



CURRENT AFFAIRS (JULY-AUGUST, 2021) :

National

- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched E-100 pilot project on the occasion of World Environment Day in Pune. This ambitious project was launched with the aim of setting up a network for production and distribution of ethanol in India. It was released in line with the theme of World Environment Day – 'Promotion of bio fuels for a better environment'. Ethanol has become a major priority of the 21st century India because ethanol has a better impact on environment and lives of farmers. In the line, Government resolved to achieve the target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol by 2025. Till now it has reached to 8.5%.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the India-EU Leaders' Meeting held in a hybrid format. The India-European Union Leaders' Meeting was hosted by Portugal, who currently holds the chair of the grouping.
- ⇒ The top Oil and Gas PSUs of India, including IndianOil, BPCL, HPCL, ONGC and GAIL, have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Shri Badrinath Utthan Charitable Trust, for Construction and Redevelopment of Shri Badrinath Dham in Uttarakhand as a Spiritual Smart hill Town.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Boris Johnson held a virtual Summit meeting. During the Summit meeting, both the leaders unveiled an ambitious 10-year road map to elevate the India-UK bilateral relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership. The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a new India-UK trade investment worth £1 billion.
- ⇒ Indian Navy, for the first time, participated in a joint exercise with the European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR). Stealth frigate INS Trikand participated in the two-day exercise in the Gulf of Aden. Along with the Indian Navy, other naval forces are from Italy, Spain and France. The aim of the exercise is to enhance and hone their war-fighting skills and their ability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the maritime domain.
- ⇒ The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IIT Bombay) hosted a three day virtual 'Conference of BRICS Network Universities'. This conference was held as a part of India's Chairmanship of the 13th BRICS Summit in 2021. The basic objective of BRICS Network University is enhancing educational cooperation in general, and especially in the realm of research and innovation. The theme of the Conference of BRICS Network Universities was 'Electric Mobility'.

- ⇒ Drug regulator of India, DCGI has allowed Mumbai-based pharmaceutical company Cipla to import Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine for restricted emergency use in India. Moderna's vaccine is going to be the fourth COVID-19 vaccine available in India after Covaxin, Covishield and Sputnik. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has excluded Serum Institute of India (SII) manufactured Covishield from the list of approved vaccines for 'Green Pass'. As per EMA, Covishield was excluded from the list because it does not have the marketing authorisation in European Union (EU). Green Pass is a digital 'vaccine passport' which enables easy travel into and between EU countries for the purpose of work and tourism.
- ⇒ India will launch 'UNITE AWARE', a mobile tech platform for the United Nations Peacekeepers to improve their safety and security in the line of duty. It will be launched during India's United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Presidency term in August 2021 (Presidency of the UNSC is held by each of the members in turn for one month).

International

- ⇒ The Group of Seven (G7) advanced economies signed a landmark deal on taxing multinational companies. As per the deal, minimum global tax rate would be at least 15%. Major digital companies were making money in multiple countries and paying taxes only in home country. Thus, this proposal was made which would impose an additional tax on several multinational companies and technology giants like Facebook, Amazon and Google to pay taxes to countries based on where their goods or services are sold irrespective of their physical presence there. The G7 group includes the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Canada, France, Italy and Japan.
- ⇒ The United Nations 'Decade on Ecosystem Restoration' has been officially launched, which will run from 2021 to 2030. United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration will be co-led by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO). Its aim is the protection and revival of millions of hectares of ecosystems all around the world for the benefit of people and nature.
- ⇒ Mount Nyiragongo erupted in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its last major eruption in 2002 killed 250 people and displaced thousands. Nyiragongo and nearby Nyamuragira are together responsible for 40 per cent of Africa's historical volcanic eruptions.



- ⇒ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released the SIPRI Yearbook 2021. The report assesses the current state of armaments, disarmament and international security. According to the yearbook, India possessed an estimated 156 nuclear warheads at the start of 2021, while Pakistan had 165 warheads. The nine nuclear-armed states – the U.S., Russia, the U.K., France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea – together possessed an estimated 13,080 nuclear weapons at the start of 2021. Russia and the U.S. together possessed over 90% of global nuclear weapons.
- ⇒ A 1,098-carat diamond has been discovered in Botswana. The diamond is believed to be the third-largest gem-quality stone ever to be mined in the world. The largest diamond to be recovered till date is 3,106 carat Cullinan stone in South Africa in 1905, followed by the 1,109 carats Lesedi La Rona, unearthed in Botswana in 2015.
- ⇒ The 47th G7 Leaders' Summit 2021 (Outreach Session of the G7 meeting) took place in a Hybrid format at Cornwall, United Kingdom (UK) recently. The UK invited Australia, India, South Korea, and South Africa (jointly called 'Democracy 11') as Guest Countries to the 2021 summit. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually participated in the meeting and called G7 summit members for the 'One Earth One Health' approach to effectively deal with the coronavirus pandemic globally, and sought the support of the G7 grouping to lift patent protections for COVID-19 vaccines. The theme for the Summit was 'Building Back Better'.

Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 15.06. 2021) are :
 - * Repo Rate (*Repo Rate is the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the central bank, i.e., RBI*) : 4.00%.
 - * Reverse Repo Rate (*Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the commercial banks deposit their surplus money to the central bank*) : 3.35%
 - * Statutory Liquidity Ratio (*SLR is the percentage of deposits that commercial banks have to maintain with themselves*) : 18.00%
 - * CRR (*Cash Reserve Ratio is the proportion of deposits which the banks have to keep with the central bank*) : 4%
 - * Bank Rate (*Bank rate is the rate at which central bank, i.e. RBI, rediscounts the bills of exchange of commercial banks*) : 4.25%
 - * MSF (*Marginal Standing Facility is the loan banks are permitted to avail themselves from the RBI on overnight basis, using its SLR securities*) : 4.25%.

