



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–JANUARY 30, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **On January 29, the Tamil Nadu Cabinet - accorded approval for 34 proposals for investments to the tune of ₹52,257 crore.**
- ✓ The Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, also cleared the Tamil Nadu Industrial Policy 2021, which would be unveiled soon
- ✓ The investments are likely to create over 93,000 jobs in the state
- ✓ The proposed projects involve -
 - ✓ Tata Electronics - to invest ₹5,763 crore to make mobile phone components and create 18,250 jobs in Krishnagiri
 - ✓ Sun Edison – to invest ₹4,629 crore and employ over 5,000 people to produce solar photo-voltaic modules.
 - ✓ Lucas TVS – to invest ₹2,500 crore and employ over 3,500 persons for manufacturing lithium-ion batteries in Tiruvallur district.
 - ✓ Ola Electric - to invest ₹2,354 crore and create employment for 2,182 persons in the SIPCOT park at Bargur, Krishnagiri, for making electric vehicles and batteries.
 - ✓ Pegatron Corporation, a Taiwanese mobile phone maker - to invest ₹1,100 crore in the first phase and create over 14,000 jobs in Chengalpattu.
 - ✓ Luxshare of Taiwan - to invest ₹745 crore and create 4,000 jobs to make electronic components and wearables in Sriperumbudur and revive the defunct Motorola factory
 - ✓ German company Eickhoff Wind Ltd - to invest ₹621 crore to make gearboxes for wind energy production near Chennai
 - ✓ Daicel Corporation of Japan – to set up India's first airbag inflator manufacturing unit at One Hub Chennai in Chengalpattu district with an investment of ₹358 crore
 - ✓ Germany's global chemical major BASF - to invest ₹345 crore to make auto-emission catalysts at Chengalpattu

- ✓ Data Patterns – to invest ₹303.52 crore and create over 700 jobs in the Chennai node of the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor to make defence and aerospace-related products.
- ✓ LS Automotive, a Korean company – to produce automotive switches in Tiruvallur district with an investment of ₹250 crore
- ✓ Autoliv Inc., based in the U.S., - to invest ₹100 crore to develop passenger safety products (auto components) in the SIPCOT park at Cheyyar in Tiruvannamalai district.

➤ **Tamil Nadu - is set to vaccinate 70.26 lakh children aged below five during the pulse polio immunisation campaign on January 31.**



- ✓ With this, the state is all set to enter the 17th polio-free year
- ✓ A total of 43,051 booths will be established at all primary health centres, government hospitals, Integrated Child Development Services centres, noon-meal centres, schools and other important places.
- ✓ The booths will function from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- ✓ Transit booths will function in compliance with Covid-19 guidelines at major bus stands, railway stations, toll plazas, checkpoints and airports.
- ✓ Mobile teams will administer the drops to children living in remote, inaccessible and migrant areas.
- ✓ Children immunised recently under the routine schedule and the newborns should be given the oral polio vaccine.
- ✓ To identify the missed out children, marking is done for all vaccinated children on the left little finger.
- ✓ Private paediatricians and private hospitals will also administer the drops on the campaign day.
- ✓ More than 3,000 government vehicles have been deployed and about two lakh personnel of the government departments and volunteers have been drafted for the campaign
- ✓ The campaign will be held in adherence to Covid-19 protocol and guidelines.

- ✓ It is mandatory to maintain physical distance, to wear masks and wash hands during the activity.
- ✓ Persons/children with fever/cough or other symptoms of COVID-19 should not be allowed inside the booth.

STATES

- **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan – to inaugurate the country’s first ‘Gender Park’ in Kozhikode in February 2021**
 - ✓ The launch of the park will coincide with the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II), scheduled during February 11-13, 2021
 - ✓ The CM will also lay the foundation of the International Women’s Trade and Research Centre (IWTRC) during the event
 - ✓ The IWTRC aims to provide a secure and sustained ecosystem for women entrepreneurs and a space for them to market products.
 - ✓ The high-profile event will see the launch of a Gender Museum, Gender Library, Convention Centre and an Amphitheatre.
 - ✓ These four facilities will form the first phase of the Gender Park that works towards gender equality in the State
 - ✓ ICGE-II aims to boost the economic potential of women and transgender persons so as to equip them as sustainable entrepreneurs.
 - ✓ The focal theme of the event is ‘Gender in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Social Business: The Mediating Role of Empowerment’
 - ✓ It is being organised in association with the UN Women which is part of the United Nations.
 - ✓ The gender park was first announced by the government of Kerala in 2013
 - ✓ The 24-acre park will be operational under the Department of Social Justice.
- **Rajasthan - has become the 5th state in the country to successfully complete the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) reforms, as specified by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.**
 - ✓ With this, Rajasthan has now become eligible for additional reform linked borrowing.
 - ✓ The state has been granted permission by the Department of Expenditure to borrow an additional financial resource of Rs. 2,731 crore through Open Market Borrowings.
 - ✓ Other states that have completed the Urban Local Bodies Reforms are- Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana.
 - ✓ In total, these five states have been granted a total additional borrowing permission of Rs.10,212 crore after completing the reforms.
 - ✓ The reforms in the urban local bodies and urban utilities aims to provide better public health and sanitation services to create good civic infrastructure.
 - ✓ The reforms that have been put forward by the Department of Expenditure are -

