



YOUR LORDSHIPS

A Step towards Dais...

July 2021

Current Affairs 2021: Monthly Capsule



July 2021 Current Affairs

Agreements, Treaties, MOUs, etc.

1. AJNIFM, Microsoft partner to build AI, emerging technologies

The Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM) and Microsoft announced a strategic partnership to build an AI and emerging technologies centre of excellence at AJNIFM.

The collaboration seeks to explore the role of cloud, AI and emerging technologies in transforming and shaping the future of public finance management in India. The centre of excellence will serve as a central body for research, AI scenario envisioning and tech-led innovation.

AJNIFM and Microsoft will jointly explore use cases of emerging technologies in finance and related areas, across central and state ministries and public sector enterprises.

Microsoft will partner closely with AJNIFM to define the future of public finance management in India, providing the technology, tools and resources to build a strong ecosystem of partners, upskill government officials and build thought leadership.

2. India joins G20-OECD Tax Framework deal

India and majority members of OECD and G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion & Profit Shifting adopted a high-level statement that outlines a consensus solution in a bid to address tax challenges that are arising from digitalization of economy.

- This proposed solution comprises of two components:

1. First pillar is about reallocation of additional profit share to market jurisdictions and
2. Second pillar comprises of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.

- However, some significant issues like share of profit allocation and scope of subject to tax rules are open and need to be addressed.

- Technical details of proposal will be worked out soon and a consensus agreement will come by October 2021.

3. Tourism Ministry signs MoU with Yatra to strengthen hospitality, tourism industry

The tourism ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Yatra to strengthen and enable the tourism and hospitality industry.

The event was organised under an arrangement between the Ministry of Tourism and the Quality Council of India (QCI), where the MoU for the Tourism Ministry Yatra tie-up was signed.

While the MoU is meant to mainly strengthen tourism, it also takes into consideration and provides support for accommodation units.

The MoU outlines that both parties signing the document would participate in encourage the accommodation units to self-certify themselves on

the System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for the Hospitality Industry (SAATHI) on the Online Travel Agency Platform (OTA).

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Tourism had also signed a MoU with ClearTrip and Ease My Trip. There has been an ongoing effort by the ministry to strengthen the tourism sector in India while extending support to accommodation units.

The accommodation units registered on NIDHI and SAATHI on the OTA platform are to be provided extended visibility with the signing of this MoU. SAATHI is an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism in partnership with the Quality Council of India.

4. India – EU Cooperation in Agriculture sector

Virtual meeting between Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar and Member of European Commission- Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, was held on 7th July, 2021.

- During the meeting, strong momentum of India-EU relations was acknowledged.
- They discussed EU Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), recent India market reforms, UN Food System Summit, EU Farm to Fork Strategy and bilateral cooperation.
- They also discussed G20 Agriculture Minister process and fixation of Maximum Residue Limit of Tricyclazole in Indian Basmati Rice by EU.
- Member of European Commission, Agriculture explained recent reforms undertaken by EU in Common Agriculture Policy and EU Farm to Fork Strategy in order to make agriculture green & sustainable.

- EU side also underlined that; EU has set a target of bringing 25 per cent of area in EU under Organic Farming by 2030.
- Indian side explained the scenario of agriculture in India, dominance of small farmers and commitment of Government of India for welfare of farmers in India. Recent initiatives taken by Government to increase farmer's income, launch of Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, agriculture marketing infrastructure for rural areas, scheme of formation of 10000 FPOs were explained to EU.

5. India-Italy Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation

21st Session of India-Italy Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC) was held recently.

- This session was co-chaired by Piyush Goyal, Commerce & Industry Minister and Mr. Luigi Di Maio, Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Italy.
- Both the countries held discussions on bilateral trade & Investment and economic cooperation across the areas of Textile, Food Processing, Railways, Leather, Start-ups and promotion of SMEs. All these sectors play significant role in growth of economy and employment generation.
- Both the ministers also discussed bilateral market access issues and non-tariff barriers in order to facilitate trade & investment.
- They also reviewed the outcomes of India-EU leaders Summit in Porto, Portugal was also reviewed.
- Other issues raised by India were- Mutual recognition of COWIN Vaccine Certificate, opening of Travel restrictions, long duration of Business Visas and Portability

of social security benefits for Indians working in Italy.

6. Nepal, India sign deal for Lower Arun Hydropower project

Nepal has inked a USD 1.3 billion deal with Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) of India to develop a 679-megawatt hydropower project in eastern Nepal.

- This will be the second mega venture in Nepal, undertaken by India.
- It is the single largest foreign investment project.
- It is based on 2017 cost estimates.
- To develop the project, a memorandum of understanding was signed by Chief Executive Officer of Investment Board of Nepal Sushil Bhatta and Chairman & Managing Director of SJVN Nand Lal Sharma in Kathmandu.
- This hydropower project will be developed under build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) model.

7. SCO Dushanbe meet- Highlights

India, during SCO meeting in Dushanbe, has called on members of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to act against terrorism and terror financing.

- Meeting was dominated by deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan.
- Meeting was attended by representatives from countries having observer status with SCO and SCO members.
- External affairs minister of India, S Jaishankar, raised these issues when he joined his counterparts from SCO states.
- Three prominent issues discussed by members were Afghanistan, public health

and economic recovery. Apart from that, issues of combating terrorism & extremism were raised. These issues are key purpose of SCO.

8. Cabinet approves MoU with Russia on coking Coal

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Russia on cooperation in coking Coal. Coking coal is used for Steel making. MoU was signed between Ministry of Steel (India) and Ministry of Energy (Russia).

- MoU will benefit entire steel sector by reducing their input cost.
- It will reduce cost of steel and promote equity & inclusiveness.
- An institutional mechanism for co-operation in coking coal sector will also be provided by MoU.

9. Cabinet approves MoU with Denmark on Health

Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (India) and Ministry of Health (Denmark) on Cooperation in areas of Health and Medicine.

10. Ladakh signs MoU with Sikkim to turn UT organic by 2025

The union territory of Ladakh organic, the administration of Ladakh, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SOCCA).

A tripartite MOU has been signed between Ladakh and SSOCA regarding the implementation of Prampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Mission Organic Development Initiative (MODI) in the

Ladakh region with the aim to convert Ladakh into organic by 2025.

The main objective of this MOU is to get the organic certification after a tie-up with the Government of India.

11. IAHE inks pact with University of New South Wales to set up CATTs in Noida

The Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has inked an agreement with the University of New South Wales, Australia for setting up a Centre for Advanced Transportation Technology and Systems (CATTs) in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

The Agreement was signed in a virtual ceremony in the presence of Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari.

The Agreement is for a project for capacity building, technology transfer and creation of enabling environment for establishment of Centre for Advanced Transportation Technology and Systems in, IAHE.

The University of New South Wales will also deliver a course on smart transport systems and modelling.

The project will help improve the road safety scenario in the country.

12. Dvara E-Dairy partners with IFFCO Tokio General Insurance for AI-led tag

Dvara E-Dairy Solutions, a portfolio company of Dvara Holdings has launched an artificial intelligence (AI) led digital tag 'Surabhi e-Tag' to identify cattle based on muzzle identity.

This will be used for cattle insurance products offered in partnership with IFFCO Tokio General Insurance.

Muzzle images of the cattle are collected through the Surabhi mobile application and stored in hi-resolution images as a unique digital identity.

The artificial intelligence-driven mobile application of Dvara E-Dairy captures muzzle images with the mobile phone, compares the cattle's unique digital identity stored in a secured cloud server and retrieves the results in less than 60 seconds.

Conventional methods like polyurethane ear tags (PU ear tags) can be easily tampered with and are prone to duplication and fraud.

Also, Injectable Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags are considered expensive and require specialized skills.

On the other hand, muzzle printing or nose printing is a unique identifier because it perceives patchy traits on the muzzle of cattle, just like human fingerprints.

Summit and Conferences

1. 7th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium Concludes in France

The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), concluded in France on July 01, 2021. The biennial event was hosted by the French Navy at La Réunion from 28 June to 01 July 2021.

From India, Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy, participated in the inaugural session of the event virtually. France is the current chair of the Symposium, which assumed the Chairmanship on 29 June 2021 for a two-year tenure.

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a series of biennial meetings, held between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region, to enhance maritime cooperation among Navies of the member states, by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues

such as maritime security cooperation, discuss regional maritime issues, and promote friendly relationships.

The first such symposium was held in 2008 with India as host.

The chairmanship and location of the Symposium rotates between the various member states.

2. CoWIN Global Conclave

CoWIN Global Conclave held on July 5, 2021. Prime Minister Narendra Modi share his thoughts at CoWIN Global Conclave.

- India is offering CoWIN platform as digital public good to other countries run their COVID-19 vaccination drives.
- Around 50 countries like Mexico, Canada, Nigeria, Uganda and Panama have shown interest in adopting CoWIN.
- Prime minister has thus directed officials to create an open-source version of platform and provide it to any country that wants it for free.

About CoWIN Global Conclave

- It is a joint initiative by Union ministries of health, external affairs and the NHA.
- This virtual conclave inaugurated by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.
- It witnessed participation from health & technology experts who will represent countries from worldwide.
- Conclave organised with the aim of sharing India's experience with respect to universal vaccination in order to fight COVID-19 through Co-WIN.

3. CII organised Indo Pacific Business Summit

First edition of Indo Pacific Business Summit is being organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with External Affairs Ministry. It was inaugurated on July 6, 2021.

Key Points

This event witnessed the participation from Ambassadors and High Commissioners of various countries across Indo Pacific.

Secretary (East) in External Affairs Ministry, Riva Ganguly Das addressed the summit and underlined promotion of trade facilitation in Indo-Pacific by improving cross border linkages and trade infrastructure.

She highlighted importance of a free, open, & rules-based Indo-Pacific in facilitating trade & connectivity across the region.

She also highlighted initiatives undertaken by India including building up of cross border linkages & infrastructure, promotion of digital connectivity, Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.

Significance of Indo-Pacific

Idea of Indo-Pacific as a single strategic space is an outcome of China's growing influence in Indian Ocean region. It signifies interconnectedness of Indian & Pacific Oceans and importance of oceans in security & commerce.

4. Rajasthan to develop Tiger Corridor connecting Three Tiger Reserves

Rajasthan government has planned to develop a tiger corridor connecting Ranthambore tiger reserve, Ramgarh Vishdhari tiger reserve and Mukundra tiger reserve.

New Ramgarh Vishdhari sanctuary

Centre government has its nod for creation of Ramgarh Vishdhari sanctuary, recently.

This sanctuary will link Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Northeast side and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve on southern side.

Proposed site for the sanctuary is in Bundi District of Rajasthan. It will connect Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Sawai Madhopur district and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota district.

5. India-UK First Financial Markets Dialogue

UK-India Financial Markets Dialogue (FMD) held first virtual meeting on July 8, 2021 in order to strengthen bilateral financial connections.

UK-India Financial Markets Dialogue

Government-to-government conversations took place during Dialogue in a bid to increase cooperation on four major themes:

1. Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City,
2. Banking and payments,
3. Insurance, and
4. Capital markets.

Meeting was chaired by senior officials from UK Treasury and Indian Ministry of Finance.

Representatives from independent British and Indian regulatory organisations also took part.

Financial Cooperation is a significant pillar of 2030 Roadmap adopted by both the countries and India-UK Financial Market Dialogue is the key elements of this Financial Cooperation.

Both the countries agreed that, there is significant scope to strengthened financial services cooperation them.

6. India & Russia to hold 2+2 dialogue

External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar recently held productive talks with the Russian counterpart,

Sergey Lavrov. Both sides reviewed the progress on broad-ranging cooperation between both the nations on nuclear, space, energy and defence sectors.

- Both leaders discussed global and regional issues such as Afghanistan, Iran and Syria.
- According to S. Jaishankar, even though so many things are changing worldwide, India's relationship with Russia has remained steady and contributed to security, global peace & stability.
- He also appreciated Russia's support to India during second wave of covid-19 pandemic. India has become a partner of Russia to produce and use Sputnik V vaccine.
- They also reviewed the progress in different dimensions of our broad-ranging cooperation.
- They agreed upon holding 2+2 dialogue of foreign and defence ministers.
- Both the leaders also discussed connectivity, especially on North-South corridor.

7. India chairs BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues

From 12 to 14 July, 2021 the BRICS meeting on Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held.

- During the three day CGETI meeting, the BRICS members deliberated on the proposals which were circulated by India. These proposals were mainly for increasing and strengthening the intra-BRICS trade and cooperation was said by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Proposals made by India

The proposals put forward by India are

- Cooperation of BRICS regarding Multilateral Trading System.
- A framework to ensure Consumer Protection in E-Commerce.
- For SPS/TBT measures, Non-Tariff Measures resolution mechanism.
- Working Mechanism on Phytosanitary and Sanitary.
- A Framework of BRICS regarding Cooperation in the Professional Services.

Outcome of the meeting

All the BRICS Members have agreed upon India's proposals and seeks to finalise them before the BRICS Trade Ministers' meeting, on 3rd September, 2021 and will be chaired by Piyush Goyal, Indian Commerce and Industry Minister.

The members also agreed to three more of India's proposals which were put forward to strengthen economy and trade.

8. G20 Environment Ministers' Meeting 2021

The G20 Environment Ministers' Meeting 2021 is one of the ministerial meetings organized as part of the G20 Leaders Summit 2021, which will be hosted by Italy in October 2021.

The 2021 G20, under the Italian Presidency, will focus on three broad, interconnected pillars of action: People, Planet, Prosperity.

Within these pillars, the G20 aims to take the lead in ensuring a swift international response to the COVID-19 pandemic – able to provide equitable, worldwide access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines – while building up resilience to future health-related shocks.

The G20 is made up of 19 countries and the European Union. The 19 countries are Argentina,

Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, and the US.

9. 11th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation meeting held

On July 21, 2021, while addressing the 11th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) meeting, S Jaishankar India's External Affairs Minister has called for a "collective and collaborative" response to effectively deal with the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, saying that national boundaries are not respected by this virus.

- India considers the Mekong region of great importance and hence seeks a multi-dimensional engagement with Mekong countries.
- India wants to identify newer areas of cooperation and doing so will broaden the partnership of the countries.
- Addressing the meeting, S Jaishankar has said that India wants to promote better connectivity in this region through economic, digital and people-to-people connectivity.
- In the meeting finding ways to the fight against the pandemic through better MGC partnership was reflected upon. S Jaishankar said that the partner nations need to work together in addressing the crisis.
- India said that Mekong Ganga Cooperation stands on a strong foundation based on shared historical and geographical ties and cooperation among the countries should be improved to bring progress and prosperity.

10. Italy hosts G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting

On July 29 and 30, the first G20 Culture Ministers Meeting was held in Rome, Italy. This was a major two-day event that took place during the Italian G20 presidency. The Colosseum and Palazzo Barberini hosted the G20 Summit in Rome.

- The meeting began on Thursday on the stage of the Colosseum. The culture ministers of the 20 largest economies in the world and 40 high-level cultural delegations attended the meeting.
- The meeting was attended by the Italian Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, the Minister of Culture, Dario Franceschini, and the Director General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay.
- OECD, UNESCO, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Council of Europe, ICOM, ICCROM and ICOMOS, Interpol, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the World Customs Organization (WCO) took part in the meetings.
- On Friday, July 30, conference was held at Palazzo Barberini, the museum houses the collection of ancient Italian art and the museum will be closed to the public on July 30.

Discussion on Key Topics

The key topics which were up for discussion in Rome were:

- Protect and promote the cultural and creative sector as an engine for balanced growth which is also sustainable.
- Protect cultural heritage from risks, including natural disasters, environmental degradation and climate change, sabotage and looting, and illegal traffic in cultural property.

- Promote digital and technological transformation in the cultural and creative fields.
- Develop the capacity through training to face the complexity of the contemporary world and the challenges of the cultural sector.
- Joint Statement on Climate Change through Culture.

New Projects, Schemes etc.

1. Andhra CM launches 'YSR Bima' scheme

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched the 'YSR Bima' scheme with new guidelines, where the government itself will directly pay the insurance amount to the family of the deceased to make the insurance claims easier.

In order to support 1.32 lakh families through the YSR Bima scheme, the State government allocated Rs 750 crores for the year 2021-22. In the last two years, the State government had spent Rs 1307 crore for YSR Bima.

2. Agri Ministry launches Crop Insurance Awareness Campaign

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar, has launched the Crop Insurance Awareness Campaign for Fasal Bima Yojana. It was launched during Crop Insurance Week.

- Fasal Bima Yojana was launched with the aim of providing security cover to each farmer.
- Minister also announced that, this scheme has achieved milestone of 95 thousand crore of claims paid to farmers.
- According to minister, state governments and insurance companies played an

important role in implementing this Scheme.

- In last four years, premium of 17 thousand crore rupees was deposited by farmers, against which about 95 thousand crore rupees have been provided as claims.
- On the occasion, he also flagged off IEC vans. These vans would continue to engage farmers on Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana throughout crop insurance week.

Aim of the campaign

This campaign aims to bring stories of beneficiary farmers through videos and photo stories on social media. Stories of those farmers would be shared who have not only benefited from this scheme but helped entire farming community through their thought-leadership.

3. NIPUN Bharat Initiative

Union government is set to launch a new scheme called “NIPUN Bharat Initiative” on July 5, 2021. It will be launched to improve numeracy, foundational reading, and understanding for early-stage students.

About ‘NIPUN Bharat Mission’

- NIPUN stands for “National Initiative for Proficiency in reading with Understanding and Numeracy”.
- This scheme would provide an enabling environment in a bid to ensure universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy.
- It will ensure that every child achieves desired learning competencies in reading, writing, and numeracy by end of Grade 3, by the year 2026-27.
- This initiative will be a part of school education programme, Samagra Shiksha.

4. Ayurveda dataset on Clinical Trials Registry-India Portal

Ayurveda dataset on Clinical Trial Registry-India (CTRI) Portal will be launched on July 5, 2021 by Ayush Minister Shri Kiren Rijiju.

- Launch of CTRI Portal marks a significant step towards worldwide visibility with respect to Ayurveda based clinical trials.
- Ayurveda Dataset of CTRI was jointly developed by ICMR and CCRAS, Ministry of Ayush.
- On the occasion, four more portals namely AMAR, SAHI, e-MEDHA and RMIS will be launched, all of them have been developed by Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS).

What is Clinical Trial Registry-India (CTRI)?

CTRI is primary register of Clinical Trials under the International Clinical Trials Registry Platform (ICTRP) by World Health Organisation (WHO). Creation of Ayurveda dataset in CTRI facilitates will make use of Ayurveda terminologies to record clinical study meta data on the basis of Ayurveda interventions. Till date, clinical trials in Ayurveda were dependent on terminology borrowed from modern medicine. With this portal and joint efforts of ICMR and CCRAS, Ayurvedic terminology has become part of CTRI.

5. DPIIT starts project on Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has launched a project on Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC).

Aim of ONDC project

Project on Open Network for Digital Commerce was launched with the aim of promoting open networks developed on open-sourced methodology.

Open network will be developed using open specifications & open network protocols independent of any specific platform.

6. GoI launches mobile app ‘Matsya Setu’ for Indian aqua farmers

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Giriraj Singh has launched the Online Course Mobile App “Matsya Setu”.

The app was developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar, with the funding support of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad.

The online course app aims to disseminate the latest freshwater aquaculture technologies to the aqua farmers of the country.

7. Ministry of Defence implements SPARSH System

Ministry of Defence has implemented SPARSH (System for Pension Administration Raksha), an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.

This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.

A Pensioner Portal is available for pensioners to view their pension-related information, access services and register complaints for redressal of grievances, if any, relating to their pension matters.

SPARSH envisages the establishment of Service Centres to provide last-mile connectivity to pensioners who may be unable to directly access the SPARSH portal for any reason.

In addition to several offices of the Defence Accounts Department, which are already functioning as Service Centres for pensioners, the

two largest banks dealing with defence pensioners – State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) – have been co-opted as Service Centres.

8. GoI sets up 25-member development council for cement industry

The central government has set up a 25-member development council for the cement industry under Dalmia Bharat Group CMD, Puneet Dalmia.

The council will suggest ways to eliminate waste, obtain maximum production, improve quality, reduce costs and promote standardization of products. Dalmia is the chairman of the council.

Its members include Shree Cement Ltd MD HM Bangur, The India Cements Ltd Executive President Rakesh Singh; Birla Corporation Limited CEO Pracheta Majumdar; J.K. Cement Ltd Deputy Managing Director Madhavkrishna Singhania, and JSW Cement Ltd CEO Nilesh Narwekar.

9. “COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam” Campaign Launched

Tribal Affairs Minister, Arjun Munda, launched “COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan aur Uddyam” campaign.

- This campaign will help in beating “infodemic” against coronavirus vaccine and myths, rumours, disinformation & misinformation that are adding to infodemic.
- It focusses on reassurance, pride & self-efficacy and promotes ‘Livelihoods with Health’ in tribal areas.
- It also tracks activities of Van Dhan Vikas Kendra (VDVK) and accelerates COVID-19 vaccination pace among tribals engaged in procurement, value addition & marketing

of handlooms, handicrafts & forest produces.

- Campaign is being launched in partnership with UNICEF & WHO.
- It seeks to connect over 50 lakh tribals by emphasizing that, COVID-19 vaccination is free, available at nearby centres and it protects people from hospitalization cost & death as well as helps to carry forward livelihood activities.

10. 'School Innovation Ambassador Training Program' launched

Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and tribal affairs minister Arjun Munda jointly launched 'School Innovation Ambassador Training Program' on July 16, 2021.

- This Programme will provide training to teachers from Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)- affiliated schools including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and Eklavya Residential Model Schools in India.
- Similar programme is run by AICTE for teachers in higher education.
- Teachers will be trained in online mode only for duration of two months.
- Training will be provided in five modules to encourage innovation and creativity among school students.
- Five modules include- entrepreneurship, innovation, intellectual property rights, product development, design thinking and idea generation etc.
- 40 trainers have been tasked with the work to train teachers.

11. IOC to build India's first green hydrogen plant at Mathura

IOC, India's largest oil firm will build the country's first 'green hydrogen' plant at its refinery in Mathura. This decision has been undertaken with the view of preparing for a future to cater to the growing demands cleaner forms of energy.

- This project will be the India's first ever green hydrogen unit.
- Earlier, 'grey hydrogen' production projects have been announced making use of fossil fuels such as natural gas.
- Several hydrogen production units are being planned to be set up by IOC.
- With Hydrogen fuel cell powered buses are plying on the road it will be essential to set up hydrogen power plants.

12. NMGC approves new projects for rejuvenation of 6 rivers in Uttarakhand

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in its 36th Executive Committee has approved new projects for the rejuvenation of six rivers in Uttarakhand.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), there are a total of nine polluted stretches in Uttarakhand and six of them are in the Udham Singh Nagar district on various tributaries or small rivers such as Bhela, Dhela, Kichha, Nandor, Pilankha and Kosi.

The projects shall cover the six polluted river stretches in the Kumaon region. Out of the rest three polluted stretches, the project of Ganga at Jagjeetpur, Haridwar has already been commissioned and on the remaining two, Namami Gange projects are already under execution.

13. Government announces portal to register children orphaned by COVID-19

Details of any child orphaned due to COVID-19 can be shared with the government via a web portal and

the child will have a claim to benefits under the PM CARES scheme. www.pmcaredforchildren.in is the website through which details can be uploaded.

- On July 15, 2021, the government has introduced this portal for all the States and Union Territories of the country.
- Through this portal any citizen can inform the administration regarding the children who are eligible for receiving support under this scheme.
- In the month of May the Prime Minister had approved a scheme under the PM CARES fund for all those children who have lost both or lone surviving parent or an adoptive parent or a legal guardian due to COVID-19 disease.
- Under this scheme a corpus of Rs 10 lakh to each child will be provided when he or she turns 18 years old.
- A monthly stipend will be provided to the child from the age of 18 for the next five years to help them with their higher education.
- When the child attains the age of 23, they will receive the lump sum corpus amount at one go.
- Under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme the government of India will also help with their school education and provide those children with a health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh.

