair is considered to be India’s biggest silk fair, being held under one roof on Indian Silk Export Promotion Council’s virtual platform.
- The five days event is being held virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic.

- Mrs Irani said that more than 200 overseas buyers have already registered and equal number of their representatives in India will be interacting with more than 100 renowned and big Indian companies manufacturing and trading silk and silk blended products.
- She called upon the exhibitors and overseas buyers to take part in this initiative to celebrate the beauty and vibrancy of Indian silk.

Cabinet approves Budget for fiscal year 2021-22

- The **Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** approved the **Budget for the fiscal year 2021-22**.
- Earlier, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman called on President Ram Nath Kovind before presenting the Union Budget 2021-22 in Parliament.
- MoS Finance Anurag Thakur and senior officials of the Ministry of Finance also were present during the meeting.
- Traditionally, copies of the Budget are brought to the Parliament complex before the Finance Minister arrives, this year no document has been printed following the COVID-19 protocol.
- The Budget copies will be disseminated electronically, with documents being uploaded on the government website as well as being made available on a special app developed for the same.

Insurance stocks advance after FM proposes higher FDI limit

- In the Union Budget, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** proposed to amend Insurance Act, **1938 to increase FDI limit from 49% to 74% in insurance companies**, and allow foreign ownership and control with safeguards.
- Shares of six insurance companies **added 3% to 5%** after the central government proposed to amend Insurance Act to allow higher foreign direct investment (FDI) in insurance companies.
- ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company (up 5.86%), General Insurance Corporation of India (up 5.41%), The New India Assurance Company (up 5.16%), HDFC Life Insurance Company (up 4.46%), ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company (up 3.68%), SBI Life Insurance Company (up 3.49%) advanced.

About FDI :

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) is when a company takes controlling ownership in a business entity in another country. With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with day-to-day operations in the other country. This means they aren't just bringing money with them, but also knowledge, skills and technology.

Union Ministers jointly launch unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a **unified web portal** for monitoring the progress of **GOBARDHAN** activities across the nation.
- Gobardhan is an important component of **Swachh Bharat Mission Phase-2** for organic solid waste management.
- The Gobardhan scheme aims at **supporting villages effectively to manage their cattle dung and other organic waste**.
- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation will work with all the other stakeholders to implement Gobardhan, a unified approach across villages.
- Gobardhan pilot project will prove to be an important and useful step in cleanliness
- Through this will get ethanol, bio-diesel and compressed bio-fuel in the coming years.

Policy of Strategic Disinvestment announced

- **Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman**, while presenting the **Union Budget FY 2021-22** in Parliament announced that the government has approved a policy of strategic disinvestment of public sector enterprises
- That will provide a clear roadmap for disinvestment in **all non-strategic and strategic sectors**.

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- The government aims at making use of disinvestment proceeds to finance various social sector and developmental programmes and also to infuse private capital, technology and best management practices in Central Government Public Sector Enterprises

Two fold classification of Sectors to be disinvested :

- **Strategic Sector** : Bare minimum presence of the public sector enterprises and remaining to be privatised or merged or subsidiarized with other CPSEs or closed.
- **Non- Strategic Sector** : In this sector, CPSEs will be privatised, otherwise shall be closed.

Following 4 sectors to come under it :

1. Atomic energy, Space and Defence
 2. Transport and Telecommunications
 3. Power, Petroleum, Coal and other minerals
 4. Banking, Insurance and financial services
- Recognising that Idle assets will not contribute to AtmaNirbhar Bharat and the non-core assets largely consist of surplus land with government Ministries/Departments and Public Sector Enterprises, the Minister proposed to use a Special Purpose Vehicle in the form of a company to carry out monetization of idle land.
 - This can either be by way of direct sale or concession or by similar means.
 - Smt. Sitharaman also proposed to introduce a revised mechanism that will ensure timely closure of sick or loss making CPSEs.

About CPSEs :

- Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) are those companies in which the direct holding of the Central Government or other CPSEs is 51% or more.
- As on 31.3.2015 there were 298 CPSEs wherein, 63 enterprises are yet to commence commercial operation.

Tax holiday for start ups extended for another year till March 2022

- To help **India's startups** amid the COVID-19 pandemic, **tax holidays for these businesses have been extended by one year till March 31, 2022**, said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the **Union Budget 2021-22**
- **The government has also proposed to incentivise incorporation of** one-person companies (OPCs). The move is likely to help smaller startups and innovators.
- The Government has increased the **FDI limit from 49 to 74 percent** in Insurance Companies and allowed foreign ownership and control with safeguards.
- The Government has proposed to infuse **20 thousand crore rupees** to re-capitalized Public Sector Banks.

About FDI :

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) is when a company takes controlling ownership in a business entity in another country. With FDI, foreign companies are directly involved with day-to-day operations in the other country. This means they aren't just bringing money with them, but also knowledge, skills and technology.

India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management in Chennai

- **Sh. Babul Supriyo** announced the establishment of a **Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM)**, as a part of the **National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)**, Chennai, an **institution under the Ministry**.
- On the occasion of the World Wetland Day and as a part of its commitment towards conservation, restoration and management of India's wetlands, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The event was attended virtually by NCSCM, State Wetland Authorities and the knowledge partners of the Wetland Division.
- India has nearly 4.6% of its land as wetlands, covering an area of **15.26 million hectares** and has 42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 1.08 million hectares.
- The year 2021 also commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, celebrated annually as World Wetlands Day.
- The Minister also released publications relating to Faunal Diversity of all the Ramsar sites in the country and a brochure on Designation of Ramsar sites.

About the Wetland Conservation and Management :

- The dedicated CWCM Centre would address specific research needs and knowledge gaps, give a fillip to capacity development and cutting-edge research on wetlands of India, as well as aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management and wise use of the wetlands.

UP govt to set up India's first leather park in Kanpur

- **Uttar Pradesh** government will establish the **first leather park of the country in Kanpur district**.
- The park is expected to provide employment to **50 thousand people directly** and more than **1 lakh 50 thousand people indirectly**.
- The project will be established in 268 areas of land in Ramaipur village of Kanpur district and is expected to attract an investment of more than **5850 crores**.
- The leather park will also have an effluent treatment plant of 20 million litre per day capacity so that it will not pollute the Ganga river.
- The establishment of leather park Kanpur City will be able to strengthen its position among the 10 big leather manufacturing states of the country.
- The leather park will have all the facilities for production as well as exhibition of leather products.
- It will also have fooding and lodging arrangements for the investors who will come here from all over the world.

About UP

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

Karnataka puts pension payments on auto-pilot

- The **Karnataka government** launched a **first-of-its-kind initiative** in the country to automatically select beneficiaries for old-age pensions that will be paid through the **direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode**.
- This model was piloted in **Udupi and Ballari districts** where officials enrolled beneficiaries for old-age pensions using the '**Navodaya**' app.
- All persons above **60 years** will be automatically selected as beneficiaries of old-age pension based on their annual income.
- The government will make use of the Aadhaar and income certificates database in selecting beneficiaries.
- **Purpose** : To enable beneficiaries to get the pension without the need of middlemen.

About Karnataka :

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

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Kaja Kallas becomes Estonia's first female prime minister

- Kaja Kallas, the leader of the Reform Party, has become Estonia's first female prime minister.
- Estonia would thus currently become the only country in the world where both the president and the prime minister are women.
- Kaja Kallas was nominated to form the government by the Estonian president, Kersti Kaljulaid, on 14 January
- The Reform Party, led by Kallas, won the 2019 parliamentary election in Estonia with 34 MPs in the country's 101-seat parliament, Riigikogu.

