



CURRENT A F F A I R S

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Current Affairs January, 2021

National

1. The Assam assembly recently passed the Assam Ease of Doing Business (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The bill makes amendments to the Assam ease of doing business act, 2016. The amendment will avail 0.25% additional borrowing from the centre. The new bill will simplify procedures and bring transparency and efficiency in the system. Under the new Amendment Bill, the government has committed to create an investor friendly atmosphere in the state of Assam.

2. The cabinet of Punjab recently approved the Punjab state data policy. The policy aims to track progress and provide citizens access to services. With this Punjab has now become the first state in India to formulate a comprehensive data policy. The Punjab state data policy will leverage data and technology to optimize Service Delivery and citizen access. It will also increase the participation of citizens through user friendly and secure e-governance systems.

3. Delhi government recently announced that it is to set up a Tamil Academy to protect the Tamil language and culture. The Ex-Councilor N Raja has been appointed as the vice chairman of the newly set up Tamil Academy. The newly created Tamil Academy will organise Tamil language classes, give new awards and organise cultural events to promote and recognise literary works in Tamil.

4. More than 1700 migratory birds died in Pong Dam of Himachal Pradesh under mysterious circumstances. The scientist believe that the birds would have died of viral or bacterial infections. Also, they believe that it might be a flu as the birds are dying in large numbers. The forest officials have collected more than 15 samples from different locations. These samples have been sent to Indian veterinary Research Institute in Uttar Pradesh Bareilly, high security animal disease laboratory is situated in Bhopal and to the northern regional disease Diagnostic laboratory in Jalandhar to determine the cause of death.

5. Every year, the World Braille Day is celebrated on January 4 by United Nations and several other international organizations. The day is celebrated

to create awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the realization of human rights for the blind. It is celebrated on January 4 because the day marks the birthday of Louis Braille, the creator of this writing system. He was born in France in 1809.

6. The National Human Rights Commission recently made recommendations to achieve Zero Manual Scavenging in the country. According to the National Human Rights Commission, several States make tall claims that they have achieved zero manual scavenging and Nil sanitary latrines. However, based on regional workshops held by the National Human Rights Commission the claims are far from the truth. Therefore the commission has recommended certain regulations to be followed while reporting by the concerned authorities.

7. The World Health Organisation recently announced that the United Kingdom covid-19 variant has been detected in more than 41 countries. The was first detected in South Africa. This variant is 70% more transmissible than the other covid-19 mutants. Yes. Around 38 people have been found infected with the mutant. It has been detected in 10 samples at the National Institute of Mental Health and neurosciences, 11 samples at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB), three samples at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad and in 5 samples at the National Institute of Virology, Pune.

8. The World bank, Government of India and Government of West Bengal recently signed a 105 million US the agreement. The fund has been allocated to the West Bengal inland water transport, logistics and special development project. According to the agreement the one hundred and five million USD fund is to be used to improve the inland water transport infrastructure in Kolkata, West Bengal.

9. The Delhi Government recently issued guidelines to reduce the weight of school bags of students in the National Capital Region under its

Delhi School Bag Policy. According to the new Delhi School Bag Policy, the weight of the school bag of students between Class 1 and Class 10 should not be more than 10% of their body weight. The policy suggests that the schools should follow and use textbooks prescribed by NCERT, SCERT and CBSE only.

10. The IRDAI is to introduce standard products covering the risk of fire and allied perils. The policy being introduced is to replace the Standard Fire and Special Perils Policy. It has three main components namely the Bharat Griha Raksha, Bharat Laghu Udyam Suraksha and Bharat Sookshma Udyam Suraksha. Under the Bharat Griha Raksha policy, the IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India) will introduce a standard home insurance policy that will cover risk of fire and other related dangers.

11. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) recently released its Statement on Climate of India during 2020. According to IMD, 2020 was the eighth warmest year on record since 1901. Around twelve out of fifteen warmest years since 1901 were between 2006 and 2020. The rainfall as a whole during South West Monsoon was above normal. It was 109% of the Long Period Average (calculated between 1961 and 2010).

12. The Government of India recently formed a committee to protect language, land, culture of Ladakh and ensure participation of citizens in the development of Union Territory. The Committee is to be headed by Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy. It will include elected representatives from Ladakh, central government and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development council.

13. The Union environment Minister shri Prakash Javadekar recently released Management Effectiveness Evaluation report of 146 National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries. The report is first of its kind in the country. Around 60% of leopard population, 70% of Asiatic lions and 70% of global tiger population are the main reasons for the thriving of the National parks and wild life sanctuaries in the country.

14. The Henley Passport Index was launched by the International air Transport Association. Around 227 different travel destinations are considered to launch the index. The index is released based on the number of destinations the holders can access without visa. Nepal at rank 104 and Pakistan at 107 continue to be the "Worst passports to hold" category. Pakistan had a visa-free score of 32 countries and Nepal had a score of 38 countries.

15. The National Board of Wildlife recently approved advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management. The advisory empowers the Gram Panchayats to deal with problematic wild animals according to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. It encourages to use the crop compensation allocated under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana against crop damage due to human-wildlife conflict. The Inter-Departmental Committees at state and local level should adopt early warning systems and dedicate circle wise control rooms. They should operate toll free numbers that could be operated 24/7.

16. The entomologists from all over the world attended the proceedings of National Academies of Sciences recently. According to the entomologists, the insect population is declining at rapid rate. The scientists have named this as Insect Apocalypse. The Earth is losing 2% of its insects every year. This is being termed as "Insect Apocalypse". Insects outweigh humanity by seventeen times. They are essential for the proper functioning of the ecosystem as pollinators, food for other creatures and as recyclers of nutrients.

17. Every year the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated on January 9. It is important to celebrate the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas as it reconnects the Non-Resident Indians with their roots. Also, it celebrates their achievements. It acknowledges the difficulties faced by the Indian expatriate workers living abroad. The day acts as a platform to create a network of NRIs in all the countries and connect the younger generation with immigrants. This will help the immigrants to evolve and contribute significantly to the development of the country.

18. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address National Youth Parliament. The top winners of the National Youth Parliament will speak before the Prime Minister on January 12 valedictory function. It is held on January 12 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Also, the Government of India celebrates the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day.

19. The One Planet Summit was held on January 11, 2021. The summit aims to advance the protection of nature. The One Planet summit is an international event that focused on biodiversity to mobilize commitments to protect the ecosystems and make links to human health. The One Planet Summit aims to promote worldwide ecological transformation. The summit will measure environmental and climate protection combined with innovation and economy.

20. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to interact with the startups and address Startup India International Summit, Prarambh. The Startup India International Summit is organised by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The summit is being organised as a follow-up of the announcement made by the prime minister Modi at the 4th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic cooperation, BIMSTEC Summit held in 2018 at Kathmandu, Nepal. During the Summit India also committed to host the BIMSTEC Startup Conclave.

21. The Supreme Court recently cleared the Central Vista Project that covers a three kilo metre stretch between the Rashtrapati Bhavan and India Gate. Following this, the Heritage Conservation Committee has approved the construction of a new parliament. The Heritage Conservation Committee is set up under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Urban Affairs under the provisions of Section 23 in Delhi Building Byelaws, 1983 to protect heritage buildings. Only buildings in and around Delhi are governed by these laws. Similar conservation committees are set up at state levels as well. The local authority should consult the Heritage Conservation Committee before granting

permission. The heritage buildings are graded by the Heritage Conservation Committee for developmental activities.

22. The University Grants Commission (UGC) recently asked the higher education institutes across the country to establish an office for international affairs. The Office of International Affairs will be an integral part of internationalisation of higher education in India. They will be responsible for academic and research collaborations with foreign institutes. The Offices will act as a liaison body between foreign students and sponsoring agency.

23. With the assembly elections are to be held in Tamil Nadu in 2021, Jallikattu, a traditional bull-taming sport of the state has caught the attention of the political parties in the country. The Congress leader Rahul Gandhi recently attended the Jallikattu event. The Jallikattu is a two-thousand-year-old competitive sport and an event that honours bull owners who rear them for mating. It is a violent sport. During Jallikattu, the contestants try to tame the bull for a prize. If the contestants fail, the bull owner wins the prize.

24. Nine former officials who served in the Michigan, US and the state's former governor Rick Snyder were recently charged in connection with a criminal investigation into the Flint Water crisis. The Flint Water Crisis is an ongoing investigation on public health crisis. The issue began when the City of Flint in the state of Michigan shifted its water supply from Lake Huron to Flint river. The city has a population of 100,000 people. The shift caused water distribution pipes to corrode. This resulted in leaching of lead and other contaminants into the municipal drinking water. The city suffered from an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease due to the leaching of lead. This is referred to as Flint Water crisis.

25. The Ministry of Railways recently approved a new Iron Ore Policy. The policy is to come into effect on February 10, 2021. The Iron Ore Policy governs the allocation of rakes and transportation of iron-ore. The rake allotment system module is to be updated by the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS). The policy will

provide high priority to the movement of iron-ore for domestic manufacturing activity. Within the domestic movement, higher priority is to be provided to steel, sponge iron, pig iron, pellet or sinter plant owning customers with private sliding at loading and unloading ends. These customers will be followed by those with private sliding of their own and relying on public goods sheds.

26. The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) recently celebrated its 6th annual day on January 15, 2021. The annual day is celebrated on January 15 because CARA was granted the status of statutory body on this day under Section 68 of the Juvenile Justice act, 2015. Central Adoption Resource Authority operates under the Ministry of Women and Child development. It acts as the nodal body for the adoption of Indian children. It monitors and regulate inter country and in country adoptions.

27. The Allahabad High Court recently ruled that couples planning to marry under Special Marriage Act shall choose not to publish thirty-day notice before registering their marriage. According to the judgement, the provisions of the act invade the fundamental rights of liberty and privacy. That is, putting a prior notice that provides the details of the bride and groom invades their privacy.

28. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in his addressed to the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 said that by the year 2030, India will target 450 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity. He also said that India is promoting the LED lights and is also saving 38 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. He also highlighted that, by 2030 India will restore 26 million hectares of degraded land.

29. The annual event Bharat Parv that celebrates the spirit of India is being organised virtually from January 26, 2021 till January 31, 2021. Bharat Parv is being organised with the overall theme focusing on the Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat. Under the virtual event, themed pavilions of States and Union Territories will showcase their tourism destinations, handicrafts, cuisine and other features.

30. India and the United Kingdom recently held the 14th meeting of the India-United Kingdom Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. The meeting was held virtually on January 21-22, 2021. Under the meeting, both the nations strongly condemned the terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Both the countries emphasized on the demand of strengthening the international cooperation so that they could combat the global problem of terrorism completely besides combating the cross-border terrorism in South Asia.

31. The Government of India is to use Rapid Assessment System for the feedback on COVID-19 vaccination. The system sends SMS to people vaccinated in a span of four days. It sends SMS with ID AX-GOVRAS and asks citizens if social distancing was maintained at vaccination sites, if information about adverse effects of vaccination was provided, etc. The information such as names and mobiles numbers of the people vaccinated are received by Rapid Assessment System from Co-WIN platform.

32. The government of Maharashtra has decided to start a 'jail tourism' from the Yerwada prison of Pune. It will start on January 26, 2021. This initiative is being launched in the state with the aim of facilitating the people to visit and see the historical prisons in the state. This is being done as memories of many freedom fighters who were once imprisoned in the jail have been preserved. Some of the freedom fighter who were imprisoned in Yerwada jail under the British rule include Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Lokmanya Tilak, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose.