14. Amit Shah launches Green Sohra Afforestation Campaign at Sohra (Cherrapunji)

On 25th July, 2021 the Green Sohra Afforestation Campaign at Sohra (Cherrapunji) was launched by Home Minister Amit Shah. “Evergreen Northeast”, was the slogan given for this campaign highlighting

the importance of tree plantation and afforestation. This campaign will be run by the Assam Rifles and the Meghalaya.

15. Govt. proposes to set up National Research Foundation (NRF)

On 26th July, 2021, Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education announced that the government of India is planning to set up a National Research Foundation (NRF) with the primary aim to strengthen the country’s research ecosystem.

The National Research Foundation (NRF) will be functioning as a structure that will connect the industry, academia and the R&D of the country. One of the primary aims of setting up the NRF is the facilitation and growth of research capabilities and outcomes in those institutions (colleges, universities, etc) where research capacity is currently developing. The National Research Foundation (NRF) will also support and fund multi-institutional, large scale, multi-investigator, high impact, multi-nation or interdisciplinary projects which will be done in association or collaboration with the relevant departments or ministries as well as governmental and non-governmental industries of the country.

16. MP government made ‘Devaranya’ scheme to promote Ayurveda

In order to promote AYUSH in Madhya Pradesh and to link it with employment, the government has made the ‘Devaranya’ scheme.

The scheme has been made to provide employment to the people living in the tribal areas of the state.

A complete value chain for the production of AYUSH medicines will be developed in the state through Devaranya Yojana. Self-help groups will also play an important role in this work.

For this, medicinal plants should be cultivated in the beautiful plains of the villages. AYUSH and tourism will be brought together.

17. AICTE Creating Database to Promote Higher Education in Regional Languages: PM

All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has announced that it is creating a database of resources so that colleges can offer more programmes in the regional languages of the country. AICTE has also developed a tool to translate the engineering content into 11 languages of the country.

- This step has been taken so as to promote regional languages in the field of technical education.
- In eight states, 14 engineering colleges are going to start engineering studies in five Indian languages. They are Bengali, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, and Marathi.
- The benefit of teaching in the regional languages will open up access to higher education for the students who are from low-income, rural families. These students want and are capable of learning, but not being fluent in English hinders their learning process.

18. Intel, Education Ministry, CBSE launch 'AI For All' drive

Intel has collaborated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Ministry of Education to announce the launch of the 'AI For All' initiative. This initiative has been launched with the aim of creating a basic understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) for everyone in the country

- Emerging technologies such as AI plays a crucial role for economic growth.
- NITI Aayog's National Strategy for AI focuses on leveraging AI for inclusive growth and also to develop AI solutions for the various societal needs.

- The National Education Policy 2020 of India also emphasizes in preparing the students of the country for an AI driven economy.

- India is striving to build a digital-ready foundation, and to achieve this it is essential to focus on demystifying AI so that it can be used by a broader section of the population and will also help them to understand about how AI can impact their lives in a positive manner.

19. 'Krishikarna' Project of Kerala

Mini polyhouse which is a kind of greenhouse will be built under the "Krishikarna" project, launched in Kerala, a joint initiative of Society for Advancement In Agriculture, Horticulture And Allied Sectors (SAAHAS), the Sustainability Foundation and Qore3 Innovations.

- Although SAHS, a government-recognized cooperative, is involved in promoting agricultural and gardening practices, the Sustainability Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in Thiruvananthapuram, promotes sustainable development.
- Qore3 Innovations is a start-up company that claims to provide "end-to-end support" for farms.
- Under Krishikarna, a small polyhouse will be built on a 2.5 cent land.
- The total estimated cost of each plastic house is Rs 2,35,000.
- Aneesh N Raj won Kerala's Best Hi-Tech Farmer Award and is also an agronomist of Qore3 who is implementing Krishikarna's innovations.
- Unprecedented climate changes have had a negative impact on Kerala's agriculture.

Hence, it is necessary to promote high-tech agricultural practices so that farmers can farm all year

- Qore3 has established more than 30 projects successful high-tech farms in Kerala.

20. 780 New Air Traffic Routes Approved under UDAN

The Government of India announced that it has approved 780 new air traffic routes under the UDAN regional air connectivity scheme.

- Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia informed the Lok Sabha that after the launch of the scheme, 359 routes has been opened in the country.
- 59 new airports have been established under the UDAN scheme.
- The Minister stated that with the increase in civil aviation activities, cargo handling services have also developed by leaps and bounds.
- During the Covid pandemic, cargo handling via airlines also increased from 2% to 19%.
- The number of cargo operators in the country has been increased to 28.

21. Govt announces 27% reservation for OBCs, 10% quota for EWS in medical seats

The centre has announced 27% reservation for OBCs and a 10% quota for students from the economically weaker sections (EWS) for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental courses under the All-India Quota (AIQ) scheme.

Under the AIQ scheme, 15% of seats at the UG level and 50% seats at the PG level are kept domicile free in government medical and dental colleges against which students from other states to

are offered admission while the rest of the seats are kept only for students from within the state.

This will immensely help thousands of our youth every year get better opportunities and create a new paradigm of social justice in our country.

A statement by the government said that the decision would benefit nearly 1500 OBC students in MBBS and 2500 OBC students in PG while it will also impact around 550 EWS students in MBBS and around 1000 EWS students in PG medicine.

22. Kerala police launched 'Pink Protection' project for women safety

The Kerala Police launched a new initiative called the Pink Protection project for the protection of women in public, private and digital spaces.

The Pink Protection project aims to prevent dowry-related issues, cyber-bullying & humiliation in public places. It has 10 components, one of which is activating the existing Pink Police Patrol system, named Pink Janamaithri Beat.

They will collect information from panchayat members, neighbours and other locals and hand it over to the Station House Officers for further action.

The Pink Beat system, in which specially trained women police officers have been deployed, will be present at Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and private buses and in front of schools, colleges and other public places including bus stops.

Pink control rooms have been set up in all 14 districts to coordinate the activities.

The Pink Shadow Patrol team will also be deployed to detect the presence of anti-socials in crowded areas and to take action.

A bullet patrol team of woman police officers called “Pink Romeo” was also launched as part of the project.

23. PM Modi launches Academic Bank of Credit and Artificial Intelligence programme

PM Modi has launched multiple educational initiatives including the Academic Bank of Credit that will provide multiple entries and exit options for students in Higher education.

Academic Bank of Credit is envisaged as a digital bank that holds the credit earned by a student in any course.

Academic Bank of Credit is a major instrument for facilitating multidisciplinary and holistic education and multiple entry and exit in higher education.

Academic Bank of Credit and the Artificial Intelligence programme to make the youth future-oriented and open the way for an AI-driven economy.

24. Rajasthan Government launches ‘Mission Niriyatak Bano’

The Rajasthan government’s industries department and the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIICO) have launched the ‘Mission Niriyatak Bano’ campaign to promote aspiring exporters in the state.

The campaign is aimed at registering and handholding the local traders willing to expand their business to foreign countries, in six steps.

This shall cover assistance from training, securing necessary documentation, registration in Rajasthan Export Promotion Council and even support in exports and trade operations.

The state government in consideration of the challenges of small businesses had waived off the

need for several state-level clearances for the initial three years of upcoming businesses.

The exporter assistance campaign shall be another step in helping the local business develop understanding towards the procedures and increase their business.

25. Ministry of Earth Sciences launches ESSDP (Earth System Science Data Portal)

On its 15th Foundation Day the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched Earth System Science Data Portal (ESSDP)

- Dr Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of World Meteorological Organization (WMO), gave a lecture during this event.
- A report on ‘WMO, Disasters, Climate and COP-26’ was discussed along with the issues relating to climate change.

ESSDP (Earth System Science Data Portal)

Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of the Ministry of Earth Sciences launched the MoES-ESSDP (Earth System Science Data Portal). It is an integrated digital web portal of the MoES institutes. This web portal will make the data regarding the various themes of earth system science available for public usage. This is available at <https://incois.gov.in/essdp> and it has been developed by using the latest technological tools. This portal has been aligned with the initiative, Digital India, of the Government of India which aims to transform India into a digitally empowered economy and society. This portal will facilitate in the retrieval and search of science data on earth system such as ocean, atmosphere, geosciences, poles, and seismology for benefit of the society.

Important Dates & Days

1. National Postal Worker Day: 01 July

The National Postal Worker Day is marked every year on July 1 globally in recognition of the contribution made by postal workers in our society. The day is a unique opportunity to say ‘thank you not only to postmen but also to all delivery personnel, as online shopping has become a lifeline for many of us.

The day was initiated by a popular postal service provider from Seattle, the United States of America in 1997 to felicitate and honour the co-postal workers for their dedication.

2. National Chartered Accountants Day: 01 July

National Chartered Accountants Day or CA Day is celebrated on July 1 every year. This day is celebrated to commemorate the finding of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) by the parliament of India in 1949.

Every year on the day of the establishment of the ICAI, CA Day is celebrated to honour the Chartered Accountant.

3. National Doctors’ Day: 01 July

The National Doctors’ Day is organized on 01 July annually in India by the Indian Medical Association (IMA).

The day is celebrated to honour the great physicians and help us understand the importance of doctors in our lives and value them, to offer them our respects by commemorating one of their greatest representatives.

The day commemorates the birth anniversary of the second Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy who was born on July 1, 1882, and died on the same date in 1962.

4. International Day of Cooperatives: 3 July

The United Nations celebrates the International Day of Cooperatives every year on the first Saturday of July to increase awareness of cooperatives.

In the year 2021, the International Day of Cooperatives will be celebrated on 3rd July with a focus on the contribution of cooperatives to combating climate change.

This July 3rd, the International Day of Cooperatives (#CoopsDay) will be celebrated as “Rebuild better together”.

Cooperatives around the world will showcase how they are meeting the COVID-19 pandemic crisis with solidarity and resilience and offering communities a people-centred and environmentally just recovery.

5. World Population Day celebrated on 11th July

World Population Day is observed globally on 11th July every year. This day is observed to raise awareness among people about the impact of a growing population and issues including gender equality, the importance of family planning, poverty, maternal health, human rights, etc.

This year theme of World Population Day 2021: “the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on fertility”.

In 1989, World Population Day was established by the Governing Council of the United National Development Programme as an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987.

6. World Malala Day: 12 July

The United Nations has declared 12th July as World Malala Day to honour the young activist, Malala Yousafzai.

Malala Day is commemorated, the birthday of Malala Yousafzai to honour women and children’s rights around the world.

On October 9, 2012, Malala was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen after she publicly advocated for the education of girls.

Despite the attack, Malala soon returned to the public eye, fiercer in her views than earlier and continued her advocacy for gender rights.

She founded the Malala Fund, a non-profit organisation to help young girls go to school and also co-authored a book titled "I Am Malala", an international bestseller.

7. World Day for International Justice: 17 July

The World Day for International Justice, (also known as Day of International Criminal Justice or International Justice Day), is celebrated globally on July 17 to support and recognize the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The day marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute on July 17, 1998, the treaty that created the International Criminal Court. It came about when 120 states adopted a statute in Rome.

It was known as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, All the countries that agreed to adopt the statute were accepting the jurisdiction of the ICC.

8. Nelson Mandela International Day celebrated on 18 July

The United Nations observes 18 July every year as Nelson Mandela International Day. The day acknowledges Nelson Mandela's contribution to the struggle for democracy internationally and the promotion of a culture of peace throughout the world.

Nelson Mandela Day is an occasion for all to take action and inspire change. On 18 July 2009, the first Mandela Day was observed in New York. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a

resolution on 10 November 2009 declaring 18 July as "Nelson Mandela International Day".

This day marks his contribution to peace through his active involvement in resolving conflicts, promoting human rights, international democracy and reconciliation and addressing racial issues.

9. International Chess Day: 20 July

The International Chess Day is celebrated annually on July 20, since 1966, to celebrate one of the most ancient and most popular games in history that promote fairness, equality, mutual respect and understanding among nations.

It was on this day that the International Chess Federation (FIDE) was founded, in 1924. The idea to celebrate the day as the international chess day was proposed by UNESCO.

Invented in India in the fifth century, this board game was originally named "Chaturanga". Chess is likely one of the oldest games of this era. After the development of the game in India, it eventually spread to Persia.

10. Science Exploration Day: 20 July

Science Exploration Day (also called Moon Day) is marked every year on 20 July. It was on this day in 1969 that Neil Armstrong and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin became the first humans to land on the Moon's surface.

The origins of Space Exploration Day date back to man first walking on the moon, with the day itself first observed to commemorate this historic event during events held in the early 1970s.

Neil Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the moon's surface. The Armstrong- Aldrin duo spent 21.5 hours on the surface of the moon out of which they spent 2.5 hours outside of their capsules.

To commemorate their achievement, the day was declared a holiday in 1984 by the then President of the United States, Ronald Reagan.

11. World Brain Day: July 22

The World Federation of Neurology (WFN) celebrates World Brain Day on every July 22, focusing on a different theme each year.

Many public awareness programs and educational & social media activities are promoting the movement to stop multiple sclerosis, commencing July 22, 2021, & continuing until October 2022. The theme for this World Brain Day is “Stop Multiple Sclerosis”.

World Brain Day advocates early diagnosis of this condition that can help improve the quality of life of the patient.

12. National Broadcasting Day celebrated on 23rd July

National Broadcasting Day is observed on 23rd July every year, to celebrate the radio, which has been an important part of people’s life in India, both as an easy medium of entertainment along with the news.

On this day in 1927, the first-ever radio broadcast in the country went on the air from the Bombay Station under the Indian Broadcasting Company.

The first radio broadcast was made on July 23, 1927, from Bombay Station. The station was then owned by a private company called the Indian Broadcasting Company.

The Government took over the broadcasting on April 1, 1930, and renamed it as Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS).

It was initially on an experimental basis. Later it permanently came under government control in 1932.

On 8th of June, 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Service became All India Radio. Currently, AIR is one of the largest public broadcasting organizations in the world.

13. Aaykar Diwas (Income Tax Day) celebrated by CBDT on July 24

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) observed the 161st Income Tax Day (also known as Aaykar Diwas) on 24 July 2021.

In India, the Income Tax Day is celebrated every year on July 24, as it was on 24 July 1980 that Income Tax was introduced for the first time in India by Sir James Wilson.

The purpose of this tax was to compensate for the losses incurred by the British regime during the first war of independence against British Rule in 1857. July 24 was first celebrated as Income Tax day in 2010.

14. Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrated on 26th July

Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated every year on July 26 since the year 1999, to mark India’s victory over Pakistan in the Kargil conflict. This year nation is celebrating the 22 years of victory in the Kargil war.

It was in 1999 that a high altitude mountain war broke out along the peaks of Kargil near the Line of Control, the de-facto border that divides Kashmir between the two nations.

The Kargil War was fought between May-July of 1999 in the Kargil district of Jammu and Kashmir along the Line of Control (LoC) in which India got the victory.

The Kargil war was fought for more than 60 days, ended on 26 July.

July 26 is celebrated as “Kargil Vijay Diwas” every year to mark the successful completion of

“Operation Vijay” that ended the 3-month war along the Line of Control.

The operation White Sea was also launched during the Kargil war, 1999.

15. World Drowning Prevention Day: 25 July

World Drowning Prevention Day, declared through the April 2021 UN General Assembly Resolution “Global drowning prevention”, is held annually on 25 July.

This global advocacy event serves as an opportunity to highlight the tragic and profound impact of drowning on families and communities and to offer life-saving solutions to prevent it.

16. World Hepatitis Day is celebrated on 28th July

World Health Organization is observed on 28th July every year as “World Hepatitis Day”.

This day is celebrated to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer.

This year theme of World Hepatitis Day 2021 is ‘Hepatitis Can’t Wait’.

The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered the hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.

There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D and E. Together, hepatitis B and C are the most common cause of death, with 1.3 million lives lost each year.

17. World Nature Conservation Day: 28th July

World Nature Conservation Day is observed on 28th July every year.

The main objective of celebrating this day is to raise awareness about protecting nature and adopting best practices for conserving our natural resources.

The Earth is supplied a limited amount of properties that we all rely upon each day like water, air, soil and trees.

18. International Tiger Day 2021

Global Tiger Day or International Tiger Day is observed on 29th July every year to raise awareness about the declining population of wild cats and making efforts to conserve them.

The goal of the day is to promote a global system for protecting the natural habitats of tigers and to raise public awareness and support for tiger conservation issues. This year marks the 11th International Tiger Day.

The theme/Slogan for the 2021 International Tiger Day celebration is “Their Survival is in our hands”.

The Global Tiger Day came into being during the signing of the Saint Petersburg declaration by 13 tiger range countries in 2010 in Russia.

The governments of these tiger range countries had resolved to encourage the conservation, protecting natural habitats and double the number of tigers by 2022.

19. World Day Against Trafficking in Persons: 30th July

United Nations observes 30 July every year as World Day Against Trafficking in Persons.

In 2013, the General Assembly designated July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons to raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights.

The 2021 theme for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is Victims’ Voices Lead the Way.

This year's theme puts victims of human trafficking at the centre of the campaign and will highlight the importance of listening to and learning from survivors of human trafficking.

International

1. Joe Biden signs three Bills to change Trump-era rules

President Joe Biden has signed three separate bills on June 30, 2021 that dismantle part of Donald Trump era.

- These laws,
 1. Block payday lenders from avoiding caps on interest rates,
 2. Restrict climate-warming greenhouse gas emissions from oil & gas drilling and
 3. End rules on how Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) settles claims.
- Each of the rules signifies the return to common sense and a commitment to the common good.
- As per Biden administration, EEOC claims process had increased the risk of retaliation as it made easier for employers to demand identities of those with information about unlawful discrimination.
- Three bills were passed by House and Senate through Congressional Review Act. It allows Congress to overturn certain regulations that were in place for a short time.

2. China is certified malaria-free by WHO

Following a 70-year effort, China has been awarded a malaria-free certification from WHO – a notable feat for a country that reported 30 million cases of the disease annually in the 1940s.

China is the first country in the WHO Western Pacific Region to be awarded a malaria-free certification in more than 3 decades. Other countries in the region that have achieved this status include Australia (1981), Singapore (1982) and Brunei Darussalam (1987).

Globally, 40 countries and territories have been granted a malaria-free certification from WHO – including, most recently, El Salvador (2021), Algeria (2019), Argentina (2019), Paraguay (2018) and Uzbekistan (2018).

3. Chinese astronauts complete First Spacewalk at New Space Station

Chinese astronauts have successfully performed China's first tandem spacewalk on July 4, 2021. They worked for seven hours outside new Tiangong station in orbit around the Earth.

Key Points

- Construction of Tiangong is a major step in China's ambitious space programme. It has seen nation land a rover on Mars and send probes to Moon.
- Three astronauts were blasted off in June 2021 to become station's first crew.
- Astronauts would remain there for three months in the mission which is being dubbed as China's longest crewed mission to date.
- Two of the astronauts exited the station for some seven hours of work in first spacewalk at Tiangong.
- They returned safely. Safe return of astronauts Liu Boming and Tang Hongbo to Tianhe core module highlights complete success of first spacewalk in space station constructed by China.

4. China bans tallest skyscrapers following safety concerns

China has banned construction of tallest skyscrapers following the safety concerns over quality of some projects. China had constructed maximum number of tallest buildings in 2019 but now it has banned to ensure safety.

- As per National Development and Reform Commission, this ban covers buildings taller than 500 metres.
- Local authorities will also require to strictly limit building of towers that are 250m tall.
- According to the commission, construction of buildings taller than 100m should strictly match the scale of city where they will be constructed along with its fire rescue capability.
- Commission has imposed an “in-principle” ban on new towers over 500m in 2020.

5. World’s tallest sandcastle built in Denmark

World’s tallest sandcastle was built in Denmark. It has established new Guinness World Record of 21.16 metres. Denmark’s new sandcastle is 3.5 meter taller than earlier record of 17.66-meter set by Germany in 2019.

6. Jewish state law upheld by Israeli court

Supreme Court of Israel upheld a controversial law on July 8, 2021. This law defines the country as ‘nation state of Jewish people’.

- This law also rejects claims by opponents regarding discrimination against minorities.
- Israeli court acknowledged shortcomings in Nation State Law. However, according to court, law “did not negate Israel’s democratic character”.

Opponents’ view

- Critiques of 2018 law claimed that, legislation only enshrined Israel’s existing Jewish character.
- They are of the view that, law downgrades status of Israel’s Arab minority that account for 20% of Israel’s population.

Arab Citizens in Israel

Arab citizens in Israel have right to vote and are well-represented in many professions. However, they suffer from widespread discrimination in areas like housing and job market.

Jewish state law of 2018

2018 law was approved by Knesset (Israel’s parliament). This law defines Israel as “nation-state” of Jewish people. As per the law, “fulfilling the right to national self-determination in Israel is unique to Jewish people.” The law descended Arabic from an official state language to one with “special status.

Implications of Law

Passage of law prompted vocal opposition from country’s Arab minority, especially among Druze Israelis, serving in military. Several Arab rights groups and civil society organizations appealed in court to strike down this law.

Court’s view

Court is of the view that, equal rights are granted to all citizens of state, including minority groups. Right to national self-determination does not reject recognized personal or cultural rights. According to court, law did not detract from status of Arabic language.

7. Sher Bahadur Deuba to be Nepal’s new PM

Supreme Court of Nepal has passed an order to appoint Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister Nepal within two days.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari had dissolved 275-member lower house on May 22, 2021 for second time in five months on the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli. She also announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19. Election Commission had also announced recently the schedule for mid-term elections despite uncertainty over polls.

8. China drafts cyber-security industry plan

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has drafted a cyber-security industry plan.

- It is a three-year action plan to develop China's cyber-security industry.
- China's cyber-security is estimated to be worth more than 250 billion yuan (\$38.6 billion) by 2023.
- This draft plan was formulated as Chinese authorities have step up efforts towards draft regulations for a better govern data storage, data transfer and personal data privacy.
- This draft plan came in the backdrop of a regulatory probe of Chinese ride-hailing giant Didi Chuxing for violating data privacy laws.

9. China's vaccine makers sign COVAX agreements

Two major COVID-19 vaccine makers of China have signed agreements to provide 550 million doses to COVAX facility.

- Gavi announced to buy 110 million doses from Sinopharm and Sinovac between July and October 2021.
- It will buy 440 million more doses by mid-2022.
- These vaccines were approved by World Health Organization for emergency use.

10. US approves Blue Origin for Human Space Travel

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved "Blue Origin license" in order to carry humans on New Shepard launch system into space.

- Former Amazon.com Chief Executive, Jeff Bezos, is to fly to space on July 20 through Blue Origin's maiden crewed voyage.
- Blue Origin is authorized to carry humans while FAA license is valid through August.
- Blue Origin is approved to conduct these missions from its Launch Site One facility in Texas.
- This flight is coming after space-tourism rival Virgin Galactic successfully sent its crew to the edge of space.

11. What is 'Right to repair' movement?

United State President Joe Biden has signed an executive order for Federal Trade Commission to curb restrictions imposed by manufacturers limiting consumers' ability to repair their gadgets on their own terms. Before US, United Kingdom had also introduced right-to-repair rules making it easier to buy & repair daily-use gadgets like TVs and washing machines.

What is right to repair movement?

The right to repair movement traces its origin to dawn of computer era in 1950s. Since then, activists and organisations worldwide have been calling for

right of consumers to be able to repair their own electronics and other products under the 'right to repair movement'. This movement seeks get companies to make spare parts, tools and information on how to repair devices that are available to customers. They also want the repair shops to increase lifespan of products & keep them from ending up in landfills.

Background

Activists started this movement after arguing that these electronic manufacturers are encouraging a culture of 'planned obsolescence'. It means, devices are designed to last a limited amount of time & to be replaced. This led to an immense pressure on environment and wasted natural resources.

12. EAM Jaishankar unveils statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Georgia

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Georgia at a prominent Tbilisi park.

During his two-day visit to Georgia, a strategically important country situated at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, Jaishankar held talks with the country's top leadership & also handed over the relics of 17th century St. Queen Keteva.

