



## **CURRENT AFFAIRS (MARCH - APRIL, 2021) :**

### **National**

⇒ India flagged off the 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica (40 ISEA) from the Mormugao Port, Goa. The expedition has 43 members and the chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasilii Golonvin will take the team to Antarctica. On return, the vessel will bring back members of the 39th expedition.

The team is led by 3 polar veterans – Yogesh Roy, Atul Suresh Kulkarni and Ravindra Santosh More. India has three permanent research base stations in Antarctica – Dakshin Gangotry, Maitri and Bharati.

⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 306 Km Rewari-Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) to the nation. This is the world's first Double Stack Long Haul 1.5 Km container train to run between Rewari in Haryana and Madar in Rajasthan. The project is funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency.

⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 351 km. New Bhanpur – New Khurja section (both in UP) of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor.

Under the Eleventh Five-Year Plan of India (2007-12), the Ministry of Railway started constructing a new Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) in two long routes – Eastern and Western freight corridors. The routes cover a total length of 3360 kms, with the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor stretching from Ludhiana in Punjab to Dankuni in West Bengal and the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor from Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai to Dadri in UP.

⇒ The Cabinet Committee chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the proposal from the Ministry of External Affairs to open 3 Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic in 2021.

⇒ India government laid the foundation of Lalandar (Shahtoot) Dam, the 2nd dam to be built by India in Afghanistan. It will be built on the Kabul river basin, which is one of the five river basins in Afghanistan. Lalandar (Shahtoot) Dam is the follow up of India built 'India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam' (Salma Dam) in Afghanistan which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2016.

⇒ Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) has signed a contract with Seychelles for delivering Fast Patrol Vessel called 'Zoroaster' to the Seychelles Coast Guard. It may be noted that earlier India donated INS Tarmugli Patrol Vessel named 'Topaz' to Seychelles which is being used by their Coast Guard.

⇒ French Minister for Ecological Transition Barbara Pompili made a 5-day visit to India. Several key

initiatives were signed and discussed between the two countries. They include (i) Indo-French Year of Environment for the period 2021-22 and (ii) Discussions on strengthening International Solar Alliance, launched by both the countries jointly in 2015.

⇒ India and China agreed to return to the pre-April 2020 positions in Eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). India and China had been engaged in face-off in various pockets in Eastern Ladakh since April 2020 when China stopped Indian patrols at the 'Finger 4' area of Pangong Tso. The contested area, located along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh is divided into 8 Fingers with India claiming territory up to Finger 8. On the 134 Km of Pangong lake's northern bank, there are eight major finger-like spurs which are indentified as 'fingers' to demarcate the territory.

⇒ The External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar recently outlined 8 broad principles for repairing ties between India and China that included strict adherence to all agreements on the management of Line of Actual Control. China has said that it had taken note of S Jaishankar's 8-point suggestions while stating that the border issue should not be linked to the bilateral relationship.

### **International**

⇒ An armed and angry mob of Donald Trump's supporters stormed the Capital Hill of the US and clashed with police in protest against the election results in which Joe Biden defeated Donald Trump as the President of the USA. At least four people died in the violence.

⇒ The 126-year-old Shiv Temple in Pakistan's Sindh province has been opened for worshippers after renovation. The other temples which have been renovated recently in Pakistan include the 1000-year-old Shawala Teja Temple in Shialkot. According to the official estimates, the number of Hindus living in Pakistan is about 90 lakh. The majority of Pakistan's Hindu population is settled in Sindh.

⇒ The United States on February 19, 2021 officially rejoined the Paris Climate Accord, 107 days after it had left. The Donald Trump administration had announced its withdrawal from the Paris Accord in the year 2019, which came into effect from November 4, 2020.

⇒ The Bangladesh authorities recently moved around 1,750 Rohingya Muslims to a controversial island in the Bay of Bengal called 'Bhasan Char Island'. The island was formed by Himalayan silt in 2006. It spans about 40 square kilometres. This move of Bangladesh was opposed by the refugees already living in the island.



