

Eazyprep

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

COMPILATION

JANUARY 2021

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1st January

1) Miscellaneous

Government launches Global Pravasi Rishta portal and app

The Government of India launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and Mobile app which aims to connect the Indian Diaspora spread all over the world.

The app was launched by the Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan.

The portal and mobile app will create a three-way communication between the Indian Missions (the embassies), external affairs ministry, and Indian diaspora.

2) Environment

India's first pollinator park opens in Uttarakhand

India's first pollinator park with over 40 species of butterflies, honey bees, birds, and insects has been developed over four acres at Haldwani, Uttarakhand.

The park has been established to conserve various pollinator species, create awareness among people, and promote research on pollination.

The 40 species of pollinators include common jezebel, red pierrot, peacock pansy, painted lady, pioneer white, yellow-orange tip, and many more such species.

Quick Fact: Trivendra Singh Rawat is the Chief Minister (CM) of Uttarakhand.

3) Person in News

Harsh Vardhan nominated as the Board member of 'GAVI'

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has been nominated as the board member of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI).

The vaccine alliance GAVI is an international organization that provides a forum for balanced strategic decision-making, innovation, and partner collaboration.

The seat is currently held by Myint Htwe (Myanmar), who will be replaced by Harsh Vardhan to represent the South East Area Regional Office (SEARO) on the GAVI Board.

Quick Fact: GAVI is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

4) Science and Technology

Indian's first Testbed TiHAN launched at IIT Hyderabad

Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has virtually laid the foundation stone of India's first Testbed for Autonomous Navigations Systems, "TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad".

The Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems (TiHAN) for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles has been established at IIT Hyderabad.

DST has sanctioned INR 135 crores to IIT Hyderabad under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to set up the system.

Quick Fact: Dr. Harsh Vardhan is the head of the Department of Space and Technology (DST).

5) Person in News

Satish Vyas conferred Tansen Samman at the World Music Festival

Pandit Satish Vyas was conferred upon the prestigious Tansen Samman at the 96th edition of the Tansen Music Festival which was held in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

Tansen festival pays tribute to Tansen, one of the 9 gems in Akbar's court.

Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honored with the Raja Mansingh Tomar Award.

6) Miscellaneous

Indian Railways completes speed trial of new Vistadome coach

Indian Railways completed the 180 km per hour speed trial of its new design Vistadome tourist coaches.

The luxurious tourist coaches have been manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai.

The European-style coaches are made with see-through glass rooftops and wide windows making the journey memorable for the passengers and providing a boost to tourism.

Quick Fact: The Indian Railways was founded on 16 April 1853.

7) National Affairs

Harsh Vardhan releases 'Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat' report

Union Minister Harsh Vardhan has virtually released the 'Action Agenda for an Atma Nirbhar Bharat' report in New Delhi.

The report has been prepared by Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC).

The report is a consequential follow-up of the TIFAC's White Paper on Focused Interventions for Make in India: post-COVID-19 released earlier in July 2020.

8) India and the World

India and Sri Lanka hold a meeting of Joint Working Group on Fisheries

The 4th meeting of the India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on Fisheries was held virtually.

The Indian delegation was led by Dr. Rajeev Ranjans while the Sri Lankan delegation was led by R.M.I. Rathnayake.

The meeting covered issues related to fishermen and fishing boats which have been on the agenda of bilateral discussions between India and Sri Lanka for many years.

2nd January

1) National Affairs

PM lays the foundation stone of AIIMS at Rajkot in Gujarat

PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Rajkot in Gujarat through a virtual conference.

The institute will set up on 201 acres of land near Rajkot at an estimated cost of INR 1,195 crore and is expected to be completed by 2022.

The institute will have a state-of-the-art 750-bed hospital sporting 125 MBBS seats and 60 nursing seats.

2) International Affairs

WHO clears Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for emergency use

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has cleared the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for emergency use paving the way for poorer countries to get access to the vaccine shot.

The first emergency use validation for a COVID-19 vaccine opens doors for countries to expedite their regulatory approval processes to import & administer the vaccine.

The vaccine which has already received clearance in the US, UK, and EU, meets the must-have criteria for safety and efficacy set out by WHO.

Quick Fact: The World Health Organisation (WHO) was formed on 7 April 1948.

3) Person in News

Former Indian Hockey team player Michael Condo passes away

India's 1975 hockey World-Cup winning and 1972 Olympics bronze-winning team member Michael Kondo breathed his last at the age of 73.

Kondo was bestowed with the prestigious Arjuna Award in 1972.

Kondo was a member of the team that won the lone World Cup for India in 1975 in Kuala Lumpur and a bronze medal in the 1972 Olympics in Munich.

Quick Fact: Manpreet Singh is the current captain of India Men's National Hockey Team.

4) National Affairs

Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates Virtual Agri-Hackathon 2020

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the Virtual Agri-hackathon 2020.

The Virtual Agri-Hackathon 2020 was organized by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare in association with IARI, Pusa.

The 2-month long event was made live on MyGov.in and is the largest virtual event to create dialogues and accelerate innovations in the field of Indian agriculture.

5) Person in News

Indian Army veteran Col Narinder "Bull" Kumar passes away

Indian Army veteran Colonel Narinder “Bull” Kumar who helped India in conquering the Siachen Glacier in 1984 breathed his last at the age of 87.

Col Kumar carried out reconnaissance expeditions with his team bringing back crucial ground situations and carved maps for the army to carry out ‘Operation Meghdoot’.

Col Kumar was awarded the Padma Shri, Arjuna Award, and McGregor Medal besides being the first Indian to climb Mt. Nanda Devi.

6) National Affairs

PM lays the foundation stone of Light House Projects at six sites

PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House Projects (LHPs) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC)-India across six states in the country.

The LHPs will showcase the best forms of technology being used for public welfare and support urban housing needs,

The projects will prove to be like incubation centers for planners, engineers, architects, and students where they will be able to experiment with the new technology.

7) Miscellaneous

Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice felicitated

The Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice was hosted by the Harmony Foundation and is the only award endorsed by Sister Prema.

The theme of this year’s awards was ‘Celebrating Compassion In Times of Covid’.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Fabio Stevenazzi, Pradeep Kumar, Cristian Fracassi, Alessandro Romaioli, Sanjay Pandey were some of the awardees this year.

Quick Fact: Sister Prema- Superior General of the ‘Missionaries of Charity’, the religious institute founded by Mother Teresa.

8) India and the World

India and ADB sign USD 231 million loan to augment electricity generation capacity

India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a USD 231 million loan to augment electricity generation capacity in Assam.

A 120 MW hydroelectric power plant will be set up to enhance the availability of electricity for households and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3,60,000 tonnes annually.

The agreement is the third tranche loan for the ongoing 'Assam Power Sector Investment Programme' that was approved by the ADB Board in 2014.

Quick Fact: Masatsugu Asakawa is the President of ADB.

4th January

1) Economy

SEBI fines Reliance Industries and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani

The Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) fined Reliance Industries and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani for carrying out manipulative trade in Reliance Petroleum Ltd.

SEBI imposed INR 25 crores on Reliance Industries and INR 15 crores on its Managing Director Mukesh Ambani.

The fine was imposed on Reliance India Limited because the company violated the Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices (PFUTP).

Quick Fact: Dhirubhai Ambani founded Reliance Industries Ltd on 8 May 1973.

2) International Affairs

Argentina becomes the largest Latin American country to legalize abortion

Argentina has become the largest Latin American country to legalize abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy.

The new abortion laws of Argentina are considered historic as before the bill was passed, abortions were permitted only in cases of rape.

Before the new law, women and girls were forced to turn towards unsafe and illegal procedures making unsafe methods the leading cause of maternal mortality.

Quick Fact: Alberto Fernandez is the current President of Argentina.

3) Science and Technology

ISRO to launch first satellite developed completely by Brazil's space agency

ISRO is all set to launch the first satellite completely developed in Brazil named 'Amazonia-1' from Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

The satellite was developed by the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

Amazonia-1 is a Sun-synchronous (solar) orbiting satellite that will help monitor the ecosystem of the Amazon rainforest.

4) National Affairs

Government launches Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG)

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) along with the MoH&FW, ICMR, and CSIR has launched Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG).

The consortium will monitor the genomic variations in the new variant of SARS-CoV-2 regularly through a multi-laboratory network.

INSACOG will have a high-level Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee which will provide guidance and oversight to the consortium.

Quick Fact: The full form of CSIR is 'Council of Scientific and Industrial Research'.

5) India and the World

ADB and India sign USD 10 million PRF to support horticulture in HP

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India have signed a USD 10 million Project Readiness Financing (PRF).

The agreement aims to help finance piloting activities and expanding horticulture production in Himachal Pradesh.

The PRF will ensure prior testing of new production tech and marketing systems so that the ensuing project is cost-effective and timely completed.

Quick Fact: The Asian Development Bank was founded on 19 December 1966.

6) Person in News

Legendary Music Director Shantanu Mohapatra passes away

Legendary Odia Musician Shantanu Mohapatra who worked with Lata Mangeshkar, Manna Dey, and Md Rafi, breathed his last at the age of 84.

Mohapatra composed music for hundreds of Odia films and Jatra (opera) shows and was the first to work in Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, and Telugu film industries.

Mohapatra retired as the Director of Odisha Mining Corporation and received the Odisha Film Critic Award for his contribution to Odia music.

7) Miscellaneous

IFSCA becomes an Associate member of IOSCO

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has become an Associate Member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

IOSCO is the international organization of the World's securities regulators and the global standard-setter for the securities sector.

IFSCA will get the platform to exchange information at the global level and regional level on areas of common interests.

Quick Fact: IOSCO is headquartered in Madrid, Spain.

8) National Affairs

SII's Covidshield vaccine approved for emergency-use in India

Serum Institute of India's (SII) Covidshield vaccine has been approved by DCGI for restricted emergency use in India.

The Covidshield vaccine is developed by the University of Oxford and British Pharma AstraZeneca.

The vaccine is to be made and marketed by SII in India with two full doses of Covidshield to be administered to each individual.

Quick Fact: The full form of DCGI is 'Drug Controller General of India'.

5th January

1) International Affairs

The United States passes the Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act

The United States recently passed the Malala Yousafzai Scholarship 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 & 2022.

Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist, fighting against the Taliban for women's education and the youngest Nobel Prize Laureate.

Quick Fact: United Nations' Malala Day is observed annually on July 12.

2) National Affairs

India approves two COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use

The DCGI recently announced that it has approved two COVID-19 vaccines- COVAXIN and COVISHIELD, for restricted emergency use in India.

COVAXIN is the first indigenous vaccine in the country, developed by Bharat Biotech and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

COVISHIELD was developed by the University of Oxford and pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca.

Quick Fact: AstraZeneca is headquartered in Cambridge, United Kingdom.

