Arts and Culture

Mandu Festival:

The famous three day Mandu Festival was organized at the historic town of Mandu in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. The festival began on February 13, 2021, and culminated on February 15, 2021.

Highlights:

❖ The festival was organized by the state government of Madhya Pradesh. The festival showcased each and every aspect of the ancient Mandu city, ranging from food, music, history & heritage, art & craft etc.

❖ During the festival, the state culture and tourism minister Usha Thakur inaugurated the newly constructed Dino Adventure Park and Fossils Museum in Mandu.

❖ The Dinosaur Park is the first modern fossil park in India which has 24 eggs and other fossils of dinosaurs on display.

About Mandu

❖ Mandu or Mandavgad is an ancient city in the present-day Mandav area of the Dhar district. It is a world-famous picturesque tourist destination located in Dhar district in the Malwa region of western Madhya Pradesh.

❖ It is surrounded by stone walls dotted with darwazas (gateways). It's also known for its Afghan architectural heritage. Landmark buildings include Hoshang Shah's Tomb, a domed marble mausoleum, and the vast Jami Masjid mosque, with courtyards framed by colonnades. The imposing, centuries-old Jahaz Mahal palace stands between 2 lakes.

About MP:

❖ The Chief Minister and the Governor of Madhya Pradesh (MP) are Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Anandiben Patel. The Capital of MP is Bhopal.

Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav:

The Governor of West Bengal, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar recently inaugurated the 11th edition of ‘Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav’ at Cooch Behar Palace in West Bengal.

Highlights:

❖ The event was inaugurated on February 14, 2021, in the presence of Minister of State (I/C) for Culture
and Tourism, Shri Prahlad Singh Patel.

❖ Ten editions of the festival have successfully been organized ever since the festival was started in November, 2015.

❖ These 10 editions were organized in Delhi, Bengaluru, Varanasi, Taiwan, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tehri and Madhya Pradesh.

Basant Panchami:

Basant Panchami or Vasant Panchami marks the beginning of the spring season - Basant means spring and Panchami means "the fifth day" (or Panchmi of Shukla Paksha in Magh Maas).

The day is also celebrated as Saraswati Puja and the Hindu goddess of wisdom and knowledge, Saraswati, is worshipped on this day.

Saraswati Puja on Vasant Panchami is more popular in Bengal, Odisha and North Indian states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh.

Highlights of the Puja:

❖ On this day, the Hindus visit temples and pray to Goddess Saraswati.

❖ Several schools begin their session on Saraswati Puja day.

❖ Men, women and children dress up in the vibrant yellow colour as mustard fields in northern parts of India blooms during this season.

❖ Yellow flowers are offered to Goddess Saraswati and the festive yellow dishes like sweet saffron rice, kesari sheera, boondi ke ladoo, rajbhog and khichdi are prepared in homes.

'Shauryanjali' Programme:

The Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently attended the 'Shauryanjali' programme.

Highlights

❖ The programme was organized to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

❖ He paid homage to the great freedom fighters of Bengal who laid down their lives in the struggle for freedom of the country.

❖ At the event, he also flagged off a cycle rally.

❖ Three teams, namely Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Rasbehari Bose and Khudiram Bose, are participating in the rally which will create awareness in different parts of West Bengal about the great sacrifices...
made by the revolutionaries of Bengal in the freedom movement.

Rash Behari Bose: Rash Behari Bose (1886 – 1945) was an Indian revolutionary leader against the British Raj.

He was born in West Bengal. Following the attempt to assassinate Lord Hardinge on 23 December 1912 in Delhi, Rash Behari was forced to go into hiding.

He was one of the key organisers of the Ghadar Mutiny, and later the Indian National Army.

Khudiram Bose: Khudiram Bose (3 December 1889 – 11 August 1908) was an Indian revolutionary who opposed British rule of India.

For his role in the Muzaffarpur Conspiracy Case, along with Prafulla Chaki, he was sentenced to death and subsequently executed, making him one of the youngest martyrs of the Indian Independence Movement.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti:

Shiv Jayanti or Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti is celebrated in India on 19 February every year. The day marks the birth anniversary of the great Maratha king Shivaji. This year marks the 391st birth anniversary of the Maratha ruler.

About Shivaji:
Minister of Defence Sh. Rajnath Singh recently honoured Delhi Police with the Best Marching Contingent Trophy during Republic Day 2021. Delhi police were honoured on 15th February, in the midst of glittery ceremony at South Block.

Defence Minister highly appreciated the Delhi Police for showing exceptional professionalism in the recent highly stressful time.

About Delhi Police:

- The Delhi Police is the law enforcement agency for the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- Delhi Police comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- It was founded in 1867.
- In 2015, sanctioned strength of Delhi Police was 84,536 making it one of the largest metropolitan police forces in the world.
- The elected officer responsible for Delhi police is Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs (India).

E-Chhawani:

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh recently launched E-Chhawani portal and mobile app in New Delhi to facilitate ‘ease of living’ and ‘ease of doing’ for the residents of the Cantonment Boards across the country.

Key points about the portal:

- The portal can be accessed at https://echhawani.gov.in/
- The portal has been created to provide online civic services to over 20 lakh residents of 62 Cantonment Boards across the country.

The tomb of Shivaji Maharaj on Raigad, around 100 km from Pune.

Freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak followed the tradition later and popularized the image of Shivaji Maharaj by highlighting his contributions and brought people together by means of it during the Independence movement.

The day is associated with the pride of the people of Maharashtra.

The eve is also celebrated in Goa and Karnataka.
➢ Through the portal, the residents of cantonment areas will be able to avail basic services like renewal of leases, application for birth & death certificates, water & sewerage connections, trade licences with just a click of a button.
➢ The portal has been jointly developed by eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) and National Informatics Centre (NIC).

What is a Cantonment board?
• A cantonment board is a civic administration body in India. The board functions under control of the Ministry of Defence. It takes care of mandatory duties such as the provision of public health, water supply, sanitation, primary education, and street lighting etc.

Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A):

Prime Minister Modi recently handed over the indigenously developed Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Indian Army at a ceremony in Chennai.

The army will get 118 units of the Main Battle Tank. It has been indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by CVRDE and DRDO along with 15 academic institutions, eight labs and several MSMEs.

About Arjun Main Battle Tank MK-1A:
➢ The project- Arjun Main Battle Tank was started by DRDO in 1972.
➢ It was initiated along with the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment as its lead laboratory
➢ The mass production of the Arjun Battle Tank began in the year 1996 at Indian Ordnance Factory in Avadi facility.
➢ The Indian Army received the first batch of 16 tanks in 2004 and they were inducted as a squadron of the 43 Armoured Regiment.
➢ In 2009, the first Arjun regiment of the Indian Army had 45 tanks.

Special Features of Arjun Main Battle Tank MK-1A:
➢ The major speciality of Arjun tanks is - Fin Stabilised Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot’ (FSAPDS) ammunition and 120-mm calibre rifled gun.
➢ It also has a computer-controlled integrated fire control system with stabilised sighting that works in all lighting conditions.
➢ The secondary weapons include a co-axial 7.62-mm machine gun for anti-personnel and a 12.7-mm machine gun for anti-aircraft and ground targets.
➢ The tank also known as the Hunter Killer makes it the most potent tank in India.

Objective of Arjun Main Battle Tank MK-1A

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• The objective of the Arjun tanks was to create a state of the art tank with superior fire power, high mobility and create an excellence in protection.

What is different in MK-1A?

➢ The Mk-1A version has 14 major upgrades than the previous version.
➢ It is also supposed to have missile firing capability as per the design, but this feature will be added later as final testing of the capability is still on.
➢ The latest version is 54.3 per cent indigenous content against the 41 per cent in the earlier model.

Note: India is now one of the countries in the league of 10 nations worldwide to design and develop their own MBT.

The other nations that are in this league are UK, Germany, USA, France, Israel, South Korea, Russia, China and Japan. The Arjun MBT has outperformed the Russian T-90s in 2010 in the exercise which took place during a desert trial conducted by the Army.

Helina and Dhruvastra Missile Systems:

In a major boost for the Indian armed forces, joint User Trials for the helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile, ‘Helina’, and its Air Force variant ‘Dhruvastra’ have been carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) at the Pokhran deserts in Rajasthan.

Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems have been designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Five missions were carried out. Four missions for evaluating missile capabilities in minimum and maximum range of 7 kms and the final mission was carried out with warhead missile against a derelict tank.