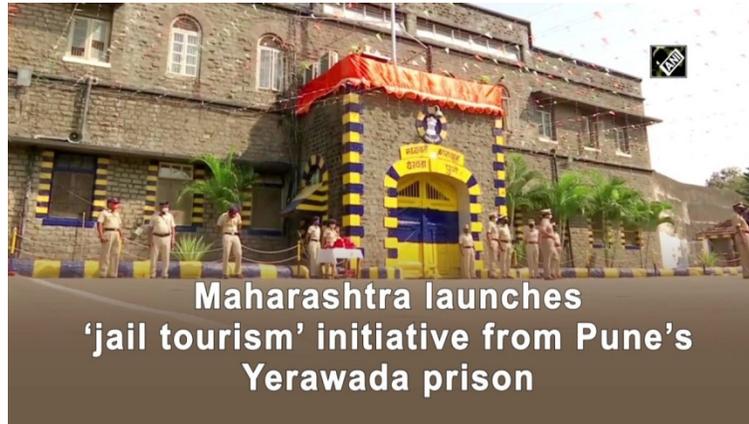
- ✓ State is required to notify floor rates of property tax in ULBs as well as the floor rates of user charges with respect of the provision of water-supply, drainage and sewerage.
- ✓ State needs to place a system of periodic increase in floor rates of property tax or user charges with respect to the price increases.

➤ **The West Bengal Transport Corporation - has launched the country's first ever boat library on January 27**



- ✓ The Kolkata Young Readers' Boat Library, an initiative by WBTC and Apeejay Anand Children's Library, is the first-ever children's boat library
 - ✓ The boat library was launched with the motive that one can read books while appreciating the marine beauty of “Hooghly” river in Kolkata.
 - ✓ The three-hour long boat trip will enable the children to read from a selection of 500 titles in English and Bengali.
 - ✓ The floating library ride with Wi-Fi connections will cost Rs 100 for adults and Rs 50 for children.
 - ✓ The famed Oxford Bookstores has curated the selection of titles and literature across various young reading age groups
 - ✓ It also includes activities like storytelling, poetry sessions, dramatised readings, poetry sessions, music and book launches.
- **Rajasthan – has launched a new School of Public Health (SPH) to develop public health capacity systems and skills**
- ✓ It has been named after Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) chairperson S.D. Gupta
 - ✓ The new school will also bridge gaps between education and practices in Rajasthan.
 - ✓ It is expected to play an important role in healthcare management in the post-Covid-19 scenario

- ✓ The SPH has taken up a study on non-communicable diseases, climate change and antimicrobial resistance as its first project to identify priority areas in public healthcare.
- **The government of Maharashtra - has launched 'jail tourism' from the Yerawada prison of Pune on January 26, 2021.**



- ✓ This initiative facilitates the people to visit and see the historical prisons in the state.
- ✓ These prisons serve as memories of many freedom fighters who were once imprisoned in them
- ✓ Some of the freedom fighters who were imprisoned in Yerawada jail under the British rule include Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Lokmanya Tilak, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose.
- ✓ Yerawada Central Jail is a noted high-security jail in Yerawada, Pune.
- ✓ It is the largest jail in the state of Maharashtra and also the largest prisons in South Asia, which can house 5,000 prisoners.
- ✓ The jail was built in the year 1871 by the British authorities
- ✓ Mahatma Gandhi had spent several years in Yerawada Jail during India's freedom struggle in 1932.
- ✓ He was again imprisoned in the year 1942 during the Quit India movement.

NATIONAL

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - tabled the Economic Survey 2020-21 in the Parliament on the first day of the Budget session on January 29 ahead of the government's Budget for fiscal year beginning April 1, 2021.**

Highlights of the Economic Survey 2020-21

- ✓ India's real GDP would record a growth of 11% in real terms (adjusted for inflation) in 2021-22.
- ✓ The nominal GDP growth has been estimated at 15.4%, implying an assumption of 4.4% inflation during the year.

- ✓ As per the survey, India's economy is firmly in the middle of a V-shaped recovery, after an estimated 7.7% contraction this year to ₹134.4 lakh crore

The recovery story

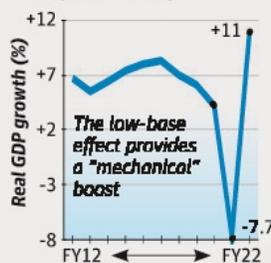
From being one of the fastest contracting economies in FY21, the Economic Survey estimates India to post one of the rapidest GDP expansions in FY22. A lowdown:



Testing times: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who tabled the Economic Survey, during the budget session of the Parliament on Friday. ■ PTI

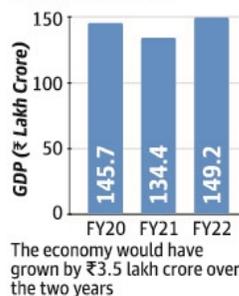
V-shaped growth

India's real GDP is expected to contract by 7.7% in FY21, compared to the 4.2% growth in FY20, due to the COVID-19 related lockdown. The economy is estimated to grow by 11% in FY22, completing a V-shaped recovery



