

# Monthly Current Affairs Gk Digest



**BANK  
EXAMS**  
Today

**March 2021**

# Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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# MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS GK DIGEST: MARCH 2021

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## 16TH FICCI HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT

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**Current Context:** The 16th edition of the FICCI Higher Education Summit was held in New Delhi recently.

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- The summit was addressed by Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.
- The summit was organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The theme of the summit: 'Higher Education @ 2030: R.I.S.E- Resilience. Innovation. Sustainability. Enterprise'.
- The Union Education Minister addressed the summit by discussing current trends in higher education for the development of India.
- He also mentioned the importance of National Education Policy 2020, by highlighting that it is based on major pillars like access, equality, affordability and accountability.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of FICCI: New Delhi
  - President of FICCI: Uday Shankar

## FM ATTENDED G20 CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS MEETING

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**Current Context:** The Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, participated in First G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting.

### KEY FACTS

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- The meeting was held under the Italian Presidency.
- The meeting was held to discuss policy actions to have transformative and equitable recovery.
- The dignitaries discussed global economic outlook, financial sector issues, financial inclusion and sustainable finance.



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- The Finance Minister discussed steps taken by India to tackle the pandemic. She discussed the policies associated with this.
- She mentioned that India's policies are framed with an aim to support credit guarantees, direct transfers, food guarantees, economic stimulus packages and accelerating structural reform.
- She also highlighted India's vaccination programme at the meeting.
- The dignitaries discussed the implications of climate change on global growth and financial stability. In this regards, India's FM stated the importance of the transfer of green technologies and scaling up of climate finance.

### APPOINTMENTS AND RETIREMENT ON 1ST MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Sharad Goklani:** He is appointed as President and CTO of AU Small Finance Bank.

#### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of AU SFB: Jaipur, Rajasthan
- **Matam Venkata Rao:** He is appointed as MD and CEO of the Central Bank of India. He has replaced Pallav Mahapatra.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Central Bank of India: Mumbai
  - Tagline of Central Bank of India: Central to you since 1911
- **R. Vinay Kumar:** He has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.

### ISRO LAUNCHED THE FIRST SATELLITE OF THE YEAR 2021

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**Current Context: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the first satellite of the year 2021.**

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **ISRO launched the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C51, which also carried Amazonia-1 and 18 other satellites.**
- It was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The launching of C51 has marked the 53rd mission of PSLV.
- In the first move, the PSLV-C51 launched the Amazonia-1 satellite of Brazil and then followed by 18 co-passenger payloads which were launched from the first launch pad of the spaceport.
- One of these satellites carried an e-copy of the Bhagavad Gita and a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to space.
- **About Amazonia-1:** It is the optical earth observation satellite of the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research (INPE). It will provide remote sensing data of deforestation in the Amazon region and analysis of diversified agriculture across the Brazilian territory.
- **Static Part:**

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- HQ of ISRO: Bengaluru
- Chairman of ISRO: K Sivan

### 2ND GLOBAL BIO-INDIA-2021

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**Current Context:** The 2nd Global-Bio India 2021 was inaugurated by Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare & Science and Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi in a virtual manner.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The theme of the event:** 'Transforming Lives' with the tagline 'Biosciences to Bio-economy'.
- **The Global-Bio India 2021 aims to showcase the importance of the biotechnology sector of India at the National and International Level.**
- The event was organised by the Department of Biotechnology under the Ministry of Science & Technology along with PSU Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India.
- GOI has set a target to build a USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.
- During this event, 24 sessions were conducted to define the role of Biotechnology. The few of the sessions were, The COVID-19 vaccine journey from Science to delivery, India Fights COVID, Health Conclave, Clean Energy Conclave, Phytopharma and Traditional Knowledge etc.

### MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING PARTNERED WITH IIT-

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**Current Context:** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has collaborated with IIT Bombay.

#### KEY FACTS

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- **They have collaborated to set up a Centre of Excellence in gaming and allied areas.**
- The Union Minister Prakash Javadekar made the announcement for same at the virtual exhibition and prize announcement of 'Khel Khel Mein'. The 'Khel Khel Mein' in Maharashtra's toy and game project design competition.
- The CoE for gaming will come into effect as the new session begins in 2021.
- The CoE is being set up with an aim to develop India's own games and apps with an aim to fulfil the motto of 'Make in India initiative'.

### 6TH TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION CUM SEED MELA

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**Current Context:** The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology (SKUAST), Manoj Sinha, inaugurated the 6th Technology Exhibition cum Seed Sale Mela.



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## KEY POINTS

- **It was inaugurated at the Shalimar campus of the SKUAST.**
- **The theme of the event:** 'Shaping the Future Farming for Better Returns'.
- The event observed the showcasing of various stalls which described farmers welfare schemes and programs, farm machinery, and organic products.
- Lt Governor Manoj Sinha appreciated the importance of conducting such events, as it allows farmers to access reliable and updated information in farming and reduce major risks in farming activities.
- At the exhibition, a farmer-scientist interaction programme was also arranged.

## APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION ON 2ND MARCH 2021

**Current Context: Arun Kumar Singh:** He is appointed as Chief Secretary of Bihar. He has replaced Deepak Kumar.

## ABOUT

- **Static Part:**
  - CM of Bihar: Nitish Kumar
  - Governor of Bihar: Phagu Chauhan
- **Pramod Chandra Mody:** He is re-appointed as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of CBDT: New Delhi
- **Sanjay Rathod:** He has submitted his resignation to be the Forest Minister of Maharashtra.
- **Static Part:**
  - CM of Maharashtra: Uddhav Thackeray
- **Governor of Maharashtra:** Bhagat Singh Koshyari

## 78TH GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS 2021

**Current Context: The Golden Globe Awards** are held to honour excellence in the American and International film and television world.

## DETAILS

- Following is the list of the winners in each category:
- **Winners for Film Categories:**
  - Best Film: Nomadland (Drama)
  - Best Director: Chloe Zhao (Nomadland)
  - Best Actress: Andra Day for The United States vs. Billie Holiday (Drama)
  - Best Actor: Chadwick Boseman for Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (Drama)

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- Best Actress: Rosamund Pike for I Care A Lot (Musical/Comedy)
- Best Actor: Sacha Baron Cohen for Borat Subsequent Movie film (Musical/Comedy)
- Best Foreign Language Film: Minari
- **Winners for Television Categories:**
  - Best TV Series: The Crown (Drama)
  - Best TV Series: Schitt's Creek (Musical/Comedy)
  - Best Actress: Emma Corrin for The Crown (Drama)
  - Best Actor: Josh O'Connor for The Crown (Drama)

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### IAF TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE DESERT FLAG-VI

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**Current Context: The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to participate in Exercise Desert Flag-VI, which is a multinational exercise.**

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **It is being held from 3rd March to 27th March 2021 at Al Dhafra airbase in the UAE.**
- **The Exercise Desert Flag is hosted by United Arab Emirates Air Force.**
- **The other countries participating in the exercise are:** United States (US), France, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Greece, Jordan, Kuwait and Egypt will be the observers for the exercise.
- India's six Su-30-MKI fighters, two C-17 and one IL-78 Tanker aircraft will be part of the Desert Flag Exercise.
- Other international fighter jets participating in the exercise include France's Dassault Rafales, Mirage-2000s, Russia's Sukhois and America's F-15s and F-16s.
- **Static Part:**
  - Chief of Air Staff: Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria

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### NSE TO SETUP IBX AT GIFT CITY, GUJARAT

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**Current Context: The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has signed MoU with various entities to set up an International Bullion Exchange (IBX), clearing corporation and depository at Gujarat International Finance Tec (GIFT) City in Gujarat.**

#### KEY POINTS

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- **NSE has signed MoU with the entities:** (a) Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd (b) India INX International Exchange Ltd (c) National Securities Depository Ltd (d) Central Depository Services (India) Ltd.
- The MoU is signed to fulfil the motto of GOI, 'to make India a price setter in bullion through GIFT International Finance Service Centre (IFSC) and in accordance with the International Financial Services Centres Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations, 2020 and other applicable laws'.
- **Static Part:**

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- HQ of NSE, Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd, National Securities Depository Ltd and Central Depository Services (India) Ltd.: Mumbai

### 'AI GAME CHANGERS' PROGRAM

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**Current Context:** The 'AI Game Changers' program will be soon launched by the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom).

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The program will be launched with an aim to promote AI (Artificial Intelligence) based innovations in India.**
- **Microsoft will be the innovation partner for Nasscom's 'AI Game Changers' program.**
- Both Nasscom and Microsoft will work to develop and promote the program.
- The program will be launched under the 'AI for India' Mission and will work to have impactful and scalable AI-based innovation in the country.
- For this program, Nasscom will identify the AI innovators who will be implementing AI-based innovations at Nasscom's Xperience AI Summit.

### 'SBI INTERNATIONAL ACCESS-US EQUITY FOF'

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**Current Context:** The SBI Mutual Fund has launched 'SBI International Access-US Equity FoF'. It is the SBI MF's first overseas offerings.

#### KEY DETAILS

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- **The SBI International Access-US Equity FoF is an open-ended Fund of Fund (FoF) that invest in MF schemes or ETFs (Exchange Traded Fund) that invest in US markets.**
- It is opened from 1st March and is valid till 15th March 2021.
- The investment scheme would be Amundi Funds-US Pioneer Fund which benchmarks with the S&P 500 Index and has assets under management of \$2.5 billion as of 31st Jan 2021.
- The Amundi Funds-US Pioneer Fund fully merges with ESG (Environment, Social Governance).
- The scheme will invest net assets of up to 95-100% in Amundi Funds-US Pioneer Fund, which will further invest in US markets.
- Thus this scheme grants an opportunity to the investors to have exposure in the US market and to invest in such themes which are not available in the Indian market.
- For this scheme, the minimum subscription amount is Rs 5000 and in multiples of Re 1 thereafter.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of SBI Mutual Funds: Mumbai

### APPOINTMENTS ON 3RD MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Vice Admiral Ajendra Bahadur Singh:** He is appointed as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command. He has replaced Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain.

### ABOUT

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- **Jaideep Bhatnagar:** He is appointed as Principal Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB). He has replaced Kuldeep Singh Dhartwalia.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of PIB: New Delhi

### NSE SIGNED MOU WITH SIDBI

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**Current Context: The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has signed an MoU with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).**

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- They have collaborated to have cooperation in the initiatives framed by both of the organisations for the upliftment of MSMEs.
- They have also collaborated to explore the feasibility of the debt capital platform for MSMEs.
- This partnership will help MSMEs to reach out to the various welfare schemes laid down by SIDBI and NSE.
- Both the entities will also frame various programmes for the upliftment of MSMEs.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NSE: Mumbai
  - MD and CEO of NSE: Vikram Limaye
  - HQ of SIDBI: Lucknow, UP

### INDIA & FIJI TO CO-OPERATE IN AGRI AND ALLIED SECTORS

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**Current Context: The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi has given the approval to sign the agreement between India and Fiji.**

### KEY POINTS

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- **The agreement will allow both nations to cooperate in agriculture and allied sectors.**
- The agreement will be signed between agricultural ministries of India and Fiji and will remain in force for a tenure of 5 years.
- The agreement will allow the promotion of joint ventures associated with agriculture between the private sectors of both countries.

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- The agreement will also allow sharing of scientific and cultural data for development in the agriculture sector, exchange of scientific experts, technology transfer and conducting training for officer and farmers.
- Both the nations will work to promote investment in value addition and marketing of agricultural commodities.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Fiji: Suva
  - Currency of Fiji: Fijian Dollar

### GOI AMENDS INSURANCE OMBUDSMAN RULES 2017

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**Current Context: The Government of India (GOI) has announced amendments to the Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017.**

#### KEY POINTS

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- **The amendments are made with an aim to improve the working of the Insurance Ombudsman mechanism and to have a resolution of complaints in the insurance sector in a timely, impartial and cost-effective manner.**
- The amended rules are having an enlarged scope of complaints to Ombudsmen, focusing on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries. Earlier the scope of complaints was limited to only disputes.
- The Insurance broker is also brought under the Ombudsman mechanism and the Ombudsmen will now have the power to pass awards against insurance brokers as well.
- The Ombudsman mechanism which was managed and administered by the Executive Council of Insurer, upon amendments it is renamed as Council for Insurance Ombudsmen.
- Now, the complaints can be made in an electronic manner to the Ombudsman, this will lead to having timely execution of complaints and in a transparent manner as well.
- To track the status of the execution of complaints, the complaint management system will also be framed.
- Also, the Ombudsman can use the video-conferencing medium to hear the cases.

### 'SUGAMYA BHARAT APP' & 'ACCESS-THE PHOTO DIGEST- A HANDBOOK'

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**Current Context: The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Thaawarchand Gehlot launched the 'Sugamya Bharat App' and a handbook with a titled 'Access-The Photo Digest' via video conference.**

#### KEY FACTS

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- The app and handbook are developed by the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Department, which comes under the Social Justice and Empowerment ministry.

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- **'Sugamya Bharat App'**: It is a crowdsourcing mobile application that will help people with disabilities and elder people to register accessibility related issues. The app is launched with an aim to sensitize and enhance accessibility in three main pillars of the Accessible India Campaign, which includes the ICT ecosystem, transportation sector, and the built environment. Through this app, people with disabilities and elder people can register for facing accessibility-related problems in transportation facilities, in buildings or at any infrastructure just by uploading the pictures on the app. The app is available in 10 regional languages.
- **'Access-The Photo Digest'**: The handbook is a collection of photos from various states and UTs. It is a medium of guidance for stakeholders in order to sensitize them about 10 accessibility features and good-bad practices.

### SWACHHTA SAARTHI FELLOWSHIP

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**Current Context:** The Office of Principal Scientific Adviser of the Government of India has launched the 'Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship'.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The fellowship is launched under 'Waste to Wealth Mission'.**
- **The fellowship is launched with an aim to recognize students, SHGs, municipal and sanitary workers who are working as Swachhta Saarthi.**
- They are working to tackle the challenges of waste management in a scientific and sustainable manner.
- Under this fellowship, GOI will grant awards to these Swachhta Saarthis in three categories. The three categories are:
  - **Category (A):** It is open to school students from class 9th to 12th who are engaged in waste management community-based work.
  - **Category (B):** It is open to College students who are pursuing UG, PG and research studies and are engaged in waste management community based work.
  - **Category (C):** It is open to Citizens who are working through SHGs, municipal workers and sanitary workers who are working beyond the criteria of their jobs in tackling waste management issues.

