

Eazyprep

**MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

COMPILATION

FEBRUARY 2021

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1st February

1) Government Schemes

R.S. Sharma appointed as the CEO of the Ayushman Bharat Scheme

R.S. Sharma has been appointed as the new CEO of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, replacing Indu Bhushan.

Ayushman Bharat Scheme is an insurance scheme by the National Health Authority (NHA).

R.S. Sharma worked as the Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

Quick Fact: Ayushman Bharat Yojana was launched on 23 September 2018.

2) Art and Culture

PM Modi addresses 125th Anniversary celebrations of 'Prabuddha Bharat'

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi addressed the 125th Anniversary celebration of 'Prabuddha Bharat' organized by Advaita Ashrama.

Prabuddha Bharata is a monthly magazine of the Ramakrishna Order, spreading the message of the ancient spiritual wisdom of India.

The magazine was founded by P. Aiyasami, BR Rajam Iyer, GG Narasimhacharya & BV Kamesvara Iyer under the guidance of Swami Vivekananda in 1896.

3) Art and Culture

The tableau of Uttar Pradesh bags 1st Prize in Republic Day Awards 2021

The Ram temple tableau of Uttar Pradesh that was on display during the Republic Day 2021 bagged the 1st prize among all tableaux.

The theme of Uttar Pradesh's tableau was 'Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh'.

Tripura's tableau won the 2nd prize while Uttarakhand's tableau bagged the 3rd prize for the Republic Day parade.

Quick Fact: India celebrated its 72nd Republic Day this year 2021.

4) Government Schemes

Centre approves 'Startup India Seed Fund Scheme'

The Central Government has approved the INR 945 crores 'Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme' (SISFS) which aims to provide financial assistance to start-ups.

The Scheme will become operational from April 1 2021 till 2025.

The scheme will be implemented by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DIIT).

5) Environment

Prakash Javadekar launches 2021 an Indo-French Year of the Environment

Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar along with Barbara Pompili have launched the Indo-French Year of the Environment.

The collaboration will be held under the Ministry of Ecological Transition in association with the Ministry of Europe & Foreign Affairs.

The basic objective of this partnership is to strengthen Indo-French cooperation in sustainable development and protection of the environment

Quick Fact: Paris is the capital of France.

6) Science and Technology

Microsoft launches new Engineering Hub inspired by Taj Mahal

Tech Major Microsoft has launched its new India Development Center (IDC) facility in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

The IDC NCR workspace architecture is inspired by the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.

IDC NCR is the third development center of Microsoft in India after Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

Quick Fact: Satya Nadella is the CEO of Microsoft.

7) Person in News

Oscar-winning actor Cloris Leachman passes away

Oscar-winning American actress and comedienne Cloris Leachman breathed her last at the age of 94.

The late star was known as one of Hollywood's most prolific performers, having won an Academy Award, a Golden Globe & 8 Primetime Emmy Awards.

Leachman's character Phyllis in 'The Mary Tyler Moore Show' brought the actress two Emmys and made Leachman a household name.

8) Miscellaneous

Airtel announces 5G ready network in Hyderabad

Bharti Airtel has become the first telecom operator in India to demonstrate 5G services successfully over a commercial network in Hyderabad.

The company explained that it used state of the art dynamic spectrum sharing to operate both 4G & 5G networks in the same spectrum block.

The company claimed that 5G could deliver 10 times the speed & latency attained previously.

Quick Fact: Gopal Vittal is the CEO of Bharti Airtel.

2nd February

1) Government Schemes

PM Aatma Nirbhar Swasth Yojana & Mission Poshan 2.0 announced in Budget 2021

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharman announced two centrally sponsored schemes- PM Aatma Nirbhar Swasth Yojana & Mission Poshan 2.0 in Union Budget 2021.

PM Aatma Nirbhar Swasth Yojana is to provide support to 17,788 rural & 11,024 urban health & wellness centers.

Mission Poshan 2.0 is launched to improve nutritional content, delivery, outreach, and outcome across 112 Aspirational Districts.

2) Summits and Conferences

Education Minister addresses ASEAN India Hackathon

The Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addressed the ASEAN India Hackathon, inaugurated to strengthen the India and ASEAN ties.

The Hackathon organized online from February 1 to 3, 2021 will provide new opportunities for all 10 ASEAN countries & India to solve their common identified challenges.

The common challenges of the countries are categorized under two themes- “Blue Economy” & “Education”.

Quick Fact: The ASEAN-India Hackathon initiative is undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

3) Economy

Voluntary Vehicle Scrappage Policy proposed in Union Budget 2021

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed the Voluntary Scrappage Policy during the presentation of Union Budget 2021.

The voluntary vehicle scrappage policy will help to scrap out the unfit and pollution-causing vehicles based on a fitness test.

The new policy will encourage fuel-efficient & environment-friendly vehicles as well as cut India’s huge oil import bills.

Quick Fact: The policy would apply to central & state government-owned vehicles from April 1, 2022.

4) Art and Culture

8th India International Silk Fair begins

The Textiles Minister of India, Smriti Irani has inaugurated the 8th edition of the India International Silk Fair virtually.

The five-day-long event is the biggest silk fair of India being held under one roof of the virtual platform of the Indian Silk Export Promotion Council.

India is the 2nd largest producer of Silk after China and the largest consumer of Silk in the World.

Quick Fact: The cultivation of Silk is called Sericulture.

5) Art and Culture

National Tribal Festival ‘Aadi Mahotsav’ begins

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated ‘Aadi Mahotsav’, a National Tribal Festival at Dilli Haat in INA in the national capital Delhi.

Aadi Mahotsav is a celebration of the spirit of Tribal Culture, Crafts, Cuisine & Commerce & to familiarise people across the country about it.

Around 1000 tribal artisans, artists, and chefs from more than 20 states of the country will participate & provide a glimpse of their rich traditional culture in the festival.

6) Person in News

'The Animals' Guitarist Hilton Valentine passes away

British band's 'The Animals' guitarist Hilton Valentine who created one of the most famous riffs in pop music in the 1960s breathed his last at the age of 77.

Valentine co-founded 'The Animals' in Newcastle in 1963 alongside singer Eric Burdon, bassist Chas Chandler, organist Alan Price, and drummer John Steel.

The British Band's version of the blues standard 'The House of The Rising Sun' topped the UK and US charts in 1964.

7) National Affairs

Lucknow Metro becomes first to sanitize coaches using UV rays

Lucknow Metro has become the first metro in the country to use Ultraviolet rays to sanitize train coaches in just seven minutes.

LMRC procured UV sanitization apparatus from an Indian firm in Jaipur, M/s FB TECH, which was certified by DRDO.

The Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation (UPMRC) has taken inspiration from the New York Metro's experiment to sanitize trains with UV lamp rays.

Quick Fact: Anandiben Patel is the Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

8) Sports

BCCI cancels Ranji Trophy 2020-21 for the first time in 87 years

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced not to conduct the Ranji Trophy 2020-21.

This is the first time in 87 years that India's premier first-class cricket national championship will not be held since its inception in 1934-35.

BCCI has decided to conduct the Vijay Hazare Trophy 50-over tournament and Senior Women's One Day tournament instead of the Ranji Trophy.

Quick Fact: Gujarat based Saurashtra Cricket Team won the Ranji Trophy 2019-20.

3rd January

1) Government Schemes

Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) scheme to be launched

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced during the Union Budget 2021 that the government has proposed a MITRA scheme.

The MITRA scheme will enable the textile industry to become globally competitive & attract large investments and generate employment.

MITRA scheme will be launched in addition to the Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)

2) National Affairs

'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' Mission launched in Punjab

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Captain Amarinder Singh has launched the 'Har Ghar Pani, Har Ghar Safai' Mission virtually.

The mission is part of the government's campaign to achieve a 100 percent potable water supply in all rural households by March 2022.

The scheme is being funded by the World Bank, Jal Jeewan Mission of GoI, NABARD, and State Budget.

3) Science and Technology

SpaceX announces First All-Civilian Mission to Space

CEO of SpaceX Elon Musk recently announced to launch its first all civilian mission to space.

The mission named 'Inspiration4' will be launched on Falcon 9.

The mission will be launched from the Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Quick Fact: SpaceX was founded in 2002 by Elon Musk.

4) International Affairs

State of emergency announced in Myanmar

A one-year state of emergency has been announced in Myanmar and the military has taken control of the country.

State counselor Aung San Suu Kyi along with President Win Myint and other members of the ruling party were detained by the military.

The state emergency was announced because the November Elections 2020 were postponed amid the COVID-19 pandemic & the government failed in tackling the situation.

Quick Fact: The capital city of Myanmar is Naypyidaw

5) International Affairs

Indian-American Bhavya Lala appointed Acting Chief of Staff of NASA

Indian American Bhavya Lala was appointed by NASA as the Acting Chief of Staff of the US Space Agency.

Bhavya served as a member of the Biden Presidential Transition Agency review team.

Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology serving as a member of the research staff at STPI from 2009 to 2020.

Quick Fact: NASA was founded on 1 October 1958.

6) Sports

Tamil Nadu beat Baroda to claim Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy

Tamil Nadu beat Baroda in the final to win the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy 2020-21.

The tournament was the 12th edition of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy and was played at the Sardar Patel Stadium, Ahmedabad.

Tamil Nadu team led by Dinesh Karthik won the trophy for the second time after 13 years since their first victory.

7) Person in News

Pioneering US actress Cicely Tyson passes away

US actress Cicely Tyson breathed her last at the age of 88.

She gained an Oscar nomination for her role as the sharecropper's wife in 'Sounder' & won a Tony award in 2013.

She touched TV viewers' hearts in 'The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman' & won two Emmys for playing the 110-year-old farmer slave.

8) Environment

Uttarakhand sets up Botanical garden to conserve trees of Shivalik Range

Uttarakhand has set up the first of its kind botanical garden named 'Shivalik Arboretum' in Nainital.

The arboretum inaugurated by noted environmentalist Ajay Singh Rawat will conserve over 210 species of trees found in the Shivalik range of the Himalayas.

It is the biggest Arboretum in Uttarakhand housing trees like Kafal, Buransh, Tejpat, and Sanjeevani.

4th January

1) Science and Technology

New Protein-based Biosensors created for Quick COVID-19 test

A team of researchers led by David Baker, a professor of Biochemistry, have created a new protein-based biosensor that will detect the Coronavirus.

The protein-based biosensors will glow when they detect the protein that makes up the pandemic coronavirus.