3) Science and Technology

PM Modi to address the National Metrology Conclave 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at the National Metrology Conclave 2021 held in New Delhi.

The theme of the National Metrology Conclave 2021 is: "Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation".

The National Metrology Conclave is organized by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research- National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL).

Quick Fact: National Metrology Conclave 2021 was held on the 75th Foundation Day of CSIR.

4) National Affairs

FSSAI implements new Trans Fat levels

The FSSAI recently announced that all edible refined oils, vegetable fat spreads, vanaspati, margarine & mixed fat spreads can contain only 3% or less Trans fat.

The implementation comes after the World Health Organisation called for the global elimination of trans fat by 2023.

According to the REPLACE annual report of WHO, India has the highest burden of heart diseases due to high trans fat.

Quick Fact: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was founded in August 2011.

5) India and the World

India becomes co-chair of Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP)

India has been chosen as the co-chair of the IUCN-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for a period of 3-years till November 2023.

India will replace South Korea as the co-chair and would be responsible to assist other Asian countries in managing their protected areas.

The APAP is chaired by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Quick Fact: IUCN is headquartered in Gland, Switzerland.

6) Defense

GRSE delivers 8th Landing Craft Utility ship to Indian Navy

Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) has delivered the 8th Landing Craft Utility (LCU) MK IV class vessel 'IN LCU L-58' to the Indian Navy.

The amphibious ship is to be placed in the strategic location of Andaman and Nicobar Islands which is close to various routes leading to the South China Sea.

LCU L-58 is the final ship in the series of 8 LCUs that were manufactured by GRSE for the Indian Navy.

Quick Fact: Rear Admiral VK Saxena is the Chairman & Managing Director of GRSE.

7) Person in News

Mukesh Ambani ranked 12th in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021

India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani, Chairman & MD of Reliance Industries dropped down to the 12th spot in the Bloomberg Billionaires 2021.

The net worth of Ambani has dropped from USD 90 million to USD 76.7 million.

Zhong Shanshan has replaced Ambani as Asia's Richest Person.

Quick Fact: Zhong Shanshan is the Founder & Chairman of the Chinese beverage company 'Nongfu Spring'.

8) Miscellaneous

Oscar nominee 'Another Round' to be opening movie at 51st IFFI

Oscar nominee 'Another Round' by Thomas Vinterberg will be the opening movie at the 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

The movie stars Cannes Best Actor Award winner Mads Mikkelsen.

The festival will witness the world-premiere of 'Mehrunisa' by Sandeep Kumar and will close on 24th January with the Indian premiere of 'Wife of a Spy' by Kiyoshi Kurosawa.

6th January

1) Sports

Assam Rifles Public School launched as Khelo India Sports School

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju launched the Assam Rifles Public School as a Khelo India Sports School.

The school located in Shillong is the first Khelo India Sports School in the North-East.

The main objective of Khelo India Sports School is to integrate sports with education.

Quick Fact: There are nine Khelo India Sports Schools in India.

2) Environment

IMD releases Statement on Climate of India during 2020

According to the Statement on Climate of India 2020 released by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), 2020 was the eighth warmest year since 1901.

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were the hardest-hit states due to adverse weather reporting 350 deaths due to severe thunderstorms in these regions.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation, the Global mean surface temperature anomaly was recorded as +1.2 degrees celsius.

Quick Fact: IMD operates under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

3) Science and Technology

India to construct the largest Floating Solar Energy Project in the world

The Government of India is to construct the largest Floating Solar Energy Project in the World at Omkareshwar Dam on the Narmada River.

The project is to have floating solar panels of 600 megawatts of power generation capacity.

The International Finance Corporation and World Bank are to provide financial assistance to the project.

Quick Fact: International Finance Corporation is headquartered in Washington D.C., United States.

4) Environment

Government launches 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica

The Ministry of Earth Sciences recently launched the 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica.

The expedition will take a team of 40 members to Antarctica focussing on ocean observations, climate change, geology, and return by April 2021.

Ice class vessel MV Vasiliy Golovin has been deployed for the expedition to Antarctica.

Quick Fact: Dakshin Gangotri was the first permanent settlement of India in Antarctica(1983).

5) National Affairs

Government to initiate Sagarmala Seaplane Services Projects

The Government of India is to initiate the project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services on selected routes in the country.

The Sagarmala seaplane services are being implemented by the Ministry of Sports, Shipping, and Waterways.

Operating under the 'Udan Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik' Scheme, the project aims to provide air connectivity to tourists, religious, remote, and unexplored locations near water bodies.

6) Miscellaneous

Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar to head 51st IFFI's International Jury

The International Jury for the 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India has been announced featuring eminent filmmakers from around the world.

The Jury will comprise Pablo Cesar(Argentina) as the Chairman, Prasanna Vithanage (Sri Lanka), Abu Bakr Shawky (Austria), Priyadarshan (India) & Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh).

Pablo Cesar contributed to African cinema by making the critically acclaimed films, Equinox, the Garden of the Roses, Los dioses de agua, and many more.

7) National Affairs

PM Modi dedicates Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to India

PM Narendra Modi has dedicated the 'Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline' to the nation through video conferencing.

The dedication is part of the journey to move towards 'One Nation One Gas Grid'.

The 450-kilometer long natural gas pipeline by GAIL between Kochi (Kerala) and Mangaluru (Karnataka).

Quick Fact: The full form of GAIL is 'Gas Authority of India Limited'.

8) Summits and Conferences

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade organizes Udyog Manthan

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry has organized 'Udyog Manthan'.

Udyog Manthan is a marathon of focussed sector-specific webinars for promoting Quality and Productivity in the Indian Industry.

The webinar has been launched in association with the Quality Council of India, the National Productivity Council, and Industry bodies.

7th January

1) Science and Technology

PM Modi launches National Atomic Scale

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi launched the National Atomic Scale at the National Meteorology Conclave (NMC) 2020.

Atomic Clock measures the actual length of a second and deviates only one second in up to 100 million years.

With the launch of the Atomic Clock, India has become self-reliant in measuring time within the range of nanosecond matching that of International Standard Time.

Quick Fact: NMC 2020 was organized by the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-NPL.

2) India and the World

India-Japan sign MoU on Specified Skilled Workers

The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding between India and Japan on 'Specified Skilled Workers'.

According to the MoU, qualified Indian workers can work in fourteen specified sectors in Japan and will be provided a new status of "Specified Skilled Workers".

The MoU will enhance people-to-people contacts and foster mobility of workers & skilled professionals from India to Japan.

3) Environment

The University of Oxford develops AI-based Survey of Elephants

An international team of researchers from the University of Oxford has developed a new approach to survey African Elephants using satellite images and AI.

The method uses a satellite orbiting in space that is capable of capturing more than five thousand square kilometers of images.

Manual counting and Manned Aircraft for aerial counts are the current methods for the survey which are expensive and hindered by poor visibility.

Quick fact: The University of Oxford is established in the United Kingdom.

4) National Affairs

IRDAI introduces Bharat Griha Rakshak Policy

The IRDAI is to introduce 'Bharat Griha Rakshak Policy: The Home Insurance Policy' that will cover the risk of fire and other related dangers.

The policy being introduced is to replace the 'Standard Fire and Special Perils Policy'.

The three main components of the new policy are- Bharat Griha Raksha, Bharat Laghu Udyam Suraksha, and Bharat Sookshma Udyam Suraksha.

Quick Fact: 'Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India' (IRDAI) is headquartered in Hyderabad.

5) India and the World

World Bank loans USD 105 million to improve waterways in West Bengal

The World Bank, the Government of India, and the Government of West Bengal recently signed a USD 105 million loan agreement.

The funds are to be used to improve the inland water transport infrastructure, logistics, and special development projects in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The project will increase the number of ferries and increase waterway connectivity in the Hooghly river facilitating freight and passenger movement in the river.

Quick Fact: David Malpass is the current President of the World Bank.

6) National Affairs

Government sets up a high-level group for South-Asia energy security

The Central Government has set up a high-level group 'South Asia Group for Energy' (SAGE) to build a South-Asia focussed energy security architecture.

SAGE will be headed by former Union Power Secretary Ram Vinay Shahi.

SAGE has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) run think-tank Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

7) National Affairs

Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal launches Toycathon-2021

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Union Minister of WCD & Textiles Smriti Zubin Irani jointly launched Toycathon-2021 and Toycathon portal.

Toycathon is being organized to develop India as the global Toy manufacturing hub.

Toycathon will provide a platform to conceptualize innovative toys based on the Indian value system to inculcate optimism and good values among children.

8) Economy

Tata Power partners with SIDBI to offer affordable financing schemes for MSME

India's largest integrated power company 'Tata Power' partnered with SIDBI to offer easy and affordable financing schemes for MSME customers in the rooftop solar segment.

The scheme will empower MSMEs to adopt sustainable energy for their businesses and promote the use of green energy.

The financing scheme is exclusively for MSME customers of Tata Power for both off-grid and on-grid connections.

Quick Fact: Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is headquartered in Lucknow.

8th January

1) National Affairs

PM Modi flags off India's first double-stack long haul container train

PM Narendra Modi recently flagged off India's first double-stack long haul container train from New Ateli in Haryana to New Kishanganj in Rajasthan.

The train hauled by Electric traction is to be operated in the 360-km long Rewari-Madar Section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

Dedicated Freight Corridors reduce Logistics costs, are environmentally friendly, and help in the faster movement of goods.

Quick Fact: The Western Dedicated Freight Corridor is from Jawaharlal Nehru Port (Mumbai) to Dadri (UP).

2) Economy

RBI forms Academic Advisory Council for Supervisory College

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently formed an Academic Advisory Council under former deputy governor NS Vishwanathan for RBI Supervisory Colleges.

The council will identify areas where upskilling and building are required in supervisory colleges and advise the director of the central bank.

The Reserve Bank of India established supervisory colleges to monitor Indian banks abroad.

Quick Fact: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is headquartered in Mumbai.

3) India and the World

India and NDB signs 646 million loan agreement for road projects in AP

The New Development Bank (NDB) has signed a loan agreement worth 646 million with the Government of India for two road projects in Andhra Pradesh.

The first project is 'Andhra Pradesh Roads and Bridges Reconstruction Project' and the second project is 'Andhra Pradesh Mondal Connectivity & Rural Connectivity Improvement'.

The projects will improve connectivity and mobility to the socioeconomic centers, enhance transport efficiency, and improve road safety.

Quick Fact: The New Development Bank (NDB) is headquartered in Shanghai, China.

4) Economy

SMCB becomes India's first urban co-operative bank to transition to SFB

Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank, Uttar Pradesh has become the first Urban Co-operative Bank (UCB) in India to operate as a Small Finance Bank (SFB).