- * Base Rate (*Base Rate reflects the actual cost of banks that has to be covered through lending. Banks cannot lend money below the Base Rate, which varies from bank to bank*) : 7.40% - 8.80%.

- * MCLR (*The Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate refers to the minimum interest rate of a bank below which it cannot lend, except in some cases allowed by the RBI*): 6.55% - 7.00%.

(Difference: Base Rate is governed by the average cost of funds while MCLR is governed by the current cost of funds. MCLR replaced the Base Rate on April 1, 2016. Under the MCLR regime, banks must adjust their interest rates as soon as the repo rate changes. Earlier it was not so).

- * Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit) Rate (more than 1 year): 4.90% - 5.50%.

- * Savings A/c.: 2.70% - 3.00%.

- ⇒ State Bank of India, in partnership with 'HyperVerge', announced the launch 'Video Banking Solution', which aims to achieve a big improvement in the number of account openings per day per agent. HyperVerge's Video Banking solution enables SBI to provide convenient digital banking services to millions of Indians. Last year, the Reserve Bank of India allowed banks to adopt the Video Customer Identification Process (V-CIP).
- ⇒ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an advisory group to assist the second Regulatory Review Authority (RRA 2.0). The Advisory Group will be headed by S Janakiraman. The second Regulatory Review Authority (RRA 2.0) has been set up for a period of one year from May 01, 2021, to review the regulations, circulars, reporting systems and compliance procedures for streamlining them and making them more effective.
- ⇒ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has excluded Lakshmi Vilas Bank (Head office : Chennai) from the Second Schedule of the RBI Act after it was merged with Singapore based DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL) last year. A bank mentioned in the Second Schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act is known as 'Scheduled Commercial Bank'.
- ⇒ As per Reserve Bank of India's data, the foreign exchange reserve of India at present is \$ 605 billion, the highest ever, in the week ended June 04, 2021.
- ⇒ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has increased overseas investment limit for local mutual funds. With this, mutual funds can make overseas investments to a maximum of \$ 1 billion per Mutual Fund out of overall industry limit of \$ 7 billion. While in overseas Exchange Traded Fund, mutual funds can invest a maximum of \$ 300 million per Mutual Fund with industry limit of \$ 1 billion.



- ⇒ Dr. K.P. Krishnan committee, which was set up to explore the potential for allowing Variable Capital Company (VCC) has submitted its report to the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA). Variable Capital Company (VCC) is a new corporate entity structure under which several collective investment schemes (whether opened end or closed end) may be gathered under the umbrella of a single corporate entity and yet remain ring-fenced from each other.
- ⇒ Karnataka has been ranked first in establishing Health and Wellness Centres under Ayushman Bharat Programme to provide comprehensive primary health care in rural areas. Karnataka is leading in implementing the project for 2020-2021.
- ⇒ India has moved to the third spot on Ernst & Young's 'Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index' due to exceptional performance on the solar photovoltaic (PV) front. The US retains the top position while China maintains the second position.
- ⇒ The 15th edition of Global Peace Index (GPI) was announced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Sydney. Out of the 163 independent states and territories indexed, India has been found to be the 135th most peaceful country. Iceland has been the most peaceful country worldwide since 2008. Iceland is followed by Denmark and New Zealand. Afghanistan is the least peaceful country again for fourth consecutive year.
- ⇒ The government made hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts mandatory from June 15, 2021. To ensure proper coordination and resolve issues while implementation, a committee headed by Pramod Tewari has been established. Gold hallmarking is a purity certification for precious metals. Presently, gold hallmarking is voluntary and about 40 % of the gold jewellery is being hallmarked. Government has launched mandatory hallmarking of gold with the aim of ensuring consumers do not get cheated while buying ornaments.
- ⇒ Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan in Central Asia, has been named the world's most expensive city for foreign workers, as per a survey conducted by the consultancy firm Mercer. Hong Kong is at the second position, followed by Beirut in Lebanon.
- ⇒ India and Bhutan have jointly launched the 'Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB)' programme in order to strengthening the tax administration of Bhutan. TIWB programme aims to strengthen tax administrations among developing countries by transferring technical know-how and skills to their tax auditors and by sharing general audit practices & dissemination of knowledge products with them.
- ⇒ Although the incremental credit growth in India plunged to a 59-year low at 5.56 per cent in the financial year 2020-21, the bank credit-to-GDP ratio rose to a five-year high of a little over 56 percent in 2020, according to the latest data from the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). The total outstanding bank credit stood at \$ 1.52 trillion in the country in 2020, according to the BIS data.
- ⇒ 'Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)' has emerged as the third strongest and the tenth most valuable insurance brand globally, in Brand Finance Insurance 100 report for 2021.
- ⇒ Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has launched a centralized web-based workflow-based IT platform called "e-PGS". The new technology platform, e-PGS, has been designed to provide a centralized collection and payment accounting with a high level of bank integration.
- ⇒ Research Design & Standards Organization (RDSO) wing of Indian railways has become India's first institution to be declared as Standard Developing Organization (SDO). Standard Development Organisation tag was given under "One Nation One Standard" mission of Bureau of Indian Standards. SDO is an organisation which works to create uniformity across producers, consumers, government agencies and other relevant parties regarding product specifications (e.g., size, measures), protocols and more.
- ⇒ SBI Card, the country's second-largest credit card issuer and Fabindia, have joined hands to launch an exclusive co-branded contactless credit card named 'Fabindia SBI Card'.
- ⇒ As per the latest data from the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), incremental credit growth in India has decreased to 59-year low at 5.56% in Financial Year 2021. As per the data, 'bank Credit-to-GDP' ratio in the country has increased to a five-year high at about 56% in 2020. Credit-to-GDP ratio of 100% is the ideal, indicating aggressive & active participation of banking sector in real economy.
- ⇒ NITI Aayog has recommended divesting government stake in the Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) as part of the privatisation initiative announced in the Union Budget. As per the new PSE (Public Sector Enterprise) policy for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', NITI Aayog is entrusted with the task to suggest names of PSUs in strategic sectors to be merged, privatised, or made subsidiaries of other PSUs.
- ⇒ Non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans of banks have declined by Rs 61,180 crore during 2020-21 to Rs 8.34 lakh crore as a result of various steps taken by the government.