St. Queen Ketevan was a 17th century Georgian Queen who attained martyrdom. Her relics were found in 2005 at the St. Augustine Convent in Old Goa, India, on the basis of medieval Portuguese records.

13. US, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan to form new quad grouping

The US, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan have agreed in principle to establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform focused on enhancing regional connectivity.

The parties consider long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan critical to regional connectivity and agree that peace and regional connectivity are mutually reinforcing.

Afghanistan's strategic location has for a long time been touted as a competitive advantage for the country. Afghanistan is bordered by Pakistan to the east and south, Iran to the west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north, and China to the northeast.

14. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program

A Texas based Federal judge has created a storm in the USA by ruling that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which was created by former president Barack Obama in the year 2012 is illegal as the congress never formerly accepted it.

- The DACA program is an immigration policy of USA which grants some extra rights to the immigrants who were illegally brought into the USA as minors. Under this program they can claim two-year period, which is renewable, of deferred action from deportation.
- Those who are granted DACA status can also receive work permits in the country.
- DACA program doesn't provide a pathway to citizenship. Instead, it is a way of fending off the fear of deportation for those who entered illegally as minors.
- Through an executive branch memorandum, Ex President Obama wrote this program into law in the year 2012. Later on January, 2021, current president Joe Biden issued another executive order to preserve the DACA program.

15. Saudi Arabia ends male guardian requirement for women attending hajj

According to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, Saudi Arabia, women can now register for the annual Hajj pilgrimage without a male guardian (marham).

In registration guidelines of Hajj for domestic pilgrims, the ministry highlights, women do not need to require a male guardian to register and could do registration along with other women.

Women wishing to perform Hajj will have to register individually. India had announced the same rule in 2017 when the Modi government declared that women could go on Hajj without a male companion. Muslim women were exempted from mahram and also from the lottery system.

It is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which is considered as holiest city for Muslims. Hajj is a mandatory religious duty for Muslims which is must to carry at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims.

16. China unveils 600 kph maglev train makes public debut

China unveiled a maglev train capable of a top speed of 600 kph. The maximum speed would make the train, self-developed by China and manufactured in the coastal city of Qingdao, the fastest ground vehicle globally.

Using electromagnetic force, the maglev train “levitates” above the track with no contact between body and rail. China has been using the technology for almost two decades on a very limited scale.

Shanghai has a short maglev line running from one of its airports to town.

At 600 kph, it would only take 2.5 hours to travel from Beijing to Shanghai by train – a journey of more than 1,000 km.

Launched in October 2016, the high-speed maglev train project saw the development of a magnetic-levitation train prototype with a designed top speed

of 600 km per hour in 2019 and conducted a successful test run in June 2020.

17. Leftist school teacher Pedro Castillo declared New Peru President

Rural teacher-turned-political novice, Pedro Castillo became the winner of Peru’s presidential election after the country’s longest electoral count in 40 years.

Castillo, whose supporters included Peru’s poor and rural citizens, defeated right-wing politician Keiko Fujimori by just 44,000 votes.

Electoral authorities released the final official results more than a month after the runoff election took place in the South American nation.

The economy of Peru, the world’s second-largest copper producer, has been crushed by the coronavirus pandemic, increasing the poverty level to almost one-third of the population and eliminating the gains of a decade.

18. Ariel Henry to take over as new Haitian Prime Minister

Ariel Henry has formally assumed the post of Prime Minister of Haiti. He assumed the role of the leader of the Western Hemisphere’s poorest nation in a ceremony in the capital Port-Au-Prince.

Henry was installed as head of a new government in an attempt to stabilize a country on the brink of chaos since the murder of president Jovenel Moise at his residence in the early hours of July 7.

The swearing-in of Henry, who was named to the post by Moise days before his death, was seen as a key step towards holding elections as demanded by many Haitians.

19. UNESCO: Liverpool removed from World Heritage status

On 21st July, 2021 Liverpool was removed from the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites after being granted the title in 2004.

- The decision was taken after a secret ballot was done by the UNESCO committee. They voted in favour stripping Liverpool of this status.
- Liverpool gained its World Heritage status in 2004, in recognition of its maritime history. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was one of the world's major trading centres.
- The heritage list has been designed to preserve and recognize the buildings, monuments and other sites, and this decision to remove Liverpool will puncture a hole in the prestige of the city.
- Previously, only two sites have lost their heritage status: The Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Oman in the year 2007, and the Dresden Elbe Valley in Germany in the year 2009. Sites are removed if they do not preserve and maintain the sites properly.

20. Taiwan will set up its first office in Lithuania using the name "Taiwan"

Using the name "Taiwan," Taiwan's government will set up its first office in Europe, in the Baltic nation of Lithuania. The Taiwan government has come up with this decision as it seeks to strengthen its diplomatic presence across the globe with the ever increasing pressure from Beijing.

21. World's first 3D-printed steel bridge opened in Amsterdam

Amsterdam, has unveiled the world's first 3D-printed steel pedestrian bridge. This project has been opened on the Oudezijds Achterburgwal canal in the city of Amsterdam. The opening ceremony of this bridge was attended by the Queen of the Netherlands, Máxima.

22. Sweden joins International Solar Alliance

Sweden has ratified the framework agreement for the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and is now a member of the global platform, which is an initiative of India aimed at promoting renewable energy and sustainable development.

Sweden hopes to bring its expertise and its experience in renewable energy and clean energy technologies to discussions in the ISA to contribute to meeting the challenges related to climate change.

In April 2018, Prime Minister Modi visited Stockholm during which both sides agreed to further deepen innovation partnership for a sustainable future.

The ISA has been conceived as an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform to increase the availability of solar energy technologies to enhance energy security and sustainable development.

23. China to activate world's first clean Nuclear Reactor

Scientist of the Chinese government has unveiled plans for an experimental nuclear reactor that does not require water for cooling. This reactor will run on liquid thorium instead of uranium and is expected to be safer than the traditional reactors. As molten salt, when exposed to air, cools and solidifies quickly thus insulating the thorium, causing any potential leak to spill very little radiation into the environment compared to the leaks from traditional reactors.

24. Philippines becomes the first country to approve Golden Rice for planting

The Philippines has become the first country in the world to get approval for the commercial production of genetically modified "golden rice", a variety of rice enriched with nutrients to help reduce childhood malnutrition.

The Golden rice has been developed by the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice) in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), after spending nearly two decades.

It is named Golden Rice due to its bright yellow colour.

A cup of golden rice can give as much as 40 per cent of vitamin A which is very essential for children aged six months to five years, to combat childhood blindness and save lives in the developing world.

It is also the first genetically modified rice approved for commercial propagation in South and Southeast Asia.

25. UNESCO grants World Heritage Status to Madrid's Paseo del Prado and Retiro Park

The historic Paseo del Prado boulevard and Retiro Park of Madrid, in Spain, has been granted the status of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The wide tree-lined Paseo del Prado, in the centre of the Spanish capital, is home to prominent buildings such as the Prado Museum.

The iconic Retiro Park, just adjoining with Paseo del Prado, is a 125-hectare green space, and one of the most visited attractions in Madrid's history.

26. Sunseap set to build world's biggest floating solar in Indonesia

Singapore's Sunseap Group, plans to spend 2 billion dollars to build the world's largest floating solar farm and energy storage system in neighbouring Indonesian city Batam, which will double its renewable power generation capacity.

The floating photovoltaic system is expected to have a capacity of 2.2 gigawatts (peak).

It will cover 1600 hectares (4000 acres) of the Duriangkang Reservoir on Batam Island. An agreement between Sunseap and the Batam Indonesia free zone authority (BP Batam) to move forward with the project was signed.

27. Kandla becomes first SEZ to achieve the IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating

On 26th July 26, 2021 Kandla SEZ (KASEZ) became the first green SEZ to achieve the IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities after it was awarded the IGBC Platinum Rating.

28. Bangladesh to launch 'Jogajog' as an alternative to Facebook

Bangladesh is going to launch its own social media platform named 'Jogajog' which is an alternative to the globally popular Facebook and 'Alapon' which will be an alternative of WhatsApp.

29. UN Adopts First-ever Resolution on Vision

The first-ever resolution on vision has been approved the United Nations general assembly. The UN called upon its 193 member countries so that they ensure access to eye care for each of their individual citizens. Following this resolution will contribute towards the global effort of helping about 1.1 billion people who are suffering from vision impairment and lack eye services by the year 2030.

30. Malaysia Registers World's First Affordable New Drug for Hepatitis C

World's first affordable as well as effective new drug for hepatitis C has been registered by Malaysia. This new drug offers hope for accessible treatment to the millions of people around the world who are suffering from this disease.

31. Najib Mikati picked as new Lebanon's prime minister

Billionaire businessman Najib Mikati was appointed as Lebanon's new prime minister-designate following binding parliamentary consultations with President Michel Aoun. He ran virtually unopposed, receiving 72 votes, with former ambassador Nawaf Salam receiving just one vote. Forty-two MPs voted blank, and three MPs did not vote at all.

His appointment comes just 11 days after Saad Hariri resigned as prime minister-designate, following nine months of political deadlock and dispute with President Aoun and his son-in-law MP Gebran Bassil.

Lebanon's economy continues to crumble with half the population living below the poverty line and a spiralling local currency that lost more than 90 per cent of its value.

The country has been without a full-fledged government for almost one year and is struggling to reform its economy to unlock international aid.

32. Brazil landscape garden Sitio Burle Marx receives UNESCO World Heritage status

The Sitio Burle Marx site, a landscape garden in Brazilian city Rio de Janeiro has been added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites. The garden features more than 3,500 species of plants native to Rio and is considered a laboratory for botanical and landscape experimentation.

The site has been named after Burle Marx, a Brazilian landscape architect whose designs of parks and gardens made him world-famous. The Sitio Burle Marx site was his home until 1985.

33. Maldives' Abdulla Shahid won the Presidency of the 76th UNGA

Foreign Minister of Maldives Abdulla Shahid won the Presidency of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

This is for the first time in the history of the United Nations (UN), Maldives will hold the office of President at the UNGA. Abdulla Shahid's victory at the UNGA Presidential election is a "proud accomplishment" and "a step forward in elevating the country's stature on the global stage".

Maldives' decision to join the UN in 1965, immediately after its independence, sparked a debate on how a "microstate", could possibly contribute to the organisation.

Over the years, Maldives has cleared all the doubts by raising its voice on issues of concern and playing a prominent role in the UN as well as in the other multilateral organisations including the Commonwealth.

34. National Gallery of Australia to return 14 Art Works to India including Chola idols

The National Gallery of Australia (NGA) has recently announced that they will be returning 14 pieces of artworks to India. These artworks also include Chola idols and they are from the museums Asian art collection section.

- 13 artworks are connected to convicted art dealer Subhash Kapoor who was arrested for running a smuggling racket.
- 1 piece of artwork was acquired from late William Wolff, New York-based art dealer.
- \$3 million is the total combined valuation of these artworks.
- The artworks which will be returned to India include six bronze or stone sculptures, a painted scroll, six photographs and a brass processional standard.
- Some of the artworks which are being returned to India dates back to the period of the Chola dynasty.

Law, Ordinance, Amendments, Policies etc.

1. New Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) rules

A new Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) rule is coming into effect from July 1, 2021.

What are those new rules?

- Under the new rules, non-filer of income tax for past two financial years will be subjected to higher taxation. TDS or TCS will be charged at double rate specified in relevant provision of Income Tax Act or 5 per cent.
- Provisions of this section will be applicable to TDS deductions on resident payments including shareholder dividends and service payment to vendors rent.
- However, it will not be applicable on salary, winnings from lottery or crossword, horse race, trust income and cash withdrawals.
- Such non-filers will bear higher tax deducted at source (TDS) and tax collected at source (TCS).
- Higher tax will be levied on them if such tax deduction will amount to Rs 50,000 or more in each of past two years.

2. Andhra launches IT policy for 2021-24

Andhra Pradesh government has launched its new 'AP Information Technology Policy 2021-24' on June 30, 2021.

- New policy was approved by State Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.
- This policy is expected to generate more than 55,000 jobs in next three years.

- In order to implement the policy, a robust and holistic business environment would be created.
- IT, Electronics and Communications Department would also be transformed into revenue centre in a bid to achieve self-sustenance.
- It will also create 1.65 lakh indirect employment and ensure a holistic ecosystem development.
- Policy will be in force till March 31, 2024.

New IT Policy links the incentive disbursement to realisation of committed direct employment which ensures transparent & effective utilisation of public funds. It offers end-to-end support for start-ups like plug & play office space, access to investors, & mentors, funds through venture capitals and private equity firms.

3. UP to launch new policy on population control for 2021-30

Uttar Pradesh government is set to release its new policy on population control for 2021-30. It will be released on July 11, on the occasion of World Population Day.

- Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath urged for community-centric approach to population control to provide people better facilities.
- Community centric approach is required to raise awareness about population in certain communities.
- Poverty and illiteracy are major factors population expansion.
- So new policy will be released in line with the objectives embedded in spirit of Sustainable Development Goals.

Fertility Rate in Uttar Pradesh

Total fertility rate in Uttar Pradesh is 2.7 per cent. It should ideally be less than 2.1 per cent. Most of the states have achieved the ideal fertility rate, except Bihar and UP. 2011 census has tagged Uttar Pradesh as most populous state of India followed by Maharashtra and Bihar.

Objectives of the policy

- Under the policy, five-pronged approach to population control will be adopted. It will also focus on improving health.
- Government will make efforts to increase accessibility of contraceptive measures which are issued under Family Planning Programme. Government will also be providing a proper system for safe abortion.
- Government will also make efforts towards stabilization of population by providing solutions for impotence and infertility.
- Efforts towards reducing infant and maternal mortality rate will also be made through improved health facilities.
- Policy will focus on comprehensive arrangements for care of elderly and give importance to improved management of education, health, and nutrition for adolescents aged 11 to 19 years.
- Efforts will be made to maintain demographic balance across different communities and ensure easy availability of advanced health facilities.

4. UP population draft bill proposes two-child policy

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath has launched a population policy that aims to incentivise couples who do not have more than two babies. Stating that population control is related to awareness among masses and poverty, Adityanath

said every community has been taken care of in Population Policy 2021-2030.

The health minister Jai Pratap Singh said Uttar Pradesh is aiming for stability by 2050 and the government is trying to reduce the population growth rate to 2.1 per cent.

The UP law commission that has formulated a population control bill said the policy would be voluntary and nobody would be forced to follow any rule.

However, if any person decides to on his or her own to not have more than two babies, they will be eligible for government schemes., while those who do not follow the policy will face restrictions in government jobs, availing ration, and other benefits.

5. Ministry of Civil Aviation releases Draft Drone Rules, 2021

Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has released reorganized "Drone Rules, 2021" for public consultation.

- As per new rules, there will be minimal human interface on digital sky platform and most permissions will be self-generated.
- It will also notify safety features such as 'No Permission – No Take-off' (NPNT), real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing etc. in future.
- Under the rules, import of drones & drone components will be regulated by Directorate General of Foreign Trade.
- All drone training and testing will be carried out by an authorised drone school.
- Directorate General of Civil Aviation will prescribe training requirements, look after drone schools and provide pilot licences online.

- Standard operating procedures (SOP) and training procedure manuals (TPM) will be provided by DGCA on digital sky platform for self-monitoring by users.
- Operating drones with no unique identification number will not be allowed unless it is exempted. Drone operators are required generate a unique identification number of drones by providing requisite details on digital sky platform.

Three zones in airspace map

Drone Rules 2021 provides for an interactive airspace map with green, yellow, and red zones. These zones will be displayed on digital sky platform. Yellow zone has been reduced to 12 km from 45 km from nearby airport perimeter. In green zones, no flight permission is required up to 400 feet and up to 200 feet in area between 8 to 12 km from airport perimeter.

6. Senari massacre of 1999

Supreme Court, on July 12, agreed to hear appeal by Bihar government against the acquittal by Patna High Court of 14 accused in Senari massacre of 1999.

What is Senari Massacre?

In the Senari Village of Jehanabad district, 34 upper caste men were forced out of their homes by cadres of defunct Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) and they were slaughtered near village temple on March 18, 1999. This event is called as Senari Massacre. This massacre was a sequel in prolonged caste war between MCC and private armies of upper caste villagers especially the Ranbir Sena which was led by Barmeshwar Mukhiya. He was jailed in 2012.

Award by Jehanabad court

Jehanabad court sentenced 11 accused to death while three others were awarded the life sentence

on November 15, 2016. Three of those convicted then challenged the verdict in High Court.

High Court order

Patna High Court has acquitted all 14 accused on May 21, 2021. Division Bench comprising of Justices Ashwini Kumar Singh and Arvind Srivastava has reversed the verdict of Jehanabad court citing lack of sufficient evidence.

Bihar government's appeal to SC

Bihar government is now going to present a strong case before the supreme court. Prosecution has told Supreme Court of having 23 witnesses, including 13 eyewitnesses who lost members of their families in massacre.

7. Maharashtra unveils new EV policy

Maharashtra government has unveiled the "Maharashtra Electric Vehicle (EV) policy, 2021".

- Government also revealed its plans to attract EV manufacturing companies and allied businesses in State by offering incentives to industries and consumers.
- EV policy was unveiled by State Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray which was approved by cabinet on July 4.

8. SC to implement system for Safe Digital Transmission of Bail Orders

Supreme Court of India announced on July 16, 2021, to implement a system for safe digital transmission of its bail orders to jails across India.

- With the implementation of 'safe digital transmission of bail order' scheme, authorities will not be required to wait for authentic orders to release prisoners.
- Bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana has directed Secretary-General of Supreme Court to submit proposal on safe

digital transmission of its bail orders scheme.

- Bench directed to implement scheme within a month.
- It also requested states to provide information on availability of internet connection in jails across India because, digital transmission scheme would require an internet connection.
- Senior Advocate Dushyant Dave has been appointed as amicus curiae to aid implementation of scheme.

Background

Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance, on July 13, 2021, of delay by Uttar Pradesh authorities in releasing 13 prisoners who were granted bail by supreme court on July 8, 2021. Prisoners were juveniles when they were convicted and have been lodged in Agra Central jail for 14 to 22 years in a murder case.

9. Rules related to incorporation of companies changed

The government has amended the rules concerning to the incorporation of companies which comes under the Companies Act, 2013. From 1stSeptember, these changes will come into effect.

- Companies Act, 2013, is being implemented by the corporate affairs ministry and they have amended the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014.
- Changes have been made to the Section 16 of the Act which relates to the allotment of a new name to an existing company.
- Section 16 relates to rectification of the name of a company which is subjected to various conditions, including that the government may direct the name changing

a firm's if it is identical with the name of another existing company. It has to be implemented by the concerned company within three months.

- New rules have been introduced by the ministry of Corporate Affairs wherein the 'ORDNC' (Order of Regional Director Not Complied) tag would be attached to a company's name that does not comply with name changing direction within the time period.

Appointments

1. Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari to be new IAF Vice Chief

Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari will be the new Vice Chief of Indian Air Force succeeding Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora.

Air Marshal Chaudhari is currently serving as commander-in-chief of the IAF's Western Air Command (WAC) that looks after the security of the country's air space in the sensitive Ladakh sector as well as various other parts of north India. Air Marshal Arora retired from service and Air Marshal Chaudhari is likely to take charge of the new assignment.

2. Amitabh Kant gets 1-yr extension as Niti Aayog CEO

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has extended the tenure of NITI Aayog Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Amitabh Kant, by one year till June 30, 2022.

This is for the third time that Kant's tenure has been extended. Mr Kant was first appointed as the CEO of the federal policy think tank on February 17, 2016, for a fixed two-year term.

The 1980 batch IAS officer was given an extension for the first time till 30 June 2019, after his tenure

was to expire in February 2018. Again he was given two years extension till June 30, 2021.

3. Pushkar Singh Dhama to be next chief minister of Uttarakhand

Pushkar Singh Dhama will be the next chief minister of Uttarakhand. He will be the youngest CM of Uttarakhand. 45-year-old Pushkar Singh Dhama, an MLA from the Khatima constituency in Udham Singh Nagar district.

He will replace Tirath Singh Rawat, who resigned from the post. Dhama was elected by the state leaders during the legislature party meeting in Dehradun.

4. KN Bhattacharjee appointed new Lokayukta in Tripura

Veteran advocate Kalyan Narayan Bhattacharjee has been appointed as the new Lokayukta in Tripura. He has been appointed to the post for three years w.e.f. July 1.

The Lokayukta Act has been in force in Tripura since 2008 and in 2012, the first Lokayukta was appointed in Tripura.

Bhattacharjee is the third Lokayukta in the state and the first to hold the post as a lawyer. Former Gujarat & Guwahati HC judge Pradeep Kumar Sarkar was 1st Lokayukta in Tripura.

5. President Kovind appoints new Governors for eight states

President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has appointed new Governors for eight states. The new governors have been appointed for states including Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Tripura, Jharkhand, Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh. While some of the current governors have been transferred to new states, in some others new appointments have been made.

S. No.	State	New Governor
1.	Karnataka	Thawarchand Gehlot
2.	Madhya Pradesh	Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel
3.	Mizoram	Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati
4.	Himachal Pradesh	Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
5.	Goa	P.S. Sreedharan Pillai
6.	Tripura	Satyadev Narayan Arya
7.	Jharkhand	Ramesh Bais
8.	Haryana	Bandaru Dattatraya

6. Nitin Gadkari becomes “Brand Ambassador” of Khadi Prakritk Paint

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways & MSME, Nitin Gadkari, virtually inaugurated India’s first and only paint made from cow dung, under the brand name ‘Khadi Prakritk Paint’.

In addition to this, the minister also declared himself as the “Brand Ambassador” of paint, to promote it across the country and encourage young entrepreneurs to take up the manufacturing of cow dung paint.

The Khadi Prakritk Paint automated manufacturing plant has been set up on the campus of Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPI), Jaipur, which is a unit of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

7. India’s new Health Minister

Mansukh Mandaviya, Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat, has been appointed as new Health Minister of India in a major cabinet reshuffle.

8. Twitter appoints Vinay Prakash as resident grievance officer for India

Twitter has named Vinay Prakash as the Resident Grievance Officer (RGO) for India, as per the information updated on its website. Users can

contact Vinay Prakash using an email ID listed on the page.

Earlier the US-based company had announced the appointment of California-based Jeremy Kessel as the new Grievance Officer for India.

However, as per the new IT rules in India, social media platforms with over 50 lakh users are mandated to appoint three key personnel namely chief compliance officer, nodal officer and grievance officer, and all these three personnel have to be residents in India.

9. Piyush Goyal appointed Leader of House in Rajya Sabha

Union Minister Piyush Goyal has been appointed as the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha. His appointment is effective from July 06, 2021. He will succeed Thawar Chand Gahlot, who has taken charge as the Governor of Karnataka.

Mr. Goyal, a two-time Rajya Sabha MP, is currently the deputy leader of the NDA as well as the Union Minister in the Cabinet.

He is serving as the Union Minister of Textiles, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. The Leader of the House is responsible for organizing government meetings and business in the House.

10. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi appointed Deputy Leader of House in Rajya Sabha

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced the appointment of the Union minister for minority affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi as the deputy leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.

Naqvi takes over from Piyush Goyal who has been elevated as the leader of the house in the Upper House.

Both Goyal and Naqvi have their job cut out for them. They will have to handle the opposition in the Upper House and ensure that the house proceedings are conducted smoothly to allow the passage of bills.

11. FinMin Joint Secretary Rashmi R Das appointed to UN Tax Committee

The joint secretary of the Finance Ministry, Rasmi Ranjan Das has been appointed to the UN tax committee as a member for the term period 2021 to 2025.

Das is among the tax experts from around the world who has been appointed as a member of the UN tax committee. She is Joint Secretary – (FT&TR-I), Central Board of Direct Taxes, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

Formally known as the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, this committee helps the countries' efforts to advance stronger and forward-looking tax policies which are adapted to suit the realities of a digitalised economy, globalised trade and investment and the ever-worsening environmental degradation.

