



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY

21, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- On February 20, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – addressed the sixth governing council meeting of Niti Aayog via video conferencing



- ✓ The CM urged the Prime Minister to declare the Godavari-Cauvery river interlinking a national project to benefit the people of Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- ✓ The CM said the enactment of Tamil Nadu Protected Agricultural Zone Development Act was historic, to protect the agriculture lands and safeguard the livelihood of farmers in the Cauvery delta.
- ✓ He stressed the importance of rejuvenating the Cauvery and its tributaries on the lines of 'Namami Gange', an integrated Ganga conservation mission
- ✓ In this regard, the CM requested the Centre to accord sanction and extend financial assistance to Tamil Nadu at the earliest.

- ✓ The CM highlighted that Tamil Nadu won the National Water Award in 2019 for the best performing State
 - ✓ He said compensation of ₹9,365 crore was disbursed under the PM crop insurance scheme (Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana) to 54.12 lakh beneficiaries in the state in the last four years.
 - ✓ The state took up restoration of water bodies under the kudimaramath scheme at ₹1,418 crore.
 - ✓ Tamil Nadu stands first in coverage under micro irrigation in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.
 - ✓ The CM also said that a multimodal logistics park was being developed near Chennai on around 150 acres.
 - ✓ The state government had approved TIDCO, the state's industrial development agency, to be part of the joint venture proposed by the NHAI near Mappedu.
 - ✓ NHAI, Chennai Port and TIDCO will form part of the proposed special purpose vehicle.
 - ✓ The state's new industrial policy unveiled last week encouraged industries to create more jobs, the CM said.
 - ✓ Since 2019, the state has attracted cumulative investment of ₹4.07 lakh crore through 453 major industrial projects, offering employment to 13 lakh people
 - ✓ An online single-window portal had cleared investments worth ₹22,332 crore, which would generate employment opportunities for 76,835 people
 - ✓ The CM also requested for an increase at the central-level to the overall budget allocation to AYUSH
 - ✓ An International Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy Medical Sciences is being established in Tamil Nadu.
 - ✓ Expressing the state's commitment to PM Modi's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, the CM said the state was able to provide quality and reliable power.
 - ✓ "Tamil Nadu stands first in wind installed capacity and third in solar installed capacity," he said.
- **Chief Minister Edappadi K.Palaniswami - to lay the foundation stone for the first phase of the Cauvery-Gundar river link project at a function to be held at Kunnathur in Viralimalai taluk in Pudukottai district on February 21, 2021**
- ✓ The project involves building a canal from the Cauvery to the Vaigai and the Gundar.
 - ✓ It seeks to divert surplus flows from the Cauvery to the dry regions in southern parts of the State.
 - ✓ The linking of the Cauvery and Gundar rivers started with the commissioning of the barrage across Cauvery at Mayanur in Karur district in 2014.

- ✓ The barrage forms the start of the new link canal which will run a distance of 262.19 km to carry the surplus waters from the Cauvery to the South Vellar, the Vaigai river and finally the Gundar.
 - ✓ The canal will have a capacity to carry about 6,000 cusecs of water.
 - ✓ The government had given an in-principal approval for executing the first phase of the project
 - ✓ This phase will link the Cauvery to the South Vellar, a distance of about 118.45 km, at an estimated cost of ₹6,941 crore.
 - ✓ In this aspect, the Public Works Department may seek financial assistance from the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) for the project
 - ✓ In the first phase, the canal will run through Karur (47.23 km), Tiruchi (18.89 km) and Pudukottai districts (52.32 km)
 - ✓ The second phase will involve linking the South Vellar and Vaigai rivers.
- **On February 20, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced a reduction in the maximum fare for travel in Chennai metro rail by ₹20**
- ✓ This brings down the fare for full length travel to ₹50 from the present ₹70.
 - ✓ The new fare will come into effect from February 22.
 - ✓ The fares were reduced following requests from commuters and to encourage more people use the facility, the chief minister said in a press release.