- ⇒ The government has set up an expert group on Fixation of Minimum Wages that will provide technical inputs and recommendations on fixation of minimum wages and national floor for minimum wages. The expert group has been set for a period of three years and is chaired by Ajit Mishra who is Director of Institute of Economic Growth.
- ⇒ State Bank of India (SBI) has launched the 'Aarogyam' healthcare business loan to provide enhanced support to the healthcare sector amid the pandemic. Under this new product, the entire healthcare ecosystem such as hospitals, nursing homes, diagnostic centres, pathology labs, manufacturers, suppliers, importers, logistic firms engaged in critical healthcare supply can avail of loans up to Rs 100 crore (as per the geographic location) repayable in 10 years.
- ⇒ The Finance Ministry has allowed housing finance companies (HFCs) with asset size of over Rs. 100 crore to recover the dues using SARFAESI law. Earlier the limit was Rs. 500 crore. This move is expected to be a shot in the arm for thousands of small HFCs, as it will facilitate quick recovery of dues and encourage these companies to lend more. SARFAESI law allows banks to adopt stringent methods for the recovery of bad loans.
- ⇒ As per the World Investment Report 2021 by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), India was the fifth largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in the world (over \$ 64 billion) in 2020. The United States remained the largest recipient of FDI, followed by China.
- ⇒ India maintained 43rd rank out of 64 economies on an annual World Competitiveness Index compiled by the Institute for Management Development (IMD) which examined the impact of COVID-19 on economies around the world this year. Switzerland topped the index followed by Sweden and Denmark.
- ⇒ India has been ranked at 10th position in the cybersecurity index. India has improved its ranking from 47 to 10 in United Nation's ITU Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA). The United States has been ranked first and is followed by the United Kingdom.
- ⇒ According to State of India's Environment Report 2021, India's rank has dropped by two places to 117 as compared to 2020 ranking on 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG goals were adopted as a part of 2030 agenda by 193 United Nations member states in 2015.
- ⇒ Out of 114 countries, India has been ranked the 14th most charitable country in the world as per a report released by the World Giving Index, 2021. Indonesia topped the index followed by Kenya and Nigeria. World Giving Index offers a unique glimpse of global trends in generosity, and people from which country are most likely to engage in social activities and charity for the benefit of their communities and to champion the growth of global giving.
- ⇒ As per the 'Global Skills Report 2021' released by Coursera, India has been ranked 67th overall globally among 100 countries. Switzerland topped the index followed by Luxembourg and Austria.
- ⇒ The US traders have benefited the most in Bitcoin (a cryptocurrency) Investment Gain in 2020, with a profit of \$4.1 billion, according to the latest report by Chainalysis, a blockchain analysis company based in Manhattan, New York. Chinese traders stood second, with a profit of \$1.1 billion. India has been ranked at 18th spot with a profit of \$241 million.
- ⇒ El Salvador has become the first country in the world to grant legal tender status to bitcoin. El Salvador's economy heavily relies on remittances and so those who are working abroad send money back home in bitcoins.
- ⇒ Britain's financial regulator, Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), has banned world's largest cryptocurrency exchanges, Binance. Binance is a cryptocurrency exchange from Cayman Islands. It provides a platform to trade several cryptocurrencies. It was founded in 2017. Bitcoin is the first cryptocurrency released as open-source software in 2009. Recently,
- ⇒ Kerala has retained the top rank in Niti Aayog's 3rd edition of SDG India Index 2020- 21. The Index for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evaluates the progress of states and union territories on social, economic and environmental parameters.
- ⇒ The Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Anurag Singh Thakur launched the six modules of short films of Investor Education & Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) titled "Hisaab Ki Kitaab". These short films were developed by Common Services Centres(CSC) eGov as a part of their training tool. The various modules highlight the importance of budget, saving, the importance of Insurance schemes, various social security schemes of the government, etc.
- ⇒ India has a total of 13 listed firms that have crossed the Rs 3 trillion m-cap. Reliance Industries is India's most valued company with a market capitalisation of Rs 14.2 trillion, followed by Tata Consultancy Services Ltd and HDFC Bank. TCS is the largest Indian IT company with market capitalisation of Rs 12 trillion.