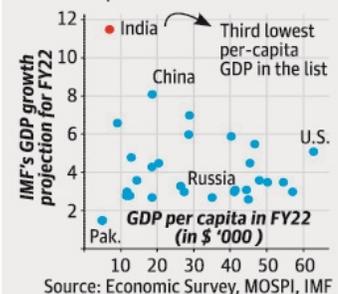
In absolute terms

India's GDP was ₹145.7 lakh crore in FY20. A contraction of 7.7% in FY21 would reduce it to ₹134.4 lakh crore. And an expansion of 11% in FY22 would take it to ₹149.2 lakh crore



Proportionately small

India's estimated GDP growth in FY22 is the highest among economies picked by the IMF. However, in terms of per capita GDP, India lags most other nations. Nations represented in the chart account for 83% of world output



- ✓ A 11% growth indicates that the Indian GDP in 2021-22 is expected to be at ₹149.2 lakh crore, which is just 2.4% more than the GDP of ₹145.7 lakh crore in 2019-20
- ✓ The gross tax revenue earned by the government during the period April to November 2020 fell by 12.6% to ₹10.26 lakh crore.
- ✓ Other than gross tax revenue, the amount of money the government expected to earn through the disinvestment route, by selling its stake in public sector enterprises, has also suffered.
- ✓ Of the targeted ₹2.1 lakh crore, by 20th January, 2021, the government was able to earn only ₹15,220 crore through this route, or around 7.2% of the targeted amount.
 - ✓ More than half of this money came by selling shares in Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd.
- ✓ As of January 8, the union government had borrowed a total of ₹10.72 lakh crore, which was 65% more than what it had borrowed in the corresponding period in the previous financial year.
- ✓ The state governments had borrowed a total of ₹5.71 lakh crore during the period, which was 41% more than the previous financial year.
- ✓ Between April and December 2020, the foreign institutional investors have net invested a massive \$30 billion in buying Indian stocks, which was five times the amount invested in 2019.
- ✓ Of the major sectors, the only sector expected to grow this year is agriculture which is expected to grow by 3.4%.
- ✓ Inflation as measured by the consumer price inflation between April and December 2020 stood at 6.6% in comparison to the previous year.
- ✓ The Ministry's projections are in line with IMF estimates of real GDP growth of 11.5% in 2021-22 for India and 6.8% in 2022-23.

- ✓ India is expected to emerge as the fastest growing economy in the next two years as per IMF, the survey noted.
- ✓ The Economic Survey summarises the state of the Indian economy across various sectors and dimensions.
- ✓ The Economic Survey 2020-21 was authored by a team led by Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian
- ✓ The first ever Economic Survey of India was presented in 1950-51 as a part of the Union Budget.
- ✓ The survey got separated from the Union Budget after the year 1964

- **The National Statistical Office (NSO) - has released the revised estimates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) data for fiscal years 2017-18 to 2019-20 on January 29**
- ✓ The first revised estimates fix GDP growth for 2019-20 at 4%, lower than the provisional estimates of 4.2% growth released last year
- ✓ This implies that the projected contraction of 7.7% in 2020-21 will now increase to 7.8%
- ✓ The second and third revised estimates of GDP growth for 2018-19 and 2017-18 are at 6.5% and 6.8% respectively.
- ✓ The GDP growth in these two years as per the earlier estimate was 6.1% and 7%.
- ✓ The National Statistical Office (NSO) was established through the merger of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) with the Central Statistics Office (CSO).
- ✓ It functions under the aegis of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - will address the 125th anniversary celebration of 'Prabuddha Bharata' on January 31**
- ✓ The event will be organized by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati
- ✓ Prabuddha Bharata is a monthly magazine of the Ramakrishna Order.
- ✓ It was launched in the year 1896 by P. Aiyasami, B. R. Rajam Iyer, G. G. Narasimhacharya, and B. V. Kamesvara Iyer under the guidance of Swami Vivekananda.
- ✓ Prabuddha Bharata magazine aims to spread the message of the ancient spiritual wisdom of the country.
- ✓ It publishes various articles and translations by monks, scholars and other writers on humanities and social sciences.
- ✓ The publication of the Prabuddha Bharata magazine was initially started in Madras for 2 years and later shifted to Almora
- ✓ From April 1899 till today, the magazine was published from Advaita Ashrama and printed in Kolkata.
- ✓ Several great personalities have contributed to the magazine namely, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Former President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Sister Nivedita and Sri Aurobindo.

- ✓ Presently, it is edited by Swami Vireshananda.
- ✓ Advaita Ashrama, a branch of Ramakrishna Math, was founded in the year 1899.
- ✓ The ashrama is located in Uttarakhand.
- ✓ Ramakrishna Order was founded in January 1886 at the Cossipore House
- ✓ It is the monastic lineage founded by Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
- ✓ It is different from the Ramakrishna Math.