About Helina and Dhruvastra:

➢ Developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Helina and Dhruvastra are a third-generation, Lock on Before Launch (LOBL) fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the ALH.
➢ Helina is the helicopter-launched version of the Nag missile system.
➢ The system has all-weather day and night operational capabilities and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour as well as explosive reactive armour (ERA).
➢ It is one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.
➢ The Helina missile can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode.
➢ While the Helina weapon systems has been developed for the Indian Army, its Indian Air Force (IAF) variant Dhruvastra has also been developed by the DRDO and now both variants are ready for induction into services.

INS Pralaya:
The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Pralaya recently participated in the NAVDEX 21 (Naval Defence Exhibition) and IDEX 21 (International Defence Exhibition) which were scheduled from 20 to 25 February 2021.

INS Mysore (an indigenously built guided missile destroyer deployed in the Persian Gulf) also participated in the exhibition.

IDEX and NAVDEX, and the International Defence Conference are organised by the Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company (ADNEC), in cooperation with the Ministry of Defense and the General Command of the UAE Armed Forces.

The exhibitions take place biennially. The event showcase the latest technologies and innovation in the global defence sector, support the growth of UAE's defence industry, and forge new relationships between major international companies.

About INS Pralaya:
- INS Pralaya is the second ship of the indigenously built Prabal Class Missile Vessels.
- The ship was built indigenously at Goa Shipyard Limited.
- It was commissioned in the Indian Navy on 18 December 2002.
- The 56 m long ship, displacing about 560 T is capable of speeds in excess of 35 knots and is fitted with an impressive array of weapons and sensors. These include a 76.2 mm medium range gun, 30 mm close range guns, chaff launchers and long range surface to surface missiles.

Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021:

India has recently joined the “Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021”. It is a two-day naval exercise.

- The exercise is being held in the northern part of the Indian Ocean.
- The drill was participated by the forces and vessels from navy divisions of both the Iranian army and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- Several vessels from the Russian navy also participated in the drill. Indian Navy has also joined the exercise with selected vessels.
- The drill will also be participated by the Chinese Navy.
- It will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres.
- The naval exercise will carry the range of activities which also includes the shooting at sea targets, air targets, liberation of hijacked ships, anti-piracy operations and search & rescue operations.

About IRGC:
- Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), also called Pasdaran, is a branch of the Iranian Armed Forc-
es. It was founded by the order of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in April 1979 after the Iranian Revolution.

➢ It was formed to defend the country's Islamic system, and to provide a counterweight to the regular armed forces.

➢ The participation of the IRGC in the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88) led to the expansion of both its role and its might, making it Iran's dominant military force, with its own army, navy, and air force and, later, its own intelligence wing.

➢ The Naval forces are the primary forces having operational control of the Persian Gulf.

➢ The naval force also controls the paramilitary Basij militia.

➢ Sepah News is the media arm of the IRGC.

Carbon-Neutral Oil:

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has recently sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US.

➢ The move comes as the company looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

➢ Carbon-neutral oil was delivered to Reliance by Oxy Low Carbon Ventures (OLCV), a division of US oil Major Occidental. RIL got 2 million barrels of consignment Permian basin.

➢ The Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) Sea Pearl containing the carbon-neutral oil from Permian basin, unloaded the cargo at Jamnagar on January 28, 2021.

➢ Reliance operates the world's largest single location oil refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat with capacity of 68.2 million tonnes a year.

➢ The transaction is a first step in the creation of a new market for climate-differentiated crude oil.

Background:

➢ Mukesh Ambani had in July 2020 unveiled plans to turn Reliance into a net carbon zero company by 2035. This will be done by embracing new technologies to convert its carbon dioxide emissions into useful products and chemicals.

➢ Occidental is the first US-based international energy company to announce an ambition to achieve net-zero GHG emissions associated...
with the use of its products by 2050. The company has been using carbon-dioxide in its enhanced oil recovery operations in the Permian Basin for over 40 years.

About RIL: Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) is an Indian multinational conglomerate company.

The company is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Reliance owns businesses across India engaged in energy, petrochemicals, textiles, natural resources, retail, and telecommunications.

RIL was founded by Dhirubhai Ambani on 8 May 1973.

Mobile Components Unit in Tamil Nadu:

Tata Electronics, a subsidiary of Tata Group, has signed MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Tamil Nadu to set up a facility to manufacture mobile components.

- The facility will be established in Krishnagiri to manufacture the mechanical enclosures of mobile phones.
- This project of Tata Electronics will cost around Rupees 4684 crores.
- The project seeks to help in creating jobs for 18,250 people in the state.

A MoU has also been signed by Tamil Nadu with the Grasim Industries Ltd in order to establish a paint manufacturing unit at Cheyyar with an investment of Rupees 750 crore.

Tamil Nadu, in total, has signed 28 MoUs for the projects for which the budget outlay is Rupees 28,000 crore.

About Tata Group:

- The Tata Group is an Indian multinational conglomerate. It is a private company.
- It was founded in 1868 by Jamsetji Tata. It is headquartered in Mumbai.
- The company is one of the biggest and oldest industrial groups of India. Each of the Tata Company is operating independently under its own board of directors and shareholders.

The companies affiliated under the Tata include:

1. Tata Communications
2. Tata Chemicals
3. Tata Consumer Products
4. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)
5. Tata Motors
6. Tata Cliq
7. Tata Elxsi
8. Taj Air
9. Tata Power
10. Jamshedpur FC
11. Tata Steel
12. Indian Hotels Company Ltd
13. Cromā
14. Tata Starbucks
15. Vistara
16. Tanishq
17. Voltas
18. Tata Projects Ltd
19. Tata Capital
20. Titan
21. Trent

About Grasim Industries Ltd:

➢ Grasim Industries Limited is an Indian manufacturing company based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It was established in 1947 as a textile manufacturer in India.
➢ Grasim Industries was ranked 154th in a list of the world’s best regarded firms compiled by Forbes. It is a subsidiary of Aditya Birla Group.
➢ The work of the company is diversified into Viscose Staple Fibre, sponge iron, cement, chemicals and Diversified Financial Services. The industry is the world’s largest producer of viscose rayon fibre that accounts for 24 per cent of the market share.

Drones for Agriculture:

The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) was recently allowed to use drones.

Highlights:

- The permission allows drone deployment by the MoAFW for remote sensing data collection in agricultural areas of 100 districts of the country under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
- It will be used in production estimates at the gram Panchayat level.
- The exemption shall be valid from the one year from the date of issue of the permission or until the operationalisation of the Digital Sky Platform.
- However, this exemption shall be valid only if all conditions and limitations are strictly adhered to.
- In case of violation of any condition, this exemption shall become null & void and action may be initiated.

Takeover of DHFL Ltd by Piramal Group:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently approved the acquisition of Diwan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) by Piramal Capital And Housing Finance.

The decision was taken by central bank after a month a Committee of Creditors (CoC) of DHFL voted in favor of Piramal’s bid. Following this, the resolution plan of the company has been approved by the RBI.
Now, the Piramal Group will require to take permission of National Company Law Tribunal to take over the DHFL.

Issue:

- DHFL was sent to bankruptcy court in December 2019 after the company defaulted to its lenders on debt worth Rs 90,000 crore.
- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted a raid in the company and found links of money laundering activity with respect to the loans given to closely linked firms.
- Following this, in accordance with the RBI Act of 1934, RBI removed the board of directors DHFL alleging inadequate governance in the company.
- Piramal’s plan is to recover Rs 37,250 crore over the next five years for DHFL’s lenders.

About Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL): DHFL is a deposit-taking housing finance company. It is headquartered in Mumbai. It was established in order to enable the access to the economical housing finance for the lower- and middle-income groups in the semi-urban and rural India. The company is the second housing finance company of India.

About Piramal Group: Piramal Group is a global business conglomerate with interests in Pharma, Financial Services, Information Management, Glass Packaging and Real Estate.

With offices in 30 countries and brand presence in over 100 markets, the Piramal Group has a global team of over 10,000 people from 21 diverse nationalities. It was founded in 1984. The current Chairman of Piramal Group is Ajay Piramal.

Environment

Tree Cities of the World:

Hyderabad recently won a green contest among cities in India, and emerged one of the ‘Tree Cities of the World’.

The title has been bestowed by the Arbor Day Foundation and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Hyderabad was selected for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forestry under the State government’s Haritha Haram programme and its Urban Forest Parks plan.

With this recognition, the city joins 120 others from 23 countries, including the United States the United Kingdoms, Australia and Canada.

The city was evaluated on five metrics. They are:

1. Establish Responsibility
2. Set the Rules
3. Know What You Have
4. Allocate the Resources
5. Celebrate the Achievements

**Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020:**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently awarded the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2020 to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB).

WCCB has received this award twice in three years.

WCCB has been awarded this year under the Innovation category. Earlier, the Bureau had received the award in 2018 under the same category.