SMCB received the commercial banking license from the Reserve Bank of India to transition to a Small Finance Bank (SFB).

SMCB will start its banking operations in April 2021.

Quick Fact: Suveer Kumar Gupta is the MD & CEO of Shivalik Mercantile Cooperative Bank.

5) Defense

India and Israel successfully test the MRSAM air defense system

India and Israel successfully tested a Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) defense system.

The MRSAM defense system was developed jointly by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) to deal with airstrikes from enemy countries.

The defense system is being used by all three wings of the Indian Army as well as by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Quick Fact: Boaz Levy is the President and CEO of Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

6) Sports

Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament begins in Chiktan, Kargil

Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament organized in Chiktan, Kargil witnessed the participation of the women team of Chiktan in Khelo India Games for the first time.

Out of the 13 teams from different villages of Chiktan participating in the tournament, there were 11 men's teams and 2 women's teams.

The tournament was inaugurated by SDM Shakar Chiktan and the Chief Guest of the event Kacho Asgar Ali Khan.

Quick Fact: Kiren Rijju is the Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports.

7) Person in News

World's oldest living first-class cricketer Alan Burgess passes away

The world's oldest living first-class cricketer Alan Burgess breathed his last at the age of 100.

Alan appeared in 11 first-class matches for Canterbury and was a tank driver for New Zealand's forces in England during the Second World War.

Following Alan's demise, India's Raghunath Chandorkar is now the oldest first-class cricketer alive.

8) National Affairs

Union Health Minister releases India report on LASI Wave-1 virtually

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has released India's report on 'Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI)' Wave-1 on a virtual platform.

LASI is a full-scale national survey of scientific investigation of health, economy, and consequences of population aging in India.

LASI is India's first and World's largest ever survey.

9th January

1) India and the World

India and France hold annual strategic dialogue

India and France held their annual strategic dialogue in New Delhi.

The countries mainly focused on COVID-19 vaccines, Indo-Pacific, nuclear, space, environment, maritime safety, digital economy, environment, and defense sectors.

The India-France strategic dialogue 2020 was held in Paris.

Quick Fact: Emmanuel Macron is the President of France.

2) National Affairs

Union Education Minister inaugurates EDUCON 2020

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated the two-day virtual International Akhand Conference EDUCON 2020.

The theme of EDUCON 2020 is: "Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace"

The conference was organized by the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB), and the Global Education Research Association (GERA).

3) National Affairs

Government sets up Control Room to control the spread of Bird Flu

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 daily stock of the preventive measures undertaken by the respective State Governments.

The control room will also abide by the National Action Plan of Avian Influenza.

4) International Affairs

Indian-American Raj Iyer becomes U.S. Army's first CIO

Indian-American Raj Iyer has been appointed as the first Chief Information Officer of the U.S. Army.

Dr. Raj Iyer is one of the highest-ranking Indian-American civilians in the US Department of Defense.

Dr. Iyer holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and had been serving as the Principal Advisor to the Secretary of the Army.

5) Economy

IDFC Mutual Fund unveils awareness campaign #PaisonKoRokoMat

IDFC Mutual Funds has launched a pan-India investor awareness campaign '#PaisonKoRokoMat'.

The new campaign of IDFC Mutual Fund urges savers to become investors and explore the smart & modern mutual fund vehicle for their investments.

The campaign has been conceptualized and created by TBWAIndia.

Quick Fact: IDFC First Bank is headquartered in Mumbai.

6) Economy

PNB collaborates with IIT Kanpur to set up a Fintech innovation Centre

The Punjab National Bank (PNB) has collaborated with IIT Kanpur & FIRST to set up a Fintech Innovation Centre (FIC) at the institute's campus.

PNB and IIT Kanpur will jointly work to set up this innovation center as a vehicle for the research and development of technological solutions with the help of FIRST.

The campaign will address challenges and explore opportunities in the Banking, Finance Services, and Insurance (BFSI) space.

Quick Fact: S.S. Mallikarjuna Rao is the CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB).

7) Culture

Government forms committee to preserve language, culture, and the land of Ladakh

The Government of India has announced the formation of a committee to protect the language, culture, and land of Ladakh.

The committee will be headed by the Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy.

The committee will ensure citizen's participation in Ladakh's development and analyze the geographical location & strategic importance of the Union Territory.

8) India and the World

India to chair three-key subsidiary bodies of UNSC

India will chair three-key subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The three panels are- Counter-Terrorism Committee, Taliban Sanctions Committee & Libya Sanctions Committee.

The announcement was made by India's Permanent Representative at UNSC, TS Tirumurti.

Quick Fact: UNSC was founded on October 24, 1945.

11th January

1) International Affairs

Touadera re-elected as President of the Central African Republic

Faustin-Archange Touadera has been re-elected as the President of the Central African Republic winning more than 53% votes.

The 63-year old had been in power since 2016 but struggled in gaining control of vast parts of the nation from the armed militia.

A producer of gold and diamonds, the Central African Republic has a population of 4.7 million.

Quick Fact: 'Bangui' is the Capital of the Central African Republic.

2) Economy

Bandhan Bank signs agreement with Indian Army unveiling account for personnel

Bandhan Bank has signed an agreement with the Indian Army to provide banking services to the personnel of the force.

The bank got the mandate to maintain a 'Bank Shaurya Salary Account' of the Army personnel which will have a zero balance facility offering protection for self & assets.

The services include unlimited free RTGS/NEFT transactions, free personal accidental insurance up to 30 lakhs, air accident cover up to 1 crore, and much more.

Quick Fact: Bandhan Bank is headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal.

3) Sports

Abhishek Yadav appointed as AIFF's first Deputy General Secretary

Former Indian striker Abhishek Yadav has been appointed as the First Deputy General Secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF).

The 40-year-old former international player has been serving as the National Team's Director since January 2018.

Yadav also served as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the 2017 U17 Indian World Cup Team collaborating closely with head coach Luis Norton de Maros.

Quick Fact: Praful Patel is the President of the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

4) Person in News

Elon Musk overtakes Jeff Bezos to become the World's Richest Person

According to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has overtaken Amazon's Jeff Bezos to become the World's Richest Person.

A 6% rise in Tesla shares took Elon Musk's net worth to about 188.5 billion USD.

A more modest rise of less than 2% in Amazon's shares put Jeff Bezos' net worth to about 187 billion USD.

Quick Fact: Tesla is headquartered in California, United States.

5) National Affairs

Nationwide COVID-19 vaccination drive to begin from January 16

PM Narendra Modi chaired a high-level committee to review the status of COVID-19 in the country, kicking-off the vaccination drive from January 16.

Emergency Use Authorisation has been granted by the National Regulator for two vaccines- COVISHIELD & COVAXIN, establishing safety and immunogenicity.

The roll-out of the vaccine will provide priority to healthcare and frontline workers followed by those above the age of 50 and the under-50 groups with co-morbidities.

6) Economy

Central Bank of India signs MoU with NABFOUNDATION

The Central Bank of India (CBI) has signed an MoU with NABFOUNDATION to provide working capital to all self-help groups.

The cheap & collateral-free credit will support rural women and promote the 'My Pad My Right' project.

NABFOUNDATION is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NABARD.

Quick Fact: Pallav Mohapatra is the Chairman of the Central Bank of India.

7) Miscellaneous

IREDA signs MoU with NHPC for renewable energy projects

IREDA signed an MoU with National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) for providing its technical expertise in developing renewable energy projects.

The

Under the MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency, and conservation projects for NHPC.

The MoU was signed virtually by IREDA's Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Pradip Kumar Das, and NHPC's CMD, Abhay Kumar Singh.

Quick Fact: The full-form of IREDA is the 'Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency'.

8) Person in News

Fashion Designer Satya Paul passes away

Ace Fashion Designer, Satya Paul who was known for giving Indian Saree a contemporary touch, breathed his last at the age of 79.

Paul started his journey in the field of retail and expanded to exports of Indian handloom products to high-end retail stores in Europe & America.

In 1980, Paul launched the first 'saree boutique' in India named L'Affaire & founded the eponymous fashion clothing brand with his son in 1986.

12th December

1) Science and Technology

ISRO to adopt 100 Tinkering Labs

The Indian Space Research Organisation announced that it is to adopt 100 Tinkering Labs across the country.

ISRO is to facilitate mentoring and coaching of students in cutting edge tech and help them gain practical knowledge of STEM through the Tinkering Labs.

NITI Aayog establishes Atal Tinkering Labs under the 'Atal Innovation Mission'.

Quick Fact: ISRO is headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

2) Science and Technology

NASA to test the most powerful rocket in the world

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is to launch the most powerful rocket in the world on January 12, 2021.

The rocket named "Space Launch System" is to carry the first woman and the next man to the moon under the Artemis program 2024.

The rocket is 98 meters tall and can carry more than twenty-seven tonnes.

Quick Fact: Dwight D. Eisenhower founded NASA on 1 October 1958.

3) International Affairs

WHO releases new Map of India

WHO recently released a new Map of India differentiating Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh from the rest of the Indian mainland with a different color.

The new WHO map of India has marked the new Union Territories of India, Ladakh, and Jammu & Kashmir in grey color.

The Aksai Chin region has also been marked in grey color with blue stripes and shows India in navy blue color.

Quick Fact: The World Health Organisation (WHO) was founded on 7 April 1948.

4) National Affairs

PM Modi to address the National Youth Parliament

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to address the National Youth Parliament wherein the top winners of the NYP will speak before the PM on January 12 valedictory function.

The first National Youth Parliament was held in 2019 under the theme "Be the voice of new India and find solutions and contribute to policy".

The National Service Scheme under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organizes the National Youth Parliament to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.

5) India and the World

Japan commits 2,113 crores support for COVID relief efforts

The Government of Japan has committed a development loan of INR 2,113 crores to support India's efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households.

The COVID relief efforts program aims to provide social assistance to people and families severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

India and Japan have had a fruitful history of bilateral development cooperation and strategic partnership since 1958.

Quick Fact: Yoshihide Suga is the Prime Minister of Japan.

6) International Affairs

Twitter suspends Trump's account of his presidential campaign

Twitter Inc suspended the account of Trump's presidential campaign and deleted tweets posted by him on the official government account @POTUS.

@POTUS Twitter account is the official Twitter account of US President Donald Trump.

President Trump used @POTUS account to tweet against 'Twitter' after the company permanently banned & suspended Trump's account @realDonaldTrump.

7) Defense

Harsh Vardhan launches Coastal Research Vessel 'Sagar Anveshika'

Union Minister for Earth Sciences, Harsh Vardhan has launched Coastal Research Vessel (CRV) 'Sagar Anveshika' at the Chennai Port.

The vessel will be used to carry out environment indexing and bathymetric (mapping underwater features) in both coastal and off-shore waters.