- ⇒ The 4th edition of One Planet Summit (OPS) was virtually organised from Paris by France, the United Nations and the World Bank to prepare negotiations for setting biodiversity targets in order to protect nature in the next decade. The theme of the summit was 'Let us act together for nature'. However, the summit was not attended by India.
- ⇒ World's four leading health and humanitarian organisations UNICEF, World Health Organisation (WHO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Medicine Sans Frontiers (MSF) collaborated to stockpile a global Ebola Vaccine with financial assistance from GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunisation).
- ⇒ In November 2020 the United States left the Open Skies Treaty (OST) first after accusing Russia of violating the pact. Open Skies Treaty is an accord between over 30 countries that allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states. Recently Russia also left the treaty.
- ⇒ The 'Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons' (TPNW) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly came into force from January 22, 2021. It is the first ever international agreement which prohibits nuclear weapons. However, nuclear capable nations – United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel did not sign it.
- ⇒ Myanmar's military seized power in a coup against the democratically elected government of Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who was detained along with other leaders of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party. The army said that it had carried out detentions in response to 'election fraud' and imposed a state of emergency for one year.
- ⇒ A team of the World Health Organisation (WHO), headed by Peter Ben Embarek visited China recently to probe the origin of COVID-19 in Wuhan. The team dismissed the theory of 'lab-leak' of the virus from China.
- ⇒ The 3rd QUAD meeting of Foreign Ministers of India, Japan, Australia and the United States was held virtually from Washington D.C. In 2017, India, Japan, Australia and the US approved the proposal of setting up the QUAD or the Quadrilateral coalition to counter China's aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ⇒ China recently enacted a law that authorises its coast guard to use weapons against foreign ships that Beijing considers to be unlawfully entering its waters. The United States warned China against the use of forces in disputed waters as it reaffirmed its view that Beijing's assertive campaign in the South China Sea is illegal.

- ⇒ The ruling Nepal Communist Party led by its leaders Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal expelled the Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli from the party.

## Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 15.04. 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*) : 3.50%
  - \* 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% - 7.05%.(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%.
- ⇒ According to the annual ranking of countries made by the CEOWorld magazine, The US has retained its spot as the most powerful country in the World followed by China and Russia. India has ranked 4th in the index.
- ⇒ The Finance Ministry has allowed all private sector banks to participate in businesses related to government such as small savings schemes, collection of taxes, pension payments, etc. Currently only some of the big private banks are allowed to conduct government related businesses.



- ⇒ India imports 80% of toys and the government is working towards promoting the indigenous toy industry for making the country self-reliant in this sector. Aiming at this, the government recently launched Toycathon-2021 and Toycathon Portal to conceptualize innovative toys based on Indian value system which will inculcate positive behaviour and good value among children.
- ⇒ In the 'Prarambh : Start-up India International Summit', the Prime Minister has announced that India will launch a 'Startup India Seed Fund' with a Rs. 1000 crore corpus. This fund will help in setting up new start ups and aid them in growth.
- ⇒ India provided over 229 lakh doses of COVID Vaccine to various countries, out of which 64 lakh doses have been supplied as grant assistance and 165 lakh on commercial basis. Vaccines sent as gifts to countries include Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Afghanistan, Bahrain and many more. Presently India is using two types of vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin. Covishield has been developed by Astra Zeneca and Oxford University and is being manufactured by Hyderabad based Serum Institute of India. Covaxin has been developed by the Hyderabad based Bharat Biotech International Ltd in association with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology.
- ⇒ According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by the Transparency International, India ranked 86th out of 180 countries. New Zealand and Denmark were jointly ranked at the top position.
- ⇒ The SWAMIH Fund is all set to deliver its first finished apartments. SWAMIH stands for 'Special Window for Completion of Construction of Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Projects. It is a Rs 250 billion fund set up by India government to complete the stalled housing projects which remained incomplete due to economic slowdown and a credit crisis in the real estate sector.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Earth Sciences has asked for suggestions on the Draft Blue Economic Policy for India. Blue Economy is a term in economics relating to the exploitation and preservation of the marine environment. Blue Economic Policy includes the use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, jobs, etc.
- ⇒ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman, while presenting the 2021-22 Budget announced the privatisation of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) as part of the disinvestment drive to garner Rs 1.75 lakh crore.
- ⇒ IIT Madras nurtured startup 'Pi Beam' has recently launched an electric two-wheeler named 'PiMo'. It can run up to 50 km on a single charge with a top speed of 25 kmph.
- ⇒ According to a report by the UN conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows into India rose 13% in 2020, the highest among top recipients of FDI in 2019 due to investments in the digital sector. China came to the 2nd position with only 4% growth. On the other hand, the fund flows declined in all major economics of the world.
- ⇒ The government has approved a proposal to levy 'green tax' on old vehicles polluting the environment. According to the proposal, green tax will be imposed on transport vehicles older than 8 years at the rate of 10.25% of road tax. Personal vehicles will also be charged the same levy after 15 years.
- ⇒ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) has asked the life insurance companies to offer a standard immediate annuity plan named 'Saral Pension'. Presently there are six to eight variants of immediate annuity plans of most insurance companies making it difficult for customers to choose the right one. (Immediate annuity plan refers to the plan where one pays an amount called purchase price and starts receiving a pension immediately)