Sports

- ⇒ New Zealand defeated India to win the first ICC World Test Championship played at Ageas Bowl Stadium (Rose Bowl Stadium) in Southampton, England. Kyle Jamieson (NZ) was adjudged as the 'Player of the Match', while Kane Williamson (NZ) is the 'Player of the Series'. The first test championship began in 2019 with the finals being played in 2021. The top three Test teams now are New Zealand, India and Australia respectively.
- ⇒ The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that the Men's Cricket World Cup in 2027 (South Africa) and 2031 will once again be a 14-team, 54-match tournament. Earlier in the 2019 World Cup, only 10 teams contested, compared to 14 teams in the 2015 World Cup. 2023 World Cup will be held in India.
- ⇒ BharatPe, the lending and digital payments startup, has inked a three-year-long deal to become an official partner with International Cricket Council (ICC). As per the agreement, BharatPe will promote the association across broadcast and digital platforms, as well as execute in-venue brand activations at all the ICC events until 2023.
- ⇒ Ramesh Powar has been appointed Head Coach of Team India (Senior Women's cricket).
- ⇒ Former Sri Lanka player and coach, Nuwan Zoysa has been banned from all cricket for six years after an ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal found him guilty of breaching the ICC anti-corruption code. The headquarters of ICC is in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Its Chairman is Greg Barclay. And the CEO is Manu Sawhney.
- ⇒ Chelsea defeated Manchester City in the final, to lift the 2020-21 UEFA Champions League title.
- ⇒ Mohit Chauhan has composed and sung the song titled 'Lakshya Tera Samne Hai', the official Olympic theme song for the Indian contingent.
- ⇒ Novak Djokovic of Serbia defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece to lift the French Open title for the second time in his career. Djokovic, with his 19th Grand Slam title, has closed in on Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on the all-time Grand Slam titles list. Both the players have won 20 Grand Slams each. The Grand Slam in tennis includes (i) The French Open. (ii) The Wimbledon, (iii) Australian Open and (iv) The US Open.
- ⇒ Forbes has unveiled its annual list of the 10 highest-paid athletes/players of the year. UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship – Mixed Martial Art) star Conor McGregor has topped the list by earning \$180 million in the last year by surpassing soccer superstars (2) Lionel Messi (Argentina – \$130 million) and (3) Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal – \$120 million).

- ⇒ The Badminton World Federation announced that India's shuttler PV Sindhu and Canada's Michelle Li have been nominated as athlete ambassadors for the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) 'Believe in Sport' campaign aimed at preventing competition manipulation.
- ⇒ Oman is to host the inaugural International Hockey Federation's (FIH) 'Hockey 5s World Cup'. The FIH said the men's and women's events will take place in Oman's capital city Muscat in January 2024. Hockey 5s becomes an increasingly popular format of the sport, played on a smaller pitch with not more than 5 players of each team on the field at the same time.
- ⇒ World number two tennis player Naomi Osaka of Japan has been named 'Sportswoman of the Year' at the 2021 Laureus World Sports Awards. World number two Rafael Nadal of Spain won the 2021 'Laureus Sportsman of the Year' title.

Awards

- ⇒ Indian economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen has been conferred with the '2021 Princess of Asturias Award' by Spain in the social sciences category.
- ⇒ Noted Indian scientist and Bharat Ratna awardee, Professor C.N.R. Rao has been felicitated with the International Eni Award 2020 (also called the Energy Frontier award). The International Eni Award is considered to be the Nobel Prize in Energy Research.
- ⇒ The naturalist Jane Goodall has been announced as the 2021 winner of the Templeton Prize in recognition of her life's work on animal intelligence and humanity. Goodall built her global reputation on her groundbreaking studies of chimpanzees in Tanzania in the 1960s.
- ⇒ The Emmy Award-nominated Indian choreographer Suresh Mukund, has won the 10th Annual 'World Choreography Award 2020' (famously known as the 'Oscars of Dance'), becoming the first Indian to win the prestigious honour. He won the award for his work on the hit American TV reality show 'World of Dance'. Mukund was the director and choreographer of the Indian dance crew 'The Kings', which won the 2019 season of World of Dance.
- ⇒ International Invincible Gold Medal of this year has been conferred on Union Education Minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank for his extraordinary commitment and outstanding service to humanity through his writings, social and illustrious public life.
- ⇒ RK Sabharwal, the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Engineers India Limited (EIL) has been honoured with the highest civilian award of Mongolia 'The Order of The Polar Star'.



- ⇒ Nuku Phom, an environmentalist from Nagaland's remote Longleng district, has won this year's Whitley Awards 2021, also known as the Green Oscar. Nuku Phom got the award along with five others. The award recognises Nuku Phom's efforts at establishing a new biodiversity peace corridor changing the fate of Amur Falcons, which come to roost in Nagaland each year, from being hunted by locals.
- ⇒ Indian-origin global nutritionist, Dr Shakuntala Hark Singh Thilstad has received the 'World Food Award' of the year 2021. She developed a holistic and nutritionally sensitive approach to seafood and food systems. The award is also known as the Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture. The award carries a prize money of \$ 250,000.
- ⇒ Dr Tahera Qutbuddin, a professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Chicago, recently became the first person of Indian origin to win the Sheikh Zayed Book Award. The award is considered to be the Nobel Prize of the Arab world. She won the award for her latest book, 'Arabic Oration – Art and Function'.
- ⇒ Former Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, Justice Gita Mittal has been declared as one of the two recipients of the Arline Pacht Global Vision Award for 2021. The Award has been instituted by the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ).
- ⇒ Maria Ressa, a Filipino-American journalist has received the 2021 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. The \$25,000 prize "recognizes outstanding contributions to the defence or promotion of press freedom especially in the face of danger," according to the UNESCO.
- ⇒ Journalist Palagummi Sainath has been awarded the Fukuoka Grand Prize for 2021. The award, established by Japan's Fukuoka city and the Fukuoka City International Foundation, is given to individuals and organisations for their work in preserving Asian culture.
- ⇒ The Central government has declared Smart City awards 2020 in which Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Surat (Gujarat) won the award jointly for their overall development.
- ⇒ The Central European University (CEU) Open Society Prize for 2021 has been awarded to KK Shailaja, the former Health Minister of Kerala. The award was presented to her in recognition of her determined leadership and community-based public health work, saving lives during the pandemic.
- ⇒ Arunachal Pradesh's Water Burial, directed by Shantanu Sen has bagged the best film National Award on environment conservation at 67th National Films Awards 2021.
- ⇒ The 2021 Land for Life Award has been won by Familial Forestry of Rajasthan, a unique concept that relates a tree with a family, making it a 'green family member'. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) organises the Land for Life Award every two years to recognize excellence and innovation in efforts towards land in balance. The theme for the 2021 Award is 'Healthy Land, Healthy Lives.
- ⇒ Tillotama Shome has won the Best Actor award at the 2021 UK Asian Film Festival (UKAFF). Tillotama won the award for her role in the film Raahgir : The Wayfarers. Goutam Ghose has also won the Best Director award for this film.
- ⇒ R.S. Sodhi, the Managing Director of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul), was conferred with the regional award as Asia Pacific Productivity Champion from Asian Productivity Organization (APO), Tokyo, Japan in recognition of enhanced productivity and efficient milk supply chain.
- ⇒ Megha Rajagopalan won Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting 2021 on her reports on China's mass detention camps for Uighurs Muslims in Xinjiang Province. Megha shared the award with two others.
- ⇒ Kerala-based Thomas Vijayan, who is now settled in Canada, has won the 2021 Nature TTL Photography Awards for his photo of an Orangutan clinging to a tree. The photograph is titled 'The World is Going Upside Down'.
- ⇒ Nitin Rakesh and Jerry Wind won the International Business Book of the Year Award 2021. The authors won the prestigious International Business Book of the Year Award for 2021 for their recently launched book "Transformation in Times of Crisis". Their book brings entrepreneurs and business owners the knowledge that can help their business thrive even in a crisis.