### 11TH QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2021

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**Current Context:** The 11th edition of QS World University Rankings for 2021 was released which ranks top universities from around the world.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The ranking is topped by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the United States.**
- The IIT Madras is ranked at 30th position for the Petroleum Engineering programme.



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- The IIT Bombay and IIT Kharagpur are at 41st and 44th rank positions for the Mineral and Mining engineering programme.
- The IISc Bangalore is ranked at 78th position for Material Science and at 93rd position for Chemistry.
- IIT Delhi is ranked at 54th position in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The OP Jindal Global University is ranked at 76th position for Law.
- The Birla Institute of Technology and Science is ranked in the 151-200 list for Pharmacy and Pharmacology.
- Manipal Academy of Higher Education is ranked in the top 200 for Pharmacy and Pharmacology.
- The IIM Bangalore and IIM Ahmedabad are at 76th and 80th rank respectively for business and management studies.

### EASE OF LIVING INDEX 2020

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**Current Context: The Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri released the Ease of Living Index 2020.**

#### KEY POINTS

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- The Ease of Living Index ranks the cities by evaluating the quality of life and impact of initiatives for urban development.
- **The index is topped by Bengaluru in the category of a population of more than a million.**
- The second and third ranks are marked by Pune and Ahmedabad respectively in the category of the population more than a million.
- **Whereas, the category of population less than million is topped by Shimla.**
- The second and third ranks are marked by Bhubaneswar and Silvassa respectively in the category of population less than a million.
- **The ministry has also released the ranking for Municipal Performance Index 2020. Under this, for a million-plus category, Indore has marked the top position. And for less than a million categories, New Delhi Municipal Council has marked the top position.**
- The MPI was evaluated through the sectoral performance of 111 municipalities (with Delhi being assessed separately for NDMC, and the three Municipal Corporations) across five verticals comprising of 20 sectors and 100 indicators in all. The five verticals under MPI are Services, Finance, Policy, Technology and Governance.
- A total of 111 cities participated in the index.

### INDIA AND PHILIPPINES SIGNED KEY DEFENCE PACT

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**Current Context: The India and Philippines have entered into a key pact for the sale of defence equipment.**

#### KEY FACTS

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- The pact is named as 'implementing arrangement for the procurement of defence material and equipment'.
- As per this pact, the Philippines will purchase BrahMos cruise missiles from India.
- The BrahMos cruise missiles are produced by India and Russia jointly.
- The pact was signed by Philippines Defence Undersecretary Raymundo Elefante and India's Ambassador to the Philippines Shambu S. Kumaran.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Philippines: Manila
  - Currency of Philippines: Peso

### EXIM BANK INKED SOFT LOAN PACT WITH ESWATINI

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**Current Context:** The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has signed a soft loan pact with Eswatini (Swaziland) on behalf of the GOI.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- Both the entities have signed a soft loan pact of USD 10.40 million (Rs 75.99 crore).
- The loan pact is signed to support the construction at disaster sites in the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland).
- With this Line of Credit of USD 10.40 million, Exim Bank has extended 3 LoCs of a total value of USD 68.30 million to the Eswatini.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Exim Bank: Mumbai
  - MD of Exim Bank: David Rasquinha
  - Capital of Eswatini: Mbabane and Lobamba
  - Currency of Eswatini: Swazi lilangeni

### APPOINTMENTS ON 5TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Kuldeep Singh:** He is appointed to take an additional charge of DG of CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force).

#### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of CRPF: New Delhi
- **Manpreet Vohra:** He is appointed as India's High Commissioner to Australia.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Australia: Canberra
  - Currency of Australia: Dollar
- **Mary Kom:** She is appointed as Chairperson of AIBA Champion and Veterans Committee.
- **Static Part:**

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- HQ of AIBA: Lausanne Switzerland
- **Michael Philip Carruth:** He is appointed as Vice-Chairperson of AIBA Champion and Veterans Committee.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of AIBA: Lausanne Switzerland

### 'CSIR FLORICULTURE MISSION'

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**Current Context:** The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the 'CSIR Floriculture Mission' in a virtual manner.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **Under this mission, the CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) will integrate the latest technologies in the area of Floriculture.**
- **The mission will be implemented through the partnerships of various organisations like:** Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Directorate of Floriculture, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Universities, Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC) and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- The mission aims to focus on floral crops, seasonal crops and cultivation of flower crops for honey bee rearing and wild ornaments.
- The mission will also help to create job opportunities in the Floriculture sector.
- The Floriculture sector will be enhanced through various advanced technologies which will be used in this mission.
- The mission will also lead to an increase in the number of nursery, floriculture farms in the country.

### ATAL INNOVATION MISSION PARTNERED WITH MATHWORKS

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**Current Context:** NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission entered into a partnership with MathWorks.

#### KEY POINTS

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- MathWorks is a developing organisation of mathematical computing software for scientists and engineers.
- **Both entities have partnered to develop mathematical computing software in order to boost deep-technology based startups in India.**
- The partnership will allow the startups to have access to the tools of MathWorks like MATLAB and Simulink.

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- The startups will also get the benefit of online training, sessions for these tools.
- The partnership will provide opportunities for deep-tech startups to reach national and global level by developing their innovative products and launching them at all levels.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NITI Aayog: New Delhi
  - Chairman of NITI Aayog: Narendra Modi
  - CEO of NITI Aayog: Amitabh Kant

### DRDO CONDUCTED TEST OF SOLID FUEL DUCTED RAMJET (SFDR) TECHNOLOGY

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**Current Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the successful flight test of Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) technology.

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The flight test was conducted from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.**
- The experts also simulated and test the air-launch scenario using the booster motor.
- The booster motor and nozzle-less motor performed as per operational specifications during the test.
- The performance of the technology and missiles was monitored through Electro-Optical, Radar and Telemetry instruments.
- Various other technologies along with SFDR technology were also verified during the testing operation. This will help DRDO to develop long-range air-to-air missiles.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of DRDO: New Delhi
  - Chairman of DRDO: Dr G Satheesh Reddy

### INDIA-SWEDEN VIRTUAL SUMMIT

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**Current Context:** The India-Sweden Virtual Summit was held on 5th March 2021.

#### ABOUT SUMMIT

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- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi headed the summit along with his counterpart Stefan Lofven of Sweden.**
- The summit was organised to discuss bilateral relations in various sectors of both nations.
- PM Modi congratulated Sweden's decision to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- Both nations discussed the COVID-19 pandemic situation and vaccination drives.
- They assured each other to cooperate in areas like elderly care, infection control, digitalization, non-communicable diseases, and start-ups.
- Both the dignitaries welcomed the decision to set up Sweden-India Health Hub at AIIMS-Jodhpur

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- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Sweden: Stockholm
  - Currency of Sweden: Krona

### RUPAY SOFTPOS SOLUTION

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**Current Context:** The 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution was launched for millions of Indian merchants by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in partnership with SBI Payments.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **This solution will offer an innovative approach to transform NFC-enabled smartphones into merchant Point of Sale (PoS) terminals for the retailers.**
- **With the help of the 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution merchants will be able to perform contactless payments of up to Rs 5,000 through tap and pay mechanism on their mobile phones.**
- To avail of this solution, the user will have to download the app on the smartphone. Then to receive money, the user will have to select the contactless menu and enter an amount. The RuPay card can then be tapped on the merchant's mobile for a contactless transaction.
- Once the transaction gets approved, the receipt for the success of the transaction will be generated.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NPCI: Mumbai
  - MD and CEO of NPCI: Dilip Asbe

### KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK SIGNED MOU WITH INDIAN ARMY

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**Current Context:** India's private sector bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank has signed MoU with the Indian Army.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The MoU was signed to provide a salary to the accounts of all active and retired army personnel.**
- The bank will also provide additional benefits to the army personnel.
- This MoU will enable the bank to offer its products and services to the active and retired Indian army personnel.
- The zero balance salary account of army personnel will earn an interest of upto 4% per annum.
- The bank will also offer free unlimited ATM usage on all VISA ATMs.
- Also, a complimentary personal accident insurance cover for on-duty and off-duty incidents will be granted to army personnel.
- The bank will offer educational benefits for the salary account holder's children up upto age 22 years for the case of an accident claim.

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- Zero processing fees will be charged for loan filing, unlimited cheque book facility, best in class rates Demat accounts will be offered by Kotak Mahindra Bank to the army personnel.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Kotak Mahindra Bank: Mumbai
  - Tagline of Kotak Mahindra Bank: Let's Make Money Simple

### 'FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2021 - DEMOCRACY UNDER SIEGE'

**Current Context:** The United States-based Think Tank Freedom House has released the report titled 'Freedom in the World 2021 - Democracy under Siege'.

#### KEY POINTS

- As per this report, India's status is downgraded from 'Free' to 'Partly Free'. In the current report, India's score is 67. In 2018, India scored 77 and in 2020, the score was 71.
- The 'most free countries' are Finland, Norway and Sweden. These countries have secured a score of 100.
- The 'least free countries' with a score of 1 are Tibet and Syria.
- The major reasons for the down gradation of India are: (a) Increased intimidation of academics and journalists (b) Government pressure on human right organisations (c) COVID19 response (d) Internet shutdowns (e) Freezing Amnesty International's assets.
- Based on the scores, the countries are classified as 'free', 'partly free' and 'not free' in the index.

### 'BUSINESS KISHT SURAKSHA'—HDFC ERGO GENERAL INSURANCE

**Current Context:** The HDFC Ergo General Insurance has launched 'Business Kisht Suraksha' insurance cover.

#### KEY FACTS

- 'Business Kisht Suraksha' is an insurance cover that offers financial protection to the balance sheets of Microfinance Institutions, financial institutions and banks in the case of any natural calamity or disasters.
- This insurance cover was launched with an aim to reduce the negative impacts on balance sheets which occur due to non-payment of EMIs by the borrower, or due to natural calamity like earthquake, cyclones and floods.
- This insurance cover will thus protect financial institutions against increasing NPAs due to natural calamities and disaster conditions.
- The insurance cover comes in a customised format for MFIs or financial institutions. It can also be customised based on the geographical status of the borrower, MFI or financial institutions i.e depending upon the climatic status of the area.
- The MFI or financial institutions can also select the number of EMIs for the insurance coverage depending upon the exposure of the lender.



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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of HDFC Ergo General Insurance: Mumbai

### 39TH CERAWEEK CONFERENCE 2021

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**Current Context:** The 39th edition of the CERAWeek Conference 2021 was held recently.

#### DETAILS

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- **At this conference, PM Narendra Modi was awarded CERAWeek Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award by the Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA).**
- **PM Modi also addressed the conference via video-conference. While addressing, he highlighted India's goal to boost the share of gas in its fuel mix to 15% from 6% by 2030.**
- He also discussed climate change which can be tackled through measures like policies, laws, rules and behavioural changes at the individual and global level.
- **The conference was organised by IHS Markit.**
- **The themes of the conference were:** Energy Transition Climate and ESG, Innovation and Technology, The new map of Geopolitics, Economic Recovery, Markets and Investments and Workforce of the Future.

### PM MODI ADDRESSED 'JANAUSHADHI DIWAS' EVENT CELEBRATIONS

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**Current Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the celebration event of 'Janaushadhi Diwas' via video-conference.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **He dedicated 7500th Janaushadhi Kendra to North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, Shillong, Meghalaya.**
- He also participated in the interactive session of beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, which aims to provide medicines at an affordable cost to the people.
- PM Modi addressed that these Janaushadhi Kendras not only grant medicines at an affordable price but are also a source of employment to the youth and women.
- He mentioned that more than 1000 kendras are managed by women, thus making them self-reliant.
- PM Modi urged people to purchase medicines from the Janaushadhi Kendra at a reasonable price.
- **Also, 1st March to 7th March 2021 was observed as 'Janaushadhi Week' under the theme of 'Jan Aushadhi- Seva Bhi, Rozgaar Bhi'.**
- **Static Part:**
  - National Parks and Wild Life Sanctuaries in Meghalaya: Balpakram NP, Nokrek NP, Baghmara Pitcher Plant WLS, Siju Bird Sanctuary

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### 76TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS OF INDIA (API)

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**Current Context:** The 76th Annual Conference of the Association of Physicians of India (API) was held virtually.

#### ABOUT SUMMIT

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- It was addressed by Union Minister of State (IC) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh.
- While addressing he mentioned the contribution of Physicians to the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Campaign.
- He also appreciated the work performed by young physicians, particularly young Resident Doctors, who are lauded as 'Corona Warriors' during the pandemic period.
- **The theme of the conference was:** 'Engaging Minds: Empowering Medicine'.

#### 'HER CIRCLE' DIGITAL PLATFORM

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**Current Context:** To mark the celebrations of International Women's Day, Reliance Foundation Chairperson Nita Mukesh Ambani launched a digital platform named 'Her Circle'.

#### KEY FACTS

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- The 'Her Circle' is a dedicated content, social media, and digital platform, launched specifically for women.
- The digital platform will help to empower the women community and will develop the sisterhood bond among them at the global level.
- The platform will be featuring experts from various domains like health, education, entrepreneurship, finance etc.
- The 'Her Circle' will also feature job opportunities for women along with various courses which the women community can learn digitally.

#### APPOINTMENTS ON 8TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Tarun Bajaj:** He has given an additional charge of Revenue Secretary. He is serving as Secretary to the Department of Economic Affairs.