The method is faster and will enable widespread testing as opposed to the RT-PCR technique which requires specialized staff and equipment.

Quick Fact: RT-PCR full form is 'Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction'.

2) National Affairs

Kerala's First Human Milk Bank to be opened

Kerala is going to open its first Human Milk Bank (HMB) at the Ernakulam General Hospital.

The milk bank is being set up with the support of the Rotary Club of Cochin Global.

The milk bank will ensure the availability of breast milk for new-born babies who are not breastfed by their mothers.

3) Environment

India's first Centre for Wetland Conservation & Management to be set up

The central government announced the opening of a new Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) in Chennai.

CWCM is being set up in a bid to address the knowledge gaps & scientific research needs for the conservation and management of wetlands.

India currently has 42 Ramsar sites that have been designated as Wetlands of international importance covering over 4.6% of the Indian landmass.

Quick Fact: World Wetlands Day is observed annually on February 2.

4) Defense

New Production Plant inaugurated at HAL

Defense Minister of India, Rajnath Singh, has inaugurated a new plant for the production of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) at HAL, Bengaluru.

The plant will help in doubling the production of LCA Tejas to 16 aircraft per year to complete the Air Force order of 83 jets.

HAL Tejas is an Indian single-engine, fourth-generation, and multi-role aircraft.

Quick Fact: The LCA was officially named Tejas in 2003.

5) Miscellaneous

Ford joins hands with Google to offer cloud-based data services

Ford Motor Co has joined hands with Alphabet Inc's Google to cooperate in software, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing.

The automaker will deploy Google artificial intelligence technology to improve the efficiency of vehicle development and manufacturing operations.

Under the 6 year partnership, it will incorporate the Android operating system of Google into its Ford and Lincoln vehicles starting in 2023.

Quick Fact: Henry Ford founded Ford Motors on 16 June 1903.

6) Sports

Former pacer Merv Hughes inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame

Former right-arm fast bowler Merv Hughes has been inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame.

The 59-year-old played 53 Tests and 33 ODIs for Australia in a career spanning from 1985 to 1994, scoring 212 Test wickets and 38 ODI wickets.

His career-best figures of 8-87 were against the West Indies at the WACA in 1988.

7) Miscellaneous

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

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has come out with his new book titled 'The Little Book of Encouragement'.

The book has been edited by Renuka Singh and published by Penguin Random House.

The book contains 130 quotes related to dealing with a panic-stricken world, combat rising extremism, polarity, and climate change.

8) Defense

Bengaluru hosts Asia's biggest Aero Show 2021

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 13th edition of the mega 3-day Aero show taking place in a hybrid mode (physical + virtual).

From modest beginnings in 1996, Aero India has now become Asia's largest defense and aerospace air show over the years.

The event will witness the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defense Minister's Conclave for the first time.

Quick Facts: The motto of the Indian Air Force is "Glory that touches the sky".

5th January

1) India and the World

EIU Democracy Index 2020

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) recently released its report titled 'Democracy in sickness and in health' and also published the Democracy Index 2020.

The Index covers 167 countries in which Norway has topped the list.

India's rank has degraded by two places to 53rd position from the previous years' ranking.

Quick Fact: EIU is headquartered in London, United Kingdom.

2) Summits and Conferences

Indian Ocean Region Defense Ministers' Conclave

The Indian Ocean Region Defense Ministers' Conclave was hosted by India taking place in the backdrop of Aero India 2021.

The theme of the Conclave was "Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean".

The Conclave seeks to promote dialogue in institutional, economic, and cooperative environments while helping countries to foster the development of peace & stability in IOR.

3) Economy

Lithium deposits found in Karnataka

The central government has confirmed in a written reply to Lok Sabha about the presence of 1600 tonnes of lithium deposits in the Mandya district of Karnataka.

The survey was done by the Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) under the Department of Atomic Energy.

India relies heavily on Japan, China, and Taiwan for lithium import which has increased the import bill of Lithium by 3 folds between 2017 to 2020.

Quick Fact: The first Lithium plant of India has been set up in Gujarat in 2021.

4) Environment

First Declaration issued for converting Kaliveli Wetlands into a Bird Sanctuary

Tamil Nadu has issued the first declaration under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 in a bid to declare Kaliveli wetlands as a bird sanctuary.

The decision will boost their efforts to protect the wetland which is home to diverse flora and fauna.

The Kaliveli Wetlands support around 20,000 birds every year and works as a feeding ground for long-distance migratory birds.

Quick Fact: The Kaliveli Wetlands is the second largest brackish water lake in South India.

5) Person in News

Birth Centenary Celebrations of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi begins

The year-long Birth Centenary celebration of legendary classical singer Pandit Bhimsen Joshi began recently.

The event to celebrate the Birth Centenary is named 'SwarBhaskar 100'.

Pandit Bhimsen Gururaj Joshi was an Indian vocalist from Karnataka famous for his khayal form of singing and belongs to the Kirana Gharana of Hindustani Classical Music.

Quick Fact: Bhimsen was awarded Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship (1998) and the Bharat Ratna (2009).

6) National Affairs

Government launches unified web portal for monitoring activities of GOBARDHAN

Agriculture Minister, Petroleum Minister, Animal Husbandry Minister, Jal Shakti Minister & Minister of State for Jal Shakti jointly launched the unified web portal.

GOBARDHAN aims to positively impact village cleanliness & generate wealth and energy from cattle as well as organic waste.

It focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to useful compost, biogas, and bio-CNG hence increasing the income of farmers.

7) International Affairs

Andy Jassy set to replace jeff Bezos as Amazon CEO

Amazon.com Inc founder and CEO, Jeff Bezos has announced that he would step down as the CEO of the company with effect from July 1, 2021.

Andy Jassy, who is currently serving as the Chief Executive of Amazon Web Services (AWS) will replace Bezos as the CEO of Amazon.

Bezos started the company 27 years ago on 5 July 1994 as an internet bookseller.

Quick Fact: Amazon.com Inc is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, United States.

8) Miscellaneous

'Aatmanirbharta' named Oxford Hindi word of 2020

The world's leading dictionary publisher, Oxford Languages, has named 'Aatmanirbharta' as the Hindi word of the year 2020.

The Oxford Hindi word of the year is a word or expression that is chosen to reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupation of the previous year as well as have a lasting cultural significance.

The word was chosen as it validated the day-to-day achievements of the countless Indians who dealt with and survived the perils of a pandemic.

Quick fact: 'Aatmanirbharta' means self-reliance.

6th February

1) Science and Technology

US launches first rocket which runs on biofuel

Stardust 1.0 launch vehicle was launched from a former US Military base

It is the first commercial space launch powered by biofuel.

The Stardust rocket launch vehicle has been manufactured by aerospace company bluShift.

2) National Affairs

MOHUA partners with Zomato for PM SVANidhi Scheme

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) has signed an MoU with Zomato to onboard street vendors onto the platform.

This will help street vendors access many more customers online.

The street vendors will be empowered with the PAN and FSSAI.

Quick Fact: The SVANidhi scheme was launched to support the livelihoods of street vendors affected due to COVID-19 lockdown.

3) India and the World

India-Bahrain conduct first JWG meeting in the field of Renewable Energy

The first meeting of the Joint Working Group between India and the Kingdom of Bahrain in the field of Renewable Energy was held virtually.

Bahraini delegation was led by H.E. Dr. Abdul Hussain Bin Ali Mirza while the Indian delegation was led by Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale.

Both sides underscored the importance of renewable energy in order to meet climate change goals.

4) National Affairs

Common Yoga Protocol Training Programme by AYUSH Ministry

The Ministry of AYUSH (MoA) has formulated the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) training programme recently.

The programme was initiated to enhance the acceptance and adoption of the practice of Yoga in India as well as abroad.

The protocol developed by a team of leading Yoga gurus & experts is organized by MoA in collaboration with the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY).

Quick Fact: International Yoga Day is observed on June 21.

5) National Affairs

Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Switch Delhi' campaign

The Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal launched the 'Switch Delhi' campaign to promote the use of electric vehicles.

The campaign has been launched with an aim to create awareness about how electric vehicles can help in combating air pollution in Delhi.

Government has issued tenders to set up 100 charging stations in the city and set a target of 25% electric vehicle registration by 2024.

6) Miscellaneous

HAL signs agreement with MIDHANI to develop composite raw materials

HAL has signed a MoU with Hyderabad-based Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI) for development and production of composite raw materials for use in aerospace.

The MoU was signed during the Aero India 2021 held in Bengaluru.

Composite raw materials are currently imported since there is no equivalent proven Indian approved supplier for these materials.

Quick Fact: HAL is headquartered in Bangalore. India.

7) Miscellaneous

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes first Union Territory to be COVID-19 free

Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the first Union territory in the country to become COVID-19 free with active cases falling to zero in the islands.

The Health Ministry website reported that the last four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared cured.

The UT had reported a total of 4,932 cases and 62 deaths from the virus since the beginning of the pandemic.

Quick Fact: Port Blair is the Capital of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

8) Person in News

Ayesha Azizz becomes India's Youngest Female Pilot at 25

A 25-year-old Kashmiri woman, Ayesha Aziz has become the youngest female pilot in the country.

She also became the youngest student pilot to get a licence at the age of 15 in 2011.

She underwent training to fly a MiG-29 jet at Russia's Sukhoi air base & later graduated in aviation from the Bombay Flying Club, thus obtaining a commercial licence in 2017.

8th February

1) Geography

First Thunderstorm Research Testbed of India to be Established

India will be setting up its first thunderstorm testbed in Balasore, Odisha, and first monsoon testbed near Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

The Testbed will study thunderstorms and aims to minimise loss of lives and property due to thunder strikes.

The Thunderstorm testbed will be established in a collaboration among the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Ministry of Earth Sciences, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Quick Fact: Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra is the Director-General of India Meteorological Department and is also known as Cyclone Man of India because of his accurate predictions of cyclones striking the country.

2) Economy

PayPal To Stop Domestic Payment Services in India

PayPal will be stopping Domestic Payment Services in India w.e.f. 1st April 2021. It will now focus on enabling more international sales for the Indian businesses and enable the Indian businesses to reach 350 million PayPal consumers across the world and increase their sales internationally.

Quick Fact: PayPal is an American online payments system.

3) Economy

“One Nation One Ombudsman” approach to be adopted by RBI

RBI has three grievance redressal schemes working across India presently, in the banking, non-bank finance companies and digital transactions.

It will unify all three under a single scheme to make the redressal system easier.