Saral Pension will have two schemes: (i) life annuity with 100% return of purchase price (RoPP). Here pension will be paid to the annuitant for his lifetime. On his demise, the entire purchase price will be returned to the nominee or heir. (ii) joint life annuity with 100% RoPP on the last survivor's death. Here, when the primary annuitant passes away, his spouse will get the same amount of pension. And when the spouse passes away, 100% of the purchase price will be returned to the nominee or heir.
- ⇒ The India-Australia Circular Economy (I-ACE) Hackathon, 2021 was inaugurated virtually by the NITI Aayog's Innovation Mission (AIM) in collaboration with Australia's Commonwealth, Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. The I-ACE Hackathon aims at enabling students and start-ups/MSMEs from both countries to present innovative solutions for the development of a circular economy across the food system value chain. The I-ACE Hackathon addressed 4 themes – (i) Innovation in packaging, (ii) Innovation in food supply chains avoiding waste, (iii) Creating opportunities for plastic waste reduction and (iv) Recycling critical energy metals and e-waste.



- ⇒ Rs. 18000 crore has been transferred to the bank accounts of nine crore farmers under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana to make the birth anniversary of the late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as 'Good Governance Day' (25th of December).
- ⇒ The Central Vigilance Commission has asked all central government departments, public sector banks, insurance companies and undertakings to complete by May 2021 the probe in all pending corruption cases that originated between 2011 and 2018.
- ⇒ Bangladesh has finalized a purchase of 1.5 lakh tonnes of rice from India and is set to import an additional 2.5 lakh tonnes in a next few months.
- ⇒ The Madhya Pradesh (MP) government is preparing to deal with a likely surge in children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) by chalking out a strategy to cater 1 lakh such children by emphasising on community management to overcome the shortcomings. Presently Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of 314 Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres where children below 5 years of age with SAM are admitted.
- ⇒ ICICI Bank has introduced an online platform called 'Infinite India' for foreign companies looking to set up or expand businesses in India.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Coal has started commercial auction of coal mines on revenue share basis. In order to arrive at the revenue share based on the market prices of coal, a National Coal Index (NCI) has been conceptualized. NCI is a price index which reflects the change of price level of coal on a particular month relative to the fixed base year. The base year for the NCI is FY 2017-18.
- ⇒ According to the 2020 Democracy Index published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), India's rank fell from 27th in 2014 to 53rd in 2020. Norway topped the index followed by Iceland and Sweden.
- ⇒ A high level Inter-Ministerial Committee recently recommended that all private cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin etc, except any virtual currency issued by the government, will be prohibited in India.
- ⇒ Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to table a paperless budget. Suresh Khanna is the Finance Minister of Uttar Pradesh.
- ⇒ The RBI has allowed banks to deduct loans distributed to new micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) borrowers from their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) for the calculation of cash reserve ratio (CRR). 'New MSME borrowers' here means those who have not availed any credit facilities from the banking system as on January 1, 2021.