#### ABOUT

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- **G R Chintala:** He is appointed as Chairman of Asia Pacific Rural and Agricultural Credit Association (APRACA). He has replaced DPK Gunasekera. He is also Chairman of NABARD.
- **Static Part:**

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- HQ of APRACA: Bangkok, Thailand
- **Ligia Noronha:** She is appointed as Assistant Secretary General and Head of the New York office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of UNEP: Nairobi, Kenya
- **Rohit Sharma:** He is appointed as Brand Ambassador of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Limited. He will be representing Glenmark's 'Candid Powder'.
- **PM Narendra Modi:** He will head the committee of 259 members which is constituted to commemorate 75 years of Independence which will be on 15th Aug 2022. The day will be celebrated as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- **Naureen Hassan:** She is appointed as first Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Federal Reserve Bank.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Federal Reserve Bank: New York, United States

### 'SMARTUP UNNATI MENTORING PROGRAMME'—HDFC BANK

**Current Context:** The 'SmartUp Unnati Mentoring Programme' was launched by HDFC Bank.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- **The programme aims to support women entrepreneurs.** It was launched to mark the celebrations of International Women's Day.
- Under this programme, HDFC bank's senior women leaders and experts from various domains will provide mentorship to women entrepreneurs to achieve their business goals.
- Initially, the programme aims to offer mentorship to more than 3,000 women entrepreneurs.
- This programme is a 'programme by women for women'.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of HDFC Bank: Mumbai
  - MD and CEO of HDFC Bank: Sashidhar Jagdishan

### ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX 2021

**Current Context:** The Economic Freedom Index 2021 was released by a US-based think tank named Heritage Foundation.

#### KEY POINTS

- The index provides a ranking for 184 countries for the period of July 2019 to June 2020.
- **As per the index, India is ranked 26th out of 40 countries i.e. among Asia-Pacific Countries.**
- **Globally, India is ranked at 121st freest country in the index.**
- **The index is topped by Singapore with a score of 89.7.**
- The second and third ranks are marked by New Zealand and Australia respectively.

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- The index ranking was calculated based on 12 indicators from property rights to financial freedom under 4 major categories of: the size of government, rule of law, open markets and regulator efficiency.

### VIRTUAL NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR 2021

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**Current Context: Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank inaugurated Virtual New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 via video conference.**

#### KEY FACTS

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- **This was the 29th edition of the event which was organised by the National Book Trust (NBT).**
- The event is being held from 6th March to 12th March 2021 in a virtual manner due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **The theme of the event:** National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- At the event, the Chairman of NBT, Professor Govind Prasad Sharma and Director of NBT Yuvraj Malik were also present.

### COMBINED COMMANDERS CONFERENCE 2021

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**Current Context: Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh participated in Combined Commanders Conference (CCC) 2021.**

#### DETAILS

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- **The conference was held at Kevadia, Gujarat.**
- The conference focused on the catheterisation of armed forces, making the defence sector self-reliant and combating evolving threats in the country.
- On the last day of the conference was addressed by PM Narendra Modi. While addressing the conference, he focused on to develop the Indian military into a 'future force'.
- The CCC is an event of three forces of India i.e. Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
- At the conference, the exhibition of some of the innovations made by armed forces was also displayed.
- **Static Part:**
  - Chief of Indian Army: General MM Naravane
  - Chief of Indian Navy: Admiral Karambir Singh
  - Chief of Indian Air Force: Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria

### MOA&FW SIGNED MOU WITH CENTRAL SILK BOARD

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**Current Context: The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) has signed an MoU with the Central Silk Board under the Ministry of Textiles.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **The MoU was signed to implement Agroforestry in the silk sector under the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme.**
- **The Central Silk Board (CSB), Ministry of Textiles, will act as a catalyst to promote Agroforestry in the silk sector.**
- The MoU was signed during an event of 'National level programme on the convergence of Agro-Sericulture and eradication of Thigh reeling'.
- The MoU was signed with an aim to fulfil the target set under the Make in India and Make for the World vision of the Prime Minister.
- The MoU will encourage farmers to adopt sericulture based Agroforestry models.
- This partnership will also lead to having faster returns to the growers and support to the product variety of range of silk in the country.
- **Static Part:**
  - Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare: Narendra Singh Tomar

### PM INAUGURATED 'MAITRI SETU' BETWEEN INDIA & BANGLADESH

**Current Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated 'Maitri Setu' connecting India and Bangladesh.**

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **'Maitri Setu' is constructed over the Feni River. The Feni River flows between the Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh.**
- **The name 'Maitri Setu' symbolizes the friendly relations between both nations.**
- **Also, the PM of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina was present at the inauguration ceremony.**
- The 'Maitri Setu' will prove beneficial as an important trade corridor for both nations.
- It is 1.9 km which joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh. It is constructed by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. Total funds required for the construction was Rs 133 crores.
- PM Modi also inaugurated various infrastructural projects in Tripura. He laid the foundation stone to set up an integrated check post at Sabroom for the movement of goods and passengers between both nations. The funds allotted for this is Rs 232 crores. He also laid the foundation stone of NH 208 which will connect the Unakoti district headquarters at Kailashahar in the state with the Khowai district headquarters.
- **Static Part:**
  - CM of Tripura: Biplab Kumar Deb
  - Governor of Tripura: Ramesh Bais

### MINISTRY OF WCD SIGNED MOU WITH INVEST INDIA

**Current Context:** The Government of India's Women and Child Development Ministry has signed an MoU with Invest India.

#### KEY POINTS

- **The MoU was signed to boost the cooperation in Nutrition, Child Protection and Development, Women Empowerment and Capacity Building sectors.**
- Under this MoU, Invest India will support framing policies and strategies to have a large scale impact. Invest India's DHRISHTI will analyse inputs and outputs for each research work.
- **It will also provide international cooperation, impact assessment to the ministry in fulfilling the objective of the MoU.**
- Both the entities will develop a participatory ecosystem to attain their objectives of MoU.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Invest India: New Delhi
  - Union Minister of Women and Child Development: Smriti Zubin Irani

### SUPER-75 SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME AND TEJASWINI SCHEME—J&K

**Current Context:** The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir launched the 'Super-75 Scholarship Scheme' and 'Tejaswini Scheme'.

#### KEY FACTS

- **The schemes aim to support the education facilities to the meritorious girls from poor families and women entrepreneurship.**
- As per Super-75 Scholarship Scheme, the girls from poor financial backgrounds will be able to avail education in various streams like medicine, engineering, ITI and humanity, which will help them to contribute to nation-building and thus become self-reliant.
- The 'Tejaswini Scheme' was launched under Mission Youth of the UT. The scheme aims to strengthen Women Entrepreneurs Ecosystem in UT.
- As per the 'Tejaswini Scheme', financial assistance of Rs 5 lakhs to the girls between the age group of 18 to 35 years will be granted to start their business.
- **Static Part:**
  - National Parks and Wild Life Sanctuaries of J&K: Dachigam NP, Kishtwar NP, Hemis NP, Nandini WLS, Ram Nagar WLS

### 'YES ESSENCE'—A WOMEN CENTRIC SERVICE

**Current Context:** India's leading private sector bank launched a women-centric service called 'Yes Essence'.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The 'Yes Essence' will provide preferentially-priced loans and healthcare benefits to women.
- It is launched to the women who belong to various segments like homemakers, salaried professionals, entrepreneurs and senior citizens.
- The service covers the lifestyle, wellness, education, protection and investment areas of women.
- Through this service, the women community will be able to fulfil their aspirations.
- For Homemakers, the service will offer a discount on locker rents, complimentary my first account for children, lifestyle benefits worth Rs 3,000 on multiple brands and a holistic earning program for kids (YOGO).
- For salaried women, the service will offer to earn more with an auto sweep facility to Fixed Deposits, shopping offers on debit cards up to Rs 1.65 Lakh, lifestyle benefits worth Rs 3000 on multiple brands.
- For women entrepreneurs, the service will offer preferential rates on a business loan, access to Standup India, benefits of various MSME solutions of the bank, access to Yes Essence Plus.
- For senior citizens, the service will offer, 0.5% extra interest rate on FDs, a discount on locker rentals, financial advice from experts.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Yes Bank: Mumbai
  - MD and CEO of Yes Bank: Prashant Kumar

## OECD PREDICTS INDIA'S GDP GROWTH AT 12.6% FOR FY22

**Current Context:** The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has projected that India's GDP to grow at 12.6% in FY22.

## DETAILS

- As per the organisation, this growth will be the highest among G20 countries.
- Also, OECD has raised India's growth estimate for FY22 by 4.7% from 7.9% which was projected in Dec 2020.
- For the fiscal year 2021, it expects the economy to contract 7.4%.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of OECD: Paris France

## RBI HAS TAKEN IDBI BANK OUT OF PCA FRAMEWORK

**Current Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken out IDBI Bank from the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework as enhanced regulatory supervision by RBI.

## HIGHLIGHTS

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- In May 2017, RBI had inducted IDBI Bank into PCA because of increased risk-weighted assets.
- The IDBI was taken out of the framework after 4 years because of its improved financial performance. IDBI Bank is owned by the Life Insurance Corporation of India.
- Upon coming out of the PCA framework, the IDBI bank has given a written commitment to RBI that it will comply with all the norms of minimum regulatory capital, bad assets and leverage ratio on an ongoing basis.
- Also, IDBI bank has made structural and systemic improvements that will help the bank to meet the requirements of norms.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of RBI and Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) Bank: Mumbai
  - Tagline of IDBI Bank: Banking for All, Aao Sochein Bada

### DBS BANK INDIA PARTNERED WITH TRRAIN

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**Current Context:** The DBS Bank India has entered into a partnership with TRRAIN (Trust for Retailers & Retail Associates of India).

#### KEY POINTS

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- The TRRAIN is a non-profit organisation engaged in training and placement of youth particularly in the e-commerce & retail sectors.
- **They have partnered to support youth from low-income houses, economically affected due to pandemic and people with disabilities with skill training and job opportunities.**
- The partnership is a part of the 'DBS Stronger Together Fund'.
- Both the entities will support youth and people with disabilities with skill training and job offers for one long year and across India.
- The TRRAIN Centres across India will conduct the training sessions. After the training process, the candidates will be recruited by leading partnered firms of retail and e-commerce.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of DBS Bank India Ltd: Mumbai

### APPOINTMENTS ON 11TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Tirath Singh Rawat:** He was sworn in as Chief Minister of Uttarakhand following the resignation of Trivendra Singh Rawat.

#### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - Governor of Uttarakhand: Baby Rani Maurya
- **Deepika Padukone:** She was appointed as Brand Ambassador of Plant-based nutrition brand OZiva.

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- **Pallav Mohapatra:** He was appointed as MD and CEO of Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd (Arcil). He has replaced Vinayak Bahuguna.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Arcil: Mumbai

### INDIAN NAVY SIGNED CONTRACT WITH SURYADIPTA PROJECTS

**Current Context:** The Indian Navy has entered into a contract with Suryadipta Projects Private Limited, which is a Thane based MSME.

#### DETAILS

- **The contract was signed to construct 11 Ammunition-Cum-Torpedo-Cum-Missile (ACTCM) barges.**
- Upon signing the contract, the Suryadipta Projects will deliver ACTCM barges to the Indian Navy from 22nd May 2021.
- The barges will be developed under the classification rules of the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).
- The contract was also signed with an aim to fulfil the motto of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the Make in India initiative of GOI.
- **Static Part:**
  - Chief of Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh

**Current Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) completed the development of NISAR (NASA-ISRO SAR), which is a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR).

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **The NISAR is capable to produce high-resolution images and will be used for Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission.**
- **The Joint Earth Observation Satellite Mission is a mission of ISRO and NASA.**
- **NISAR uses dual-frequency L and S-band for its application of earth observation.**
- In 2014, India and the US had signed an agreement to jointly develop the world's first earth observation satellite with two different radars. In this regards, ISRO achieved its role by developing S-Band SAR and shipping it to NASA in order to integrate with the L Band payload which is developed by NASA.
- After the integration process of radars, NASA will ship them to India where other accessories of the NISAR satellite will be developed and integrated.
- Then, ISRO will launch the NISAR satellite by using GSLV Mk-II from Sriharikota.
- As the satellite will be operated on two frequency bands, it will have the capability to collect data from day and night and in all weather conditions like cloudy days. It will be used to measure

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changes in the Earth's surface than a centimetre across, which will help the scientist to study dynamic surfaces, ice masses like Himalayan glaciers, groundwater level and sea level.

### 'DUSTLIK II'-- JOINT MILITARY EX. OF INDIA AND UZBEKISTAN

**Current Context:** India and Uzbekistan commenced a joint military exercise called 'DUSTLIK II'.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- **The second edition of the joint military exercise between armies of both nations is being held at Chaubatia near Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.**
- The exercise is held to focus on Counter Insurgency (IC) and Counter-Terrorism, thus boosting military cooperation between both countries.
- 45 Soldiers each from both nations are participating in the 'DUSTLIK II' exercise, which is being held till 19th March 2021.
- The Rezangla Battalion 13 Kumaon will be representing from the Indian side.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Uzbekistan: Tashkent
  - Currency of Uzbekistan: Uzbekistani Som

### UNION CABINET APPROVED PRADHAN MANTRI SWASTHYA SURAKSHA NIDHI

**Current Context:** The Union Cabinet has approved Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN).

#### KEY POINTS

- **It is approved as a single non-lapsable reserve fund. It is approved for the share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.**
- The PMSSN is a non-lapsable reserve fund allotted for health in the public account. It is comprised of the proceeds from a share of health in the Health and Education cess.
- The revenue of this fund will be utilised for the schemes of health ministry like National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres. The funds will also be used for health emergency cases.
- The PMSSN will be managed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- The PMSSN will ensure access to the health care services by ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of the financial year.

### APPOINTMENTS ON 12TH MARCH 2021

## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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**Current Context: Dr GP Samanta:** He is appointed as Chief Statistician of India. He has replaced Kshatrapati Shivaji.

### ABOUT

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- **Union Minister Anurag Thakur:** He has become the first serving MP to be appointed as Captain in the Territorial Army.
- **Thomas Bach:** He is re-elected as President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for a tenure of 4 years Static Part: HQ of IOC: Lausanne, Switzerland.
- **Girish Chandra Murmu (CAG of India):** He is re-appointed as the Chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations.