The complaint management system (CMS) portal will be provided as a one stop solution.

Quick Fact: The Banking Ombudsman is a quasi-judicial authority set up in 2006.

4) Economy

National Horticulture Fair 2021 starts from 8th February

It is a 5-day event organised at the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) campus, Bengaluru.

The theme of the National Horticulture Fair 2021 is ‘Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India’, encouraging farmers to become entrepreneurs

It will be organised by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR).

Quick Fact: Horticulture is the science of the development and sustainable production of high-value, intensively cultivated food and ornamental plants

5) Science and Technology

Square Kilometre Array Observatory approves setting up of World’s largest Radio Telescope

Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy.

Its ten current members are Canada, China, Australia, India, New Zealand, Italy, Sweden, South Africa, United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

The Square Kilometre Array will be the largest radio telescope and will be set up in Africa and Australia.

It will help scientists study the origins of the universe.

Quick Fact: SKAO is headquartered in the United Kingdom.

9th February

1) Government Schemes

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan Schools and Hostels to be Renamed after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

The Ministry of Education(MoE), through Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan,provides financial assistance to States and Union territories to run residential schools and hostels.

The aim of this scheme is to provide schooling facilities in areas that are the sparsely populated, mostly tribal areas,and hilly terrain. It also provides residential facilities in urban areas especially for children in need.

The idea behind the renaming of the schools is that freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose will act as an inspiration for the students.

Quick Fact : Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher Education were integrated to form Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and launched in 2018.

2) Person in News

Nigeria's Okonjo-Iweala to become first female chief of WTO.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, an economist and former finance minister of Nigeria became the first director general of WTO.

Former Director General of WTO was Mr. Roberto Azevedo from 1st September 2013 to 31st August 2020.

Quick Fact: World Trade Organization (WTO) came into existence on 1st January 1995.

3) Government Scheme

S.N Subramanyan appointed as the Chairman of National Safety Council (NSC)

The Union Labour Ministry announced Mr. Subramanyan to be appointed as head of the National Security Council.

He will head the council for 3 years.

He is the Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of Larsen & Toubro.

Union Labour Ministry will speed up organisation of the new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020

Quick Fact: L&T that is Larsen and Toubro Ltd is among the five largest fabrication companies in the world.

4) Science and Technology

Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) held its first meeting on 4th February 2021

During the SKAO meeting, they approved the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope.

It is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy.

Its headquarter is in the United Kingdom.

Quick Fact: Radio telescopes can detect gasses, thus the new telescope will benefit in finding those areas obscured under cosmic dust.

5) Geography

Glacial lake outburst flood in Uttarakhand.

A part of Nanda Devi Glacier broke off at Joshimath in Chamoli District of Uttarakhand.

A power project Tapovan Reni was going on.

A glacier breaks because of many reasons like erosion, an avalanche of snow or rock, build up water pressure and an earthquake under ice.

Quick Fact: Nanda Devi Glacier forms the part of second highest mountain range in India, that is, Nanda Devi.

6) Science and Technology

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) to develop unmanned fighter jet

HAL will work with a start up company to strengthen the military strike ability.

The unmanned aircraft will be teamed up with manned vehicles, the aircraft will enter into the enemy's zone.

HAL is also developing a high-altitude satellite system. It will be solar energised. This asset will be flying unmanned around 70,000 feet height for around two to three months and will be taking all the information.

7) Environment

Green Tax to be imposed on older vehicles

Green tax will be imposed on vehicles older than 8 years.

It aims to dissuade people from using automobiles that cause a disproportionate amount of pollution

The Green tax is also called Pollution tax or Environmental tax.

Quick Fact: In 2019, India launched 'The National Clean Air Programme' with a tentative national target of 20%-30% reduction in PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations by 2024.

8) India and the World

STARS Project to be signed with DEA and the World Bank.

Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States project aims to focus on improving the overall quality of education.

An agreement of financial assistance has been signed between The Ministry of Education and the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and World Bank.

It includes six major states of India Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Odisha.

Quick Fact: At the State level, the STARS project will be implemented through the integrated State Implementation Society (SIS) for Samagra Shiksha.

10th February

1) International Affairs

Safer Internet Day (SID) was celebrated on 9th February in 2021

Safer Internet Day is an international event to promote responsible use of online platforms and to spread awareness about increasing cyber bullying issues.

SID is organised by Insafe/INHOPE network awareness centres, that is spread across 30 countries and funded by the Connecting Europe Facility program (CEF) of the EU.

The initiative was expanded by introduction of committees in 2009. The NGO DISC (Developing internet Safe Community) Foundation is the SID committee of India, situated in New Delhi.

Quick Fact: The motto of the SID initiative is “Together for a better internet”.

2) National Affairs

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) stands out as the “Voice of the Customer”

The Bangalore Airport has secured global recognition for being the “Voice of the Customer”, an initiative by Airports Council International World.

The Voice of the Customer recognises the airports who prioritise their customers and remained committed in the times of Covid pandemic in 2020.

BAIL created a hashtag named #WeAreHereForYou under which various campaigns were launched to win the trust of passengers in air travel in 2020.

Quick Fact: Bangalore Airport was the first airport to be built under Public-Private Partnership.

3) International Affairs

India to build “Shahtoot Dam” in Afghanistan

India will construct Shahtoot dam on Kabul river in Afghanistan. The agreement was signed at the Geneva Donors Conference between India and Afghanistan.

The construction of the dam will provide safe drinking water to 2 million Kabul residents.

The Shahtoot Dam will be built upon Maidan river, a tributary of Kabul river.

Quick Fact: The current president of Afghanistan is Ashraf Ghani.

4) Defence

India to make indigenized High Altitude Clothes for the Army

India will make special high altitude clothes for Indian Soldier Standing Guards on Mountain Terrain.

Last year India bought the high altitude clothes from the US because soldiers were deployed in Ladakh.

The inspiration behind the initiative is "Make in India".

Quick Fact: Make in India initiative was launched on 25th September, 2014 with the primary goal of making India a manufacturing hub.

5) Science and Technology

3 Spacecrafts arriving on Mars simultaneously

The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Orbiter reaches Mars on 9th February, in less than 24 hrs China's orbiter and rover combo will also reach the planet. NASA's rover will come after a week, approximately by 18th February.

All the three spacecraft rocketed away in the month of July in 2020.

UAE's orbiter is called Amal, or Hope in Arabic, China's orbiter and rover is called Tianwen-1 or "Quest for Heavenly Truth", whereas USA's rover is called Perseverance.

Quick Fact: The first spacecraft to land on Mars was Viking 1. It was a part of a two part mission of NASA to investigate life on the Red planet.

6) Art and Culture

Koozhangal (Pebbles): First Tamil film to win Tiger Award

Director PS Vinohraj won Tiger award at International Film Festival at Rotterdam for his debut film Koozhangal (Pebbles)

The Tiger Award is accompanied by 40,000 Euros as a cash prize.

The movie is based on an alcoholic abusive husband who searches for his wife with his son after she runs away.

7) Government Scheme

KIRAN a helpline launched by Ministry of Social Justice and Environment

The Ministry of Social Justice and Environment launched a 24/7 helpline for providing assistance to people who are suffering from depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

The helpline is available in 13 languages, has 660 clinical psychologists and 668 psychiatrists as volunteers.

It is being coordinated by National Institutes for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), and National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR), Sehore, Madhya Pradesh.

Quick fact: Ministry of Education has launched “Manodarpan”— an initiative to provide support for psycho-social needs of students and counselling for mental well-being.

8) Art and Culture

President inaugurated General K S Thimayya Museum in Karnataka

The museum in Karnataka celebrates the life of Army Chief General Kodandera Subayya Thimayya.

A diary is preserved inside the museum that narrates various war battles of Indian Army.

The museum houses a variety of war relics and antique weaponry. There is a war tank at the entrance named Himmat.

Quick Fact: K S Thimayya is a distinguished officer who served as a Chief of Army Staff. He was the only Indian to command infantry in World War 2.

11 February

1) International Affairs

PM inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit

The World Sustainable Development Summit is the 20th Edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event.

The theme of 2021 is “Redefining our common future: Safe and secure environment for all”.

It is the sole summit on global issues taking place in the developing world. It provides a platform for global leaders to discuss and deliberate over climatic issues of universal importance.

Quick Fact: TERI is the leading think-tank dedicated to conduct research for sustainable development of India and Global South.

2) National Affairs

ONGC plans to develop India's first geothermal energy project in Ladakh

The geothermal project is known as the Geothermal Field Development Project.

The Puga village in eastern Ladakh has been identified as the hotspot for geothermal energy by scientists.

A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Union Territory Administration Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) - Leh, AND Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Energy Centre on 8th February 2021.

Quick Fact: Chairman and Managing Director of ONGC Energy Centre is Shashi Shanker.

3) Government Schemes

The government will launch a central sector scheme called “Formation and Promotion of Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO’s)

The aim of launching the scheme is to form and promote 10,000 new FPO’s.

It is a Producer’s Organisation (PO), where members are farmers. Small Farmers’ Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) is providing support for the promotion of FPO’s.

FPO’s helps in collectivization of small, marginal and landless farmers in order to give them the collective strength.

Quick Fact: SFAC is an autonomous body established in 1994, promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare.

4) International Affairs

18th edition of BioAsia Summit 2021 to focus on Covid 19 pandemic, pharma, medtech and global health

The theme of BioAsia is “Move the Needle”.

The discussion in the summit will be dedicated to dealing with Covid-19, the new realities of the health sector, and innovative medical technologies.

The event will have discussion on supply chain resilience.

Quick Fact: India has become 3rd largest Biotechnology destination in India Pacific region.

5) Person in News

Bikram Singh Bedi appointed as Managing Director of Google Cloud, India

Bikram Singh Bedi as new Managing Director of Google Cloud will be responsible for leading the sales and operation team for the dynamic market.

Bikram Singh Bedi will succeed Karan Bajwa, who has become the Vice-President for Asia Pacific Region.

Google Cloud is in the process of launching Delhi Cloud Region in India in 2021.

Quick Fact: The CEO of Google is Sundar Pichai.

6) Government Schemes

PM launches Asom Mala programme in Assam

Asom Mala is a road connectivity project launched by the PM in Dhekiajuli of Assam.

The programme will link the rural roads and major district roads with state and national highways networks.

The project aims to facilitate multi modal transport in the state. The programme also laid the foundation of two hospitals. The project is on the lines of Bharat Mala project.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Assam is Sarbananda Sonowal and Governor of Assam is Jagdish Mukhi.