About Estonia :

- Capital : Tallinn
- Currency : Euro
- Prime Minister : Kaja Kallas
- President : Kersti Kaljulaid

Liberation War fighter from Bangladesh awarded Padma Shree

- Bangladesh Liberation War fighter **Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir** and well known musicologist, **Rabindra Sangeet** exponent and academic **Sanjida Khatun** from Bangladesh has been awarded the **Padma Shri** for the year 2021.
- Padma awards are one of the highest civilian awards of the country.
- The awards were announced on the eve of the **Republic Day of India**.
- According to the official press release, **7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri awards** have been conferred on people for their distinguished work in various fields.

About Bangladesh:

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

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigns

- **Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte resigned** on Jan 26 after a key coalition ally pulled his party's support over the prime minister's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, setting the stage for consultations this week to determine if he can form a third government.
- Conte tendered his resignation to **President Sergio Mattarella**, who held off on any immediate decision other than to ask Conte to keep the government running in the near-term.
- Italy was the first European country to face the full force of the Covid-19 pandemic and has since suffered badly, with the economy plunged into recession and deaths still rising by around 400 a day.

About Italy :

- President : Sergio Mattarella
- Currency : Euro

- Capital : Rome

Vietnam ruling Communist Party chief Trong re-elected for third term

- Vietnam's ruling Communist Party chief **Nguyen Phu Trong, 76, has been re-elected for a rare third five-year term.**
- Mr Trong was granted an exception to party rules that say people over the age of 65 should retire, cementing his position as one of the country's strongest and longest-serving leaders for decades.
- It aims to bolster **Vietnam's ongoing economic success, and the legitimacy of the party's rule.**
- **Vietnam's Communist Party governs the nation of nearly 100 million people** and has ruled for more than 45 years since reunification.
- Leadership of the one-party state is split among three positions: the party chief, a president who serves as head of state and a prime minister who runs the government. Since 2018, Mr. Trong has served as both party leader and president.
- A new study by the independent Lowy Institute in Australia ranked Vietnam second in the world behind New Zealand in handling the pandemic's first nine months.

About Vietnam :

- PM : Nguyen Xuan Phuc
- Capital : Hanoi
- Currency : Vietnamese dong

UK applying to join Asia-Pacific free trade pact

- The UK is applying to join a **free trade** area made up of **11 Asia and Pacific nations, under its post-Brexit plans.**
- The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (**CPTPP**).
- The trade agreement formed in 2018 which includes **Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.**
- In total, it covers a market of around 500 million people, generating more than 13% of the world's income.
- International Trade Secretary Liz Truss will make the request with negotiations expected in the spring.

UK opens visa scheme – Hong Kong residents to become citizens

- A visa scheme to allow **Hong Kong residents** to come to the UK opened, with some **THREE LAKH** people expected to apply.
- The visa, which is open to holders of a **British National (Overseas) passport** and their immediate dependents, will offer a fast track to UK citizenship.
- But the Chinese foreign ministry said it would no longer recognize the BNO passport as a travel document.
- The UK launched the new visa after China imposed a new security law.
- Beijing has previously warned the UK not to meddle in domestic issues.

Nepal decides to award hydropower project

- Nepal has decided to award the contract for construction of **679 mega watt Lower Arun Hydropower Project** to **India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN).**
- This was decided at a meeting of the Investment Board Nepal (IBN), chaired by **Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.**
- The project was awarded to the SJVN under the Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) delivery method.
- **Arun III hydel project**, which will provide 21 per cent free power to Nepal during the concession period.

Military seizes power in Myanmar- report 1 year emergency

- **The Myanmar Military Tatmadaw** has announced a one year state of emergency in the country.

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- The **Vice President Myint Swe** has been made the acting President and all powers have been transferred to the **Commander in Chief Min Aung Hlaing**.
- The development follows early morning detention of the State Counsellor **Aung San Suu Kyi**, President Win Myint and other senior leaders from the ruling party National League for Democracy (NLD) by the military.

World Bank to provide USD 500 million to Bangladesh for improving Road and Digital Connectivity

- The government of **Bangladesh signed an agreement** with the **World Bank for the upgradation of rural roads and connectivity in the western region**.
- The project is expected to benefit over **20 million people in the western region of Bangladesh**.
- The project will help upgrade the **48 kilometre two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah** road to a modern **4-lane highway**.
- It will also help improve 600 kilometre of connecting rural roads and build or develop new rural markets.
- The project will finance installation of fiber-optic cables along the highway to ensure fast and reliable internet service
- The project is the first of a multi-phased USD1.4 billion 10-year program to upgrade the existing 110 kilometre two-lane highway, Bhomra-Satkhira-Navaron and Jashore-Jhenaidah. In the current phase, the project will be implemented in four districts namely Jashore, Jhenaidah, Magura, and Chuadanga.

About World Bank :

- Headquarters : Washington DC, US
- President : David Malpass
- Founded : July 1944

UN World Tourism Organization confirms 2020 as “worst year on record”

- According to the global travel and tourism report ‘**World Tourism Barometer**’ released by the **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, the year 2020 was the “**worst year on record**”.
- Global tourism suffered its worst year on record in 2020, with international arrivals dropping by -74% year-on-year according to the latest data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- Locations worldwide welcomed 1 billion fewer worldwide arrivals in 2020 than within the earlier year as a result of COVID-19 disaster, the associated fall in demand and widespread travel restrictions.
- **Asia and the Pacific (-84%)** the primary area to endure the influence of the pandemic and the one with the very best stage of journey restrictions at present in place – recorded the most important lower in arrivals in 2020 (300 million fewer).
- The **Center East and Africa** each recorded a **-75% decline**.
- **Europe recorded a -70% lower in arrivals**, regardless of a quick revival within the Summer season of 2020.
- Based on the most recent UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, the collapse in worldwide travel represents an estimated lack of US\$1.3 trillion in export revenues – greater than 11 instances the loss recorded in the course of the 2009 world financial disaster.

About UNWTO :

- Secretary General : Zurab Pololikashvili
- Headquarters : Madrid, Spain
- Member States : 159

CURRENT AFFAIRS : BANKING & FINANCE

HSBC inaugurates international banking unit at GIFT City in Gujarat

- Global financial services major **HSBC** inaugurated its **International Banking Unit (IBU)** branch at **GIFT City near Gandhinagar city in Gujarat**.

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- HSBC is one of the earliest global financial institutions setting up a branch at India's GIFT City and was the first bank to get a licence from the newly set up **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)**.
- HSBC's IBU branch at Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City) will be operational for customer transactions with effect from **January 27**.
- HSBC has been present in the country for more than 160 years and its fourth branch globally was opened in India.
- HSBC operates in all of the leading international financial service hubs in the world, and looks forward to the development of GIFT City as a globally competitive international financial centre.