33. The Supreme Court recently upheld the validity of Section 32 A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. Under its judgement, the apex court pronounced that the successful bidders for a corporate debtor will be immune from any investigations conducted by an investigating agency (like Enforcement Directorate or other statutory bodies such as SEBI) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

34. The Oxfam has recently published its report titled "The Inequality Virus". In its report, the Oxfam finds that the COVID-19 pandemic has deepen the existing inequalities in India and across the world. As per the report, the pandemic has stalled the economy that in turn has forced millions of poor Indians out of job. However, the richest billionaires in India have increased their wealth by 35 percent during the lockdown. Thus, India has been ranked at sixth in the world following the US, China, Germany, Russia and France.

35. The National Non-Communicable Disease Monitoring Survey (NNMS) was recently released in India by the Ministry of health. The survey was conducted for the period of 2017-18. This is the first of its kind of a comprehensive survey on NCDs. It covers the age groups of 15-69 years, males and females from the urban and rural areas. It is the largest comprehensive national Survey on risk factors and health systems preparedness of non-communicable disease (NCD). It also provides framework on the use of telemedicine for cancer, heart diseases, diabetes, and stroke. The survey was conducted with the purpose of collecting the reliable baseline data on key indicators such as select NCDs, risk factors and health systems response related to the National NCD monitoring framework and its Action Plan. The survey also highlights the need of improving the comprehensive multi-sectoral approaches that focussed on both prevention and management of NCDs.

36. The Reliance Jio venture of billionaire Mukesh Ambani has become the fifth strongest brand globally. It now stands behind the brands like Ferrari and Coca-Cola. This venture has achieved this milestone in just four-odd-years. The Reliance Jio was founded in 2016 and has become the largest mobile network operator in India. It has also become the third-largest mobile network operator in the world. The network operator has almost 400 million subscribers, as of now.

37. The government is considering to introduce a new bill "National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021" in the ongoing budget session of the parliament. This

bill will be passed with the objective of setting up a new development finance institution (DFI) so as to finance the infrastructure projects. DFI will be a specialized institution to provide funds for the infrastructure projects. The DFI will be backed by government.

38. The West Bengal Transport Corporation has launched the First Young Readers' Boat Library. The library has been launched in collaboration with a heritage book store. It has been launched on a boat making it first of its kind initiative. The boat library was launched with the motive that one can read books while appreciating the beauty of Kolkata. The library will provide the options for Children to choose from a selection of 500 titles in English and Bengali.

39. Rajasthan has become the 5th state in the country to successfully complete the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) reforms. This was specified by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. Other states that have completed the Urban Local Bodies Reforms include- Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana. In total, these five states have been granted a total additional borrowing permission of 10,212 crore rupees after completing the reforms.

40. The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' and 'National Marine Turtle Action Plan' recently to create a conservation paradigm for the marine mega fauna and marine turtles. The documents were released containing the ways and means to promote the inter-sectoral action for conservation. The documents also suggest for improving the coordination amongst the government, civil society and all relevant stakeholders so as to response to the cases of stranding, injury or mortality of marine mammals.

41. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the union territory of Ladakh recently signed an agreement for the development of the Union Territory through Science and Technology (S&T) interventions. The agreement was signed by CSIR-IIIM Director D. Srinivas Reddy and Rigzin Samplel who is the Commissioner Secretary Agriculture and Horticulture, Ladakh

UT. The MoU was signed with the aim of establishing a knowledge partnership between CSIR and the Ladakh UT. It seeks to develop the areas like exploration of natural resources, introduction of cash crops in the region and bioresource utilization which is endemic to Ladakh.

42. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2020-21 in the Lok Sabha on January 29, 2021. The Economic Survey 2021 presented an estimation of the progress that the Indian economy has made in the last 12 months. The survey highlights that the real growth rate for Financial Year 2021 was taken as -7.7% as per MoSPI while the real growth rate for Financial Year 2022 is assumed was taken as 11.5 % on the basis of estimates provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

43. The Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has bagged a contract worth Rs 1390 crore for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. This project is India's first such project. L&T has bagged the contract for the project from the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). The contract for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet corridor have been given to Larsen & Toubro (L&T) – IHI Infrastructure Systems Consortium. L&T has been given the contract for the procurement and fabrication of 28 steel bridges for Crossing Over Rivers, roads, railway lines, highways and other structures for the Mumbai Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor.

44. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, will inaugurate the Chauri Chaura Centenary celebrations on February 4, 2021. The celebrations will be inaugurated by PM virtually and it will be held in Uttar Pradesh. On the occasion, the Prime Minister will also release a postal stamp that will be dedicated to the centenary year of the Chauri Chaura incident. The celebrations will also be joined by the families of martyrs and freedom fighters. The state-wide celebration will also be held and it will begin from 4th February, the celebration will continue for a year.

45. The State Cabinet meeting which was chaired by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Edappadi K Palaniswami, cleared the 34 major investment

proposals with a total investment of Rs 52,257 crore. These new Industrial Policy have the potential to create 93,935 jobs. These investments will be done in the sectors including automobiles & auto components, electronics, solar cell manufacturing and including electric vehicles.

46. The International Holocaust Remembrance Day was observed on January 27 at the Bengaluru International Centre. A small ceremony was organised and memorial candles were lit by clergy of various religious communities to mark the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The ceremony was organised in accordance with the UN's theme: "Facing the Aftermath: Recovery and Reconstitution after the Holocaust".

47. Recently, India joined the world and Light Up Qutub Minar as a sign of unity to combat the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NDT). This was done to mark the second annual World NTD Day that will be observed on January 30th. The World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day highlights the global community's commitment to end the diseases. The NDT diseases cause immeasurable suffering among the most marginalized communities of the world. On the occasion of World NTD day, 50 landmarks representing the 25 nations of the world will be lit up. They will celebrate how far the world have come together in beating the NTD.

48. The fifth joint meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum was held between India and Japan on January 28, 2021. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and the Ambassador of Japan to India, Suzuki Satoshi. At the Act East Forum, India and Japan reviewed the progress of ongoing projects in the North Eastern Region of India. These projects were launched in the areas ranging from the hydropower, connectivity, harnessing of water resource, sustainable development, and skill development.

49. The Union Sports Minister, Kiren Rijiju, has presented the Republic Day Awards for 2021 Parade Tableaux. In the parade of 72nd Republic Day, 32 tableaux participated. Those Tableaux were selected from the 17 States and Union Territories (UTs). 6 of the Tableaux were from the

Defence Ministry while 9 were from other ministries, departments and paramilitary forces.

50. The last Sunday of January is celebrated as the World Leprosy Day every year. The day is observed all across the world. As per the report, there were 2,08,619 new leprosy cases globally registered in the year 2018. This figure has come from 159 countries. Leprosy is also known as Hansen's disease. The incubation period of the disease is 5 years usually. Symptoms of the disease can be seen within 1 year but it could also take 20 years or even more years to occur.

51. The Southern India received excessively heavy rainfall (ten times the normal) between January 1, 2021 and January 17, 2021. This winter rain, according to the scientists, is due to sudden stratospheric warming that occurred in Arctic region. The Sudden Stratospheric Warming is an event where the polar stratospheric temperature increases up to fifty degrees Celsius. It is preceded by a situation where the polar jet stream of westerly winds in the northern hemisphere is disturbed by natural weather patterns. This is usually addressed as polar vortex.

52. The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) recently published the "Birds of the Sundarban Biosphere Reserve" in which ZSI highlighted that the Indian Sunderbans is home to 428 species of birds. It is a mangrove area in the Delta formed by the rivers Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna in the Bay of

Bengal. It covers the area from the Hooghly River in West Bengal to the Baleswar River in Bangladesh over an area of about 10,000 km sq.

53. The Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb recently wore "Risa" on Kokborok Day. The Chief Minister of late has made Risa, his style statement. The Government of Tripura is to promote Risa at national and international level. Risa is the traditional dress of Tripura. Risa is worn by both men and women of Tripura. The dress for women in the upper half of the body has two parts namely Risa and Rikutu. Risa covers the chest part and rikutu covers the whole upper part. The dress of women that covers the lower half of the body is called Rigwani or Rignai.

54. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will address the 125th anniversary celebration 'Prabuddha Bharata' which is scheduled to be organized on January 31, 2021. It will be organized by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. It is a monthly magazine of the Ramakrishna Order. This magazine was founded in the year 1896 by P. Aiyasami, B. R. Rajam Iyer, G. G. Narasimhacharya, and B. V. Kamesvara Iyer under the guidance of Swami Vivekananda. Prabuddha Bharata magazine was of great significance in spreading the message of the ancient spiritual wisdom of the country. The magazine comprises of the articles and translations by monks, scholars and other writers on humanities and social sciences.

International

1. China has recently deployed underwater drones called Sea Wing Glider in the Indian Ocean region. The Sea Wing Glider Drone is used for Naval surveillance. It can operate for months under the sea. The Sea Wing Glider Drone is a type of an uncrewed underwater vehicle. It was launched in last year. Apart from Indian ocean region China has also deployed the Sea Wing Glider Drone in the Arctic Ocean. Also, these drones are deployed in South China Sea, East China Sea and other waters of the Western Pacific.

2. The Australian Government recently announced certain changes to its National Anthem "Advance

Australia Fair". The second line of the National Anthem has been changed from 'For we are young and free' to 'For we are one and free.' The Australian National Anthem, "Advance Australia Fair" was written in 1878. It became official National Anthem of Australia only in 1984. According to the critics, the words "for we are young and free" destroy the 50,000 years of history of Australia. The word young imply that the Australian history started only with Colonisation. Accordingly, it is believed that the national anthem celebrates British colonisation. This is unacceptable by the indigenous communities of the island nation who till date celebrate Australia Day as Invasion Day.

3. Argentina recently became the largest Latin American country to legalize abortion. Under the new law Argentina has legalised abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy. In India, abortion is legal till 24th week of pregnancy according to medical termination of pregnancy (Amendment) act, 2020. Earlier it was 20 weeks. The new abortion laws of Argentina is considered historic because prior to the passing of the bill abortions were permitted only in cases of rape or he'll help. The activist of Argentina have been campaigning for a new law to overturn this rule since 1921.

4. The National Defence Authorisation act, 2021 was enacted by United States to specify budget, expenditure and policies of United States Department of Defence for the fiscal year 2021. The act determined the annual budget of United States as 740.5 USD. The first National Defence authorisation act, 2021 was passed in 1961. Since then, the act has been passed every year. The act has been named the William M thornberry National Defence authorisation act. It has been named after William m Thornberry to honour him. He served as the chair of the house armed services committee. The committee is responsible for funding and oversight of department of Defence in the United States.

5. A perfectly preserved woolly Rhinoceros was found by scientists in Yakutia in Russia. The Ice Age Rhino was discovered on the bank of Tirekhtyakh river. Most of the intestine of the Rhino was intact. Also, the Rhino had perfectly preserved hair, soft tissue and a lump of fat. Its horn was found near its uncovered site. According to scientists, the animal died when it was three to four years old. The age of the carcass has been dated as 20,000 to 50,000 old.