7) International Affairs

South Korea to develop World's Largest Offshore Wind Farm

The President of South Korea has approved the plan to build the largest wind power plant by 2030.

This project will help South Korea to achieve the target of becoming an environmental friendly and Carbon Neutral country by 2050.

The wind power plant will be located in the southwestern coastal town of Sinan. It will have a capacity of 8.2 gigawatts.

Quick Fact: Currently, the world's largest offshore wind farm is Hornsea 1 in Britain which has 1.12 gigawatts capacity.

8) International Affairs

World Pulses Day (WPD) is observed every year on 10th February

World Pulse Day is celebrated to create awareness about the importance of pulses in human life.

Theme of WPD 2021 is "Nutritious Seeds for a Sustainable Future".

The United Nations has 17 sustainable goals, the International day for Pulses falls under the second goal, that is, "Zero Hunger".

Quick Fact: The Secretary-General of the United Nations is Antonio Guterres.

12th February

1) Defence

The largest Indian Navy Exercise TROPEX-21 is currently underway

Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TORPEX 21) commenced in January. The exercise is observing the participation of all operational units of Indian Navy such as submarines, ships and aircraft

The exercise is being held in the Indian Ocean Region and its adjunct waters.

The aim of exercise is to test the combat readiness of the Navy for the complex multi-dimensional scenario amid the tight geo strategic environment.

Quick Fact: Sea Vigil and TROPEX together will cover the entire spectrum of maritime security challenges, including transition from peace to conflict.

2) Person in News

Akshay Kumar Singh to be the new Managing Director and Chief Executive of LNG

The Director of Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Akshay Kumar Singh, will be the new managing director and chief executive of the country's biggest gas importer, Petronet LNG Ltd.

Mr. Singh will replace Prabhat Singh who served for a term of 5 years.

Petronet LNG Ltd. is an Indian oil and gas company formed by the government of India to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) and set up LNG terminals across the country. Petronet is a joint venture of IOC, GAIL, ONGC and BPCL.

Quick Fact: Petronet has set up the country's first LNG receiving and regasification terminal in Dahej, Gujarat and another terminal in Kochi, Kerala.

3) Person in News

Vidisha Maitra an Indian Diplomat to be elected to UN Advisory Committee

Vidisha Maitra has been elected to the UN's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Question.

She won with 126 UN members supporting her for the only post for Asia-Pacific group, while 64 voted against her.

India has been a member of the UN Advisory Committee since its inception in 1946.

Quick Fact: Mr Antonio Guterres is the Secretary General of the United Nations.

4) Economy

SBI signs an agreement for 1 billion USD with JBIC

The State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a loan agreement of upto 1 billion USD with The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

The loan will facilitate the operation of Japanese car companies in India. The financing will assist the Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative.

600 million USD will be financed by JBIC, the rest will come from other participating members like Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, MUFG bank, Shizuoka Bank and Bank of Yokohama.

Quick fact: The chairman of SBI is Dinesh Kumar Khara. SBI has the largest network of over 22,100 branches in India.

5) Science and Technology

Skyroot signs MoU with Bellatrix for Orbital Transfer Vehicle

Skyroot Aerospace, a Hyderabad based rocket startup has signed Memorandum of Understanding with Bellatrix Aerospace, a small satellite company based in Bangalore.

Bellatrix Aerospace is building a vehicle that will work as a “taxi in space” to ferry small satellites into multiple orbits. The orbital transfer vehicle is expected to help global operators reduce time and cost while launching communication and earth observation satellites.

The vehicle is expected to launch to low earth orbit in 2023 on the Vikram rocket made by Skyroot Aerospace. The vehicle will offer ride-sharing or small satellites and drop each passenger to their intended slots in space.

Quick Fact: Skyroot is founded by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientist. The CEO is Pawan Kumar Chandra.

6) Environment

China to launch a public platform to track and crack the polluters

The environment ministry of China is going to launch a public platform that will allow authorities and members of the public to monitor real-time emission levels and check historical data in order to determine whether rules are being breached.

Polluting enterprises are obliged to install monitoring equipment and keep at least five year data, with fines of 20,000 yuan (\$31,00).

A total of 2.36 million companies, industrial facilities and institutions in China are legally obliged to obtain permits for emitting pollutants like sulphur dioxide or wastewater.

Quick Fact: China is the world's biggest emitter of fossil fuel carbon dioxide emission.

7) International Affairs

International Epilepsy Day is observed on the second Monday of February every year.

In the year 2021, International Epilepsy Day was on 8th February.

The day is organised jointly by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

The objective is to raise awareness about Epilepsy and highlight the kinds of problems faced by the victims.

Quick Fact: Epilepsy is a neurological disorder which makes a person go through sudden and recurrent episodes of sensory disorder.

8) Environment

Tamil Nadu to create the 5th Tiger Reserve in the state

The Srivilliputhur Megamalai Tiger Reserve is the 5th Tiger reserve added by the state of Tamil Nadu.

The reserve will encompass the Meghamalai and Srivilliputhur Grizzled Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuaries.

The four other tiger reserves are Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger reserve, Anamalai Tiger reserve, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Sathyamangalam Tiger reserve.

Quick Fact: India has 70% of global tiger population.

13th February

1) Environment

Fossil of Earth's Oldest Animal Found in Bhimbetka

Researchers believe that they have found India's first fossil of Dickinsonia in Bhimbetka.

Dickinsonia is considered to be Earth's oldest animal, dating back 570 million years ago (late Ediacaran period).

It is considered an internal link between the early, simple organisms and then explosion of life in the Cambrian Period that was around 541 million years ago. Dickinsonia has been found in Australia, Russia, Ukraine and China.

Dickinsonia's discovery in India will pave for further assessment of biogeographic provinces and also plate tectonic reconstructions for late Ediacaran. It also confirms assembly of Gondwanaland (ancient supercontinent).

Quick Fact: Bhimbetka Caves are situated in foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains (Near Bhopal) in Madhya Pradesh. It is also a UNESCO world heritage site.

2) Government Schemes

Government has approved inclusion of 'Speciality Steel' under Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme

Speciality Steel is a steel containing alloys that provide special properties, such as resistance to corrosion or to heavy load.

It is also called alloy steel.

Earlier, PLI scheme across 10 key specific sectors was launched to attract investment, enhance export etc. Other specific sectors are Advance Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery; Electronic/ Technology Products, Food Products, High Efficiency Solar PV Modules, White Goods (ACs and LED)

Quick Fact: PLI is a scheme that aims to give companies incentive on incremental sales from products manufactured in domestic units. The scheme invites foreign companies to set up units in India, however, it also encourages local companies to set up or expand existing manufacturing units.

3) Environment

Oil spill at Kerala Beach

2000 litres of furnace oil leaked at Kerala Coast from state run Travancore Titanium Products (TTP).

An emergency clean-up was launched to address furnace oil leak at Kochuveli near Thiruvananthapuram.

Oil is one of the most abundant pollutants in the oceans. Approximately 3 million tons of oil contaminates oceans annually.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Kerala is Pinarayi Vijayan and the Governor is Arif Mohammad Khan.

4) International Affairs

New Zealand Parliament scraps tie requirement after Maori MP ejected from chamber over dress code

The Maori are the indigenous people of New Zealand.

They are Polynesian and make up 15% of the country's population. Polynesian is a vast string of islands in the Pacific Ocean, including Hawaii, New Zealand, Easter islands, Tonga, and French Polynesia.

Te Reo Maori is their native language.

Quick Fact: It is believed that Maori migrated to New Zealand from elsewhere in Polynesia around the 9th century to 13th century AD.

5) International Affairs

IEA releases India Energy Outlook 2021 report

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released India Energy Outlook 2021 report that examines opportunities and challenges faced by India.

The report examines pathways out of the crisis that emerged from Covid-19 pandemic, as well as long- term trends.

India is the world's third largest energy consuming country due to rising incomes and improving standards of living.

Quick Fact: The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris based autonomous intergovernmental organisation established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1974. India is the associate member of IEA.

6) National Affairs

Vijaynagara officially declared as 31st District of Karnataka

Vijaynagara has been declared as the 31st district of Karnataka through official gazette notification.

Vijaynagara, the new district of Karnataka has been carved out of Bellary district and named after Vijaynagara empire that ruled from this region from 1336 to 1646 A.D

The UNESCO World Heritage site Hampi, will be a part of Vijaynagara.

Quick Fact: Vijaynagara Empire or Karnata Empire was established by Harihara-1 and his brother Bukka Raya-1 of Sangama Dynasty.

7) Science and Technology

India's 1st Thunderstorm Research Testbed to be established in Odisha

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced setting up of the first 'Thunderstorm Research Testbed' of the country in Balasore district of Odisha.

The main objective of the 'Thunderstorm Research Testbed' is to minimize human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes.

The facility is in collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, IMD, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Quick Fact: Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Director-General is Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

8) Government Scheme

Government of India launches Unified Web Portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN scheme

The Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) Scheme is implemented under the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin- Phase 2.

The Scheme aims to augment income of farmers by converting biodegradable waste into compressed biogas (CBG). The initiative aims at attracting entrepreneurs for establishing community-based CBG plants in rural areas.

The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) comprises two main components for creating clean villages- creating open defecation free villages and managing solid and liquid waste in villages.

Quick Fact: The scheme is implemented by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Jal Shakti Ministry.

15th February

1) Person in news

Jual Oram launches book on economic awareness in India

Jual Oram, Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Defence and MP, has launched 'Turn Around India: 2020-Surmounting Past Legacy', a book on creating economic awareness among masses.

The book is authored by R P Gupta.

The book provides a practical and viable option for reviving Indian economy for creating new jobs and enlarging public income and also, the structural reforms such as fiscal and monetary stimuli for overcoming economic crisis arising due to pandemic.

Quick Fact: In Indian Parliament, a Standing committee is a committee consisting of Members of Parliament.

2) National Affairs

Meghalaya police inks MoU with SBI for e-Challan

A Memorandum of Understanding is signed between the Meghalaya police and the State Bank of India (SBI) for the implementation of the e-Challan within the jurisdiction of the Shillong Traffic Police (STP).

Via the e-Challan system imposing penalties on violators of traffic rules and generating challan will be done digitally.

The system has been integrated with VAHAN & SARTGI applications and will enable the Traffic Officials to fetch the details of the traffic violator such as vehicle and driver's details through these applications, thereby reducing the time taken to issue challan.