Pay less
The revised tariff for travel on Chennai Metro

Up to 2 km	₹10
Up to 5 km	₹20
Up to 12 km	₹30
Up to 21 km	₹40
Up to 32 km	₹50

- ✓ The minimum fare of ₹10 for travelling up to 2km remains the same
- ✓ Further, the commuters will have to pay ₹20 for travelling between two and five km, ₹30 for 5km to 12km, ₹40 for 12km to 21km, and ₹50 fare for a distance of 21km to 32km.
- ✓ Passengers using QR-code tickets and smartcards will get a 20% discount.
- ✓ The price of one-day trip card, which includes travelling on the 9km north Chennai line, will remain the same at ₹100.
- ✓ The cost of monthly pass will also be the same ₹2,500 for daily commute, including on the new line.
- ✓ Passengers will get 50% discount on Sundays and public holidays.
- ✓ So far, 7.25 crore people have used the metro rail service that commenced on June 29, 2015

- ✓ On February 14, a 9.05km line from Washermenpet to Wimco Nagar, which completes the 54.15km-long phase-1 corridor, was opened for the public.
- ✓ The foundation has been laid for construction of 118.9km phase-2 of the project.

STATES

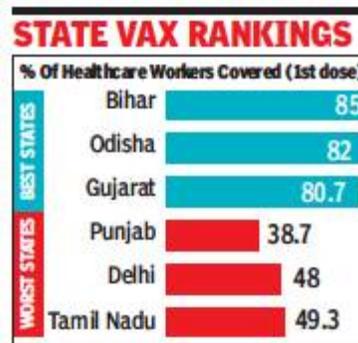
- **Nagaland House - plays national anthem for the first time after attaining statehood 60 years before**
 - ✓ The budget session of the Nagaland assembly started on February 12 with an address by governor R N Ravi.
 - ✓ The national anthem was played before and after the governor's address on the first day of the session.
 - ✓ This was the first time that the anthem had been played in the assembly since Nagaland became the 16th state of the Union on December 1, 1963,
 - ✓ Also, it is the first instance since the assembly occupied the new building in 2007.
 - ✓ The initiative was taken by Speaker Sharingain Longkumer, who was elected Speaker in February 2020.

NOT MANDATORY

- Nagaland became 16th state on Dec 1, 1963. National anthem was played before and after governor R N Ravi's address on Feb 12 this year
- Anthem isn't mandatory, mostly treated as convention, say constitutional experts
- Ravi is also interlocutor for peace talks with militant outfits, including NSCN(IM)
- In Tripura, anthem was first played in assembly in 2018

- ✓ In Tripura, another northeastern state, the national anthem was first played in the assembly only in 2018 — after BJP formed the government replacing the Left Front.
- **The Karnataka government - has assigned 'industry' status to the hospitality sector**
 - ✓ The move is aimed at reviving the star hotels, which have been suffering owing to the COVID-19
 - ✓ The pandemic has resulted in a massive slowdown in the tourism sector and the new decision aims to revive the sector.
- **Uttar Pradesh - had given the highest number of 11.52 lakh doses to healthcare and frontline workers in the country**
 - ✓ This included over 10.66 lakh people who got the first dose and 85,752 second doses (healthcare workers) administered after a gap of four to six weeks.

- ✓ However, Karnataka inoculated the maximum number of healthcare workers with the second dose so far.
- ✓ Karnataka had fully vaccinated (with two doses) more than 1.11 lakh health workers, followed by Telangana and Uttar Pradesh at 86,648 and 85,752, respectively.