6. The United States recently passed the Malala Yousafzai Act for Pakistani Women. The USAID has so far awarded more than 6000 scholarship to the young women of Pakistan since 2010. These scholarships help the Pakistani women to receive Higher Education in Pakistan. The Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act aims to expand this programme. Malala is a Pakistani activist for female education. She is also the Youngest Nobel Prize Laureate. She fought against the Taliban for

women education. The Taliban had banned girls from attending schools.

7. The Asian Development Bank recently signed an agreement of 100 million USD modernize and upgrade the power distribution in Bengaluru city. The 100 million USD loan is to be used to enhance the quality and reliability of electricity supply in Bengaluru city under the Bengaluru Smart Energy Efficient Power Distribution Project. Also, the loan will be used to install 2,800 km of fiber optical cables. These fiber optical cables are to be laid in parallel to the underground distribution cables. This parallel laying of the electrical and communication lines will help to reduce technical and commercial losses by 30%.

8. The Government of India recently launched the 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica. The expectation will take a team of 40 members to Antarctica and return by April 2021. XL Indian Antarctica expedition has been Limited due to existing challenges of covid-19. It will mainly focus on ongoing scientific projects on ocean observations, climate change, electric and magnetic flux measurements, geology, Re supplying of food, environmental monitoring, fuel, and accomplish the return of the winter crew.

9. More than two hundred engineers and workers have formed the Alphabet Workers Union capping years of growing activism in the company. The Alphabet Workers Union will strengthen the growing labour movement at Alphabet and serve as a vehicle for workers to voice their concerns. Alphabet was formed through restructuring Google. Alphabet has now become the parent company of Google and Waymo (a self-driving car company).

10. The Government of India recently released the Draft Arctic Policy. The policy ensures that the Arctic resources are explored and used sustainable. Under its policy, India will make sure the it abides by rules and regulations of Arctic Council. India became the observer of Arctic Council in 2013 and its membership as an observer was renewed in 2018 for another five years.

11. The World Health Organisation recently announced that the United Kingdom covid-19 variant has been detected in more than 41 countries. The VOC-202012/01 was first detected in South Africa. This variant is 70% more transmissible than the other covid-19 mutants. Yes. Around 38 people have been found infected with the mutant. It has been detected in 10 samples at the National Institute of Mental Health and neurosciences, 11 samples at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB), three samples at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad and in 5 samples at the National Institute of Virology, Pune.

12. The World bank, Government of India and Government of West Bengal recently signed a 105 million US dollar agreement. The fund has been allocated to the West Bengal inland water transport, logistics and special development project. According to the agreement the one hundred and five million USD fund is to be used to improve the inland water transport infrastructure in Kolkata, West Bengal.

13. The Union Cabinet recently approved the Memorandum of Understanding between India and Japan on "Specified Skilled Worker". The fourteen sectors are Industrial machinery, building cleaning, nursing care, material processing industry, electric and electronic information related industry, industrial machinery manufacturing industry, shipbuilding and ship-related industry, aviation, automobile maintenance, lodging, aviation, fisheries, agriculture, food and beverages manufacturing industries, food service industry, construction.

14. On January 5 to January 6, 2021, the US President Donald Trump supporters gathered in Washington DC to protest against the results of recent US President Elections. On January 6, 2021, the protesters gathered for the "Save America" rally. During the rally the attendees heard speeches of President Trump. The rally culminated in a riot. Eventually the protesters invaded the United States Capitol building. President Trump instructed his supporters to march into the Capitol building to overturn the

elections. It ended up in an armed standoff. The storming of the building and the riots are being described as sedition, infection and domestic terrorism. Some sources even refer it to an attempted coup. The series of these incidents leading to the invasion of US Capitol building are called United States Capitol Protests.

15. India and France held their annual strategic dialogue in New Delhi. The countries mainly focused on COVID-19 vaccines, nuclear, Indo-Pacific, space, environment, maritime safety, digital economy, environment and defence sectors. France has a deep presence in the Indian Ocean Region. The territories of Mayotte Island and Reunion Island are under French control. These overseas areas provide France an area of 28 lakh square kilo metres in the Indian Ocean Region as Exclusive Economic Zone under the UNCLOS Treaty.

16. The United States Capitol Protests, 2021, has induced calls to invoke 25th Constitutional amendment. The 25th Constitutional amendment lays out how a US President or a Vice President can be replaced or succeeded. It includes resolve issues revolving around unfortunate situations like death, resignation to removal of US President and actions to be followed after a President becomes disabled to such a degree that he is unable to fulfil his responsibilities. The amendment has four sections.

17. The Ambassador of India to the United Nations recently announced that India has been asked to chair three important committees of the Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee, Libya Sanctions Committee and Taliban Sanctions Committee. There are fifteen member states of Counter Terrorism committee. They are Belgium, Dominican Republic, China, Germany, France, Niger, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Russia, South Africa, UK, Vietnam and US.

18. The World Health Organization recently released a new map. The map differentiated Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh from the rest of Indian mainland with a different colour. The new WHO map of India has marked the newly created Union Territories of India, Ladakh and Jammu

and Kashmir in grey colour. Also, it has marked the disputed Aksai Chin region in grey colour with blue stripes. The blue stripes are in identical shade as that of China. The map shows India in navy blue colour.

19. Pope Francis recently changed the Church laws to allow women to do more things during Mass. The law that defines proceedings during Mass and in Altar is called Code of Canon Law. This law has now been amended to allow women to serve in Altar. Pope Francis has created a second study commission to study if women could be deacons. The first commission failed to reach a consensus.

20. The United States recently designated Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism. The United States lists the countries that repeatedly provide support for acts of international terrorism under the State Sponsors of Terrorism. The list was first released in 1979 with Iraq, Libya, Syria and South Yemen in it. Cuba was added in 1992, Iran in 1984. Later North Korea and Sudan were added in 1988 and 1993 respectively. Later South Yemen was removed in 1990. Iraq has been removed twice from the list, once in 1982 and then again in 2004. Libya was removed in 2006. North Korea was removed in 2008 and again re-added in 2017. Cuba was removed in 2015 and has now been re-added.

21. The Global Ebola Vaccine stockpile was recently established by four international health and humanitarian organizations. World Health Organization (WHO), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UNICEF. The Ebola Vaccine was licensed by the European Medicines Agency in November 2019. The vaccine was pre-qualified by World Health Organization. It has also been licensed by US Food and Drug Administration. Also, the vaccine has been licensed in eight African countries.

22. The External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar recently addressed the United Nations Security Council open debate. During his address, the minister proposed eight-point action plan. All the member nations should fulfil their obligations in international counter-terrorism conventions and

instruments. The countries should not bring in double standards in the battle. For instance, there are countries that support terrorism by offering financial support. Such countries are black listed by the international bodies such as FATF (Financial Action Task Force). These countries are being referred to double standard countries.

23. The Union Cabinet recently approved India-UAE Memorandum of Understanding for Scientific and Technical Cooperation. The weather services enhance the efficiency of weather dependent sectors of the economy. This includes agriculture and transport. The global cooperation in this field is highly important to modernize weather and forecasting services. This in turn will strengthen the resilience of the countries to fight against climate change and related disasters. Also, both UAE and India are located in the same region of the World Meteorological Organization. The WMO divides the countries into six regions. The WMO is a specialised agency that promotes international cooperation in climatology, science, hydrology and geophysics. Therefore, it is important for India to sign such MoUs to increase cooperation among its regional partners.

24. The Tsar Icicle recently collapsed killing four tourists in Russia. The Vilyuchinsky waterfall in winter is called Tsar Icicle. The Vilyuchinsky waterfall lies in Kamchatka peninsula. It is home to more than one hundred and sixty volcanoes. Of these twenty-nine are still active. Many of these volcanoes are capped with glaciers. As these glaciers melt during warm weather, they form waterfalls. One such waterfall is the Vilyuchinsky waterfalls.

25. The United States President elect Joe Biden recently announced 1.9 USD "American rescue plan". It is a covid-19 stimulus package. According to the United States Centres for Disease Control and prevention more than 9 million Americans have been provided with the covid-19 vaccination dose as of January 11, 2021. Recently the United States Food and Drug Administration issued the first emergency use authorisation of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. The moderna vaccine was the second vaccine to

receive emergency use authorisation in the country.

26. India and Japan recently signed Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technology. The agreement included standardization of 5G as well. India and Japan will enhance cooperation in the field of telecom security, 5G technologies, submarine optical fiber cable system to islands of India, smart cities, spectrum management, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, public safety and disaster management.

27. The US President Donald Trump has become the first president of the country to be impeached twice. The House of Representatives of the United States recently voted to charge President Trump with inciting mob attack on US Congress. Recently President Trump instructed his supporters to March into the US Capitol building to overturn the US Presidential elections held in 2020. This ended up in an armed standoff.

28. Pakistan recently issued special permits to Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and five other members of their family to hunt Houbara Bustard during the 2020-21 hunting season. The controversial private hunting expeditions of Houbara Bustard by the Dubai Royals date back over four decades. The hunting continued even after the Pakistan Supreme Court imposed a blanket ban on the killing of Houbara Bustard in 2015. However, the order was reversed.

29. The United States National Rifle Association recently filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy code. The association filed for bankruptcy in order to avoid being investigated by New York Attorney General. The New York Attorney General had sued the National Rifle Association in August 2020 based on allegations that the association top executives diverted millions of dollars for their personal trips.

30. Nine former officials who served in the Michigan, US and the state's former governor Rick Snyder were recently charged in connection with a criminal investigation into the Flint Water crisis. The Flint Water Crisis is an ongoing

investigation on public health crisis. The issue began when the City of Flint in the state of Michigan shifted its water supply from Lake Huron to Flint river. The city has a population of 100,000 people. The shift caused water distribution pipes to corrode. This resulted in leaching of lead and other contaminants into the municipal drinking water. The city suffered from an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease due to the leaching of lead. This is referred to as Flint Water crisis.

31. The Italian authorities believe that the Ndrangheta Mafia is responsible for controlling the massive amount of cocaine entering Europe from South America. This was confirmed by the Italian Government after a massive mafia trial targeting the Ndrangheta group. The Ndrangheta is a prominent Italian Mafia based in the region of Calabria. The Mafia has been in existence since 18th century. The first official report of Ndrangheta was submitted in 1792 during the reign of the Bourbons of Naples. The House of Bourbon ruled Southern Italy and Sicily for more than a century during 18th and 19th century.

32. The Chatham House recently published a report proposing a blueprint for foreign policy of UK after Brexit. The report classed India as one of the "difficult four" countries along with China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The report criticizes India for its diplomatic behaviour. According to the report, India did not join the group of countries that criticized China at the United Nations General Assembly held in 2019. The UN Members criticized China for its human rights violations in Xinjiang. Also, India stayed silent over the National Security Law in Hong Kong.

33. Russia recently announced that it is withdrawing from the "Open Skies Treaty". The treaty allows the signatories to carry out unarmed surveillance flights over each other's territories. In 2020, the US announced that it is to leave the Open Skies Treaty. The Open Skies Treaty was signed in 1992 after the Disintegration of the Soviet Union. It was first proposed by the former US President Dwight Eisenhower in 1955 to deescalate cold war tensions. The treaty was signed between NATO (Non-Atlantic Treaty Organization) members and the former Warsaw

Pact countries. In 2002, more than 35 countries had signed the treaty. This included US and Russia as well. India is not a signatory of the Open Skies Treaty.