- **Prime Minister, Narendra Modi - will inaugurate the Chauri Chaura Centenary celebrations on February 4 virtually in Uttar Pradesh.**
- ✓ On the occasion, the Prime Minister will also release a postal stamp that will be dedicated to the centenary year of the Chauri Chaura incident.
- ✓ The start of the year-long celebrations will also be joined by the families of martyrs and freedom fighters.
- ✓ The Chauri Chaura incident took place in British India, on February 4, 1922 at Chauri Chaura.
- ✓ Chauri Chaura is a place in Gorakhpur district of the modern Uttar Pradesh. (formerly United Provinces)
- ✓ During the incident, over 3,000 protesters participating in the non-cooperation movement, clashed with police who opened fire.
- ✓ In the protest, three agitators were martyred and the protestors set the police station on fire which left 20 policemen dead.
- ✓ Mahatma Gandhi withdrew his non-cooperation movement after the incident on February 12, 1922
- ✓ Later, 228 agitators were prosecuted by the British government while 172 protesters were sentenced to death by the Gorakhpur Sessions Court.
- ✓ The non-cooperation movement was launched on September 4, 1920 by Mahatma Gandhi for obtaining self-governance and full independence or Purna Swaraj.
- ✓ This was started after the withdrawal of the support by Indian National Congress (INC) for British reforms following the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - addressed the World Economic Forum's Davos Dialogue via video conferencing on January 28**
- ✓ PM Modi delivered his speech on the “Fourth Industrial Revolution- using technology for the good of humanity”.
- ✓ More than 400 top industry leaders from across the globe attended the session
- ✓ It included Chinese President Xi Jinping, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron and Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu
- ✓ PM Modi also interacted with the CEOs during the event.

- ✓ During the address, PM said that India launched the world's biggest vaccination programme and has inoculated more than 2.3 million healthcare workers in the last 12 days



- ✓ "India has made rapid strides in four pillars of Industry 4.0 (or Fourth Industrial Revolution-using technology): Connectivity, automation, Artificial intelligence and real-time data," PM Modi said.
- ✓ Davos Dialogue 2021 is the 51st annual meeting of the World Economic Forum
- ✓ The Davos Dialogues agenda marks the launch of the World Economic Forum's Great Reset Initiative in the post Covid world
- ✓ The 50th annual meeting of WEF was organised in June 2020
- **The Ministry of Agriculture - has proposed a Rs. 19,000 crore 'National Mission for Edible Oil' in order to increase the domestic availability, ensure self sufficiency and reduce the import dependency.**
 - ✓ The mission has been proposed for next five years in the span of 2020-21 to 2024-25.
 - ✓ It aims to increase the production of oilseeds from 30.88 to 47.80 million tonnes of oilseeds
 - ✓ The country is importing around 15 million tonnes of cooking oil, which caters to 70% of annual requirement of 23 million tonnes, costing ₹75,000 crore to the exchequer annually
 - ✓ The mission may be funded by levying a cess of ₹2,500-3,000 per tonne on import, which will generate a corpus of ₹6,000 crore per year
 - ✓ The government is focusing on promoting oil palm cultivation in the country, which accounts for more than 60% of the total imports.
 - ✓ At present, fruit-bearing oil palm trees cover only 225,000 hectares, which may be increased to 325,000 in a year.
 - ✓ The NMEO comprises of the three Sub-Missions into it with the objective of increasing the production of oilseeds and edible oils from the three sources
 - ✓ Primary Sources that includes the Annual Crops, Plantation Crops and Edible TBOs
 - ✓ Secondary Sources that includes the Rice bran oil and Cotton seed oil.

- ✓ Consumer Awareness to maintain the edible oil consumption constant at 19.00 kg per person per annum.
- ✓ The mission seeks to produce 7.00 to 11.00 million tonnes of edible oils from primary Sources and 7.00 million tonnes from the existing 3.50 million tonnes from secondary sources
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – addressed the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021, hosted by the Netherlands government on January 25, 2021**

Mega Energy Push

450 GW target by 2030

175 GW target by 2022 includes:
100 GW solar power | 60 GW wind energy

Installed capacity of RE: 86 GW

- 34 GW Solar
- 38 GW Wind
- 36 GW Under Installation
- 35 GW Under Bidding

Apprehensions

- Competition to thermal
- Slowdown in RE implementation

Solar capacity growth	Wind energy
6.5 GW in 2018-19	5.4 GW in 2016-17
9.4 GW in 2017-18	Less than 2 GW now

PM MODI'S ADDRESS AT
CLIMATE ADAPTATION SUMMIT 2021

India targeting 450 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity by 2030

- ✓ The summit was held online and it is being called “CAS Online”.
- ✓ It highlighted the pioneering solutions of the climate emergency and sustaining momentum through UNFCCC’s COP26.
- ✓ During the address, PM said that India will target 450 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity by the year 2030
- ✓ He also said that India is promoting the LED lights and is also saving 38 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year.
- ✓ The PM also highlighted that, by 2030, India will restore 26 million hectares of degraded land.
- ✓ Further, India has committed to provide the clean cooking fuel to 80 million rural households and piped water supply to 64 million households
- ✓ The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference is also known as COP26
- ✓ It is the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference and will be held in Glasgow, Scotland from November 1 to 12, 2021
- ✓ The United Kingdom will chair the summit.
- ✓ The conference will incorporate the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), third meeting of the parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA3) and the 16th meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP16).