About HSBC Bank :

- CEO : Surendra Rosha
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra

India's GDP to deal 8 per cent in FY21: FICCI Survey

- India's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to contract by **8 per cent in 2020-21**, according to the latest round of **FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey**.
- The annual median growth forecast by the industry body is based on responses from leading economists representing industry, banking and financial services sector.
- The survey was conducted in January.
- The median growth forecast for agriculture and allied activities has been pegged at **5 per cent** for 2020-21.
- "Agriculture sector has exhibited significant resilience in the face of the pandemic.
- Higher **rabi acreage, good monsoons, higher reservoir levels and strong growth in tractor sales** indicate continued buoyancy in the sector," FICCI stated on the survey findings

Highlights of Economic Survey 2020-2021

- Union finance minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** presented the **Economic Survey**, that details the **state of the economy** ahead of the government's budget for the fiscal year beginning **April 1, 2021**.
- The Economic Survey 2020-2021, authored by a team led by **chief economic adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian**, focused on the state of different sectors of the economy, the effect of the coronavirus pandemic as well as reforms that need to be taken.
- The survey expects the Indian economy to grow by 11 per cent during 2021-22 which is close to the growth forecast of 11.5 per cent made by the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- This means that the Indian GDP in 2021-22 is expected to be at **149.2 lakh crore**.
- The Theme of Economic Survey 2020-21 :
 - #SavingLives&Livelihoods
 - #VshapedRecovery

Students in Karnataka's Hubballi made robot to help in banking services

- **Engineering college students in Hubballi** have come up with '**Maya**', a robot that has been programmed to serve in banks and **speaks in many regional languages**.
- The students of the Automation and Robotics department of KLE Technological University have spent nearly **eight months** and spent **Rs 5 lakh to develop the robot**.
- It was developed keeping banking sectors in mind and programmed with all banking activities such as advising the customers on opening accounts, sending them to designated counters for queries.
- With the help of **artificial intelligence**, it recognises customers' faces and responds to them by using a chatbot.
- After the banking hours, it automatically goes to the docking yard and charges its batteries without the help of any human being.

Economic Survey: India to become Fastest Growing Economy in next 2-years reported by IMF

- The Union Government said that the country's V-Shaped Economic Recovery happened due to Mega Vaccination Drive, Robust Recovery in the Services Sector and Robust Growth in Consumption and Investment.
- **Chief Economic Adviser K. Subramanian** said, V-Shaped Recovery is due to Resurgence in High Frequency Indicators Such as Power Demand, Rail Freight, E-Way Bills, GST Collection and Steel Consumption.
- The Economic Survey said, **India is to become the Fastest Growing Economy in next two years** as per the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.
- India is to have a Current Account Surplus of two per cent of GDP in financial year 2021, a historic high after 17 years.

Microsoft launches Taj Mahal inspired engineering hub in Noida

- **Microsoft** announced the launch of its new **India Development Center (IDC)** facility at **NCR** that will serve as a premier **hub for driving cutting-edge engineering and innovation**.
- IDC NCR is Microsoft's **third Development Center in India** after Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
- The IDC NCR facility will collaborate with Microsoft teams globally to build products and services for driving digital innovation.
- The center will provide opportunities for engineering talent in the areas of Business & Productivity tools, AI, Cloud & Enterprise, Core Services, and the new Gaming division.
- The IDC NCR workspace architecture is inspired by the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.
- The IDC in NCR will collaborate with Microsoft teams worldwide to design and create products that drive digital innovations.

About Microsoft :

- CEO : Satya Nadella
- Founded : 4 April 1975, US
- Founder : Bill Gates, Paul Allen
- Managing Director : Rajiv Kumar



PNB customers won't be able to withdraw money from these ATMs

- The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has taken a giant step and won't allow its customers to **withdraw money from non-EMV automated teller machines (ATMs) from today(1 February 2021)**.
- To protect our esteemed customers from fraudulent ATM activities, PNB will be restricting transactions (**financial and non-financial**) from Non-EMV ATM machines from February 1, 2021.
- Punjab National Bank has introduced PNB One App that allows PNB debit card users to switch on or off their debit card through this app.

What are non-EMV ATMs

- Non-EMV ATMs are those which read data through magnetic strips and do not hold the ATM card during the transaction.
- In such ATMs, Data Magnetic Chips enabled reading is done by the ATM machine and for a few seconds one's debit card gets locked.

About PNB :

- Headquarters :New Delhi
- CEO : S.S. Mallikarjuna Rao
- Founded : 19 May 1984, Lahore, Pakistan

In 2021 Budget Govt proposes to introduce single securities markets code

- The government proposed to introduce a **unified securities markets code**, a move that will help in **boosting the ease of doing business** in the country's financial markets.
- The proposed move would help in cutting down compliance costs and reducing the friction between rules enacted by capital markets watchdog Sebi, depositories and government
- Finance Minister in her Budget speech for 2021-22 proposed to consolidate the provisions of Sebi Act, Depositories Act, Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act and Government Securities Act into a rationalised single securities markets code.
- The proposal to create a unified securities market code is very progressive as it aims to simplify and reduce the friction between rules enacted by various acts of Sebi, depositories.
- Sebi Act – **1992**
- Depositories Act – **1996**
- Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act – **1956**
- Government Securities Act – **2007**

About Sebi :

- Securities and Exchange Board of India
- Founded : 12 April 1992
- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Chairperson : Ajay Tyag

CURRENT AFFAIRS : APPOINTMENTS

Shri U P Singh Charge of Secretary in Textiles Ministry

- **Shri U. P. Singh**, a 1985 batch **Indian Administrative Service Officer (IAS)** of Odisha Cadre has taken over as **Secretary, Ministry of Textiles**, Government of India.
- Prior to this, he held the post of Secretary in the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- He joined the Ministry of Water Resources & River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation on 1.6. 2016 as Additional Secretary and also held the post of Mission Director, National Water Mission (NWM). Later he assumed the charge of Director General, National Mission for Cleaning Ganga (NMCG).
- He has the experience of working in different sectors like Water Resources, Finance, Steel, Transport, etc. He had been deeply involved in policy, planning and management of water resources in India.

About Ministry of Textiles :

- Minister : Smriti Zubin Irani
- Headquarters : New Delhi
- Minister of State : Ajay Tamta

Center nods appointment of two SBI MDs

- **The Appointments Committee (ACC)** of the Cabinet cleared the names of two officials — **Swaminathan Janakiraman** and **Ashwini Kumar Tewari** as new managing directors of State Bank of India (SBI) for a period of **three years**.
- Both Tewari and Janakiraman, are eligible for the extension of their term of office after a review of their performance, according to an order issued by the Department of Personnel & Training.
- Currently, both are working with SBI.
- While **Tewari is serving as MD and CEO of SBI Card**, **Janakiraman is working as the deputy managing director (finance), SBI**.

Lt Gen Ravin Khosla takes over command of Gajraj Corps

- The command of Indian Army's Frontier **Gajraj Corps** changed hands from **Lieutenant General Shantanu Dayal, to Lieutenant General Ravin Khosla**.
- Lieutenant General Gen Ravin Khosla brings with him immense operational experience and has served in important command and staff appointment both in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East.
- He comes to Gajraj Corps from Integrated Headquarters of Ministry of Defence (Army), New Delhi where he was holding the appointment of Director General (Manpower Planning & Personnel Services).
- The General Officer has served in Sri Lanka during **Operation PAWAN**.
- For his illustrative service, he has been awarded the **Ati Vishist Sewa Medal, Sena Medal and the Vishisht Seva Medal**.
- In addition to his professional pursuits, the general officer is also a keen sportsman and an avid reader.

Italian PM Giuseppe Conte resigns

- **Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte** has resigned – and it is not clear if he will be able to form and lead a new coalition government.
- Parties are divided over spending in the coronavirus crisis, in which more than 85,000 Italians have died.
- Mr Conte met President Sergio Mattarella, who may ask him to form a stronger government.
- he lost his Senate majority.
- However media reports said, someone else could become Italy's PM, or a snap election could be called.