It assists countries in their efforts to prevent double or multiple taxations as well as non-taxation, broaden their tax base, strengthen their tax administrations, and curb international tax evasion and avoidance.

12. IPS officer Nasir Kamal appointed DG of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security

Senior IPS officer Nasir Kamal has been appointed the Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). He is a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Kamal's appointment to the post of Director General in BCAS for a tenure up to his superannuation on July 31, 2022.

13. Basavaraj Bommai elected as the new Chief Minister of Karnataka

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) legislature party has unanimously elected Lingayat MLA Basavaraj S Bommai as the new Chief Minister of Karnataka.

The 61-year-old will succeed BS Yediyurappa, who resigned on July 26, 2021. He will be sworn in as the 23rd Chief Minister of Karnataka on July 28, 2021.

Prior to this, Basavaraj Bommai was the Home Minister in the BSY government. He is a two-time MLC and three-time MLA from Shiggaon in the Haveri district.

14. Rakesh Asthana appointed as Delhi Police Commissioner

Border Security Force (BSF) Director General (DG), Rakesh Asthana has been appointed as the Delhi Police Commissioner, with immediate effect. His appointment comes just three days before his superannuation on July 31, 2021.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has extended Asthana's service initially for a period of one year beyond the date of his superannuation or until further order, whichever is earlier.

Asthana, a 1984-batch IPS officer, had earlier served as the Special Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation. He was the Narcotics Control Bureau chief when actor Rhea Chakraborty was arrested in a drugs case in Mumbai.

During his stint in the CBI in 2018, Asthana was engaged in an unsavoury spat with the then CBI Director Alok Verma. Both the officers were removed from the central probe agency and Asthana was subsequently cleared of the charges.

15. Vice Admiral SN Ghormade: New Vice Chief of the Naval Staff

Vice Admiral S.N. Ghormade took over as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff from Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar on Saturday, who retired after 39 years of service.

- Vice-Admiral Ghormade was appointed to the Navy on January 1, 1984 and is an expert in navigation and direction specialist.
- He was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) by the President in 2017 and the Nausena Medal in 2007 by commendation of then Chief of the Naval Staff.
- During Vice Admiral Kumar's tenure, the Navy had seen an increase in budget allocations with 100% utilization of the allocated budget with a capital acquisition boost.

Books

1. Pan Macmillan to publish Nathuram Godse's biography

The book titled "Nathuram Godse: The True Story of Gandhi's Assassin" by Mumbai-based journalist Dhaval Kulkarni will be published by Pan Macmillan India in 2022.

A biography of Nathuram Godse, Mahatma Gandhi's infamous assassin, situates the man and his most defining act in the larger context of modern Indian history and contemporary society and politics.

The book was acquired at auction by Teesta Guha Sarkar, editorial head at Pan Macmillan India, from Anish Chandy, founder of Labyrinth literary agency. "The book will be a deep-dive account and delve into the cataclysmic chain of events both before and after Gandhi's murder.

2. “Lady Doctors: The Untold Stories of India’s First Women in Medicine” by Kavitha Rao

A book titled “Lady Doctors: The Untold Stories of India’s First Women in Medicine” has authored by Kavitha Rao. This book recovers the stories of India’s first women doctors, often ignored by history.

In this excerpt from Kavitha Rao’s ‘Lady Doctors: The Untold Stories of India’s First Women in Medicine, the story of Rukhmabai Raut.

Rukhmabai was an Indian physician and feminist. She is best known for being one of the first practising women doctors in colonial India as well as being involved in a landmark legal case involving her marriage as a child bride between 1884 and 1888.

3. A book titled ‘The Fourth Lion: Essays for Gopalkrishna Gandhi’

A book titled ‘The Fourth Lion: Essays for Gopalkrishna Gandhi’ authored by Venu Madhav Govindu and Srinath Raghavan.

The book consists of twenty-six essays contributed by individuals drawn from various walks of life and from across the globe. Gopalkrishna Gandhi has been an administrator, diplomat, author, and public intellectual of distinction for over four decades.

His writings have spanned diverse genres, showcasing both his deep scholarship as well as a profound engagement with issues of politics, history, literature, and culture.

4. A new book titled “The Light of Asia” by Jairam Ramesh

A new book titled “The Light of Asia” authored by Jairam Ramesh is a biography of an epic bio-poem on the Buddha.

Ramesh, the author, Member of Parliament, former Union Minister, and Congress leader, digs deep in his new book to bring out the fascinating story behind the epic 1879 poem, “The Light of Asia” by Sir Edwin Arnold, that took the world by storm and in some ways, brought the Buddha’s story to the world at the turn of the last century.

5. The Struggle Within: A Memoir of the Emergency authored by Ashok Chakravarti

A book titled “The Struggle Within: A Memoir of the Emergency” authored by Ashok Chakravarti. He is an economist who has been providing policy advice to countries, mainly in the African region, for the past forty years.

He is currently Senior Economic Advisor to the Government of Zimbabwe, based in Harare. The Book is Published By Harpercollins India.

The Struggle Within: A Memoir of the Emergency book deals with one of independent India’s darkest hours during the emergency period.

The Emergency (1975-1977) was one of independent India’s darkest hours. In that period, Over 150,000 people were imprisoned without trial; as many as eleven million forcibly sterilized, and countless killed in police firings or otherwise eliminated.

6. A book titled “The Art of Conjuring Alternate Realities”

A new book titled ‘The Art of Conjuring Alternate Realities: How Information Warfare Shapes Your World’, authored by Shivam Shankar Singh and Anand Venkatanarayanan. The Book is Published by HarperCollins.

The Book deals with human history, societal control was determined by various hierarchies like military, colonialism, mega-corporations and now by information.

This book widely talks about how information warfare is shaping your life and world. Parallely it deals with the operations of political parties, cybercriminals, godmen, national states in manipulating the thoughts.

7. A book titled “The Great Big Lion” written by child prodigy Knight

A book titled “The Great Big Lion” drawn and written by child prodigy Chryseis Knight. This book is a story about a lion and two children. It talks about friendship, inclusivity, wildlife conservation and the world of imagination.

The book was published by Penguin Random House India’s “Puffin” imprint. Knight, who is currently residing in Canada, learnt how to read at the age of one, started writing the story of “The Great Big Lion” in her notebook when she was three years old.

She then shared it with her family and became determined to do the artwork with the motivation of getting the book published.

8. A new book titled ‘The India Story’ by Bimal Jalan

Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan writes a new book titled ‘The India Story’. The book focuses on India’s economic history and aims to provide lessons for the future of India’s political economy.

He traces India’s economic policies from 1991 to 2019 to offer insights on learning from the past, before moving ‘Beyond the Metrics of Economy’ to talk about the role of governance in implementing these policies. He also authored the books ‘India Then and Now’, ‘India Ahead’.

9. Vice President releases book ‘Palleku Pattabhishekam’

Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu has released a book titled ‘Palleku Pattabhishekam’ authored by former MP Yalamanchili Sivaji.

This book is based on rural India and agriculture. The Vice President said that villages and agriculture are intrinsically connected and we must address their issues holistically to bring ‘Gram Swarajya’ to our villages.

National

1. J&K Chief Secretary inaugurates helpline “Sukoon”

J&K Chief Secretary, Arun Kumar Mehta, inaugurated SDRF first Battalion’s 24×7 mental health helpline ‘SUKOON’ at its headquarters. This initiative, launched by SDRF First Battalion Kashmir in collaboration with Mission Youth J&K and Tourism department, will guide the caller to avail services of clinical psychologists, therapists, counsellors and psychiatrists.

‘SUKOON’ is a mental health helpline initiative (toll-free number 1800-1807159) to offer guidance to persons (or their well-wishers) who are experiencing anxiety, depression, stress, panic attack, PTSD, adjustment disorder, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, mental health emergency and pandemic induced psychological stress.

2. Lt Governor launches “HAUSLA- Inspiring her growth” in J&K

Lieutenant Governor J&K, Manoj Sinha has launched the “HAUSLA- inspiring her growth”, a comprehensive programme for Catalysing Women Entrepreneurship in UT.

The priority of the government is to reduce the gap between women and men entrepreneurs, in a systematic manner and to encourage women who are currently engaged in various professions so that they too can become a part of the ‘Hausla’ program.

The intent of the innovative initiative is to empower Women as vital drivers of the overall development process in the UT by identifying & empowering Women Entrepreneurs as role models, providing them with markets, networks, training & continuous

support and subsequently building an ecosystem to inspire other local women entrepreneurs.

3. First voyage of Green Freight Corridor-2

Ministry of Shipping launched the maiden voyage under Green Freight Corridor-2 on June 30, 2021.

Green Freight Corridor-2 is a coastal shipping service.

Voyage was launched from Cochin port to Beypore and Azhikkal ports located in north Kerala.

Why voyage service was launched?

First voyage service was launched in line with ministry's plans to improve connectivity and synergies between major & non-major ports by promoting coastal trading. This step is also aiming to

- Create intermodal & sustainable customer solutions,
- Improve use of waterways,
- Cut road & rail traffic and
- Cut logistical expenditures.

About the first Voyage Service

First voyage was inaugurated by MoS Mansukh Mandaviya. It was inaugurated under the service operated by Mumbai-based Round the Coast Pvt Ltd. This newly launched service will connect Cochin with Beypore-Azhikkal in the initial phases while Kollam ports in Kerala in later phases. Vessels will ferry load from Cochin to Beypore and Azhikkal twice in a week.

4. Researchers discovered Black-bellied Coral snake in forests of Uttarakhand

Researchers have discovered Black-bellied Coral snakes in the forests of Uttarakhand for the first time in history. The snake is related to the Elapidae family and Sinomicrurus genus. Its scientific name is *S. nigriventer*.

It was found in the Bhadraj Block of Benog Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS) in the Mussoorie Forest Division. There are currently 107 species of coral snakes in the world. In India, only seven coral snake species are found.

As per the report of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on the management of snakebite, there are more than 2000 species of snakes in the world. About 300 of these species are found in India, of which 52 are venomous.

India's venomous snakes belong to three families 'Elapidae', 'Viperidae' and Hydrophidae' (sea snakes).

5. Delhi's cloud-based Health Project

Delhi government has informed that a cloud-based Health Care Information Management System (HISM) is likely to be rolled out by March 2022. This announcement was made by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal while reviewing the progress of health project in Delhi.

Along with HIMS, a health helpline will be issued and special surveys will be conducted to issue e-health cards for residents of Delhi.

Delhi will become the only state in India to have a cloud-based Healthcare Information Management System (HIMS).

HIMS project will be implemented across private hospitals soon.

6. Govt announces inclusion of retail and wholesale trades under MSMEs

Minister of MSME, Nitin Gadkari, announced on July 2, 2021 about revised guidelines for MSMEs which has included retail and wholesale trade under Micro, Small & Medium (MSME) Enterprises.

- Inclusion of retail & wholesale trades mean that retail & wholesale trade will be able to

avail benefits like priority sector lending under RBI guidelines.

- As per MSME minister, revised guidelines will benefit 2.5 crore retail and wholesale traders. It will also allow them to register on Udyam portal.

Significance of the move

- This will enable traders to get access to capital that have been impacted greatly amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- With this inclusion, several measures of MSME sector announced over past year will now be applicable to retail and wholesale traders.
- It will thus enable smaller retailers and traders to avail Resolution Framework for COVID-19-related stress. announced by Reserve Bank of India.
- It will immediately impact smaller retailers with businesses up to Rs 250 crore of turnover by enabling them to avail immediate-term finance through schemes announced under Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- As per CAIT, this decision will enable traders to avail requisite finances from banks and financial institutions under Priority Sector Lending as well.

7. President Kovind laid foundation stone for Ambedkar Memorial and Cultural Centre

President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for Ambedkar Memorial and Cultural Centre in Lucknow.

The cultural centre will come up at 5493.52 sq meter nazool land in front of Aishbagh Eidgah in Lucknow and have a 25-ft high statue of Dr Ambedkar.

The centre, to come up at a cost of ₹45.04 crores, will also have an auditorium having a capacity of 750 people, library, research centre, picture gallery, museum and a multi-purpose convention centre.

8. New jumping spider species named after 26/11 martyr Tukaram Omble

A group of scientists who discovered two new species of jumping spiders from the Thane-Kalyan region named one of them after the brave police constable Tukaram Omble who lost his life in the 26/11 terror attacks.

The species is called 'Icius Tukarami.'

The paper citing the discovery of the new species was published in the Russian science journal *Anthropoda Selecta* by scientists Dhruv A. Prajapati, John Caleb, Somnath B. Kumbhar and Rajesh Sanap.

9. Gujarat: 194 crocodiles relocated from Panchmuli lake

In last two days, 194 crocodiles have been relocated from Panchmuli lake near Statue of Unity in Narmada district, Gujarat.

- Crocodiles were relocated for the safety of tourists do boat rides in the Panchmuli lake.
- This lake is situated near 182-metre-tall statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Kevadia.
- Lake has become a major tourist attraction. It had a large number of crocodiles which was a threat to visitors.

10. J&K ends 149-year-old darbar move tradition

The LG Manoj Sinha formally put an end to a 149-year-old biannual tradition of shifting offices between summer capital Srinagar and winter capital Jammu. The administration served notice to employees to vacate the 'Darbar Move' related

accommodations in three weeks in Jammu and Srinagar.

Administration cancelled the residential accommodation of “darbar move” employees in Jammu and Srinagar, implying the employees will remain stationed in either Jammu or Kashmir.

Dogra monarch Maharaja Gulab Singh is believed to have started the tradition of shifting the capital in 1872. The tradition was continued after 1947 by J&K’s political class, as it acted as a major bridge and a space for interaction between two diverse linguistic and cultural groups of Kashmir and Jammu regions.

11. Gomti River Front Development scam

Officials of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) are conducting raids across several districts in Uttar Pradesh in connection with alleged scam in Gomti River Front Development Project.

Key Points

- Raids were conducted at 40 locations across 13 districts including Ghaziabad, Lucknow and Agra.
- There are alleged irregularities in Rs 1,600 crore Gomti riverfront development project.
- Former engineers, superintending engineers, other engineers of irrigation department of state, private contractors and businessmen have been named as accused.
- This is the second probe initiated by CBI in project scam. First case was registered in December 2017 on the recommendations of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led Uttar Pradesh government.

Background

Gomti Riverfront Development Project This project was launched in 2015 by previous Samajwadi Party led Uttar Pradesh government with Akhilesh Yadav

as chief minister. Many prominent environmentalists have pointed out that the project was seen as an interference in river systems.

Controversy surrounding the project

Gomti riverfront development project is controversial as the Gomti river has been stressed in and around Lucknow. Three major issues with the project are:

1. Construction of high embankments around the Gomati River to protect population of Lucknow is altering river’s natural floodplain.
2. Gomti River has 40 natural drains. 23 of them are major. Drains were carrying surplus water into river during monsoon and recharged underground water table. But now those drains are carrying residential and industrial sewage into river.
3. River’s floodplains and fertile land were covered with residential areas, including Gomti Nagar and Triveni Nagar. But Gomti River started receding during late 1970s. In 2016, it was under major stress.

Gomti River

It is a tributary of Ganges. As per Hindu beliefs, river is daughter of Rishi Vashisht and bathing in Gomti river on Ekadashi can wash away sins.

12. Srinagar bans Storage, Sale, Possession, Use and Transport of UAVs

Authorities in Srinagar district have banned storage, sale, possession, use and transport of drones and similar kinds of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) within the territorial jurisdiction of district.

What orders were issued?

- Order asks the authorities to secure aerial space near vital installations and highly populated areas. Thus, it is imperative to

discontinue use of drones in all social and cultural gatherings.

- Order to ban UAVs was issued under Section 144 of CrPC.
- Order reads, “decentralized airspace access needs to be regulated in the backdrop of episodes of misuse of drones, which are posing a threat to security infrastructure.
- Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has also provided draft guidelines to regulate the use of drones with respect to weight classification, height or altitude restrictions, generation of Unique Identification Number, speed restriction etc.
- Persons who already having drone cameras or similar kind of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in their possession are required to ground it in local police station with proper receipt.
- Government departments using drones to map, conduct surveys and surveillance in agricultural, environment conservation and disaster mitigation sector are required to inform local Police station before undertaking any such activity in public interest.

Why this order was passed?

This order was passed in the backdrop of a drone attack on Jammu Air Force Station on June 27 using drones. This drone attack is being seen as a display of capability and an attempt to put pressure on fragile ceasefire which is being maintained along the Line of Control (LoC) since February 2021. It also aimed at disrupting political process in Kashmir.

13. KVIC project ‘BOLD’ to boost tribal income

KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission) has launched Project BOLD (Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Draught), a first-of-its-kind exercise, to create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones.

It is the first of its kind exercise in India which was launched from the tribal village Nichla Mandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Under the project, 5000 saplings of special bamboo species i.e. Bambusa Tulda and Bambusa Polymorpha have been planted over 16 acres approx. of vacant arid Gram Panchayat land.

14. Govt creates ministry of cooperation to boost cooperative movement

The government has created a Ministry of Cooperation to boost the Indian cooperative movement and give a fillip to the indigenous enterprises. India’s first minister of cooperation will also be sworn in once the Union Cabinet reshuffle takes place and the new ministers take the oath of office at the Durbar Hall in President House.

The new ministry of Cooperation will work to realise the vision of “Sahkar se Samridhi” and will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework to boost the cooperative movement in the country.

The development will aid the deepening of the cooperatives as true people-based movements with benefits going down to the grassroots. The ministry will be mandated to streamline the processes for the ease of doing business for cooperatives and ultimately aim to broaden and strengthen the multi-state cooperatives.

15. Delhi Metro launches India’s first UPI-based Cashless Parking

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) launched India’s first FASTag or Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-based parking facility on July 6, 2021.

- This facility was launched to reduce time for entry and payment.
- Under the Multi-Model Integration (MMI) initiative, dedicated Intermediate Public Transport (IPT) lanes were also inaugurated for autos, taxis and r-Rickshaws at the station.
- DMRC is also planning to set up similar systems at other parking facilities across Delhi-NCR.

16. West Bengal passes resolution to create a Legislative Council

Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) government passed a resolution in state assembly on July 6, 2021 for creation of a legislative council in state under Article 169 of Constitution.

- Government was able to pass the resolution with 196 votes in favour and 69 against it.
- Legislative Assembly in Bengal has a strength of 294 members. However, only 265 were present during the voting.

Background

Creation of a legislative council was a key poll promise of Mamata Banerjee. In run-up to assembly polls, Mamata Banerjee had said, TMC leaders who did not get tickets would be sent to legislative council.

What does law say?

According to law, West Bengal can have a maximum of 94 members in legislative council, accounting for one-third of total assembly seats, after this resolution gets support of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Can States have legislative council?

Yes. Presently six states; Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and

Karnataka; have a Legislative Council. West Bengal too had Legislative Council. It was the first state to have upper house in 1937. But in 1969, legislative council was abolished because the then government considered it a “symbol of elitism”.

Recent demands on Legislative Council

Creation of legislative council has been a bone of contention in Tamil Nadu for three decades. Assam Assembly and Rajasthan Assembly also passed a resolution to set up legislative councils in 2010 & 2012. On the other hand, Andhra Pradesh passed a bill to abolish legislative council. Bill is yet to be introduced in Parliament. Jammu & Kashmir too had a legislative council. However, it was dissolved after state was downgraded into a Union Territory in 2019.

17. Delhi govt's Policy for street children

Delhi government has formulated a policy for welfare of street children in light of covid-19 pandemic situation.

- Policy underlines the role of various stakeholders in promoting Covid-appropriate behaviour and generating awareness about the infection.
- It was prepared by Women and Child Development Department (WCD) of Delhi Government.

Provisions of Policy

- Policy encourages direct participation of civil society organisations.
- It also highlights their role in identifying hotspot areas and distributing masks among those children.
- As per policy, district administration could consider training children rescued from streets as Civil Defense Volunteer, after they attain age of 18 years. It will provide

them respectable employment. Trained children can also assist many other children who coming from a similar background.

- It proposes for composition of District Child Protection Convergence Committee (DCPCC) above the District Task Force to rescue children.
- District magistrate will act as chairperson of DCPCC along with other members like two members from NGOs & Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights representatives.
- NGOs will be tasked to bring all cases of children identified by them to their respective Child Welfare Committee. NGOs will work with concerned departments for rehabilitation of identified children.

18. Dept of Public Enterprises brought under Finance Ministry

Central government has decided to bring Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) under finance ministry.

Key Points

- DPE was earlier under Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.
- It has been brought under finance minister in a bid to ease coordination regarding future disinvestment plans.
- Finance ministry now comprises of six departments, after inclusion of DPE.
- Other five departments are:
 1. Department of Economic Affairs,
 2. Department of Expenditure,
 3. Department of Revenue,

4. Department of Investment & Public Asset Management and
5. Department of Financial Services.

Background

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced about this change in her budget speech 2021-2022.

Why DPE brought under Finance Ministry?

This move aims to ease disinvestment process. Finance ministry already has a department dealing with Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE). So, inclusion of DPE would result into better coordination on issues like disinvestment. Other identified areas include coordination on general policy matters impacting CPSEs, evaluating their performance, and review of capital projects.

19. Kerala govt. to have its own OTT platform

Kerala government has proposed to have its own over-the-top (OTT) platform. Government has planned to launch it by November 1.

Launch of OTT platform is a sudden attack and a cultural intervention into online content streaming space. It is not something prompted by market or revenues.

Why Kerala will launch new OTT platform?

Major OTT players like Netflix and Amazon have been showing more interest in Malayalam cinema. But they are mostly limited to films from which they can get revenue. In last one year, less than 15 Malayalam films, featuring big stars, have been taken up these platforms. Furthermore, smaller & home-grown OTT platforms such as Neestream and Mainstream TV do not have much of finance to match bigger players. Thus, the state government proposed this OTT platform which will ensure space and make some sort of revenue share for

lower budget & independent films that are struggling to find space among public.

Significance

Homegrown platform will ensure that data and content be with government rather than with third party by using existing platform.

20. India's first maritime arbitration centre to be set up in Gandhinagar

The Gujarat Maritime University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) in GIFT City to set up the Gujarat International Maritime Arbitration Centre (GIMAC).

GIMAC will be the first of its kind centre in India to manage arbitration and mediation proceedings for disputes related to the maritime and shipping sector. It will be part of a maritime cluster that is being set up by the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) at GIFT City in Gandhinagar.

There are over 35 arbitration centres in India. However, none of them exclusively deals with the maritime sector. The arbitration involving Indian players is now heard at the Singapore Arbitration Centre.

The idea is to create a world-class arbitration centre focused on maritime and shipping disputes that can help resolve commercial and financial conflicts between entities having operations in India.

21. India's first movable freshwater tunnel aquarium installed at Bengaluru Station

Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station also known as Bengaluru City Railway Station has become the first railway station in India with a movable freshwater tunnel aquarium.

The state-of-the-art aquarium has been jointly opened by the Indian Railway Stations

Development Cooperation Limited (IRSDC) in collaboration with the HNi Aquatic Kingdom.

The Aquatic Kingdom aquarium is based on the concept of the Amazon River and is 12-feet long. The entrance of the station now gives a glimpse into marine life, with a beautiful dolphin humbly greeting visitors with a slight bow and a smile. A 3D selfie area, 20 feet of glass periphery are also some attractive features of the new facility.

22. Karnataka to develop 46 Kempegowda heritage sites in Bengaluru

The Karnataka state government has decided to develop 46 Kempegowda heritage sites located in Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Chikballapura, and Tumakuru districts, in a bid to promote tourism.

According to Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, the sites identified to be in three circuits would be developed at a cost of Rs 223 crore for promoting tourism.

According to the Authority, these sites are developed to help people acknowledge the contribution of Kempegowda or Nada Prabhu Kempegowda, the founding father of Bengaluru.

23. Manipur enters India's railway map as first passenger train reaches the state

A passenger train Rajdhani Express from Assam's Silchar railway station has reached the Vaingaichunpao railway station in Manipur for a trial run, putting the state on the Indian Railways map.

The train covered the distance of 11 km between the two northeastern stations, with railway officials onboard.