The vessel has been built by Titagarh Wagons, Kolkata, WB, and will be used for research purposes by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).

Quick Fact: National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) is headquartered in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

8) Miscellaneous

India's 7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) at WTO

The second session of the 7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) concluded at the World Trade Organisation.

During this trade policy review, WTO examines the trade and related policies of the member countries and provides constructive feedback.

The official delegation of India for the 7th TPR was headed by the Commerce Secretary, Anup Wadhawan.

Quick Fact: The World Trade Organisation is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

13th December

1) Government announces New Trade policy 2021-26

The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently announced the New Trade Policy 2021-26 which will come into effect from April 1, 2021.

The new policy's goal is to make India a 5 trillion USD economy by 2024.

The policy aims to boost exports, ease of doing business & tackle issues such as under-employment and slowdown in agriculture.

Quick fact: Piyush Goyal is the current Minister of Commerce and Industry.

2) Environment

Scientist caution an 'Insect Apocalypse'

Entomologists from all around the globe attended the National Academies of Sciences and cautioned against the rapid decline of the insect population.

The Earth is losing 2% of its insects every year and scientists have named this 'Insect Apocalypse'.

Honey Bees and Butterflies best illustrate the insect decline happening due to various issues such as climate change, intensive agriculture, and light pollution.

Quick Fact: Honey Bees have 5 eyes.

3) International Affairs

Global Ebola vaccine stockpile established

The Global Ebola vaccine stockpile was recently established by four international health and humanitarian organizations.

The 4 organizations are- WHO, Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and UNICEF.

Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunisation (GAVI) will provide financial assistance to the Global Ebola vaccine stockpile.

Quick Fact: IFRC is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

4) National Affairs

Supreme Court suspends implementation of the Farm Laws

The Supreme Court recently suspended the implementation of three Farm Laws to end the disagreement between farmers and the Government of India.

The Supreme Court has directed to form a committee to resolve the issue.

The 3 Farm Laws are- Farmers Agreement on Price Insurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, Farmers Produce Trade & Commerce Act 2020 & Essential Commodities Act 2020.

5) Environment

Management Report of National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries released

The Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar recently released the Management Effectiveness Evaluation Report of 146 National Parks & Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Around 60% of leopard population, 70% of Asiatic lions & 70% of global tiger population are the main reasons for the thriving of the National parks & wildlife sanctuaries in the country.

Jaldapara National Park, Raiganj wildlife sanctuary, Tirthan wildlife sanctuary, Sainj wildlife sanctuary & the Great Himalayan National Park are ranked in the top 5.

6) Summits and Conferences

One Planet Summit held

The One Planet Summit was held recently which aims to advance the protection of nature.

The theme of One Planet Summit 2021 is "Let's act together for nature".

The One Planet Summit aims to promote worldwide ecological transformation and measures environmental & climate protection combined with innovation & economy.

Quick Fact: The One Planet Summit is organized by the United Nations, World Bank, and France.

7) Defense

Coastal defense exercise “Sea Vigil 21” kicks off

The second edition of the biennial pan-India coastal defense exercise “Sea Vigil-21” will be conducted on January 12 and 13.

The exercise will involve all the 13 coastal states and Union Territories along with other maritime stakeholders, fishing, and coastal communities.

The exercise will be undertaken along the entire 7,516 km coastline & Exclusive Economic Zones of India providing a realistic assessment of our strengths & weaknesses.

Quick Fact: The Indian Navy was founded on 26 January 1950.

8) Sports

The Jigmet Dolma from India wins 4th position in Dhaka Marathon 2021

Jigmet Dolma, an SPO from Ladakh Police in India, secured the fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021.

Hicham Lakohi of Morocco came first in the marathon in the men's category while Angela Jim Asunde from Kenya won the women's category in the same event.

The marathon was organized to commemorate the return of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Pakistan jail to Bangladesh in 1972.

14th December

1) India and the World

India-UAE sign MoU for Scientific & Technical Cooperation

The Union Cabinet recently approved the India-UAE Memorandum of Understanding for Scientific and Technology Cooperation.

The MoU provides sharing of knowledge & information of data from satellites, radar, tide gauges, and meteorological stations between the countries.

Global cooperation in this field is highly important to modernize weather and forecasting services strengthening countries to face climate change & related disasters.

2) International Affairs

India's Eight-Point Action Plan to UNSC to combat terrorism

The External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar recently addressed the UNSC open debate during which he proposed an eight-point action plan to combat terrorism.

The UNSC open debate was chaired by the current President of the 15-member UNSC body, Tunisia.

The UNSC is made of 5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members, the 5 permanent members being China, UK, France, Russia, and the USA.

Quick Fact: The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is headquartered in New York, United States.

3) Sports

Jay Shah named BCCI's official representative on the ICC board

Jay Shah has been named as the official representative of BCCI for International Cricket Council's (ICC) meetings.

Shah is the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Shah will replace Saurav Ganguly who was currently representing India at the ICC Board but had to be admitted to hospital following a heart ailment.

4) Person in News

Oldest living Olympic Champion Agnes Keleti turns 100

The oldest living Olympic Champion belonging to Hungary, Agnes Keleti celebrated her 100th Birthday recently.

Agnes is one of Hungary's most successful Olympians securing 10 medals in Gymnastics at the Olympic Games Helsinki 1952 and Melbourne 1956.

At the age of 35, Agnes became the oldest female gymnast to win an Olympic title.

5) National Affairs

Union Budget 2021 to be paperless for the first time in history

Union Budget 2021 which is slated to be presented on February 1 is going to be completely paperless for the first time since independence in the wake of ongoing COVID-19.

The budget papers are usually printed at the ministry's in-house printing press in the North Block.

Several conventions would be broken including the traditional 'Halwa' ceremony and a low-key function would be held with limited gathering.

Quick Fact: Nirmala Sitharaman is the Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs.

6) Defense

Dr. Ajay Kumar co-chairs 13th India-Vietnam Defense Security Dialogue

The 13th edition of India-Vietnam Defense Security Dialogue held virtually was co-chaired by Defense Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar.

Defense Secretary and the Deputy Defense Secretary Lt Gen Nguyen Chi Vinh expressed satisfaction at the ongoing cooperation between the two countries amid COVID-19.

The meeting reviewed the progress on various bilateral cooperation & ensured elevated engagements between the armed forces under the 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'.

Quick Fact: The currency of Vietnam is 'Vietnamese Dong'.

7) Person in News

Indian-American writer Ved Mehta passes away

Celebrated Indian-American novelist Ved Mehta, who overcame blindness and became known as the 20th-century writer, breathed his last at the age of 86.

Mehta was a staff writer for 'The New Yorker' magazine for 33 years and his 24 books included volumes of reportage on India.

Mehta was the recipient of the MacArthur Foundation 'genius grant' in 1982.

8) Miscellaneous

The first-ever climbing festival celebrated in Nubra Valley

In Leh, the first-ever climbing festival was celebrated in the Nubra valley Ladakh.

The seven-day climbing event was organized by Nubra Adventure Club.

To promote winter tourism in Nubra valley, Nubra Adventure Club, with the help of Social activist Dr. Nordan Otzer, has organized the Seven Day Ice Climbing Festival.

15th January

1) National Affairs

Health Ministry Kayakalp Awards 2019-20

The Kayakalp Awards 2019-20 were presented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to the health facilities with the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene.

JIPMER was awarded the second prize under Group A (of hospitals having more than 1,000 beds) of the Kayakalp Awards Scheme.

AIIMS Bhubaneswar has received the best central government hospital under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness for the third consecutive time.

Quick Fact: The Kayakalp Award Scheme was launched in 2015.

2) National Affairs

Naveen Patnaik inaugurates India's first 'Fire Park' in Bhubaneswar

The CM of Odisha Naveen Patnaik virtually inaugurated India's first 'Fire Park' to educate and bring awareness among the people on basic fire safety measures.

The 'Fire Park' is located inside the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.

The Minister also launched an online portal 'AgnishamaSeva' of the Odisha Fire Service.

3) Government Schemes

RBI forms a six-member working group to regulate digital lending frauds

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has formed a working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated & unregulated players because of growing instances of frauds.

The 6-member panel includes- Jayant Kumar Dash, Ajay Kumar Choudhary, P Vasudevan, Manoranjan Mishra, Vikram Mehta & Rahul Sasi.

The group will evaluate digital lending activities and suggest steps to regulate the activities including online lending platforms & mobile lending.

Quick Fact: Shaktikanta Das is the Governor of RBI.

4) Science and Technology

NITI Aayog and Flipkart collaborate to enhance WEP

NITI Aayog and Flipkart have come together to launch the revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).

WEP is a unified access portal that brings together women from different parts of India to realize their entrepreneurship aspirations.

The idea was first mooted by Amitabh Kant, CEO of NITI Aayog who announced the setting up of WEP at the 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) held in Hyderabad in 2017.

Quick Fact: Kalyan Krishnamurthy is the CEO of Flipkart.

5) Miscellaneous

India ranks 4th in 'Break Out Economies'

India has been ranked 4th in the 3rd edition of the 'Digital Evolution Scorecard' developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard.

China has been ranked first in the 'Break Out Economies' group mainly due to its rapidly growing demand and innovation.

The report displays increasing digital momentum suggesting the potential to rapidly digitalize post-COVID economic recovery and long-term transformation.

Quick Fact: Mastercard Incorporated is headquartered in Purchase, New York, United States.

6) Person in News

Social Activist and Padma Shri awardee D Prakash Rao passes away

Noted Social Activist and Padma Shri winner, D Prakash Rao breathed his last at the age of 63.

Rao was a tea seller based in Cuttack who spent his entire life educating kids in the slum through the school 'Asha O Ashwasana' which he started in 2000.

Rao was conferred the Padma Shri in 2019 for his contribution towards boosting the value of education among slum kids in Cuttack.

7) Miscellaneous

Tesla sets up a fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru

Elon Musk owned Electric Vehicle company Tesla has registered a fully-owned subsidiary in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Tesla's global senior director David Jon Feinstein, CAO Vaibhav Taneja, and Venkatrangam Sreeram are on the board of Tesla India Motors & Energy Pvt. Ltd.

The electric maker would start first with sales and then might start with assembly and manufacturing.

Quick Fact: Tesla is headquartered in California, United States.

8) International Affairs

1th Dhaka International Film Festival to pay tribute to Satyajit Ray

The 19th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) will be inaugurated on 16th January and is dedicated to the birth centenary of Baghabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Director of the festival, Ahmed Muztaba Zamal announced that 225 films from 73 countries will be screened during the 9-day long festival.

Spring Blossom directed by Suzanne Lindon will be the opening film of the festival and a tribute will be paid to legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray.

16th January

1) Economy

RBI Financial Stability Report

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently released the financial stability report for December 2020.