- ✓ Seven states and Union Territories have reported less than 50% coverage of registered health workers for the first dose.
- ✓ These are Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Punjab, Chandigarh, Nagaland and Puducherry.
- ✓ India had administered more than 1.08 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines till February 21, 2021
 - ✓ Of this, 63.52 lakh healthcare and 36.11 lakh frontline workers had been given the first dose, whereas 8.73 lakh health workers had taken the second shot.
- ✓ In terms of percentage coverage of registered beneficiaries, Bihar had the maximum 85% of healthcare workers covered with the first dose of the vaccines.
- ✓ A total of 12 states and UTs had vaccinated more than 75% of the registered health workers with the first dose.
- ✓ Immunisation of frontline workers began on February 2 and 10 states/Union territories have so far registered more than 50% coverage for the first dose
 - ✓ The 10 states/UTs include Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.
- **Kerala - has decided to convert conventional anganwadis into “smart” anganwadis with better amenities.**
 - ✓ In this regard, the state government has sanctioned ₹9 crore for the conversion
 - ✓ Under this scheme, the Department of Women and Child Development has allowed 48 anganwadis to construct its new ‘smart’ buildings.
 - ✓ These facilities will be more child-friendly and will help to nurture mental and physical development of children.
 - ✓ The local bodies will also share ₹74 crore for the construction of the smart structures.

- ✓ The smart anganwadis are being designed and constructed under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).
- ✓ The Anganwadi scheme is a rural child care centre that was started in the year 1975 by the Indian government.
- ✓ It runs under the Integrated Child Development Services program and seeks to address child hunger and malnutrition issues.
- ✓ The basic health care activities covered under the program includes nutrition education, contraceptive counselling & supply alongwith preschool activities.
- ✓ The ICDS is a government program that provides food, primary healthcare, preschool education, health check-up, immunization, and referral services for the children aged under 6 years.
- ✓ During the year 1978, it was discontinued but the scheme was again launched by the Tenth Five Year Plan linking it to the Anganwadi centres.

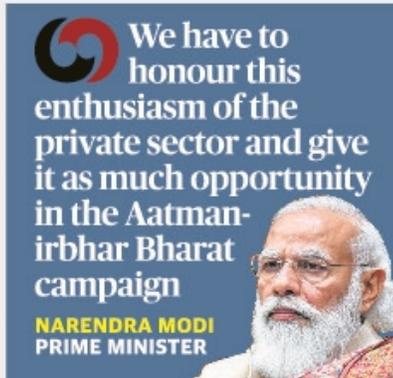
NATIONAL

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - addressed the sixth governing council meeting of Niti Aayog in New Delhi on February 20**
- ✓ The governing council comprises state CMs, UT administrators, key ministers and policymakers.

Way forward

The NITI Aayog meeting had six key issues on its agenda

- Making India a manufacturing powerhouse
- Re-imagining agriculture
- Improving physical infra
- Accelerating human resources development
- Improving service delivery at the grassroots level
- Health and nutrition



- ✓ Twenty-six Chief Ministers, three Lieutenant-Governors and two administrators attended the meeting, besides Union Ministers, special invitees and NITI Aayog officials.
- ✓ The Chief Ministers of Punjab, Gujarat, West Bengal and Telangana did not attend the meeting.
- ✓ During his address, the PM asked the States to join the Centre's effort to expand the role of private sector in giving a major push to self-reliance and Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign
- ✓ He also called for a strong cooperation between the Centre and states to accelerate all-round development.

- **On February 19, the toll fee collections through FASTag across the National Highway network touched ₹102 crore, the highest ever toll collection in NHAI's history**
 - ✓ The collections have jumped by 23% in the past four days to touch the record amount
 - ✓ Earlier, the total toll collection through FASTag was around ₹85 crore before NHAI designated all toll lanes as FASTag lanes.
 - ✓ Meanwhile, the government has also stepped up monitoring of toll plazas to see that commuters are not caught in queue even after having FASTags.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi – launched ‘Mahabahu-Brahmaputra’ initiative in Assam on February 18 through video conferencing**