Cabinet Approves appointment of Swaminathan Janakiraman and Ashwini Kumar Tewari as MDs at SBI

- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has approved the appointment of **Swaminathan Janakiraman as Managing Director of State Bank of India**, the country's largest commercial bank.
- **Janakiraman**, who is currently **Deputy Managing Director**, has been appointed as MD for three years.
- ACC has also approved the appointment of **Ashwini Kumar Tewari, Deputy Managing Director, as Managing Director of SBI for three years**.
- In October, 2020, the Banks Board Bureau (BBB) recommended the names for the two posts of managing director at the State Bank of India.
- The bureau interviewed 16 candidates from SBI and nationalised banks for the two positions.
- The country's largest bank SBI is headed by a chairman with four managing directors to assist.

About SBI :

- Chairperson : Dinesh Kumar Khara
- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founded : 1 July 1955

About BBB :

- Chairperson : Bhanu Pratap Sharma
- Founded : 28 February 2016
- Comes Under Ministry of Finance

Lt- General CP Mohanty to be the new vice-chief of Army Staff

- Lieutenant General **Chandi Prasad Mohanty** on **February 1, 2021**, will take over as the next **vice-chief of Army Staff**.
- Currently, he is the Southern Army Commander and will be succeeding Lt General SK Saini.
- Lt General CP Mohanty is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, and National Defence Academy.
- He is a June **1982 batch** Infantry Officer from the Rajput Regiment.

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- Lieutenant General Mohanty has served across a wide spectrum of terrain and conflicts, along the fronts with both Pakistan and China.
- He has also been a part of the counter-terror operations in the Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir.

Bharti AXA General Insurance launches 'Krishi Sakha' App for farmers

- **Bharti AXA General Insurance** has launched its new app '**Krishi Sakha**' to cater to the specific needs of the farmers in the country and guide them in adopting best farming practices and enhancing productivity.

About the 'Krishi Sakha' :

- Bharti AXA 'Krishi Sakha' aims at **helping Indian farmers make informed decisions** through customized information related to their farming requirements. It shares relevant information about the scientific way of farming, crop cultivation, sowing, or harvesting of major crops.
- The app is a one-stop shop for all crop insurance-related requirements and offers the farmers a variety of innovative and tailored solutions along with curated crop advisories by experts to help them protect their invaluable crops and increase the overall farming productivity.
- It guides the farmers about weather forecasting, market and crop prices and government schemes related to insurance and agriculture.

About Bharti AXA General Insurance :

- Established : 2008
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra
- MD & CEO : Sanjeev Srinivasan

R S Sharma appointed as new CEO of Ayushman Bharat Scheme

- The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has appointed **RS Sharma as the new Chief Executive to head its health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** a flagship programme of the government.
- He will be replacing Indu Bhushan whose three years term comes to an end.
- Indu Bhushan, who is serving as the Chief Executive of the Ayushman Scheme since its inception in 2018.

About Sharma :

- Sharma, the former Chairman of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), also heads the Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to combat Covid-19, and is a member, National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19.
- He will take charge of the NHA from February 1, and will ensure a smooth rollout of the National Digital Health Mission on data privacy.

About NHA :

- The National Health Authority or the NHA is responsible for implementing India's flagship public health insurance/assurance scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. NHA has been set-up to implement the PM-JAY at the national level.
- Founded : 2018

Prakash Javadekar Launches 2021 as Indo-French Year of the Environment

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, **Shri Prakash Javadekar** and **Ms Barbara Pompili**, the French Minister for Ecological Transition launched the **Indo-French Year of the Environment in New Delhi**.

- The basic objective is to **strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions in favor of global environment protection and give them greater visibility.**
- The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on **five main themes:** environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, and the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency.
- It is also a platform for engaging in discussions on critical areas of collaboration relating to the environment and allied areas.
- From the French side, it will be held under the aegis of the Ministry of Ecological Transition, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs with the support of the Embassy of France in Delhi and its partners.
- From the Indian side, it will be coordinated by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** along with the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and other concerned Ministries/Departments/Organisations.
- A joint screening committee will also be set up to finalise the calendar of the events for the Indo-French Year of the Environment.

About France :

- Capital : Paris
- President : Emmanuel Macron
- Prime Minister : Jean Castex
- Currency : Euro

SBI Card appoints Rama Mohan Rao Amara as MD & CEO for 2 years

- **SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd (SBI Card)** appointed **Rama Mohan Rao Amara** as its **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for a period of two years.**
- It was effective from **30 January 2021.**
- Prior to this appointment, Amara, who started his banking career with SBI in 1991 as a probationary officer, was the Chief General Manager of SBI Bhopal circle.
- Rao is a veteran banker, with a successful career spanning over 29 years at SBI, the credit card company said in a release. Prior to taking charge at SBI Card, he was the Chief General Manager, SBI Bhopal Circle.

About SBI Card :

- CEO : Ashwini Kumar Tewari
- Headquarters : Gurugram
- Founded : 1998
- Chairperson : Dinesh Kumar Khara, Rajinish Kumar

Facebook Hires Its First Chief Compliance Officer

- **Facebook Inc. has hired its first chief compliance officer,** as the social media company **faces increasing scrutiny from regulators.**

About Henry Moniz :

- **Henry Moniz,** who has been the chief compliance officer and chief audit executive at media company ViacomCBS Inc., will join Facebook on **8 to lead the company's global compliance team, according to Facebook.**
- He will be the **first person to hold the compliance chief title at Facebook.**
- Moniz was previously the chief compliance officer and chief audit officer at Viacom before its merger with CBS.
- He also previously worked as a partner at law firm Bingham McCutchen LLP, which is now Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP, and as an assistant U.S. attorney in Miami and Boston.

About Facebook :

- CEO : Mark Zuckerberg
- Founded : February 2004
- Headquarters : California, US

Indian-American Bhavya Lal appointed acting chief of staff of Nasa

- **NASA appointed Indian-American Bhavya Lal** as its acting **chief of staff**.
- Previously, as the senior White House appointee at NASA, Lal served as a member of the Biden Presidential Transition Agency Review Team for the agency and oversaw the agency's transition under the administration of President **Joe Biden**.

About Bhavya Lal :

- Lal serves as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020
- Lal is an active member of the space technology and policy community, having chaired, co-chaired, or served on five high-impact National Academy of Science committees.
- Dr Lal will also serve as the senior advisor for budget and finance at NASA.

About NASA :

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

CURRENT AFFAIRS : AGREEMENTS

Ford, Google join hands to offer cloud-based data services

- **Ford Motor Co** will tap into software, artificial intelligence and **cloud computing** offered by **Alphabet Inc's Google** to develop new consumer services and modernize internal operations.
- As part of a **six-year partnership**, the Dearborn, Michigan-based automaker will incorporate the tech giant's Android operating system into its Ford and Lincoln vehicles starting in 2023.
- Ford will offer its customers built-in Google apps, including its map and voice technology.
- It will deploy Google artificial intelligence technology to improve the efficiency of vehicle development, supply chain and manufacturing operations

About Ford Motor Company :

- Founder : Henry Ford
- Founded : 16 June 1903, United States

About Google :

- CEO : Sundar Pichai
- Founded : 4 September 1998 US
- Founders : Larry Page, Sergey Brin

Dr. Harsh Vardhan addresses the 4th edition of Future Investment Initiative Forum

- **Harsh Vardhan**, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the **4th edition of the Future Investment Initiative Forum**, through a Video Conference.