According to the report, the Gross Non- Performing Assets (GNPA) stood at 7.5% while the Net Non-Performing Assets (NNPA) stood at 2.1% in September 2020.

The report was the 22nd issue of the financial stability report of the apex bank which is released twice a year by the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC).

Quick Fact: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is the Chairperson of FSDC.

2) International Affairs

Joe Biden's USD 1.9 trillion plan

The United States President-elect recently announced 1.9 trillion USD 'American Rescue Plan' that is a COVID-19 stimulus pack.

The plan will provide 130 million USD to help schools in the United States to open safely, one trillion USD direct relief to households, and many more.

The package also includes 415 billion USD to bolster the response to the covid-19 virus & 440 billion USD to develop the small businesses and communities hit by COVID-19.

3) Government Schemes

Government launches Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0

The Government of India recently launched the third phase of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

Under the third phase, 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra & more than 200 ITIs are to be established to train more than 1 lakh candidates for one year.

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana is implemented by 'National Skill Development Corporation' operating under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Quick Fact: Mahendra Nath Pandey is the Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

4) Person in News

Donald Trump becomes the first US President to be impeached twice

President Donald Trump was impeached by the U.S. House for a historic second time with 'incitement of insurrection' over the deadly mob siege of the Capitol recently.

Trump was first impeached in 2019 over his Ukraine dealings when the U.S. House voted 232-197 to impeach Mr. Trump.

The decision came just one week after violent pro-Trump loyalists stormed US Capitol urging lawmakers to proceed with the impeachment.

5) Miscellaneous

Intel appoints Pat Gelsinger as the CEO

Intel has appointed Pat Gelsinger as its new Chief Executive Officer(CEO) effective from February 15, 2021, and will join the Intel Board of Directors upon assuming charge.

Pat will succeed Bob Swan who will resume his charge as the CEO till February 15, 2021.

Gelsinger is an industry veteran with more than four decades of technology and leadership experience, including 30 years at Intel where he began his career.

Quick Fact: Gordon Moore and Robert Noyce founded Intel on 18 July 1968.

6) Defense

Indian Army inks 20 million USD contract to buy SWITCH drones

The Indian Army recently signed a contract with Mumbai-based drone manufacturing company IdeaForge to procure high-altitude variants of SWITCH UAVs.

The pact is worth approximately 20 million USD and the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) procured will be delivered to the Indian Army in one year.

The UAV can be deployed, at high altitudes & harsh environments for day-night surveillance in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions.

Quick Fact: Ankit Mehta is the CEO of IdeaForge.

7) Defense

DRDO develops India's first indigenously built 9mm-Machine Pistol

India's first indigenous 9mm- Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by the Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Army.

Infantry School, MHOW, and DRDO's Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune have designed and developed the weapon.

The weapon developed in a record time of four months has been named 'Asmi' meaning 'Pride', 'Self-respect' and 'Hard-Work'.

Quick Fact: DRDO is headquartered in Delhi.

8) Summits and Conferences

Ministry of Statistics launched NCAVES India Forum 2021

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation in collaboration with United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), European Union & UN Environment is conducting NCAVES India Forum 2021.

NCAVES- National Capital Accounting and Virtual Ecosystem Services is a project initiated by European Union in 2017 to help nations advance knowledge on environmental-economic accounting.

The NCAVES project is implemented in five nations- India, Brazil, China, Mexico, and South Africa by UNSD, UN Environment, and Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).

18th January

1) Government Schemes

Government launches SAKSHAM awareness campaign

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently launched the SAKSHAM awareness campaign to spread awareness about green energy.

The initiative is a one-month long people-centric fuel conservation campaign creating awareness in 7 key drivers.

The campaign is to be launched by Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA).

Quick Fact: Dharmendra Pradhan is the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

2) National Affairs

Office for International Affairs in Educational institutions

The University Grants Commission (UGC) recently asked the higher education institutions across the country to establish an office for international affairs.

The office will be responsible for academic and research collaborations with foreign institutes and address the grievances of foreign students.

The offices are being set up to expand the global outreach of Indian higher education institutes to promote India as a global study destination as part of NEP 2020.

3) Environment

Green Wall Initiative launched at One Planet Summit

The Green Wall for Sahel and Sahara Initiative recently received 14 billion USD funds at the One Planet Summit to restore degraded lands, create green jobs & protect biodiversity.

The Great Green Wall is an African-led initiative that aims to transform the lives of 100 million Africans by growing 8,000 km long & 15 km wide mosaic of vegetation.

The initiative will contribute 15 out of 17 UNSD Goals and aim to sequester 250 million tonnes of carbon and create 10 million green jobs.

Quick Fact: The United Nations Sustainable Development Group was founded in 1997.

4) Summits and Conferences

PM Modi to address Prarambh: Startup India International Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to interact with startups & address Startup India International Summit 'Prarambh' which marks the 5th anniversary of 'Startup India' initiative.

The Startup India International Summit is organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) & the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The Summit will witness the participation of more than 25 countries and 200 global enabling discussions on innovation, technologies, and robust policies.

Quick Fact: The 'Startup India' initiative was launched by PM Modi on January 16, 2016.

5) India and the World

India-Japan sign MoU in the ICT sector

India and Japan recently signed a MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technology.

India and Japan will enhance cooperation in the field of telecom security, 5G technologies, submarine optical fiber system, disaster management, and much more.

Both the countries have a history of agreements including the Military Logistics Agreement 2020, the Nuclear deal in 2015, and the first 'Dharma Guardian' exercise in 2018.

6) International Affairs

Indian-American Garima Verma named Digital Director in Office of First Lady of USA

Incoming First Lady, Jill Biden has named Indian-American Garima Verma as her Digital Director and Michael LoRosa Press Secretary.

Garima served as audience development and content strategist on the Bill-Harris campaign.

Verma was a volunteer with the content team, designing graphics for distribution to Biden-Harris volunteers across the country before the campaign.

7) Economy

YES Bank launches wellness-themed credit card

Yes Bank collaborated with Aditya Birla Wellness Pvt. Ltd. to launch 'YES BANK Wellness' and 'YES BANK Wellness Plus' Credit cards.

The launch of these credit cards is an innovative step aimed at holistic health, promoting self-care and wellness of customers.

Consumers can enjoy complimentary health benefits including diet plans, annual health check-ups, round the clock consultation simply by registering on Aditya Birla Multiply App.

Quick Fact: Prashant Kumar is the MD & CEO of Yes Bank.

8) Miscellaneous

Rajnath Singh unveils India's 1st indigenously developed driverless metro car

Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh has unveiled India's first driverless metro car during a function held at BEML's Bangalore Complex.

The indigenously designed & developed trains are being manufactured at the BEML Bengaluru facility for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

BEML recently opened its Depot Office at Charkop Metro Depot, MMRDA, Mumbai, and bagged a total order of 576 cars for MMRda's MRS1 project.

Quick Fact: The full form of BEML is 'Bharat Earth Movers Limited'.

19th January

1) International Affairs

Russia announces withdrawal from 'Open Skies Treaty'

Russia recently announced that it is withdrawing from the 'Open Skies Treaty' which allows signatories to carry out unarmed surveillance flights over each other's territories.

The treaty was signed in 1992 between NATO (Non-Atlantic Treaty Organization) members and former Warsaw Pact countries.

The US left the treaty accusing that Russia is non-compliant with the treaty and according to Russia withdrawal of the US created an imbalance in the treaty's implementation.

Quick Fact: Moscow is the capital of Russia.

2) Art and Culture

Tamil Nadu celebrates Thiruvalluvar

The state of Tamil Nadu celebrates Thiruvalluvar during Pongal celebrations.

Thiruvalluvar is celebrated annually on the second day of Tamil month 'Thai'.

Thiruvalluvar is a Tamil poet and is best known as the author of Thirukkural, a collection of couplets on political and economic matters, ethics, and love.

Quick Fact: Edappadi K. Palaniswami is the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

3) Defense

Rajnath Singh launches Aero-India 21 mobile application

Union Defense Minister Rajnath Singh recently launched Aero-India 21 application which will act as a handy interactive interface for issues related to Aero-India 21.

Aero India is a biennial air show held in Bengaluru and is organized by the Defense Exhibition Organization operating under the Ministry of Defense.

The theme of Aero-India 21 is "Runaway to a Billion Opportunities".

Quick Fact: The first edition of Aero India was held in 1996.

4) Miscellaneous

UN releases 'International Migration 2020 Highlights'

The United Nations recently released the report 'International Migration 2020 Highlights'.

According to the report, the Indian diaspora is the largest in the world with more than 18 million people from India living outside of India as of 2020.

The United States was the largest country of destination of international migrants with more than 51 million migrants in the US as of 2020.

5) National Affairs

PM Modi flags off 8 trains connecting Statue of Unity

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently flagged off 8 trains connecting the Statue of Unity in Kevadiya, Gujarat with different regions of the country.

The 8 trains flagged off will connect Kevadiya with Varanasi, Dadar, Ahmedabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Rewa, Chennai & Pratapnagar.

It was the first time in history that so many trains from different locations were flagged off for a common destination.

Quick Fact: The Statue of Unity is the world's tallest statue with a height of 182 meters.

6) National Affairs

Kerala Government launches 'One School One IAS' Scheme

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan recently launched the 'One School One IAS' Scheme under the Vedhik Erudite Foundations Scholarship Program.

The program will provide free training to students who are economically backward but are academically brilliant students of civil services & other competitive exams.

The scheme is supported by sponsors and expects the enrollment of 10,000 boys and girls around the state.

Quick Fact: Pinarayi Vijayan is the Chief Minister of Kerala.

7) India and the World

USIBC announces of 2021 Global Board of Directors

The US-India Business Council (USIBC) has selected three corporate leaders as the Vice-Chair of the 2021 Global Board of USIBC.

The 3 VCs are- Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Milind Pant, and Edward Knight.

The three newly appointed VCs will now work with USIBC President Nisha Biswal and the Council's policy directors for strengthening US-India relations.

Quick Fact: USIBC is headquartered in Washington D.C., United States.

8) Person in News

Biswajit Chatterjee conferred 'Indian Personality of the Year' award at IFFI

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar recently announced veteran actor, director & singer Biswajit Chatterjee as the recipient of 'Indian Personality of the Year'.

The 84- year-old actor is known for featuring in films like 'Bees Saal Baad', 'Night in London' and 'April Fool'.

Chatterjee started his career in the late 1950s working alongside legends such as Dharmendra, Hema Malini, Rekha & directing 'Kehte Hain Mujhko Raja'.

20th January

1) Summits and Conferences

Davos Agenda Summit 2021

PM Narendra Modi & Chinese President Xi Jing Ping are to participate in the Davos Agenda Summit 2021 whose theme is “Stakeholders for a cohesive & sustainable world”

The Davos Agenda Summit is organized by the World Economic Forum.