Persons

- ⇒ Laurence des Cars becomes the first female president of Musée du Louvre, the world's largest museum in Paris, France in 228 years.
- ⇒ Jagjit Pavadia, the former Narcotics Commissioner of India and a retired officer of the Indian Revenue Service (Customs), has been elected president of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Vienna.
- ⇒ Anup Chandra Pandey has been appointed Election Commissioner, following the retirement of Sunil Arora. Sushil Chandra is the Chief Election Commissioner and Rajiv Kumar is the other Election Commissioner.



- ⇒ Andy Jassy has become the CEO of Amazon. Jassy replaced Jeff Bezos as CEO of the entire company in February. Bezos has become executive chair of Amazon's board.
- ⇒ Narinder Batra has been re-elected as the President of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) for the second consecutive term.
- ⇒ Penpa Tsering, the former speaker of Tibet's parliament-in-exile, has been elected new president of the exile government.
- ⇒ Neera Tanden, an Indian-American, has been appointed senior adviser to the U.S. President Joe Biden.
- ⇒ New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern has topped the 'World's 50 Greatest Leaders' list for 2021, released by Fortune Magazine. Adar Poonawalla, the chief executive officer (CEO) of Serum Institute of India (SII) is the only Indian among the top 10 names. He is placed in the 10th spot.
- ⇒ Kami Rita of Nepal has scaled Mount Everest for the 25th time. Nepali name of Mt. Everest is Sagarmatha;
- ⇒ Himanta Biswa Sarma of BJP is the new Chief Minister of Assam. He has replaced incumbent Sarbananda Sonowal.
- ⇒ MK Stalin, the chief of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has been sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.
- ⇒ Karnam Malleswari has been appointed the first Vice-Chancellor of Delhi Sports University. She is the first Indian woman weightlifter to bring home an Olympic medal. She created history at the Sydney Olympics by winning a bronze medal in weightlifting in 2000.
- ⇒ Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata, the legendary Indian industrialist and founder of the Tata Group, has topped the inaugural 'EdelGive Hurun Philanthropists of the Century' list, which ranks the world's 50 most generous individuals in the last century. As per the report, the total donations made by Mumbai-based Jamsetji Tata is estimated at \$102.4 billion. He is the only Indian among the top 10 list, compiled by Hurun Research and EdelGive Foundation. The only other Indian in the list of 50 global philanthropists is Azim Premji, the former chairman of Wipro. He is ranked at 12th position. Bill Gates & Melinda French Gates ranked second with donations worth \$74.6 billion. They are followed by Henry Wellcome, Howard Hughes and Warren Buffett in that order.
- ⇒ Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft Corp, has been named as its new chairman. He took over as the software giant's CEO in 2014, succeeding Steve Ballmer.
- ⇒ Rebecca Grynspan of Costa Rica has been appointed head of United Nations Conference on Trade and development (UNCTAD).
- ⇒ Abdulla Shahid, the Foreign Minister of Maldives has been elected the new President of the UN General Assembly (UNGA). The election to UNGA presidential post is held annually.
- ⇒ Ebrahim Raisi has won the 2021 Iranian presidential election. He will succeed Hassan Rouhani.
- ⇒ Naftali Bennett, the former Defence Minister of Israel, and leader of the Yamina party has become the new Prime Minister. He has replaced Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been forced out of office after 12 years (2009 to 2021). Netanyahu was the longest-serving PM of Israel.
- ⇒ Ranjitsinh Disale has been appointed World Bank Education Advisor, starting from June 2021 to June 2024. He is the first Indian to have been awarded the Global Teacher Award in 2020 and will now be working on the Coach Project, launched by the World Bank recently. The project's aim is to 'help countries accelerate learning by improving teacher professional development.'

Died

- ⇒ Milkha Singh, the legendary Indian sprinter, passed away due to coronavirus disease (Covid-19), at the age of 91. A former army man, Milkha Singh won several laurels for the country in track and field events across the globe. Singh won four gold medals for India in the Asian Games. He was unlucky to have missed out an Olympic medal as he finished a close fourth in the 400 metres final at the 1960 Rome Olympics.
- ⇒ Nirmal Milkha Kaur, the former Indian women volleyball team captain, who is the wife of sprint legend Milkha Singh (Flying Sikh), passed away due to COVID-19.
- ⇒ Rohit Sardana, a renowned TV journalist and news anchor, has passed away due to a heart attack, following the deadly COVID-19 infection. The 41-year-old Sardana was currently associated with Aaj Tak.
- ⇒ H S Doreswamy, the freedom fighter who is known for his participation in the Quit India movement and Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement, passed away.
- ⇒ Raghunath Mohapatra, the eminent sculptor, architect and Rajya Sabha member, has passed away while undergoing treatment for COVID-19.
- ⇒ O P Bhardwaj, Indian boxing's first Dronacharya awardee coach passed away.
- ⇒ Jagannath Pahadia, senior Congress leader and former Rajasthan chief minister has passed away due to COVID-19.