- The **purpose** of the forum being hosted in Riyadh was to find solutions on how business and government can expand access to healthcare, train healthcare workers, remove regulatory barriers and encourage investment in advanced health technologies.
- Hosted by **Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia**
- It was held for the first time in October 2017.
- In that Forum Dr Harsh Vardhan highlighted the **five big trends** which are emerging due to COVID-19 and influencing global business:
 - The impact of Technology and Innovation
 - Importance of Infrastructure for Global Growth
 - Changes coming in human resource and future of work
 - Compassion for environment
 - Business friendly governance with focus on whole of society and government approach

About FII :

- Located at : Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

CURRENT AFFAIRS : BOOKS & AUTHORS

Dalai Lama pens new book 'The Little Book of Encouragement'

- Tibetan spiritual leader the **Dalai Lama** has come out with his new book titled '**The Little Book of Encouragement**', in which he has shared quotes and words of wisdom to promote human happiness.
- "The Little Book of Encouragement", which has **130 quotes, is edited by Renuka Singh and published by Penguin Random House.**
- It deals with the new realities of the panic-stricken world, combat rising extremism, polarity and climate change besides Dalai Lama's views on Tibet.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: AWARDS AND HONOURS

Uttar Pradesh's Ram Temple tableau on Republic Day bags first prize

- The **Ram Temple tableau of Uttar Pradesh** that was on display during the **Republic Day** has **bagged the first prize among all tableaux.**
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will be giving away the first prize to Uttar Pradesh for its tableau.
- The Ram Temple tableau evoked strong reactions from the public.
- It is reported that the people present to witness the parade at the Rajpath applauded when the model of the upcoming Ram Temple in Ayodhya made an appearance.
- The tableau provided the glimpse of the temple that began its construction recently.
- As for the setting of the tableau, it showcased Maharishi Valmiki composing the Ramayana, followed by a model replica of the Ram temple that showed how it would look after its construction.
- It is for the first time that the Uttar Pradesh tableau showcased a glimpse of the Ram Temple that is being built in Ayodhya.
- The **Tripura tableau** won the **second prize for the Republic Day parade.**
- The **third prize** was received by **Uttarakhand's tableau** which was themed around Kedarkhand.

About UP :

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

Textiles Committee signed MoU with Japanese Nissenken Quality Evaluation Centre

- The **Textiles Committee of the Ministry of Textiles** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding- MoU with Nissenken Quality Evaluation Centre, Japan** to boost export of Textile and Apparel to Japanese market.
- The MoU signing ceremony was held through video conferencing which was presided over by **Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani** and State Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan **Yasumasa Nagasaka**.
- The **main objective** of the MoU is to provide required support to textile's trade and industry for ensuring quality as per the requirement of **Japanese buyers**.
- The MoU will **strengthen the bilateral trade** by enhancing India's export of Textile and Apparels to Japan, which is the third largest export destination of the world.

About Japan:

- **Prime minister:** Yoshihide Suga Trending
- **Capital:** Tokyo
- **Currency:** Japanese yen

Maha Vir Chakra awarded to Col Santosh Babu posthumously

- President has approved awards of **455 Gallantry** and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel and others.
- **Galwan valley hero Colonel B Santosh Babu**, the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment, who lost his life during the Galwan Valley clash last year, will be **posthumously** awarded with **Maha Vir Chakra**.
- Subedar Sanjiv Kumar of 4th Battalion Parachute Regiment, CRPF Inspector Pintu Kumar Singh, CRPF Head Constable Shyam Narayan Singh Yadav, CRPF Constable Vinod Kumar will be posthumously awarded with **Kirti Chakra**.
- Deputy Commandant CRPF Rahul Mathur will be awarded **Kirti Chakra**.
- Naib Subedar Nuduram Soren of 16 Bihar Regiment, Havildar K Palani of 81 Field Regiment, Naik Deepak Singh of Army Medical Corps 16 Bihar Regiment and Sepoy Gurtej Singh of 3rd Battalion Punjab Regiment will be awarded **Vir Chakra posthumously**.
- Havildar Tejinder Singh of 3 Medium Regiment will be awarded **Vir Chakra**.
- Major Anuj Sood of 21st Battalion Rashtriya Rifles, Jammu and Kashmir police inspector Arshad Khan, J&K police Selection Grade Constable GH Mustafa Barah, J&K police Constable Naseer Ahmed Kolie and J&K Special Police Officer Bilal Ahmed Magray will be **posthumously** awarded with **Shaurya Chakra**.
- Rifleman Pranab Jyoti Das of 6th Battalion Assam Rifles and Paratrooper Sonam Tshering Tamang will be awarded **Shaurya Chakra**.
- These include one Mahavir Chakra, 5 Kirti Chakras, 5 Vir Chakras, 7 Shaurya Chakras, 4 Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 130 Sena Medal (Gallantry), one Nao Sena Medal (Gallantry), 4 Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry), 30 Param Vishisht Seva Medal, 4 Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, 51 Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, 11 Yudh Seva Medal, 3 Bar to Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 43 Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty) including 2 COVID Warriors, 8 Nao Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 14 Vayu Sena Medal (Devotion to Duty), 3 Bar to Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) including one COVID Warrior and 131 Vishisht Seva Medal including 12 COVID Warriors.

Padma Shri Awardee Transgender Joga Nritya Performer

- **Manjamma Jogathi**, the **Padma Shri** comes after decades of social and financial struggle.
- The list of Padma awards recipients this year includes a **transgender from Karnataka** who has over the past many decades practised and single-handedly popularised rural folk arts.
- Manjavva Jogati, as she would be called in Karnataka, held aloft the cause of these art forms, especially the Jogati Nritya and Janapada songs, practiced in rural Karnataka, Maharashtra, and parts of Andhra Pradesh.

Achievements :

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- In 2006, she was awarded the Karnataka Janapada Academy Award and, 13 years later, in 2019, she herself was appointed President of the institution, becoming the first transgender to occupy the position.
- In 2010, the Karnataka government honoured her with the annual Kannada Rajyotsava award.

ICC introduces Player of the Month awards to recognise best performances of cricketers

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** on January 27, 2021 announced the '**ICC Player of the Month**' awards to recognise the best performances of male and female cricketers across all three forms of international cricket.
- The ICC elaborated further by saying that an independent ICC Voting Academy comprising former players, journalists and broadcasters from around the world will team up with fans to vote for the ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month.
- The awards will be conferred starting from this month onwards.
- ICC stated that there have been some sensational cricketing performances during January 2021, which will make an inaugural player of the month awards a highly competitive affair.
- January 2021 has seen some of the finest performances, especially by young cricketers such as Washington Sundar (India), Rishabh Pant (India), Mohammed Siraj (India) and T. Natarajan (India) and established players including Steve Smith (Australia), Joe Root (England), Ravichandran Ashwin (India), Nadine de Klerk (South Africa), Marizanne Kapp (South Africa) and Nida Dar (Pakistan).

About ICC :

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

AR Rahman and social activist from Saidapet Hari Krishnan win awards for being Good Samaritans

- Music composer **AR Rahman** and social activist from **Saidapet Hari Krishnan** were among the **14** people who were presented the **fourth edition** of the **Alert Being Awards 2020** by the **NGO ALERT**, for their Good Samaritan work.
- **Hari Krishnan** had been appointed by the Greater Chennai Corporation as a district volunteer head for Covid-19 relief work.

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.
- **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, he said.
- **Pinarayi Vijayan** released the **stamp** published in connection with the **International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK)**.
- Culture Minister **A K Balan** presided.

2021 Padma Awards: Odisha's octogenarian doctor Dr Krishna Mohan Pathi

- **Dr Pathi is a noted orthopaedic surgeon** who is known for his landmark work in **tribal districts of the State**.
- **Octogenarian Dr Krishna Mohan Pathi** goes about giving **free treatment to poor patients** on a **daily basis** in a village of Ganjam district.
- For him, age is just a number as the **82-year-old doctor** refuses to give up on helping the needy, a trait which has earned him the Padma Shri award this year.