- ✓ The launch of the initiative is marked with the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations between the Neamatighat & Majuli, Dhubri-Hatsingimari and North-South Guwahati.
- ✓ This initiative also includes the inauguration of the Inland Water Transport Terminal at Jogighopa
- ✓ It also comprises of the inauguration of various tourist jetties at four locations in order to promote the river tourism and employment across the state.
- ✓ The RO-Pax Vessel operations will help in reducing the travel time and facilitate the connectivity between banks.
- ✓ The PM also laid the foundation stone for a four lane Dhubari Phulbari bridge to be constructed on NH-127B.
- ✓ It will be constructed over the Brahmaputra River connecting Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari, Tura, Rongram, and Rongjeng in Meghalaya at a total cost of Rs. 4997 crores
- **Labour Minister, Santosh Gangwar - launched the software applications for five All-India surveys on February 18, 2021**
 - ✓ The five All-India surveys will involve migrant workers, domestic workers, employment generated by Professionals, employment generated in transport sector and a quarterly establishment-based employment survey



- ✓ The Labour Minister also released the instruction manuals with questionnaire for all the five All India Surveys.
 - ✓ The survey will be conducted by the Labour Bureau.
 - ✓ The All-India Survey on Domestic Workers will estimate the proportion of Domestic Workers in the workforce and calculate the percentage distribution of them.
 - ✓ The Survey on the migrant workers will estimate the number of migrant workers in the country and collect the information on their living & working conditions alongwith the socio-economic conditions.
 - ✓ The All-India survey on employment generated by professionals will estimate their total number alongwith the employment generated by them
 - ✓ The All-India survey on employment generated in Transport Sector will identify the employment generated in Transport Sector.
 - ✓ The All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey will capture the relative change in employment situation in the successive quarters for a sizeable group of non-farm economy.
 - ✓ It will cover all the eight important sectors of Indian economy.
- **The interaction programme, Pariksha Pe Charcha – will be held ‘online’ this year, against the backdrop of Covid-19 pandemic**
- ✓ This was announced by the Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’
 - ✓ The annual interaction will feature Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the school students from across the country
 - ✓ The interaction will be held with the students from classes 9 to 12 before their exams in March.
 - ✓ The registration for the programme will start from February 18, 2021 and it will be concluded on March 14, 2021.
 - ✓ The first edition of the interaction programme with school and college students was held on February 16, 2018 at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi.
 - ✓ During the event, the Prime Minister interacts and shares his personal experiences with several students, parents and teachers from the entire country.

- **The Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and the Greenstat Norway - signed an agreement to set up the Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H) for the transfer and sharing of technology**



- ✓ The National Hydrogen Mission was recently unveiled by the Indian government to focus on the generation of carbon-free fuel from renewable sources.
 - ✓ The government has also announced in the Union Budget for 2021-22 to focus on generating hydrogen from the green power sources.
 - ✓ The CoE-H will focus on Green and Blue hydrogen value chain and other technologies such as hydrogen storage and fuel cells.
 - ✓ It will act as a think-tank for the developing codes and standards of the best industrial practices, product protocols, safety and regulations in the fields of hydrogen and fuel cells.
 - ✓ The National Hydrogen Mission was announced by the Finance Minister in her Union budget for 2020-21.
- **The Centre – has announced a new scheme that integrates the Passport services with the Digi Locker.**
 - ✓ The Union Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan has launched the new digital scheme that aims paperless mode of transaction
 - ✓ The new scheme would provide link to the specific documents of the applicants while applying for passport that they have uploaded in the Digilocker.
 - ✓ The passport programme was introduced to improve the delivery of passport services in the year 2010.
 - ✓ Digilocker is a key initiative under the Digital India Mission.
 - ✓ It enables the availability of all documents and certificates which has been uploaded on the cloud platform.
- **The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar - inaugurated the Atal Paryavaran Bhavan at Lakshadweep on February 19**