34. The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently invited PM Modi to attend G7 summit. UK has invited Australia and South Korea as well. Earlier, UK had proposed the idea of D10. D10 includes members of G7 and India, Australia and South Korea. G7 was originally formed in 1975. The members are USA, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Italy, UK. Russia was formally inducted as a member of the group in 1998. With this G7 became G8. However, when Russia moved its troops into eastern Ukraine and conquered Crimea in 2014, the other G8 countries criticized Russia heavily. They subsequently suspended Russia from G8. With this, the G8 again became G7 in 2014.

35. The Malaysian Government recently unveiled 3.7 billion USD package to help the economy recover from impacts of COVID-19. The package amounts to 1.1% of GDP of Malaysia. The package was announced as the country struggled to curb its third wave of COVID-19 infections. The 3.7 billion USD package of Malaysia includes cash support to the poor, wage subsidies, tax breaks. The Malaysian Government is to implement twenty-two initiatives under the new package.

36. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese President Xi Jing Ping are to participate in the Davos Agenda Summit. The Davos Agenda Summit is organised by the World Economic Forum. The "Great Reset Initiative" of the World Economic Forum is to be launched during the Davos Agenda Summit. The theme of the Davos Agenda Summit, 2021 is "Stakeholders for a cohesive and sustainable world".

37. India and France are to hold Ex-Desert Knight 21 exercise. It is a bilateral air exercise to be held between Indian Air Force and French air and Space Force. The Ex-Desert Knight 21 is to be held in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Rafale Fighter Jets are to participate in the exercise. Under the Indo-French Defence Cooperation, the French Air and Space force and the Indian Air Force have so far

held six editions of air exercise called "Garuda". The last of the six exercises was held in Air Force Base Mont-de-Marsan, France in 2019. The Ex-Desert Knight 21 is being held in addition to the Garuda series exercise.

38. Israel has been recently banning the human rights groups in the country that called Israel to be an apartheid state. Apartheid is a system of institutionalized racial segregation. Israel is being criticized to be an Apartheid State for its actions against Palestinians. The actions of Israel occupying the West Bank region is criticized as being apartheid.

39. The US president elect Joe Biden is expected to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline project. The keystone pipeline system is an oil pipeline system in the United States and Canada. It was commissioned in 2010 and is owned by the Government of Alberta and TC Energy. The pipeline runs from the Western Canadian sedimentary basin in Alberta to the Refineries in Texas and Illinois.

40. The top palm oil producers for the first time are looking for opportunities to run an advocacy campaign in Europe. The largest oil producers of the world Indonesia and Malaysia have sent proposals to hire an advocacy firm to run campaign in Europe through the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries. According to the European Union, the producers of palm oil primarily Malaysia and clear vast areas of biodiversity rich rainforest in South East Asia exploiting migrant workers. The Union is to ramp up legislations on deforestation as a part of European Green Deal. This could restrict the use of palm oil in fuel and food. Therefore, the CPOPC dominated by Indonesia and Malaysia are looking for opportunities to launch campaigns to change the perceptions of European countries.

41. Iran and six other countries have lost their voting rights in the United Nations General Assembly as they had not paid their dues. The other countries that lost their voting rights were Niger, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic and Libya. On the other hand, three other countries such as Comoros, Somalia, Sao Tome and Principe will be

allowed to vote despite of their missing dues. The actions of suspending the members from voting has been taken under Article 19 of the United Nations Charter.

42. The Great Green Wall for Sahel and Sahara Initiative recently received 14 billion USD funds at the recent One Planet Summit for Biodiversity. The funding is to be used to restore degraded land, strengthen resilience, create green jobs and protect biodiversity. Among the financiers, the World Bank has committed 5 billion USD, African Development Bank committed 6.5 billion USD and Government of France committed 14 billion USD.

43. The LongOps Project is a collaboration between UK and Japan. Under the operation, the scientists from Japan and UK will develop new and safe technologies to dismantle old nuclear facilities such as the Fukushima that were severely damaged by tsunamis and earthquakes. The project is to use long-reach robotic arms and hence is called "LongOps Project". The project will reduce the risks to human health and will speed up decommissioning of nuclear reactors that are non-operational.

44. The United Nations General Assembly recently adopted a resolution on safeguarding religious sites across the world. The resolution was titled "Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites". India supports the resolution. Promotion of education programmes on protecting the religious sites. Education is to be used as a tool to address hate speech issues. The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech has been launched to reduce hate speech and violence related to hate speech in the world.

45. The US President Joe Biden recently proposed to extend New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty by five years. Russia has welcomed the proposal. The above obligations of reducing the nuclear warheads were to be achieved within a time frame of seven years from the date, the treaty entered into operation. The treaty will last for ten years. The countries may renew it till five years upon agreement by both the parties.

46. Recently, the researchers from the University of Oxford Wildlife Conservation Research Unit and Machine Learning Research Group have detected the elephants in South Africa using the Artificial Intelligence from space. This survey is being claimed as more accurate as compared to the detection by Human. For the purpose of survey, researchers used the highest resolution satellite imagery called Worldview3.

47. India recently made an announcement that it does not support the "Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" and it is not bound by any of the obligations of the treaty. India maintains that, it will continue to provide the high priority and remain committed to the universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. India does not support the treaty because, India believes, the treaty does not constitute or contribute to the development of customary international law. Further, the treaty does not provide for any new standards or norms.

48. Recent figures by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development highlights that, China has surpassed the United States as the world's top destination for the foreign direct investment (FDI) in the year 2020. The Foreign investment in the U.S. started picking up in the year 2016. Till 2016, the investments stood at \$472 billion in contrast to total foreign investment of \$134 billion in China. However, since 2017 the investments in China continued to rise while in U.S. continued to fall.

49. The Prime Minister of Nepal, KP Sharma Oli, has been expelled from the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP). He was expelled from the party following his decision to dissolve the Parliament. He was expelled from his party by a Central Committee at a meeting of the party's splinter group. The splinter group of the party was led by former Prime Ministers Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar. Both the members had earlier asked PM Oli to explanation for his unconstitutional decisions. They sent letter to seek clarification. But the PM Oli failed to do so.

50. India and the United Kingdom recently held the 14th meeting of the India-United Kingdom Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism. The

meeting was held virtually on January 21-22, 2021. Both the countries concluded by asking the other nations to take an immediate step in order to ensure that no territory under their control has been used for terrorist activities. They also asked the nations that, if any attack executes from a particular territory, the respective nation must take actions against it.

51. The Global Climate Risk Index was recently released by Germanwatch-a NGO based in Bonn, Germany. In the index, India has been ranked at seventh position among the countries that are most effected by climate change in 2019. The Global Climate Risk Index is annually published by the Germanwatch. The index analyses the impact of extreme climate events on the country and the economy. It analyses how countries have been affected by the impacts of weather-related loss events. The index is prepared on the basis of data from Munich Re's NatCatSERVICE.

52. The President of U.S., Joe Biden, signed the executive order in a bid to tighten the "Buy American" requirements in the federal government procurement. This move by the President is the first step toward fulfilling his campaign promise. This act was passed in 1933 by Congress and signed by President Hoover on his last full day in. The act ensures that the United States government is preferring the U.S.-made products in its purchases. This act is different than the "Buy America Act". Under the act, exceptions could be given in certain cases if the domestic product is 25% or more expensive than a similar foreign-sourced product or if it is being done in the public's interest. This act can be waived by the President.

53. India celebrated its 72nd Republic Day. The Republic Day Parade this year was though muted amid the COVID-19 pandemic and no chief guest was invited. But this year, Bangladesh Army contingent marched down the Rajpath. The Bangladesh Army Contingent participated in the parade to mark the completion of 50 years of the liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistani rule. The victory was one of the finest military victories and the world has rarely witnesses the military campaign like India-Pakistan war of 1971. Thus,

to mark the Golden Jubilee of the war, Bangladesh Forces marched along with the Indian Forces.

54. Recently, the Google workers from all around the globe have formed an international union called the "Alpha Global". The new union has been named after Google's parent company Alphabet. The union was formed in coordination with UNI Global Union. The alphabet workers union was launched by the United States and Canada. It is a minority union. It initially had over 200 workers affiliated with the Communications Workers of America. Within a week, AWU grew to over 700 members.

55. The permanent representative of India to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti, announced the pledge of USD 150,000 to fund for the activities of the UN peacebuilding as a token for the engagement of both the countries. The United Nations Peacekeeping operations are policing and peacebuilding actions. It is carried out by the United Nations to bring order and stability in the nations affected by the war. The UN Peacekeepers are known as 'Blue Helmets' or 'Blue Berets'. They are the personnel comprising of the soldiers, military officers, police officers and civilian personnel from other countries. The Department of the Peace Operation is headed by the "Jean-Pierre".

56. The United Nations has released its biggest ever opinion poll on climate change that is "UN Global Climate Survey". The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted the "Peoples' Climate Vote" for 1.2 million people from 50 countries to prepare the report. UNDP is the global development network of United Nations (UN) headquartered in New York City. The organisation promotes the technical and investment cooperation among nations. It is engaged in giving the expert advice, training and grants support to the developing countries. It works with nations on their own solutions to meet the global and national development challenges. UNDP help the nations only if different nations request for the help. The UNDP is funded by voluntary contributions from UN member states, completely. UNDP is operational in 177 countries. It also helps the countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also

focuses on poverty reduction, Social development, democratic governance, HIV/AIDS, energy & environment and crisis prevention & recovery.

57. The most active volcano of Indonesia, Mt Merapi, recently erupted with a river of lava and searing gas clouds. The lava and clouds flown for 1,600 meters down its slopes. Indonesia, the archipelago of 270 million people, is situated in the Southeast Asia and Oceania between the Indian and Pacific oceans. It comprises of more than seventeen thousand islands, including Java, Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, parts of Borneo (Kalimantan) and New Guinea (Papua). It is considered as the world's largest island country and the 14th-largest country with respect to area. The country is also the 4th-most populous country in the world. It is also the most populous Muslim-majority country. The most populous island of Indonesia is Java which is also the most populous island in the world. The country is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity as it sits along the "Pacific Ring of Fire".

58. India has signed a Framework for strategic partnership agreement with the International Energy Agency (IEA), recently. IEA is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organisation that was established in the year 1974 in the aftermath of 1973 oil crisis. It was established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

59. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, will address the Davos Dialogue of World Economic Forum on January 28, 2021 virtually. The Great Reset Initiative is the 50th annual meeting of WEF that was organised in June 2020. The initiative had brought together the high profile political and business leaders who were convened by WEF and Prince of Wales. The meeting was organised under the theme of Rebuilding the society and economy in a sustainable way for the post-COVID-19 world.

60. The United Kingdom has launched a New Global Platform to track the new COVID-19 variants. The platform will provide world-leading genomics expertise from the country to identify the new variants of the virus. The Variant of Concern 202012/01 is the new variant of the

Corona virus (SARS-CoV-2). The new variant is also known as lineage B.1.1.7, 20I/501Y.V1 and it is commonly known as UK coronavirus variant since the virus emerged in the UK. The new variant is 36%–75% more transmissible than wild-type SARS-CoV-2.