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB):

- WCCB is a statutory body constituted under the WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Bureau functions under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Its task is to combat organized wildlife crime in the country.
- The Bureau has its headquarters in New Delhi and five regional offices at Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Jabalpur.
- WCCB has developed an online Wildlife Crime Database Management System to get real-time data to analyse trends in wildlife crimes across India. This system has been successfully used for carrying out operations such as Operation Save Kurma, Thunderbird, Wildnet, Lesknow, Birbil, Thunderstorm, Lesknow-II etc resulting in huge seizures of Tiger, Leopard Skin, bones, Rhino Horn, Elephant Ivory etc.

About UNEP:

- It is an abbreviation for United Nations Environment Programme.
- UNEP was founded on 5 June 1972 by a Canadian businessman and philanthropist Maurice Strong.
- It is responsible for coordinating the UN’s environmental activities and assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.
- It is the global champion for the environment with programmes focusing on sustainable development, climate, biodiversity and more.
- It is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.
- The current Executive Director of UNEP is Inger Andersen and the current Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP is Dechen Tsering.

**Usha Rao-Monari:**

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India’s Usha Rao-Monari who is a leading investment professional, has recently been appointed as Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the UNDP by UN chief Antonio Guterres. She has now joined a growing list of women from the country appointed to helm key agencies of the global organisation.

Rao-Monari previously served as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Global Water Development Partners, a Blackstone portfolio company. She held several senior positions, including Director of the Sustainable Business Advisory Group at the International Finance Corporation, part of the World Bank Group.

She currently serves on the Boards of several organisations in the field of sustainable development and has held various Board and advisory positions in the areas of water, natural capital, biodiversity and environment.

An Enrolment Module for TECHNOGRAHIS, has been launched by Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

- TECHNOGRAHIS are students from IITs, NITs, engineering, planning and architecture colleges, faculty members, academicians, and stakeholders.
- MoHUA is promoting six Light House Projects (LHPs) as Live Laboratories for transfer of technology to the field.
- The LHPs are model housing projects. About 1,000 houses at each location are being built with allied infrastructure facilities.
- The interested candidates can register themselves to visit these live laboratories at six LHP sites for learning, consultation, generation of ideas and solutions, experimentation, innovation, and technical awareness.
- Till the completion of the LHPs within a period of twelve months, the ‘Technograhis’ will get regular updates from the sites for information dissemination.
- This can enable the ‘Technograhis’ in adapting and adopting the technologies as per their requirements in the construction sector for a ‘Make in India’ approach”.

TECHNOGRAHIS:

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About Light House Project (LHP):

The LHP is being constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urb an (PMAY-U) as part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India).

Approximately 1,000 houses in each location are being built with related infrastructure facilities.

This initiative seeks to be an important driving force for India’s technological transformation.

This technological revolution is cost-effective, environmentally-friendly, strong in disaster resistance, and can speed up construction.

“Go Electric” Campaign:

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari recently launched the “Go Electric” Campaign.

The campaign has been launched to spread awareness on the benefits of e-mobility and EV Charging Infrastructure as well as electric cooking in India.

Highlights of the campaign are as follows:

- Go Electric Campaign is an important initiative which seeks to help in reducing the import dependence of India in the coming years and would be an important step towards a cleaner and greener future.
- The campaign is aimed at creating awareness at PAN-India level and is expected to boost the confidence of Electric Vehicle manufacturers.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) will extend technical support to the State Designated Agencies (SDAs) to implement the ‘Go Electric’ campaign at National and State level.
- As a Central Nodal Agency, BEE will provide content and details to State Designated Agencies and other partners to ensure uniformity of information.

What is the importance of Electric fuel?

I. Electric fuel is a major alternative for fossil fuels which have an import bill of Rs. 8 lakh Crore.
II. Electric fuel when compared to conventional fuels the electric fuel has low cost, reduced emissions and it is also indigenous.

NTLF 2021:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently addressed the 29th NTLF 2021 (NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum 2021).

Highlights:

❖ February 2021 marks the 29th year of NASSCOM Technology & Leadership Forum - a platform which has been the voice of the 190-billion-dollar industry eco-system.
❖ The forum was organized by NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) virtually on the theme "Shaping the future towards a better normal".
❖ It is a platform that brings together key leaders from the world of technology and innovation.
❖ The event is hosting almost 1600 participants from more than 30 countries.
❖ More than 30 products will be showcased during the three-days of talks.
❖ NTLF 2021 aims to achieve three key objectives. They are:
   I. To celebrate technology which has served as a backbone to boost businesses during the crisis,
   II. To draw a roadmap for the way ahead towards building a better future
   III. To bring out the importance of trust and responsible tech in this hyper virtual world.

NASSCOM:

❖ The full form of NASSCOM is National Association of Software and Service Companies.
❖ NASSCOM is a non-profit industry association established in 1988.
❖ It is the premier trade body and chamber of commerce in the Indian technology industry.
❖ It is composed of more than 2,800 member companies, including India and multinational organizations with branches in India.
❖ It is committed to accelerating the pace of industry transformation, making it the preferred driving force for global digital transformation.
❖ Its mission is to help India's technology products and service industries to be trustworthy and innovative on a global scale.

Use of Steel on National Highway:
The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways recently issued an order to allow all steel (whether produced by melting ore, billets, pellets or scrap) to be used for the construction of National Highways. However, the steel must meet the required standards for a specific grade of steel.

- The recommended steel will be tested in NABL accredited laboratories before being approved as a third-party check before approval.
- The step has been taken to ensure cost reduction in the building highways through use of new technology, reducing restrictions on suppliers and making the procurement system transparent.
- With this step, the supplier base for steel used in the construction of national highways would increase. This in turn will lead to more competition and better price discovery by the markets.

The Union Cabinet, recently chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius.

Key highlights of India-Mauritius CECPA are as follows:

- The India-Mauritius CECPA is the first trade Agreement to be signed by India with an African country.
- The main purpose is to liberalize norms to boost two-way commerce between the two countries.
- The CECPA between India and Mauritius will cover 310 export items for India, while 615 products for Mauritius.
- The Agreement is a limited agreement, which will cover Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Financial services, Customs Procedures and Cooperation in other Areas.
- CECPA provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
➢ Both sides have also agreed to negotiate an Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) for a limited number of highly sensitive products within two years of the Signing of the Agreement.

World Solar Bank:

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

Key points of WSB are as follows:

➢ The development of the WSB will support India’s attempt to secure its leadership in the climate arena.
➢ The development of the bank is significant because the green finance will be one of the priority themes at the climate meet called COP-26.
➢ COP-26 will be organized in the backdrop of US re-joining the Paris climate accord.
➢ The headquarters of the World Solar Bank is expected to be set up in India. It will be first multilateral development bank (MDB) that will be set up in India.
➢ The WSB have planned to disburse around $50 billion to the member countries of ISA over next 10 years.

➢ The WSB will be launched because many member countries of the ISA face the challenge of raising finances on their own.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA):

➢ The ISA is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
➢ The alliance was founded on 30 November 2015 climate change conference in Paris.
➢ It is the first treaty-based international government organization which is headquartered in Gurugram, India. It is the nodal agency to implement the global electricity grid plan of India called “One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)”.
➢ The current leader of ISA is Upendra Tripathy.

About OSOWOG:

➢ The One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) was launched with the objective of transferring the solar power generated in one region to feed the electricity demands of another region.
➢ Under the OSOWOG vision, India aims to replicate its global solar leadership through phased development of a single globally connected solar electricity grid.
➢ This would have multiple benefits such as Low cost, Zero pollution

世界太阳能银行：

国际太阳能联盟（ISA）计划在格拉斯哥举行的联合国气候变化大会（COP）上启动世界太阳能银行（WSB），该大会定于2021年11月举行。

WSB的关键点如下：

➢ WSB的发展将支持印度在气候领域争取领导地位的尝试。
➢ 银行的发展意义重大，因为在气候会议上，绿色金融将作为优先主题。
➢ COP-26将在美国重返巴黎气候协定的背景下举行。
➢ 世界太阳能银行的总部预计将在印度建立。它将是第一个在印度建立的多边开发银行（MDB）。
➢ WSB计划在未来10年内向ISA成员国拨款约500亿美元。

➢ WSB将启动，因为ISA的许多成员国面临着资金筹集的挑战。

关于国际太阳能联盟（ISA）：

➢ ISA是121个国家的联盟，由印度发起，其中大部分是阳光国家，它们位于赤道和南回归线之间。
➢ 该联盟成立于2015年11月30日的巴黎气候会议。
➢ 它是第一个条约性国际政府组织，总部位于印度古尔格拉姆。它是实施印度全球电网计划“一个太阳一个世界一个电网（OSOWOG）”的节点机构。
➢ ISA的现任领导人是Upendra Tripathy。

关于OSOWOG：

➢ OSOWOG的启动目标是将一个地区的太阳能发电转移给另一个地区。
➢ 根据OSOWOG的愿景，印度希望通过分阶段开发一个全球连接的太阳能电力电网来复制其全球太阳能领导地位。
➢ 这将带来多重好处，例如低成本，零污染。
Sama Lukonde: The Congo President Felix Tshisekedi on February 15 appointed Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, director-general of Gécamines (General Quarries and Mines) as the new DRC Prime Minister.