- **The Ministry of Road Transport – has decided to impose an additional tax named ‘Green Tax’ on old vehicles that are no more fit on road.**
- ✓ The decision has been taken to reduce pollution and urge people to switch to environment-friendly alternatives to the vehicles.
- ✓ Under the Green Tax norms, the transport vehicles older than eight years will be charged with the green tax at the time of renewal of fitness certificate.
- ✓ They will be charged at the rate of 10 to 25% of road tax.
- ✓ However, the vehicles used in farming like tractor and harvester will be exempted from the tax
- ✓ Also, the Public transport vehicles like city buses will be paying lower Green Tax.

- **On January 29, Infrastructure firm Larsen & Toubro (L&T) - announced that it has received a Rs 2,500 crore contract for the upcoming and country’s first high speed rail corridor project connecting Mumbai and Ahmedabad**
- ✓ This high speed rail corridor project is being implemented by National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), based on Japanese E5 Shinkansen technology.
- ✓ The order is to procure, assemble, fabricate, paint as well as transport 28 steel bridges for the rail corridor.
- ✓ The Rs 2,500 crore contract was secured through a consortium of L&T and Japan’s IHI Infrastructure Systems (IIS).
- ✓ The country’s first Bullet Train project is PM Modi government’s flagship collaboration with Japan.
- ✓ The train corridor will pass through Gujarat, Maharashtra and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.
- ✓ The ambitious 508 km long Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed rail corridor project is expected to generate more than 90,000 direct and indirect jobs during the construction period
- ✓ PM Narendra Modi along with then Japan PM Shinzo Abe had laid the foundation stone in September 2017 for the project.
- ✓ The bullet train project is expected to boast speeds of over 300 km per hour.
- ✓ It is funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- ✓ Other than Mumbai – Ahmedabad Bullet Train project, feasibility studies have been sanctioned by the Indian Railways for seven more high-speed rail corridors
- ✓ It includes Delhi – Ahmedabad, Delhi – Amritsar, Varanasi – Howrah, Delhi – Varanasi, Mumbai – Hyderabad, Mumbai – Nagpur, Chennai – Mysore rail corridors.

- **The government - has announced for the launch of Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) on January 29, 2021.**
- ✓ The Startup Indian Seed Fund Scheme will provide financial assistance up to Rs 20 lakhs to startups, and will be disbursed through selected incubators.
- ✓ The Rs 945 crore scheme will be in mission mode for the year 2021-25.

- ✓ The seed support will be provided only once to any start-up and will be operational from April 1, 2021
 - ✓ To get the assistance, the startups should have been recognised by the DPIIT and incorporated not more than two years ago at the time of application.
 - ✓ Further, start-ups should not have received monetary support of more than Rs 10 lakh under any other central or state government scheme.
 - ✓ The scheme will be implemented by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
 - ✓ An Experts Advisory Committee (EAC) will be constituted by DPIIT, which will be responsible for the overall execution and monitoring of the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme.
 - ✓ Preference would be given to startups that are innovating in areas of agriculture, education, food processing, healthcare, social impact, waste management, water management, financial inclusion, biotechnology, energy, mobility, defence, space, railways, oil and gas, textiles, etc.
 - ✓ Earlier, on January 16, PM Narendra Modi had announced the launch of Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.
- **The UT of Ladakh and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - signed an agreement recently for the development of the Union Territory through Science and Technology (S&T) interventions**
- ✓ The agreement was signed by CSIR-IIIM Director D. Srinivas Reddy and Rigzin Samplal who is the Commissioner Secretary Agriculture and Horticulture, Ladakh UT.
 - ✓ The MoU seeks to develop the areas like exploration of natural resources, introduction of cash crops in the region and bio-resource utilization which is endemic to Ladakh.
 - ✓ In the first phase, institutes like CSIR-IIIM, CSIR-CMERI, CSIR-NBRI, CSIR-IHBT, CSIR-CLRI and CSIR-NGRI will start research and development, extension and societal projects in accordance with the agreement
 - ✓ For this purpose, CSIR-IIIM, Jammu will be the nodal institution.
 - ✓ Major areas of interest include the aromatic and nutraceutical plants or crops, geophysical mapping, eco-friendly leather processing, bioprospection of endemic microbial, industrial agriculture
- **The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) under the Ministry of Education and the World Bank - have signed the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) project on January 28, 2021.**
- ✓ STARS project for financial support is a centrally sponsored scheme that seeks to strengthen the school education system.
 - ✓ The agreement has been signed with an aim of improving the quality and governance of school education in six states of India.

- ✓ The 6 Indian states include- Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Odisha.