61. India has extended its "Vaccine Maitri Initiative" to Sri-Lanka now. As per the agreement, India dispatched 500000 doses of Covishield vaccines to Sri Lanka as grant assistance. The vaccine maitri initiative has delivered nearly five million doses to seven countries in the neighbourhood, till date. The delivery of vaccines which has been made by the Serum Institute of India is in light with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to the Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa during. PM Modi had committed in September 2020 during a virtual summit to provide all the possible support in order to minimise the health and economic impacts of the pandemic in Sri Lanka.

62. Recently, India joined the world and Light Up Qutub Minar as a sign of unity to combat the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD). It is an awareness day that addresses the neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). World NTD Day was celebrated on January 20, 2020 for the first time. The date, January 30, marks the anniversary of the 2012 London Declaration on NTDs. The London declaration had unified the partners across sectors, countries and disease communities for a greater cooperation, investment and action on NTDs.

63. The fifth joint meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum was held between India and Japan on January 28, 2021. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and the Ambassador of Japan to India, Suzuki Satoshi. The act east forum was established in the year 2017. The agreement to establish the forum was signed in September 2017 during the visit of Prime Minister Abe to India. This platform works in line with the Japan's vision for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" and India-Japan collaboration in the North Eastern Region under India's "Act East Policy".

64. The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the Ministry of Education, and the World

Bank have signed the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) project on January 28, 2021. The project is a financial support agreement. It is an international financial institution. It was established in the year 1944. The IBRD is headquartered in Washington, D.C., United States. IBRD is the lending arm of World Bank Group. It offers loans to the middle-income developing countries.

65. Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index was recently released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). The index measures the readiness in adopting the personalised healthcare of 11 health systems in the Asia-Pacific region. Though, India was ranked at 10th position overall. But in the four vital categories India's rank is- 10th in the

health information indicator, 11th in the health services, 9th in the Personalised Technologies indicator while 5th in the Policy Context indicator.

66. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced its new citizenship policy. The government has planned to offer citizenship to a select group of foreigners. The UAE has thus become the first Gulf Arab nation that formalized the process of giving expatriates a bigger stake in the economy. The new citizenship policy has been announced with the aim of attracting the talent to the UAE in order to boost the growth. The country is considering longer residency and limited citizenship for foreigners because it seeks to attract the investment and diversify from oil.

Defence

1. The Ministry of Defence recently signed an agreement with the Bharat Electronics Limited to supply ten LYNX U2 GFCS. It is a Naval Gun Fire Control System. It has been designed to track and engage targets amidst sea clutter. It can accurately track air and surface targets. Also, it can generate required target data to predict weapon aiming points. The target engagement is done using Russian A190, AK176 and AK630.

DRDO recently developed the Retractable Landing Gear System for Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, TAPAS. These landing gear systems are to be used by the Indian Navy. The Retractable Landing Gear System consists of a hydrogas shock strut integrated with wheel and brake system. It absorbs and dissipates landing impact load to safeguard the aircraft. It has nitrogen combined with hydraulic fluid to absorb and dissipate impact loads.

2. China has recently deployed underwater drones called Sea Wing Glider in the Indian Ocean region. The Sea Wing Glider Drone is used for Naval surveillance. It can operate for months under the sea. Apart from Indian ocean region China has also deployed the Sea Wing Glider Drone in the Arctic Ocean. Also, these drones are deployed in South China Sea, East China Sea and other waters of the Western Pacific.

5. The second edition of coastal Defence Exercise Sea Vigil-21 is to be conducted between January 12 and January 13, 2021. The Sea Vigil exercise will be undertaken along the 7,516 kilo metres coastline. It involves all the thirteen coastal states, Union Territories and the Exclusive Economic Zone. Also, the exercise involves the fishing and coastal communities. The exercise is conducted by the Indian Navy.

3. The National Defence Authorisation act, 2021 was enacted by United States to specify budget, expenditure and policies of United States Department of Defence for the fiscal year 2021. The act determined the annual budget of United States as 740.5 USD. The first National Defence authorisation act, 2021 was passed in 1961. Since then, the act has been passed every year.

6. Recently on Army Day (January 15, 2021), the Indian Army displayed its combat drones that are part of the Swarm Technology. Swarm drones are lightweight drones that carry multiple packages to a single destination at a time. In simple words, multiple drones are engaged in a single operation. Here, multiple drones receive commands from a single drone. They overcome single drone's payload and battery limitations. They work on swarm intelligence. Swarm Intelligence is the

4. The Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment operating under

collective behaviour of decentralized and self-organized Systems.

7. The Aero India-21 mobile application was recently launched by the Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The mobile app will act as a handy interactive interface for all the issues related to Aero India 2021. The application has features to support the attendees, exhibitors and media of Aero India 21. The Aero India is a biennial air show held in Bengaluru. It is organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation operating under the Ministry of Defence. This year, the Aero India is being conducted under the theme "Runaway to a Billion Opportunities". Aero India-21 is the first hybrid event where the business element will happen both physically and virtually.

8. Bhawana Kanth is to become the first woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade. She was one among the first women fighter Pilots inducted in Indian Air Force in 2016. The other fighter pilots inducted into the Indian Air Force were Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh. In 2019, Bhawana Kanth became the first female fighter pilot of India to qualify to undertake combat missions. She received the Nari Shakti Puraskar from President of India Ramnath Kovind in last year.

9. India and France are to hold Ex-Desert Knight 21 exercise. It is a bilateral air exercise to be held between Indian Air Force and French air and Space Force. The Ex-Desert Knight 21 is to be held in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Rafale Fighter Jets are to participate in the exercise. Under the Indo-French Defence Cooperation, the French Air and Space force and the Indian Air Force have so far held six editions of air exercise called "Garuda". The last of the six exercises was held in Air Force Base Mont-de-Marsan, France in 2019. The Ex-Desert Knight 21 is being held in addition to the Garuda series exercise.

10. The Global Firepower Index ranks the countries based on their potential military strength. India was ranked fourth in the index. The Global Firepower Index ranked 138 countries. The countries were evaluated based on prolonged offensive and defensive military campaigns. The United States topped the index with 904 attack

helicopters and eleven aircraft carriers. Also, the country has sixty-eight submarines and 40,000 armoured fighting vehicles.

11. Thales, a French Multinational Company has signed an agreement with the Bharat Dynamics Limited, a Government of India enterprise to jointly work on STARStreak Air Defence System. The STARStreak is a short-range surface-to-air missile. It was earlier called as the Shorts Missile System. It travels at Mach 3 speed, that is, the speed of the missile is three times the speed of sound.

12. The Indian Army is to conduct a large scale joint military exercise Kavach in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. The exercise is to be held under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command. The Joint Military Exercise Kavach will involve Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard. During the exercise, the joint forces will execute high density offensive and defence measures in the Andaman sea and Bay of Bengal. Also, they will carry out amphibious landing operations, helicopter borne insertion of special forces from sea culminating in tactical follow-on operations on land.

13. The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited recently test fired the SAAW (Smart Anti Airfield Weapon) from Hawk aircraft successfully. SAAW was developed by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO). SAAW is the first smart weapon fired from an Indian Hawk. SAAW is a long-range precision guided anti-airfield weapon. The weapon is capable of engaging ground targets with precision up to a range of hundred kilo metres.

14. The Operation Sard Hawa was launched by the Border Security Force in the western border of Rajasthan. The main purpose of the operation is to check the instances of infiltration due to dense fog in the region. The Operation has also been launched to enhance the security ahead of Republic Day. The operation is to run till January 27, 2021. Due to dense fog in desert areas in winter, there are possibilities of infiltration in the region. There have been attempts to infiltrate from across the border taking advantage of this haze. During such situations, the border security forces

increase patrolling under special operations like that of Operation Sard Hawa. They also monitor the borders through vehicles along with trekking. The jawans also conduct foot point trekking. During foot point trekking, the camels, vehicles and pedestrian intrusions used by intruders are detected.

15. The Indian Armed forces conducted a large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise AMPHEX – 21 in Andaman and Nicobar group of islands in between 21 to 25 January 2021. It is also a tri service Military exercise. The exercise was conducted along with the AMHEX-21 in January 2021. The exercise was conducted under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) which happens to be the only Joint Forces Command of India. The exercise was participated by the Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air force and the Indian Coast Guard. It involves the synergised application of maritime surveillance assets, air and maritime strikes besides the air defence, submarine and landing operations. This exercise was conducted with the aim of set up the

joint war-fighting capabilities and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) so as to boost the operational synergy between all the services.

16. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired the surface-to-air Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile off the Odisha coast. The missile can intercept the aerial threats. The missile has been launched in order to boost the Indian Air Force (IAF) defence system. Akash-NG is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defense system.

17. The Indian Naval Fast Attack Craft, IN FAC T-81, of the Super Dvora MK II class was decommissioned on January 28 2020 in Mumbai. The IN FAC T-81 was decommissioned after providing service for more than 20 years. The event for decommissioning was held at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. The Chief Guest of the event was Rear Admiral V Srinivas who is the Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area.

Business, Economy & Banking

1. The Reserve Bank of India recently released the Digital Payments Index to measure the growth in cashless transactions in India. The Digital Payments Index comprises of five broad parameters. These parameters have different weight to measure the penetration of digital payments in the country. The sub factors of the payment enablers of the Digital Payments Index comprises of internet, mobile, bank account, merchants and participants.

2. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) recently fined the Reliance Industries Limited and its Managing Director Mukesh Ambani. SEBI also fined two other entities. The fine was imposed for carrying out manipulative trade in Reliance Petroleum Limited. SEBI imposed Rs 25 crores on Reliance India Limited and Rs 15 crores on its Managing Director Mukesh Ambani. Besides Reliance, the Mumbai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Navi Mumbai SEZ have been ordered to pay a fine of Rs 10 crores and Rs 20 crores respectively.

3. The Government of India recently announced that the benefits of RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) scheme is to be extended to all goods. The RoDTEP Scheme was launched in 2020 to boost exports of India in International markets. Under the scheme, a mechanism will be created for reimbursement of levies, taxes or duties at central, state and local levels. Prior to the scheme, the reimbursements were not done under any mechanism.

4. The International Financial Services Centres Authority recently became an associate member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO). The IOSCO works closely with the Financial Stability Board (FSB) and the G20 nations, to set up the standards that strengthen the securities markets. According to FSB, IOSCO membership is one of the key standards for sound financial system. This will increase the reputation of the member in the global market.

5. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to dedicate the Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to India on January 5, 2021. The pipeline is 444 kilometres long. The pipeline is to carry natural gas from the Liquefied Natural Gas regasification terminal at Kochi to Mangaluru. In its way it will pass through Ernakulam, Palakkad, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kannur, Kozhikode and Kasaragod districts. Around 8 districts are to benefit from the pipeline project.

6. The Government of India is to initiate the project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services on selected routes. The project aims to provide air connectivity to numerous tourist, religious, remote and unexplored locations near water bodies. This is to make the journey easier and simulate tourism on these new locations. Ultimately the project will contribute to boost the GDP of the country in the long run.

7. Vietnam recently started to buy food grains, especially rice, from India due to its attractive prices. Vietnam has started to import rice from India in spite of the fact that the country (Vietnam) is the third biggest exporter of rice in the world. Vietnam has begun to import rice from India because the local prices in the country jumped to the highest in nine years due to Limited domestic supplies. This is mainly because Vietnam has begun to stockpile huge quantity of rice for future.