- ✓ He also attended programmes at Suheli, Kadmat (Cardamom) and Bangaram islands and evaluated major innovative initiatives of the Forest and Environment Department of the Union Territory.
- ✓ Lakshadweep is a group of islands located at 200 to 440 km off the southwestern coast of India.
- ✓ It has a total surface area of 32 km² and comprises of 10 subdivisions.
- ✓ The capital of the island is Kavaratti.
- ✓ This region comes under jurisdiction of Kerala High Court.
- **The Divya Coronil medicine by Patanjali - has received the certification from AYUSH Ministry in accordance with the WHO certification norms.**
 - ✓ The medicine has been certified as a drug which can be used as supporting measure to fight Covid-19 and as an immunity-booster.
 - ✓ The drug has received the Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (CoPP) from the Ayush section of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation.
 - ✓ Patanjali has also released a booklet with nine peer-reviewed papers that certifies the efficacy of Coronil.
 - ✓ Patanjali had launched the Coronil tablets in June 2020.
 - ✓ It was developed at Haridwar-based Divya Prakashan Patanjali Research Institute.
 - ✓ The Patanjali group had claimed that the drug cures the Covid-19 in seven days.
 - ✓ As per the Certificate of Pharmaceutical Products (CoPP) certification, the drug can be exported to 158 countries.
 - ✓ It also allows the World Health Organisation to inspect manufacturer at intervals.
- **The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Directorate General of Civil Aviation - granted conditional permission to the Agriculture ministry to use the Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)**
 - ✓ The drones are to be used for the purpose of remote sensing data collection under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
 - ✓ The RPAS will be used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW) for remote sensing data collection in the agricultural areas of 100 districts.

- ✓ It will be used at the gram panchayat level to identify yield estimation after obtaining necessary clearances from the local administration
 - ✓ This conditional exemption will be valid for one year after the date of issue or until the operationalisation of the Digital Sky Platform.
 - ✓ Drones are used in agriculture sector to monitor the crop health parameters
 - ✓ It can also perform soil analysis and nutrient availability for a better plant nutrient management.
 - ✓ The PMFBY insurance scheme was launched in February 2016.
 - ✓ It replaced the two schemes namely the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS).
- **Union Health Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan - has launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0.**



- ✓ The mission will be conducted in two rounds across 250 districts or urban areas in 29 States or Union Territories.
- ✓ The first round will start from February 22, 2021 while the second phase will start from March 22, 2021.
- ✓ The Minister also launched the IMI 3.0 portal and released Operational Guidelines for it.
- ✓ He also launched the awareness material or IEC package developed under the campaign.
- ✓ The IMI 3.0 initiative was launched by central government to provide immunization to the pregnant women and children free of cost in India.
- ✓ The initiative will facilitate vaccination under the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).
- ✓ The Mission Indradhanush was launched in December 2014 with the aim of fully immunizing unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children under UIP.
- ✓ The scheme targets children aged under 2 years and pregnant women for immunization.
- ✓ The mission incorporated immunization programme against 12 Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPD) - Whooping cough, diphtheria, polio, tetanus, meningitis, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, pneumonia, Haemophilus influenzae type B infections, rotavirus vaccine, Japanese encephalitis (JE), measles-rubella (MR) and pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV).

- ✓ The rate of immunization coverage under the initiative has increased to 6.7% per year through the first two phases of 'Mission Indradhanush'.
 - ✓ The Intensified Mission Indradhanush was launched in 2017
 - ✓ It aims to cover children aged under two years and pregnant women who were left uncovered under the routine immunisation programme.
 - ✓ Under this mission, greater focus was given on urban areas which were left out under the Mission Indradhanush.
- **The government – is all set to deliver its first finished apartments in the year 2021 using the SWAMIH Fund**
- ✓ SWAMIH stands for 'Special Window for Completion of Construction of Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Projects'
 - ✓ The SWAMIH Fund is a 250-billion-rupee corpus set up by Indian government to complete the stalled housing projects.
 - ✓ The fund will hand over 16 projects comprising of more than 4,000 homes in the financial year 2021-2022.
 - ✓ The SWAMIH fund was announced in November 2019.
 - ✓ In the year 2019, India had an estimated \$63 billion of stalled projects due to the economic slowdown and a credit crisis in the real estate sector.
 - ✓ This fund was created to complete the construction of stalled, RERA-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects.
 - ✓ It was created as Category-II Alternative Investment Fund debt fund which is registered with SEBI.
 - ✓ This fund has approved around 159 projects with the investment of 145 billion rupees.
 - ✓ Out of these projects, 47 projects have been given final approval.
 - ✓ The SWAMIH Fund has a total of 14 investors, while the government has 50% share in the fund.
 - ✓ The Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India are having the share of 10%, while the rest is met by other public and private-sector players.