Quick Fact: Meghalaya's Capital is Shillong.

3) Government Schemes

The Government will organise the first Toy fair of India

The Government of India will organise the first toy fair of India, "The India Toy Fair, 2021, from 27th February to 2nd March 2021, on a virtual platform.

The official website for India Toy Fair-2021 is www.theindiatoyfair.in

The initiative is in line with the Prime Minister's vision of making India a global hub for the toy industry.

It is the first ever digitally accessible exhibition in India and platform which will provide an opportunity to not only explore and buy a variety of toys from over 1,000 exhibitors across states and union territories.

4) Economy

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched the Financial Literacy Week (FLW)

The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Financial Literacy Week from 8th to 12th February 2021, with the objective to propagate financial education.

The theme for Financial Literacy Week (FLW) is "Credit Discipline and Credit from Formal Institutions"

Banks have been advised to disseminate the information and create awareness among its customers and the general public.

Quick Fact: The 25th Governor of RBI is Shaktikant Das.

5) Economy

New Development Bank to Invest 100 million USD in NIIF Fund of Funds

The New Development Bank (NDB) has committed to invest 100 million USD (Rs.727.6 crore), into the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIF) Fund of Funds (FoF).

The Investment marks NBD'S first equity investment into India and its first-ever investment into a Fund of Funds.

Currently, the Government of India, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are the investors in the FoF. Now NBD has joined the group.

Quick Fact: The FoF was established in 2018 with the objective of providing homegrown Indian private equity fund managers access to an India focused institutional investor that operates at scale.

6) Government Schemes

TIFAC launches SAKSHAM portal and Seaweed Cultivation Mission

The Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) have launched a job portal called SAKSHAM to map the skills of workers as required by the MSMEs.

Seaweed Cultivation, or kelp farming, is the practice of cultivating and harvesting seaweed. The process comprises management of naturally found batches in the simplest form.

As per the estimate of the department, if seaweed cultivation is done in 10 million hectares or 5% of the Exclusive Economic Zone area in India, it would help in providing employment to 50 million people.

The TIFAC will showcase a model, in collaboration with other in-line ministries, of the commercial farming of seaweeds and its processing.

Quick Fact: TIFAC is an autonomous organisation. It works under the Department of Science and Technology. It was set up in 1988.

7) Environment

Mandarian duck spotted after 118 year in Assam

The Mandarian duck which is a colourful duck from eastern Asia was spotted in Assam recently after 188 years.

Spotting of the Mandarian Duck has raised hopes for the wetland which was affected by a blowout and inferno at a natural gas well in the year 2020.

The duck was spotted by the team of avian specialists in the Maguri-Motapung Beel of Tinsukia district in eastern Assam.

The last Mandarin Duck was spotted in Assam in 1902. Mandarin duck is the habitat of eastern China and southern Japan.

Quick Fact: The scientific name of Mandarin Duck is *Aix galericulata*.

8) Science and Technology

Concentration of small Black Holes discovered in Cluster NGC 6397

The astronomers have discovered a concentration of smaller black holes in cluster NGC 6397.

NGC 6397 is also known as Caldwell 86. It is a globular cluster lying in the constellation Ara. The Globular clusters are a dense stellar system that host the closely packed stars. The cluster is located around 7,800 light years from Earth.

It comprises around 4,00,000 stars. The cluster can be observed with a naked eye under the good observing conditions. The cluster is one among the 20 globular clusters in the Milky Way Galaxy.

16th February

1) Government Scheme

MSDE launches Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has launched Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) under SANKALP.

Fellows under MGNF will require academic expertise and technical competency in understanding the overall skill ecosystem along with being attached to District Skill Committees (DSCs)

Ministry has partnered with top 9 Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) across India for MGNF.

Quick Fact: The MSDE is a ministry set up in 2014 to coordinate all skill development efforts across the country.

2) National Affairs

Covid Warrior Memorial to be built in Bhubaneswar

The Odisha Government has planned to construct 'Covid Warrior Memorial' in Bhubaneswar to recognise the self-less services of Covid warriors who sacrificed their lives fighting Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid War Memorial would be set up at Biju Patnaik Park in Bhubaneswar.

The proposed Memorial is scheduled to be inaugurated on Independence Day on 15th August.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Odisha is Naveen Patnaik.

3) Person in News

Tata Motors appoints Marc Llistosella as the new CEO and Managing Director

Marc Llistosella has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Tata Motors Limited.

Llistosella is the former president and CEO of Fuso Truck and Bus Corp. and head of Daimler Trucks in Asia.

The appointment of Marc Llistosella will be effective from 1st July 2021.

Quick Fact: Guenter Butschek is the former CEO and MD of Tata Motors Limited.

4) Sports

Divyansh Singh Panwar won the gold medal in men's 10m air rifle

Divyansh Singh Panwar won the gold medal in the first-ever Asian Online Shooting Championship 2021 in men's 10m air rifle.

On the second day of the competition, world number one Divyansh shot an impressive 632.4 to strike gold.

Kynan Chenai and Rajeshwari Kumari topped the podium in men's and women's trap events respectively.

Quick Fact: The first-ever 'Asian Online Shooting Championship' was by Kuwait Shooting Federation.

5) Person in New

Priyanka Chopra Jonas pens memoir titled “Unfinished”

Former Miss World and Bollywood, Hollywood Star Priyanka Chopra authored a memoir titled “Unfinished”.

The book reveals her life journey from her childhood, teenage years in India and US and her return to homeland where she won a national beauty contest, her acting career, her American TV show among other things

The book has been published by Penguin Random House.

Quick Fact: Priyanka Chopra Jonas won the title of “Miss World” in 2000.

6) National Affairs

Four women wins SERB Women Excellence Award 2021

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) announced SERB Women Excellence Award 2021 on the Occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

Four young women who won the SERB Women Excellence Award, are Dr. Shobhna Kapoor, Dr. Antara Banerjee, Dr. Sonu Gandhi, and Dr. Ritu Gupta.

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) is a statutory body of the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

Quick Fact: The SERB Award provides a grant of 14 lakhs for a period of three years to awardees to pursue their research ideas.

7) International Affairs

Mario Draghi to be the new PM of Italy

Mario Draghi, the former European Central Bank Chief, has been elected as the new Prime Minister of Italy.

The 73 years old has served as President of the European Central Bank from 2011 to 2021.

Mario Draghi replaced Giuseppe Conte.

Quick Fact: The President of Italy is Sergio Mattarella.

8) Government Scheme

World Bank signs 100 million USD project with Chhattisgarh

The Central government and Chhattisgarh government have signed a 100 million USD project named "CHIRAAG" with the World Bank.

The project CHIRAAG stands for Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth

The objective of the project is to develop sustainable production systems that allow tribal households in remote areas in Chhattisgarh to practice round-the-year production of diversified and nutritious food.

Quick Fact: Bhupesh Baghel is the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh.

17th February

1) National Affairs

India's first CNG tractor launched by Union Road Transport and Highways Minister

Nitin Gadkari has launched India's first-ever diesel tractor, converted to a much cleaner Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) variant.

This conversion is jointly developed by Rawmatt Techno Solutions and Tomasetto Achille India.

The farmers can save up to 50% on fuel cost, they can save up to Rs. 1 trillion annually.

Quick Fact: CNG is odorless, tasteless, and non-toxic and is made up of 93.05% methane, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, propane, and traces of ethane.

2) Defence

Prime Minister hands over indigenous Arjun Mk-1A tank to Army

PM Narendra Modi handed over the indigenously developed Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Indian army at a ceremony in Chennai.

The army will get 118 units of the Main Battle Tank, indigenously designed and developed by CVRDE and DRDO along with 15 academic institutions, eight labs, and several MSME's

The Arjun tanks stand out for their 'Fin Stabilised Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot (FSAPDS)' ammunition and 120-mm calibre rifled gun.

Quick Fact: The Defence Minister of India is Rajnath Singh.

3) Economy

ICICI Lombard launches Corporate India Risk Index

Private general insurer ICICI Lombard has launched 'Corporate India Risk Index', which intends to be a unified, standardized corporate risk index that spans industries and companies.

The private insurer ICICI said this will help companies understand the level of risk that their business is facing and also assist in developing a successful risk aversion plan.

It has worked with consulting firms Frost and Sullivan to develop the risk measurement tool.

Quick Fact: ICICI Lombard CEO is Bhargav Dasgupta.

4) Space and Technology

Indian Astronomers detect huge optical flare in a Blackhole

Indian astronomers have reported one of the strongest flares from a feeding supermassive black hole or blazar called BL Lacertae.

The Department of Science and Technology said the analysis of the BL Lacertae can help trace the mass of the Blackhole and the source of emission.

Blazars or feeding supermassive black holes in the heart of distant galaxies receive a lot of attention from the astronomical community because of their complicated emission mechanism.

Quick Fact: The Minister of Science and Technology is Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

5) Person in News

Meghna Pant's new book "The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News"

Meghna Pant, an award-winning writer, journalist, and speaker has penned a new book "The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News".

The book will release in April and soon be seen as a major motion picture under the title Badnam Ladoo.

The book is about a small-town woman, Ladoo, who scandalizes her conservative family when she decides to use a sperm donor to have a baby.

6) Science and Technology

India's homegrown App MapMyIndia ties up with ISRO

India's homegrown App MapMyIndia ties up with ISRO to build an alternative to Google Maps and similar platforms.

The agreement between ISRO and MapMyIndia will turn out to be a benefit for users because it will use digital maps and satellite imagery and Earth observation data of ISRO.

Along with mapping data, the information about pollution, agricultural output, weather, land-use changes, flood, and several disasters will be visible to users.

Quick Fact: The Chairman of ISRO is K. Sivan

7) Art and Culture

11th Edition of 'Rashtriya Sanskrit Mahotsav' inaugurated in West Bengal

The Governor of West Bengal inaugurated the 11th Edition of 'Rashtriya Sanskrit Mahotsav' at Cooch Behar Palace in West Bengal.

The 'Rashtriya Sanskrit Mahotsav' is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Culture, organized under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Programme, since 2015.

The programme is organized to promote and celebrate the idea of 'Unity in Diversity'.

Quick Fact: The Governor of West Bengal is Jagdeep Dhankhar.

8) Polity

Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar sworn-in as Chief Justice of Manipur HC

Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar was sworn-in as Chief Justice of Manipur High Court at Raj Bhavan, Imphal.

He was appointed as Chief Justice of Manipur HC by the President of India.