The train halted briefly at Manipur's Jiribam railway station, where railway officials were greeted by local citizens before the national flag was hoisted accompanied by the national anthem.

Notably, the Vaingaichunpao-Imphal (capital of Manipur) railway line is also under construction. Once completed, it will be the longest railway tunnel near Imphal.

24. Nitin Gadkari inaugurates India's first private LNG Facility plant at Nagpur

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated India's first private Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility plant at Nagpur in Maharashtra. The plant has been set up on Kamptee Road near Nagpur Jabalpur Highway, by Baidyanath Ayurvedic Group, the makers of Ayurvedic medicines.

Once operational, this LNG filling station in Nagpur will be the first such facility to operate on a commercial basis. LNG is a clean, pollution-free and cost-effective liquid fuel, which is also easy to store and reduces logistics costs.

25. India's first Cryptogamic Garden Inaugurated in Uttarakhand

India's first cryptogamic garden, with around 50 different species grown, has been inaugurated in Deoban area of Dehradun in Uttarakhand.

The garden is situated at a height of 9,000 feet and is spread over an area of three acres. Located in the district's Chakrata town, the garden was inaugurated by social activist Anoop Nautiyal.

Cryptogamae means "hidden reproduction" referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are produced. Thus, cryptogams represent the non-seed bearing plants.

Algae, bryophytes (moss, liverworts), lichens, ferns and fungi are the best-known groups of cryptogams that require moist conditions to survive.

26. Assam to create new department for indigenous faith and culture

The Assam Cabinet has announced the creation of an independent department to protect and preserve the "faith, culture and traditions of tribes and indigenous communities" of the state.

The new department would ensure that the state's indigenous population gets to preserve their faith and traditions, while also providing requisite support to them.

Indigenous tribes such as the Bodos, Rabhas, Mishings, along with others have their own religious beliefs and unique traditions, which so far have not received the support necessary for their preservation.

The cabinet, during the meeting, agreed that financial and administrative reforms were necessary to ensure speedy implementation of various schemes floated by the government. It decided that departmental committees, headed by commissioners, will be entitled to give its nod for projects worth ₹ 2 crores and below.

27. In a first, Himalayan yaks to be insured

National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) in West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh has tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. for insuring Himalayan Yak.

The insurance policy would shield the yak owners against the risks posed by weather calamities, diseases, in-transit mishaps, surgical operations and strikes or riots.

The owners of the Yaks would have to get their yaks ear-tagged and provide a proper description in order to get their animals insured.

Himalayan Yak is a long-haired domesticated cattle found throughout the Himalayan region of the Indian subcontinent, Tibetan Plateau, Myanmar and as far north as Mongolia and Siberia. The total yak population in India is about 58,000.

The Highest Yak Population is in the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. It is followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal and Uttarakhand.

28. India launches BHIM-UPI services in Bhutan

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched BHIM-UPI QR-based payments in Bhutan will further strengthen the cooperation between the two neighbouring nations.

With the launch in Bhutan, the payment infrastructures of the two countries are seamlessly connected and will benefit tourists and businessmen from India who travel to Bhutan. This will enhance the ease of living and travelling through cashless transactions.

The services have started in Bhutan under India's "Neighbourhood First" policy. She described BHIM UPI as one of the brightest in facilitating digital transactions in India during the pandemic.

29. India's first national dolphin research centre to come up in Patna

India's and Asia's first National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) will come upon the bank of the Ganges in the premises of Patna University.

Around 1,455 dolphins have been sighted during a survey conducted in 2018-19 in the river Ganga by the teams of experts.

The Gangetic dolphin is India's national aquatic animal but frequently falls prey to illegal poaching. The presence of dolphins in the Ganga gives a sign of a healthy ecosystem because dolphins live at least in 5 ft to 8 ft deep water.

The Gangetic dolphin has been declared an endangered aquatic animal and is one of the four freshwater dolphins species in the world as another three species are said to be found in the Yangtze

River, the Indus River in Pakistan and the Amazon River globally.

30. India's first 5-star Hotel atop Railway Track in Gandhinagar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to virtually inaugurate a newly-built five-star hotel on the top of redeveloped Gandhinagar railway station on July 16, 2021.

This project on redevelopment of Gandhinagar railway station and construction of five-star hotel started by Indian Railway Stations Redevelopment Corporation (IRSDC) in January 2017.

31. NTPC to set up India's largest solar park at Rann of Kutch

State-run NTPC Ltd is to set up India's largest solar park at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

- This solar park will have the capacity of 4.75 gigawatt (GW).
- It will be set up in Rann of Kutch in Gujarat from where NTPC will also generate green hydrogen on commercial scale.
- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd got the go-ahead from ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) for this project under "ultra-mega renewable energy power parks (UMREPP) scheme".
- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd has also signed pact with Union territory of Ladakh to set up green hydrogen mobility project in region.

32. Adani Group takes over Mumbai Airport

Adani Group led by Gautam Adani has completed the takeover of 'Mumbai International Airport' from GVK group.

- With this takeover, Adani group has become the top company in terms of airport infrastructure companies in India.
- India is going to become world's third largest aviation market by 2024.
- addition of Mumbai International Airport to Adani Group's existing portfolio of six airports will provides a transformational aviation platform will allow Adani Group to interlink its B2B [business-to-business] and B2C [business-to-consumer] business.
- It will also help Adani group to create several strategic adjacencies its other B2B businesses.
- Adani Airport Holdings presently own a 74% stake in Mumbai International Airport.
- With the takeover, Adani group's airports now account for fourth of total footfalls at airports across India, and third of total air cargo handled.

33. India's first 'Grain ATM' open in Gurugram

The country's first 'Grain ATM' has been set up as a pilot project in Gurugram, Haryana. It is an automatic machine, which works just like a bank ATM.

This machine has been installed under the 'World Food Programme' of the United Nations (UN), and is called the 'Automated, Multi Commodity, Grain Dispensing Machine'.

This automatic machine is equipped with the biometric system with a touch screen, where the beneficiary will have to enter the Aadhaar or ration card unique number.

On biometric authentication, the foodgrain prescribed by the government to the beneficiaries

will be automatically filled in the bags installed under the machine.

Three types of grains — wheat, rice and millet — can be distributed through this machine. At present, the distribution of wheat has been started from the 'Grain ATM' machine installed at Farrukhnagar.

34. Ladakh signs MoU with Sikkim to turn UT organic by 2025

The union territory of Ladakh organic, the administration of Ladakh, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SOCCA).

A tripartite MOU has been signed between Ladakh and SSOCA regarding the implementation of Prampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Mission Organic Development Initiative (MODI) in the Ladakh region with the aim to convert Ladakh into organic by 2025.

The main objective of this MOU is to get the organic certification after a tie-up with the Government of India.

35. Manduadih railway station renamed as Banaras

The Manduadih railway station has been finally renamed as Banaras by the Northeastern railways (NER).

The NER replaced the old signboard with the new one which read 'Banaras' after the Railway Board gave its nod for the new name. The newly painted signboards were put up with Banaras written in Hindi, Sanskrit, English, and Urdu.

The process to change the station's name started in 2019 when the former railway minister and the present governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Singh, put forth the request. In the same year, the Uttar Pradesh government accepted the proposal and forwarded it to the ministry of home affairs.

36. Jurisdiction of Krishna & Godavari River boards notified

Central Government has notified jurisdiction of Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) & Godavari River Management Boards (GRMB), Seven years after their constitution under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.

- With the constitution of boards, Centre transferred operation of all projects, including generation of hydel power, in two river basins in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to them. It will be in effective from October 14, 2021.
- Notification was issued by Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS).
- Notification brought 35 projects in Krishna basin and 71 in Godavari basin, under purview of boards.
- It empowered the boards to operate headworks of barrages, dams, reservoirs, part of canal network, regulating structures, transmission lines and power houses at projects.
- P. and Telangana will deposit Rs 200 crore each to bank account of KRMB within sixty days of publication of notification in order to enable boards to discharge its functions effectively.

37. New name for Jammu and Kashmir High Court

With an order notified by Department of justice in Law Ministry on July 16, 2021, nomenclature of 'Common High Court of UT of Jammu & Kashmir and UT of Ladakh' has been changed to 'High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh'.

38. India's first monk fruit cultivation begins in Kullu, H.P

Cultivation of 'monk fruit' from China has started in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh. The fruit was introduced for field trials in Himachal Pradesh by Palampur-based Council of Scientific Research and Industrial Technology-Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (CSIR-IHBT).

39. Railway Projects to be inaugurated in Gujarat

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate and dedicate to the nation several key projects of Railways in Gujarat on July 16, 2021.

- Railway projects comprise of
 1. Newly redeveloped Gandhinagar Capital Railway station
 2. Gauge converted cum electrified Mahesana- Varetha line and
 3. Newly electrified Surendranagar -Pipavav section.
- Prime Minister will also flag off two new trains namely, Gandhinagar Capital – Varanasi Superfast Express and MEMU service trains between Gandhinagar Capital & Varetha.

40. Covid vaccination campaign for pregnant women in Kerala, "Mathrukavacham"

The Kerala government's campaign 'Mathrukavacham' to vaccinate all the pregnant women in the state against COVID-19 infection was inaugurated at the district level recently.

Spot registrations for vaccination of pregnant women would be carried out at various government hospitals.

Pregnant women can receive the COVID vaccine at any time during their pregnancy. The special vaccination drive comes as a strong defence to protect pregnant women.

Vaccination will be made available in all district hospitals as part of the model program. In the beginning, the covid vaccine will be given to 100 pregnant women through spot registration.

The State Health Ministry assured that in the coming days, covid vaccination for more pregnant women will be made accessible in all hospitals, depending on the availability of the vaccine.

41. Andhra govt announces 10% reservation for EWS

The Andhra Pradesh government announced a 10% reservation for the Kapu community and other Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) for appointments in the initial posts and services in State government in accordance with the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019.

The 10% reservation in employment will benefit Kapus who are neither benefited under BC quota nor under EWS quota and other Open Competition (OC) sections who are deprived of the benefits of reservation thus far due to non-implementation of the EWS quota.

42. India's first pod taxi to operate between Noida Airport and Film City

Indian Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation Ltd (IPRCL) has prepared a Detailed Project Report or DPR for the pod taxi service between Noida Airport at Jewar and Film City.

There are plans to run a driverless taxi between the two destinations. This will cost about Rs 862 crore, according to the detailed project report (DPR) submitted to the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida). This is a 14 km stretch. This will be India's first pod taxi service.

Pod taxis can accommodate four to six passengers per car. This important project will provide smooth connectivity to residential and industrial areas falling between film city and the Noida International Airport. As per the DPR, the corridor

will pass through various sectors such as 21, 28, 29, 30 and 32, among others, falling under the Yeida region.

43. Haryana to introduce 'One Block, One Product' scheme

The Haryana government will soon introduce the 'One Block, One Product' scheme, to encourage and promote small industries in the rural areas.

Under the scheme, the state government plans to connect every block of the state with some industrial vision and the government is working expeditiously on this scheme.

Arrangements for common services, lab testing, packaging, transportation, accountancy will be set up in the cluster itself. Haryana's 'One District, One Product' Scheme which is being implemented under MSME, has come up as a model across the country.

44. Tripura to promote commercial cultivation of agar

The government of Tripura has taken initiatives to promote commercial cultivation of Agar trees and has set a target of achieving Rs 2,000 crore business from this sector in the coming three years.

- Tripura government has plans to export 1,500 kg of Agar oil and 75,000 kg of Agar chips in the year 2021-22.
- Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday and apprised him about the potential of Agar trees.
- Tripura government has launched a draft named Tripura Agar Wood Policy 2021 and a target has been set up of doubling the plantation by the year 2025. Currently, there are over 50 lakh agar trees in the state.

- Chief Minister of Tripura had also requested PM Modi for fixing a quota on Agarwood exportation and its products.

45. Successful trial of train between Jaynagar in India and Kurtha in Nepal undertaken

On July 18, 2021, successful trial of movement of train was undertaken between Jaynagar in India and Kurtha in Nepal.

- The length of the rail section is 34.50 and this is the first section of the rail line links between the two countries which connects Kurtha in the Mahottari district of Nepal to Jaynagar in the Madhubani district of Bihar.
- The total cost for this rail section is 619 crores.
- IRCON has set up the The Jayanagar – Kurtha Railway under the India – Nepal friendship rail project which was financed by the Indian government.

Announcement by East Central Railway

- Rajesh Kumar, East Central Railway's Chief Public Relations officer has said that, after fulfilling some technical and other formalities between the two countries, the train movement on this section will start soon.
- The 34 km rail line which is remaining will be built in two phases.
- The second section which is 17 km long will link Kurtha and Bhangaha.
- The 17 km long third phase will extend from Bhangaha to Bardibas.
- Two modern DEMU trains have been delivered by the Indian Railways to Nepal for the Jayanagar-Kurtha railway link.

About IRCON

Ircon International or Indian Railway Construction Limited (IRCON) is a subsidiary of the Indian Railways and a construction & engineering corporation which specializes in infrastructure used for transport. The subsidiary was established in the year 1976 with the primary aim of construction of various railway projects in India as well as abroad. At present, Ircon has successfully completed over 1650 major infrastructure projects in India and over 900 major projects around the world in 31 countries. M. K Singh is the current chairman of Ircon.

46. SoP to capture and release of wild elephant: Tamil Nadu

A standard operating procedure (SoP) will be shortly developed by the forest department of Tamil Nadu for the capture and release of wild elephants which will be based on science and best practices.

- After the release of the male elephant Rivaldo back into the wild from Vaazhahottam check-post of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, the Chief Wildlife Warden of the state visited camps that have housed elephants housed and interacted with the mahouts and cavadies.
- The decision to capture Rivaldo was taken after some sections of the public demanded it. Keeping a fully adult elephants in a small kraal and attempts to train a healthy, fully mature and hefty adult elephant defeats the science involved in elephant ecology.
- Rivaldo, despite his disabilities, appeared to be very intelligent and in a healthy condition. And it was noted that that there was not even a single instance of it indulging in crop-raiding or attacking humans.

- Releasing the adult male elephant in the wild will be much more cost effective compared to the costs to be incurred in capturing, maintaining and training this adult elephant in captivity.

47. Maharashtra to issue Certificates using Blockchain Technology

Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology. Forgery of documents is a serious concern for various educational and other institutions.

Many steps are being taken to avoid forgery along with verification of documents. Maharashtra State Board of Skill Development has decided to issue blockchain-based certificates to students.

48. Balika Panchayat successfully held at Kunariya village in Gujarat

Kunariya village of Kutch district in Gujarat has come out with a unique idea of holding Balika Panchayat.

The first-ever elections of this Balika Panchayat were successfully. Inspired by the TV series, Balika Vadhu, the Kunariya village in Kutch district today held elections for the unique Balika Panchayat, which aims to develop leadership qualities in the girls for Future Panchayat polls.

Young females aged between 10 to 21 years contested elections for this unique Panchayat which will take up issues pertaining to adolescent girls and women in the village.

This Panchayat will be run by the girls and for the girls.

The separate sitting arrangements will be given to these girls and they will be given to use the budget of gender sensitivity.

This unique step by a small village like Kunaria aligns with PM's vision of enhancing young women's participation in the political process.

49. Govt to set up Indian Institute of Heritage at Noida

The government has decided to set up the Indian Institute of Heritage at Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar.

This will impact higher education and research in the field of rich Indian heritage and its conservation, leading to Masters and PhD courses in History of Arts, Conservation, Museology, Archival Studies, Archaeology, Preventive Conservation, Epigraphy and Numismatics, Manuscriptology as well as conservation training facilities to in-service employees and students of the institute.

50. Perumkulam is Kerala's first 'Book Village'

Perumkulam, in Kollam District, has been bestowed with the title Kerala's first 'Book Village'. This claim to fame results from years of concerted efforts aimed at encouraging the habit of reading.

Perumkulam is a small village in Kulakkada near Kottarakkara in Kollam district. Bapuji Smaraka Grandhasala', a library in the village is at the forefront in this effort of making it the first book village of the State.

The library inculcates passion towards reading by setting up bookshelves, or 'Book Nests' placed at different corners of the village. Anybody can take books from the book nests, read them, and keep them back.

51. CM K.C. Rao to Launch 'Telangana Dalit Bandhu' from Huzurabad

Telangana Chief Minister, K Chandrasekhar Rao will launch his government's new Dalit empowerment scheme, now christened Dalita

Bandhu, on a pilot basis from the Huzurabad assembly constituency.

The scheme, which was to be called Dalit Empowerment Scheme, has now been renamed as Dalita Bandhu scheme.

As part of the scheme, eligible Dalit families would be given Rs 10 lakh in cash directly to their accounts. The sanctioned amounts will be deposited in the bank accounts of eligible beneficiaries.

52. Three monuments identified as Adarash Smarak: Andhra Pradesh

Three monuments in the State of Andhra Pradesh have been identified under the Adarsh Smarak Scheme. These monuments will be provided with additional amenities and will be made into more tourist-friendly sites.

- This was announced by the Union Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region G Kishan Reddy
- The Buddhist remains at Salihundam in Srikakulam, monuments at Nagarjunakonda in Guntur and Veerabhadra temple (Lepakshi) in Anantapur have been selected under the Adarsh Smarak Scheme.
- They will be provided with various additional facilities like cafeteria, Wi-Fi, Braille signages, interpretation centre, illumination etc.
- Currently, there are 135 sites in Andhra Pradesh which are centrally protected monuments and they are provided with amenities various Upgradation in a regular manner.
- The preservation, conservation and environmental development and Upgradation in and around the protected monuments and sites are taken in accordance to their need and priority.

53. Central University approved in Ladakh

The Union Cabinet has given its approval of the formation of a Central University in Ladakh. This project cost for the formation of this university will be Rs 750 crore.

- In four years the first phase of the university will be completed.
- To facilitate the formation of Central University in Ladakh the bill for amending Central Universities Act, 2009 will be introduced.
- Establishing this university will aid the propagation of higher education in this region.
- The jurisdiction of this Central University will cover the entire region of Ladakh including Kargil and Leh.

54. Kerala removes age limit for transgenders in University admissions

The authorities of the state of Kerala have removed the upper age limit for transgender college students of the state who are seeking admission to numerous educational programs available in the State universities and its affiliated schools.

- The resolution to remove the upper age limit has been done to encourage the transgender students in the State to pursue various postgraduate and undergraduate educational programs.
- In the year 2018 the state authorities had sanctioned two seats reserved only for transpersons in all programs that are run by universities and affiliated schools in the State. This decision was taken to empower the transgender population of Kerala.
- The authorities of Kerala had directed the state universities to undertake transgender

coverage to deal with the differences faced by the college students who are transgender.

- Views of the Kerala State Higher Education Council and the various universities of the state had been sought by the authorities before formulating the points on the basis of which the upper age limit for transgender candidates has been removed.
- Kerala was the first State in India to have announced transgender coverage in the year 2015.

55. Rudreswara Temple inscribed as India's 39th UNESCO World Heritage List

The Kakatiya Rudreswara Temple, (also known as the Ramappa Temple) at Palampet, Mulugu district, near Warangal in Telangana has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list, during the 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. With this latest induction, there are 39th World Heritage Sites located in India.

The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the reign of the Kakatiya Empire.

The iconic 13th-century temple is also known as Ramappa temple, named after its architect, Ramappa

The Rudreswara temple was the only nomination for the UNESCO World Heritage site tag for the year 2019 by the Indian government.

56. Assam CM lays the foundation stone of bamboo industrial park

The chief minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma has laid the foundation stone of a bamboo industrial park at Manderdisa Village, Dima Hasao. The project will be implemented with Rs 50 crore from the DoNER ministry.

The project, once completed, would usher in a new era in the economy of the region and create vast employment opportunities for the local youth.

Bamboo produced in Dima Hasao were earlier mostly exported to paper mills, however, with the completion of the park new avenues would open to use bamboo for the production of tiles, incense stick, ceiling etc., which would bring more economic benefit to the people.

57. Uttar Pradesh CM launches 'MyGov-Meri Sarkar' portal

On 26th July, 2021, Yogi Adityanath the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh launched the 'MyGov-Meri Sarkar' portal.

- Through this portal, the people of the state can give various feedbacks to the government and the UP government can also inform them about the various schemes of the state.
- The portal will be used efficiently to further enhance the engagement of the common citizens of the state with the Uttar Pradesh state government.
- This portal will play a major role to disseminate the schemes of the state and to know the citizens opinion on them and how they can be addressed.

58. Dholavira inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List

A Harappan-era metropolis, Dholavira in Gujarat has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Now Gujarat has three world heritage sites, Champaner near Pavagadh, Rani ki Vav in Patan and the historic city of Ahmedabad. Dholavira is now the 40th treasure in India to be given.

The ongoing 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO has already given India a new world heritage site in the form of the Rudreswara/ Ramappa Temple in Telangana, which dates back to the 13th century.

This session of the World Heritage Committee is being chaired from Fuzhou in China.

59. Govt to set up center for animation, visual effects, gaming

The Union Government has decided to set up a National Centre of Excellence for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics for creating a world-class talent pool in India to cater to the Indian as well as a global industry.

It will be set up in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur said this in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

In order to support skilled manpower in the animation and VFX sector, Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute and Film and Television Institute of India run courses on Animation and VFX. The Minister also informed that India has also audio-visual co-production treaties with 15 countries.

60. Puri becomes India's first city to provide quality drinking tap water

Puri has become the first city in India where people can avail high-quality drinking water directly from the tap on a 24-hour basis.

It has enabled the people of Puri to collect quality drinking water directly from the tap. Henceforth, people need not have to store or filter drinking water.

The project would benefit 2.5 lakh citizens of Puri and 2 crore tourists who visit the tourist place every

year. They need not have to move around with water bottles.

Puri would no more be burdened with 400 metric tonnes of plastic waste. Water fountains have been developed at 400 locations in Puri.

61. GoI to set up Garima Grihas for transgender persons to provide safe shelter

The Centre is setting up the Garima Grihas for transgender persons are with the help of community-based organizations.

Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment A. Narayanaswamy informed Lok Sabha, 12 pilot shelter homes have been initiated with the aim of providing safe and secure shelter to transgender persons.

The Garima Grihas for transgender persons is being set up with the help of community-based organizations. Such shelter homes have been set up in the states of Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu and Odisha.

62. Indore becomes only Indian city to make it to Int'l Clean Air Catalyst Programme

The Indore city of Madhya Pradesh, or the cleanest city of India, has become the only city from the country to be selected for International Clean Air Catalyst Programme.

The project will be operated for a period of five years to purify the air in the city with the cooperation of Indore Municipal Corporation and Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board.

Under the project, USAID and partners will work with local communities to better understand local pollution sources and identify, test, accelerate, and scale solutions for cleaner, healthier air.

Clean Air Catalyst is a new flagship programme launched by The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and a global consortium of organisations, led by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) to combat air pollution in low and middle-income countries by accelerating clean air solutions.

63. Karnataka becomes the 1st state to reserve jobs for transgender persons

Karnataka has become the first state in the country to provide one per cent reservation for the 'transgender community in all the government services.

The government submitted a report to the High Court in this regard informing that a notification had already been issued after amending the Karnataka Civil Service (General Recruitment) Rule, 1977.

The specifies one per cent reservation in all general as well as reserve categories for the third gender. Whenever a notification is published inviting applications for government jobs, the 'others' column must be added along with male and female columns.

64. 14 Tiger Reserves of India get (CA|TS) Recognition

From India, 14 tiger reserves have received the accreditation of the Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS), on the occasion of International Tiger Day on July 29, 2021.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) recognized the 'BaghRakshaks' for their efforts in protecting Tigers and forests. The NTCA's quarterly newsletter STRIPES was also released during the event.

65. India to take over as President of UNSC for August

From August India will be the president of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the month and then the nation will host various events in the three major areas of fight against terrorism, maritime security and peacekeeping.