INTERNATIONAL

- **On February 18, Israel - has announced that it is developing a new ballistic missile shield named "Arrow-4" in collaboration with the United States.**
- ✓ This missile is being developed as another layer in the defensive system to prevent any action by Iran.
 - ✓ The Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 interceptors of Israel are already operational under the multi-layered system.
 - ✓ This system can destroy the incoming missiles in the atmosphere and in space.
 - ✓ Arrow or Hetz refers to the family of anti-ballistic missiles
 - ✓ These missiles are being jointly funded and produced by Israel and United States since 1986.

- ✓ The missile system is overseen by Israeli Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Missile Defense Agency.
- ✓ The missile system comprises of joint production of hypersonic Arrow anti-missile interceptor and Israel Aerospace Industries Brown Hazelnut.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **India and Ethiopia - have signed two agreements on February 20 on visa facilitation and leather technology.**

India-Ethiopia sign Agreements on visa facilitation & leather technology



- ✓ These agreements were signed in the presence of Demeke Mekonnen Hassen, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.
 - ✓ The Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia is on a 4-day visit to India to discuss several bilateral and regional issues.
 - ✓ The ministers also agreed to expand the bilateral agenda with respect to the economy, defence, S&T, digital and cultural cooperation.
 - ✓ India is the third most important trading partner for Ethiopia.
 - ✓ In 2018-19, the bilateral trade between both the countries stood at \$1.28 billion.
 - ✓ Out of this, Indian exports to Ethiopia stood at \$1.23 billion and imports stood at \$55.01 million.
 - ✓ India is also the second largest foreign investor in Ethiopia, with 40% of investment in agriculture sector alone.
- **The International Solar Alliance (ISA) - has planned to launch the World Solar Bank (WSB) at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP-26, in Glasgow that is scheduled for November 2021.**
 - ✓ The development of the WSB is significant because the green finance will be one of the priority themes at the COP-26 climate meet.
 - ✓ 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 the country
 - ✓ The WSB have planned to disburse around \$50 billion to the member countries of ISA over next 10 years.
 - ✓ The ISA was co-founded by India at 2015 climate change conference in Paris.

- ✓ It is the first treaty-based international government organization which is headquartered in India.
- ✓ It is the nodal agency to implement the global electricity grid plan of India called “One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG)”.
- ✓ This plan was launched with the objective of transferring the solar power generated in one region to feed the electricity demands of another region.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) - held its 3rd ministerial meeting on February 18, 2021**

QUAD: 3rd Ministerial Meeting held over inclusive Indo-Pacific



- ✓ The meeting involved on various global and regional issues and focused on an open, free and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
 - ✓ The meeting of the Quad members will involve the participation of their foreign ministers.
 - ✓ The ministers discussed about issues of mutual interest, including the efforts of combating the pandemic, global climate change and to put an end to the growing economic influence of China
 - ✓ This meeting is the continuation of the views that were exchanged in the 2nd QUAD meeting of October 6, 2020 that was held in Tokyo.
 - ✓ The first meeting of Quad was organized in the year 2019 in New York.
 - ✓ Quad or Asian NATO is an informal strategic forum comprising of Japan, United States, Australia and India.
 - ✓ The grouping held semi-regular summits, military drills and military information exchanges between the member countries.
- **The 11th India-European Union macroeconomic dialogue - was held in the virtual mode on February 19, 2021.**
 - ✓ The Indian Delegation was led by the Secretary of Economic Affairs, Tarun Bajaj.
 - ✓ It comprised of the representatives from Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Revenues
 - ✓ The Director-General of Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission led the European Union delegation.
 - ✓ The European Union is one of the largest trading partners of India.