- ⇒ Kenneth Kaunda, the first President of Zambia, passed away.
- ⇒ Sunderlal Bahuguna, the well-known environmentalist and Gandhian, has passed away. A pioneer in environmental protection, Mr Bahuguna led the charge against the construction of big dams in the Himalayas in the 1980s. He was fervently opposed to the construction of the Tehri dam. Bahuguna, along with local women, founded the 'Chipko Movement' in the Seventies to prevent the felling of trees in the ecologically sensitive zones. The movement's success led to the enactment of a law to ban the felling of trees in ecologically sensitive forest lands. He also coined the Chipko slogan: 'Ecology is the permanent economy'.
- ⇒ Dr KK Aggarwal, renowned cardiologist and former national president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), has passed away battling with Covid. He was an eminent physician and cardiologist, who also served as the head of the Heart Care Foundation of India.
- ⇒ Professor MS Narasimhan, the noted Indian mathematician, has passed away. Professor Narasimhan and C. S. Seshadri together were known for their proof of the Narasimhan–Seshadri theorem.
- ⇒ Indu Jain the pioneering philanthropist and Times Group Chairperson, has passed away due to Covid-related complications.
- ⇒ Vanraj Bhatia, the veteran music composer who was the best-known composer of Western classical music in India, has passed away.
- ⇒ V Kalyanam, Mahatma Gandhi's former personal secretary passed away. He was Gandhi's personal secretary from 1943 to 1948.
- ⇒ Ajit Singh, the former Union Minister and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) founder has passed away battling COVID-19.
- ⇒ Pandit Debu Chaudhuri, the Sitar maestro has passed away following COVID-19 related complications.
- ⇒ Veteran Kannada film actor Sanchari Vijay, who won the National award in 2015, has passed away.
- ⇒ Dingko Singh, the boxer from Manipur and the winner of the gold medal for India in the 1998 Asian Games Bangkok, Thailand passed away.
- ⇒ Buddhadeb Dasgupta, the National award-winning eminent Bengali film director passed away.
- ⇒ T.M. Kalliannan Gounder, the last surviving former member of the Indian Constituent Assembly, passed away at the age of 101.
- ⇒ Sir Anerood Jugnauth, the former Prime Minister and President of the Republic of Mauritius, passed away. He was the country's longest-serving prime minister.

Miscellaneous

- ⇒ India and Kuwait signed an MoU on cooperation on domestic worker recruitment. This MoU will bring Indian domestic workers in Gulf nation within the legal framework which will provide them protection under law. The agreement will also streamline recruitment of domestic workers. It will ensure rights and obligations of domestic workers as well as employers.
- ⇒ Raimona Reserve Forest in Kokrajhar district, across the border with Bhutan, has been upgraded to sixth national park of Assam. The other five national parks in Assam are – (1) Kaziranga National Park (2) Manas National Park, (3) Nameri National Park, (4) Orang National Park and (5) Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.
- ⇒ The Assam Government has decided in its recent cabinet meeting to declare Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary as the 7th National Park of the state. The state now has the second-highest number of national parks in the country. Madhya Pradesh and Andaman and Nicobar Islands have nine national parks each.
- ⇒ Haryana government announced to create 80 acres of 'Oxi-van' (a forest) in Karnal district. It was announced on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, 2021. On the occasion, highlighting the importance of trees and encouraging promotion, protection, planting of them, Haryana Government launched four important schemes: (1) Prana Vayu Devta Pension Scheme (2) Oxi-Van in Karnal (3) Oxi-Van in Panchkula and (4) Panchavati Plantation.
- ⇒ The Coast Guards have enforced laws and started 'Operation Olivia' to protect Olive Ridley turtles in Odisha. This operation helps in protecting Olive Ridley turtles every year when they start nesting along Odisha coast for breeding in the months of November to December. Under it, round-the-clock surveillance is conducted from November till May through Coast Guard assets like Fast patrol vessels, Interceptor craft, Air cushion vessels and Dornier aircraft.
- ⇒ Citizens and environmentalists lodged strong protest against the Karnataka Minor Irrigation Department's proposal to clear over 6000 trees in Singanayakanahalli to make way for a lake under the Hebbal-Nagawara Valley Project, which aims to fill 65 water-tanks in Bangaluru.
- ⇒ Indonesia's Merapi volcano, in Java Island erupted recently. Merapi is considered as Indonesia's most active volcano. It is an active stratovolcano located on the border of Central Java and Yogyakarta in Indonesia.