- . Tirumurti India's permanent representative to the UN will hold a press conference on the Security Council's work plan for the month.
- He will also provide a briefing to UN member states which are currently not permanent members of the Council on its work for the month.
- On January 1, 2021 India's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council began. The August presidential term will be India's first chairmanship during its non-permanent membership of the Security Council in 2021-22.
- India will again chair the Council in December next year, which is the last month of its two-year term.
- During India's presidency, the nation will be hosting various high-level events in the three main areas of counter-terrorism, maritime security and peacekeeping.
- Maritime security is India's top priority, and it is important for the Security Council to take a holistic approach to this issue.
- India is particularly focused on using better technology to ensure the safety of peacekeepers and how to bring perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice.
- As a leading country in the fight against terrorism, India will continue to focus on the fight against terrorism.

Economy

1. Govt. extends superannuation age of LIC Chairman to up to 62 years

The government has extended the superannuation age of IPO-bound LIC Chairman, M R Kumar, to up to 62 years by making amendments to the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Staff) Regulations, 1960.

The changes made in the rules will be called the Life Insurance Corporation of India (Staff) Amendment Rules, 2021, according to a government notification dated June 30, 2021. It is to be noted that the retirement age for the top executives of the majority of PSUs is 60 years, barring a few exceptions, including the State Bank of India (SBI).

2. National Asset Reconstruction Company

The National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARC) has finally become a legal entity registered with the Registrar of Companies (RoC) Mumbai.

- NARC is also called as bad bank is finally here in India. It is considered as a one-stop solution for banking systems stressed assets menace.
- Under the first phase, 22 stressed accounts amounting to Rs 89,000 cr has been identified to transfer to NARC.
- With this, Rs 2 lakh cr worth of bad loans accounts will be transferred to newly incorporated bad bank.
- SBI is expected to transfer bad loans worth Rs 20,000cr.
- PNB will transfer about Rs 8,000cr stressed assets while,
- Union Bank of India will transfer about Rs 7,800cr NPAs to NARCL.

3. 'RBI Retail Direct' scheme

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced "RBI Retail Direct facility" scheme on July 12, 2021.

- RBI's Retail Direct Scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in Government Securities (G-Sec) by individual investors.
- Under this scheme, retail investors will be provided a facility to open and maintain Retail Direct Gilt Account (RDG Account) with RBI.
- This facility was launched as part of continuing efforts towards increasing retail participation in government securities.
- Announcement to launch this scheme was made by RBI in Statement of Developmental and Regulatory Policies of February 05, 2021.
- It was launched to improve ease of access by retail investors by online access to primary as well as secondary government securities market.
- Date of implementation of scheme is not yet announced.

4. India: 5th largest Forex reserve holder in the world

As of 25th June, 2021, India has surpassed Japan, China, Russia and Switzerland to become the world's fifth-largest foreign exchange reserve holder with \$608.99 billion. This was mentioned in the Lok Sabha on 20th July, 2021 by Pankaj Choudhary, MoS Finance.

Defence News

1. Rafael unveils Sea Breaker AI missile with 300 km range

Israeli defence electronics company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems has unveiled Sea Breaker, a 5th generation long-range, autonomous, precision-guided missile system, which can precisely target sea and land targets up to a range of 300 kilometres.

Sea Breaker features an advanced imaging infra-red seeker, which can engage stationary or moving targets in a diverse range of land and marine environments.

Sea Breaker can be launched from naval platforms, varying in size, and from fast attack missile boats to corvettes and frigates.

The land version is a central part of the shore defence, based on Rafael's highly mobile SPYDER launchers. The battery architecture supports standalone launchers, or operation as an integrated solution, with a command and control unit (CCU) and various sensors, based on customer requirements.

2. Indian Navy warship conducted military drill with South Korean vessel

Indian Navy warship conducted military drill with South Korean vessel in the East China Sea. The Navy partnership exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability and facilitating the exchange of best practices with partner navies in the maritime domain.

Indian Navy's indigenous ASW Corvette INS Kiltan undertook the exercise with Republic of Korea's Ship ROKS Gyeongnam, a Daegu-class frigate, on June 28.

3. India's 1 indigenous drone defence dome 'Indrajaal' developed by Grene Robotics

India's 1st indigenous drone defence dome 'Indrajaal' has been developed by Hyderabad-based Grene Robotics.

As per the company, the drone defence dome – 'Indrajaal' is capable of autonomously protecting an area of 1000-2000 sq km against aerial threats. It protects the area by assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and Low- Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.

The company said that cutting-edge technologies such as UAVs, Smart Swarms, etc. have been for the first time used in India to drop explosives next to the Mi-17 hangar at Jammu Air Base.

4. Indian Army chief to inaugurate war memorial for Indian soldiers in Italy

Indian Army chief General MM Naravane will embark on an official visit to the United Kingdom (UK) and Italy, during which he will be meeting his counterparts and the senior military leadership of these countries.

The highlight of the visit will be Gen Naravane's inauguration of the Indian Army Memorial in the famous town of Cassino, Italy. In the Battle of Monte Cassino during World War II, over 5,000 Indian soldiers laid down their lives while fighting to save Italy from fascist forces.

Nearly 50,000 Indians were enlisted for Italy's liberation between September 1943 and April 1945. Both the UK and Italy are important partners for India in the fields of defence, healthcare, aerospace, education, clean technology, renewable energy and information and communication technology among others.

5. IAF to procure 10 Anti-drone systems

Following a drone attack at Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu, Air force has decided to procure 10 anti-drone systems in order to stop such attacks in future across border areas.

- Army Force has floated Request for Information (RFI) from Indian vendors for Counter Unarmed Aircraft System (CUAS).

- Counter Unarmed Aircraft System (CUAS) can be armed with laser-directed energy weapons to bring down rogue drones.

Drone attack was carried on Jammu Air Force Station on June 27, 2021 where two unmanned aerial vehicles were used to drop bombs. National Investigation Agency is currently probing the matter.

6. Army inducts 10m bridging system developed by DRDO

The Army inducted the first production lot of 12 Short Span Bridging System (SSBS)-10m, designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in association with Larsen & Toubro Limited, the production agency.

The SSBS-10m plays a crucial role of bridging the gaps up to 9.5m as a single span providing a 4m wide, fully decked roadway, ensuring faster movement of the troops.

The project involved the development of two prototypes of 5m SSBS on Tatra 6×6 chassis and another two prototypes of 10m SSBS on Tatra 8×8 re-engineered chassis.

This bridging system is compatible with the Sarvatra bridging system (75 m), where the last span required covering gaps less than 9.5 m.

The DRDO has developed a range of bridges for the Army that have already been inducted.

7. INS Tabar conducts military exercise with Italian Navy

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tabar recently participated in military exercises with frontline frigate of Italian Navy.

Key Points

- INS Tabar joined Italian Navy and entered Port of Naples on July 3 as part of ongoing deployment in Mediterranean.
- Commanding officer Captain Mahesh Mangipudi called on senior officers of Prefect of Naples Authority, regional Italian navy headquarters and coast guard headquarters during the stay.
- While returning, Tabar also undertook a Maritime Partnership Exercise with ITS Antonio Marceglia in Tyrrhenian Sea on July 4 & 5.
- This exercise covered several naval operations such as air defence procedures, communication drills, replenishment at sea, and cross deck helo operations by day and night.
- Exercise was mutually beneficial for enhancing interoperability and consolidating combined operations against maritime threats.

8. Axis Bank signs MOU with Indian Army to offer defence service salary package

The country's third-largest private lender Axis Bank has signed MOU with the Indian Army offering a defence service salary package under its "Power Salute" initiative.

The Defence service salary package will offer different benefits to all ranks of army officers. The benefits of the MoU will cover both serving Defence personnel as well Defence pensioners.

According to the bank, it will offer—Personal accidental cover of up to ₹56 lakh to all army personnel; additional up to 8 lakh education grant; total Permanent Disability Cover benefit up to 46 lakh; permanent partial disability cover of up to ₹46 lakh; air accident cover of ₹1 crore, and free additional debit card for a family member.

9. Indian Navy gets 10th P-8I aircraft from Boeing

Indian Navy received 10th anti-submarine warfare aircraft P-8I from US-based aerospace company, Boeing.

- Contract for eight P81 aircraft was signed by defence ministry in 2009.
- In 2016, ministry signed a contract for four additional P-8I aircraft.
- 10th P-81 aircraft is the second aircraft to be delivered under option contract for four additional aircraft that Defence ministry was awarded in 2016.
- P-81 aircrafts have been deployed to assist during disaster relief & humanitarian missions in addition to unmatched maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- 9th aircraft was received by Indian Navy in November 2020.

10. US Navy hands over MH-60R multi role helicopters to India

United States Navy has handed over first two MH-60R Multi Role Helicopters (MRH) to Indian Navy, further strengthening the India-US defence relationship.

- Indian Navy is procuring 24 of MH-60R helicopters manufactured by Lockheed Martin.
- Helicopters are being procured under foreign military sales from US at an estimated cost of USD 2.4 billion.
- Indian Cabinet had cleared purchase of these helicopters from USA in February 2020 before historic visit of then US President Donald Trump.

- First batch of Indian crew is currently undergoing training in US.
- These helicopters are considered as world's most advanced maritime helicopter.

11. OFT hands delivery of 25 remote control guns to Navy

Ordnance Factory Tiruchirappalli hands over Fifteen 12.7 mm M2 NATO Stabilized Remote Control Gun to Indian Navy & 10 to Indian Coast Guard. It is manufactured with the transfer of technology agreement from Elbit Systems, Israel.

This gun is equipped with an inbuilt CCD camera, thermal imager & a laser range finder for observation & tracking of targets through the day and night operations. The gun is meant for marine applications and can remotely engage targets.

12. DRDO successfully flight-tests indigenously developed MPATGM

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested indigenously developed third-generation Man-Portable Antitank Guided Missile (MPATGM) for its minimum range.

The missile was launched from a man-portable launcher integrated with a thermal site, and all the mission objectives were met.

The missile has already been flight-tested for the maximum range.

MPATGM is a low weight, fire and forgets missile, incorporated with state-of-the-art Miniaturized Infrared Imaging Seeker along with advanced avionics.

It is being developed to strengthen the combat capabilities of the Indian Army.

13. DRDO successfully test-flights surface-to-air missile 'Akash-NG'

The Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested the New Generation Akash Missile (Akash-NG), from Integrated Test Range (ITR) off the coast of Odisha.

The Akash missile system has been developed by the DRDO's laboratory in Hyderabad in collaboration with other wings of the premier defence research organisation.

The Akash-NG weapon system is a surface-to-air missile that can strike targets at a distance of around 60 km and fly at a speed of up to Mach 2.5.

The flight data on the missile confirmed the success of the test. DRDO deployed a number of monitoring mechanisms such as electro-optical tracking systems, radar and telemetry.

14. Rajnath Singh flags-in Indian Army's Skiing Expedition "ARMEX-21"

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has flagged in the Indian Army's skiing expedition that was conducted in the Himalayan mountain ranges between March 10 and July 6.

The expedition, called ARMEX-21, was flagged off at Karakoram Pass in Ladakh on March 10 and culminated at Malari in Uttarakhand on July 6 covering 1,660 km in 119 days.

The ARMEX-21 was conducted in the mountain ranges of the Himalayan region to promote the adventure activity in the country and the Indian Army."

During the expedition, the team travelled through several passes at a height of 5,000-6,500 meters and through glaciers, valleys and rivers.

15. Indo-Russia Joint Military Drill 'Exercise INDRA 2021' to be held in Russia

The 12th Edition of the Indo-Russia joint military exercise called 'Exercise INDRA 2021' will be held at Volgograd, Russia from 01 to 13 August 2021.

The exercise will entail the conduct of counter-terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.

Exercise INDRA-21 will further strengthen mutual confidence and interoperability between the Indian & Russian Armies and enable sharing of best practices between the contingents of both countries.

The exercise will be yet another milestone in strengthening security cooperation and will serve to reinforce the longstanding bond of friendship between India and Russia.

250 personnel from both nations will form part of the exercise, which will involve the conduct of counter-terror operations against international terror groups, under the United Nations mandate.

The Indian Army contingent comprising of a Mechanised Infantry Battalion underwent rigorous training at different locations in India to refine their drills for participation in the joint exercise.

16. KVIC and BSF Launch Project Bold in Jaisalmer

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in collaboration with the Border Security Force (BSF) in a first of its kind project has launched Project Bold with the primary aim of developing green cover in the Indian deserts of Rajasthan.

- On 27th July, 2021 KVIC along with the BSF planted 1000 bamboo saplings under Project Bold.
- The saplings were planted in Tanot village in Jaisalmer.
- Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, the chairman of KVIC, launched this first of a kind

plantation program in the presence of Shri Surendra Panwar, Special DG of the BSF.

- Project BOLD, which stands for Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought, aims to provide livelihood, reducing desertification and providing multi-disciplinary rural industry support to the local population of the area.

17. India, China to hold 12th round of Military-level talks

India and China hold another round of high-level military talks on Saturday in a bid to advance the process of removing the remaining points causing friction in eastern Ladakh to end a 14 months long standoff.

- At the Moldo border post on the Chinese side of the LAC the 12th round of talks is taking place.
- India hopes for a positive outcome in this meeting that is being held regarding disengagement in Gogra and Hot Springs.
- This round of dialogue is taking place after an interval of more than three and a half months.
- At the Chushul border point on the Indian side of LAC the 11th round of military dialogue was held on April 9th and lasted approximately 13 hours.
- The twelfth round of military is taking place for more than two weeks. Prior to this, Foreign Minister Jashankar firmly stated to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that the extension of the current situation in eastern Ladakh clearly had a negative impact on bilateral relations.

Index, Ranks and Reports

1. Report: 1 bn tonnes CO2 to be removed by 2025 to meet climate goal

According to a report released by “Coalition for Negative Emissions (CNE) & McKinsey”, Projects in development will remove only some fraction of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from air to meet the 2025 climate change goal.

- About 190 countries have signed Paris agreement which seeks to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- But the report highlights, even with pledges of big reductions in emissions several scientists believe removal technologies will be needed to meet this goal.

Key findings of report

- As per report, goal of keeping global warming within Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degree Celsius cannot be achieved without action to deliver 1 Gigatonne (Gt) of negative emissions globally by 2025.
- Report highlights, countries are required to remove a billion tonnes of CO₂ from atmosphere by 2025, if Paris target is to be met.
- This targeted reduction would require to be further increased by more than one billion tonnes annually.
- According to the report, current pipeline of projects in development could only remove about 150 million tonnes of CO₂ by 2025.

Concerns

Scaling up the technology would lead to lower costs and an average cost of 30-100 pounds per tonne of CO₂ removed by 2050. Removal technology is expensive. Many countries have initiatives in place to put price on CO₂ emissions but prices are far too low to incentivise new projects.

Negative Emission Projects

As per report, negative emission projects include-

- Bioenergy with technology capture & storage carbon emissions,
- Technology to directly capture & store emissions from air and
- Natural climate solutions such as afforestation.

2. India ranked at 10th position in ITU's Global Cybersecurity Index 2020

India has been ranked as the 10th best country in the world in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020, released by International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The GCI 2020 is the fourth edition of the annual index and ranked 194 countries. The GCI measures the commitment of countries to cybersecurity at a global level.

India ranked at 10th position, with 97.5 points to rank among the top ten best countries in the world.

The United States has topped the GCI 2020.

The United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia is tied on the second position

Estonia was ranked third in the index.

3. India ranked 20th in Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2021

India stands at the 20th spot among the top 100 countries that have been ranked in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2021 by Startup Blink. The country was in the 17th spot in 2019, after which it slid six spots down and stood at 23 in 2020.

According to the report, India needs to better its infrastructure and Internet speed in order to further strengthen its start-up ecosystem.

India currently has 43 of its cities listed in the top 1000, globally, with Bengaluru(10th), New Delhi (14th) and Mumbai (16th) in the top 20.

Like last year, the US, the UK, Israel, Canada and Germany are in the top five spots this year too and continue their lead.

4. UN Report on International tourism

According to the report by UNCTAD and UN's World Tourism Organisation (WTO), International tourism arrivals are set to stagnate in 2021, except in some Western markets.

- As per report, stagnation would result into losses of \$2.4 trillion.
- It highlights, tourism sector is not expected to rebound fully until 2023.
- It underlines, COVID-19 vaccination and certificates are key to restore confidence in foreign tourism. Vaccination will provide a lifeline for several countries including small island states which rely mainly on tourism sectors to provide jobs.
- According to it, international arrivals plunged by 73% in 2020 from pre-pandemic levels in 2019. It resulted into estimated losses of \$2.4 trillion in tourism and allied sectors.
- Report expects for certain recovery in second half of 2021 at least for North America and Europe.

5. Report on UDISE 2019-20 for School Education launched

Union minister of education, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank released Unified District Information System for Education Plus report (UDISE+) for 2019-2020. UDISE+ report highlighted some interesting facts, both positive and negative about Indian school education system.

What is UDISE+ report?

UDISE+, launched in 2018-2019, is the largest Management Information Systems on school education. It covers 1.5 million schools, 8.5 million teachers and 250 million children. It was launched for speeding up data entry, reducing errors, improving data quality and easing its verification. It is an advanced and improved version of UDISE which was launched in 2012-2013 by integrating DISE for elementary education & SEMIS for secondary education.

Significance of UDISE+

It helps in measuring education parameters across classes 1 to 12 in government as well as private schools in India. It provides timely and accurate data for an effective planning and decision-making.

Key findings of report

- As per report, total enrolment in 2019-20 was about 25.09 crores in primary to higher secondary levels of school education.
- Enrolment of boys was 13.01 crore while that of girls was 12.08 crore.
- Enrolment number has increased by 26 lakhs as compared to data of 2018-19.
- About 26.45 crore students were enrolled in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary in 2019-20. This number has increased by 42.3 lakh as compared to 2018-2019.
- Enrolment of girls has increased at all levels of school education in 2019-20 against 2018-19.

What was Pupil-teacher ratio?

Pupil-Teacher Ratio is defined as “the average number of pupils per teacher, teaching at specific level of education in a given school year. As per the report, Pupil-Teacher Ratio has increased at all

levels of school education in 2019-2020 as against 2012-2013.

6. 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report

Trafficking in Persons report 2021 was recently released by US State Department. As per the report, Covid-19 pandemic has increased vulnerability to human trafficking and interrupted existing anti-traffic efforts.

Key Findings of report

According to the report, India did not meet minimum standards of eliminating trafficking. However, government made significant efforts, though these were inadequate especially with respect to bonded labour.

Chinese government was engaged in forced labour, including through mass arbitrary detention of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, ethnic Kyrgyz, and other Muslims.

Concurrence of increased number of individuals at risk, traffickers' ability to capitalise on competing crises, and diversion of resources to Covid-19 pandemic response efforts made ideal environment for human trafficking.

Countries were not categorised on the basis of magnitude of country's trafficking problem but on the basis of efforts they made to meet minimum standards of eliminating of human trafficking.

Three-tier system

Countries were designated on the basis of three-tier system:

Tier 1 countries- Countries where governments completely comply with minimum standards of Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). TVPA is US's law on human trafficking. USA, UK, Australia, Bahrain and South Korea are tier 1 countries.

Tier 2 countries– Countries whose governments do not comply with TVPA’s minimum standards completely. However, they are making efforts to comply with those standards. India is in this category.

Tier 3 countries– Countries where governments do not comply with minimum standards of TVPA and are not making significant efforts for same. Afghanistan, China, Burma, North Korea, Cuba, Eritrea, South Sudan, Iran, Russia, Syria and Turkmenistan are under this category.

Special Case– There are some “Special Cases” like Yemen where civil conflict and humanitarian crisis makes it difficult to gain information.

7. NewsOnAir Radio Live-stream Global Rankings

NewsOnAir Radio Live-stream Global Rankings was released recently ranking countries where All India Radio (AIR) live-streams on the NewsOnAir app are most popular.

In the latest Rankings of top countries in the world (excluding India) where All India Radio Live-streams on NewsOnAir App are most popular, Fiji has jumped from 5th position to 2nd, while Saudi Arabia has made a comeback in the top 10.

Kuwait and Germany are new entrants, while France and New Zealand are no more in the top 10. The United States continues to be number 1.

Rank	Country
1	United States
2	Fiji
3	Australia
4	United Kingdom
5	Canada
6	United Arab Emirates

7	Singapore
8	Kuwait
9	Saudi Arabia
10	Germany

8. Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021

Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021 was recently published by UN department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). It was launched at 2021 session of High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

Report highlights the impacts of COVID-19 on SDG implementation. It also identifies areas which require urgent and coordinated action. Report was prepared using data and estimates in Global SDG Indicators Database comprising of global, regional and country data & metadata on official SDG indicators.

Key findings of report

As per report, there has been progress in availability of internationally comparable data on SDGs. Number of indicators included in global SDG database has increased from 115 in 2016 to 211 in 2021. However, covid-19 pandemic has disrupted data operations like population censuses, worldwide.

SDG 1: Global poverty rate is estimated to be 7% in 2030, missing the target of eradicating poverty.

SDG 2: 22% of children under 5 are stunted, 6.7% suffer from wasting, while 5.7% are overweight.

SDG 3: covid-19 has halted or reversed progress in health. It has reduced life expectancy.

SDG 4: 9% of children in grades 1-8 have come below minimum reading proficiency levels in 2020.

SDG 5: 25.6% of national parliamentarians are women, 36.3% are local government representatives while 28.2% are occupied at managerial positions.

SDG 6: 2 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water and 3.6 billion people are deprived of safely managed sanitation.

SDG 7: 2.6 billion people are vulnerable to dangerous and inefficient cooking systems.

SDG 8: covid-19 led to loss of 255 million full-time jobs.

SDG 9: Manufacture of medium- and high-tech products contributed for economic recovery in 2020;

SDG 10: For every 100,000 persons, 311 are refugees in 2020.

SDG 11: Half of world's urban population has access to public transport.

SDG 12: Global material footprint has increased by 70% between 2000 and 2017.

SDG 13: Global average temperature was at 1.2 Degree Celsius in 2020.

SDG 14: Dead zones have increased from 400 in 2008 to 700 in 2019.

SDG 15: During 2000-2020, 100 million hectares of forest were lost.

SDG 16: Child labor has increased to 160 million in 2020. It accounted for first increase for two decades.

SDG 17: About 3.7 billion people (half of world's population) are still not online.

Facebook has announced to launch its new publishing tool called Bulletin with the aim of promoting independent writers. Bulletin would help and support these independent creators in United States.

- Bulletin will be providing support focused on content creation, monetisation and audience growth.
- Bulletin was launched in the backdrop of popularity of facebook's local Groups and Pages. Popularity of such pages has revealed that people are hungry for locally-relevant, longer-form content produced by expert and authoritative voices.
- Thus, bulletin would help these creators, and unify Facebook's other existing tools with something which could directly support great writing and audio content ranging from podcasts to Live Audio Rooms.

How Bulletin will work?

- Each Bulletin creator will be provided with website under their brand and they will be able to customise their publication's name, logo and colour palette.
- Creators will have the option to customise their articles with multi-media embeds and different styling options.
- It will help in connecting with more audiences with new and diverse voices and enable them to go deep into topics they care about.
- Bulletin content can be distributed in Facebook News and other discovery surfaces in order to help audiences easily find it and subscribe.
- It will comprise of tools to distribute podcasts, long-form writing, externally-

Science and Technology

1. Facebook's new publishing tool

hosted podcasts and additional audio features etc.

- Bulletin will be integrated with Facebook Pages to enable publishing across different multimedia formats.

2. Flipkart launches Shopsy to enable over 25 mn online entrepreneurs

Flipkart has launched Shopsy, an app that will enable Indians to start their online businesses without any investment. Flipkart aims to enable over 25 million online entrepreneurs by 2023 with the help of Shopsy.

Users of Shopsy will be able to share catalogues of a wide selection of 15 crore products offered by Flipkart sellers.

These users can share catalogues with potential customers via popular social media and messaging apps, place orders on their behalf and earn commissions on the transactions. These range across fashion, beauty, mobiles, electronics and home, with potential customers via popular social media and messaging apps.

Shopsy's objective is to power e-commerce for communities and third-party channels where these users spend time/trust.