- ✓ During the dialogue, discussions were held on all the dimensions of mutual interest including the political, economic, environmental, research & innovation, trade & investment and security.
 - ✓ The dialogue focused on aspects such as G20 Framework Working Group Deliverables, debt-related issues, collaboration in the G20 on finance track matters, International taxation of the digital economy and G20 Action Plan.
 - ✓ Further, the medium-term fiscal strategy and fiscal policy response besides the financial or structural reform priorities were also discussed
- **PM Narendra Modi - addressed the India-Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE) on February 19**
- ✓ During the hackathon, waste reduction solutions were provided by 200 percipients from 72 teams of the students and start-ups



- ✓ Circular Economy aims to eliminate the waste and minimise the pollution, waste and carbon emissions
- ✓ This system supports the reuse, repair, sharing, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling in order to create closed-loop system.
- ✓ During the hackathon, Prime Minister highlighted that every person must make recycling & reusing things, eliminating waste and improving resource efficiency part of the lifestyles.
- ✓ The India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon was launched by the NITI Aayog Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- ✓ This hackathon was launched in association with the commonwealth scientific and industrial research organisation (CSIRO) of Australia.
- ✓ It focuses on identification and development of the innovative technology solutions provided by students, MSMEs and start-ups from both the countries.
- ✓ The I-ACE was organised under the four key themes -
 - ✓ Innovation in food supply chains avoiding waste.
 - ✓ Innovation in packaging reducing packaging waste.
 - ✓ Creating opportunities for plastics waste reduction.
 - ✓ Recycling critical energy metals and e-waste.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **The Scientists - have recovered and sequenced the oldest DNA on record from the molar teeth remains of three Siberian Mammoths.**



- ✓ These mammoths were found in the north-eastern Siberia some 1.2 million years ago.
- ✓ The remains of the mammoths were discovered in the early 1970s.
- ✓ The oldest of the three mammoths was discovered near Krestovka river, which was found to be 1.2 million years old.
- ✓ Another mammoth was discovered near the Adycha river and is 1 to 1.2 million years old.
- ✓ The third mammoth was recovered from Chukochya river, which is found to be around 7,00,000 years old.
- ✓ The mammoth is the species of extinct elephantidae family of genus Mammuthus
- ✓ The family also comprises of two genera of modern elephants and their ancestors.
- ✓ They were equipped with the long, curved tusks and a covering of long hair and found from the Pliocene epoch to the Holocene some 4,000 years ago.
- ✓ The species existed in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America.

DEFENCE

- **The Indian and the Indonesian navies - held the PASSEX military exercise in the Arabian Sea on February 18, 2021.**
- ✓ The exercise focused on enhancing the operational interoperability and the overall cooperation between both the navies
- ✓ INS Talwar represented the Indian naval ship, while the Indonesian Navy was represented by the multirole corvette KRI Bung Tomo.
- ✓ Recently, in November 2020, India hosted the Malabar exercise involving the navies of US, Japan and Australia.

SPORTS

- **Japan's Naomi Osaka – clinched the women's singles title in the Australian Open at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne, Australia on February 20**

- ✓ This is the second Australian Open (after 2019) and fourth Grand Slam title (2018 and 2020 US Open wins) for the third-seeded Osaka, who has maintained a 100% record in slam finals till now



➤ Japan's **Naomi Osaka** brushes aside American **Jennifer Brady** 6-4, 6-3 to win the Australian Open for the second time. She'd beaten Serena Williams, also in straight sets, in the semis

➤ Osaka's record in **Slam finals** now 4-0, the first woman to start her career that way since Monica Seles did it 30 years ago

➤ She is on a **21-match winning streak** that dates back to the last season, including the title run at last year's US Open

➤ Only **2 active women own more Slam titles** than Osaka: Serena Williams with 23, and her sister Venus with 7

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- ✓ The 23-year-old Osaka becomes only the third player after Monica Seles and Roger Federer to win their first four Major finals
- ✓ Osaka, the world's top-earning female athlete, defeated American, Jennifer Brady to win the title
- ✓ With the win, Osaka will climb a spot to No.2 in the WTA rankings on February 22.