The 43-year-old Tshisekedi is a former sports minister and an ex-party member of the former governor of Katanga Moïse Katumbi, who recently postured his political lean in support of the President.

Congo: The Democratic Republic of the Congo, also known as Congo-Kinshasa, DR Congo, the DROC, or simply either Congo or the Congo, and historically Zaire, is a country in Central Africa. Congo achieved independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960 under the name Republic of the Congo. Congolese nationalist Patrice Lumumba was elected the first Prime Minister, while Joseph Kasavubu became the first President. The Capital of Congo is Kinshasa. The currency used here is Congolese franc.

Anti-extremism bill:

The lower house of the French Parliament recently voted in favour of a law to battle “Islamist separatism” that is billed by the government as a riposte to religious groups attempting to undermine the secular state.

This major decision was taken after the recent beheading in France.

The centrist party of President Emmanuel Macron hugely supported the law with 347 National Assembly lawmakers voting in favour, 151 against and 65 abstaining.

The text will now be submitted to the upper house Senate, where Macron’s party does not hold a majority.

France: France officially the French Republic is a country consisting of metropolitan France in Western Europe and several overseas regions and territories. It is historically and culturally among the most important nations in the Western world. France has also played a highly significant role in international affairs, with former colonies in every corner of the globe. The capital of France is Paris. The currency of France is Euro, CFP franc. The current President of France is Emmanuel Macron. The current Prime Minister is Jean Castex.

International Mother Language Day:

International Mother Tongue Day: The International Mother Tongue Day (IMLD) is observed on 21st February every year globally.

The objective of this day is to promote linguistic and cultural goodwill among the diverse population. It aims to foster unity among various nations as it promotes the
preservation and protection of all languages used by people all over the world.

The theme of the 2021 IMLD is “Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society.”.

This year’s observance is a call on policymakers, teachers and educators, parents and families to scale up their commitment to multilingual education, and inclusion in education to advance education recovery in the context of COVID-19.

History of IMLD:

- The idea of celebrating International Mother Tongue Day is an initiative of Bangladesh.
- It was approved at the UNESCO General Conference in 1999 and has been observed all over the world since 2000.
- On 16 May 2007 the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution A/RES/61/266 called upon the Member States "to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by peoples of the world".
- The date pays tribute to the students in Bangladesh who gave their life on this day in 1952 for the recognition of their language ‘Bengali’ as one of the two national languages.
- The police gunned down four students of Dhaka University Abul Barkat, Abdul Jabbar, Sofiur Rahman, Abdus Salam, when they marched towards the East Bengal Legislative Assembly breaking the curfew.

- In Bangladesh, this day is celebrated as Shaheed Day commemorating the sacrifice of the martyrs for the language of Bengali.
- On February 29, 1956, Bengali was recognized as the second official language of Pakistan under article 214(1) of the constitution which states "The state language of Pakistan shall be Urdu and Bengali."

What do you mean by mother language or the mother tongue?

- The mother language or the mother tongue is the first language (also native language) or languages that a person has learned from birth.
- Children who are brought up speaking two languages have more than one native language and are called bilingual.
- A child’s mother language is part of his personal, social, and cultural identity.

Significance of Mother Tongue:

- Linguistic diversity is increasingly imperiled as more and more languages disappear. One language disappears on average every two weeks, taking with it a whole cultural and intellectual heritage.
- Real values of any culture can only be conserved if there is an honor for mother tongue and heritage.
- All the scripts and religious books are composed in local languages which show us the right path to living life.

Quote: "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart. – Nelson Mandela
Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar:

Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar has recently been sworn-in as the Chief Justice of Manipur High Court.

Justice PV Sanjay Kumar was appointed as Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur by the President of India on 12th February, 2021 at Raj Bhavan, Imphal.

Prior to this, he served as a Judge in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Dr. Kiran Bedi:

Dr. Kiran Bedi has recently been removed from the post of Puducherry Lieutenant Governor amid a political turmoil in the Union territory following the resignation of Congress MLAs from the V Narayanasamy government.

- The additional charge of Telangana Governor has been given to Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan who is the Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.
- Ms. Bedi was the fourth woman incumbent of the post of Lt Governor.
- She assumed office of Lt Governor on May 29, 2016 and had been at loggerheads with Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy on various issues.

Article 153 of the Indian constitution:

Article 153 of the Indian constitution states that here shall be Governor for each State. Nothing in this article shall prevent the appointment of the same person as Governor for two or more States.

Kotia Cluster:

Andhra Pradesh recently held panchayat elections in three villages in the Kotia cluster, which is at the centre of a dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.

This is the first time Andhra has held panchayat polls in any of these villages.

Key highlights of these disputed villages are as follows:
❖ These villages in the Kotia Cluster, with a population of nearly 5,000, are located on a remote hilltop on the inter-state border.
❖ These are inhabited by Kondh tribals.
❖ The region was once a Maoist hotbed and still reports sporadic incidents of violence.
❖ The region is also rich in mineral resources like gold, platinum, manganese, bauxite, graphite and limestone.

Background of the Andhra-Odisha Boundary Dispute:

❖ Prior to April 1, 1936, villages under Kotia panchayat were part of Jeypore Estate.
❖ In the Constitution of Orissa Order, 1936, the Government of India (GoI) demarcated Odisha from the erstwhile Madras Presidency.
❖ The Presidency included the present-day Andhra Pradesh.
❖ In 1942, the Madras government contested the boundary and ordered re-demarcation of the two states.
❖ In a joint survey of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, seven villages of Kotia gram panchayat were recorded as revenue villages and revenue was collected by the Odisha government. But, the exercise left out the 21 villages now under dispute.
❖ The villages were not surveyed by the Andhra Pradesh government either when the state of Andhra Pradesh was created in 1955.
❖ In the early 1980s, Odisha filed a case in the Supreme Court demanding right and possession of jurisdiction over the 21 villages.
❖ In 2006 however, the court ruled that since disputes belonging to the state boundaries are not within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, the matter can only be resolved by Parliament and passed a permanent injunction on the disputed area.

Current Status:

➢ In Andhra, Vizianagaram, District collector said the three villages are separate gram panchayats and fall under Salur Mandal, hence elections were held.
➢ However, the villages participate in Assembly and Lok Sabha elections for both states. They are registered as voters for -
  o Salur Assembly and Araku Lok Sabha seats of Andhra
  o Pottangi Assembly and Koraput Lok Sabha seats of Odisha.
➢ The villagers enjoy benefits from both states under various schemes.
➢ A day after Andhra notified the panchayat elections here; Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated projects worth Rs 18 crore.

Juvenile Law:
The Union Cabinet has recently approved the proposal of the Ministry of Women and Child Development to amend the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. The proposal seeks to introduce measures for strengthening Child Protection set-up to ensure best interest of children.

The key highlights under the proposed act are as follows:

❖ The amendments include authorizing District Magistrate including Additional District Magistrate to issue adoption orders under Section 61 of the JJ Act, in order to ensure speedy disposal of cases and enhance accountability.

❖ Under the act, the District Magistrates have been further empowered to ensure its smooth implementation, as well as garner synergized efforts in favour of children in distress conditions.

❖ Some of the other aspects of the proposal are - defining eligibility parameters for appointment of CWC members, and categorizing previously ‘undefined offences as ‘serious offence’.

❖ Several difficulties faced in implementation of various provisions of the Act have also been addressed.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:


❖ The act allows juveniles between the age of 16-18 years, who are involved in Heinous Offences, to be tried as adults.

❖ The Act also seeks to create a universally accessible adoption law for India, superseding the Guardians and Wards Act (1890) (applicable to Muslims) and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act (1956), which is applicable to Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs). It does not replace them though.

Governing Council of NITI Aayog:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently chaired the sixth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog.

About:

➢ The meeting which was held on 20th February 2021 included the following objectives:

1) Making India a Manufacturing Powerhouse

2) Reimagining Agriculture

3) Improving Physical Infrastructure

4) Accelerating Human Resources Development
5) Improving Service Delivery at Grassroots Level
6) Health and Nutrition.