## Sports

- ⇒ India clinched the four test India-Australia Series (Gavaskar-Border Trophy) by 2-1 matches. Australian pace bowler Pat Cummins was adjudged the Man of the Series. Virat Kohli was the captain of India in the first Test while Ajinkya Rahane was the captain for the last three Tests. Tim Paine was the captain of Australia.
- ⇒ New Zealand has become the first team to grab the spot for the inaugural ICC World Test Championship Final to be held in England from June 18 to 22. India became the other team by defeating England.
- ⇒ Players' auction for Indian Premier League (IPL) took place in Chennai. South African all-rounder Chris Morris scripted history by emerging the most expensive buy ever in IPL player auction history when Rajasthan Royals bought him for Rs. 16.25 crore, much higher than his base price of Rs. 75 lakh.
- ⇒ Ravichandran Ashwin joined the 400 wicket club, becoming the fourth Indian bowler after Anil Kumble, Kapil Dev and Harbhajan Singh to take 400 wickets in Test Cricket. Ashwin achieved the feat when he took the wicket of Jofra Archer of England in Ahmadabad. He is the quickest Indian bowler to reach this milestone (in 77 Tests) and the second quickest in the world after Muttiah Muralitharan (in 72 Tests).
- ⇒ The second edition of Khelo India Winter Games was held at Gulmarg. Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally.
- ⇒ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the world's largest stadium at Motera in Gujarat, which was later renamed as Narendra Modi Stadium. The first match played in the stadium was the second India-England pink-ball Test in February, 2021.
- ⇒ Lionel Messi of Barcelona scored his 644th goal to surpass Pele as the all time record scorer for a single club.
- ⇒ Bayern Munich of Germany emerged champion of the FIFA Club World Cup 2020, beating the Mexican club Tigres.
- ⇒ Novak Djokovic of Serbia emerged champion of the Australian Open Men's Singles title by defeating Daniil Medvedev in Melbourne. This was Novak's 18th Grand Slam singles title, two short of 20 title holder Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. In tennis, the term Grand Slam includes four championships – Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon Open (Britain) and US Open.
- ⇒ The foundation stone of Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium has been laid at Rourkela, Odisha. It, along with the Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar will jointly host the Men's Hockey World Cup 2023.





- ⇒ The Sports Ministry has restored the recognition of the faction-ridden Gymnastics Federation of India after 10 years.

## Awards

- ⇒ Veteran actor Biswajit Chatterjee has been presented with the 'Indian Personality of the Year' award at the inaugural ceremony of the 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa. The IFFI 'Lifetime Achievement' Award was given to Italian Cinematographer Vittorio Storaro. Bangladesh was the 'country of focus' in the festival. Danish director Anders Refn's film 'Into the Darkness' won the Golden Peacock Award.
- ⇒ Jean Luc Godard, the eminent French-Swiss filmmaker has been felicitated with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 25th Kerala International Film Festival.
- ⇒ Colonel Bikumalla Santosh Babu, who was among the 20 soldiers killed in the line of duty when they clashed with Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley, was awarded with the Maha Vir Chakra.
- ⇒ Jean Luc Godard, the eminent French-Swiss filmmaker has been felicitated with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 25th Kerala International Film Festival.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been selected for the CERAWEEK (Cambridge Energy Research Associates Week) global energy and environment leadership award.
- ⇒ S Theodore Bashkaran, a writer, historian and naturalist won the Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award, 2020 for his dedication to the wildlife conservation. The award was instituted by the Sanctuary Nature Foundation.
- ⇒ Uttar Pradesh's tableau at the 2021 Republic Day Parade was awarded as the best one. The theme of the UP tableau was 'Ayodhya Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh'.
- ⇒ The NGO 'Helpage India' received the 2020 'UN Population Award' in the institutional category for its contribution towards serving disadvantaged elderly people and raising awareness on their cause.
- ⇒ Manasa Varanasi from Telangana was crowned the VLCC Femina Miss India World 2020.

## Persons

- ⇒ Joseph R. Biden Jr. (Joe Biden) took oath as the 46th President of the USA. Joe Biden becomes the oldest President (78 year) in the history of the USA. He belongs to the Democratic Party.
- ⇒ Kamala Harris of Indian origin took oath as the 49th Vice-President of the USA. She is the first woman and first person with South Asian origin to take the office of the Vice-President of the USA.

- ⇒ Soma Mandal has taken over as the first ever woman head of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).
- ⇒ Reshma Nilofer Neha has become India's first woman marine pilot. She received Nari Shakti Puraskar Award in 2019.
- ⇒ Ranadeep Brar, the opposition leader of Canada attended a farmers' rally near Delhi. However Canada's conservative Party refused to accept him as its representative.
- ⇒ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala of Nigeria has been selected as the seventh Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Dr Iweala has become the first woman and the first African to be chosen in this post.
- ⇒ Tetsushi Sakamoto has become the first ever Minister for Loneliness in Japan to effectively address the problem of growing rate of suicide in the country.
- ⇒ Arora Akanksha, an Indo-Canadian auditor and the United Nations official has announced her candidacy to challenge the incumbent UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who is seeking a second five-year term beginning January 2022.
- ⇒ Mallikarjun Kharge of Congress is the new leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha. He replaced Ghulam Nabi Azad.
- ⇒ Rihanna, the international pop star extended her support to the agitating Indian farmers.
- ⇒ Preeti Sinha, an Indian origin investment and development banker has been appointed Executive Secretary of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