### 'WEAR N PAY' – CONTACTLESS PAYMENT WEARABLE DEVICE

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**Current Context: Axis Bank has launched a range of wearable contactless payment devices named 'Wear N Pay'.**

### KEY FACTS

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- This range of devices linked to the customers' bank account and thus perform like a regular debit card.
- The devices are available in various forms like the band, Key chain and watch loop with the starting price of Rs 750.
- Users need to wave the device at a POS machine for transactions up to Rs 5,000 and for transactions for more than Rs 5000, a PIN is required.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Axis Bank: Mumbai
  - MD and CEO of Axis Bank: Amitabh Chaudhry

### AQUACONNECT PARTNERED WITH BANK OF BARODA

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**Current Context: Aquaconnect, which is a leading aquaculture Tech Company has partnered with Bank of Baroda.**

### DETAILS

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- **They have partnered to grant credit access to aquaculture farmers.**
- The facility will be granted under the Kisan Credit Card Scheme.
- The credit access will be provided at an annualized rate of as low as 10%.
- This partnership will prove beneficial to 15,00,000 fish farmers and over 1,50,000 shrimp farmers across the country.

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- Under this partnership, Aquaconnect will grant advisory services and quality farm inputs to fish farmers and shrimp farmers. Bank of Baroda has extended loan for up to Rs 10 lakhs under the KCC scheme and fisheries loan facility.
- The partnership will target states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Odisha and later will be extended to the rest of the states as well.
- **Static Part:**
  - Kisan Credit Card Scheme: It is created by NABARD to fulfil the credit requirements of the agriculture sector of the country.
  - HQ of BOB: Vadodara, Gujarat
  - Tagline of BOB: India's International Bank
  - HQ of Aquaconnect: Chennai, TN

### REC LTD, PFC SIGNED PACT WITH BHUTAN BASED KHEL

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**Current Context:** India's Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC Ltd) and Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has signed a pact with Bhutan's Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited (KHEL).

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The pact was signed to finance the hydroelectric project of 600MW at Trashiyangtse, Bhutan.**
- The project will be financially supported in the debt-equity ratio of 70:30.
- As per the pact, REC and PFC will grant Rs 2029 crore each. Bhutan's NPPF will grant the loan of Rs 200 crore and the Bank of Bhutan will grant the loan of Rs 200 crore.
- The project will be executed as the Inter-Governmental Agreements between GOI and Bhutan's gov.
- KHEL is a 50:50 joint venture between SJVN India and Druk Green Power Corporation of Bhutan which is set up to develop the hydroelectric project in east Bhutan.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Bhutan: Thimphu
  - Currency of Bhutan: Ngultrum
  - HQ of REC and PFC: New Delhi

### PM MODI PARTICIPATED IN QUAD SUMMIT 2021

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**Current Context:** The Quad Summit 2021 observed the participation of India's PM Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga, President of the United States Joe Biden, and Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison.

#### KEY POINTS

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- The Quad Summit 2021 was held in a virtual mode.



## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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- The dignitaries held discussions about the Indo-Pacific region, combating COVID19 Pandemic, maritime security, emerging technologies and climate change.
- They discussed developing cooperation to have an equitable and affordable distribution of vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region.
- They assured to make Quad a force for global good.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital and Currency of Japan: Tokyo and Japanese Yen
  - Capital and Currency of the US: Washington DC and Dollar
  - Capital and Currency of Australia: Canberra and Dollar

### BRICS CGETI MEETING

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**Current Context: The first meeting of the BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held recently under India's Chairmanship.**

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The theme of the meeting:** 'BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus'.
- At this meeting, India presented a calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, which comprised of schedule, deliverables, and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on the services statistics and BRICS Trade fair.
- **Various discussions were held on proposed deliverables:** Action Plan based on the document strategy for the BRICS Economic Partnership 2025, Cooperation among the BRICS on the multilateral trading system, Developing a framework to protect consumers on e-commerce, Non-tariff measures resolution mechanism, Working mechanism of sanitary and phytosanitary, Framework for genetic resources protection and traditional knowledge and professional services.
- **Static Part:**
  - India is the current chairman of BRICS.

### EXPERTS BY SEBI TO EXAMINE FEASIBILITY OF SPACS

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**Current Context: The Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has constituted a committee of experts to examine the feasibility in order to implement Special Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPACs).**

#### DETAILS

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- **The committee is set up under SEBI's Primary Market Advisory Committee (PMAC).**
- **The main moto to examine SPACs is to boost the funds in an initial public offering (IPO), which will be used to identify and merge with the target company.**
- The expert group is set up to explore the potential of SPACs and building adequate checks and balances in the regulatory framework by taking care of associated risks.

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- SPACs: These are the blank cheque companies that are not having any business plan while seeking investor money. The Private equity funds or financial institution having expertise in a particular industry with investment for working capital and issue related expenses can become SPACs.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of SEBI: Mumbai
  - Chairman of SEBI: Ajay Tyagi

### 'MERA RATION' MOBILE APP

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**Current Context:** With an aim to implement the 'One Nation-One Ration Card' system in India, the GOI has launched the 'Mera Ration' mobile app.

#### ABOUT

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- The 'Mera Ration' mobile app will guide the citizens to locate the nearest fair price shop.
- This will be of high advantage to those who have moved to new areas for livelihoods.
- The app is developed by the government in association with NIC. The app will facilitate 'One Nation-One Ration Card' services among the National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries like migrant beneficiaries, FPS dealers and stakeholders.
- The app will help the user to track details of food grains entitlement and past transactions.

### 4TH GLOBAL AYURVEDA FESTIVAL

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**Current Context:** The 4th edition of the Global Ayurveda Festival was addressed by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi via video conference.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- It is being held from 12th to 19th March 2021.
- While addressing he mentioned the growing global interest in Ayurveda. He also mentioned and appreciated the efforts taken by experts for promoting Ayurveda across the globe.
- He also highlighted that during the pandemic, demand for ayurvedic products increased to a greater extent.
- He discussed that National AYUSH Mission has started to promote AYUSH medical systems through cost-effective AYUSH services.

### 'WHEELS OF LOVE' PROGRAMME—TATA MOTORS

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**Current Context:** Tata Motors has launched a holistic programme called 'Wheels of Love'.

#### KEY POINTS

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- The programme is launched to support new parents in the workforce environment.

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- The programme supports them in their exciting journey both as a parent and also as an employee through a culture of care, inclusion and sensitization within the organization across levels.
- Also, a book titled 'Wheels of Love' was launched to help the parents to manage the needs of growing family needs while pursuing their career.
- **The aspects of the programme are:**
  - Announcement of pregnancy at the workplace, understanding the manager's dilemma, management of work deliverables, job handover process, maternity leave planning and transition back to work.
  - Mother and Manager guides help to transit through various phases of maternity like becoming a parent and transitioning back to work.
  - Counselling Sessions for new parents, coaching sessions for pregnant/new mothers.
  - Assigning a Buddy to the new mothers to keep in touch with her workplace during the maternity break.
  - Forming a community of new parents to share the learnings and experiences of being parents.
  - Conduction of webinars to guide in various responsibilities like childcare, dual-career couples etc.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Tata Motors: Mumbai

## SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS 2020

**Current Context: The National Academy of Letters announced the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020.**

### ABOUT

- **The winners were announced during an event of Annual Festival of Letters, which was held from 12th to 14th March 2021.**
- **Some of the winners are mentioned below:**
  - **Arundhathi Subramaniam (Poet):** She received Sahitya Akademi Awards 2020 for the English poetry collections called 'When God is a Traveller'.
  - **Mani Shankar Mukhopadhyay (Author):** He has received the award for his memoirs called 'Eka Eka Ekashi'.
  - **M Veerappa Moily:** He received the award for his epic poetry called 'Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam'.
  - **Other winners for their poetry compositions are:** Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), Anamika (Hindi), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Irungbam Deven (Manipuri), Rupchand Hansda (Santali), and Nikhileswar (Telugu).
  - **Other winners for their novels compositions are:** Nanda Khare (Marathi), Maheshchandra Sharma Gautam (Sanskrit), Imaiyan (Tamil) and Sri Hussain-ul-Haque (Urdu).
  - **Winners for short stories:** Apurba Kumar Saikia (Assamese), Dharanidhar Owari (Bodo), Hiday Koul Bharti (Kashmiri), Kamalkant Jha (Maithili) and Gurdev Singh Rupana (Punjab).
  - **Winners for plays:** Gian Singh (Dogri) and Jetho Lalwani (Sindhi)

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## PWC'S 24TH ANNUAL GLOBAL CEO SURVEY

**Current Context:** The 24th edition of the Annual Global CEO Survey was released by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

### KEY FACTS

- As per survey, India is the 5th most attractive global destination in the world.
- The USA has marked as the first most attractive global destination in the world, which is thus highly favoured by CEOs.
- The 2nd and 3rd ranks are marked by China and Germany respectively.
- As per the CEOs, major threats of 2021 are: (a) Pandemic and Health issues (b) Over-regulation (c) Policy uncertainty (d) Cyber threats (e) Uncertain economic growth.
- The 24th edition of the survey covered 5050 CEOs in 100 countries.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of PwC: London, UK

## ISRO LAUNCHED RH-560 SOUNDING ROCKET

**Current Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a sounding rocket named RH-560 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota Range.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The RH-560 was particularly launched to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics.
- The RH-560 are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets which are used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and to perform space research activities.
- They will also be used as platforms to test the prototypes of new components or subsystems which are to be used in the launch of vehicles and satellites.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of ISRO: Bengaluru
  - Chairman of ISRO: K Sivan

## NHSRCL SIGNED MOU WITH JRTC

**Current Context:** The National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) signed MoU with Japan Railway Track Consultant Co. Limited (JRTC).

### DETAILS

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- The MoU was signed to get support for track works in the 237-km stretch between Vadodara and Vapi in Gujarat for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR), which is the bullet train project of India.
- Under this MoU, JRTC will design the HSR track components like RC track bed, track slab arrangement and continuous welded rail (CWR) forces for the project.
- The MoU will also enhance the cooperation between India and Japan.
- This partnership will allow the transfer of Japan's high-speed rail system technology to India.
- The total outlay for MAHSR, i.e. India's first bullet train project is Rs 1.08 lakh crore. And NHRCL is an implementing organisation for the same.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NSSRCL: New Delhi
  - Capital of Japan: Tokyo
  - Currency of Japan: Japanese Yen
  - Prime Minister of Japan: Suga Yoshihide

### **'E3 CERTIFICATIONS PROGRAMME FOR BRICK MANUFACTURING SECTOR'**

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**Current Context:** R K Singh, Minister of State (I/C) for Power and New & Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship launched the 'Energy Efficiency Enterprise (E3) Certifications Programme for Brick Manufacturing Sector'.

#### **KEY FACTS**

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- While launching, the minister acknowledged the responses received from the bricks manufacturing sector to avail the certificate.
- He assured that the certification will lead to having a transition from conventional to efficient technologies and product shift towards low-density bricks with better thermal insulation.
- It will also lead to having energy savings in the brick manufacturing process, improvement in the quality of bricks, cost-saving to the builders and energy saving to the occupiers of the building.
- He has asked the bricks manufacturing companies to upgrade to an E-3 certificate in the next 2-3 years.
- The E3 certification will be granted by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

### **GRAMMY AWARDS 2021**

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**Current Context:** The 63rd edition Grammy Awards 2021 were held at the Los Angeles Convention Center by following social distancing norms.

#### **ABOUT**

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- **The details of the winners are mentioned below**
- Billie Eilish: Won Record of the year award for 'Everything I Wanted'
- Taylor Swift: Won Album of the Year for 'Folklore'

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- Dernst Emile II, H.E.R. and Tiara Thomas: Won Song of the Year award for 'I Can't Breathe'
- Harry Styles: Won Best Pop Solo Performance award for 'Watermelon Sugar'
- Dua Lipa: Won Best Pop Vocal Album award for 'Future Nostalgia'
- Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande: Won Best Pop Duo/Group Performance award for 'Rain on Me'
- James Taylor: Won Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album award for 'American Standard'
- Snarky Puppy: Won Best Contemporary Instrumental Album award
- Fiona Apple: Won Best Rock Performance award for 'Shameika'
- Brittany Howard: Won Best Rock Song for 'Stay High'

### DR HARSH VARDHAN INAUGURATED CENTRE FOR ADVANCED RADIATION SHIELDING

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**Current Context: The Union Minister of Science & Technology, Earth Science Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the Centre for (a) Advanced Radiation Shielding and Geopolymeric Materials (b) Analytical High-Resolution Transmission Electron Microscope Laboratory.**

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- He inaugurated both the centre and lab during his visit to CSIR-AMPRI, Bhopal.
- **He laid the foundation stone for CSIR-AMPRI Bamboo Composite Structure.**
- While addressing the programme, he congratulated CSIR-AMPRI for adopting the 'Waste to Wealth' strategy by developing radiation shielding materials utilizing industrial wastes as raw materials.
- He mentioned that the institute has adopted lead-free and highly effective shielding materials specifically from industrial waste like red mud and fly ash.
- The shielding materials can be used for the construction of X-ray diagnostic and CT scanner rooms.
- Various developments will take place because of the Centre for Advanced Radiation Shielding and Geopolymeric Materials. Some of the developments like, Geopolymeric Bullet Proof Concrete for Bunkers, Graphene-Induced Geopolymeric Concrete and Geopolymeric Radiation Shielding Concrete will take place.
- The centre will also enhance the skill knowledge in the process of Radiation Shielding and will lead to development in engineering properties of developed materials.
- The Analytical High-Resolution Transmission Electron Microscope Laboratory is equipped with Scanning Transmission Electron Microscope (STEM) which is having High-Angle Annular Dark Field Detector (HAADF), Energy Dispersive Spectrometer (EDS), Ultrasonic disc cutter, Dimple grinder etc. The lab will allow performing microanalysis to the experts.

#### INTERACTION SESSION WITH FISHERMEN COMMUNITY

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**Current Context: The seven teams of personnel from the Indian Navy, Coast Guard District Headquarters 6, Coastal Security Police of Andhra Pradesh and representatives of the State Fisheries Department held an interactive session with the fishermen communities.**



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## KEY POINTS

- The session was held to start the celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of Independence of India.
- The fishermen community from the coastal areas of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East Godavari, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore participated in the interaction.
- At the session, the dignitaries informed the fishermen community about the historical significance of 12 March. In 1930, on this day Mahatma Gandhi started 'Dandi March' as part of the civil disobedience movement against the British salt monopoly.
- The objective behind the interaction session was to build friendly relations with the fishermen community and to acknowledge their role for being the 'eyes and ears of the Armed Forces, thus supporting the Armed Forces in maintaining the coastal security along the coast of Andhra Pradesh.