➢ The Governing Council presented a platform to discuss inter-sectoral, inter-departmental and federal issues.

➢ It comprises the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of States and Union Territories (UTs), with Legislatures and Lt Governors of other UTs.

➢ The sixth meeting was attended by Ladakh for the first time, in addition to the participation of Jammu and Kashmir as a UT. This time, other UTs headed by administrators were also invited to join.

➢ The meeting was attended by the ex-officio members of the Governing Council, Union Ministers, Vice Chairman, Members and CEO of NITI Aayog, and other senior officials of Government of India.

NITI Aayog: It refers to the National Institution For Transforming India Aayog. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India (GoI). It was established on 1 January 2015 with an objective to foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognizing that strong States make a strong nation.

The Governing Council of NITI, with The Prime Minister as its Chairman, comprises Chief Ministers of all States and Lt. Governors of Union Territories (UTs). The current CEO of NITI Aayog is Amitabh Kant.

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

He will be taking over from the current incumbent Guenter Butschek, who has preferred to relocate to Germany, his native place.

Llistosella was most recently the president and CEO of Fuso Truck and Bus Corporation and head of Daimler Trucks in Asia.

He was earlier the MD and CEO of Daimler India Commercial Vehicles Pvt Ltd.

Dr Ajay Mathur:
The International Solar Alliance (ISA) recently announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General (DG) following his election at the first special assembly of ISA members.

Dr. Mathur replaces Mr. Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since the ISA was founded in 2015.

ISA accelerate the demand for and use of safe, sustainable, and affordable solar energy for all. It aims to mobilize over $1 trillion USD of investment into solar projects by 2030 through focused advocacy, policy and regulatory support, capacity building, and by overcoming perceived investment barriers.

ISA: It is an abbreviation for International Solar Alliance.

- The ISA is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India, most of them being sunshine countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
- The alliance was founded on 30 November 2015 climate change conference in Paris.
- It is the first treaty-based international government organization which is headquartered in Gurugram, India.
- It is the nodal agency to implement the global electricity grid plan of India called “One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)”.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala:

She is the first female and first African who has recently been chosen as the head the World Trade Organization (WTO).

WTO has handed her the task of restoring trust in a rules-based global trading system.

Highlights:

The WTO’s 164 members unanimously selected the 66-year old Nigerian economist to serve a four-year term as director general.

The appointment came after United State’s new President Joe Biden endorsed her candidacy, which had been blocked by former President Donald Trump.

About: Okonjo-Iweala, formerly Nigeria’s finance minister, had a 25-year career at the World Bank (WB), where she rose to the number-two position of managing director. She holds both US and Nigerian citizenship.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

plants The World Trade Organization is an international body that deals with the rules of trade between nations.
It was established on 1st January 1995 in accordance with the Marrakesh Agreement.

It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. The WTO has over 160 members representing 98% of world trade.

Marrakesh Agreement:

- The Marrakesh Agreement was signed after the Marrakesh Declaration in April 1994. The agreement was signed in Marrakesh, Morocco.
- The agreement was signed by 123 nations in April 1994.
- The Marrakesh Agreement had replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
- The agreement is supplemented by agreements on issues like sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade in services, intellectual property rights etc.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy:

He is the Chief Minister (CM) of Andhra Pradesh (AP). He has recently been conferred with the SKOCH Chief Minister of the Year Award based on a year-long study of results of projects being implemented by governments in various States of the country.

Andhra Pradesh: Andhra Pradesh is situated in the south-eastern part of India. It came into existence in its present form in 1956 as a result of the demand of the Andhras for a separate state. Its Capitals are Visakhapatnam (executive capital), Kurnool (judicial capital), Amaravati (legislative capital). The current Governor and the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh is Biswabhusan Harichandan and Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy respectively.

Ajai Malhotra:

He has recently become the first Indian to be elected as Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

Malhotra has also served as the Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation till his retirement in 2013. After retirement, he served from 2015 to 2019 as Independent Director of India’s public sector Oil and Gas Company, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), as also of ONGC Videsh (2017–2019).

He has been on the Indian team negotiating issues such as biological diversity, climate change, desertification, education, energy, forestry, health, human
rights, human settlements, intellectual property, international law, labour, ozone depletion, sustainable development and trade.

About Human Rights Council:

- HRC is the Human Rights Council, an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system. It is located at the UN Office at Geneva. It was founded on 15 March 2006 by the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251.
- Its main task is to investigate allegations of breaches of human rights in UN member states. It also addresses important thematic human rights issues such as freedom of expression, women’s rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.

To mark the launch of Mahabahu-Brahmaputra, he inaugurated the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari. He also laid the foundation stone of Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa and various tourist jetties on river Brahmaputra and launched digital solutions for Ease-of-Doing-Business.

The program is aimed at providing seamless connectivity to the Eastern parts of India and includes various development activities for the people living around River Brahmaputra and River Barak.

About Dhubri Phulbari Bridge:

- PM Modi laid the foundation stone for the four lane bridge over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri (on North Bank) and Phulbari (on South Bank).
- The proposed Bridge will be located on NH-127B, originating from Srirampur on NH-27 (East-West Corridor), and terminating at Nongstoin on NH-106 in the State of Meghalaya.
- It will connect Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari, Tura, Rongram and Rongjeng in Meghalaya.
- It will reduce the distance of 205 Km to be travelled by Road to 19
Km, which is the total length of the bridge.

The bridge will be built at a total cost of approximately 4,997 crore.

About Majuli Bridge

Prime Minister performed the Bhumi Pujan for the two-lane Bridge on the Brahmaputra between Majuli (North Bank) and Jorhat (South Bank).

The bridge will be located on NH-715K and will connect Neematighat (on Jorhat side) and Kamalabari (on Majuli side).

About Assam: Assam is a state in northeastern India known for its wildlife, archeological sites and tea plantations. It is situated south of the eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak River valleys. Assam is known for Assam tea and Assam silk. The state was the first site for oil drilling in Asia. Its capital is Dispur. The current Governor and the Chief Minister of Assam are Professor Jagdish Mukhi and Sarbananda Sonowal respectively.

Key Projects in Assam:

PM Modi dedicated to the nation the following:

- INDMAX Unit at Indian Oil’s Bongaigaon Refinery
- Oil India Limited’s Secondary Tank Farm at Madhuban, Dibrugarh
- A Gas Compressor Station at Hebeda Village, Makum, Tinsukia.

He inaugurated the Dhemaji Engineering College. The college has been built on 276 “bighas” of land, at a cost of about ₹45 crore. It is the seventh government engineering college in the state and will offer BTech courses in civil, mechanical and computer science engineering.

He also laid the foundation stone for Sualkuchi Engineering College in Assam.

Mega Projects in Tamil Nadu:

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his recent visit to Tamil nadu inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for several key projects at Chennai.

The mega projects are as follows:

He inaugurated the Chennai Metro Rail Phase-I extension, fourth Railway line between Chennai Beach and Attipattu, Railway Electrification of single line section in Villupuram - Cuddalore - Mayiladuthurai - Thanjavur and Mayiladuthurai-Thiruvarur.

He also laid the foundation stone for two projects. They are:-
1. The extension, renovation and modernization of the Grand Anicut Canal System crucial for irrigation in the delta districts to be taken up at ₹2,640 crore.

2. Discovery Campus to come up at IIT Madras for ₹1000 crore in the first phase. The Campus is to be built at Thiruvanmiyur near Chennai at an estimated cost of 1000 crore rupees in the first phase, over an area of 2-lakh square metre.

The Central Government has accepted the long-standing demand of DevendrakulaVelalar community to be known officially as DevendrakulaVelalar. They will now be known by their heritage name and not the six to seven names listed in the Schedule to the Constitution.

Modi is the only Indian Prime Minister to visit Jaffna. To boost connectivity, the railway network to Jaffna and to Mannar is being re-built. Flights have been established from Chennai to Jaffna. India has built the Jaffna Cultural Centre which will open soon.

During the visit, PM Modi also handed over the Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Army in Chennai.

The MK-1A tank is indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by CVRDE, DRDO in collaboration with 15 academic institutions, eight labs and certain MSMEs.

About Tamil Nadu: It is located in the extreme south of the subcontinent. It was formerly the Madras Presidency of British India but was renamed Madras (State) after independence in 1947. Madras (State) was again renamed Tamil Nadu in 1968. Its Capital is Chennai. The Governor and Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu are Banwarilal Purohit and Edappadi K. Palaniswami respectively.