- ⇒ US President Joe Biden signed a law making June 19 or “Juneteenth” a national holiday. This holiday is recognized in the USA to commemorate the end of slavery after American Civil War.
- ⇒ The Film Division recently organised an online festival on environment called “Oasis of hope” on the occasion of World Environment Day on the 5th of June with the theme of ecosystem restoration. “REIMAGINE, RECREATE, RESTORE” were the key words for celebrations this year. The Films shown under ‘green package’ include: 1. Jungle Man Loiya, 2. Living the Natural Way, 3. My Son Neo and 4. Plastic World.
- ⇒ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has found three new caves in Buddhist Caves Complex in Nasik, Maharashtra. These caves are being discovered about two centuries after the British military officer documented Tri-Rashmi Buddhist caves, which are also called as Pandav Leni, on a hill in Nashik. Antiquity of caves is yet to be established. These caves have been discovered on the opposite side of the current complex.
- ⇒ Jalgaon District is an identified banana cluster under Agri Export Policy and is called as ‘Banana city’ of Maharashtra. Recently a consignment of fibre & mineral rich “Jalgaon Banana” was exported to Dubai, marking a major boost to exports. Banana export from India has been rising sharply because of adoption of farm practices in accordance with global standards.
- ⇒ Goa government has released a short film titled ‘Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Shivrajyabhishek Divas’ on the occasion of the anniversary of the Maratha king’s coronation day, highlighting the history of Goa and Shivaji’s role in fighting Portuguese.
- ⇒ Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, approved release of the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20. PGI provides grading to States and Union Territories on the basis of 70 parameters to assess and catalyse transformational changes in education. Five states & union territories namely Chandigarh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Kerala attained highest grade (Grade A++) for 2019-20.
- ⇒ Iranian navy’s largest warship ‘Kharg’ caught fire near the Iranian port of Jask and sank in the Gulf of Oman.
- ⇒ Scientists, for the first time have created the 3-dimensional map of the boundary between our solar system and the interstellar space called Heliosphere. 3D map was created using data from NASA’s IBEX satellite. Heliosphere, created by the sun, is a vast bubble-like region of space surrounding the sun.
- ⇒ Russia started the construction of the fifth nuclear power unit at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu. Rosatom (a Russian company) is providing technology to construct the Kudankulam plant.
- ⇒ China operationalised the two units of giant Baihetan hydropower plant on the Yangtze river in southwest China. Baihetan is the largest hydro project under construction worldwide.
- ⇒ NASA’s experimental Mars helicopter ‘Ingenuity’ successfully completed first powered controlled flight on Mars on April 19, 2021. Ingenuity was originally designed to fly only five times, but it successfully made many ambitious flights. Ingenuity is a small robotic helicopter which is operating on Mars under NASA’s Mars 2020 mission. It rode to Mars attached to the belly of the Perseverance rover. Perseverance rover is a car-sized Mars rover, launched on July 30, 2020 and was landed at Jezero Crater, Mars on February 18, 2021.
- ⇒ Sports Minister of Mizoram, Robert Romawia Royte, has announced that a cash incentive of Rs 1 lakh would be given to the living parent(s) with the highest number of children in the minister’s constituency to encourage population growth among the demographically small Mizo communities. Population density in Mizoram is about 52 persons per square kilometre. It has the second lowest population density in India, next to Arunachal Pradesh (17). National average is 382 per sq km.
- ⇒ Odisha has become the only state in India to have all the three species of crocodiles – (i) Reptile freshwater Gharials at Satkosia in Mahanadi, (ii) Muggers in Bhitarkanika National Park and (iii) Saltwater crocodiles. Odisha has witnessed natural nesting of Gharials (a critically endangered species) for the first time since they were introduced in its rivers in 1975.
- ⇒ German agrochemicals major ‘Bayer’ has commercially launched first-ever yellow watermelon variety called ‘Yellow Gold 48’ in India under ‘Seminis’ brand. Yellow watermelon has been developed from superior germplasm under Bayer’s global research and development efforts.
- ⇒ Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest coral reef system that comprises of about 2,900 individual reefs and 900 islands stretching for 2,300 kilometres over an area of 344,400 square kilometres. It is located in Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland, Australia. The reef can be seen from outer space. The UNESCO recommended adding Great Barrier Reef to the list of ‘in danger’ World Heritage Sites. However, this recommendation is opposed by Australia.



- ⇒ The UN has endorsed a multinational project called 'Committee on Earth Observation Satellites Coastal Observations, Applications, Services and Tools' CEOS COAST). The programme is co-led by ISRO and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) from the US. CEOS COAST aims to improve the accuracy of coastal data on the basis of satellite and land-based observations.
- ⇒ The Department of Higher Education has launched a new initiative called 'YUVA- Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors'. YUVA stands for Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors. It is an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors, below 30 years of age to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.
- ⇒ The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has constituted a group of ministers (GoM) under the Meghalaya chief minister Conrad K Sangma in order to decide on the GST rates of COVID-19 relief essentials such as vaccines, drugs, testing kits and ventilators.
- ⇒ The world's longest pedestrian suspension bridge named 'Arouca' was opened in Portugal. The Arouca Bridge offers a half-kilometre (almost 1,700-foot) walk across its span, along a metal walkway suspended from cables.
- ⇒ The Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), the apex body of broadcasters, is being renamed as Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF), as it expands its purview to cover digital platforms to bring all digital (OTT) players under one roof.
- ⇒ Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has appointed 'Guardian Ministers' to oversee the implementation of government policy decisions, administrative reforms, and other welfare schemes in all the 34 districts of the state. 13 'Guardian Ministers' have been appointed for all 34 districts in Assam, for balanced, speedy and sustainable developments of these districts.
- ⇒ Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has announced a secretary-level committee for the implementation of 'Smart Kitchen Scheme' in the state. Under the scheme, women of the state will be given loans to refurbish their kitchen. The loan will be provided with a low-interest rate in instalment schemes. The scheme seeks to reduce the workload of women's domestic labour.
- ⇒ INS Rajput, the first destroyer of the Indian Navy, has been decommissioned. It was commissioned on 4 May 1980. After rendering service for 41 years, it has been decommissioned at the Naval Dockyard of Visakhapatnam. INS Rajput was built by Russia and its original name was 'Nadezhny'.
- ⇒ The Mahratta Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture (MCCIA) has launched India's first agro-export facilitation centre in Pune, in collaboration with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
- ⇒ Iran has unveiled a new supercomputer named 'Simorgh', which is 100 times more powerful than the previous supercomputer of the country.
- ⇒ China successfully achieved the feat of landing its first Mars Rover 'Zhu Rong' on the red planet, becoming the only second nation after the USA to do so.
- ⇒ Cheetah, the world's fastest land animal which was declared extinct in India in 1952, is to be brought from Africa at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- ⇒ GoAir has rebranded itself as 'Go First', with the new motto 'You Come First'.
- ⇒ Elon Musk owned SpaceX is set to launch the 'DOGE-1 Mission to the Moon', the first-ever commercial lunar payload, paid entirely in the cryptocurrency Dogecoin. The satellite is scheduled to be launched in the first quarter of 2022 onboard the Falcon 9 rocket.
- ⇒ The armed forces have launched operation 'CO-JEET' to aid anti-COVID-19 efforts, like strengthening the medical system in India and oxygen supply chains. Along with these, CO-JEET will also take measures to ensure the mental wellbeing of people.
- ⇒ The Indian Navy has launched Operation Samudra Setu-II to help in faster transportation of medical oxygen and other requirements from other countries to India, amid its worsening COVID-19 pandemic. As a part of operation 'Samudra Setu II', seven Indian Naval ships have been deployed.
- ⇒ The United Kingdom has become the first country to allow driverless cars on roads.
- ⇒ The Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated NATRAX (National Automotive Test Tracks) – the High-Speed Track(HST) in Indore. This 11.3 km High-Speed Track is the longest such track in Asia. This is a one-stop solution for all sorts of high-speed performance tests for the widest categories of vehicles from 2 wheelers to heavy tractor-trailers.
- ⇒ India's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-I), being built at the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi, Kerala under a public-private partnership is planned to be commissioned by 2022. Once commissioned, the carrier will be rechristened as INS Vikrant, in memory of India's first aircraft carrier. India's first aircraft carrier INS Virant was decommissioned in 1997.