The ‘Great Reset Initiative’ of the World Economic Forum is to be launched during the Davos Agenda Summit alongside an address to urgent climate change & tensions in Iran.

Quick Fact: Klaus Schwab is the Founder and Leader of the World Economic Forum.

2) National Affairs

Indian Mountaineering Foundation approves winter climbing

The Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) recently approved a 3-member team of mountaineers led by Arjun Vajpai for a winter climbing expedition to Mt. Trishul.

Mountaineering expeditions are taken up only during the pre-monsoon & post-monsoon periods but for the first time, IMF has approved the concept of winter mountaineering.

The leader of the 3-member team, Arjun Vajpai, is the youngest Indian to climb Mount Everest at the age of 16 in 2010.

3) Defense

Flight Lt. Bhawana Kanth becomes first woman pilot to take part in R-Day Parade

Bhawana Kanth, one of the first women fighter pilots to be inducted in IAF in 2016, will become the first woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade.

In 2019, Bhawana Kanth became the first female fighter pilot of India to qualify to undertake combat missions.

Bhawana received the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' from President of India Ramnath Kovind in March 2020.

Quick Fact: The first Republic Day parade was held in 1950.

4) National Affairs

DRDO and CRPF develop Bike Ambulance 'Rakshita'

The Defense Research and Development Organisation and the Central Reserve Police Force recently developed a bike ambulance called 'Rakshita'.

The ambulance was developed by INMAS (Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Science) operating under DRDO and has been developed on Royal Enfield.

The ambulance will be of great help in the areas such as Sukma, Bijapur, Dantewada & will attend to the evacuation needs of the CRPF personnel during emergency or battle injury.

Quick Fact: CRPF is headquartered in New Delhi.

5) Defense

India and France to hold Ex-Desert Knight 21 military exercise

India and France are to hold a four-day military exercise 'Ex-Desert Knight 21' from 20-24 January in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

The exercise is a bilateral air exercise held between the Indian Air Force & French Air and Space Force providing operational exposure & sharing best practices.

The exercise will witness the participation of Rafale fighter jets, multi-role tankers, Su-30 MKI, Mirage 2000, IL-78 flight refueling aircraft, and around 175 personnel.

Quick Fact: Exercise Garuda is held between the Indian Air Force & French Air and Space Force.

6) Miscellaneous

Bird Festival to be held in Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary

A bird festival is to be organized at the Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary in West Bengal.

The festival organized by 'Darjeeling Wildlife Division' is the first of its kind to be held in a wildlife sanctuary.

The Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary located in the foothills of the Himalayas between the Teesta & Mahananda rivers has been identified as an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area.

7) Environment

Jammu and Kashmir seeks GI tag for Gucchi Mushroom

The Jammu and Kashmir Government recently sought GI Tag for Gucchi mushroom.

Gucchi mushroom is a species of fungus belonging to the family 'Morchellaceae' and is highly expensive & full of healthy benefits.

Gucchi mushrooms locally called 'Thuntoo' are pale yellow with large ridges and pits on their cap.

8) National Affairs

Government decides to celebrate January 23 as 'Parakram Diwas'

The Ministry of Culture recently announced the celebration of January 23 as 'Parakram Diwas' on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

The day is celebrated to honor and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation.

PM Narendra Modi will visit the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, West Bengal to attend Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary celebrations.

Quick Fact: Prahalad Singh Patel is the Minister of Culture.

21st January

1) International Affairs

Iran loses their voting rights in the UN General Assembly

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.

The actions of suspending the members from voting have been taken under Article 19 of the United Nations Charter.

Quick Fact: Volkan Bozkir is the President of the United Nations General Assembly.

2) Defense

India and France sign Agreement on STARStreak Air Defense System

French Multinational Company 'Thales' has signed an agreement with Bharat Dynamics Ltd. to jointly work on STARStreak Air Defense System.

STARStreak is a short-range surface-to-air-missile earlier called 'Shorts Missile System' and travels at Mach 3 speed.

The surface to air missile installed in the STARStreak Air Defense System is currently the fastest short-range surface to air missile in the world.

Quick Fact: Bharat Dynamics Ltd founded in 1970 is headquartered in Hyderabad.

3) Science and Technology

United States develops new Mitochondrial DNA based COVID-test

The United States scientists have developed a new rapid COVID-19 test to measure mitochondrial DNA in the blood sample of COVID-19 patients.

The test will be highly helpful to identify people at the highest risk of the virus.

The mitochondrial DNA in COVID-19 patients is spilling out of the body cells into the bloodstream & is the main reason for tissue damage & organ failure.

4) Summits and Conferences

Harsh Vardhan chairs 148th session of WHO Executive Board

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan digitally chaired the 148th session of the WHO Executive Board organized from 18-26 January 2021.

The meeting provides a platform bringing together all member states to set directions & agendas with the objective of bettering health.

WHO declared 2021 as the Year of Global Solidarity and Survival.

Quick Fact: Tedros Adhanom is the Director-General of WHO.

5) Sports

Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth Festival 2021 begins

The inaugural edition of Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth Festival 2021 kicked off in Ladakh.

The 13-day festival aims to open a new arena in Ladakh for adventure and nature-loving tourists as well as hone the skills of local youth in winter sports.

A series of snow-based activities will be held in the next 13 days to promote tourism and economic activities.

Quick Fact: Radha Krishna Mathur is the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

6) International Affairs

Netherlands PM Mark Rutte and his entire cabinet quits

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his entire Cabinet has resigned over the childcare subsidies scandal

Under the child subsidies fraud, thousands of families were wrongly accused of child welfare fraud.

The Rutte government will stay on in a caretaker role until parliamentary elections in March 2021.

Quick Fact: Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands.

7) National Affairs

Nitish Kumar inaugurates Bird festival 'Kalrav' in Bihar

CM of Bihar Nitish Kumar has inaugurated the first-ever festival of the state 'Kalrav' at Nagi-Nakti Bird Sanctuary in Jamui district.

The festival was organized by the state environment, forest, and climate change department to create awareness among people about birds, especially migratory birds.

Over 136 species of birds and around 1,600 bar-headed geese have been spotted in the Nagi-Nakti Sanctuary.

8) Summits and Conferences

15th India Digital Summit 2021 begins

The biggest flagship event of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), India Digital Summit 2021 was flagged off recently.

Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT, Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad is the chief guest of the summit and will give the inaugural address as well.

The theme for IDS 2021 is 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat- Start of New Decade'.

Quick Fact: IAMAI is headquartered in New Delhi.

22nd January

1) Economy

Union Cabinet approves Ratle Hydropower Project

The Union Cabinet recently approved the Ratle Hydropower Project of 850 MW located in River Chenab.

The project is a joint venture of Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation & National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC).

The foundation stone to construct the dam was laid by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2013.

Quick Fact: NHPC is headquartered in Faridabad, India.

2) Economy

DPIIT launches Regulatory Compliance Portal

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recently launched a regulatory compliance portal.

The portal will increase the ease of doing business & is to act as a bridge between industries, citizens, and government in minimizing burdensome compliances.

It is the first central online repository portal for all state and central level compliances.

Quick Fact: India ranked 63rd in the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business' report 2019.

3) Government Schemes

Gujarat CM announces 'horticulture development mission'

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani recently announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' also known as '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 wasteland of the State Government of Gujarat is to be provided on a thirty-year lease for farming medicinal and horticulture crops.

Quick Fact: Gandhinagar is the capital of Gujarat.

4) Science and Technology

Infosys receives Google Cloud Partner Status

Infosys recently announced that it has been accredited with the Google Cloud Partner Specialization in the data and analytics space.

Infosys has showcased robust methodology, strong industry expertise, technical proficiency & success in specialized data and analytics solutions.

The data and analytics offerings are a part of Infosys Cobalt.

Quick Fact: Salil Parekh is the CEO of Infosys.

5) Miscellaneous

India's 1st Labour Movement Museum to be set up in Kerala

The first-of-its-kind Labour Movement Museum in India would be launched in Alappuzha, Kerala showcasing the history of the world labor movement.

The museum will portray the growth of the world labor movement & the history of Kerala's labor movement, through pictures, documents & other exhibits.

The New Model Cooperative Society Limited, previously run by the Bombay Company, has been converted into the Labour Movement Museum.

Quick Fact: Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of Kerala.

6) International Affairs

Joe Biden takes oath as 46th US President

Joe Biden became the 46th President of the United States when he swore oath after Kamala Harris, America's first Woman Vice-President.

Biden is the oldest president in the US history at 78 & the only second Roman catholic president under Barack Obama.

Biden plans to kick-off his tenure with a flurry of 17 orders including immediately joining the Paris Agreement, stopping the US's exit from WHO, and much more.

7) National Affairs

Himachal Pradesh launched its first online youth radio station

Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Jai Ram Thakur has launched HP's first online youth radio station 'Radio Hills- Youngistan Ka Dil'.

The online youth radio would go a long way in promoting the culture and traditions of the state, besides providing an opportunity for the youth to exhibit their talents.

Deepika and Saurab are the founders of the online youth radio.

Quick Fact: Himachal Pradesh has two capitals- Shimla (Summer) & Dharamshala (Winter).

8) Summits and Conferences

India and Singapore sign pact on submarine rescue support

The 5th edition of the Defense Ministers' Dialogue(DMD) between India & Singapore was successfully held through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the 'Implementing Agreement on Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation' was signed between the two Navies.

The agreement was signed by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and his Singaporean counterpart Dr. Ng Eng Hen.

Quick Fact: Lee Hsein Loong is the PM of Singapore.

23rd January

1) Science and Technology

Rare UV-Bright Stars spotted in Milky Way Galaxy

The Astronomers have spotted massive hot UV-Bright stars in the Milky Way Galaxy with the help of the UltraViolet Imaging Telescope(UVIT) of ISRO.

The UVIT is placed in the Astrosat satellite which is the first multi-wavelength space satellite of India.

More than 34 UV-bright stars were discovered using the UVIT, Gaia telescope, and space telescope to identify the stars.

Quick Fact: Astrosat was launched in 2015.

2) International Affairs

The UK collaborates with Japan to launch LongOps Project

Scientists from the UK and Japan will develop new & safe tech to dismantle old nuclear facilities such as Fukushima under the LongOps Project.

The project is to use long-reach robotic arms and will reduce the risks to human health, hence is called the 'LongOps Project'.

The LongOps Project is to be implemented for 12 million Euros.

Quick Fact: Tokyo is the capital of Japan.

3) Miscellaneous

World Economic Forum releases Global Risk Report 2021

The World Economic Forum released the 16th edition of Global Risk Report 2021.

The report was released based on the Global Risk Perception Survey undertaken by more than 650 members of the World Economic Forum.