## INDIA'S SECOND LARGEST OIL SUPPLIER AFTER IRAQ

**Current Context:** As per the analysis of trade data, Iraq is continued to be top oil supplier to India for Feb 2021. However, there is a decline of 23% in purchases to a five-month low of 867,500 bpd (barrels per day).

## KEY FACTS

- **The United States has become India's second biggest oil supplier for Feb 21 by surpassing Saudi Arabia.**
- As per the data, India's imports from the US raised to 48% with a record of 545,300 bpd for last month which has led to 14% of overall imports from last month of India.
- In all, India shipped 3.92 million bpd of oil in Feb 2021.
- The third and fourth largest suppliers of oil to India are Nigeria and Saudi Arabia respectively.
- The reason behind oil supply increased from the US is that the crude oil which is supplied by the US is relatively cheaper as compared to oil supplied by OPEC nations.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of OPEC: Vienna, Austria

## APPOINTMENTS ON 16TH MARCH 2021

**Current Context: Deepak Mishra:** He is appointed as Director and Chief Executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). He is serving as Economist and Practice Manager at the World Bank.

## ABOUT

- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of ICRIER: New Delhi
  - Chairman of ICRIER: Pramod Bhasin

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- **Hardeep Singh Brar:** He is appointed as the National Head of Sales and Marketing for Kia Motors India Ltd.
- **Union Minister Prahlad Singh Patel:** He is appointed as head of the committee which is set up by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to have the multidisciplinary study of the Sarasvati River.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of ASI: New Delhi
  - DG of ASI: V Vidyavathi

### 'UPI HELP' BY NPCI

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**Current Context:** India's digital payments umbrella entity called National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched 'UPI-Help' on BHIM UPI.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- The 'UPI-Help' will help in the grievance redressal mechanism for BHIM app users.
- With this application, users will be able to check the status of the pending transactions, raise complaints against transactions that are not processed if the money has not reached the other end and raise complaints against merchant transactions.
- The feature has gone live on the BHIM app by NPCI for the customers of State Bank of India, AXIS Bank, HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank. And soon it will be extended to the customers of Paytm Payments Bank and TJSB Sahakari Bank as well.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NPCI: Mumbai
  - MD and CEO of NPCI: Dilip Asbe

### MG MOTOR INDIA PARTNERED WITH IIT DELHI

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**Current Context:** MG Motor India has entered into a partnership agreement with IIT Delhi.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **MG Motor has collaborated with the Centre for Automotive Research and Tribology (CART) of IIT Delhi.**
- **They have collaborated to conduct the research activities in the deployment of electric, connected and autonomous vehicles in urban areas of India.**
- The partnership took place through the Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi which aims to divert the focus of automakers on CASE mobility (Connected Autonomous Shared Electric. And for this, it supports research for the deployment of electric and autonomous vehicles.
- Under this partnership, the CART will conduct research activities in Electric Vehicles (EV).
- Both MG Motor and IIT Delhi will perform research in Battery operated EV, Hybrid EV, Alternate energy sources and autonomous and connected vehicles.

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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of MG Motor India: Gurugram, Haryana

### INDIA-FINLAND VIRTUAL SUMMIT

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**Current Context: India and Finland held a Virtual Summit on 16th March 2021 in a virtual manner.**

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The meet was held between PM Narendra Modi and PM of the Republic of Finland Ms Sanna Marin.**
- The meet was held to discuss the bilateral, regional and multilateral issues between both nations.
- They reviewed the relations between both nations with respect to shared values of democracy, rule of law, equality, freedom of speech, and respect for human rights.
- They assured to commit to work for multilateralism, a rules-based international order, sustainable development, COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination drives and combating climate change.
- They also assured to enhance cooperation in areas like trade and investment, innovation, education, Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, and quantum computing.
- They held discussions about the India-EU partnership, cooperation in the Arctic region, WTO and UN reforms.
- Also, PM Modi appreciated Finland's leading role in clean and green technologies.
- They assured to jointly work in conducting developmental activities in Africa.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Finland: Helsinki
  - Currency of Finland: Euro

### BANKS TO IMPLEMENT IMAGE BASED CTS SYSTEM—BY RBI

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**Current Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked all banks in the country to implement an image-based Cheque Truncation System (CTS) in their all branches.**

#### KEY POINTS

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- **The RBI has also framed the deadline for the same i.e. till 30th Sep 2021.**
- **The image-based CTS will help in the faster settlement of cheques thus giving a better customer experience.**
- Until around 18,000 bank branches are not in this process of setting up image-based CTS and so the RBI has proposed to all such bank branches to complete the mechanism process for the same.
- The CTS is in use since 2010 and presently covers around 1,50,000 branches. All the erstwhile 1,219 non-CTS clearing houses (ECCS centres) have been migrated to CTS effective September 2020.
- On 5th Feb 2021, RBI announced Pan-India coverage of CTS by framing all bank branches under an image-based CTS mechanism.

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- And now the banks are asked to inform RBI, the roadmap to achieve Pan-India coverage of CTS and submit a report by 30th April 2021.
- The image based CTS will bring operational efficiency in the paper-based clearing of cheques thus making the process of collection and settlement of cheques faster.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of RBI: Mumbai
  - Governor of RBI: Shaktikanta Das

### APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION ON 17TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Deb Haaland:** She was confirmed as the Secretary of the Interior, becoming the first native American to head a cabinet agency and securing a major role in Joe Biden's plan to fight climate change.

### ABOUT

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- **Dr SK Singh:** He is appointed to head the 3 member committee to review medical care arrangements for the Haridwar Kumbh Mela which will commence from 1st April 2021.
- **P K Sinha:** He resigned from the position of Principal Advisor to PM Narendra Modi.

### AIM SIGNED SOI WITH ASTER DM HEALTHCARE

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**Current Context: The NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has signed SoI with Aster DM Healthcare with an aim to promote digital healthcare innovations and entrepreneurship initiatives in India.**

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **They have partnered to transform the healthcare infrastructure of India through innovations.**
- Under this SoI, they will work to conduct various initiatives of AIM programmes and support AIM beneficiaries in India.
- They will jointly develop entrepreneurship skills amongst aspiring entrepreneurs in the sector of digital healthcare.
- The Aster DM Healthcare Group's unit called Aster Digital Health Incubator (ADHI) will support initiatives of AIM like Atal Incubation Centers (AICs), Established Incubation Centres (EICs), Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) and Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs).
- Under the SoI, both the entities will provide access to Aster Clinical Simulation Lab, Aster Federated Learning Data bank for AI healthcare research, ADHI, Aster Digital Health Center of Excellence, and other relevant facilities to the startups under various AIM initiatives.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NITI Aayog: New Delhi
  - CEO of NITI Aayog: Amitabh Kant

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- HQ of Aster DM Healthcare: Dubai, UAE

### IBSA WOMEN'S FORUM MEETING

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**Current Context:** The 6th edition of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was held virtually.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI.**
- The meet was attended by Ministers and officials of women affairs departments of IBSA Countries and was addressed by Zubin Irani, Chairperson of the 6th IBSA Women's Forum.
- While addressing she mentioned the year 2020, which witnessed the gaining prominence for the rights of women and girls.
- The dignitaries discussed the issues faced by women and adopt ways to transform their lives.
- The nations assured to adopt initiatives, policies and best practices to eliminate gender-based discrimination & violence against women and to promote gender equality.

### WORLD AIR QUALITY REPORT—BY SWISS TECH COMPANY

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**Current Context:** The Swiss technology company IQAir released the World Air Quality report. The report mentions the list of polluted cities globally in each country.

#### KEY POINTS

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- As per the report, 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities globally are in India.
- Xinjiang in China is the topmost polluted city in the world. It is further followed by Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh.
- The report states that Delhi is the 10th most polluted city in the world and the most polluted capital.
- The World Air Quality report mentions that India is having the third-worst air quality out of 106 countries in 2020.

### RBI IMPOSED RS 2 CRORE PENALTY ON SBI

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**Current Context:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on the State Bank of India (SBI).

#### KEY FACTS

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- The penalty was imposed for contravention of certain provisions of Section 10 of the Banking Regulation (BR) Act, 1949.

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- The penalty was also imposed for not following the specific directions issued to SBI on payment of remuneration to employees in the form of commission.
- As per the RBI's BR Act section 10 (1) (b) (ii), it is mandated that no banking company shall employ or continue the employment of any person whose remuneration or part of the remuneration takes the form of commission or of a share in the profits of the company.
- As per the statement from RBI, 'This process is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers'.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of RBI and SBI: Mumbai
  - Governor of RBI: Shaktikanta Das
  - Chairperson of SBI: Dinesh Kumar Khara

### APPOINTMENTS ON 18TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: H K Mittal:** He is appointed to head the committee set up by GOI to execute and monitor the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme.

### ABOUT

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- **Kapil Dev:** He is inducted into as a board member of the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI).
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of PGTI: Gurugram, Haryana
- **Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan:** He is appointed as the chairman of the Stop TB Partnership Board.

### ITALY SIGNED FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT OF THE ISA

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**Current Context: Italy has entered into a framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) with India.**

### DETAILS

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- The announcement for the same was made by the Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Anurag Srivastava.
- Italy signed ISA's framework agreement after the amendment to the agreement which entered into force on 8th Jan 2021, opening the membership of the alliance to all the UN member states.
- The Framework Agreement was signed by the Ambassador of Italy Vincenzo De Luca.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of ISA: Gurugram, Haryana
  - Capital of Italy: Rome
  - Currency of Italy: Euro



## US INDIA ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INITIATIVE

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**Current Context:** The US India Artificial Intelligence Initiative (USIAI) was launched by Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF).

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- The announcement for the same was made by the Department of Science and Technology.
- The US India Artificial Intelligence Initiative will focus on AI cooperation in the prioritized areas of both nations.
- This initiative will help to enhance Science & Technology relationship between India and the US.
- The USIAI will be the major platform to discuss challenges, opportunities, barriers in AI sector.
- The platform will lead to have AI based innovations for the welfare of both nations particularly in the areas like smart cities, healthcare, agriculture, materials, manufacturing, and energy.
- The experts associated with this initiative will identify the research, technical, infrastructure, and workforce challenges and opportunities.

## APEDA SIGNED MOU WITH NSIC

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**Current Context:** The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has signed MoU with National Small Industries Corporation Ltd (NSIC).

### KEY POINTS

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- **They have partnered to boost the exports potential of agricultural and processed food products manufactured by MSMEs.**
- The expertise from both the organisations will synergize the activities in the agriculture sector and allied areas thus bringing better value to the stakeholders.
- Both APEDA and NSIC will promote green & sustainable manufacturing technology for the MSME so that they can develop their units to produce sustainable and green products.
- They will also help MSME clusters to participate in national and international trade fairs.
- Under this MoU, the registered members of APEDA will get assistance under all the NSCI schemes.
- Both the entities will tackle the current issues being faced by the MSMEs like technology, skill, quality products and market access.

## IATA PARTNERED WITH STANDARD CHARTERED BANK

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**Current Context:** The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has entered into a partnership with Standard Chartered Bank (StanC).

### KEY FACTS

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- Under this partnership, StanC is mandated by IATA to manage the payment flow within the aviation ecosystem under EasyPay.
- Therefore, IATA has appointed StanC as one of its IATA EasyPay service providers in India which will provide greater payment flexibility to travel agents
- The API based EasyPay grants a secure way to the traditional billing mechanism. The EasyPay is based on 'pay-as-you-go'
- The EasyPay will identify the travel agents who perform payments in a dedicated IATA EasyPay account with StanC and release the tickets to the agents in real-time
- Thus, this partnership will boost the digitization of payments in India
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of IATA: Montreal, Canada

### APPOINTMENTS ON 19TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Dr Ajay Mathur:** He is appointed as Director-General of International Solar Alliance (ISA). He has replaced Upendra Tripathy.

### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of ISA: Gurugram, Haryana
- **Lt Gen DP Pandey:** He is appointed as the Commander of Kashmir based 15 Corps. He has replaced Lt Gen BS Raju who is appointed as DG of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army
- **M A Ganapathy:** He is appointed as the Director-General of the National Security Guard
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of National Security Guard: New Delhi
- **Kuldeep Singh:** He is appointed as the Director-General of Central Reserve Police Force
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of CRPF: New Delhi

### 'INS DHURUV', INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS NUCLEAR MISSILE TRACKING SHIP

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**Current Context: India commissioned 'INS Dhruv, which is an ocean surveillance and nuclear missile tracking vessel. Its code name is VC 11184.**

### DETAILS

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- With this, India has become a 5th country to have a tracking vessel after the USA, France, Russia and China
- It is jointly developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Navy and National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO)

## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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- It is built by Hindustan Shipyard Ltd at its Visakhapatnam facility under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan initiative at the cost of Rs 725 crore
- The INS Dhruv will be used to monitor missile launched from long distances, to monitor the telemetry data of strategic missiles, detect the launch of missiles by adversary nations and to monitor the Indian Ocean bed
- It will also help to create maritime domain awareness for India in the Indian Ocean
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of DRDO and NTRO: New Delhi
  - Chairman of DRDO: Dr G Satheesh Reddy

## WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2021

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**Current Context:** The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network released the World Happiness Report 2021.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- The report is the survey of the state of global happiness which analyses 149 countries for how happy their citizens are.
- This current report focused on the effects of the pandemic and how people all over the world have fared.
- The report was framed by focusing on three main indicators: life evaluations, positive emotions, and negative emotions.
- **As per the report, India is ranked at 139th position among 149 countries.**
- **The list is topped by Finland, being the happiest country in the world for the fourth consecutive year.**

## KUWAIT'S FOREIGN MINISTER PAID VISIT TO INDIA

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**Current Context:** The foreign minister of Kuwait Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah visited India by receiving an invitation from India's external affairs minister, Dr S Jaishankar.