- ✓ The project will be benefitting approximately 250 million students in the age group of 6 to 17 years coming from the 1.5 million schools.
- ✓ Apart from the students, the project will also benefit 10 million teachers across the six states.
- ✓ At the state level, the project will be implemented through the integrated state Implementation Society (SIS) for Samagra Shiksha.
- ✓ The total cost of the STARS project is Rs 5718 crore.
 - ✓ Out of this, the World Bank has provided financial support worth \$500 million which stands around Rs. 3700 crores.
 - ✓ The rest will be contributed as state share from the participating states, over a period of five years.
- ✓ The proposed World Bank support under STARS is primarily in the form of a results-based financing instrument called Program for Results (PforR).
- ✓ This loan has been provided by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) which is the lending arm of the World Bank.
- ✓ The STARS project was approved by the Union Cabinet under National Education Policy, 2020 in October 2020.

- **India - illuminated Qutub Minar with red lights as a sign of unity to combat the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NDT).**



- ✓ This was done to mark the second annual World NTD Day that will be observed on January 30th.
 - ✓ On the occasion of World NTD day, 50 landmarks across 25 nations of the world will be lit up.
 - ✓ The NTDs are a diverse group of communicable diseases that prevail in tropical and subtropical conditions and affect more than one billion people every year.
 - ✓ The populations who are living in poverty, where there is no adequate sanitation, those who are in close contact with infectious vectors, domestic animals & livestock are highly affected by such diseases.
 - ✓ As per the WHO, major NTDs include Buruli Ulcers, Chagas Disease, Dengue, Chikungunya, Sleeping Sickness (Human African Trypanosomiasis), Hansen's Disease (Leprosy), Trachoma Mycetoma, chromo-blastomycosis, deep mycoses etc.
 - ✓ India is home to the world's largest absolute burden of 11 of the major neglected tropical diseases.
 - ✓ As per the data, one in five people across the world are affected by NTD in India alone.
 - ✓ World NTD Day is observed every year to highlight the effects of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).
 - ✓ It was celebrated on January 30, 2020 for the first time.
 - ✓ The date, January 30, marks the anniversary of the 2012 London Declaration on NTDs.
- **Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar - has released Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines and the National Marine Turtle Action Plan in New Delhi.**



- ✓ The documents contain ways and means to promote inter-sectoral action for conservation of marine mammals and also conservation of marine turtles.
- ✓ These two documents highlight actions to be taken for handling stranded animals on shore, stranded or entangled animals in the sea or on a boat, management

actions for improved coordination, reducing threats to marine species and their habitats

- ✓ Further, they focus on rehabilitation of degraded habitats, enhancing people's participation, advance scientific research and exchange of information on marine mammals and marine turtles and their habitats.
- **India – announced recently that it does not support the “Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” and is not bound by any of the obligations of the treaty.**
- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) had approved the “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” on July 7, 2017.
- ✓ Apart from India, the other major nuclear powers that did not support the treaty were China, US, France, Japan, North Korea, Russia, Pakistan and Israel.
- ✓ Despite that, the treaty came into force on January 22, 2021 with the signing of it by 120 member nations
- ✓ India has decided not to support the treaty as it did not participate in negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- ✓ India does not support the treaty because the treaty does not constitute or contribute to the development of customary international law and also does not provide for any new standards or norms.
- ✓ However, India showed its support to the commencement of negotiations on a “comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention in the Conference on Disarmament”.
- ✓ India is committed to the policy of “No First Use” against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states
- ✓ The Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is also called as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.
- ✓ It is the first legally binding international agreement that prohibits the nuclear weapons and aims for the total elimination of such weapons.
- ✓ For the member nations, the treaty prohibits development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons.
- ✓ As of 2020, Russia and US account 90% of the 13,500 estimated global warhead inventories
- ✓ Russia holds 6,375 nuclear war heads, while US holds 5,800 nuclear warheads
- ✓ Further, China and India holds 320 and 150 nuclear warheads respectively

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar - launched the Indo-French year of Environment with his French counterpart Barbara Pompili on January 28**
- ✓ Indo-French partnership on Environment, Biodiversity, Climate Change and other allied areas will enhance the cooperation in sustainable development and increasing the effectiveness of actions for the global environment protection.



- ✓ It will focus on the fields of renewable energy, biodiversity conservation, plastic waste management and smart cities.
 - ✓ India and France have environment projects already underway in Assam, Rajasthan and a project to be started soon in Jharkhand.
 - ✓ India has made significant progress towards climate change action and has already achieved 26% of reduction of emission intensity.
 - ✓ As of 2020, the renewable capacity in India stands at 90 Giga Watt which includes 36 Giga Watt of solar energy and 38 Giga Watt of wind energy.
 - ✓ The Indo-French Year of the Environment over the period 2021-2022 would be based on five main themes - environmental protection, climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable urban development, and the development of renewable energies and energy efficiency.
- **India - has extended its “Vaccine Maitri Initiative” to Sri-Lanka and dispatched 500000 doses of Covishield vaccines.**
- ✓ The vaccine Maitri initiative has delivered nearly five million doses to seven countries in the neighbourhood till date.
 - ✓ The delivery of vaccines has been made by the Serum Institute of India following the commitment made by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa in September 2020 during a virtual summit
 - ✓ The Vaccine Maitri or the Vaccine Friendship initiative was started on January 20, 2021.
 - ✓ Under the initiative, India will supply Made-in-India Covid-19 vaccines to its neighbouring countries and to other key partners of the Neighbourhood First Policy.
 - ✓ Bhutan and Maldives were the first country to get the vaccines.
 - ✓ They are followed by Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles.
 - ✓ Afghanistan and Mauritius will also get doses after they give necessary regulatory approvals.
 - ✓ Pakistan has not been named as a neighbouring country by India to deliver the vaccine.