Oil & Gas Projects In Tamil Nadu:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation and laid the foundation of key projects of the oil & gas sector in Tamil Nadu

Thoothukudi Natural Gas Pipeline:

- He dedicated to the nation the Ramanathapuram – Thoothukudi natural gas pipeline. The Ramanathapuram – Thoothukudi section (143 km) of the Ennore- Thiruvallur- Bengaluru- Puducherry- Nagapattinam- Madurai- Tuticorin Natural Gas Pipeline has been laid at the cost of about Rs. 700 crores.
- It will not only help utilize gas from ONGC Gas fields but also deliver natural gas as feedstock to industries and other commercial customers.

Gasoline Desulphurisation Unit at Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited, Manali:

- He dedicated the Gasoline Desulphurisation Unit at Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited, Manali. The unit has been constructed at the cost of around Rs 500 crore.
- It will produce low sulphur (less than 8 ppm) environment-friendly gasoline, help reduce emission and
contribute towards a cleaner environment.

Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam:

➢ He laid the foundation stone of Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam.
➢ It will have a capacity of 9 million metric tonnes per annum. It will be set up through a Joint Venture of IOCL and CPCL at an estimated project cost of Rs. 31,500 crore.
➢ It will produce Motor Spirit and Diesel meeting BS-VI specifications, and Polypropylene as a value-added product.

Mega Projects in Kerala:

Prime Minister on his recent visit to Kerala inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for several key projects.

The projects are as follows:

• Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project (PDPP) of BPCL:

PM Modi dedicated to the nation the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project (PDPP) of BPCL. It will produce Acrylic Acid, Acrylates and Oxo-Alcohol which are at present predominantly imported, and is expected to result in saving of about Rs 3700 to 4000 crore per annum in foreign exchange which in turn will strengthen India’s journey towards being Aatmanirbhar. It has been constructed at a capital cost of about Rs 6000 crore.

• Inauguration of the International Cruise Terminal ‘Sagarika’:

He inaugurated the International Cruise Terminal ‘Sagarika’ at Cochin Port which is situated at the Ernakulam Wharf on Willingdon Island. It is India’s first full-fledged international cruise terminal. It has state-of-the-art facilities and has been constructed at a cost of Rs 25.72 crore.

• Inauguration of the Marine Engineering Training Institute:

He inaugurated the Marine Engineering Training Institute of Cochin Shipyard Ltd. Vigyan Sagar, the new knowledge campus of Cochin Shipyard would particularly help those wanting to study marine engineering.

• Foundation stone for Reconstruction of South Coal Berth:

He laid the foundation stone of Reconstruction of South Coal Berth at Cochin Port. The South Coal Berth seeks to bring down logistics costs and improve cargo capacities.

• Inauguration of the Ro-Ro Vessels:

He reopened the Ro-Ro Vessels at Willingdon Islands in Cochin. According to the government, the International Waterway Authority of India will deploy two new Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ro) vessels between Bolgatty and Willingdon Island on National Waterway-3. These will have the capacity to carry six 20-feet trucks, three 20-feet trailer trucks, three 40-feet trailer trucks and 30 passengers each.

With Ro-Ro Vessels, a distance of almost thirty kilometres on road will become 3.5
kilometres through waterways leading to less congestion and more convenience, commerce and capacity-building.

- **50 MW Kasaragod Solar Power Project:**

He dedicated to the nation the 50 MW Kasaragod Solar Power Project in Kerala. It has been developed under the National Solar Energy Mission. It has been set up over 250 acres of land spread across Paivalike, Meenja and Chippar villages of Kasaragod district. It has been built with Central Government’s investment of around Rs. 280 crores. More than 20 lakh solar power pumps are being given to farmers under PM-Kusum Yojana.

- **Foundation stone for Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC):**

He laid the foundation stone of the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The project is to be built at a cost of Rs 94 crores. It is being set up to host Smart Solutions for Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation. It will act as a common point of action during emergency situations to facilitate coordinated action.

The control rooms or War Room at the ICC will only act as a single point of coordinated action and decision making among various agencies like police, civil supplies, revenue, health and fire fighting.

- **Inauguration of 75 MLD Water Treatment Plant:**

He inaugurated the 75 MLD (million litres per day) Water Treatment Plant at Aruvikkara in Kerala. The water treatment plant will boost supply of drinking water to people of Thiruvananthapuram and help avoid disruption of drinking water supply to the city in the event of maintenance work in the existing treatment plants in Aruvikkara. It is being built under the AMRUT Mission.

**About AMRUT Mission:**

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched in 2015 with the aim of providing basic civic amenities like water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks as to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged.

**About Kerala:** It is a state on the southwestern Malabar Coast of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, following the passage of the States Reorganization Act, by combining Malayalam-speaking regions of the erstwhile states of Travancore-Cochin and Madras. Its capital is Thiruvananthapuram. The current Governor and Chief Minister of Kerala are Arif Mohammad Khan and Pinarayi Vijayan respectively.

**Maa Scheme:**

West Bengal (WB) Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee recently launched “Maa” canteens for providing subsidized cooked meals for the poor and the destitute at a nominal cost of ₹5.
➢ This new initiative is for the common people.
➢ The govt. will give a subsidy of ₹15 and people have to pay ₹5. The kitchen will be run by Self-Help Groups (SHGs).
➢ The Budget tabled by the Chief Minister earlier this month allocated ₹100 crores for this project.

Even though free rations are given there is still a huge demand for cooked food. Therefore, these community kitchens have been started by the WB Government.

**Railway Projects in West Bengal:**

The Union Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal recently dedicated series of projects for the development of rail infrastructure in poll-bound West Bengal. He inaugurated various infrastructure development and passenger amenity-related works in the North Bengal area through video conferencing.

These projects aim to not only enhance passenger experience but also help in faster movement of goods.

He inaugurated 2nd Foot Over Bridge at Santragachi, Freight Terminal at Sankrail (Phase-I) & Vivekananda Meditation Centre at Howrah and dedicated to the Nation an Executive Lounge at Sealdah station, 2 Escalators at Sealdah station and 2 lifts at Sealdah station.

- **Santragachi Station:** Santragachi station is one of the busiest stations over Howrah-Kharagpur section. It is being developed with all modern amenities.
  - **Sankrail Freight Terminal:**
    Sankrail Freight Terminal (Phase-I) has been developed with modern facilities for freight rake handling. This Freight Terminal will serve around 40 sq km. industrial belt spreading over Kolkata and Howrah in West Bengal.
  - **Vivekananda Meditation Centre:**
    The Vivekananda Meditation Centre is constructed at a cost of Rs 65 lakh of which Rs 30 lakh has been arranged from the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) fund of MP Pradip Bhattacharya.
    The total built-up area of this centre is 3,528 sq ft and the meditation hall area is 2,100 sq ft.
    It has the capacity to hold 70 persons.
  - **Integrated Security System at Barddhaman Station:**
    In order to augment security of passengers & railway property, an Integrated Security System has been commissioned at Barddhaman station.
  - **Executive Lounge at Sealdah:**
    The Executive Lounge at Sealdah Station is another novel initiative of Railways to provide more comfort for passengers.
    The executive lounge covers an area of 2,000 sq ft and is provided with a separate capsule lift for easy access.
A fully air-conditioned premium waiting lounge has been set up at Kolkata station.

He also launched the Foot Over Bridge at Jhamatpur Baharan and Nimo stations, Extension of platform shed at Balagarh and Guptipara Stations and Escalator at Tarkeswar and Nabadwip Dham stations.

Note: The Ministry has taken it upon itself to contribute big time to the mission of Sonar Bangla.

Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan:

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) recently launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban, JJM-U.

➢ As the part of the survey, Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan 2021 will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water and reuse of wastewater through a challenge process.

➢ It will also help in mapping the water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.

➢ The Pilot survey, as its first step, will be launched in 10 cities, which are Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur.

➢ Based on responses received in all 500 cities, the survekshan will be extended to AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) cities.

Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban (JJM-U):

➢ JJM-U was announced during the Union Budget for FY 2021-22 under the Ministry Housing and Urban Affairs.

➢ The mission seeks to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households with functional taps which also includes sewerage and septage management in 500 AMRUT cities to make them water-secure and rejuvenation of water bodies to augment sustainable freshwater supply and create green spaces and sponge cities to reduce floods and enhance amenity value through an Urban Aquifer Management plan.

➢ JJM-U is designed to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households through functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns.

➢ The mission has been launched in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal-6.

➢ The total outlay proposed for JJM(U) is 2 lakh 87 thousand crore rupees which includes 10 thousand crore rupees for continuing financial support to AMRUT Mission.
➢ The mission also complements the Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural) that was launched to ensure the supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every household in rural areas.
➢ It aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) in the rural areas by 2024.

AMRUT Mission:
- The Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India (GoI).
- The mission was launched on 24 June 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the aim of providing basic civic amenities like water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks as to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged.