### KEY POINTS

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- During his visit, they held talks about bilateral relations of both nations and assured to enhance cooperation in energy, trade, healthcare, defence, science and technology, culture, IT, cybersecurity and education
- They released the joint statement on the establishment of a joint ministerial commission (JCM)
- The JCM will be an umbrella to engage the bilateral institutions like foreign office consultations and joint working groups.
- The commission will also review various agreements between both nations
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Kuwait: Kuwait City

## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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- Currency of Kuwait: Kuwaiti Dinar

### INDIA'S GDP TO GROW 5% IN FY 2021-- UNCTAD

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**Current Context: The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has estimated that the Indian economy to contract by 6.9% in FY2020 amidst COVID-19, is forecast to record a 'stronger recovery', with growth by 5% in FY 2021.**

#### DETAILS

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- It has also estimated that the global economy to grow by 4.7% in FY 2021
- The accumulated real income loss relative to the pre-COVID-19 trend, 2020-2021 (% of GDP) for India is 27.7 per cent.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of UNCTAD: Geneva, Switzerland

### APPOINTMENTS ON 20TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Ajinkya Rahane:** He is appointed as brand ambassador for NeoGrowth Credit Pvt Ltd.

#### ABOUT

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- **Samia Suluhu Hassan:** She is sworn in as the first woman President of Tanzania
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Tanzania: Dodoma
  - Currency of Tanzania: Shilling
- **Aparna Chennapragada:** She is appointed as Chief Product Officer of Robinhood, which is an American stock trading platform

### LABOUR BUREAU SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH BECIL

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**Current Context: The Ministry of Labour & Employment's attached office called the Labour Bureau signed a service level agreement with Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL).**

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- The BECIL is a GOI's enterprise which is under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- **The service level agreement was signed for providing the technical and manpower support to the Labour Bureau by BECIL**
- **The partnership will help to conduct All India Surveys on Migrant Workers & All India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES).**
- Thus it will lead to the start of IT-enabled surveys as the surveys will be undertaken by the Labour Bureau which will be integrated with the BECIL's technology.

## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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- The partnership will also reduce the time taken for completion of surveys by at least 30-40%
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of BECIL: New Delhi

### NITI AAYOG SIGNED SOI WITH AISPL

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**Current Context:** The NITI Aayog has signed SoI with Amazon Internet Services Private Limited (AISPL).

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **They have signed SoI with an aim to empower the students about the fundamentals of cloud computing through Atal Tinkering Labs.**
- This partnership will help to train students with digital and web-based tools so that they can enhance their creative and innovative capabilities, which in turn will help the nation to grow in innovation and entrepreneurship network areas.
- Under this partnership, Amazon Web Services (AWS) will introduce the fundamentals of cloud-like cloud storage, virtual compute power, web hosting, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and virtual reality (VR) to the students.
- The NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) will leverage the AWS Educate and AWS Edstart, which are the platform of AWS.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of NITI Aayog: New Delhi
  - Director of AIM: Ramanan Ramanathan
  - HQ of AWS: Seattle, Washington DC, USA

### GRAM UJALA SCHEME

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**Current Context:** The Union Power and New and Renewable Energy Minister Raj Kumar Singh launched Gram Ujala Scheme.

#### KEY POINTS

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- **The Gram Ujala Scheme is launched to offer the world's cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas of the country at a cost of Rs 10 only.**
- **The first phase of the scheme was launched from Arrah in Bihar.**
- During the first phase, 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed across villages of 5 states.
- The LED bulbs will be offered by state-run Energy Efficiency Services Ltd's subsidiary Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL). It will offer 7 watts and 12 watts LED bulbs with three years' warranty to the rural community of India.

### 11TH INDIA CHEM 2021

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## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

**Current Context:** The 11th edition of India Chem 2021 was inaugurated by Union Minister Sadananda Gowda.

### DETAILS

- **The India Chem is the biennial International Exhibiting and Conference.**
- **It was jointly organised by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, GOI and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).**
- **The theme for 2021:** 'India: Global Manufacturing Hub for Chemicals and Petrochemicals'.
- It was organised to explore and enhance investment in the Chemicals and Petrochemical sectors of India.
- Various events like Global CEOs round table, conclaves related to the chemicals industry, petrochemical industry, global agrochemical industry, capital goods and plant machinery were held at the conference.
- Also, India-Japan Chemical and Petrochemical Forum, India-EU Chemical and Petrochemical Forum and India-US Chemical and Petrochemical Forum were conducted.
- Union Minister also highlighted that an investment of Rs 8 lakh crore in the Chemical and Petrochemical sector of India will be made by 2025.

### INDIA & JAPAN TO ENHANCE COOPERATION IN PATENT VERIFICATION

**Current Context:** India and Japan have agreed to enhance cooperation in patent verification.

#### KEY FACTS

- **Both the nation's offices have agreed to act mutually as competent International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA) for any international patent application filed with them.**
- The agreement for the same was signed during the 4th review meeting of the Department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) and Japan Patent Office (JPO).
- They have agreed on patent verification cooperation under a memorandum of cooperation on industrial property.
- The meet was held in two phases. The first phase was co-chaired by Guruprasad Mohapatra, secretary, DPIIT and Toshihide Kasutani, commissioner, JPO. During the first phase, the pilot Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programme was reviewed. The second phase was co-chaired by Ravinder, joint secretary, DPIIT and Kasutani.
- All the dignitaries reviewed the work progress under the MoC on the industrial property between both nations and developed an action plan between the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks (CGPDTM) of India and the JPO based on the MoC.
- They also acknowledged IP enforcement importance and assured to work to raise awareness for IP.

### SAAMAR CAMPAIGN



## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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**Current Context:** The government of Jharkhand launched SAAMAR Campaign.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The campaign is launched to tackle malnutrition in the state.**
- **The SAAMAR signifies ‘Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anemia Reduction.’**
- The campaign is launched with the target of 1000 days, during which annual surveys will be conducted to track the progress.
- Under this campaign, various departments will come together to identify anaemic women and malnourished children of the state. The campaign will also identify the anaemia and malnutrition in the tribal community of the state.
- **Static Part:**
  - Stadium in Jharkhand: Jharkhand States Cricket Association International Cricket Stadium, Keenan Stadium, Birsa Munda Athletics Stadium
  - Dams in Jharkhand: Maithon Dam, Panchet Dam, Tenughat Dam

## PM MODI LAUNCHED ‘JAL SHAKTI ABHIYAN: CATCH THE RAIN’ CAMPAIGN

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**Current Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ‘Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain’ Campaign via video conference.

### KEY FACTS

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- It was launched on the occasion of World Water Day (22nd March 2021).
- **The campaign is based on the theme of ‘Catch the rain, where it falls when it falls.’**
- The campaign will be executed in rural and urban areas of India from 22nd March to 30th November 2021 i.e. during the pre-monsoon and the monsoon period in the country.
- The main motto behind the campaign is to conserve the water and preserve it at the grass-root level through the people’s participation.
- It also aims to encourage stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures.

## MANIPUR—MODEL STATE FOR VAN DHAN VIKAS YOJANA

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**Current Context:** Manipur has emerged as the winning state for Van Dhan Yojana.

### DETAILS

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- **In this state, the Van Dhan programme has emerged as a major source of employment for the local tribals.**
- The Van Dhan Programme was launched in Oct 2019 and since the launching, the state government actively participated in the execution of the programme at all levels and due to which the state emerged as a model enterprise for the rest of the country.

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- The state has established 100 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, which constitute 1500 SHGs and are proving beneficial to 30,000 tribal entrepreneurs of the state who are particularly engaged in professions like processing, collection, packaging, value-adding, and marketing of the value-added products from the minor forest produce.
- The programme is controlled by TRIFED along with the support and the implementing agencies from the district administration and other stakeholders of the state.
- **Static Part:**
  - National Park and Wild Life Sanctuaries in Manipur: Keibul Lamjao National Park, Khongjaingamba Ching WLS, Yaingangpokpi Lokchao WLS

### APPOINTMENTS ON 22ND MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Dattatreya Hosabale:** He is appointed as General Secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He has replaced Bhaiyyaji Joshi.

### ABOUT

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- **Arindam Bagchi:** He is appointed as the official spokesperson of the Union ministry of external affairs. He has replaced Anurag Srivastava.
- **Mark Rutte:** He won the 2021 parliamentary elections to become the Prime Minister of the Netherland for the 4th term.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Netherland: Amsterdam
  - Currency of Netherlands: Euro

### RBI SETS UP PANEL TO EVALUATE APPLICATIONS FOR UNIVERSAL BANKS AND SFBS

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**Current Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a 5 member committee to evaluate applications for Universal Banks and Small Finance Banks.**

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- The committee set up for this purpose is termed as 'standing external advisory committee (SEAC)'.
- **The 5 member committee will be headed by former Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath.**
- **Other members of the committee:** Director of the central board of RBI, Revathy Iyer; Former executive director of the National Payments Corporation of India, B Mahapatra; Former Chairman of the Canara Bank, T N Manoharan, Former MD of the State Bank of India, Hemant G Contractor.
- The committee will work for a tenure of three years and the secretarial support to the committee will be granted by the Department of Regulation of the RBI.
- The committee is set up in regards to the guidelines from RBI for 'on-tap' Licensing of Universal Banks in the Private Sector (1st Aug 2016) and Guidelines for 'on-tap' Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector (5th Dec 2019), which indicates that applications for Universal Banks

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and Small Finance Banks will be initially screened by the Reserve Bank to ensure prima facie eligibility of the applicants.

- The SEAC will evaluate the applications thereafter.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of RBI: Mumbai
  - Governor of RBI: Shaktikanta Das

### ULTIMATE MILITARY STRENGTH INDEX

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**Current Context:** According to a study released by the defence website Military Direct, India has the 4th Strongest Military Force with 61 points.

#### KEY POINTS

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- **China is at the 1st rank position with 82 points in the study for having Strongest Military Force in the world.**
- The second and third ranks are gained by the USA and Russia respectively for the same.
- The study was made by considering various factors like budgets, the number of inactive and active military personnel, total air, sea, land and nuclear resources, average salaries, and weight of equipment.
- **Static Part:**
  - Chief of Defence Staff: Bipin Rawat

#### UPFPO SHAKTI PORTAL

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**Current Context:** The government of Uttar Pradesh launched UPFPO (Uttar Pradesh Farmer Producer Organisation) Shakti portal. It was launched by the CM of the state, Yogi Adityanath.

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The portal is part of the Kisan Kalyan Mission in Gorakhpur and is the first of its kind in India.**
- The UPFPO Shakti portal will prove highly beneficial to farmers at the grassroots level. It will grant a single platform for farmers, producer groups, traders and the agriculture and other allied departments of the state.
- The portal is developed by the Department of Agriculture of the state with technical and funding support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- The portal will help farmers to enhance their business base, reduce their dependencies of income from madis only by giving them a platform for national and international trade.
- The farmers will be able to download the necessary documents required to form the organizations directly from the portal.
- **Static Part:**

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- Thermal Power Plant in UP: Rihand Super Thermal Power Project, Singrauli Super Thermal Power Plant, Feroze Gandhi Unchahar Thermal Power Plant, National Capital Thermal Power Plant, Rosa Power Plant

### YONEX ALL ENGLAND OPEN BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIP 2021

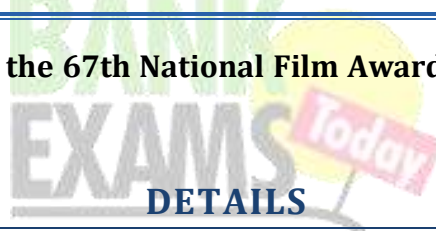
**Current Context:** The All England Open 2021 Championship was held at Arena Birmingham, England.

#### ABOUT

- **The winners in each category of the tournament are:**
- Men's Single: Lee Zii Jia (Malaysia)
- Women's Single: Nozomi Okuhara (Japan)
- Men's Doubles: Yuta Watanabe and Hiroyuki Endo (Japan)
- Women's Doubles: Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara (Japan)
- Mixed Doubles: Yuta Watanabe and Aria Higashino (Japan)

### 67TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS

**Current Context:** The winners for the 67th National Film Awards were announced on 22nd March 2021.



- **The event is organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals. Below are the winners for each category.**
  - Best Feature Film: Marakkar: Lion of the Arabian Sea (Malayalam)
  - Best Actor: Manoj Bajpayee for Bhonsle (Hindi), and Dhanush for Asuran (Tamil)
  - Best Actress: Kangana Ranaut for Panga (Hindi) and Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi (Hindi)
  - Best Director: Sanjay Puri for Bahattar Hoorain (Hindi)
  - Best Debut Film of a Director: Mathukutty Xavier for Helen (Malayalam)
  - Best Child Artist: Naga Vishal for KD (Tamil)
  - Best Choreography: Maharishi (Telugu), Raju Sundaram
  - Best Male Playback Singer: B Praak for Kesari (Hindi)
  - Best Female Playback Singer: Savani Ravindra for Bardo (Marathi)
  - Best Children's Film: Kastoori (Hindi)
  - Best Film on Social Issues: Anandi Gopal (Marathi)
- **The winners for Best Film Category Awards for each language are:**
  - Best Hindi Film: Chhichhore
  - Best Malayalam Film: Kalla Nottam
  - Best Telugu Film: Jersey
  - Best Punjabi Film: Rab Da Radio 2

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- Best Bengali Film: Gumnaami
- Best Marathi Film: Bardo
- Best Tamil Film: Asuran
- Best Kannada Film: Akshi
- Best Bengali Film: Gumnaami
- Best Tulu Film: Pingara
- Best Chattisgarhi Film: Bhulan the Maze
- Best Assamese Film: Ronuwa - Who Never Surrender
- Best Odia Film: Kalira Atita and Sala Budhar Badla
- Best Konkani Film: Kaajro
- **The winners for Non-Feature Film Category Awards are:**
  - Best Non-Feature Film: An Engineered Dream (Hindi)
  - Best Director: Sudhanshu Saria for Knock Knock Knock (English/ Bengali)
  - Best Short Fiction Film: Custody (Hindi/ English)
  - Best Educational Film: Apples and Oranges (English)
  - Best Animation Film: Radha (Musical)
  - Best Investigative Film: Jakkal (Marathi)
  - Best Biographical Film: Elephants Do Remember (English)
- **The winners for Other Awards Categories are:**
  - Most Film Friendly State: Sikkim
  - Best Book on Cinema: A Gandhian Affair: India's Curious Portrayal of Love in Cinema, by Sanjay Suri
  - Best Film Critic: Sohini Chattopadhyay

### RBI IMPOSED RS 15 LAKH PENALTY ON FEDBANK FINANCIAL SERVICES LIMITED

**Current Context: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 15 lakh on Fedbank Financial Services Limited, Mumbai.**

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- **The penalty was imposed for not following the directions framed by RBI in 'Monitoring of Frauds in NBFCs (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2016'.**
- As per RBI, a statutory inspection of the company with reference to its financial position as of 31st March 2019 revealed the non-compliance with the directions. In this regards, RBI has issued a notice to the company to mention why a penalty should not be imposed for failure to not following the directions issued by RBI.
- And after the company's reply to the notice and oral submissions made during the personal hearing, the RBI came to the conclusion that the charge of non-compliance with aforesaid RBI directions was substantiated and warranted imposition of monetary penalty.
- The Fedbank Financial Services Limited, Mumbai is a subsidiary of Federal Bank.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of RBI: Mumbai

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- Governor of RBI: Shaktikanta Das

### MOC BETWEEN INDIA & JAPAN FOR WATER RESOURCES

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**Current Context:** The Union Cabinet gave the approval to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Japan and India in the water resources sector.