3. ISRO gives nod to parliamentary panel to implement satellite TV classrooms

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has given its nod to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education to provide technical assistance for satellite TV classrooms in the country to bridge the learning gap due to COVID-induced lockdown.

ISRO scientists have appeared before the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Education and made a detailed presentation about the proposed satellite TV classroom for students.

4. Indian-American Sirisha Bandla set to fly into space

India-origin woman Sirisha Bandla will travel to the edge of the space aboard 'VSS Unity' of Virgin Galactic, which is scheduled to fly off on July 11 from New Mexico. This is significant as she will be the third woman of Indian origin to go to space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams.

Bandla, the vice-president of government affairs at Virgin Galactic in Washington DC, will travel alongside his boss and the group's founder, billionaire Richard Branson and four others in the company's spaceflight.

5. NASA receives first Sample of Asteroid Ryugu

American Space Agency, NASA, has received its first sample of asteroid Ryugu that returned to Earth in December 2020 by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Hayabusa2 spacecraft.

- Samples from asteroid Ryugu is one of the first samples to leave Japan for preliminary investigation.
- Mike Zolensky was one of the first scientists to examine these sample so as to determine its basic nature.
- Sample analyses were performed in Scanning Electron Microscopy Lab in Structural Engineering Division of Johnson.

What is asteroid Ryugu?

Asteroid Ryugu is also called as 162173 Ryugu. It is provisionally designated as 1999 JU3. It is a near-Earth object and a potentially hazardous asteroid belonging to Apollo group. It is approximately 1 kilometre in diameter. It is a dark object of rare spectral type Cb. It has qualities of C-type asteroid as well as B-type asteroid. Japanese spacecraft Hayabusa2 arrived at this asteroid in 2018. It left Ryugu for Earth in November 2019 after making

measurements and taking samples. It returned sample capsule to Earth in December 2020.

6. Scientists detect New Source of Gravitational waves

Scientists have detected gravitational waves produced by collision of neutron star and black hole for the first time.

- Gravitational waves ripples were detected in fabric of space-time.
- This finding shows that there are neutron star-black hole systems. This system will help in answering several questions regarding cosmos ranging from star formation to expansion rate of universe.

7. AI used to reveal Actual Shape of the Universe

Japanese astronomers have developed an artificial intelligence (AI) technique which will help in removing noise in astronomical data because of random variations in galaxy shapes.

- Technique was developed after extensive training and testing on large mock data that was created by supercomputer simulations.
- Scientists then applied this new technique to actual data from Japan's Subaru Telescope.
- They found that, mass distribution derived from this method is in consistent with currently accepted models of Universe.
- New technique is a powerful way to analyse big data from current and planned astronomy surveys.

8. DRDO gives licence to Laurus Labs to make & market 2-DG

Hyderabad-based pharma player Laurus Labs has received a licence from the Defence Research &

Development Organisation (DRDO) for manufacturing and marketing Covid-19 drug 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose (2-DG) in India.

The licence to Laurus Labs has been granted by DRDO as part of efforts to make the drug affordable and accessible to patients. DRDO had recently invited expression of interest (EoI) from other pharma companies for manufacturing this drug and had said it would grant licences to 15 companies on a first-come, first-served basis.

Meanwhile, the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research institution Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IIT) has been licencing the know-how for 2-DG synthesis to other companies, including Lee Pharma, Suven Pharma, Anthem Biosciences and Nosch Labs.

9. DBT-NIBMG creates world's 1st database of Oral Cancer variants

Department of Biotechnology (DBT) & National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG) has created a first of its kind database of genomic variation in oral cancer. NIBMG made this database accessible to public. Database is being called as dbGENVOC.

About dbGENVOC

- It is a free resource and a browsable online database of GENomic Variants of Oral Cancer. First release of dbGENVOC comprises of
 1. 24 million somatic and germline variants which have been derived from whole exome sequences of 100 oral cancer patients & whole genome sequences of 5 oral cancer patients.
 2. Somatic variation data from 220 patient samples were collected from USA and analyzed by TCGA-HNSCC project.

3. Variants were identified by community approved best practice protocol and were annotated with the help of multiple analytic pipelines.
- dbGENVOC is a catalogue of genomic variants as well as a built-in search engine. It allows a reasonable extent of statistical and bioinformatic analysis to be carried out such as identification of variants in associated altered pathways in oral cancer.
- It will be updated annually with variation data of new oral cancer patients from India southeast Asia.
- It will support advances in oral cancer research.

10. Virgin Galactic Space Flight soars into space

British billionaire, Richard Branson, soared for 50 miles above New Mexico desert on his Virgin Galactic rocket plane. He also made safe return in vehicle's first fully crewed test flight to space.

This Virgin Galactic Space Flight is a symbolic milestone for venture started by Richard Branson 17 years ago.

Branson was one of six Virgin Galactic Holding Inc employees who strapped in for space ride.

He has touted this mission as precursor to new era of space tourism, which was founded by company in 2004.

Its commercial operations would begin in 2022.

This launch of VSS Unity passenger rocket plane marks company's 22nd test flight of its SpaceShipTwo system. It was also the fourth crewed mission beyond Earth's atmosphere.

11. Cuba develops world's first conjugate Covid-19 vaccine

Cuba has developed world's first conjugate Covid-19 vaccine Soberana 2 (Sovereign 2).

- When the Soberana 2 vaccine is delivered with booster shot of Soberana Plus, it is 91 percent effective against symptomatic Covid-19 cases.
- If this vaccine is approved, Cuba will become first Latin American country to manufacture and produce vaccine against Covid-19.

12. Rare superluminous supernova spotted by Indian researchers

Indian researchers have spotted an extremely bright, hydrogen deficient, fast-evolving supernova (SN).

- The rare spotted supernova shines with energy borrowed from exotic type of neutron star having ultra-powerful magnetic field.
- Study on such ancient spatial objects can help in solving the mysteries of early universe.
- SN was spotted using special arrangements at India's Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT-3.6m), Sampurnanand Telescope-1.04m and Himalayan Chandra Telescope-2.0m.
- Researchers found that, outer layers of onion structured supernovae were peeled off while core was shining with a borrowed energy source.

13. Gaganyaan: ISRO successfully test fires liquid fuel engine

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted the third long duration hot test of liquid fuel powered, Vikas Engine.

- With this testing, ISRO has moved further for its first human space mission Gaganyaan.
- Third long duration hot test of liquid propellant Vikas Engine was conducted for core L110 liquid stage (engine) of human rated Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk III (GSLV Mk III).
- This test was a part of engine qualification requirements for Gaganyaan Programme.
- Engine was fired for 240 seconds at engine test facility of ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu.
- ISRO have planned to fly two human rated unmanned GSLV-Mk III rockets before sending Indian astronauts in third rocket.

Gaganyaan Mission

Gaganyaan Mission is planned by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Under the mission three flights will be sent into orbit. It will comprise of two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight. Gaganyaan system module called Orbital Module will carry three Indian astronauts, including a woman. Spaceflight will move around the Earth for 5 to 7 days at low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from Earth.

14. Rajnath Singh launches AI-based grievance analysis app “CPGRAMS”

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched a mobile application, called CPGRAMS to lodge grievances using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools.

The Raksha Mantri was briefed that this AI-powered application will automatically handle and analyse the complaints of the people and would reduce human intervention, save time and bring more transparency to their disposal.

This is the first AI-based system developed to improve grievance redressal in the Government.

The AI tool developed as part of the initiative has the capability to understand the content of the complaint based on the contents therein.

As a result, it can identify repeat complaints or spam automatically. Based on the meaning of the complaint, it can categorise complaints of different categories even when keywords normally used for such search are not present in the complaint.

15. Digital Platform “Kisan Sarathi” launched to facilitate farmers

In order to facilitate farmers to get ‘right information at right time’ in their desired language, a digital platform namely ‘KisanSarathi’ was launched jointly by Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

This initiative of KisanSarathi empowers farmers with technological interventions to reach farmers in remote areas.

The ICAR Scientists to take-up research on new technological interventions in the area of transportation of farmer’s crop from their farm gate to warehouses, markets and the places where they want to sell with minimum damage.

16. IISc-Mynvax’s heat-tolerant Covid vaccine

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru has developed a heat-tolerant COVID-19 vaccine formulation. While studying on animals, it was found to be effective against all current SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern.

- Research was published in ACS Infectious Diseases journal.
- This vaccine was formulated by IISc-incubated biotech start-up Mynvax, built a

strong immune response in mice. It also protected hamsters from virus.

- Vaccine also remained stable for up to a month at 37 degrees Celsius while at 100 degrees Celsius it remained stable for up to 90 minutes.

17. Google Cloud launches second 'Cloud Region' in India

Google Cloud has announced the launch of its new Cloud Region in Delhi NCR, for customers and the public sector in India and across the Asia Pacific.

With the new region, the customers operating in the country will benefit from lower latency and higher performance of their cloud-based workloads and data.

This new Google Cloud region is the second such in India after Mumbai and the 10th in Asia-Pacific.

As the second cloud region, customers are expected to benefit from improved business continuity planning, while maintaining data sovereignty. Totally, 26 Google Cloud regions are present across the world.

18. Pegasus spyware used to pry on Indian journalists, ministers

Pegasus spyware has been used to conduct surveillance on ministers, opposition leaders, journalists, government officials and scientists of India.

- Phone numbers of around 40 Indian journalists were found in a leaked list of potential targets for surveillance. Forensic tests done on the list has confirmed that an unidentified agency has successfully snooped some of them using the Pegasus software.

- Indian ministers, opposition leaders, government officials, and businessmen also figure in the leaked list of people.
- The leaked database has around 50,000 phone numbers from around the globe. Names of the others who have been suspected to have been targeted by using this software will be revealed later.
- This leaked database was accessed by Forbidden stories and Amnesty International and was shared with The Wire, Le Monde, The Guardian, The Washington Post and others as part of an investigation named the Pegasus Project.
- India was among the 10 countries in the list with the most numbers and Mexico topped the list with 15,000 numbers. A large share of the numbers was also from West Asian countries such as Bahrain, UAE, and Saudi Arabia, with Pakistan, Hungary and France being the other prominent countries on the list.

19. IIT Ropar develops first-of-its-kind Oxygen Rationing Device 'AMLEX'

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar has developed a first-of-its-kind Oxygen Rationing Device called AMLEX, to save the oxygen which otherwise gets wasted unnecessarily, and in turn, increase the life of medical oxygen cylinders three folds.

The device will supply a required volume of oxygen to the patient during inhalation and will trip when the patient exhales carbon dioxide.

“AMLEX”, on the other hand, was a system developed specifically for oxygen cylinders synchronising the flow of oxygen with inhalation and exhalation of the patient, thus conserving a large amount of oxygen in the reservoir for a long-lasting operation.

As “AMLEX” supplies a required volume of oxygen to the patient during inhalation and trips when the patient exhales CO₂, it saves the flow of oxygen at that time.

20. Jeff Bezos launches to space aboard New Shepard rocket ship

Billionaire Jeff Bezos has made a short journey to space, in the first crewed flight of his rocket ship, New Shepard. He was accompanied by Mark Bezos, his brother, Wally Funk, an 82-year-old pioneer of the space race, and an 18-year-old student.

They travelled in a capsule with the biggest windows flown in space, offering stunning views of the Earth. On this flight was the oldest person who has been to space, Wally Funk and the youngest, student Oliver Daemen.

When the capsule touched back down after the 10-minute, 10-second flight, Jeff Bezos exclaimed: “Best day ever!”.

New Shepard, built by Bezos’ company Blue Origin, is designed to serve the burgeoning market for space tourism.

21. NASA selects SpaceX for mission to Jupiter moon Europa

The US space agency NASA has selected California-based SpaceX to provide launch services for Earth’s first mission to conduct detailed investigations of Jupiter’s moon Europa.

The mission called ‘Europa Clipper mission is scheduled to be launched in October 2024 on a Falcon Heavy rocket from Launch Complex 39A at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Conduct a detailed survey of Europa to investigate whether the icy moon has conditions suitable for life, produce high-resolution images of Europa’s surface, determine its composition, look for signs of recent or ongoing geological activity, measure the

thickness of the moon’s icy shell, search for subsurface lakes, determine the depth and salinity of Europa’s ocean.

22. NEA Scout: NASA’s New Spacecraft

NASA has announced that its new spacecraft, NEA Scout, has successfully undergone all the required tests and has now been safely tucked inside the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket.

23. COVID BEEP-India’s first Physiological Parameters Monitoring System

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has said that the Government is taking various steps to undertake the large scale production of COVID BEEP.

COVID BEEP is the country’s first cost effective indigenously made wireless physiological parameters monitoring system for the patients who are suffering from COVID-19.

COVID BEEP has been developed by the ESIC Medical College Hyderabad in association with the Department of Atomic Energy and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. (ECIL).

40 COVID-BEEPs were supplied to the Government hospitals in Hyderabad for feedback and deployment.

Further, another 100 are being prepared to be dispatched by mid-August, 2021.

A proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Labour & Employment for the large scale deployment of COVID BEEPS.

24. ISRO to Launch a Satellite for Natural Disaster Monitoring this Year

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has planned to launch a satellite that will be used for monitoring natural disasters.

This satellite will be a geo-imaging satellite, EOS-3, which will be capable of near-real time

monitoring of various natural disasters like cyclones, floods etc.

It will be launched sometimes in the year 2021-22.

Not only natural disasters but this satellite will also be capable of imaging the country at least 4 to 5 times in a day and will also be able to monitor crops, water bodies, change in forest cover and vegetation condition.

The Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) developmental flight is scheduled in the fourth quarter of 2021 and it will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre located in Sriharikota.

25. Hubble Finds First Evidence of Water Vapor at Jupiter's Moon Ganymede

For the first time, astronomers have uncovered evidence of water vapour in the atmosphere of Jupiter's moon Ganymede. This water vapour forms when ice from the moon's surface sublimates that turns from solid to gas.

Scientists used new and archival datasets from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope to make the discovery, published in the journal Nature Astronomy.

In 1998, Hubble's Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph took the first ultraviolet (UV) images of Ganymede, which revealed colourful ribbons of electrified gas called auroral bands, and provided further evidence that Ganymede has a weak magnetic field.

The similarities in these UV observations were explained by the presence of molecular oxygen (O₂). But some observed features did not match the expected emissions from a pure O₂ atmosphere. At the same time, scientists concluded this discrepancy was likely related to higher concentrations of atomic oxygen (O).

26. IIT Hyderabad developed Covid RNA test kit called "COVIHOME"

India's first Rapid electronic Covid-19 RNA Test kit that allows self-testing at home called 'COVIHOME' has been developed by a research group at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad.

The kit has been validated by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology and can be used to check for Covid-19 trace at the comfort of home.

This test kit can produce results within 30 minutes for both symptomatic and asymptomatic patients.

The major benefit of this testing kit is that it does not require RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction), an expert human resource, and a BSL 2 lab facility for the extraction of RNA, so it has the potential for one to take the test at home without expert supervision.

The validation report confirmed the kit's efficiency at 94.2 per cent, Sensitivity 91.3 per cent and Specificity 98.2 per cent.

While a test currently costs around Rs 400, the developers say that mass production of the testing kit will help to reduce the cost to around Rs 300 per test.

Sports

1. Indian-origin American Abhimanyu Mishra becomes youngest ever chess Grandmaster

Indian-origin American Abhimanyu Mishra has become the youngest-ever chess Grandmaster in the world. At 12 years, four months and 25 days, he obliterated the long-standing record held by Sergey Karjakin, who was 12 years and seven months old when he attained the title.

Three years ago, India's R Praggnanandhaa had almost surpassed him but missed the opportunity by a whisker.

2. WAKO India Kickboxing Federation gets Government recognition

Sports Ministry has decided to recognise WAKO India Kickboxing Federation as a National Sports Federation (NSF) to promote and develop sport in India.

- WAKO India Kickboxing Federation is affiliated to World Association of Kickboxing Organizations (WAKO) which is a world body for kickboxing.
- Since November 30, 2020; WAKO has been a provisionally recognised member of International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- Recommendation to approve WAKO as fully recognised member of Olympic family was taken by IOC in June 2020.
- International Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive Board has approved recommendation for WAKO on June 10, 2021 to become a fully recognized member of Olympic family of sport.
- Full recognition of WAKO will be finally decided by IOC Session of July 2021 in Tokyo.

3. Maana Patel- First Indian Female Swimmer to qualify Tokyo 2020 Olympics

Maana Patel has become the first female and only the third swimmer from India to qualify Tokyo Olympics 2021 ticket.

Patel, 21, is a decorated athlete having won gold medals in 50 backstroke and 200 metre backstroke also at the National Games. She also clinched gold in 100 metre backstroke at the 60th National School Games (2015) breaking the national record in backstroke.

In 2015, Patel was selected for the Olympic Gold Quest, marking the first time a swimmer was roped

in. Three years later in 2018, Patel secured three gold medals at 72nd Senior National Aquatic Championships. At the Senior Nationals in Thiruvananthapuram in 2018, Patel swept all three backstroke events.

4. Norway's Karsten Warholm breaks men's 400 metres hurdles world record

Karsten Warholm, a 25-year-old athlete from Norway, broke the long-standing world record in the 400m hurdles during the Bislett Games. Earlier the record was held by American hurdler Kevin Young for 29 years.

His mark of 46.78 seconds was set at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, which was finally broken with an official time of 46.70 seconds by Warholm.

5. Mithali Raj surpasses Edwards to become highest run-getter

India captain Mithali Raj became the highest run-getter in women's cricket across formats, overtaking former England skipper Charlotte Edwards. Mithali became the world's most prolific batter in women's internationals, overtaking Edwards' 10,273 runs.

Suzie Bates of New Zealand is third with 7849 runs. Stafanie Taylor (7832) and Meg Lanning (7024) round up the top five.

Mithali achieved the feat during the third and final inconsequential ODI against hosts England while chasing 220 for a consolation win.

In 2020, Raj was named to the ICC's ODI team of the decade, a fitting honour for her consistency in the sport. She is also the most capped player in the history of the women's game, having featured in 11 Tests, 216 ODIs and 89 Twenty20 Internationals so far.

6. MC Mary Kom & Manpreet Singh named flag bearers at Tokyo Olympics

Boxer M.C. Mary Kom and men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh have been named for flag bearers at Tokyo Olympics from India.

- Both of them will be flag bearers for India at opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympics which is scheduled to get underway on July 23, 2021.
- Wrestler Bajrang Punia will be flag bearer at closing ceremony on August 8, 2021.
- This decision was communicated by Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to Organising Committee of Olympics Games.
- In 2016 games in Rio De Janeiro, India's lone individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony

Gender parity

In order to bring equality and parity among gender, International Olympic Committee had made provisions for flag bearers, at the executive board meeting, from both genders at the opening ceremony. IOC Executive Board also decided that, there should be at least one female and one male athlete in each of 206 teams and IOC Refugee Olympic Team which are participating at Games of the Olympiad.

7. James Anderson claims 1000th first-class wicket

Veteran England fast bowler James Anderson has added another feather to his cap as he completed 1000 wickets in first-class cricket. Anderson achieved the rare feat during Lancashire's County Championship clash against Kent in Manchester.

Anderson is the leading wicket-taker among pacers in Test cricket. In 162 Tests, the England great has claimed 617 wickets at an average of 26.67 with 30 five-fors and three 10-wicket match hauls.

Anderson is only the 14th player to claim 1,000 first-class wickets this century and only the fifth among pacers. Andy Caddick, Martin Bicknell, Devon Malcolm and Wasim Akram were the other pace bowlers to cross the 1000-wicket landmark before Anderson.

8. Udayan Mane: 2nd Indian golfer to qualify for Tokyo Olympics

Indian golfer, Udayan Mane, has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics 2020 which is scheduled to be organised in July & August 2021.

Udayan Mane is 30-year-old and has become 2nd Indian golfer to qualify for Tokyo Olympics.

He joined Anirban Lahiri in 60-player field in men's golf event.

Lahiri will be appearing at his second consecutive Olympic Games. He had also represented India at Rio 2016 Olympics along with SSP Chawrasia.

9. Wimbledon Championships 2021

S. No.	Category	Winner	Runner Up
1.	Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Matteo Berrettini
2.	Women's Singles	Ashleigh Barty (Australia)	Karolína Plíšková (Czech Republic)
3.	Men's Doubles	Nikola Pietrangeli and Mate Pavić	Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos
4.	Women's Doubles	Hsieh Su-wei and Elise Mertens	Veronika Kudermetova and Elena Vesnina
5.	Mixed Doubles	Neal Skupski and Desirae Krawczyk	Joe Salisbury and Harriet Dart

10. Indian-American Samir Banerjee has won the Wimbledon Junior Men`s title

Indian-American Samir Banerjee has won the Wimbledon Junior Men`s title at Number 1 Court. He defeated Victor Lilov of America by 7-5, 6-3 in the Junior Men`s finals to lift the trophy at All England Club.

For the first time since 2014, and only the second time since 1977, there was an all-American conclusion to the boys` singles event. Notably, both 17-year-olds were unseeded for The Championships.

11. Argentina beats Brazil to Lift Copa America 2021

Lionel Messi-led Argentina beat Neymar`s Brazil 1-0 to win the Copa America final match, held at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. With this win, Lionel Messi has secured his first major international trophy.

The 2021 Copa America was the 47th edition of the annual international men`s football championship organised by South America`s football ruling body CONMEBOL.

Earlier the tournament was scheduled to be held in July 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was the first time since 1991 that no guest nation took part in the tournament.

12. Sophie Ecclestone, Devon Conway win ICC Player of the Month Award

England Left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has been named as ICC Women Player of the Month for June. She is the second English female to win the title after Tammy Beaumont, who was awarded the title in February 2021.

In Men`s category, New Zealand opener Devon Conway has bagged ICC Player of the Month for

June. He became the first New Zealand player to win the award after an astounding first month in Test cricket.

13. 2022 Khelo India Youth Games to be held in Haryana

The state government of Haryana will organise the Khelo India Youth Games 2021 in February 2022.

Earlier the sports show was scheduled to be held from November 21 to December 5, 2021, but has been shifted due to the possible third wave of Covid-19 pandemic and keeping in mind that Khelo India Youth Games 2021 are to be held in the Under-18 category.

Around 8,500 players will participate in the event of which 5,072 will be athletes, including 2,400 females and 2,672 males.

14. Euro 2020 Final: Italy beat England on penalties

The European Championship final pits England and Italy against each other. Italy won 3-2 on penalties. Italy, one of the most decorated teams in the world, have ended a few years of trophy drought.

England, on the other hand, we`re in uncharted territory. They haven`t even reached a final since 1966. Italy has already reached the final twice in recent years — in 2000 and 2012 — whereas England hasn`t got close until now. Italy`s Goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma named player of UEFA EURO 2020.

15. Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo wins Golden Boot in EURO 2020

Portugal captain and modern-day great Cristiano Ronaldo won the Euro 2020 Golden Boot after finishing as the top-scorer in the tournament.

Despite playing just four games, Ronaldo clinched the top honours as he scored five goals.

Czech Republic's Patrik Schick also ended the tournament with five goals but the award went to Ronaldo via the tie-breaker of assists.

16. Deepak Kabra becomes first Indian gymnastics judge at Olympics

Deepak Kabra has become the first Indian to be selected for judging the gymnastics competition of the Olympic Games, a life goal achieved for the man who knew he wouldn't have made it there as an active gymnast because of his not-so-strong fundamentals.

He will be seen officiating the men's artistic gymnasts at the Tokyo Games, which gets underway on July 23.

17. India to host 2026 World Badminton Championships

The Badminton World Federation has allotted the BWF World Championships to India for 2026.

This will be the second time that India will host the premier tournament, which is held every year except for the Olympic year. India had hosted the BWF World Championships in Hyderabad in 2009.

Since then, India has played host to various major badminton tournaments including the 2014 Thomas and Uber Cup Finals, the Asian Championships apart from the annual BWF Super 500 event, the Yonex-Sunrise India Open.

18. Gokulam Kerala FC to represent India in AFC Women's Club C'ship

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has nominated Gokulam Kerala FC to represent India in the AFC Club Championship 2020-21.