8. The Government of India is to construct the largest floating solar energy project in the world. The project is to be constructed at Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river. The project will begin its power generation by 2022 to 2023. The solar panels will automatically adjust upward and downward based on the water level of the Dam. The floods and strong waves will not have any effect on the solar panels. The solar panels are to float on the surface of water.

9. The Defence Research and Development Organisation recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Maha Metro. Maha Metro is Maharashtra metro rail Corporation. It is a joint venture company of the Government of India and Government of Maharashtra. The agreement will render technical support to implement the

advanced biodigester Mk II technology to treat human waste in Metro Rail Network.

10. The Reserve Bank of India recently announced operational guidelines to Payment Infrastructure Development Funds. The main aim of the funds is to deploy more digital payment infrastructure across tier-3 to tier-6 centres and in the north eastern states. The Central Bank has constituted an advisory council under the chairmanship of B P Kanungo. The advisory council will basically govern the funds. On the other hand, the funds will be administered and managed by RBI.

11. The Reserve Bank of India recently formed an advisory council under former deputy governor N S Vishwanathan to advise the director of the central bank on supervisory colleges. The council will identify areas where upskilling and building are required in supervisory colleges. Also, the council will plan and develop curricula of all programmes and benchmark the programmes with international standards and best practices.

12. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently flagged off the first double stack long-haul container train from New Ateli in Haryana to New Kishanganj in Rajasthan. Currently, the freight trains are operated at maximum speed of 75 kilometres per hour. The speed is to be increased to 100 km/hr. The average speed of the freight trains are to be increased from 26 km/hr to 70 km/hr. It crosses through Sikar, Jaipur, Ajmer, Nagaur and Alwar districts.

13. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs recently chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved an ambitious scheme to boost the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of India has allocated 28,400 crores of Rupees for the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir scheme. The funds are to be used to develop industrial sector of the territory till 2037. The main objective of the scheme is to generate jobs that will lead to economic development and boost industry and service later development of the union territory. This in turn will attract new investment.

14. The Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently launched the "Single Window Clearance System"

for coal mines. The Single Window Clearance System for Coal Mines is an online platform launched to obtain clearances for smooth operationalisation of coal mines. It is aimed at allowing coal bidders to obtain all required clearances from a single portal. Currently, a company has to receive 19 major approvals to start a coal mine. Now with the single Window Clearance System, all the 19 approvals can be obtained in one place. This is one of the major steps in Coal Sector reforms of Government of India.

15. The Geological Survey of India has found promising concentrations of Vanadium in the Tamang and Depo areas of Arunachal Pradesh. According to Geological Survey of India, the Vanadium mineralisation is geologically similar to the "Stone Coal" Vanadium deposits of China. The GSI has discovered about seven metre thick carbonaceous phyllite for a length of more than six kilo metres in Depo area. Vanadium was also found in Subansiri district for a length of 15.5 km and thickness of 7 metres.

16. The Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari is to launch "Khadi Prakritik Paint". The paint will help in doubling farmers income. This is because, the technology adopted in the making of Khadi Prakritik paint will increase consumption of cow dung as raw material for eco-friendly products. This will generate additional revenue to Gaushalas and farmers. The Khadi Prakritik paint is expected to generate an additional income of Rs 30,000 per annum per animal to farmers. On the other hand, utilisation of cow dung will prevent clogging of drains and will clean the environment.

17. The Supreme Court recently suspended the implementation of three farm laws to end the disagreement between the farmers and Government of India. The Supreme Court has directed to form a committee to resolve the issue. The apex court also indicated that it was highly disappointed with the negotiation process between the farmers union and the union government. The central government and the farmer unions were unable come to a conclusion even after eight rounds of talks.

18. The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently announced that the new Foreign Trade Policy. 2021-26 is to come into effect from April 1, 2021. The District Export hubs are to play a major role in the new Foreign Trade Policy. The policy will aim to boost exports. It will bring improvements in the operations of domestic manufacturing and services sector through infrastructure support.

19. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently launched SAKSHAM awareness campaign. The campaign was launched to spread awareness about green energy. The campaign will spread awareness about clean energy. It is a one-month long people centric fuel conservation campaign. The campaign is to be launched by the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA). The campaign is to create awareness in seven key drivers namely greater reliance on domestic sources to drive bio-fuels, moving towards gas based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, achieving renewable targets with the set deadlines, increased use of electric vehicles to decarbonize mobility, increased use of cleaner fuels and digital innovation across all energy systems.

20. The Malaysian Government recently unveiled 3.7 billion USD package to help the economy recover from impacts of COVID-19. The package amounts to 1.1% of GDP of Malaysia. The package was announced as the country struggled to curb its third wave of COVID-19 infections. The 3.7 billion USD package of Malaysia includes cash support to the poor, wage subsidies, tax breaks. The Malaysian Government is to implement twenty-two initiatives under the new package.

21. The Gujarat Government is to patent the Dragon Fruit in the name of "Kamalam". Kamalam is also the name of the BJP state party headquarters in Gujarat. India imports 95% of its Dragon fruit from Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. The Dragon Fruit has great export potentials to countries such as USA, Gulf and European. The farmers in the states of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka have taken up Dragon Fruit Cultivation only in the recent years.

22. The Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa recently launched Avalokana software. The software will enable the state government to access data on expenditures and sanctions incurred on 1,800 programmes. It is a transparent e-governance tool that will provide Assembly constituency wise release of government grants and allocations to different government programmes. This will help the government to decide on releasing funds based on the expenditure incurred by the department. It will eventually increase the government hold over resources.

23. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recently launched a regulatory compliance portal. The portal is to act as a bridge between the industries, citizens and the government in minimising burdensome compliances. The portal will increase ease of doing business in India. India ranked 142nd in 2014 in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking. In 2019, India ranked 63rd. Also, the portal will be instrumental in achieving the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

24. The Union Cabinet recently approved the Ratle Hydropower Project of 850 MW. The cabinet has nodded to an investment of Rs 5,281.94 crores in the project. The project is located in River Chenab. It is a joint venture of Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation and National Hydroelectric power corporation. The share of NHPC in the project is 49% and that of Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation is 51% respectively.

25. The Finance Minister of India, Nirmala Sitharaman, has launched the "Union Budget Mobile App" ahead of the presentation of the Union Budget on February 1, 2021. The mobile app was launched for hassle-free access of Budget-related documents by Members of Parliament (MPs) and the public. The budget will completely be paperless for the first time after. This decision was taken in the light of ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

26. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and Azim Premji

University have put forward the Udyog Sahayak Enterprises Network (USENET) framework draft policy. The Udyog Sahayak Enterprises Network (USENET) framework approach has been set on the basis of the belief that India should focus on helping the existing MSEs to grow rather than creating more nano-entrepreneurs.

27. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently proposed for a four-tier structure for tighter regulatory framework of the Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The responsibility of regulation and supervision has been entrusted with the Department of Non-Banking Supervision (DNBS) of RBI under the regulatory – provisions of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. The framework will provide for the registration and prudential regulation of NBFC. It will also issue the directions on acceptance and surveillance of the sector.

28. The Ministry of road transport has decided to impose the additional taxes on old vehicles that are no more fit on road. This additional tax is being called as the "Green Tax". The decision was taken to curb pollution. It will also motivate people to switch to environment-friendly alternatives to the vehicles. Under the Green Tax norms, the transport vehicles older than eight years will be charged with the green tax at the time of renewal of fitness certificate. They will be charged at the rate of 10 to 25% of road tax.

29. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is in process of examining if India needs a new central bank digital currency (CBDC) and is exploring ways to operationalise the digital currency. It is a legal tender and a central bank liability in digital form. The digital currency is denominated in a sovereign currency. It also appears on the balance sheet of the central bank. This is an electronic version of currency which can be converted or exchanged with the similar denominated cash and the traditional central bank deposits.

30. The economic survey for 2020-2021 will be tabled in the parliament on January 29, 2021 days before the presentation of Union Budget on February 1, 2021. The Economic survey will be released with the focus on the impact of lockdown and COVID -19 on the economy. It is expected

that, the survey will provide an overview of how much did the COVID 19 pandemic affect the economy.

31. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for milling copra and ball copra. MSP is an agricultural product price which is set by the Government of India. On this price, the government purchases the commodities directly from the farmer. The MSP is not enforceable by law. MSP seeks to safeguard the farmer interest by providing them a minimum profit for their harvest in case the open market has lesser price than the actual cost incurred. The price of the 23 commodities is set by the government twice a year. The MSP is fixed based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). CACP sets the price since 2009 on the basis of cost of production, demand & supply, price fluctuations, market price trends, international market prices and agricultural wage rate.

32. The Government of India is all set to present the Union Budget 2021 on February 1, 2021. This year, the focus of the budget will be on off-budget borrowings so as to reduce the Fiscal Deficit. Government can raise the borrowings by asking the implementing agency to raise the required funds from the market by loans or by issuing bonds. The borrowings can also be raised through the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) where the PSBs can be asked to fund off-budget expenses. For example, loans from PSBs were utilized for meeting the shortfall in releasing the fertilizer subsidy.

33. The Department of Expenditure of Ministry of Finance has recently released Rs 12,351 crore to 18 States in order to provide grants to the Rural Local Bodies. The amount is the 2nd instalment of basic grants released in the current financial year. The grant has been released after the states provided the Utilisation Certificate for the first instalment. The States will now transfer the grants to the Rural Local Bodies within 10 working days of receipt from the Central Government.

34. The Union Cabinet has cleared the policy on the privatization of public sector undertakings (PSUs). The details regarding the policy will be announced in the upcoming Union Budget that will be presented on February 1, 2021. The policy will present a road map for the presence of government-owned entities in strategic and non-strategic sectors. This policy was the part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package that was announced by the Finance Minister in last year.

35. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2020-21 in the Lok Sabha on January 29, 2021. The Economic Survey 2021 presented an estimation of the progress that the Indian economy has made in the last 12 months. The survey highlights that the real growth rate for Financial Year 2021 was taken as -7.7% as per MoSPI while the real growth rate for Financial Year 2022 is assumed was taken as 11.5 % on the basis of estimates provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

36. The government has announced for the launch of Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) on January 29, 2021. The scheme will be launched with a corpus of Rs 945 crore. The scheme was launched with the aim of providing the financial assistance to start-ups for the product trials, market-entry, proof of concept, prototype development and commercialization. The funds under the Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme will be disbursed through the selected incubators across the country.

37. The Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has bagged a contract worth Rs 1390 crore for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. This project is India's first such project. L&T has bagged the contract for the project from the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL). The contract for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet corridor have been given to Larsen & Toubro (L&T) – IHI Infrastructure Systems Consortium.

38. The government is considering to introduce a new bill "National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021" in the ongoing budget session of the parliament. This bill will be passed with the objective of setting up a new development finance institution (DFI) so as

to finance the infrastructure projects. DFI will be a specialized institution to provide funds for the

infrastructure projects. The DFI will be backed by government.

Science & Technology

1. In order to solve the problem of space debris, Japanese researches are to launch wooden satellites by 2023. These satellites are made of wood. They will burn up without releasing harmful substances into the atmosphere when they plunge back to the earth. With this the satellite will not leave out any waste in space after it completes its service or when it becomes dysfunctional.

2. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to deliver an inaugural address at the National Metrology Conclave on January 4, 2021. The conclave will strengthen the role of Precision measurement in various segments that has direct implication in the economic growth of India. It will mainly focus on establishing and developing primary standards, accreditation, quality systems and standardization, regulations and Legal Metrology, conformity assessment.

3. The Drug Controller General of India recently announced that it has authorised two COVID-19 vaccines for restricted Emergency Use in India (COVAXIN and COVISHIELD). The COVAXIN is the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech and ICMR (Indian council of Medical Research). It was the first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine to be developed in the country. The COVISHIELD vaccine was developed by Oxford University and Astra Zeneca, the pharmaceutical company.

4. The Indian Space Research Organization recently released the plan for the decade. The plan included reusable satellite launch vehicle, heavy lift rocket and semi-cryogenic engine. ISRO is to complete its moon mission Chandrayaan-3, the solar mission Aditya-L1 and first Indian Data Relay Satellite in the decade 2021-2030. Also, the space agency will complete the first developmental flight of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle. The Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre will help to boost the Semi-Cryogenic Propulsion capability. With this, the Indian rockets will be

able to carry 5.5 tonnes to the Geostationary Transfer Orbit.

5. The Government of India is to construct the largest floating solar energy project in the world. The project is to be constructed at Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river. The project will begin its power generation by 2022 to 2023. The solar panels will automatically adjust upward and downward based on the water level of the Dam. The floods and strong waves will not have any effect on the solar panels. The solar panels are to float on the surface of water.

6. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the National Atomic Scale at the National Meteorology Conclave. Atomic Time provides the exact speed at which the clock ticks. In technical words, it measures the actual length of a second. Atomic Clocks deviate only one second in up to 100 million years. The International System of Units (SI unit) define one second (in atomic time) as the time taken by the Cesium-133 atom in the ground state to oscillate 9,192,631,770 times. In simple words, the atomic clocks count one second after the Cesium-133 atom has oscillated 9,192,631,770 times.

7. The Bird Flu in India has been reported in wild Geese in Himachal Pradesh, ducks in Kerala, crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Also, in Haryana more than one lakh poultry birds have died mysteriously in the last few days. The Kerala Government recently declared Avian Influenza as State Disaster. In Kerala more than 1,700 ducks have died due to flu. It is a contagious viral disease caused by Influenza Type A virus. It usually affects poultry birds such as Turkeys and Chickens. There are several types of Influenza Type A virus. Some of the virus may cause low egg production and others result in early cracking of egg shells.

8. The Department of Animal Husbandry has set up a control room after confirmation of Bird Flu in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and

Himachal Pradesh. The control room will watch the situation and take stock on daily basis of the preventive and control measures undertaken by the respective State Governments. The control room will also abide by the National Action Plan of Avian Influenza.

9. NASA is to launch the most powerful rocket in the world on January 17, 2021. NASA has named it as the "Space Launch System". The Space Launch System consists of a giant core. It has two solid rocket boosters. Apart from these, the core has two large storage tanks. One tank stores liquid hydrogen and the other stores liquid oxygen. When the liquid oxygen and hydrogen are fed into the engine chambers, the chemical reaction produces vast amount of energy and steam. This steam exits engine nozzles at speeds of 16,000 km/hr to generate force that propels the rocket through the air.

10. The Indian Space Research Organization recently announced that it is to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across the country. By adopting hundred Atal Tinkering Labs, ISRO is to facilitate mentoring and coaching of students in cutting edge technologies. It includes technologies related to space as well. ISRO will promote scientific temperament among students and will encourage them for space related technologies. The students will gain practical and application-based knowledge of STEM through the programme.

11. The Union Cabinet recently approved India-UAE Memorandum of Understanding for Scientific and Technical Cooperation. The weather services enhance the efficiency of weather dependent sectors of the economy. This includes agriculture and transport. The global cooperation in this field is highly important to modernize weather and forecasting services. This in turn will strengthen the resilience of the countries to fight against climate change and related disasters.

12. The National Informatics centre and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) jointly launched the CollabCAD software. The CollabCAD software provides engineering solution for students and Faculty of Engineering Graphics curriculum. It aims to provide a platform

to students across the country to create and modify digital designs. The aim is to provide a good platform to the students of Atal tinkering labs across the country. With the software the students of Atal tinkering labs will be able to create and modify 3D designs with free flow of creativity. It will enable students to create data across the network and access the same design data for storage and visualisation.

13. The United States scientists have developed a new rapid COVID-19 test to measure mitochondrial DNA in the blood sample of the COVID-19 patients. The test will be highly helpful to identify people at the highest risk of the virus. The mitochondrial DNA is a unique type of genetic material that normally resides inside the energy factories of the cells. However, in COVID-19 patients the mitochondrial DNA is spilling out of the body cells into the bloodstream. This leads to cell death. Eventually the COVID-19 patients go into hyperinflammatory death. According to the scientists, the spill out of mitochondrial DNA is the main reason for tissue damage and eventual organ failure especially in lungs, kidney and heart in COVID-19 patients.

14. Virgin Orbit recently launched its LauncherOne rocket to the orbit. This is the first successful flight of the rocket. Earlier an unsuccessful launch attempt was made in May 2020. LauncherOne is a two-stage orbital launch vehicle. It is an air-launched rocket. It is capable of carrying small satellite payloads up to 300 kilograms. The LauncherOne rocket is carried to the upper atmosphere on Boeing 747 called "Cosmic Girl". During the first attempt in May 2020, LauncherOne failed to reach the space.

15. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in partnership with the Amazon Web Services is to establish Quantum Computing Applications Lab. The lab will identify quantum computing problems faced by Central and State Governments and also by the research institutions. The chosen proposals from these entities will get access to Amazon Web Services to use computing cloud platform from Amazon. Also, it will provide access to simulators and programming tools at no cost.

16. NASA recently shared the picture of a huge cluster of galaxies called Abell 370. As light emitted by galaxies (located in far distances) passes by massive objects, the gravitational pull from these objects tend to bend or distort the light. This is called Gravitational lensing.

17. NASA recently released the estimates of soil moisture in the root zone (the top 39 inches of soil) as of January 11, 2021. Accordingly, the Konya Plains had the lowest "root zone moisture". The estimate was done based on the GRACE-FO satellite data. The Konya Plains located in Turkey received 38% less rainfall in 2020 as compared to 2019. This is the main reason for the region to become the lowest "root zone moisture" area in the world.

18. The Astronomers have spotted massive hot UV-Bright stars in Milky Way Galaxy with the help of UVIT. UVIT is Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope. It is placed in Astrosat satellite. The Astrosat is the first multi wavelength space satellite of India. The Astronomers have successfully distinguished the UV-bright star cluster from relatively cooler red giant stars and other main sequence stars. More than thirty-four UV-bright stars were discovered using the UVIT.

19. The Southern India received excessively heavy rainfall (ten times the normal) between January 1, 2021 and January 17, 2021. This winter rain, according to the scientists, is due to sudden stratospheric warming that occurred in Arctic region. The Sudden Stratospheric Warming is an event where the polar stratospheric temperature increases up to fifty degrees Celsius. It is preceded by a situation where the polar jet stream of westerly winds in the northern hemisphere is disturbed by natural weather patterns. This is usually addressed as polar vortex.

20. The researchers have recently found that the largest sea in Titan (moon of Saturn) is thousand feet deep in its centre. Also, it is the size of five great lakes combined together. It is a joint mission of NASA and European Space Agency. The mission is to be developed at a cost of 2.5 billion USD. It is a four-year mission. It includes two-year Saturn tour, two months of Titan aerosampling and twenty-month Titan orbiting phase.

21. The Hum of the Universe was recently detected by the North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav). According to the researchers, the hum was produced by gravitational waves. The Hum of the Universe comes from a type of dead star called a "Pulsar". These stars are basically neutron stars. They are oriented in such a manner that they flash beams of radio waves from their poles as they rotate.

22. The researchers studying about the WASP-107b have recently found that the core mass of the giant exoplanet is much lower than what was previously assumed. WASP-107b is an exoplanet and was discovered in 2017. Earlier, the scientists believed that the planet was huge in size due to its huge gas envelope that surrounded the planet. Also, the scientists believed that such huge gas envelopes are possible only with massive and dense cores. However, the recent study says that the cores of WASP-107b are not as dense as thought earlier.

23. The MeerKAT Radio Telescope recently discovered two giant radio galaxies. The galaxies were discovered under the MIGHTEE survey. The discovered galaxies are bigger than 93% of any other giants discovered before. They were 62 times the size of Milky Way. Light takes 6.5 million light years to travel from one end to the other. The MeerKAT Radio Telescope is located in Northern Cape of South Africa. It is a radio telescope with sixty-four antennas.

24. Spain and France have recently signed an agreement to build 590 MW of solar power plant. This will be the largest solar power plant in Europe. The agreement was signed between Iberdrola of Spain and Donone of France. Spain is currently the busiest subsidy free photo-voltaic market of Europe. In 2020, Spain commissioned 2.9 GW of solar power. In 2019, Spain added 729 MW of solar power. Hence, the 2020 addition is four times that of the 2019 addition. France has set a target of installing 18 to 20 GW of solar power by 2023. In 2016, France along with India laid the foundation of International Solar Alliance. Though France is not a country located in the tropics, it has joined hands with India in International Solar Alliance. This is mainly

because the International Solar Alliance was framed and announced at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 2015 (the Paris agreement conference) hosted by France.

25. The Scientists from the International Space Station (ISS) have observed a bright-blue lightning bolt that is shooting upward from the thunderclouds. Such blue jets are hard to observe from the ground because the electrical discharges emerge from the tops of thunderclouds. But from space, one can easily observe the phenomenon.

26. Elon Musk's SpaceX has created a new world record. It has launched 143 satellites on a single rocket called Falcon 9 rocket. With the new record, SpaceX has broken the record of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) that has deployed 104 satellites on a single launch in February 2017. For the purpose of delivering these satellites to a polar sun-synchronous orbit, Space X charges a price of 15,000 dollars per kilogram for each satellite.

27. Recently, the Hubble Space Telescope of NASA captured the images of the NGC 4535 which is also known as the "Lost Galaxy". The image highlights that the young and hot stars that hang out are the bright blue spots. On the other hand, older and cooler stars are highlighted by the bright shades nearer to the center. An amateur astronomer Leland S. Copeland fixed his telescope lens on a distant galaxy in the Virgo constellation first in 1950s. He then witnessed an eerie spiral that was shrouded in dust. He named the spiral as "The Lost Galaxy".

28. A rare maritime mineral, Jarosite, has been found in the Antarctica ice. It was discovered after drilling deep into Antarctic ice. The recently discovered mineral was examined and it was found that it was formed in pockets within the ice. This supports the theory of presence of jarosite on MARS in a similar manner. It signifies that, the minerals are able to form in thick deposits on mars because the planet is a lot dustier than Antarctica.

Government Schemes

1. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation of the Light House Project in six states. The Light House Projects are to be implemented in Agartala (Tripura), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India. The Light House Project is to be implemented by Union Urban Ministry.

rupees and in Chennai the prices have increased by 17 rupees.

3. The Uttar Pradesh Government is to launch Kisan Kalyan mission. The Kisan Kalyan mission aims to double the farmer income covering all the Assembly constituencies of the state of Uttar Pradesh. This is to be achieved through campaigns that create awareness among farmers on how to reduce agricultural caused by using fertilizers in a balanced manner. The mission will also encourage farmers to time their cultivation of crops according to the demand of the market.