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The MoC will help in facilitating irrigation requirements, water security, and sustainability in water resources development.**
- It was signed between the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Jal Shakti Ministry, GOI and the Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan.
- The MoC will help in enhancing cooperation in water technology and water and delta management which will lead to implementing various projects between both nations.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Japan: Tokyo
  - Currency of Japan: Japanese Yen

### UNOPS PARTNERED WITH DENMARK

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**Current Context:** The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has entered into a partnership with Denmark to support the Jal Jeevan Mission Programme in Uttar Pradesh.

#### KEY POINTS

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- Both the entities will work to offer strategic technical support to the mission and will ensure to fulfil the motto of bilateral Indo-Danish cooperation.
- Under this partnership, UNOPS will frame scalable delivery models in 11 water-scarce districts of Uttar Pradesh namely Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions.
- They will mobilise the resources in the districts for community mobilisation, capacity building and training in order to fulfil the mission i.e. to provide tap water connection to every household of the districts.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of UNOPS: Copenhagen, Denmark

### PRANIT E-TENDERING PORTAL

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**Current Context:** The Power Grid Corporation of India has launched an e-Tendering Portal called PRANIT.



### DETAILS

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- The PRANIT portal will support fewer paperwork activities, ease of operation and will offer more transparency in the tender application process.
- The portal is certified by the Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Because of this portal, the Power Grid Corporation of India has become the only organization of the country to have an eProcurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), which will thus enhance data security and operational transparency.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Power Grid Corporation of India: Gurgaon, Haryana

### FREE-SPACE QUANTUM COMMUNICATION DEMONSTRATED BY ISRO

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**Current Context:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully demonstrated its Free-Space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 meters.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The demonstration took place at the Space Applications Centre (SAC) in Ahmedabad in between the two line-of-sight buildings within its campus.**
- The demonstration was conducted at the night to avoid interference from direct sunlight.
- The experts performed a demonstration using quantum-key-encrypted signals.
- As per ISRO, this is thus the major achievement for unconditionally secured satellite data communication using quantum technologies.
- The space quantum communication is comprised of NAVIC receiver for the time synchronisation in between the transmitter and receiver modules, gimbal mechanism system to have an optical alignment.
- Also, the Quantum Key Distribution technology uses the Quantum Communication technology which grants data security.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of ISRO: Bengaluru
  - Chairman of ISRO: K. Sivan

### GOV. OF KARNATAKA SIGNED MOU WITH ITC

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**Current Context:** The state government of Karnataka has signed an MoU with ITC.

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The MoU was signed to execute a watershed development programme, which covers over one million acres and 100 watersheds in the state.**

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- The MoU was signed under Karnataka Watershed Development Department and ITC's social investment programme called Mission Sunehra Kal. The partnership will work for a tenure of 3 years.
- The MoU is basically a part of Karnataka's 'Watershed development for drought proofing' programme. This programme aims to cover 1.16 million acres of watershed area in 29 districts of the state.
- Under this MoU, ITC will form an expert group that will provide guidance and training to the government officials to apply the company's drought-proofing framework for planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme.
- Both the entities will work to fulfil the motto of Jal Shakti Abhiyan and More-Crop-Per-Drop.
- **Static Part:**
  - Lakes in Karnataka: Agara Lake, Bellandur Lake, Lalbagh Lake, Madiwala Lake, Kukkarahalli lake, Lingambudhi Lake, Pampa Sarovar

### MP AND UP SIGNED MOU WITH JAL SHAKTI MINISTRY

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**Current Context:** The governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh signed MoU with Union Jal Shakti Ministry.

#### KEY POINTS

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- **The MoU was signed to implement the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project.**
- The Ken-Betwa river interlinking project will carry water from surplus regions to drought prone and water-scarce regions through interlinking of rivers.
- The water will be transferred from Ken river in Panna district in Madhya Pradesh to Betwa river in Uttar Pradesh by constructing the Dhaudan Dam and a 221 km-long canal.
- The project will prove beneficial to districts of Jhansi, Mahoba, Lalitpur and Hamirpur of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Static Part:**
  - National Parks of MP: Bandhavgarh NP, Kanha Tiger Reserve, Mandla Plant Fossils NP, Pench NP, Van Vihar NP, Satpura NP
  - Wild Life Sanctuaries in UP: Bakhira Bird Sanctuary, Katarniaghat WLS, Lakh Bahosi Sanctuary, Okhla Bird Sanctuary, Samaspur Sanctuary, Ranipur WLS

### INDIA'S GDP TO 12.8% FOR FY22—FITCH

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**Current Context:** The Fitch Ratings has upgraded the growth projection for India to 12.8% for the fiscal year 2022.

#### KEY FACTS

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- Earlier it had estimated 11% of growth for India for FY22.

## Monthly Current Affairs GK Digest: March 2021

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- Fitch has released this upgradation in growth in its Global Economic Outlook (GEO), which mentions that the improvement in GDP is due to factors like stronger carryover effect, looser fiscal stance and better virus containment.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Fitch Ratings: New York, US

### WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY FORUM 2021

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**Current Context:** The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021 was held recently.

#### DETAILS

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- **India was represented by the Minister of State for Communication, Sanjay Dhotre.**
- **The WSIS Forum is the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for the development community.'**
- **It was organised by International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.**
- The forum observed the participation of Secretary General ITU, Ministers of Russia, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Zimbabwe, Iran and leaders and high-level dignitaries.
- At the forum Union Minister Sanjay Dhotre highlighted the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in various sectors of growth.
- He highlighted the policies and programs adopted by India to have a digital drive in the country.
- He also mentioned various initiatives and platforms like Arogya Setu, CovidSavdhan system developed by India to deal with the pandemic.
- He mentioned the BharatNet flagship programme of India which aims to have telecom infrastructure development in remote areas of the country.

### APPOINTMENTS ON 25TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Justice NV Ramana:** He will be appointed as the next Chief Justice of India following the retirement of Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde. Therefore, Justice N V Ramana will serve as the 48th Chief Justice of India from April 24th.

#### ABOUT

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- **Dr Vivek Murthy:** He is appointed as Surgeon General under US President Biden's administration.

### INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INDEX 2021

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**Current Context:** The 9th edition of the International Intellectual Property Index 2021 was released.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **It was released by the US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC).**
- **As per the index, India is ranked at 40th position among 53 nations with a score of 38.40.**
- **The index is topped by the USA with a score of 95.31.**
- The second and third rank positions are marked by the UK and Germany respectively.
- The index ranking is framed by evaluating IP rights, patents, copyright policies, commercialization of IP assets and ratification of International Treaties for all 53 nations.
- The report suggests that India needs a unified IP framework for sectors like advanced manufacturing, biopharmaceutical products and creative contents.
- The report also suggests that India needs to remove bureaucratic barriers and make Cinematographic law amendments to improve its rank position in the index.

## FM LAUNCHED CENTRAL SCRUTINY CENTRE & IEPFA APP

**Current Context: The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman virtually inaugurated Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) and launched the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) mobile app.**

## KEY POINTS

- The Central Scrutiny Centre (CSC) is an initiative of the Corporate Affairs Ministry. This centre will help to scrutinise the filings by users under straight through processes.
- The IEPFA app will develop financial literacy through investors' awareness, education, and protection among investors. The app will help to track the status and progress of the IEPF claim refund process.
- The app will allow investors and common citizens to file a report on the suspected fraudulent schemes.
- Both initiatives will develop a new corporate and investor-friendly ecosystem.

## 'IOB TRENDY' SAVING ACCOUNT BY INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK

**Current Context: The Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) launched an 'IOB Trendy' Savings Account.**

## KEY FACTS

- **It is particularly launched for the growing millennial population in the country by keeping their banking preferences in mind.**
- To have an IOB Trendy account, the customer should be between the age of 21-38 years. The account can be opened in a self or joint manner. In the case of a joint account, the primary holder has to be a millennial at the time of account opening.
- The 'IOB Trendy' comes up with no 'Opening Balance' requirement, therefore no charges will be levied for the first month for non-maintenance of balance.

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- The customer needs to maintain a daily minimum balance of Rs 10,000 or a daily minimum balance of Rs 5000 and a digital turnover (transactions using IOB ATM / CDM / IOB Mobile Banking or Internet Banking fund transfer / IOB UPI transactions or IOB Debit card POS transactions) of a minimum of Rs 2000 per month.
- The account also offers a free personalised accident (death) insurance cover facility of Rs 5 lakhs, if the quarterly average balance is Rs 1 lakh and above.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of IOB: Chennai, Tamil Nadu
  - Tagline of IOB: Good People to Grow with

### APPLIED MATERIALS SIGNED PACT WITH IISC

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**Current Context: Applied Materials India has signed a Research and Development (R&D) pact with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.**

#### DETAILS

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- The R&D pact is part of the Industry Affiliate Program of the Centre for Nanoscience and Engineering (CeNSE). The CeNSE conducts cutting-edge research and technological innovations and incorporates them with partners to develop commercial products and services.
- Both the entities in partnership with CeNSE will work jointly to develop new applications and solutions in the advanced materials field.
- They will work to develop advanced infrastructure which will be used to find solutions from 'lab to fab' and will grant an advanced approach to semiconductor technologies.

### APPOINTMENTS ON 26TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Sanjeev Kumar:** He is appointed as Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

#### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of AAI: New Delhi
- **Atish Chandra:** He is appointed as Chairman and MD of Food Corporation of India (FCI).
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of FCI: New Delhi
- **Saurabh Garg:** He is appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of UIDAI: New Delhi
- **K Vijay Raghavan:** He gets an extension of one year to be the Principal Scientific Advisor.

### NIYO PARTNERED WITH EQUITAS SFB AND VISA

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**Current Context:** The Digital banking fintech firm, Niyox has partnered with Equitas Small Finance Bank and Visa to launch Niyox.

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The Niyox is a mobile banking solution for millennials.**
- The Niyox has launched a new type of zero balance saving account with an interest rate of 3.5% upto Rs 1 lakhs and 7% on incremental amounts above Rs 1 lakhs.
- This Niyox digital account can be utilised in two ways i.e. using it as an online saving account or using it as a Wealth Management Account.
- It is thus a 2 in 1 type of account i.e. Savings Account and Wealth Account.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Equitas Small Finance Bank: Chennai, TN

### SEBI ANNOUNCED TO EASE LISTING NORMS FOR STARTUPS

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**Current Context:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) announced to ease the eligibility and listing criteria particularly on Innovators Growth Platform (IGP) to help the startups.

### KEY POINTS

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- **The SEBI has also made amendments to SEBI regulations like the Delisting of Equity Shares and Alternative Investment Funds.**
- Currently, for a company to list on IGP need to have 25% pre-issue capital for at least two years by an institutional investor and other large investors. Now, this is revised to one year by SEBI.
- The pre-issue shareholding of IGP investors was 10%, this is now modified to 25%.
- Initially, the open offer threshold limit to companies for being under IGP was 25%. It is now modified to 49%.
- The promoters or the acquirer are supposed to disclose their intention to delist the company by making a public announcement at the prior stage and they as permitted to mention an indicative price of delisting which should not be less than the floor price.
- Also, SEBI has allowed angel investors to make investments in startups.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of SEBI: Mumbai
  - Chairman of SEBI: Ajay Tyagi

### 2021 PARA SHOOTING WORLD CUP

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**Current Context:** The 2021 Para Shooting World Cup tournament was held in Al Ain, UAE.

### KEY FACTS

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- In the event, India bagged 7 medals and finished at 3rd position. Ukraine topped in the number of medals by winning a total of 11 medals.
- The winners from India in each category are:
  - Shinghraj: Gold medal in Men's 10m Air Pistol
  - Manish Narwal: Gold medal Mixed 50m Pistol
  - Avani Lekhara: Silver medal in women's 10m air rifle standing
  - Rahul Jakhar: Bronze medal in Mixed 25m pistol
  - Singhraj: Bronze medal in Mixed 50m pistol
  - Sriharsha Devaraddi Ramakrishna: Bronze medal in mixed 10m air rifle standing
  - Sidhartha Babu: Bronze medal in mixed 50m rifle prone

### 116TH MEET OF PERMANENT INDUS COMMISSION (PIC)

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**Current Context:** The 116th edition of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) was held between India and Pakistan in New Delhi.

#### DETAILS

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- The 116th PIC meet was held under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- The Indian side was represented by Pradeep Kumar Saxena, India's Commissioner for IWT and officers from Central Water Commission, Central Electricity Authority and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation.
- Pakistan's side was represented by Syed Muhammad Meher Ali Shah, Commissioner for IWT.
- The dignitaries held a discussion about two projects, namely, Pakal Dul (1000 MW) and Lower Kalnai (48 MW).
- Pakistan has asked India to share data related to the design of other Indian hydropower projects being planned to be developed, which was accepted by the Indian side and assured to cooperate in data sharing.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Pakistan: Islamabad
  - Currency of Pakistan: Pakistani Rupee

### APPOINTMENTS ON 27TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Anish Shah:** He is appointed as MD and CEO of Mahindra and Mahindra. He has replaced Pawan Goenka.

#### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of AAI: New Delhi
- **Denis Sassou Nguesso:** He is re-elected to be the President of the Republic of Congo.
- **Static Part:**

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- Capital of Republic of Congo: Brazzaville
- Currency of Republic of Congo: Central African CFA Franc
- **Dr HR Nagendra:** He is appointed to head an expert committee to explore the potential of Yoga as a productivity-enhancing tool for the population. The committee is set up by AYUSH Ministry.
- **Static Part:**
  - Union Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH: Shripad Yesso Naik

### JICA SIGNED LOAN AGREEMENT WITH TCCL

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**Current Context:** The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has signed a loan agreement with Tata Cleantech Capital Ltd (TCCL).

#### HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The loan agreement was signed to offer loans to the Indian firms which work in the Clean Energy project sectors.**
- **The loan agreement of 10 billion Japanese yen (approx. 660 crores) was signed between the firms.**
- The loan amount will be granted through JICA's private sector investment finance scheme and is co-financed with the Sumitso Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC).
- The TCCL will make use of this loan amount to reduce the impact of climate change by offering green finance.
- This joint agreement will accelerate the pace of transition to clean energy in India.
- They will work to support the projects like renewable energy, e-mobility and energy efficiency sectors by channelising climate finance in India.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of JICA: Tokyo, Japan
  - HQ of TCCL: Mumbai

### WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2021--DATA FOR BETTER LIVES

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**Current Context:** The World Bank released a report titled 'World Development Report 2021:Data for Better Lives'.

#### KEY POINTS

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- **The report is a blueprint which describes that how to make use of power and solutions to improve the lives of poor people and advance development objectives, by ensuring that no one is left behind.**
- **The report highlights various ways to improve the lives of people.**
- The report describes the Social Contract for Data in order to get more value out of data while protecting people against harm and ensuring access and representation. It also mentions that

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different data-creating and data-using parties should collaborate to attain the objective of the report.

- It mentions that Value, Equity and Trust are the three elements of a social contract for data.
- The report supports the nations to identify where the public and private sector investments are the most critical.
- It highlights defining rich welfare programs to have policy reforms and mentions the sectors in which initiatives can be held to facilitate cross-border cooperation.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of World Bank: Washington, D.C., United States
  - President of World Bank: David Malpass

### MOU SIGNED TO IMPLEMENT CITY SPECIFIC ACTION PLAN UNDER NCAP

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**Current Context: The Representatives of state pollution control boards, urban local bodies and Institutes of Repute signed an MoU to implement city-specific action plans under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).**

#### KEY FACTS

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- **The MoU was signed for 132 identified cities in India.**
- The MoU was signed in the presence of Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar.
- The MoU was signed to fulfil the vision set by PM Modi to curb air pollution by 20% in the next 4 years in over 100 cities of the country.
- The NCAP is a national-level strategy that has set a target to reduce air pollution by a reduction in particulate matter concentrations by 2024.
- The Union Minister Prakash Javadekar also urged the states to procure e-buses for public transport purpose under the FAME scheme.
- The MoU will lead to having smooth execution of plans set to tackle air pollution in a timely manner.

### 7TH ANNUAL SUMMIT OF NATHEALTH

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**Current Context: The 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH was held recently.**

#### ABOUT

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- **The summit was addressed by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan.**
- **The theme of the Summit: 'Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era'.**
- The main objective of the summit was to bring healthcare industries under a single platform to frame a path to deal with Post COVID 19 situation and to eradicate the pandemic.

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- While addressing the summit, Union Minister focussed on GOI's vision of Health for all. He also discussed National Health Policy drafted by India.

### TRIBAL TB INITIATIVE

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**Current Context:** The Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has launched the 'Tribal TB Initiative' with an aim to achieve the target of TB Mukht Bharat.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **In this regards, a Guidance Note on Joint Action Plan for eradicating TB was framed.**
- **The joint action plan is set for 2021-25 and it includes:**
  - Vulnerability mapping followed by quarterly ACF and TB preventive therapy
  - Capacity building for frontline workers and vulnerability reduction
  - Multisectoral collaboration for social determinants
  - Budgeted district health plan
- Along with the joint action plan, a Special Edition of Tribal Ministry's Publication 'ALEKH' on TB, and a document on Tribal Tuberculosis (TB) Initiative was also released.

### 'DISTRIBUTOR TO RETAILER' (D2R) FINANCE-- BHARATPE

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**Current Context:** The Financial Technology firm, BharatPe has launched a product called 'Distributor to Retailer' (D2R) Finance.

### KEY FACTS

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- **It is launched to grant instant liquidity to SMEs and empower SMEs in India.**
- The D2R Finance offers collateral-free loans of upto Rs 50 lakhs for a tenure of 7 days to 30 days at low-interest rates and zero processing charges.
- The product will address the credit gap which is being faced by the SME sector.
- The D2R Finance is termed as the short term loan to tackle constant liquidity challenges faced by SMEs.
- The product disburses the loan amount within 1 business day.
- It will prove beneficial to small Kirana holders, merchants, dealers and traders.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of BharatPe: New Delhi

### INDIA AND BANGLADESH SIGNED VARIOUS MOUS

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**Current Context:** India's PM Narendra Modi paid a visit to Bangladesh, during which both the nations signed MoUs in various sectors to boost their cooperation.

## DETAILS

- **The MoUs were signed in the sector of trade, resilience, sports facilities, ICT, Disaster management and mitigation.**
- During the visit, the PMs of both the nations discussed bilateral cooperation and the progress activities in areas of health, trade, connectivity, energy, developmental cooperation and many more.
- Both the dignitaries agreed to run 'Mitali Express', a direct passenger train between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri.
- India also granted 109 ambulances to the Bangladesh and 1.2mn of Covid vaccine doses to eradicate pandemic from the country.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of Bangladesh: Dhaka
  - Currency of Bangladesh: Taka
  - PM of Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina

## KBL SMART TRADE

**Current Context: Karnataka Bank in partnership with IIFL Securities Limited launched KBL Smart Trade.**

### ABOUT

- **The KBL Smart Trade will allow the customers of Karnataka Bank to access IIFL Securities Demat and Trading account solution to serve their capital market needs.**
- This will also help the customers to open a paperless, online trading account with IIFL Securities.
- The KBL Smart Trade is a two-in-one type of account facility i.e. it possesses combined features of a Demat and Trading account.
- With the help of this account, customers can track live prices and gets alerts related to stocks and trading tips.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Karnataka Bank: Mangalore, Karnataka
  - Tagline of Karnataka Bank: Your Family Bank across India
  - HQ of IIFL Securities: Mumbai

## CESL SIGNED PACT WITH CSC SPV

**Current Context: The Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) has signed a pact with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV).**

## HIGHLIGHTS

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- **The pact was signed to create demand aggregation for electric mobility, solar, energy efficiency solutions and other initiatives of CESL.**
- Under the pact, both the entities will aggregate demand and will conduct feasibility studies for projects related to renewables (decentralized solar), energy efficiency (solar micro-grids, solar-based agricultural pump-sets), e-mobility (EV charging stations, battery charging stations and battery swapping stations), Battery Energy Storage Systems, etc.
- Through this partnership, the initiatives of CESL will reach across the country and will have new and innovative business models.
- The partnership will also help to support India's plan of climate action and explore green energy initiatives.
- They will jointly implement renewables, electric mobility, and other energy efficiency solutions in the country.
- **Static Part:**
  - CESL: It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).

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### NAVIES OF INDIA AND THE US CONDUCTED 'PASSEX'

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**Current Context: The Indian Navy and the United States Navy conducted Passage Exercise i.e. 'PASSEX'.**

#### KEY POINTS

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- **The naval exercise was held in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (Bay of Bengal).**
- This is the first time that Indian Air Force fighters were part of this exercise.
- The Indian side was represented by warship 'Shivalik' and P8I, a long-range maritime patrol aircraft.
- The US side was represented by the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group.
- The objective behind PASSEX is to develop cooperation and interoperability among the forces.
- **Static part:**
  - Chief of Naval Staff: Admiral Karambir Singh

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### 'UNI-CARBON CARD'

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**Current Context: Union Bank of India launched the 'UNI-CARBON CARD' which is co-branded by HPCL in NPCI's Rupay platform.**

#### DETAILS

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- This card will create an opportunity to add the value of benefits to the bank's customers.
- The UNI-CARBON CARD is a contactless tap and goes type of card. It is also termed as National Common Mobility Card (NCMC).
- The card if used at the HPCL retail outlets offers cashback or rewards, waiver of fuel surcharge features to the user.



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- The card limit offered is 20% of gross annual income with a minimum of Rs 50,000 with no upper limit.
- **Static Part:**
  - HQ of Union Bank of India and HPCL: Mumbai
  - Tagline of Union Bank of India: Good People to Bank with

### APPOINTMENTS ON 30TH MARCH 2021

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**Current Context: Nilam Sawhney:** She is appointed as Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner. She has replaced Ramesh Kumar.

### ABOUT

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- **Static Part:**
  - CM of Andhra Pradesh: Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy
  - Governor of Andhra Pradesh: Biswabhusan Harichandan
- **Soma Mondal:** She is appointed as Chairman of the Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE). She is also the Chairman of SAIL.
- **Pradip Kumar Das:** He is appointed as Vice-Chairman of Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE). He is also the CMD of IREDA.

### INDIA-SOUTH KOREA FRIENDSHIP PARK

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**Current Context: India's Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh and South Korea's Minister of National Defence, Suh Wook jointly inaugurated an Indo-Korean Friendship Park in Delhi State Park.**

### KEY FACTS

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- The park signifies the friendly relations between both nations and serves as a monument to India's contribution to a part of the country that participated in the Korean War (1950-53) in the 21st century with the support of the United Nations.
- The park is developed jointly by the Ministry of National Defense, the Government of India, the Indian Army, the Delhi Cantonment Board, the Korean Embassy and the Indian North Korean Veterans Association.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital of South Korea: Seoul
  - Currency of South Korea: South Korean Won

### INDIA AUSTRALIA TALKS ON DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION AND EXPORT CONTROL

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**Current Context:** India and Australia held joint talks on Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Export Control. This was the sixth edition of the same.

### HIGHLIGHTS

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- They held joint discussions about the issues being faced in the areas of chemical, nuclear, biological disarmament and non-proliferation, outer space security, conventional weapons, and strategic export control.
- The discussions led to enhancement in the mutual cooperation of both nations and revealed the appreciation of national perspectives and global development on the disarmament and non-proliferation issues.
- These talks also helped in contributing to the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- **Static Part:**
  - Capital Australia: Canberra
  - Currency of Australia: Dollar

### 11TH INDO-US JOINT SPECIAL FORCES EXERCISE VAJRA PRAHAR 2021

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**Current Context:** The Special Forces of India and the US conducted the joint military exercise at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh.

### KEY POINTS

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- **The joint military exercise is termed Vajra Prahar 2021. This was the 11th edition of the joint military exercise.**
- It was held to enhance interoperability between both the nations.
- It also leads to explore cooperation in the areas like joint mission planning and operational tactics.

### COGNIZANT RETURNSHIP PROGRAMME

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**Current Context:** The tech giant Cognizant launched a Returnship Programme with the name 'Cognizant Returnship Programme'.

### KEY FACTS

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- **The programme was launched to offer support for IT professionals who wish to restart their careers.**
- **The programme will be a 12-week paid experience for talented technology professionals looking to restart their careers after a break.**
- By launching this programme, the tech firm has extended its diversity and inclusion (D&I) philosophy beyond the workplace and into lives and careers, by supporting the employees in their

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personal goals like taking care of the family, raising a child or pursuing a life i.e. granting a professional break.

- The programme will grant a break to the employees which will in return help them to focus and return stronger to the next phase of a professional journey with a renewed sense of purpose.

### 2021 ISSF SHOOTING WORLD CUP NEW DELHI

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**Current Context: The 2021 ISSF World Cup New Delhi was held recently in which India finished at the top position in the medals tally.**

#### ABOUT

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- **India secured 30 medals which included 15 gold, 9 silver and 6 bronze. The USA was in second position by winning 8 medals.**
- **The winner for each category of the event are:**
  - Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Deepak Kumar and Pankaj Kumar won Silver in Air Rifle Team men
  - Sanjeev Rajput and Tejaswini Sawant won Gold in 50M 3 Position mixed team
  - Aishwary Pratap and Sunidhi Chauhan won Bronze in 50M 3 Position mixed team
  - Anjum Moudgil, Shreya Saksena and Gayathri Nithyanadam won Silver in the 50M 3P Team Women
  - Swapnil Kusale, Chain Singh and Niraj Kumar won Gold in the 50M 3P Team Men event
  - Chinki Yadav won Gold in the women's 25M pistol event
  - Yashaswini Singh Deswal, Shri Nivetha Paramanatham and Manu Bhaker won Gold in the Air Pistol Team Women's event
  - Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Lakshay won gold in the men's trap team event
  - Rajeshwari Kumari, Manisha Keer and Shreyasi Singh won Gold in the women's Trap team event
  - Gurpreet Singh, Vijayveer Sindhu and Adarsh Singh won Silver in men's 25m rapid fire pistol team event

### MAHARAJA CHHATRASAL CONVENTION CENTRE

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**Current Context: The 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre' was inaugurated at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.**

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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- **It was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Tourism and Culture (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel.**
- The 'Maharaja Chhatrasal Convention Centre' is built under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism, which has thus added a feature to the UNESCO World Heritage site at Khajuraho.
- The centre will host various conferences and meetings.

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- It is equipped with modern infrastructure and modern amenities. The convention hall is 14880 sqft of area.
- **Static Part:**
  - Thermal Power Plant in MP: Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station, Sanjay Gandhi Thermal Power Plant, Singaji Super Thermal Power Project, Amarkantak Thermal Power Plant