The winners of the Women League compete in the tournament but since it will not be held, the national federation nominated the champions of the fourth edition.

Gokulam Kerala FC became the first team from Kerala to win a national title when they defeated Krypta FC in the 2019-20 Indian Women's League (IWL) finals in Bengaluru.

19. Lewis Hamilton wins British Grand Prix 2021

Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes-Great Britain), won the British Grand Prix 2021, for a record-extending eighth time. The event was held on July 18, 2021, at the Silverstone Circuit in the United Kingdom.

This is the 99th career win of seven times world champion Hamilton and the fourth win of the current season after 10 races. Monaco based Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) stood second. Hamilton's teammate Valtteri Bottas from Finland, finished third.

20. Sandesh Jhingan named AIFF men's Footballer of Year

Senior India defender, Sandesh Jhingan was named the AIFF men's Footballer of the Year 2020-21 season.

It is the first time that the towering central defender has received the AIFF Player of the Year award, having won the Emerging Player of the Year Award in 2014.

While midfielder Suresh Singh Wangjam was picked as the Emerging Player for the year award for 2020-21.

The 20-year-old Suresh, who made his Blue Tigers debut earlier this year against Oman, was part of the Indian side that competed at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017.

21. Madhya Pradesh Para Shooter Rubina Francis bags gold at Peru event

Madhya Pradesh shooter, Rubina Francis has set a world record at the ongoing Para Sport Cup in Peru.

She has won gold in the 10-meter air pistol para-event for women. Scoring 238.1 points, she went past the world record of Aysegul Pehlivanlar of Turkey. This win also secured her the quota for India at the Tokyo Summer Paralympics 2020.

Over the years, she has earned more than 15 medals from national and international events.

Presently, Rubina is training under the guidance of Jaspal Rana, former shooter and coach of the Junior Indian Pistol Shooting Team.

22. Ngangom Bala Devi named AIFF 'Women's Footballer of the Year' 2020-21

Indian Women's National Team Forward, Ngangom Bala Devi has been named as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) Women's Footballer of the Year 2020-21. Bala currently plays for Rangers Women's FC in Scotland.

She made her debut for the team in February 2020 and created history as she scored her first competitive goal for the side in December last year. She is the first Indian woman footballer to sign a professional contract with an overseas club in Europe.

Bala was a part of the Manipur U19 team that took part in the Under-19 Women's Championship in Assam in 2002, where she was declared the best player. She has also represented the Manipur Senior Women's Football Team in the India women's football championship.

23. Pramod Bhagat named Differently Abled Sportsman of the Year 2019

World No. 1 para shuttler Pramod Bhagat was named Differently Abled Sportsman of the Year at Indian Sports Honour for 2019. The delay in the announcement was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indian Sports Honours are awards given annually by the RPSG Group in association with the Virat Kohli Foundation to outstanding sports personalities of India. The awards were founded in 2017.

Bhagat, who won two gold medals and a bronze at the Dubai Para-Badminton Tournament this year, will be participating in singles and mixed doubles events at the Paralympics which opens in Tokyo from August 24.

24. China's Yang Qian Wins First Gold Medal of Tokyo Olympics

Yang Qian of China took gold in the women's 10m air rifle final to secure the first gold medal of the 2020 Summer Games at the Asaka Shooting Range on 24th July.

Anastasiia Galashina of Russia won silver, while Nina Christen of Switzerland won the bronze medal.

25. Tokyo 2020: Mirabai Chanu wins Silver in weightlifting

Mirabai Chanu won the silver medal and became the first Indian to win an Olympic medal at the 2020 Tokyo Games in the Women's 49kg category.

China's Zhihui Hou won the gold medal in the women's 49-kg weightlifting at the Tokyo Olympics, lifting a total of 210 kg, while Indonesia's Windy Cantika Aisah won the bronze medal.

Chanu managed to lift a total of 202 kg in the women's 49kg category to become the second Indian weightlifter after Karnam Malleswari to win an Olympic medal. A new Olympic record was registered by Mirabai Chanu with a successful lift of 115kg in clean and jerk.

26. Indian boxers win in Cadet World Championship

On 22nd July, 2021, young wrestlers from India Priya and Tannu became the latest world champions at the Cadet World Championship.

- Tannu en route to the 43kg title did not concede even a single point. She won three out of her four bouts by fall. This includes the final match against Valeryia Mikitsich of Belarus.
- Priya won the title in the 73kg category with a 5-0 win over Kseniya Patapovich of Belarus.
- Sagar Jaglan (80kg) and Aman Gulia (48kg) won titles in men's freestyle competition and this propelled the Indian team to the Team championship title which India won for the first time.
- Varsha, another participant from India, won the bronze medal in the 65kg category with a victory by fall against Duygu Gen of Turkey.
- India finished on top with 147 points, ahead of USA (143) and Russia (140).
- On Saturday, Komal will also be in contention for world title in the 46kg category final after having defeated ' Sviatlana Katenka of Belarus. She will be up against Ruzanna Mammadova of Azerbaijan.
- Harshita (69kg) and Nitika (61kg) lost their semi-final bouts and will not fight for the bronze medals in their respective categories.

27. Sumit Nagal: Third Indian to win Tennis singles match at Olympic

Sumit Nagal became only the third Indian tennis player to win a singles men's match at the Olympic Games. He became the first to win for India in 25 years. He edged past Denis Istomin in this match.

28. Priya Malik wins Gold at World Cadet Wrestling Championship

Indian Wrestler Priya Malik has won a Gold Medal at the 2021 World Cadet Wrestling Championship in Budapest, Hungary.

She defeated Kseniya Patapovich 5-0 in the summit clash of women's 73kg weight category to win the yellow medal.

The Indian team bagged as many as 13 medals, including 5 Golds at the Championship, to make the country proud.

29. Japan's Yuto Horigome wins first ever Olympic gold medal in skateboarding

Japan's Yuto Horigome has won the first-ever skateboarding competition at the Olympic Games, taking gold in men's street event at the Ariake Urban Sport in Tokyo. Yuto overcame a shaky start to pocket the gold with 37.18 points.

Kelvin Hoefler of Brazil won silver in the men's street skating competition, while Jagger Eaton of the United States clinched the bronze.

Skateboarding's inclusion into the Olympics marks a turning point for the sport, which has its roots in youth street culture and has influenced everything from art to fashion.

30. Momiji Nishiya becomes one of the youngest gold medal winners in Olympic

Japan's Momiji Nishiya became one of the youngest individual Olympic champions in history when she won the inaugural women's skateboarding gold at the age of 13 years and 330 days.

Rayssa Leal (13 years and 203 days) of Brazil won silver and Funa Nakayama (16 years) of Japan clinched the bronze.

The youngest gold medalist was Team USA's Marjorie Gestring at the 1936 games in Berlin.

Gestrung, only 13 years and 268 days old at the time, won gold in the women's diving competition.

31. Four new sports in Tokyo Olympics

Four new sports have been introduced in the Tokyo Olympics. They are karate, skateboarding, surfing and sport climbing.

32. Mariyappan Thangavelu named flag-bearer for Tokyo Paralympics

Top para high-jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu was named the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the Tokyo Paralympics, which begins on August 24.

Thangavelu, who is defending the T-42 gold he had won in the 2016 Rio Paralympics during the August 24 to September 5 showpiece in Tokyo, was picked for the honour by the executive committee of the national body.

The 25-year-old Thangavelu, who was conferred with the Khel Ratna, the country's highest sporting award, last year is one of the 24 para-athletes picked by the selection committee for the Tokyo Paralympics.

Thangavelu, who hails from Salem district in Tamil Nadu, suffered a permanent disability at the age of five when a bus crushed his right leg below the knee.

33. Jaipur to get India's second-largest cricket stadium

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) released a financial grant of Rs 100 crore to the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA), which will be used to build India's second-largest cricket stadium.

The facility, which will be second to the recently inaugurated Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, is set to be built in Jaipur. The construction of the new stadium is likely to be

completed within 24-30 months from commencement.

Meanwhile, an amount of Rs 290 crores has been estimated to be spent on the construction of the second-largest cricket stadium in India.

This amount will be sourced from; Rs 100 crore from the bank loan, Rs 100 crore from BCCI grant, Rs 90 crore from RCS funds, sale of boxes, seats & sponsorship. The proposed stadium will have a spectator capacity of 75,000.

34. ICC welcomes Mongolia, Tajikistan and Switzerland as new members

The International Cricket Council (ICC) inducted Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Switzerland as members at its 78th Annual General Meeting. Mongolia and Tajikistan as the 22nd and 23rd members of the Asia region.

Switzerland is Europe's 35th member. With the ICC now comprising 106 members in total, including 94 associates.

35. Viswanathan Anand wins Sparkassen Trophy

Viswanathan Anand defeated Vladimir Kramnik to win the Sparkassen Trophy at Dortmund. Anand needed only a draw in the final game of the No-Castling Chess event, and he got it in 40 moves.

Kramnik, who conceived this variant of chess with the intention of making the game less predictable and more dynamic, however, was forced to draw the game by giving perpetual checks. Anand was just one move away from putting a second queen on the board.

36. Australia's Brisbane to Host 2032 Olympic and Paralympic games

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has voted the Australian city of Brisbane as the host

city for the 2032 Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games.

Brisbane is the third Australian city to host the Olympic Games after Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000.

With this, Australia will also become the only second country in the world, after the United States, to stage the summer Olympic Games in three different cities.

37. Aman Gulia and Sagar Jaglan become cadet world champions

Young wrestlers Aman Gulia and Sagar Jaglan emerged as the new world champions in their respective categories as India dished out an impressive show on the second day of the Cadet World Championship 2021 at Budapest, Hungary.

Gulia emerged the winner with a convincing 5-2 win over American Luke Joseph Lilledahl in a 48kg final while Jaglan blanked James Mockler Rowley 4-0 in the 80kg summit clash.

38. New Motto of the Olympics

On 20th July, 2021, “Faster, Higher, Stronger,” the Olympic motto was updated to “Faster, Higher, Stronger – Together”. This updating was done to show solidarity around the globe at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

39. Vantika Agarwal wins National Women Online Chess Title

Delhi youngster Vantika Agarwal has won the National women online chess title. From 11 rounds she scored 9.5 points.

Demise

1. Editor of ‘Sudharma’ Sanskrit Daily, K.V. Sampath Kumar Passes Away

Editor of ‘Sudharma’ Sanskrit Daily, K.V. Sampath Kumar has passed away. He, along with his wife,

was selected for the Padma Shri honour from the Government of India in 2020 for his contribution to the field of Literature & Education.

He has also received several awards like the Siddharudha award, the Shivaratri Deshikendra Media award, the Abdul Kalam award and others.

Sampath Kumar’s father Pandit Varadaraja Iyengar had launched ‘Sudharma’ in 1970. Sudharma is the only Sanskrit Daily in the world, printed and published from Mysuru.

2. Former India footballer Prasannan passes away

Former Indian footballer M Prasannan has passed away. A gifted midfielder of the 1970s, he shared the dressing room with stalwarts of Indian football like Inder Singh and Doraiswamy Natraj.

He played for Kerala, Maharashtra, and Goa in Santosh Trophy National Football Championship.

3. Legendary Bollywood actor Dilip Kumar passes away

Legendary Bollywood actor Mohammed Yusuf Khan, known professionally as Dilip Kumar passed away at 98. He was popularly known as the tragedy king of Bollywood. He was last seen in the 1998 film Qila.

He was the first actor to win the Filmfare Award for Best Actor in 1954 and won it a total of 8 times. He and Shah Rukh Khan jointly hold the record for most Filmfare trophies.

4. 1983 World Cup winning former India cricketer Yashpal Sharma passes away

Former Indian cricketer, Yashpal Sharma, who was a member of the Indian team that won the 1983 Cricket World Cup, has passed away.

He represented India in 37 Tests and 42 ODIs. He was a middle-order batsman, who played during the 1970s and 80s. The Punjab-born cricketer had

represented three teams in Ranji including Punjab, Haryana and Railways.

5. Former WWE Wrestler ‘Mr. Wonderful’ Paul Orndorff passes away

The renowned American professional wrestler, Paul Orndorff, who is best known with his nickname Mr. Wonderful, has passed away.

He was one of professional wrestling’s biggest stars of the 1980s and was famous for his appearances with the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and World Championship Wrestling (WCW). He retired in 2000. He was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2005

6. Pulitzer Prize-winning Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui passes away

Pulitzer Prize-winning Indian photojournalist, Danish Siddiqui, has passed away, after he was killed in a clash while reporting a fight between Afghan troops and the Taliban in Spin Boldak district of Kandahar province in Afghanistan on July 13, 2021.

He was employed with the international news agency Reuters. He was a recipient of the prestigious Pulitzer Prize with six others working as a photographer with Reuters news agency in 2018.

7. India’s oldest student Bhageerathi Amma passes away at 107

Bhageerathi Amma, the oldest woman in India to take the equivalency exams, has passed away due to age-related ailments. She was 107-years-old.

Amma, who hailed from the Kollam district of Kerala, decided to continue her education at the age of 105.

Amma had quit formal education in class three, when she was 9 years old. The centenarian was felicitated with the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar

by the central government for her exceptional contribution towards women’s empowerment.

8. Arjuna Award-winning Badminton Legend Nandu Natekar passes away

Legendary Indian badminton player Nandu Natekar, who became the first Indian to win the international title in 1956, has passed away.

He won over 100 national and international titles for India in his career spanning 15 years. He was the recipient of the first Arjuna Award, instituted in 1961.

In 1956, Natekar won the Men’s Singles title in the Selangor International Tournament in Kuala Lumpur to win the first international title by an Indian badminton player.

Awards

1. ‘Decoding Shankar’, wins at Toronto International Women’s Film Festival

Freelance filmmaker Deepti Pillay Sivan’s most touted documentary, “Decoding Shankar” about the life and career of the celebrated musician Shankar Mahadevan, recently won the Best Film Award in the Documentary section (Best Biographical) at the Toronto International Women Film Festival, 2021.

The 52-minute docu-film released a few years ago is a sketch of the life of the prolific musician focusing on how he balances his career as a singer, music composer, and teacher. The film gives interesting tidbits about his family life and shares interesting moments about his passion for cooking.

2. Odia poet Rajendra Kishore Panda bags Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar

The Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar, the national award instituted in memory of late poet laureate Kuvempu, has been awarded to renowned Odia poet Dr. Rajendra Kishore Panda for the year 2020.

The prestigious award carries a cash award of Rs 5 lakh, a silver medal, and a citation. Founded in 1992, Rashtrakavi Kuvempu Trust instituted this national annual literary award in 2013 in the name of Kuvempu to recognize litterateurs who had contributed in any language recognized by the Constitution of India.

3. Invest India won the most innovative Investment Promotion Agency 2021 award

Invest India has been awarded the world's most innovative Investment Promotion Agency 2021 by OCO Global. OCO Global is a leading authority on foreign investment and offers a range of economic development services, products, and unique company assessment tools.

Invest India, set up in 2009, is a non-profit venture under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

4. 52nd IFFI to be held in November 2021 in Goa

The 52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will be held in Goa from 20th -28th November 2021. The regulations and poster for the 52nd IFFI were released by Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar.

On the occasion of the birth centenary of the maestro of Indian cinema Shri Satyajit Ray, the "Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema" has been instituted from this year to be given at the IFFI every year starting from this year.

5. Korean Air wins Air Transport World's Airline of the Year Award

Korean Air has been announced the winner of one of the most prestigious honours in the aviation industry: Air Transport World's (ATW) 2021

Airline of the Year. This year's award is even more meaningful to Korean Air, as the global industry has been suffering from the unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19.

The company's excellent leadership, its ability to remain operationally profitable through the industry's worst-ever crisis, its strong commitment to health safety customer service excellence, and its remarkable relationship with employees."

The judges also noted the airline's "transformational strategic deal to incorporate Asiana and create a larger, more global flagship carrier. Korean Air plans to continue to strengthen its position in the global aviation industry and aims to become one of the world's top 10 airlines after successfully acquiring and integrating Asiana Airlines.

6. Zaila Avant-garde Wins 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee

Zaila Avant-garde, an African-American, from New Orleans in Louisiana, has won the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The 14-year-old Avant-garde, who is also an accomplished basketball player, is the first African-American contestant to win the prestigious competition in its 93 years history.

The 8th-grader Avant-garde correctly spelt "Murraya", a genus of tropical Asiatic and Australian trees having pinnate leaves and flowers, to win a USD 50,000 prize.

Scripps National Spelling Bee is an annual spelling bee held in the United States, for children of South Asian descent, to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives.

7. National Film Archive of India adds Aamir Khan's 'PK' to its collection

National Film Archive of India (NFAI) has announced a significant addition of the original camera negative of Rajkumar Hirani's 2014 film 'PK' in its collection.

The filmmaker handed the negatives over to Director NFAI, Prakash Magdum, in Mumbai.

The National Film Archive of India was established as a media unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 1964.

8. Syed Osman Azhar Maqsusi won Commonwealth Points of Light award

Hyderabad's hunger activist Syed Osman Azhar Maqsusi, who has been feeding thousands of people every day as part of his food drive 'Hunger Has No Religion' was awarded a top UK award recently.

In order to honour Maqsusi's efforts, he was conferred with the Commonwealth Points of Light award for his drive that helps to feed 1,500 people on a daily basis. The award is for those 'outstanding individuals who are making a change in their community.'

9. Journalist N N Pillai honoured with BKS Literary Award

Journalist and playwright Omchery N N Pillai has been selected for the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS)'s Literary Award for 2021. BKS president P V Radhakrishna Pillai, general secretary Varghese Karackal and literary wing secretary Firoz Thiruvathra announced the award.

The Jury was headed by the novelist M Mukundan. Literary critic Dr K S Ravikumar, writer and Kerala Chief Secretary Dr V P Joy, and Radhakrishna Pillai were part of the jury. The award constitutes a cash prize of ₹50,000 and a citation acknowledging the achievement.

The award ceremony will be held later in Delhi. "His enormous contributions as a whole to

Malayalam language and literature are remarkable, which ultimately led to this award.

10. Cannes Film Festival 2021

Palme d'Or: Julia Ducournau for Titane (France)

Grand Prix (TIE): Ashgar Farhadi for A Hero (Iran) and Juho Kuosmanen for Compartment No.6 (Finland)

Best Director: Leos Carax Annette (France)

Best Actress: Renate Reinsve for Worst Person in the World (Norway)

Best Actor: Caleb Landry Jones for Nitram (US)

Best Screenplay: Hamaguchi Ryusuke and Takamasa Oe for Drive My Car (Japan)

Jury Prize (TIE): Shared by Nadav Lapid for AHEAD'S KNEE (Israel) and Apichatpong Weerasethakul for Memoria (Thailand)

Best First Film: Antoneta Kusijanovic for Murina (Croatia)

Best Short Film: Hong Kong's All The Crows In The World Tang Yi

Short Film Palme d'Or: Tian Xia Wu Ya by Tang Yi

Special Jury Mention for Short Film: Ceu de Agosto by Jasmin Tenucci

11. Bangladesh Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus to get Olympic Laurel

Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Prize winner, Muhammad Yunus will receive the Olympic Laurel at the Tokyo Games, the second time the trophy will be awarded.

Yunus, whose pioneering micro-lender has been hailed for cutting poverty across the globe, will be honoured for "his extensive work in sport for development. The 81-year-old economist-turned-

globe-trotting celebrity speaker won the Nobel in 2006.

He will be given the award at the Tokyo 2020 opening ceremony on July 23. The Olympic Laurel was created five years ago to recognise endeavours in culture, education, peace and development through sport.

It was given for the first time at the 2016 Rio Games to Kenyan former Olympian Kip Keino, who opened a children's home, a school and an athletes' training centre in his home country.

12. India's Payal Kapadia wins best documentary award in Cannes 2021

Director Payal Kapadia's, "A Night of Knowing Nothing" won the Oeil d'or (Golden Eye) award for best documentary at the 74th Cannes Film Festival.

The Mumbai-based filmmaker's first feature bagged the prestigious prize in a formidable field made up of 28 documentaries presented across various sections of the festival. A Night of Knowing Nothing screened as part of the Directors' Fortnight, a section that runs parallel to the festival.

The award was instituted in 2015 by LaScam (the French-Speaking Writers' Society) and Bertuccelli in collaboration with the Cannes Film Festival and its general delegate Thierry Fremaux.

13. 2-Indian organisations win UNDP Equator Prize 2021

Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited and Snehakunja Trust are among the 10 awardees of the prestigious Equator Prize 2021 for their work in the field of conservation and biodiversity.

The UNDP gives a biennial award to recognize community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited is a 1,700-member cooperative, managed and run entirely by indigenous people from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in Tamil Nadu and its work in the past eight years has improved livelihood across 147 villages by processing and marketing a diverse range of forest produce and crops.

Snehakunja Trust has protected sensitive wetland and coastal ecosystems in the Western Ghats and the Karnataka coast for 45 years with a focus on community-based restoration and conservation.

14. Shibaji Banerjee to be conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna posthumously

Former India and Mohun Bagan shot-stopper Shibaji Banerjee, who famously denied Brazil's legendary football player Pele from scoring a goal in an exhibition match in 1977, will be conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna posthumously.

The friendly match against New York Cosmos at the iconic Eden Gardens ended in a thrilling 2-2 draw. Banerjee played for Bagan for 11 years and died at the age of 68 four years ago.

15. Cachar district received the National Silver SKOCH award

Cachar Deputy Commissioner, Keerthi Jalli received the National Silver SKOCH Award a few days ago for 'Pushti Nirbhor' (nutrition-dependent), a convergence project on transformation and development entailing setting up Nutri-gardens at houses in Dinnathpur Bagicha village.

The village is near the India-Bangladesh border in the Katigorah circle of the Cachar district.

30,000 seedlings of vegetables, fruits and herbal plants were distributed among 140 beneficiaries.

Each household of the village was also given payment for 75 man-days to implement the project.

The main objective was to train the villagers toward becoming self-reliant during the pandemic, grow enough for their own nutritional needs and sell the surplus in the markets.

Instituted in 2003, SKOCH Award salutes people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.

16. Sunjeev Sahota among 13 contenders for fiction's Booker Prize

Indian-origin British author, Sunjeev Sahota is among the 13 authors longlisted for the prestigious 2021 Booker Prize for fiction for his novel 'China Room', alongside Nobel laureate Kazuo Ishiguro and Pulitzer Prize winner Richard Powers.

The 2021 longlist or "The Booker Dozen" of 13 novels was unveiled after judges evaluated 158 novels published in the UK or Ireland between October 1, 2020, and September 30, 2021.

A six-book shortlist will be announced on September 14, and the winner will be crowned on November 3 during a ceremony in London.

17. Asha Bhosle to get prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan award 2021

The Maharashtra Bhushan Selection Committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has unanimously selected legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle for the prestigious award.

Asha Bhosle is best known for her playback singing in Hindi cinema, although she has a wider repertoire. Bhosle's career started in 1943 and has spanned over seven decades. She has done playback singing for over a thousand movies.

Asha Bhosle was officially acknowledged by the Guinness Book of World Records as the most recorded artist in music history. The Government of India honoured her with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2000 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2008. Bhosle is the sister of playback singer Lata

Mangeshkar and belongs to the prominent Mangeshkar family.

18. Vaidehi Dongre from Michigan crowned as Miss India USA

Vaidehi Dongre, a 25-year-old girl from Michigan, has been crowned Miss India USA 2021 at the beauty pageant.

Arshi Lalani from Georgia was declared the first runner up and North Carolina's Mira Kasari was declared the second runner up.

Dongre, who has majored in international studies, won the 'Miss Talented' title in the pageant for giving a flawless performance of Indian classical dance from Kathak.

19. Cyrus Poonawala to receive Lokmanya Tilak Award

The founder of the Serum Institute of India (SII) in Pune, businessman Cyrus Poonawalla has been named the winner of the prestigious National Lokmanya Tilak Award 2021.

He will be commended for his work during the COVID-19 pandemic and how his company helped save many lives by creating the Covishield vaccine and then making provided the medicine to the citizens of the country at an affordable price.