He has earlier served as a Judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Manipur is N. Biren Singh.

18th February

1) Person in News

Preeti Sinha appointed as the new Executive Secretary of UN Capital Development Fund

Preeti Sinha, an Indian-origin investment and development banker, has been appointed as the Executive Secretary (the highest leadership rank in the institution) of the United Nations Capital Development Fund.

She will work with a focus on providing micro-finance assistance to women, youth, small and medium-sized enterprises in under-served communities.

She replaced Judith Karl.

Quick Fact: The Secretary-General of the United Nations is Antonio Guterres.

2) Sports

Naman Ojha announces retirement from all formats of Cricket

Former Indian wicketkeeper-batsman, Naman Ojha has announced his retirement from all formats of cricket.

He made his debut for Madhya Pradesh in 2000-01.

He holds the record for most dismissals by a wicketkeeper in the Ranji Trophy.

Quick Fact: Ranji Trophy is named after Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji Jadeja, the first Indian cricketer who played international cricket

3) Person in News

Ajay Mathur elected as the new DG at the special assembly of ISA

India's Ajay Mathur is elected as the new Director-General of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Mathur replaced Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director-General since 2017.

ISA, a coalition of 73 countries, aims to mobilize over 1 trillion USD of investment into solar projects by 2030 through policy and regulatory support, capacity building, and overcoming perceived investment barriers.

Quick Fact: International Solar Alliance was founded in 2015 in Paris, France.

4) International Affairs

China overtakes the US as the Biggest Trading partner of the EU

The People's Republic of China has overtaken the United States of America, as the biggest trading partner of the European Union (EU) in 2020, according to Eurostat, the European Union statistics agency.

The trade volume of the EU with China reached 586 billion euros (711 USD) in 2020 compared to 555 billion euros (673 USD) for the US.

Britain, which left the European Union in 2020, was the third-largest trading partner in 2020, and its bilateral trade with the EU reached 444.7 billion euros.

Quick Fact: President of the European Commission is Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen.

5) Government Scheme

UP initiates a training programme titled "Abhyudaya Yojana"

UP has started a training programme for aspirants of various competitive examinations under "Abhyudaya Yojana"

Under this, free of cost training will be provided to the candidates preparing for various competitive exams like UPSC, UPPSC, Subordinate Services, Banking Service, NDA, NEET, CDS, etc.

More than 5 lakh candidates applied for the registration and 50,000 aspirants have been selected for the training in the first phase.

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

6) Miscellaneous

India accounts for 11% of global deaths in road accidents, a report by World Bank

The World Bank in association with SaveLife Foundation released a report, titled "Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society" based on 2019 incidents.

The report was released by Union Transport Minister, Nitin Gadkari.

As per the report, India has only 1% of the world's vehicles but accounts for 11% of all road crash deaths.

Quick Fact: The President of World Bank Group is David Malpass.

7) Environment

ACC Limited introduced new low carbon concrete called “ECOPact”

ACC Ready Mix Concrete has introduced its new low carbon concrete called “ECOPact”.

It is a “Green Concrete” that has been introduced for high-performing, sustainable and circular construction.

The innovative manufacturing process of ECOPact will reduce CO₂ emissions up to 100%.

Quick Fact: ACC Limited is one of the largest producers of cement in India and a subsidiary of LafargeHolcim.

8) Summit & Conferences

11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit organized in New Delhi

The joint conferences of the 11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit organized in New Delhi on 16th February 2021.

The Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted the increase in LPG coverage from 56% to approximately 99.5% in less than seven years.

India has advanced from BS-4 to BS-6 emission standards from April 2020, to reduce vehicular pollution.

Quick Fact: The top 5 largest producers of oil in the world are the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Canada, and China.

19th February

1) International Affairs

India joins Iran and Russia for a two-day navy exercise

India joined Iran and Russia in the navy exercise called “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021”.

The purpose of the drill is to enhance the security of international maritime trade, confront maritime piracy and terrorism, and exchange information.

The drill will cover an area of 17,000 square km and it includes shooting at sea and air targets, liberating hijacked ships as well as search and rescue, and anti-piracy operations.

Quick Fact: The National Security Advisor is Ajit Doval.

2) Summits and Conferences

11th IEA, IEF, OPEC Symposium on Energy Outlook took place virtually

The 11th International Energy Agency (IEA)-International Energy Forum (IEF)-Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Symposium on Energy Outlook organized virtually.

It was organized under the patronage of the Minister of Energy of Saudi Arabia HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al Saud.

The Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan represented India in the trilateral symposium.

Quick Fact: Largest producer of oil in the world is the United States of America.

3) National Affairs

IIT Madras incubated startup launches PiMo E-bike

The IIT Madras incubated start-up, Pi Beam Electric has recently launched a sustainable electric two-wheeler called PiMo.

The utility e-bike has been developed for personal and commercial use, it does not require any license or registration.

It eliminates fuel costs as it runs on a battery and the e-bike offers a battery swapping facility.

Quick Fact: The CM of Delhi has launched a “Switch Delhi” campaign to promote electric vehicles.

4) Government Schemes

Centre Launches new Instant Messaging platform “Sandesh”

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information and Technology, has launched an instant messaging platform called Sandesh.

Similar to WhatsApp, the new government instant messaging system (GIMS) can be used for all kinds of communication by anyone using a mobile number or email id.

The aim to build a home-grown messaging platform is to ensure secure communication between people.

Quick Fact: The Director of the National Informatics Centre is Neeta Verma.

5) National Affairs

Union Government launches India's first International Cruise Terminal

PM inaugurated Sagarika, India's first International Cruise Terminal at Cochin port in Kochi, Kerala.

It has been turned into a major cruise destination which will give a boost to tourism in Kerala.

It is a dedicated terminal, that is fully air-conditioned and serving cruise ship requirements, provides all statutory clearances including Customs and Immigration for passengers.

Quick Fact: Cochin port or Kochi port on the Arabian Sea is one of the largest ports in India.

6) Person in News

Ajai Malhotra becomes the first Indian Chairperson of the Advisory Committee at UNHRC

Ajai Malhotra becomes the first Indian to be elected as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

He has previously served as an Ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, and Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Newyork, and Romania.

UNHRC is a UN's body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world.

Quick Fact: The headquarter of UNHRC is in Geneva, Switzerland.

7) Science and Technology

NASA's Perseverance rover ready to land on Mars' Jezero Crater

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's(NASA) Mars rover called Perseverance is set to land at Jezero Crater on Mars.

The terrain of Jezero Crater makes the landing of the rover difficult as it has steep cliffs, sand dunes, and boulder fields.

The aim of the mission is to look for biosignatures in the dried-up lake bed at Jezero Crater.

Quick Fact: Mars is called the Red Planet because the soil looks like rusty iron.

8) Government Scheme

Union Government launches Pey Jal Survekshan programme

Pey Jal Survekshan is a drinking water survey launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under the Union Government.

It launched in 10 cities under Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban).

As part of the survey, data will be collected on drinking water, wastewater management, non-revenue water, and the condition of water bodies.

Quick Fact: The Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban aims to create universal coverage of water supply in all 4,378 statutory towns as well as sewage management in 500 AMRUT cities.

20th February

1) Person in News

Irwin Allan Sealy's pens new novel "ASOCA"

The prize-winning writer Irwin Allan Sealy has written a new Novel "ASOCA: A Sutra, an imagined memoir of Ashoka The Great.

The book is about Ashoka, an Indian emperor of the Maurya Dynasty who ruled almost all the Indian subcontinent.

The book is to be published by Penguin Random House's Viking imprint and will be released in July 2021.

Quick Fact: Jnanpith Award, highest literary award in India, is given annually for the best creative literary writing to writers in India.

2) Science and Technology

HCL Technologies signs an MoU with IIT- Kanpur to build up competence in cybersecurity

Hindustan Computers Limited (HCL) Technologies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology- Kanpur to collaborate in the field of cybersecurity.

HCL will also work with the C3iHub, a specialized cybersecurity research center off IIT-Kharagpur.

Under this MoU, the teams will develop a security framework and solutions for cybersecurity issues in present and future operational technologies as one of the areas of interest.

Quick Fact: The Chief Executive officer of HCL Technologies is C Vijaykumar.

3) Environment

FAO and Arbor Day Foundation recognizes Hyderabad as 'Tree City of the World 2020'

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Arbor Day Foundation have recently recognized Hyderabad as the Tree City of the World 2020.

Hyderabad was selected for its commitment to grow and maintain the urban forests.

Other cities which were recognized by the organizations include 120 cities across 63 countries.

Quick Fact: FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that works internationally, aims at defeating hunger and improving nutrition security as well as food security.

4) Sports

Manika Batra wins National Table Tennis Championship

Manika Batra has won the 82nd Senior National Table tennis Championship.

Batra will now compete with two table tennis contenders, which will be followed by World Olympic qualifiers and Asian Olympic qualifiers in Doha.

She is a top-ranked female table tennis player and has won a silver medal in the under-21 category of the Chile Open in 2011.

Quick Fact: In table tennis, India's Women's team ranks 22nd in the world, as of 2019.

5) Science and Technology

Nasa's Perseverance Rover lands on Mars

The science rover Perseverance of NASA landed on the red planet, Mars, on 18th February 2021.

The rover sailed through space for nearly seven months and covered a distance of 472 million km before entering into the Martian atmosphere.

The rover is advanced in astrobiology and aims to search the traces of microbial life on the planet Mars.

Quick Fact: Mars appears to be red in color because of the effect of iron oxide prevalent on its surface.

6) Science and Technology

Hyundai designs a Walking Car Concept Robot

The Hyundai Motors Group has designed a walking car concept robot.

It is named 'TIGER' which stands for Transforming Intelligent Ground Excursion Robot.

The robot possesses wheels that have the capability to adapt and navigate in challenging terrain.

Quick Fact: Hyundai Motor Company is a South Korean multinational automotive manufacturer.

7) International Affairs

ISA to launch World Solar Bank

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has planned to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference scheduled for November 2021.

The development of the World Solar Bank will support India's attempt to secure its leadership in the climate arena.

The development of the bank is significant because green finance will be one of the priority themes at the climate meet called COP-26.

Quick Fact: The ISA was co-founded by India.

8) Science and Technology

Oldest DNA discovery from Teeth of Siberian Mammoths

Scientists have recovered the oldest DNA on record from the teeth of Siberian Mammoths.

These mammoths were found in north-eastern Siberia from around 1.2 million years ago.