Odisha teacher scores a century in his age and 2021 Padma Awards

- Fondly known as 'Nanda Mastre', centenarian Nanda Prusty of Kantira in Sukinda block had never imagined he would be bestowed the coveted Padma Shri award for his service to the society.
- A class VII pass-out, Prusty who turned 100 this year, has been teaching children as well as senior citizens of his village for the last seven decades.
- His mission is to eradicate illiteracy from his village.

Padma Awards: Divine poetess Purnamasi Jani from Odisha's Kandhamal

- Purnamasi Jani has over a lakh poems and devotional songs to her credit, but Purnamasi Jani has never been to a school.
- And the 76-year-old tribal poetess, popularly known as Tadisaru Bai in the region, has never repeated any of her poems or songs.
- Born in Charipada village under Khajuripada block of Kandhamal district, Purnamasi was married at a young age.
- 5,000 of her songs and poems have been recorded by litterateurs and literary societies.
- Her biography was subsequently written by Dr Surendranath Mohanty and a teacher Duryodhan Pradhan compiled all her songs.

CURRENT AFFAIRS : SCHEMES

IT minister to launch 'Work from Anywhere' portal, Tejas Virtual Intelligence tool at NICS event

- IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad will launch virtual intelligence tool Tejas and 'Work from Anywhere' portal.
- The National Informatics Centre Services Inc (NICS), a public sector enterprise under the National Informatics Centre (NIC), will celebrate 25 years of its establishment at an event.
- Tejas, a virtual intelligence tool that extracts critical information from data to make its meaningful information for policy decisions and improving efficiency in government services and citizen delivery.
- It will also launch 'e-Auction India' to cater to electronic forward and reverse auction requirements of the government organisations serving online 24x7.
- Also launch 'Work from Anywhere' portal, a virtual environment that enables employees to "access routine applications like e-office, calendar, mail, and other departmental applications and communicate across through VC ensuring safety during this pandemic with social distancing and work assurance from anywhere.

India Inks Strategic Partnership With International Energy Agency

- India and the International Energy Agency (IEA) signed a framework for a strategic partnership to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation and to enhance global energy security, stability and sustainability.
- This partnership will lead to an extensive exchange of knowledge and would be a stepping stone towards India becoming a full member of the Paris-based IEA.
- The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Sanjiv Nandan Sahai, Secretary (Power) and Dr. Fatih Birol, IEA Executive Director.
- Dr Birol termed the signing of the agreement as a historic moment and a huge step forward for global energy governance.

About IEA :

- Headquarters : Paris, France
- Founded : November 1974
- It is mainly to help coordinate a collective response to major disruptions in the supply of oil. It is made up of 30 member countries and also includes eight association countries.

Commerce Ministry notifies Rs 945 crore seed fund Scheme for startups

- The government has approved the **Rs 945-crore Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS)** for the period **2021-25** to offer early-stage funding to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization.
- It is implemented by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- The Rs 945 crore Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) will be operational from **April 1, 2021**, to 2025 as the government looks to boost the ecosystem, providing the crucial capital for young companies.
- The government announced that Startup India Seed Fund Scheme will provide financial assistance to startups that have been recognised by the DPIIT and incorporated not more than two years ago at the time of application.
- The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme is sector-agnostic and will have a central common application on Startup India portal for startups and incubators on an ongoing basis.
- Earlier, on January 16, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the launch of this Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.

About DPIIT :

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

Venkaiah Naidu inaugurates integrated weapons design centre

- Vice President **M Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated the **Integrated Weapons System Design Centre at DRDO's Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile complex in Hyderabad**.
- The facility would enhance the capability in design and development of command and control systems for **surface-to-air missile (SAM)** systems and ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems,
- The DRDO officials briefed Naidu on the various ongoing projects and technological developments of missile complex laboratories **Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL)** and **Research Centre Imarat (RCI)**.
- The exposition will display missile technologies and weapon systems and the centre will be the backbone for outreach activities.

About DRDO :

- Founded : 1958
- Headquarters : New Delhi

CURRENT AFFAIRS : RANKING

TCS is third most valued IT services brand globally: Brand Finance

- **Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS)** is now the **world's third most-valued IT services brand**, only behind industry heavyweights Accenture Plc and International Business Machines Corp. (IBM), according to a report.
- Four Indian IT services companies **TCS, Infosys Ltd. (4), HCL Technologies Ltd. (7) and Wipro Ltd. (9) have secured spots in the Top-10 global rankings**.
- The brand value of HDFC Bank is recorded **at USD 15 billion**.
- Accenture retained the title of world's most valuable and strongest IT services brand with a record brand value of \$26 billion, while IBM continued at the second place with brand value of \$16.1 billion.

About Tata Consultancy Services Ltd :

- CEO : Rajesh Gopinathan
- Founded : 1 April 1968

- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founders : Faquir Chand Kohli, Tata Sons, J.R.D.Tata

Climate risk Index India Ranks in 7th

- **India is among the top 10 most affected countries** in the **Global Climate Risk Index 2021** published by the **Bonn-based environmental think tank Germanwatch**.
- **India ranked as the Seventh worst hit** country in terms of **climate change in 2019**.
- It is the 16th edition of the report and has taken into account the data available for 2019 and from 2000 to 2019.
- It caused catastrophic damage and a humanitarian crisis, making Mozambique and Zimbabwe the two most affected countries in 2019.
- In the past 20 years (2000-2019), Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti were the countries most affected by the impacts of such weather events.

About Global Climate Risk Index :

- The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 analyses to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of weather-related loss events (storms, floods, heat waves etc.). Human impacts (fatalities) and direct economic losses were analysed.

India ranks 86th in corruption perception index 2020

- **India's rank** has slipped six places to **86th among 180 countries** in **corruption perception index (CPI) in 2020**.
- For 2020, Transparency International (TI)'s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) was released.
- The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people, uses a scale of **0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean**.
- India's rank is 86 out of 180 nations with a score of 40.
- This year, **New Zealand and Denmark rank at first position** with scores of **88**. **Somalia and South Sudan rank lowest at 179th position with scores of 12**.
- India is sharing its position jointly with Burkina Faso, Morocco, East Timor, Trinidad and Tobago and Turkey.

About CPI :

- The Corruption Perceptions Index is an index published annually by Berlin-based Transparency International since 1995 which ranks countries "by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.

India Ranks 86 of 98 on Covid-19 Response Index, New Zealand Tops List

- **India has ranked at 86th position** among **98 countries** in the new **Coronavirus Performance Index**.
- It was Released by **Australia-based Lowy Institute**.
- According to the performance index **New Zealand** handled the pandemic **more effectively** than any other country in the world, while **Brazil sits at the bottom** of the list.
- The study measured a number of key indicators, including confirmed cases, deaths, cases per million people and deaths per million people.
- Countries were ranked based on the publicly available and comparable data on Covid-19 response. China was excluded from the list due to lack of publicly available data.
- China was not included in the study because all of its testing rates are not publicly available.