## Died

- ⇒ Ved Prakash Mehta, the India-American novelist and journalist passed away.
- ⇒ George Blake, a spy with Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (MIB) and worked as a double agent for the Soviet Union, passed away.
- ⇒ Pierre Cardin, the French fashion designer, known for his 'Space Age' designs passed away.
- ⇒ John Edrich, England's former opening batsman passed away.
- ⇒ Akhtar Ali, Indian tennis legend and former Davis Cup coach passed away.
- ⇒ Teresa Zabinska, the daughter of the former Warsaw Zoo directors Jan and Antonina Zabinski, who saved 300 Jews from the Nazi holocaust by hiding them at the zoo passed away. Their story of bravery was told in the Hollywood movie 'The Zookeeper's Wife'.
- ⇒ Rajiv Kapoor, a Bollywood actor and son of Raj Kapoor passed away.
- ⇒ Carlos Menem, the former President of Argentina passed away.



⇒ Leon Spinks, former heavy weight champion of the USA passed away.

## Miscellaneous

⇒ Aditya-L1, the first solar mission of ISRO is expected to be launched in 2022. ISRO has set up 'NETRA' (Network for space object Tracking and Analysis), an early warning system that would help detect space hazards to Indian satellites at Peenya, Bengaluru in Karnataka.

⇒ Flipcart and NITI Aayog have collaborated to launch the updated Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) as part of the efforts to enhance community experience for women entrepreneurs in India.

⇒ The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda has launched a National Migration Support Portal 'Shramshakti' at Panjim, Goa. The portal will help the government in smooth formulation of state and national level programmes for migrant workers.

⇒ The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) launched a specially developed 'RAKSHITA' bike ambulance service to attend urgent evacuation needs of the security force personnel in the event of a medical emergency or battle injury in Naxal affected areas. The customised Rakshita ambulances have been created on 350 cc Royal Enfield Classic bikes.

⇒ Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan released the India Report on Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1 recently. LASI is a nation-wide survey of scientific investigation of health, economic and social factors and consequences of the ageing population of India. It is India's first and the world's largest survey providing a longitudinal database to design policies and programmes for the older population.

⇒ Australian government brought some changes to their national anthem from January 1, 2021. The first line of the anthem, '*Australians all let us rejoice, for we are "young" and free*' is now '*Australians all let us rejoice, for we are "one" and free*'.

⇒ Kevadia railway station, located in Gujarat and is facing the Narmada River is Indian's first railway station with green building certification. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently flagged off eight new trains from Kevadia. The station was opened recently with an aim to make the Statue of Unity more accessible to tourists.

⇒ The government has approved the merger of four government run film and media units – the Films Division, the Directorate of Film Festival, the National Film Archives of India and the autonomous body the Children's Film Society with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).

⇒ The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention 2021 was organised virtually. Surinam President Chandrikapersad Santokshi was the Chief Guest and the theme of the convention was 'Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

⇒ Maharashtra government has been claiming the border areas of Belgaum, Karwar and Nippani which are presently the parts of Karnataka.

⇒ Shree Cement Company has announced 'Project Naman', a national initiative to provide free cement to the families of Armed Forces Personnel who died in battle in the past 20 years.

⇒ As per the new regulation issued by Food Safety and Standard Authorities of India (FSSAI), no food product in which edible oils and fats are used as an ingredient will contain industrial trans fatty acids from January 1, 2022. Presently this cap is 5%.

⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House Project (LHP) as part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge – India (GHHC – India) initiative in 6 cities. They are Rajkot in Gujarat, Lucknow in UP, Indore in MP, Ranchi in Jharkhand, Chennai in Tamil Nadu and Agartala in Tripura. The LHP will showcase the best use of new age alternative global technologies, processes and materials. The project will comprise around 1000 houses in each location. It will mainly aim to deliver ready to live houses at a fastened pace within 12 months.

⇒ Facebook recently blocked the Australian users from reading and sharing any local and international news. Facebook initiated this move in the backdrop of the dispute over new media payment law that Australia initiated. Australian government wants the tech giants like Google and Facebook to pay for the news which is shared in their platform.

⇒ India's most anticipated action mobile game 'Fearless and United Guards' (FAU-G) from nCore Games has been released by Android users. The game was launched by Akshay Kumar on India's 72nd Republic Day.