- ✓ India has also supplied the two million doses of Covishield to each of Brazil and Morocco.
- ✓ Further, the doses will be supplied to South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

CONFERENCES, FESTIVALS & SUMMITS

- **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla - inaugurated recently the 'Bharat Parv 2021', a virtual national festival showcasing the country's diverse culture, cuisines and handicrafts.**



- ✓ The five-day annual event celebrates the spirit of India focusing on the Aatmanirbhar Bharat
- ✓ The Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with other central ministries is organizing this year's 'Bharat Parv' event from 26th to 31st January 2021 in virtual mode
- ✓ Under the virtual event, themed pavilions of States and Union Territories will showcase their tourism destinations, handicrafts, cuisine and other features.
- ✓ The Bharat Parv was started in the year 2016 in front of the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of Republic Day Celebrations.
- ✓ It showcases the pavilions of Central Ministries and other organizations such as Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Ayush, media units of I&B Ministry, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Archaeological Survey of India, Lalit Kala Academy, National Museum, National Gallery of Modern Arts, Khadi & Village Industries Commission.
- ✓ This year, glimpses of Republic Day Parade and recorded performances of Armed forces music bands will also be available.
- ✓ Central Institutes of Hotel Management and the Indian Culinary Institute will also display their culinary delight and recipe through videos.
- ✓ Prasar Bharati has set up its virtual stall that will showcase its efforts in promoting the Ek Bharat-Shrestha Bharat.
- ✓ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Bureau of Outreach and Communication will focus on the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ✓ It will exhibit the photos, videos, animation related to Swachh Bharat, Sashakt Bharat, Babu Ke Sapno Ka Bharat'.

- ✓ Ministry of Tourism has set up three pavilions, Dekho Apna Desh, Statue of Unity and Incredible India

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **Elon Musk's SpaceX - has created a new world record recently by launching 143 satellites on a single Falcon 9 rocket.**



- ✓ With the new record, SpaceX has broken the record of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)
 - ✓ Earlier, Isro has deployed 104 satellites on a single launch in February 2017.
 - ✓ For the purpose of delivering these satellites to a polar sun-synchronous orbit, Space X charges a price of 15,000 dollars per kilogram for each satellite.
 - ✓ The 143 satellites that were launched include the commercial and government satellites namely the CubeSats, microsats and 10 Starlink satellites alongwith a spacecraft of NASA
 - ✓ SpaceX has launched these satellites with the aim of providing the near-global broadband internet coverage all across the world by the end of 2021.
 - ✓ SpaceX is an American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company, which is headquartered in Hawthorne, California.
 - ✓ The agency was founded in the year 2002 by Elon Musk.
 - ✓ The Falcon 9 rocket has been designed and manufactured by SpaceX.
- **Hubble Space Telescope of NASA – captured recently the images of the NGC 4535 which is also known as the “Lost Galaxy”**



- ✓ The galaxy is one of the largest of some 2,000 galaxies in the Virgo Cluster and is located about 50 million light-years from Earth.
 - ✓ The image consists of bright blue spots, indicating young and hot stars along with brighter shades near the centre, indicating older and cooler stars
 - ✓ The Galaxy was discovered in 1785 by William Herschel who found the planet Uranus.
 - ✓ The galaxy was termed as the Lost Galaxy by an amateur astronomer Leland S. Copeland, who had a glimpse of NGC 4535 using his small yard lenses in 1950s
 - ✓ It is a barred spiral galaxy that means a vast swirl of stars having a distinct bar structure at its center.
 - ✓ The concept of the Spiral Galaxy was first described by Edwin Hubble in 1936 with a spiral shaped galaxy, due to the presence of long arm full of stars
 - ✓ The galaxy comprises of a flat, rotating disk containing the stars, gas and dust, and a central concentration of stars called as bulge
- **An international team of researchers - has found evidence of the rare maritime mineral jarosite in ice cores extracted from Antarctica**



- ✓ Jarosite is very rarely found on Earth, and it is generally seen in mining waste that has been exposed to air and rain
- ✓ The discovery supports the theory of presence of yellow-brown mineral jarosite on MARS in a similar manner because the planet is a lot dustier than Antarctica.
- ✓ The researchers suggest the mineral formed in ice pockets that also held small amounts of dust
- ✓ The abundant volume of jarosite mineral was found on the surface of Mars by the Opportunity rover back in 2004
- ✓ Jarosite is a mineral consisting of sulphate of potassium and iron.
- ✓ It can be formed by both water and acidic conditions.
- ✓ Other Jarosite minerals include silver, sodium, lead and ammonium.
- ✓ Jarosite is used in hydrometallurgy to control impurities.
- ✓ The name Jarosite was derived from a Spanish name of a yellow flower of genus Cistus.