- ⇒ The world's first genetically modified (GM) rubber plant has been planted in Assam by Rubber Board, at the board's farm in Sarutari near Guwahati. The GM rubber sapling was developed at the Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII), in Puthuppally, Kottayam, Kerala.
- ⇒ Raja Parba festival was celebrated in Odisha. It is a 3-day festival in which the onset of monsoon and the earth's womanhood is celebrated by the state.
- ⇒ Social media giant Facebook has launched a new initiative 'Report it, Don't share it!' that encourages people to report child abuse content on its platforms and not to share it.
- ⇒ London-based 'Quacquarelli Symonds' (QS) has released the QS World University Rankings 2022. Eight Indian universities have found places among the best 400 global universities. However, only three Universities namely IIT-Bombay (rank 177), IIT-Delhi (rank 185), and IISc Bangaluru (rank 186) featured among the top 200. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has topped the ranking for the 10th year in a row, followed by the University of Oxford. Stanford University and the of Cambridge University shared the third spot.
- ⇒ Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) will set up the country's first international maritime services cluster at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). The maritime cluster will be developed as a dedicated ecosystem comprising ports, shipping, logistics service providers and government regulators, all present in the same geographic vicinity – GIFT City. GIFT City is India's first operational smart city with international financial services.
- ⇒ The Indian Navy received its first set of multi-role helicopters as America handed over three MH-60 Romeo helicopters to the force. India and the US had signed over-Rs 16,000 crore deal to buy 24 MH-60 Romeo helicopters from Lockheed Martin in 2020.
- ⇒ The National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently directed the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC), Gujarat and other authorities to implement the Vishwamitri River Action Plan, including preparation for demarcation, plantation and maintaining the integrity of the river. The crocodiles, turtles & highly protected species have been breeding in the stretches of the river. The Vishwamitri River in Vadodara is among the 351 polluted river stretches that need to be restored, as identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- ⇒ A new AI-driven platform called 'X-raySetu' has been developed to help in the early detection of COVID 19, with the help of Chest X-ray. The solution will be beneficial for early detection especially in rural areas, where RT-PCR tests and CT-Scans are not easily available. X-raySetu will operate through WhatsApp. It will identify COVID positive patients even from low-resolution Chest X-Ray images sent over Whatsapp-based Chatbot. (AI stands for Artificial Intelligence).
- ⇒ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has given easy-to-say labels to two variants of the Covid-19, first found in India. The two variants – the B.1.617.1 variant of the Covid 19 has been named as 'Kappa' while the B.1.617.2 variant is named as 'Delta'.
- ⇒ Weyan, a village in district Bandipora (J&K) has become the first village in the country, where the entire population above 18 years has been vaccinated.
- ⇒ Goa has become the first Rabies-free state in India.

Books & Authors

- ⇒ Languages of Truth : Essays 2003-2020 – Salman Rushdie.
- ⇒ It's a wonderful Life – Ruskin Bond
- ⇒ 7 Lessons from Everest : Expedition Learnings from Life and Business – Aditya Gupta
- ⇒ Sach Kahun Toh – Neena Gupta
- ⇒ Nehru, Tibet and China – Avtar Singh Bhasin
- ⇒ India and Asian Geopolitics: The Past, Present – Shivshankar Menon
- ⇒ Sikkim: A History of Intrigue and Alliance – Preet Mohan Singh Malik
- ⇒ Arabic Oration : Art and Function – Dr Tahera Qutbuddin
- ⇒ 'Life in the Clock Tower Valley' – Shakoor Rather
- ⇒ My Joys and Sorrows as a Mother of a Special Child -- Krishna Saksena
- ⇒ Elephant In The Womb – Kalki Koechlin.
- ⇒ Anomalies in Law and Justice – RV Raveendran.
- ⇒ Policymaker's Journal: From New Delhi to Washington DC -- Kaushik Basu
- ⇒ Kashmiri Century : Portrait of a Society in Flux – Khemlata Wakhlu
- ⇒ The Nutmeg's Curse : Parables for a Planet in Crisis – Amitav Ghosh
- ⇒ Transformation in Times of Crisis – Nitin Rakesh and Jerry Wind
- ⇒ Home in the World – Amartya Sen
- ⇒ Stargazing : The Players in My Life – Ravi Shastri
- ⇒ 1232 km : The Long Journey Home -- Vinod Kapri