⇒ The Horticulture Department in Karnataka is setting up a power processing centre in collaboration with the International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB). The centre will be set up in order to convert the unused flowers into the useful products such as natural dyes, floral papers, incense sticks, cosmetics, etc.

⇒ The Global anti-terrorism watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to maintain Pakistan into Gray List till June 2021. Being in the Gray List, Pakistan will find it difficult to get aid from World Bank, Asian Development Bank, IMF and European Union.



- ⇒ Six elephants died recently at the Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary in Kalahandi, Odisha. A Central investigating team in its report highlighted that the elephants died of Haemorrhagic Septicaemia which is caused by a bacteria.
- ⇒ Antonio Guterres of Portugal, the ninth Secretary General of the UNO has urged World leaders to declare a 'state of climate emergency' and shape greener growth after the ongoing COVID pandemic.
- ⇒ Bangladesh has become the first country to ban the painkiller 'Ketoprofen', which is used widely to treat the cattle. The painkiller is toxic enough to kill vultures, which eat dead animals. Similar steps need to be taken by India, Pakistan, Nepal and Cambodia in order to save the population of vultures.
- ⇒ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has planned to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2021. The World Solar Bank needs to be launched because many member countries of the ISA face the challenge of raising finances of their own. The ISA was co-founded by India and France in 2015.
- ⇒ Joyee Setu or Joyee Bridge, the longest river bridge in West Bengal has been constructed on the river Teesta. The bridge connects Jalpaiguri town to Haldibari and Mekhliganj towns in Cooch Behar.
- ⇒ Sudan for the first time in history submitted a film for the Academy Awards. The name of the film 'You Will Die at Twenty'.
- ⇒ India's first ever Geothermal Power Project is going to set up in Puga village of Eastern Ladakh. Puga village showed high potential for geo-thermal energy in the form of hot springs, mud pools, sulphur and borax deposits.
- ⇒ The Central government has decided to rename a total of 1063 residential schools and hostels funded under Samagra Shiksha Scheme as 'Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose' residential schools.
- ⇒ The government of Denmark is set to build the world's first energy island (Artificial island) in the North Sea which will produce and store green energy enough to cover the electricity requirement of 10 million households in Europe.
- ⇒ The United Arab Emirate's 'Hope' probe orbiter reached the Mars in February and has sent its first image of the Red Planet. The image captured 'Olympus Mons', the largest volcano in the solar system.
- ⇒ The USA's NASA Perseverance, nicknamed 'Percy' safely landed on Mars after 292.5 million mile journey from the Earth. Percy sent back its images of the landing site 'Jezero Crater'. Swati Mohan, an Indian American scientist led the guidance, navigation and control operation of the Mars 2020 mission.
- ⇒ Along with Hyderabad, 51 other cities in the world have been recognised as the '2020 Tree Cities of the World'. Hyderabad becomes the first and the only city in India to be recognised as the Tree City of the World. The Tree Cities of the World programme was inaugurated by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the Arbor Day Foundation. The aim is to call cities to invest in forest-based solutions towards a sustainable and resilient model of urban development.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebration in Gorakhpur, UP. Chauri Chaura of 1922 was a landmark event in the history of Indian freedom movement in which infuriated freedom fighters turned violent and set ablaze the Chauri Chaura police station killing 23 policemen. After this, Mahatma Gandhi suspended the Non-Cooperation Movement.
- ⇒ India's first digital university named the Kerala University of Digital Sciences, Innovation and Technology has been inaugurated at Mangalapuram near Thiruvananthapuram.
- ⇒ The word 'Aatmanirbharta' has been named as the Hindi word of the year 2020 by the Oxford Languages.
- ⇒ Bangaluru based microblogging site 'Koo', formerly known as KuKooKu has crossed 5 million users. Its CEO is Aprameya Radhakrishna and co-founder is Mayank Bidawatka.
- ⇒ Jammu and Kashmir has joined hands with a UK-based space agency for a collaborative project on impact-based flood forecasting.

### **Books & Authors**

- ⇒ Right Under Our Nose – R. Girdharan
- ⇒ Gazing Eastwards : Of Buddhist Monks and Revolutionaries in China, 1957 – Romila Thapar
- ⇒ The Little Book of Encouragement – Dalai Lama
- ⇒ Whereabouts – Jhumpa Lahiri
- ⇒ 1857 : the Sword of Mastan – Vineet Bajpai
- ⇒ The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News – Meghna Pant
- ⇒ How To Avoid A Climate Disaster – Bill Gates

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