- ✓ The mineral, first described in 1852 by August Breithaupt, is brittle, hard and has crystal structure.

DEFENCE

- **The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - has successfully test-fired the surface-to-air Akash-NG (New Generation) Missile off the Odisha coast recently.**



- ✓ The missile can intercept the aerial threats from fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles and is launched to boost the Indian Air Force (IAF) defence system
 - ✓ Akash-NG is a medium-range mobile defence system that has been produced jointly by the Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) that developed the Missile Systems
 - ✓ Further, DRDO has collaborated with the Bharat Electronics (BEL), Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division & Larsen & Toubro for the development of radars, control centers and launcher systems.
 - ✓ The missile has the capability of targeting the aircraft up to 50-60 km away at altitudes of 18,000 m.
 - ✓ It uses an integrated ramjet-rocket propulsion system for providing a sustained thrust to the missile
 - ✓ In December 2020, the Cabinet Committee on Security chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the exports of Akash Missile defence system
- **The Indian Naval Fast Attack Craft, IN FAC T-81, of the Super Dvora MK II class - was decommissioned on January 28, after serving the nation successfully for more than 20 years**



- ✓ Rear Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area was the Chief Guest of the event held at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai.
- ✓ The 25 meters long vessel with 60 tonnes displacement was built at Goa Shipyard Ltd., in collaboration with M/s Ramta of Israel.
- ✓ It was commissioned into the Navy on 05 Jun 1999 by the then Governor of Goa, Lt Gen JFR Jacob (Retd).
- ✓ The ship, specially designed for shallow waters, could achieve speeds up to 45 knots
- ✓ It had the capability of day/night surveillance and reconnaissance, Search & Rescue, beach insertion, extraction of Marine Commandoes and high speed interception of intruder craft.
- ✓ It was the second ship of the Extra Fast Attack Craft (XFAC) Super Dvora MK II Class.
- ✓ Super Dvora Mark II-class patrol boats belong to a high-speed class of patrol boats.
- ✓ They are employed for a variety of naval missions ranging from the typical off-shore coastal patrol mission profiles to a high-speed, high-manoeuve littoral warfare.
- ✓ It is built by Israel Aerospace Industries for the Israeli Sea Corps.
- ✓ They are the successor to the Dvora-class fast patrol boats and employed by the Sri Lanka Navy to counter the LTTE operations at sea.

ECONOMY

- **The Reliance Jio venture of billionaire Mukesh Ambani - has become the fifth strongest brand globally, as per the “Brand Finance Global 500 ranking 2021”**
- ✓ This ranking determines the relative strength of various global brands.
- ✓ The ranking has been topped by WeChat, to emerge as the world’s strongest brand
- ✓ The brand Ferrari is ranked second, Russian bank Sber is ranked third while Coca-Cola is ranked fourth.
- ✓ The Reliance Jio was founded in 2016
- ✓ It is the largest mobile network operator in India and the third-largest mobile network operator in the world with 400 million subscribers as on date
- ✓ Reliance Jio has got the BSI score of 91.7 out of 100 and is given elite AAA+ brand strength rating.
- ✓ The data was analysed for over 50,000 respondents in 30 countries and across 20 sectors.

APPOINTMENTS

- **R. S. Sharma - has been appointed recently as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Ayushman Bharat scheme, an insurance scheme under the National Health Authority (NHA).**



- ✓ He will replace Indu Bhushan, who has completed the 3-year tenure as the CEO of Ayushman Bharat.
- ✓ Ram Sewak Sharma has worked as the Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
- ✓ He is also the head of the Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to combat the Covid-19 and the Covid-19 vaccine delivery technology platform—Co-WIN.
- ✓ He also works as a member of the National Expert Group on Covid-19 Vaccine Administration.
- ✓ The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is the second component under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme.
- ✓ It offers free healthcare services to around 40% of people of the country.
- ✓ The first component of the scheme is the Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) which provide the primary health care to the people close to their homes.
- ✓ The scheme was launched on September 23, 2018, in Ranchi, Jharkhand by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ✓ It provides a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year.

RANKINGS

- **The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) – released recently the Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index, focusing on the personalised 11 healthcare systems in the Asia-Pacific region**
- ✓ The countries evaluated include India, China, Singapore, Australia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, and New Zealand.
- ✓ It measured the performance across 27 indicators of the personalised health across 4 categories that are called as the 'Vital Signs'.
- ✓ The four vital signs are Policy Context, Health Information, Personalised Technologies and Health Services.
- ✓ As per the report, Singapore was the best performer followed by Taiwan, Japan and Australia

- ✓ India was ranked at 10th position out of 11 health systems, while Indonesia finished at the last position
- ✓ Among the four vital signs, India was ranked at 10th in the health information indicator, 11th in the health services, 9th in the Personalised Technologies indicator while 5th in the Policy Context indicator.
- ✓ The EIU is the research and analysis division of Economist Group, which provides the forecasting and advisory services by doing research and analysis.