According to the report, the top three risks that are to happen in the next 10 years are- Climate action failure, extreme weather, and human-environment damage.

Quick Fact: World Economic Forum is headquartered in Cologny, Switzerland.

4) Defense

HAL test-fires Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon of DRDO

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) successfully test-fired SAAW (Smart Anti- Airfield Weapon) from Hawk aircraft recently.

SAAW was developed by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and is the first smart weapon fired from an Indian Hawk.

The SAAW project was approved by the Government of India in 2013.

Quick Fact: Walchand Hirachand is the Founder of HAL.

5) National Affairs

Uttarakhand CM inaugurates first child-friendly police station of the state

Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurated the first child-friendly police station which is meant to provide a friendly environment to children associated with crimes.

The child-friendly police unit has been set up in the Dalanwala police station with a budget of about Rs 5 lakhs on the recommendation of the Child Protection Committee of Uttarakhand.

To keep children at ease the walls are painted in bright colors with cartoons & the police personnel will be dressed in casual clothes rather than their uniforms.

Quick Fact: Uttarakhand has two capitals- Gairsain (Summer) & Dehradun (Winter).

6) Economy

Axis Bank launches Aura Credit Card with health & wellness benefits

Axis Bank has unveiled a credit card 'Aura' exclusively loaded with many health and wellness benefits to users at an affordable price.

Axis Bank has partnered with Poshvine to offer benefits and specialists such as Decathlon, Practo, Fitternity, IndushealthPlus, 1MG, etc., to the cardholders.

Cardholders will also get a discount on annual medical checkups through IndushealthPlus.

Quick Fact: Axis Bank is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

7) Defense

Andaman and Nicobar Command to conduct joint military exercise 'Kavach'

The Indian Army is to conduct a large-scale joint military exercise 'Kavach' in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal under the aegis of Andaman & Nicobar Command.

The Joint Military Exercise will involve the Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and the Indian Coast Guard fine-tuning their joint war capabilities.

Along with the 'Kavach' exercise, the Joint Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) will also be held.

Quick Fact: The Indian Army was founded on 1 April 1895.

8) Science and Technology

MeITY and AWS announced Quantum Computing Applications Lab in India

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has partnered with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to establish Quantum Computing Applications Lab in India.

The partnership will allow researchers & scientists access to Amazon's Bracket cloud-based quantum computing service.

The application labs implemented by the 'Department of Science and Technology' aim to address issues concerning national priorities, fundamental science & tech.

Quick Fact: Ravi Shankar Prasad is the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology.

25th January

1) International Affairs

France and Spain sign agreement to build Europe's Largest Solar Power Plant

Spain and France have signed an agreement to build Europe's Largest Solar Power Plant: Francisco Pizarro which will generate 590 MW of solar power.

The agreement was signed between the Spanish electric utility 'Iberdrola' and the French corporation 'Danone'.

The plant is to be built for 364 million USD supplying power to over 375,000 people per year.

Quick Fact: Pedro Sanchez is the Prime Minister of Spain.

2) Science and Technology

MeerKAT Radio Telescope discovers two giant radio galaxies

The MeerKAT Radio Telescope recently discovered two giant radio galaxies that are 62 times the size of the Milky Way.

The galaxies discovered under the MIGHTEE survey are bigger than 93% of any giants discovered before.

The MeerKAT Radio Telescope located in the Northern Cape of South Africa is a radio telescope with sixty-four antennas.

3) Defense

BSF launches 'Operation Sard Hawa'

The Border Security Force recently launched 'Operation Sard Hawa' on the Western border of Rajasthan.

The Operation has been launched to enhance security ahead of Republic Day and check instances of infiltration due to dense fog in the region.

BSF is India's 'First Wall of Defense' and was set up in the wake of the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war.

Quick Fact: Republic Day was first celebrated in the year 1950.

4) Government Schemes

Arjun Munda launches 'ShramShakti' portal

The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Arjun Munda recently launched a National Migration Support Portal 'ShramShakti' at a virtual event in Panjim, Goa.

The portal will help the government in the smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers.

ShramShakti portal will address the data gap and empower migrant workers who migrate in search of employment, linking them with welfare schemes under 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat'.

5) Summits and Conferences

Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the 7th edition of MASCRAGE 2021

Union Minister of Health & Family Affairs, Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the 7th edition of MASCRAGE- Movement against Smuggled & Counterfeit Trade.

The 2-day program was organized by FICCI CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy)

The event aims to combat illicit trade through actionable policies especially in a post-COVID-19 era.

6) Sports

ITBP wins IHAI National Ice Hockey Championship

The ITBP has won the Indian Hockey Association of India (IHAI) 10th National Ice Hockey Championship after a win over Ladakh.

The match was held at Gulmarg Ice Rink.

The top 8 teams of ice hockey participated in the event held at an altitude of 8,694 feet.

Quick Fact: IHAI was established on 27 April 1989.

7) Miscellaneous

India's longest Road Arch Bridge inaugurated in Meghalaya

Meghalaya CM Conrad K. Sangma inaugurated India's longest arch bridge, 'Wahrew Bridge' at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.

The project was sanctioned in 2013 and the construction of the bridge was completed in December 2018.

The arch bridge has been constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 49.395 crore under the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR).

Quick Fact: Shillong is the capital of Meghalaya.

8) Person in News

Shyam Srinivasan named Business Standard Banker of the Year

Shyam Srinivasan, Managing Director and CEO of Federal Bank is the Business Standard Banker of the Year 2019-20.

The award was given for his bank's consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed large stress.

The unanimous decision was taken by a high-profile jury of five, chaired by former RBI deputy governor, S S Mundra.

Quick Fact: K.P. Hormis was the Founder of the Federal Bank.

26th January

1) Miscellaneous

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puruskar 2021

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puruskar 2021 was awarded by PM Modi to 32 children for their tremendous & outstanding achievements in various disciplines.

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puruskar is the Highest Civilian Honour in India given to exceptional achievers under the age of 18.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development had instituted the puruskar in 1996.

2) International Affairs

China overtakes the US for Foreign Direct Investment

The UN recently announced that China has surpassed the US as the world's top destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the year 2020.

The announcement was made by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The New Investments by overseas businesses into the US fell by 49 percent in 2020 mainly due to the effects of COVID-19.

Quick Fact: UNCTAD was founded on 30 December 1964.

3) Economy

Draft policy on Udyog Sahayak Enterprises Network (USENET)

The Federation of Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) & Azim Premji University have put forward USENET draft policy.

The framework has been established to focus on helping existing MSMEs & providing them a growth-driven service.

The framework would help in creating an additional 10.3 million jobs in 5 years by enabling the scale-up of nano and micro-enterprises.

Quick Fact: Dilip Chenoy is the Secretary-General of FICCI.

4) Economy

Nirmala Sitharaman launches 'Union Budget Mobile App'

Finance Minister of India Nirmala Sitharaman has launched the 'Union Budget Mobile App' ahead of the presentation of 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 Union Budget for the year 2021 will be completely paperless for the first time in the light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Quick Fact: The app has been developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

5) National Affairs

Maharashtra to begin 'Jail Tourism'

The government of Maharashtra has decided to start a 'Jail Tourism' from the Yerawada prison of Pune.

Starting from January 26, 2021, the initiative is being launched to facilitate the people to visit and see historical prisons in the state.

Yerawada is the largest noted high-security jail in the state of Maharashtra and imprisoned several freedom fighters including Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, and many more.

6) International Affairs

Mongolian PM Khurelsukh Ukhnaa & his government resigns

Prime Minister of Mongolia Khurelsukh Ukhnaa along with his government has resigned following protests and public outrage over the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 52-year-old served as the Prime Minister of Mongolia from 4 October 2017 to 21 January 2021.

Parliament, which is controlled by Khurelsukh's Mongolian People's Party, voted overwhelmingly to accept his resignation.

Quick Fact: Ulaanbaatar is the capital of Mongolia.

7) National Affairs

Uttar Pradesh launches 'Udyam Sarathi App' for youths

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has recently launched the 'Udyam Sarathi App' on the occasion of the 71st Foundation Day of Uttar Pradesh.

The app will enable the youths to get every piece of information related to self-employment and the job industry across the state.

The theme of Uttar Pradesh Day (24- 26 January) 2021 is 'Respect for self-reliant Uttar Pradesh, women young farmers, development of all'.

Quick Fact: Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh.

8) Person in News

Haridwar teen Shrishti Goswami to be one-day CM of Uttarakhand

Shrishti Goswami, a 19-year-old Haridwar-based student will become the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand for one day on National Girl Child Day.

Shrishti is a student of Bsc Agriculture and lives in Daulatpur village in Roorkee.

The one-day CM will review various schemes run by the state government that include Atal Ayushman Scheme, Smart City project, Homestay Scheme & other development projects.

Quick Fact: Trivendra Singh Rawat is the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.

27th January

1) International Affairs

US president signs 'Buy American' Executive Order

The President of the US, Joe Biden signed the executive order in a bid to tighten the 'Buy American' requirements in the federal government procurement.

The executive order was signed to strengthen the manufacturing sector in the country & to raise the percentage of US-Made content.

The move was targeted to counter the 'Made in China 2025' campaign by the Chinese government.

Quick Fact: Kamala Harris is the 49th and current Vice President of the United States.

2) Environment

Global Climate Risk index 2021

India has been ranked at the 7th position in the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 among the countries that are most affected by climate change in 2019.

The Global Climate Risk Index was released by 'Germanwatch', an NGO based in Bonn, Germany.

The index analyses the impact of extreme climate events on the countries and the economy.

Quick Fact: Berlin is the capital of Germany

3) Summits and Conferences

India and UK hold a meeting on Counter-Terrorism

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

Both the countries emphasized the demand for strengthening international cooperation so that they could combat the global problem of terrorism.

The countries reviewed & exchanged their views on the threats imposed by the UN prescribed terrorist entities & terrorists.

4) Art and Culture

Bharat Parv 2021

The annual event 'Bharat Parv' that celebrates the spirit of India is being organized virtually from January 26, 2021, till January 31, 2021.

Inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, themed pavilions of States and UTs will showcase their tourism destinations, handicrafts, cuisine under the virtual event.

Bharat Parv started in the year 2016, is organized by the Ministry of Tourism annually.

5) National Affairs

National Mission for Edible oil (NMEO)

The Ministry of Agriculture has proposed the National Mission for Edible Oil to increase domestic availability and reduce import dependency.

The mission has been proposed to increase the production of oilseeds from 30.88 to 47,80 million tonnes.

The mission has been proposed for the next five years in the span of 2021-21 to 2024-25.

Quick Fact: Narendra Singh Tomar is the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

6) National Affairs

President approves conferment of 119 Padma awards

The President of India distributes the Padma Awards on every republic day to the civilians of India.