About Lowy Institute :

SALEM INSTITUTE OF BANKING

- The Lowy Institute is an independent think tank founded in April 2003 by Frank Lowy to conduct original, policy-relevant research about international political, strategic and economic issues from an Australian perspective. It is based in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.
- Founder : Frank Lowy

Reliance Jio ranked fifth strongest brand globally

- **Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's four-year-old telecom venture Reliance Jio** has been ranked the **fifth strongest brand globally behind the likes of Ferrari and Coca-Cola**.
- Jio was Mukesh Ambani's re-entry into the telecom business, offering free voice calling and dirt cheap data for mobile phones.
- As per the ranking, Reliance Jio has emerged as the **5th strongest brand in the world**.
- The Brand Finance's **Global 500 ranking** of the strongest brands globally, which determined the relative strength of brands, is topped by WeChat, according to its annual report on most valuable and strongest global brands.
- Entering the ranking for the first time this year and claiming the title of the world's **5th strongest brand, is Indian telecom giant, Jio, with a BSI score of 91.7 out of 100**.

About JIO :

- Founder : Mukesh Ambani
- Founded : 2007
- Headquarters : Mumbai, Maharashtra

India ranks 10th in Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index

- **India ranked 10th out of 11 Asia Pacific countries** in a newly-launched health index to measure the progress towards **personalised healthcare**.
- Overall, **Singapore has topped the index**. It is followed by Taiwan (2nd), Japan (3rd) and Australia (4th).

About EIU Report :

- The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) report "Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index"** measures the readiness of **11 health systems** across the region—Australia, China, Japan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and New Zealand—in adopting personalised healthcare, enabling the right care to be tailored to the right person at the right time.
- The 'Personalised Health Index' measures performance against **27 different indicators** of personalised health across four categories called **Vital Signs**.
- These include Policy Context, Health Information, Personalised Technologies and Health Services.

Maharashtra tops 2nd India Justice Report for delivering justice to people

- The **second edition** of the India Justice Report, **India's only ranking** of states on delivery of Justice to people, announced.
- **Maharashtra** once again at the **top of the 18 Large and Mid-sized states** (with population of over one crore each), followed by Tamil Nadu (2019: 3rd), Telangana (2019: 11th) Punjab (2019: 4th) and Kerala (2019: 2nd).
- The India Justice Report (IJR) is an initiative of Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS—Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives. The maiden IJR was announced in 2019.
- Through a rigorous 14-month quantitative research, the India Justice Report 2020 once again tracks the progress states have made in capacitating their justice delivery structures to effectively deliver services to all.
- It takes account of latest statistics and situations as they existed prior to March 2020. It brings together otherwise siloed statistics from authoritative government sources, on the four pillars of Justice delivery—Police, Judiciary, Prisons and Legal Aid.

About India Justice Report (IJR)

- The India Justice Report (IJR) is launched by Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, DAKSH, TISS–Prayas, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and How India Lives
- The states are ranked based on publicly available data of different government entities on the four pillars of justice delivery which are police, judiciary, prisons and legal aid.
- The first edition of IJR was released in 2019.

About Maharashtra :

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

CURRENT AFFAIRS : SPORTS NEWS

BCCI : Ranji Trophy cancelled for the first time in 87 years

- The BCCI will not be conducting its premier **first-class domestic tournament Ranji Trophy** for the first time in **87 years as the parent body opted for the Vijay Hazare Trophy** .
- The BCCI will also host the U-19 National One Day tournament for the Vinoo Mankad Trophy and the Women's national 50-over tournament as per a letter sent by BCCI secretary Jay Shah to the state units.

About BCCI :

- President : Sourav Ganguly
- Secretary : Jay Shah
- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founded : December 1928

Jay Shah takes over as Asian Cricket Council President

- **BCCI secretary Jay Shah** was unanimously elected as the **president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) at its Annual General Meeting (AGM)**.
- The 32-year-old replaces **Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief Najmul Hasan Papon**.
- Pakistan was to originally host the tournament but the tournament is now expected to be held in either Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

About ACC :

- CEO : Sridhar Balakrishnan
- Headquarters : Mumbai
- Founded : 1 August 1936
- The ACC is Asia's regional administrative body and it currently consists of 24 member associations.
- ACC is responsible for organizing the Asia Cup tournaments.
- The 2020 edition of the Asia Cup was postponed to June this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Former pacer Merv Hughes inducted into Australian Cricket Hall of Fame

- Former pacer **Merv Hughes** has been inducted into **the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame**, the country's board (CA) announced.
- The **59-year-old captured 212 Test wickets** at an average of 28.38 in a career spanning 53 Tests and 33 ODIs for Australia from 1985 to 1994.

- His career-best figures of 8-87 against the West Indies at the WACA in 1988 included the final wicket of a hat-trick spread across three separate overs, two innings and two different days.

S Sports Minister launches the First Reference Material synthesized by NDTL and NIPER to strengthen anti-doping measures

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports **Kiren Rijiju launched** a breakthrough **Reference Material** for use in chemical testing.
- It is synthesized by collaborative efforts of **National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER), Guwahati.**
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between NDTL and NIPER Guwahati was signed in August 2020 which proposes to synthesize 20 rarely available Reference Materials (RMs) during a period of **3 years.**

About RM :

- This Reference Material (RM), has been identified by NDTL as one of the rarely available RMs globally and would be used to strengthen anti-doping measures in all World Anti Doping Agency (WADA)-accredited laboratories.
- These RMs are used essentially during dope testing for quality control purposes and therefore their availability remains critical in sports dope testing, globally.
- The availability of these RMs would help the anti-doping laboratories to strengthen their testing capacity. This will help in the greater cause of promoting fair play in sports.
- It has also been decided to distribute 5 mg of this indigenously developed RM to all the WADA-accredited dope testing laboratories all around the world free of cost for the first occasion.

India top medals tally at first Asian Online Shooting Championship

- **India's 24-member shooting contingent topped the medals tally in the first Asian Online Shooting Championship.**
- The squad won **four out of the eight gold medals on offer, besides two silver and five bronze medals**, for a total of **11 podium finishes.**
- The two-day competition, held on Thursday and Friday, was organised by the Kuwait Shooting Federation and **saw 274 shooters from 22 Asian countries take part.**

List of Medal Winners from India

Gold

- Saurabh Chaudhary – men's 10m air pistol
- Divyansh Singh Panwar- men's 10m air rifle
- Kynan Chenai – men's trap
- Rajeshwari Kumari – women's trap

Silver

- Arjun Babuta – men's 10m air rifle
- Shreyasi Singh – women's trap

Bronze

- Manu Bhaker – women's 10m air pistol
- Sarabjot Singh – men's 10m air pistol
- Deepak Kumar – men's 10m air rifle
- Prithviraj Tondaiman – men's trap
- Manish Keer – women's trap

- There were a total of eight events on the roster with no final rounds in the pistol and rifle competitions. In the shotgun events, 150-bird matches were held.

Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu defeat Baroda to win Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy

- **Dinesh Karthik-led Tamil Nadu clinched their second national T20 championship** as they beat **Baroda by seven wickets** in the final of **Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy in Ahmedabad**.
- This was Tamil Nadu's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph, after winning their first title way back in 2006-07.
- **Baroda**, who had won **the title twice in the past** (in 2011-12 and 2013-14), ended runners-up this time.
- Siddharth (4/20) spun his web around the Baroda batsmen to restrict them to a meagre 120 for 9 and then Tamil Nadu overhauled the target in 18 overs, with opener C Hari Nishaanth top-scoring with 35.
- Chasing 121 for a win, Tamil Nadu lost opener Narayan Jagadeesan (14) early as pacer Lukman Meriwala (1/34) picked up the first wicket, with the opposition at 26/1.
- This is the second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) title for Tamil Nadu, and their first title in 13 years. The team claimed their first SMAT title in 2006-07, that too under Karthik's captaincy.
- The Player of the match title was won by Manimaran Siddharth (Tamil Nadu) who picked 4 wickets, conceding 20 runs

2022 AFC Women's Asia Cup in India

- **2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup**, set to be held in India, has been confirmed by the continental governing body.
- The marquee women's football event will start on **January 20, 2022**, and will finish on **February 6, 2022**.
- The tournament has also been expanded to feature 12 of the best teams on the continent. It must be noted that the previous edition of the Women's Asian Cup, which was held in Jordan, had featured only eight teams.
- The **12 teams** will be divided into three groups of four and eight teams will qualify to the quarter-finals, including two third-placed teams.
- A total of 25 matches will be played across 18 days during the tournament.
- The 2022 Women's Asian Cup will also serve as a qualification tournament for the 2023 Women's World Cup which will be held in Australia (affiliated to the AFC) and New Zealand (affiliated to the OFC).
- The best four teams from the 2022 Women's Asian Cup, along with Australia, will take part in the 2023 Women's World Cup.