The remains of the mammoth were discovered in the early 1970s and new scientific methods were developed to extract their DNA

Quick Fact: Mammoth is from a species called elephantid of genus Mammuthus, which is now extinct.

22nd February

1) Government Schemes

PM launches 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' initiative

The Prime Minister has virtually launched the 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' initiative in Assam and the objective of this initiative is to improve connectivity in the North-eastern states of India.

He laid the foundation stone for the Dhubri Phulbari Bridge and also performed the bhumi puja for the construction of the Majuli Bridge in Assam.

Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative is going to be marked with the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Assam is Sarbananda Sonowal.

2) Government Scheme

FAITH organizes third India Tourism Mart

The Third India Tourism Mart was organized by the Federation of Associations in India Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH).

The event will bring together a mix of the right buyers and exhibitors and provide a platform to connect them.

The third India Tourism Mart is significant as it is being organized at a time when the world is emerging from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Quick Fact: FAITH is the policy federation of all the national associations.

3) Defence

Israel develops new missile system with USA

Israel has announced that it will develop a new anti-ballistic missile shield, "Arrow-4", in collaboration with the United States.

The missile is being developed as another layer in the defense system by keeping an eye on Iran.

The Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 interceptors of Israel are already operating under the multi-layered system.

Quick Fact: The Arrow missile is a family of anti-ballistic missiles.

4) International Affairs

IFF report declares World's debt to increase in 2021

The Institute of International Finance (IIF) has reported that the world has never been more indebted before and the debt will further rise in 2021 as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As of the year 2020, the World's debt stands at 281 trillion USD.

The debt will increase by another 10 trillion USD in the year 2021 since the political and social pressures push for more spending.

Quick Fact: IIF is the trade group for the global financial services industry.

5) Summits and Conferences

India-Singapore CEO Forum organizes a joint meeting

The India-Singapore CEO Forum was organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and FICCI.

The Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, stated that both countries can work together in the arena of e-commerce, smart manufacturing, fintech, and healthcare.

The Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Singapore, S Iswaran, also emphasized the greater engagement between businesses from both countries.

Quick Fact: The Prime Minister of Singapore is Lee Hsien Loong.

6) Environment

10th World Pangolin Day observed globally

World Pangolin Day is celebrated on the third Saturday of February, that is, on 20th February 2021.

It aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts.

Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in Asia and Africa and these species are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically endangered.

Quick Fact: Pangolins, which are known as scaly anteaters, are mammals of the order Pholidota.

7) Government Schemes

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Technograhis

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched an enrolment module for Technograhis.

Technograhis are for students from IITs, NITs, engineering, planning and architecture colleges, faculty members, etc.

These students will visit live laboratories at six Light House Projects (LHPs) sites for learning, consultation, generation of ideas and solutions, experimentation, innovation, and technical awareness.

Quick Fact: LHPs are model housing projects with houses built with shortlisted alternate technology suitable to the geo-climatic and hazard conditions of the region.

8) Government Schemes

Prime Minister lays foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Maharaja Suheldev Memorial and development work of Chittaura lake in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh.

The event marks the birth anniversary of Maharaja Suheldev.

The project will include the installation of an equestrian statue of Maharaja Suheldev and the development of various amenities like a cafeteria, great house, and children's park.

Quick Fact: Maharaja Suheldev was an 11th-century ruler of Shravasti. He defeated Ghaznavi general Ghazi Salar Masud.

23rd February

1) Defence

India-Indonesia Navies conduct PASSEX exercise

The Indian and Indonesian navies held PASSEX military exercise in the Arabian sea on 18th February.

The military exercise was organized in order to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation.

INS Talwar represented the Indian Naval Ship.

Quick Fact: Joko Widodo is the President of Indonesia.

2) Government Scheme

Union Health Minister launches 'Intensified Mission Indradhanush' 3.0 (IMI)

IMI 3.0 targets achieving 90% full immunization coverage in all districts of the country and sustaining the coverage through the immunization system.

The focus will be on children and pregnant women who have missed their vaccines during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mission Indradhanush (MI) was launched in 2014 with a goal to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines under the Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) for children up to 2 years of age and pregnant women.

Quick Fact: Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare is Dr. Harsh Vardhan

3) International Affairs

U.S. decides to reinstate Iran Nuclear Deal

The U.S administration has said that it will participate in talks with Iran with a view to reinstate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or Iran Nuclear Deal.

In 2018, the USA pulled out of the deal and initiated a procedure called 'snapback' at the United Nations Security Council to unilaterally reimpose sanctions on Iran.

JCPOA allows any party to trigger a process that snaps U.N sanctions on Iran back into place if Iran is not complying with the deal.

Quick Fact: India and Iran are partners in Projects like Chabahar port, International North-South Transport Corridor.

4) Environment

IIT study reveals Delhi school and colleges to have higher IAP

The study was conducted by IIT Delhi revealed that in schools, colleges, hospitals, restaurants, offices and cinema halls, etc, there are higher levels of Indoor Air Pollutions (IAP).

According to it, concentration levels of PM 2.5 and PM 10 were recorded 2-5 times higher than the permissible limits set by Central Pollution Board ambient quality in India.

The key causes identified are smoking in offices, hospitals, and colleges; high CO2 levels due to higher occupancy and inadequate ventilation; use of chemical cleaning agents, etc.

Quick Fact: Prakash Javadekar is the Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.

5) Government scheme

Ministry of Civil Aviation grants permission for drone use in agricultural fields

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare granted permission for the use of drones in agricultural fields.

This was done under PM Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY), it aims to use drones for remote sensing data collection in the agricultural areas of 100 districts for gram panchayat level yield estimation.

PMFBY is a Central Government's crop insurance scheme launched in 2016.

Quick Fact: Narendra Singh Tomar holds the portfolio of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare.

6) Defence

Helina and Dhruvastra successfully tested

India has successfully test-fired indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile systems 'Helina' and 'Dhruvastra' in the Pokhran range, Thar desert (Rajasthan).

Helina (the Army version) and Dhruvasta (IAF version) are third-generation anti-tank guided missiles.

The system has all-weather day and night capability and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armor as well as with explosive reactive armor.

Quick Fact: Rajnath Singh is the current Defence Minister of India.

7) National Affairs

Visva-Bharati University completes 100 years

The Visva-Bharati University was founded at Santiniketan in West Bengal by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore in 1921.

It was a conscious repudiation of the British education system.

The curriculum includes music, painting, dramatic performances, and other performative practices.

Quick Fact: Bidyut Chakrabarty is the Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University.

8) Defence

Indian Army procures Software Defined Radio (SDR)

Indian Army is in the process to revamp its communication systems by procuring Software Defined Radios (SDRs) under Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

SDRs are handheld radio devices that are being developed by DRDO and have enhanced data transmission capability, enhanced voice clarity.

It will replace Combat Net Radio (CNR) which supports voice communication only and has limited or no data transmission capability.

Quick Fact: The current Chief of the Army Staff of India is General Manoj Mukund Naravane.

24th February

1) Government scheme

Kerala government invests Rs. 9 crores in Smart Anganwadis

The state government of Kerala has sanctioned Rs. 9 crores to build 48 'Smart Anganwadis', by converting the conventional anganwadis into smart structures with better amenities.

These smart anganwadis are being designed and constructed as part of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

The smart anganwadis will have various amenities, ranging from the study hall, kitchen, dining area, storeroom, creative zone, garden to the swimming pool, and outdoor play area as per the availability of land.

Quick Fact: Chief Minister of Kerala is Pinarayi Vijayan

2) Government Scheme

Assam's CM lays foundation of first Skill University of Eastern India

The Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of the first skill university of eastern India in Darrang district of Assam.

The state-of-the-art skill university would be built with a financial outlay of Rs. 1,000 crores and is expected to be completed by 2026.

It will impart training to over 10,000 students in 12 disciplines and will have "understandings with countries like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan, and England.

Quick Fact: The capital of Assam is Dispur

3) Art and Culture

Vice President releases 'Maverick Messiah' a political biography

Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu released "Maverick Messiah", a political biography on former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, N.T. Rama Rao.

The book is authored by senior journalist Ramesh Kandula.

N.T. Rama Rao was ranked among the top pioneers of 'alternative politics'.

Quick Fact: Vice- President is also the ex-officio chairperson of the Rajya Sabha.

4) Defence

L&T delivers 100th K9 Vajra Howitzer to Indian Army

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has built and delivered the 100th K9 Vajra self-propelled howitzer to the Indian Army at Hazira in Gujarat.

The K9 Vajra programme involved the delivery of 100 howitzers with associated engineering support packages covering spares, system documentation, and training.

It also involves the maintenance transfer of technology to an army base workshop to support the howitzers throughout their operational life cycle.

Quick Fact: The CEO of Larsen & Toubro is S.N. Subrahmanyam

5) Environment

Rare birds spotted in Mangalore University

The rare birds namely the Yellow-billed Babbler, Green Sandpiper, and Grey-Necked Bunting were sighted in the Mangalore University

A team of Bird watchers spotted 108 species of birds in Mangalore University while they were running the Campus Bird Count.

The campus bird count is part of the Great Backyard Bird Count which is organized by the Bird Count of India

Quick Fact: Bird Count Of India is an informal partnership of organizations and groups that work together so as to increase the collective knowledge regarding the distribution of birds and their population.

6) Science and Technology

UP becomes the first state in India to table paperless budget

The state of Uttar Pradesh has become the first Indian State to table a paperless budget.

The members of the state legislative assembly were provided iPads so as to keep a tab on budget highlights

The budget document was also made available on the budget App of Uttar Pradesh named "Uttar Pradesh Sarkar Ka Budget" which can be downloaded from the Google Play store.

Quick Fact: Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh is Yogi Adityanath

7) Sports

Novak Djokovic wins Australian Open 2021 Tennis Championship

Siberian Novak Djokovic beats Daniil Medvedev of Russia, for the Ninth Australian Open Title.

The win at Rod Laver Arena gave him the 18th Grand Slam title.

He has won six of the last 10 major tournaments.

Quick Fact: The Australian Open is a tennis tournament held annually in Melbourne, Australia.

8) Science and Technology

Israel launches 'Green Pass' for people with vaccination certificate

Israel has launched a coronavirus 'Green Pass' system, that allows people who have been vaccinated to access public facilities.

Israelis who have taken both the Pfizer vaccine shot and recovered from the virus get a 'Green pass' certificate in the form of a QR code or printout for people without a smartphone.

It will allow entry to gyms, pools, hotels, entertainment venues, and sporting events.