National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHEM):

Recently, the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her budget speech formally announced the National Hydrogen Energy Mission (NHEM) which aims for generation of hydrogen from green power resources fulfilling the announcement made by Prime Minister in November 2020. The government plans to produce green hydrogen by using the country vast renewable resources.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has disclosed that the draft regulations for NHEM will be finalised by the end of this month and will thereafter proceed for approval of the Union Cabinet.

The reason for NHEM by the Government is because of the following advantages:
➢ It is a clean-burning molecule, which can decarbonize a range of sectors including iron and steel, chemicals, and transportation.
➢ Renewable energy that cannot be stored or used by the grid can be channelled to produce hydrogen.
➢ The proposal in the Budget will be followed up with a mission draft in the couple of months — a roadmap for using hydrogen as an energy source.

Philosophy behind NHEM:
➢ The electricity grid of India is predominantly coal-based and will continue to be so.
➢ In several countries that have gone in for an EV push, much of the electricity is generated from renewables — in Norway for example, it is 99 per cent from hydroelectric power.
➢ Experts believe hydrogen vehicles can be especially effective in long-haul trucking and other hard-to-electrify sectors such as shipping and long-haul air travel.
➢ Using heavy batteries in these applications would be counterproductive, especially for countries such as India, where the electricity grid is predominantly coal-fired.
Hydrogen as an element:

➢ It is the most abundant chemical substance in the universe, constituting roughly 75% of all baryonic mass.
➢ However, this most common element in nature is not found freely. It exists only combined with other elements and has to be extracted from naturally occurring compounds like water (which is a combination of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom).
➢ Hydrogen is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, flammable gaseous substance that is the simplest member of the family of chemical elements.
➢ With a standard atomic weight of 1.008, hydrogen is the lightest element in the periodic table.
➢ Non-remnant stars are mainly composed of hydrogen in the plasma state.
➢ Hydrogen gas was first artificially produced in the early 16th century by the reaction of acids on metals.
➢ This fuel can be produced from various sources like natural gas, nuclear power, biomass, and renewable power like solar and wind.

There are three types of hydrogen – grey, blue and green.

1. The fuel produced from fossil fuels is called grey hydrogen. This constitutes the bulk of the hydrogen produced today.
2. Those produced from fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage options are called blue hydrogen.
3. Those produced from renewable power sources are called green hydrogen.

➢ The most common methods for producing hydrogen are natural gas reforming and electrolysis.
➢ Being a zero-carbon fuel, hydrogen is considered to be one of the key sources of clean energy for the future.

Efforts in India on transportation so far:

In October 2020, Delhi became the first Indian city to operate buses running on hydrogen spiked compressed natural gas (H-CNG) in a six-month pilot project.

The buses will run on a new technology patented by Indian Oil Corp for producing H-CNG — 18 per cent hydrogen in CNG — directly from natural gas, without resorting to conventional blending.

Advantages of H-CNG:

❖ The use of H-CNG is the elimination of carbon monoxide emissions.
❖ H-CNG as a fuel reduces carbon dioxide and hydrocarbon emissions.
❖ Hydrogen up to one-fifth by volume can be blended with CNG as fuel for buses.
❖ H-CNG makes the fuel less expensive than CNG.

Disadvantages of H-CNG:
Safety is seen as a concern. Hydrogen is pressurized and stored in a cryogenic tank, from there it is fed to a lower-pressure cell and put through an electrochemical reaction to generate electricity.

- Determining the most optimized H2/NG (Natural Gas) ratio.
- It requires new infrastructures for preparing H-CNG.
- Many steps need to be taken for commercializing it at a large scale.
- A big barrier to the adoption of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles has been a lack of fuelling station infrastructure. There are less than 500 operational hydrogen stations in the world today, mostly in Europe, followed by Japan and South Korea.
- Current cost of H2 is more than the cost of Natural Gas. So, HCNG's cost is more than CNG.

**All India Surveys:**

A Software Applications and instruction manuals with questionnaires for five All India Surveys on Labour was recently launched by the Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

**Highlights:**

The five All India Surveys are being conducted by Labour Bureau in Chandigarh.

These five surveys being undertaken by Labour Bureau are:

1. All India survey on employment generated in Transport Sector.
2. All India Survey on Migrant workers
3. All India survey on Domestic Workers
4. All India survey on employment generated by Professionals
5. All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (to assess the employment situation in establishments with more than 10 workers and also less than 10 workers)

**About Labour Bureau:**

Labour Bureau is an attached office of Ministry of Labour & Employment.

The bureau has been at the forefront in fulfilling the data needs of various stakeholders in the field of labour and employment since 1920.

**PLI Scheme for Telecom and Networking Products:**

The Union Cabinet has recently approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Telecom and Networking Products.

**Highlights:**
PLI scheme on telecom sector will be effective from April 1, 2021.

The Scheme aims to promote manufacture of Telecom and Networking Products in India.

The scheme proposes a financial incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract investments in the target segments of telecom and networking products.

The main component of the scheme is to offset the imports of telecom equipment worth more than Rs 50,000 crore.

The scheme will also encourage exports of telecom and networking products 'Made in India'.

Main features of PLI Scheme are:

- The outlay of the scheme is Rs. 12,195 Crores over 5 years.
- Support under the Scheme will be provided to companies/entities engaged in manufacturing of specified telecom and networking products in India like Gigabit Passive Optical Networks (GPON), base routers, Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM), Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS/ IPMPLS) and 5G/4G radios.
- The eligibility for the scheme will be subject to achievement of a minimum threshold of cumulative incremental investment over a period of 4 years and incremental sales of manufactured goods net of taxes (as distinct from traded goods) over the Base Year 2019-2020.
- The minimum investment threshold for MSME has been kept at Rs.10 crore with incentives from 6% - 4 % over 5 year above Base Year.
- The applicants with higher investments than specified threshold under MSME and Non MSME categories will be selected through transparent process.

About PLI scheme:

- This scheme was launched in the March 2020 in a bid to boost the domestic manufacturing.
- It seeks to cut down on import bills.
- The scheme was launched with the aim of giving the companies incentives on incremental sales of the domestically manufactured products.
- This scheme does not stop any foreign companies to set shop in India, but at the same time it also encourages the local companies to set up or expand the existing manufacturing units.

**Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary:**


The 3rd edition of the ISL dictionary contains a total of 10,000 terms including 6,000 of the first and second edition of the dictionary.
Details of ISL Dictionary are as follows:

- The Dictionary has been developed by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), an autonomous Institute under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- The 3rd edition of the ISL Dictionary contains total 10,000 terms of everyday use, academic terms, legal & administrative terms, medical terms, technical terms and agricultural terms.
- The Dictionary also contains regional signs used in different parts of the country.
- The 1st edition of the ISL Dictionary was launched on 23rd March 2018 with 3000 terms.
- The 2nd edition was launched on 27th February 2019 with 6000 terms including earlier 3000 terms.

Importance:

- The launch of the ISL dictionary is an important step towards fulfilling needs of hearing and speech impaired in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016.
- It also complies with the initiative by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) called “Accessible Digital Textbooks for All”.
- The ISL will be essential in enhancing the vocabulary and the capabilities to understand concepts of the impaired

Provisions by the Government for hearing impaired are as follows:

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 was passed to include provisions for hearing impaired.
- The government started the accessibility of news and educational videos by incorporating sign language or written text subtitles and transcripts.
- New Education Policy, 2020 also contain provisions of universalization of education for all including the disabled with 100% Gross Enrolment ratio from preschool to secondary level by 2030.
- National Program for Prevention and Control of Deafness (NPPCD) was launched in 2006 to tackle high incidence of deafness.

Geo-spatial sector in India:

- The Ministry of Science and Technology Monday recently released new guidelines for the Geo-spatial sector in India.
Highlights:

➢ The guidelines deregulate existing protocol and liberalises the sector to a more competitive field.
➢ The move is aimed at liberalizing geospatial services.

About Geospatial Data:

➢ Geospatial data is a data about objects on the surface of the earth, both natural and manmade.
➢ The location may be static in the short-term, like the location of a road, an earthquake event, malnutrition among children, or dynamic like a moving vehicle or pedestrian, the spread of an infectious disease.
➢ Geo-spatial data combines location information, attribute information (the characteristics of the object, event, or phenomena concerned), and often also temporal information or the time at which the location and attributes exist.
➢ Geo-spatial data usually involves information of public interest such as roads, localities, rail lines, water bodies, and public amenities.
➢ The past decade has seen an increase in the use of geo-spatial data in daily life with various apps such as food delivery apps like Zomato or Swiggy, e-commerce like Amazon or even weather apps.