About Indian Women's Football Team :

- Captain : Loitongbam Ashalata Devi
- Coach : Maymol Rocky

About Asian Football Confederation :

- Founded : 7 May 1954
- Headquarters : Kuala Lumpur , malaysia
- President : Shaikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa

CURRENT AFFAIRS : DAYS

International Data privacy day- observed on Jan 28

- **Data Privacy Day** is an international event that occurs every year on **28 January**.
- The purpose of Data Privacy Day is to raise awareness and promote privacy and data protection best practices.
- It is currently observed in the United States, Canada, Israel and 47 European countries.
- Surveys and industry reports show that many of us feel an increasing lack of control over our own data.
- **The theme for DPD 2021 is "Own Your Privacy."**
- Surveys and industry reports show that many of us feel an increasing lack of control over our own data.

Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas – Observed on Jan 30

- The day marks the **death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**.
- On this day in **1948**, Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in the compound of Birla House after one of his routine multi-faith prayer meetings.
- The nation pays homage to Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his **73rd death anniversary**.
- Martyrs' Day is an annual day observed by nations to salute the martyrdom of soldiers who lost their lives defending the sovereignty of the nation.

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day Observed On 30 January

- **January 30, 2021** will mark the **second annual World Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Day**.
- **Theme of 2021** is **Face NTDs: End the Neglect**
- The **first World NTD Day** was held on **30 January 2020**
- This day highlighting the global community's commitment to ending Neglected Tropical Diseases that cause immeasurable suffering among the world's most marginalized communities.
- India joins the world to Combat Neglected Tropical Diseases.
- On this day the Qutub Minar will be lit up along with other landmarks across the world.
- NTDs include a range of conditions that can blind, disfigure, or even disable people.

World Leprosy Day 2021 – Jan 31

- **World Leprosy Day** is observed on the **last Sunday of January**.
- The day was chosen by **French humanitarian Raoul Follereau in 1953** to coincide with the anniversary of **Mahatma Gandhi's death** which happened on the last Sunday of January 1948.
- In **2021 World Leprosy Day** is Observed **31 January 2021**.
- It is celebrated with the aim of **raising awareness and knowledge** about leprosy, the fact that it can be cured, and changing attitudes that stigmatise and marginalise people affected by the disease.
- **Theme of 2021** is **Beat Leprosy, End Stigma and advocate for Mental Wellbeing**

About Leprosy :

- Leprosy, **also known as Hansen's disease**, is a chronic infectious disease caused by **Mycobacterium leprae**.
- The disease mainly affects the **skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces** of the upper respiratory tract, and the eyes.
- Leprosy is known to occur at all ages ranging from early infancy to very old age. Leprosy is curable and treatment in the early stages can prevent disability.
- Leprosy is likely transmitted via droplets, from the nose and mouth, during close and frequent contact with untreated cases.

World Wetlands Day Celebrated on 02 February 2021

- **World Wetlands Day** is observed every year on **2nd February**.
- **Purpose** : To raise global awareness about the vital role played by wetlands for people and our planet.
- Wetlands are protected places under **UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)**.
- There are over **2,400 protected wetlands** across the world.
- The **theme for World Wetlands Day 2021** is **'Wetlands and Water'**.
- The day is celebrated to mark the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- In 2021 marks 50 years of the Convention on Wetlands.
- World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997.

About Wetland :

- A wetland is a distinct ecosystem that is flooded by water, either permanently or seasonally, where oxygen-free processes prevail.
- The primary factor that distinguishes wetlands from other landforms or water bodies is the characteristic vegetation of aquatic plants, adapted to the unique hydric soil.

Indian Coast Guard Day: Observed on Feb 01

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will celebrate its **45th Raising Day on Feb 01**.
- The ICG is an armed force of India that protects maritime interests and enforces maritime law.
- The ICG is headed by a **Director-General, Vice-Admiral rank of the Indian Navy**.
- With just seven surface platforms in 1978, the ICG has grown into the **fourth largest coast guard** with 156 ships and 62 aircraft in its inventory.
- The ICG has targeted force levels of 200 surface platforms and 80 aircraft by 2025.
- Since its inception in 1977, the ICG has saved over 10,000 lives and apprehended around 14,000 miscreants, the agency said.
- Director General, Indian Coast Guard **K Natarajan**

CURRENT AFFAIRS : OBITUARIES

Animals guitarist Hilton Valentine dies at the age of 77

- The **Animals guitarist Hilton Valentine**, who created one of the most famous riffs in pop music in the 1960s, **died** at the age of 77.
- The British band's version of blues standard The House of The Rising Sun topped the UK and US charts in 1964.
- The Animals' record label **ABKCO Music** described Valentine as a pioneering guitar player influencing the sound of rock and roll for decades to come.
- Valentine co-founded the Animals in Newcastle in 1963 alongside singer Eric Burdon, bassist Chas Chandler, organist Alan Price and drummer John Steel.

Nobel laureate Paul Crutzen, who warned of ozone hole, dies at 87

- The man most responsible for that **moniker, Nobel Prize-winning chemist Paul Crutzen**, died. He was 87.
- Crutzen was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1995 together with American chemist F. Sherwood Rowland and Mexican chemist Mario J. Molina for discovering the risk to the ozone layer
- The Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Mainz, Germany, where Crutzen was the director of atmospheric chemistry from 1980 until his retirement in 2000.
- He was known for his work on the ozone layer and climate change and for popularizing the term 'Anthropocene' to describe a proposed new era when human actions have a drastic effect on the Earth.

Oscar And Emmy-Winning Actor Cloris Leachman Passes Away At 94

- Academy **Award winner Cloris Leachman**, one of the most decorated actors in **television history**, best known for playing nosy neighbor Phyllis on "**The Mary Tyler Moore Show**," died. She was 94.
- Leachman won **eight Emmy Awards** in her storied television career, tied with Julia Louis-Dreyfus for the most individual acting awards in Emmys history.
- Leachman, who was inducted into the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Hall of Fame in 2011, won the award for best supporting actress in a comedy series in 1974 and 1975 for her work as Moore's snobbish neighbor, Phyllis Lindstrom.
- The show and the character were so popular that Leachman was spun off into her own show, "Phyllis."
- She won the **1973 Emmy for best leading actress** in the TV movie "A Brand New Life," playing a first-time mother in middle age — a daring act in the era. Leachman was 46 when the "ABC Movie of the Week" aired Feb. 20, 1973.
- The "Malcolm" gigs earned her **Emmy Awards in 2002 and 2006 for best guest actress** in a comedy.
- Leachman also **won an Oscar**, earning the **1971 award for best supporting actress in "The Last Picture Show**.