Quick Fact: Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.

25th February

1) Science and Technology

The University of California reports some properties of mysterious "Einsteinium"

Scientists at the California-based Berkeley laboratory reported some properties of the element 99 in the periodic table called "Einsteinium", named after Albert Einstein

Einsteinium is a synthetic element and belongs to group 13 of the heavy transuranic subseries of the element found in the actinide series.

Einsteinium was discovered after World War II, in the debris of the first hydrogen bomb.

Quick Fact: Albert Einstein was a German theoretical physicist who developed the theory of relativity.

2) International Affairs

International Mother Language Day observed on 21st February

International Mother Language Day (IMLD) is observed every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

IMLD was proclaimed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1999 and has been observed throughout the world since 2000.

This year's theme was "Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society."

Quick Fact: The Director-General of UNESCO is Audrey Azoulay.

3) Government Scheme

Union Government approves 8 toy manufacturing clusters worth Rs. 2,300 Crores

The Union Government has approved three clusters in Madhya Pradesh, two in Rajasthan, and one each in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

These clusters will manufacture toys made of wood, lac, palm leaves, bamboo, and fabric.

Clusters are to be developed under existing schemes such as the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI).

Quick Fact: SFURTI offers intensive skills such as skill development, capacity building, creation of facilities.

4) Environment

UNEP releases 'Making Peace with Nature' Report

United Nations Environment Programme released the 'Making Peace with Nature' report, ahead of the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)

The report explains how climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution are closely interconnected and put the well-being of current and future generations at unacceptable risk.

Over the last 50 years, the human population has more than doubled, and extraction of materials, production of primary energy, etc have all more than tripled.

Quick Fact: UNEP is a leading global environmental authority established on 5th June 1972.

5) Government Scheme

UP to export 'Kala Namak Rice' to Singapore

The state of Uttar Pradesh is all set to export a consignment of 20 tonnes of Kala Namak rice from Siddharth Nagar to Singapore.

The STATE Government has also declared the rice as One District One Product of Siddharth Nagar.

The rice is called Budha Rice or 'Buddha Ka Mahaprasad'

Quick Fact: The governor of Uttar Pradesh is Anandiben Patel.

6) Science and Technology

Indian Oil signs pact with Greenstat Norway for Centre of Excellence

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has signed a Statement of Intent with Greenstat Hydrogen India Pvt. Ltd. to set up a Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen.

Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H) including CCUS and Fuel Cells, will be developed for clean energy by IOCL and Greenstat in cooperation with Indo-Norwegian Hydrogen Cluster Companies.

It will facilitate the transfer and sharing of technology, know-how, and experience through the green Hydrogen value chain.

Quick Fact: Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation Limited is Shrikant Madhav Vaidya.

7) Defence

ICGS C-453 Inceptor boat commissioned into services in Chennai

The Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICG) named C-453 was commissioned into service in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

This was the 17th interceptor boat out of the 18 which are being indigenously built by Larsen & Toubro Ltd.

The ship will be deployed to do surveillance of the Exclusive Economic Zone and other duties in accordance with the Coast Guard Charter.

Quick Fact: CEO of Larsen & Toubro is S.N.Subrahmanyam.

8) Art & Future

Home Minister released a book 'Rashtra Pratham- 82 version ki Swarnim Gatha'

Home Minister Amit Shah has released a book 'Rashtra Pratham- 82 version ki Swarnim Gatha' in New Delhi.

The book chronicles the glorious history of CRPF since its raising in 1939 and it has detailed and thoroughly researched accounts of CRPF's journey, challenges, successes, and sacrifice.

The Home minister will become a source of inspiration for personnel joining the force.

Quick Fact: Union Home Minister of India is Amit Shah.

26th February

1) Government Scheme

Defence Minister inaugurates 26th edition of 'Hunar Haat'

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the 26th edition of 'Hunar Haat' in New Delhi.

The theme of Hunar Haat is "Vocal for Local" and more than 600 artisans and craftsmen from more than 31 states and union territories are participating.

The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs aims to provide employment and employment opportunities to 750000 artisans by organising 75 Hunar Haats by 2022 when India will celebrate its 75 years of Independence.

Quick Fact: Minister of Minority Affairs is Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

2) National Affairs

CM of Madhya Pradesh renames Hoshangabad as Narmadapuram

Hoshangabad city in the state of Madhya Pradesh will be renamed Narmadapuram.

This was announced by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during the Narmada Jayanti Programme held in Hoshangabad.

The new name Narmadapuram is after the river Narmada which is the lifeline of the state.

Quick Fact: Governor of Madhya Pradesh is Anandiben Patel.

3) Person in News

Jasmine Harrison becomes youngest woman to row Atlantic Ocean

A British woman Jasmine Harrison of England has become the youngest woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

The 21 years old achieved the feat by the fishing top in the 2020 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, organized by Atlantic Campaigns.

Harrison, who is a swim instructor by profession, travelled 3,000 miles (4,828km) across the Atlantic Ocean in 70 days, 3 hours, and 48 minutes.

Quick Fact: The Atlantic Ocean is the second-largest ocean in the world.

4) Economy

India signs trade deal of 100 million USD with Mauritius

India signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) or Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Partnership Agreement (CECPA) with Mauritius.

The first of its kind with an African nation, making the strategically-located country a launch-pad for business expansion into the huge African continent.

The CECPA will encourage Indian entrepreneurs to invest both in Mauritius and across the region, helping the ambition of the country to become a strategic regional economic hub.

Quick Fact: The PM of Mauritius is Pravind Jugnauth

5) Environment

Nine African nations on track to join Solar “Gigawatt Club”

Gigawatt club is an unofficial tag of Nations with an installed capacity to produce 1 GW of solar power.

Out of 37 only two African countries, South Africa and Egypt are part of the solar gigawatt club.

The nine countries that are developing their solar infrastructure are Algeria, Namibia, Ethiopia, Morocco, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.

Quick Fact: India is also a part of the Solar Gigawatt Club.

6) Government Scheme

India signs a project with World Bank to enhance school education in Nagaland

The State Government of Nagaland has signed a 68 million USD project with the World Bank to enhance the governance of schools across the state.

The “Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project” will improve classroom instruction, create opportunities for the professional development of teachers, and more access to online teaching.

As many as 1,50,000 students and 20,000 teachers will benefit from statewide reforms.

Quick Fact: The CN of Nagaland is Neiphiu Rio

7) Government Scheme

Central Government launched NUDM

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has launched the National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM).

NUDM will create a shared digital infrastructure for urban India that will strengthen the capacity of an urban ecosystem to solve complex problems at scale and speed.

It works on three pillars People, Processes, and Platforms and will help in ease of living for citizens.

Quick Fact: Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs is Hardeep Singh Puri

8) National Affairs

Motera Stadium renamed Narendra Modi Stadium

Newly-constructed Motera Stadium, Ahmedabad has been renamed after India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi Stadium.

The stadium has 11 pitches being made using red and black soil spread over 63 acres of land.

It is the biggest cricketing venue in the world.

Quick Fact: The Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports is Kiren Rijju

27th February

1) Economy

China surpasses US to become India's top trade partner in 2020

China has regained its position as the top trading partner of India in 2020, which was held by the United States in 2018-19.

The two-way trade between India and China stood at 75.9 billion USD in 2020 despite the conflict along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Meanwhile, the UAE continues to remain India's third-biggest trading partner.

Quick Fact: The President of China is Xi Jinping.

2) National Affairs

Karnataka to set up a Flower Processing Centre

The Karnataka State Horticulture Department is setting up a "Flower Processing Centre", in collaboration with the International Flower Auction Bangalore, (IFAB).

The facility will provide support to the farmers who suffer huge losses whenever there is a glut or market disruption.

The incubation centre will process flowers and convert them to value-added products such as natural dyes, floral papers, incense sticks, flower petal powder for cosmetic usage, floral art, etc.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Karnataka is B.S. Yediyurappa.

3) Government Scheme

Punjab Cabinet approves mission “Lal Lakir” in all villages

Lal Lakir is aimed at facilitating villagers to monetize property rights and availing benefits provided by government departments, institutions, and banks.

No record of rights is available for such properties in Lal Lakir so the same cannot be monetized as per the real value of the property.

The right of record of properties will be prepared with the cooperation of the government of India under the Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) Scheme.

Quick Fact: The Chief Minister of Punjab is Captain Amarinder Singh

4) Person in News

Vijay Sampla takes charge as Chairman of National Commission for SC

Former Union Minister Vijay Sampla has assumed the charge of Chairman of National Commission for Scheduled Classes (NCSCs).

He has been the former Union Minister of the State for Social Justice & Empowerment from 2014 to 2019.

NCSC is an Indian constitutional body under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which works for the socio-economic development of the scheduled castes and to prevent atrocities against them.

Quick Fact: NCSC was founded on 19th February 2004.

5) International Affairs

India signs an agreement with AIIB to improve Assam power transmission

The Government of India and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has signed a 304 million USD loan agreement on 23rd February 2021, for the Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project.

The project aims to improve the reliability, capacity, and security of the power transmission network in Assam.

It includes constructing 10 transmission substations and laying transmission lines and upgrading 15 existing substations.

Quick Fact: President of AIIB is Jin Liqun

6) Summits and Conferences

Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurates ICOLD Symposium

Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has inaugurated the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium in New Delhi.

The theme of the symposium is “Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins”

The symposium has been organized by the ICOLD at New Delhi in Hybrid format, in collaboration with Central Water Commission (CWC), Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP), and National Hydrology Project (NHP).

Quick Fact: The president of ICOLD is Michael Rogers

7) Person in News

Biden administration names Anjali Bharadwaj for International Anti-Corruption Award

Anjali Bharadwaj is one of the 12 courageous individuals named by the Biden administration for the newly instituted International Anti-Corruption Champions Award.

She is an Indian social activist working on the issues of transparency and accountability, the 48-year-old has served as an active member of the Right to Information Movement.

She is the founder of the Satark Nagrik Sangathan, a citizen's group which promotes transparency and accountability in government and encourages active participation of citizens.

Quick Fact: The Right to Information is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Indian constitution

8) Summit and Conferences

India begins BRICS chairmanship

India has started its BRICS chairmanship with the inaugural three-day-long Sherpas' meeting on 25th February 2021.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Anurag Srivastava stated the theme of the 13th BRICS summit is “BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.

The External Affairs Minister has launched India's BRICS 2021 website at the Secretariat of BRICS at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan.

Quick Fact: BRICS stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

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