The present policy on geo-spatial data is as follows:

➢ There are strict restrictions on the collection, storage, use, sale, dissemination of geo-spatial data and mapping under the current regime.
➢ The policy had not been renewed in decades and has been driven by internal as well as external security concerns.
➢ The sector so far is dominated by the Indian government as well as government-run agencies such as the Survey of India and private companies need to navigate a system of permissions from different departments of the government (depending on the kind of data to be created) as well as the defence and Home Ministries, to be able to collect, create or disseminate geo-spatial data.
➢ Initially conceptualized as a matter solely concerned with security, geo-spatial data collection was the prerogative of the defence forces and the government.
➢ GIS mapping was also rudimentary, with the government investing heavily in it after the Kargil war highlighted the dependence on foreign data and the need for indigenous sources of data.

Expected impact of new guidelines:

➢ By liberalizing the system, the government will ensure more players in the field, competitiveness of Indian companies in the global market, and more accurate data available to both the government to formulate plans and administer, but also for individual Indians.
➢ Startups and businesses can now also use this data in setting up their concerns, especially in the sector of e-commerce or geo-spatial based apps – which in turn will increase employment in these sectors.
➢ Indian companies will be able to develop indigenous apps, for exam-
ple an Indian version of google maps.

SANDES:

![Sandes](image)

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

Key Highlights:

❖ This instant messaging platform is similar to WhatsApp.

❖ Like WhatsApp, the new government instant messaging systems (GIMS) platform can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone using a mobile number or email id.

❖ GIMS, like other instant messaging apps in the market, uses a valid mobile number or email id to register the user for the first time. It also offers features such as group making, broadcast message, message forwarding and emojis.

❖ Although there is no option to transfer the chat history between two platforms, the chats on GIMS can be backed up to a users' email.

❖ The instant messaging app, called Sandes, has an interface similar to many other apps currently available in the market.

❖ The need to build a home-grown messaging platform was felt by the government to ensure secure communication between people as they worked from home, following the nationwide lockdown imposed to contain the spread of Covid-19.

❖ The app can be used by central and state government officials for intra-organisational and inter-organisational communication.

❖ The Sandes app is also a part of the government strategy to encourage the use of India-made software so as to build an ecosystem of indigenously developed software and products.

❖ Sandes was initially launched for Android users and mainly for government officers. Later, the service was also extended to iOS users and it is now available for the common public as well.

Background:

❖ In 2020, the ministry of home affairs had issued the advisory for the government employees to not use the platforms like Zoom for official communications because of security concerns.

❖ Before that, the Computer Emergency Response Team (Cert-In) had also issued an advisory against Zoom with respect to the safety and privacy concerns.

About National Informatics Centre (NIC):

❖ National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics
and Information Technology (Mei- tY) is the technology partner of the Government of India (GoI).

❖ It is headquartered in New Delhi.

❖ It was established in 1976 with an objective to provide technology-driven solutions to Central and State Governments in various aspects of development.

❖ NIC has been instrumental in adopting and providing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and eGovernance support to Central Government.

❖ The current Director-General (DG) is Neeta Verma.

Perseverance on Mars:

The American space agency NASA successfully landed its fifth rover 'Perseverance' on Mars 18 February 2021 Successfully.

➢ It landed in a deep crater near the planet’s equator called Jezero.

➢ It touched down the surface of Mars after successfully overcoming a risky landing phase known as the seven minutes of terror.

➢ Then it began sending images of the local area back to Earth.

➢ The rover is only the fifth ever to set its wheels down on Mars. This feat was first accomplished in 1997 and all so far has been American.

Background:

• Perseverance’s mission officially began on July 30, 2020, when NASA launched the $3 billion Mars 2020 mission from Florida’s Cape Canaveral.

Perseverance’s mission

➢ The Perseverance rover is expected to continue exploration for at least one Martian year, which is 687 Earth days.

➢ Its goal is to explore the Jezero crater, which scientists have speculated was once an 820ft lake that existed around 3.5 billion years ago.

➢ The six-wheeled vehicle will now spend at least the next two years drilling into the local rocks, looking for evidence of past life.

About Preserverance: It is about the size of an SUV. It weighs a ton. It is equipped with a seven feet long robotic arm, has 19 cameras, two microphones and a suite of cutting-edge instruments to assist in its scientific goals. It has a laser spectrometer on board that will be able to examine rocks using different wavelengths of energy.

Note: The shadow of NASA’s Perseverance rover was seen on the surface of Mars as it landed on the planet.

With this, NASA is set to become the first space agency to fly a drone in the atmosphere of another planet.
Snakepedia:

A team of scientists, doctors and photographers in Kerala have launched a mobile application named “Snakepedia”.

Highlights of Snakepedia:

- This mobile app will present all relevant information on snakes, to help the public as well as doctors in treating snake bites.
- The app aims to help the public identify snakes and avail proper treatment on time for snakebites. It will also help in busting myths about snakes, and protect snakes as well as snakebite victims.
- The android mobile application documents information on snakes with the help of pictures, infographics and podcasts and analyses its first aid, treatment, myths and superstitions.

Rashtrapati Bhavan Krida Sthal:

The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, recently, inaugurated the Rashtrapati Bhavan Krida Sthal (renovated Football Ground and Basketball Court), in the President’s Estate.

On the occasion, an ‘Exhibition Football Match’ was played between the children of My Angels Academy, Vikaspuri, New Delhi – a Trust working for the cause of underprivileged children.

The main aim of developing these state-of-art sports facilities are to cater to the needs of the employees of Rashtrapati Bhavan and their families.

An inter-departmental football tournament with five teams namely – President’s Secretariat Heroes, Household Youngs, PBG Warriors, Army Guard Daredevils and Delhi Police Stalwarts also started to encourage the employees and their family members to take part in the sports activities.

Kings XI Punjab:

The IPL Franchise, Kings XI Punjab has formally been renamed as Punjab Kings.
ahead of the Indian Premier League auction.

The new brand name and logo of the team was officially released by the management.

The Punjab-based IPL franchise ‘Punjab Kings’ is co-owned by Bollywood actress Preity Zinta, along with businessman Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman and Karn Paul.

The side is currently led by batsman KL Rahul, with former Indian captain Anil Kumble as its head coach.

**National Table Tennis Title:**

Manika Batra recently won the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship.

- She beat Reeth Rishya by 8-11, 10-12, 11-1, 11-9, 11-5, 11-6 at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula.

- It was Manika’s second Nationals title. She won her maiden national title in 2015 in Hyderabad.

- Batra will now compete at two WTT Contender events which will start on February 28.

- This will be followed by the World Olympic qualifiers and Asian Olympic qualifiers in Doha which is scheduled for March 14 and 18 respectively.

About Manika Batra:

- She is an Indian table tennis player. She is the top-ranked female table tennis player as of November 2020. She is ranked 63rd in world. The player specializes in playing the long-pimples on her backhand. It is not often played by top players.

**Her Achievements:**

- In 2020, she also received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award.

- In 2018 she was the only Indian who received “The Breakthrough Star Award” by ITTF.

- In 2015, she won three medals at Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships.

- In 2011, she won silver medal in the under-21 category of the Chile Open.

- She represented India in 2014 Commonwealth Games at Glasgow. She finished to the quarterfinalist. She also took part in 2014 Asian Games.

**Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI):**

The Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) is the governing body for table tennis in India. The TTFI was established in 1926, and was a founding member of the International Table Tennis Federation.

TTFI's membership includes 32 state units and 37 institutions.

As of 2019, India’s Men’s TT Team are ranked 10th in the world while Women’s team are ranked 22nd.
Table Tennis (TT) is a popular indoor recreation sport in the country. It mostly played in the states of West Bengal, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

Seiko Hashimoto:

Former Olympian Seiko Hashimoto was recently named as president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee. She was named as the President of the committee after a meeting of its executive board. She replaces 83-year-old Yoshiro Mori, a former Japanese prime minister who was forced to resign recently after making sexist comments about women.

Tokyo Olympic organizing committee after a meeting of its executive board, which is 80% male, a committee with a 50-50 gender split, was formed to find a successor to Mori.

Ankita Raina:

India’s Ankita Raina claimed her maiden WTA title by lifting the Phillip Island Trophy along with Russian partner Kamilla Rakhimova.

This feat will catapult her into the top-100 in the doubles for the first time in her career.

Ankita and Kamilla erased a one-set deficit to beat the Russian combination of Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6 6-4 10-7 in the summit clash here.

Ankita will become only the second player to crack the doubles top-100 since Sania Mirza, who is a six-time Grand Slam champion.

https://www.civilserviceindia.com/current-affairs/quiz.php