President has approved the conferment of 119 Padma awards that comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan, and 102 Padma Shri.

Former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe & late singer SP Balasubramaniam are on this year's Padma Vibhushan recipient list.

7) Sports

Ahmedabad hosts Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Championship

Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy 2020-21 has been started at Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad from 26 to 31 January 2021.

As per the schedule, four quarter-finals will be played from 26-27 January, 2 semi-finals on January 29 with the final scheduled on January 31.

Karnataka were the defending champions of 2020.

8) Person in News

Legendary American-talk show host Larry king passes away

Iconic American radio and television host, Larry King breathed his last at the age of 87.

Larry rose to fame in 1987 as a radio host of The Larry King Show and then hosted the Larry King Live on CNN for about 25 years from 1985 to 2010.

Larry King was the recipient of two Peabody Awards, an Emmy, and ten Cable ACE Awards.

Quick Fact: Larry King was inducted into the National Radio Hall of Fame in 1989.

28th January

1) Art and Culture

First Young Readers' Boat Library launched in Kolkata

The West Bengal Transport Corporation has launched the First Young Readers' Boat Library in collaboration with a heritage book store.

The library has been launched on a boat with the motive that one can read books while appreciating the beauty of Kolkata.

The boat library which will cruise on the Hooghly river will provide options for children to choose from a selection of 500 titles in English and Bengali.

2) International Affairs

UN releases Global Climate Survey

The United Nations has released its biggest ever opinion poll on climate change that is the 'UN Global Climate Survey'.

In the survey, the UN finds that two-thirds of people think it is a 'global emergency' wherein young people showed greater concern.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted the "Peoples' Climate Vote" for 1.22 million people from 50 countries to prepare for the report.

Quick Fact: UNDP was founded on 22 November 1965.

3) India and the World

India pledges USD 150,000 for UN Peacebuilding

The permanent representative of India to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti announced the pledge of USD 150,000 to fund the activities of the UN Peacebuilding.

India is conscious to prioritize the building of governance structure to strengthen democracy and rule of law.

UN Peacekeeping operations are policing & peacebuilding actions carried out by the UN to bring order and stability in the nations affected by war.

Quick Fact: UN Peacekeepers are known as 'Blue Helmets' or 'Blue Berets'.

4) International Affairs

Google workers from all over the world form 'Alpha Global Union'

Recently, Google workers from all around the globe have formed an international union called the 'Alpha Global' named after Google's parent company Alphabet.

The union formed in coordination with the UNI Global Union comprises 13 different unions representing workers in 10 different countries.

The union has been formed to build a more ethical and accountable company.

Quick Fact: Larry Page and Sergey Brin founded Google on 4 September 1998.

5) Economy

India's New Central Bank Digital Currency

RBI is in process of examining if India needs a new Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) & is exploring ways to operationalize the digital currency.

The statement from the RBI has come in the light of gaining popularity of the private digital currencies, virtual currencies, and cryptocurrencies.

These currencies are not operational in India because regulators & the government have always been skeptical about the risks associated with them.

Quick Fact: Reserve bank of India (RBI) is headquartered in Mumbai.

6) National Affairs

UP becomes the first state in India to have 2 Expressway airstrips

In Uttar Pradesh, a new 3,300-meter long airstrip has been constructed near Kurebhar on Purvanchal Expressway.

UP has become the first state to have 2 expressway airstrips, the other one being on the Lucknow- Agra Expressway.

Airstrips on expressways are designed to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.

Quick Fact: Yogi Adityanath is the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

7) Defense

Indian Navy conducts exercise AMPHEX- 21 with Army and Air Force

A large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise AMPHEX – 21 was held in the Andaman & Nicobar group of islands.

The exercise was aimed at validating India's capabilities to safeguard the territorial integrity of its island territories.

The joint force executed multi-domain, high-intensity offensive and defensive maneuvers in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Quick Fact: Indian Navy Day is observed on 4 December.

8) Science and Technology

SpaceX breaks ISRO's record by launching 143 satellites

SpaceX successfully launched its amphibious rideshare mission 'Transporter 1' carrying 143 small satellites.

The launch by SpaceX broke the record set by ISRO in 2017 for deploying 104 satellites onboard the PSLV in a single mission.

SpaceX used a two-stage 'Falcon-9' rocket for the mission from the Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

Quick Fact: Elon Musk is the Founder & CEO of SpaceX.

29th January

1) Summits and Conferences

PM Modi address World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue

The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, addressed the Davos Dialogue of the World Economic Forum recently.

PM Modi delivered his speech on the 4th Industrial Revolution- using technology for the good of humanity in the virtual session attended by 400+ top industry leaders.

Davos Dialogue 2021 is the 51st annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

Quick Fact: The theme of Davos Dialogue 2021 was "The Great Reset".

2) India and the World

India- IEA sign MoU for Global Energy Security

India has signed a Framework for a strategic partnership agreement with the International Energy Agency (IEA) recently.

The MoU seeks to strengthen the cooperation in global energy security, stability, and sustainability.

IEA is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization established in 1974 in the aftermath of the 1973 oil crisis.

3) International Affairs

UK launches Global Platform to track new COVID-19 variants

The United Kingdom has launched a new Global Platform to track the new COVID-19 variants.

The platform launched as part of the UK's presidency of the G7 will provide world-leading genomics expertise to identify new variants of the virus.

The platform is led by the Public Health England (PHE) & National Institute for Health Protection (NIHP).

Quick Fact: SARS-CoV-2 is the abbreviation for 'Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome CoronaVirus 2'.

4) Science and Technology

IT Minister launches 'Tejas' virtual intelligence tool at NICSI event

IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar launched 'Tejas' and 'Work from Anywhere' portal on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of NICSI.

'Tejas' is a virtual intelligence tool that extracts critical information for policy decisions and improves efficiency in government services.

The 'Work from Anywhere' portal is a virtual environment that enables employees to access routine applications and communicate across VC ensuring safety during the pandemic.

Quick Fact: The full form of NICSI is 'National Informatics Centre Services Inc'.

5) Defense

DRDO conducts successful test launch of Akash-NG Missile

DRDO has successfully conducted the maiden launch of Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.

Akash-NG is a new generation Surface-to-Air Missile for the Indian Air Force (IAF) intending to intercept high maneuvering aerial threats.

The missile intercepted the target with textbook precision & met all the test objectives by performing high maneuvers during the trajectory.

6) Miscellaneous

TCS ranked third most valued IT services brand globally

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been ranked 3rd most-valued IT services brand globally according to a report released by 'Brand Finance'.

Accenture Plc and International Business Machines Corp. (IBM) have been ranked as the 1st & 2nd most valued IT services brand globally.

TCS is rapidly closing the gap with IBM following a healthy 11% brand value increase to USD 15 billion.

Quick Fact: Rajesh Gopinath is the CEO of TCS.

7) Summits and Conferences

Harsh Vardhan addresses 4th edition of Future Investment Initiative Forum

The Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan addressed the 4th edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Forum.

The forum was hosted by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia (PIF).

The main aim of the forum was to find solutions on how the government can expand access to healthcare, train healthcare workers & remove regulatory barriers.

8) Miscellaneous

Reliance Jio- Fifth Strongest Brand Globally

The Reliance Jio venture of Mukesh Ambani has become the 5th strongest brand globally, achieving this milestone in just four-odd years.

The ranking has been provided by the 'Brand Finance Global 500 ranking 2021' of the strongest brand.

'WeChat' has topped the annual report on the most valuable and strongest global brands.

Quick Fact: Reliance Jio was founded in 2016.

30th January

1) Science and Technology

Rare Mineral Called Jarosite Found in Antarctica

A rare maritime mineral called Jarosite has been found in Antarctica.

The mineral was found after drilling deep into the ice in Antarctica.

It is a mineral also found on Mars. But it is rarely found on Earth.

Quick Fact: Jarosite is used in hydrometallurgy to control impurities.

2) National Affairs

Gender Park to Open in Kerala in February

A Gender Park is due to open in Kozhikode, Kerala on the occasion of the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II).

The Gender Park is the first of its kind in the world and will off-campus and on-campus activities and other projects working towards gender equality and empowerment.

The Foundation of the International Women's Trade and Research Centre (IWTRC) will also be laid down on this occasion.

Quick Fact: The park will function under the Department of Social Justice.

3) Science and Technology

Second Annual World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day to be Observed on 30th January

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) are a diverse group of communicable diseases that occur commonly in tropical and subtropical regions.

India is home to 11 of the major NTDs of the world and has the absolute largest burden of the same.

On this day, 50 landmarks of 25 nations of the world will be lit up. India will be lighting up Qutub Minar.

Quick Fact: The 2012 London Declaration on NTDs was signed on January 30th, but the first World NTD day was celebrated on 20th January 2020.

4) India and the World

India Ranks 86th in COVID-19 Response Index

The Covid-19 Response Index was published by Lowy Institute, Sydney.

India ranked 86th among 98 countries, with Brazil at the bottom and New Zealand at the top of the index.

The ranking is based on key indicators like confirmed cases, cases per million people, deaths and deaths per million people, etc.

5) National Affairs

India Signs Agreement For STARS Program

Department of Economic Affairs under the Ministry of Economic Affairs has signed a financial support agreement for the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) project with World Bank.

STARS project is a centrally sponsored scheme for strengthening the school education system in India, with initial work being done in six states.

The 6 Indian states include- Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Odisha.

Quick Fact: STARS project was approved under National Education Policy 2020.

6) India and the World

India launches 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative

'Vaccine Maitri' initiative is an initiative launched by India to gift COVID-19 vaccines to neighboring countries.

Sri Lanka has received 5 lakh COVID-19 vaccines while Bahrain has received 10,800 vaccines from India under the initiative recently.

India has already delivered 5 million doses to 7 countries in the neighborhood under the initiative before Sri Lanka and Bahrain.

Quick Fact: Mahinda Rajapaksa is the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

7) Economy

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

Bharti AXA General Insurance has launched the 'Krishi Saksha' app, which offers Indian farmers relevant information to cater to their daily farming needs.

The farmers through this app will also have access to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) portal for crop insurance-related information.

The app shares relevant information about scientific ways of farming, crop cultivation, weather forecast, crop pricing, and government schemes.

Quick Fact: Bharti AXA General Insurance is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

8) Defense

Lt. General Chandi Prasad Mohanty appointed as the new Army Vice-Chief

Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty has been appointed as the new Vice-chief of Army staff.

Lt Gen CP Mohanty would assume the office on February 1, 2021, from Lt General SK Saini, who is superannuating on 31 January 2021.

Lt Gen CP Mohanty is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, National Defence Academy & a June 1982 batch Infantry Officer from the Rajput Regiment.

Quick Fact: The motto of the Indian Army is "Service Before Self"

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