4. The Government of India recently announced that the benefits of RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) scheme is to be extended to all goods. The RoDTEP Scheme was launched in 2020 to boost exports of India in International markets. Under the scheme, a mechanism will be created for reimbursement of levies, taxes or duties at central, state and local levels. Prior to the scheme, the reimbursements were not done under any mechanism.

2. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently announced that more than 14 crores of free of cost cylinders have been provided under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana to the beneficiaries of the scheme during covid-19 crisis. The price of non-subsidised Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders of 14.2 kg is to remain at 694 rupees per cylinder. The commercial customers will have to pay an additional amount of 17 rupees per cylinder. Also, the new rate of 19-kilogram LPG cylinder in Delhi has increased to 1349 rupees as compared to the previous price of 1332 rupees. In Kolkata the price has increased by 23

5. The Government of India is to initiate the project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services on selected routes. The project aims to provide air connectivity to numerous tourist, religious, remote and unexplored locations near water bodies. This is to make the journey easier and simulate tourism on these new locations. Ultimately the project will contribute to boost the GDP of the country in the long run.

6. The TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding with Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to setup TRIFOOD parks in Madhya Pradesh. According to the MoU, TRIFED and Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram will together implement Van Dhan Yojana. This is to be achieved through mobilization of self help groups, TRIFOOD parks, Van Dhan Vikas Kendra. They will together provide machinery and equipment, identify self help groups, organised training and building infrastructure. They will also focus on other activities such as Horticulture, fisheries, floriculture, animal husbandry and craft. They will mainly work to to improve the livelihood of tribals.

7. The Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog recently announced that it is to conduct a National-level "Gau-Vigyan" (Cow Science) online exam. This is being done to generate interest among the students and public about the indigenous cow and its benefits. The exam will infuse curiosity to all Indians about cows and make them aware of the business opportunities and unexplored potential a cow can offer after it stops giving milk.

8. The UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) and SLNP (Street Lighting National Programme) completed six years of successful implementation. The two programmes revamped household and public lighting system across the country. The SLNP has plans to bring investment of Rs 8,000 crores by 2024 to cover entire rural India. More than 30 million LED street lights are to be installed by EESL in coming years.

9. The Indian Space Research Organization recently announced that it is to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across the country. By adopting

hundred Atal Tinkering Labs, ISRO is to facilitate mentoring and coaching of students in cutting edge technologies. It includes technologies related to space as well. ISRO will promote scientific temperament among students and will encourage them for space related technologies. The students will gain practical and application-based knowledge of STEM through the programme.

10. On January 15, 2021, the Government of India is to launch the third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana. The third Phase is to be implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. Under the third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra are to be established and more than 200 ITIs are to be rolled out under Skill India mission. This will build a robust pool of skilled professionals. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0 is to train more than 1 lakh candidates for a period of one year with an investment of 950 crores of Rupees.

11. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently launched SAKSHAM awareness campaign. The campaign was launched to spread awareness about green energy. The campaign will spread awareness about clean energy. It is a one-month long people centric fuel conservation campaign. The campaign is to be launched by the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA). The campaign is to create awareness in seven key drivers namely greater reliance on domestic sources to drive bio-fuels, moving towards gas based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, achieving renewable targets with the set deadlines, increased use of electric vehicles to decarbonize mobility, increased use of cleaner fuels and digital innovation across all energy systems.

12. WE Hub recently announced its partnership with i-Hub. I-Hub operates under Government of Gujarat. WE Hub operates under Government of Telangana. WE Hub is Women Entrepreneurs Hub. It is a startup incubator, that is, it provides an environment for the women entrepreneurs to grow their business. It aims to support women entrepreneurs with solutions, innovative ideas and entitles to focus on emerging areas. It also

supports unexplored and under explored sectors along with service sectors. The main goal of WE Hub is to eliminate financial and societal barriers for women.

13. The Gujarat chief Minister recently announced the "Horticulture Development Mission". It is also called "Bagayat Vikas Mission". The main objective of the mission is to double the income of the farmers involved in horticulture and medicinal farming. Under the mission, the waste land of the State Government of Gujarat is to be provided on thirty year lease for farming medicinal and horticulture crops. Currently, the Gujarat Government holds 50,000 non-cultivated waste lands. A list of waste lands available for allotment is to be released on I-Khedut portal.

14. The Election Commission of India (ECI) is all set to launch the Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Card (e-EPIC) programme on the occasion of National Voter's Day. The new digital card is being launched by keeping in view the upcoming polls in five states namely, Kerala, Puducherry, Assam, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The national voter's day is observed on January 25 to mark the foundation day of Election commission of India. The day is being observed since 2011. This year, the election commission will observe the 11th voter's day. Theme of the day for the year 2021 is "Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed". The day is observed to encourage, facilitate and maximize the enrolment of the new voters.

15. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi said that the central government has taken many initiatives that focus on empowering the girl child. He highlighted that, the initiatives also provide a better access to education, better healthcare and improves the gender sensitivity. This statement was made by him on the occasion of National Girl Child Day. This scheme was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The scheme has been implemented through a national campaign and focussed multi sectoral action in selected 100 districts which have low CSR. The scheme covers all States and Union Territories (UTs). The scheme mainly targets the states like

Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Punjab and Bihar.

16. Rajasthan has launched a new School of Public Health. The school was launched in order to make the policy intervention to build the public health capacity and skills. It will also help in bridging the gaps between education and practices in Rajasthan. It is expected that the school will play an important role in the healthcare management after the state is completely recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for milling copra and ball copra. MSP is an agricultural product price which is set by the Government of India. On this price, the government purchases the commodities directly from the farmer. The MSP is not enforceable by law. MSP seeks to safeguard the farmer interest by providing them a minimum profit for their harvest in case the open market has lesser price than the actual cost incurred. The price of the 23 commodities is set by the government twice a year. The MSP is fixed based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). CACP sets the price since 2009 on the basis of cost of production, demand & supply, price fluctuations, market price trends, international market prices and agricultural wage rate.

18. Rajasthan has become the 5th state in the country to successfully complete the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) reforms. This was specified by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. Other states that have completed the Urban Local Bodies Reforms include- Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana. In total, these five states have been granted a total additional borrowing permission of 10,212 crore rupees after completing the reforms.

19. The Gender Park in Kozhikode, Kerala will open from next month. The park will become functional on the occasion of the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II). The ICGE is an initiative by the Gender Park. The second edition of the conference

will be inaugurated with the objective of exploring the measures to boost the economic potential of women and transgender persons. It will help them to be equipped as sustainable entrepreneurs. The conference will be organised under the theme: "Gender in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Social Business: The Mediating Role of Empowerment". This event will be organised in collaboration with the UN Women.

20. The government has announced for the launch of Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) on January 29, 2021. As per the eligibility conditions, the incubators must be legal entities. It must be operational for at least 2 years on the date of application to the scheme. Further, it should have at least five start-ups undergoing incubation physically and should have the seating capacity for at least 25 individuals. They should have a full-time CEO and a capable team.

Awards & Honours

1. The United States recently passed the Malala Yousafzai Act for Pakistani Women. The Act requires the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to award at least 50% of scholarship to Pakistani women between 2020 and 2022. The act makes it mandatory for the USAID to brief the US Congress about the number of scholarships provided under the programme. This includes percentage of recipients who are involuntarily pushed out of the programme for their failure to meet programme requirements as well.

2. The Government of India recently launched the 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica. The expectation will be take a team of 40 members to Antarctica and return by April 2021. XL Indian Antarctica expedition has been Limited due to existing challenges of covid-19. It will mainly focus on ongoing scientific projects on ocean observations, climate change, electric and magnetic flux measurements, geology, Re supplying of food, environmental monitoring, fuel, and accomplish the return of the winter crew.

3. The state of Tamil Nadu celebrates Thiruvalluvar Day during Pongal celebrations. Every year, the Thiruvalluvar Day is celebrated on the second day of Tamil month "thai". Thiruvalluvar is a Tamil poet and is best known as the author of Thirukkural. Thirukkural is a collection of couplets on political and economic matters, ethics and love. There are no known details about the life of Thiruvalluvar. However, he is believed to have lived near Chennai between fourth and sixth century.

4. The Jammu and Kashmir Government recently sought GI tag for Gucchi mushroom. The Gucchi mushrooms are highly expensive and are full of health benefits. 500 grams of Gucchi mushrooms cost Rs 18,000. Recently, GI Tag was provided to Saffron of Jammu and Kashmir. Gucchi mushroom is a species of fungus belonging to the family Morchellaceae. They are pale yellow in colour with large ridges and pits on their cap. They are raised on a large white stem. The Gucchi mushrooms are locally called "Thuntoo".

5. The Government of India recently announced that the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose is to be celebrated as "Parakram Diwas". Parakram Diwas means Courage Day. Netaji was born on January 23, 1897. The Central Government and the Bengal Government are to begin the year long celebrations of 125th birth anniversary year on January 23, 2021. Netaji was an Indian nationalist. He was born in Cuttack to an affluent family. He acquired a degree in philosophy and was later selected for the Indian Civil Services. He refused to join as he did not want to serve the British Government.

6. India celebrated Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti on January 20, 2021. Guru Gobind Singh was the last of the ten Sikh Gurus. He was born on December 22, 1666 in Patna. His birthday is celebrated according to the Nanakshahi calendar. Accordingly, this year, the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh was celebrated on January 20, 2021.

7. The Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal recently provided four lakh rupees to around 1,279 surrendered cadres of National Democratic Front

of Bodoland. The National Democratic Front of Bodoland is an armed separatist that seeks to obtain sovereign Bodoland for the Bodo people. The Government of India has designated the National Democratic Front of Bodoland as the terrorist organisation.

8. Thirty-two children have been awarded with the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar in the year 2021. The award has been given to these children for their tremendous and outstanding accomplishments and exceptional abilities in fields including the innovation, scholastics, sports, social service, arts, culture and bravery. As per the statement of The Ministry of Women and Child Development these awardees have been selected from the 32 districts of 21 states and Union territories.

9. On the evening of 72nd Republic Day, India has honored 119 people from diverse field with the Padma Awards. These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions at Rashtrapati Bhawan. In the year 2021, the President has approved conferment of 119 Padma Awards. In the list, there are 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri Awards.

10. Recently, R. S. Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Ayushman Bharat scheme or the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana which is an insurance scheme by the National Health Authority's (NHA). The newly appointed chief executive, RS Sharma, will replace Indu Bhushan. He was appointed after Indu Bhushan has completed the 3-year tenure as the CEO of Ayushman Bharat.

Sport

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi recently attended the Jallikattu event. The Jallikattu is a two-thousand-year-old competitive sport and an event that honours bull owners who rear them for mating. It is a violent sport. During Jallikattu, the contestants try to tame the bull for a prize. If the contestants fail, the bull owner wins the prize.

3. Punjab has defeated champions Karnataka by nine wickets in the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy recently. The defeat, at the Motera Stadium, was the result of Siddharth Kaul's three-wicket haul and Prabhsimran Singh's unbeaten 49-run knock. Following the win, Punjab has reached to the semi-finals on the other hand, Karnataka has been knocked out. Now, Punjab will face the winner of the Baroda-Haryana match in the second semi-final.

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