

SHIKSHA BY SWATHIKA

An IAS Academy

**JANUARY MONTH
CURRENT AFFAIRS
2021**

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JANUARY MONTH

STATES

Pedalandariki Illu

- ✓ The Andhra Pradesh government has launched the housing-sites distribution exercise under the 'Pedalandariki Illu' (houses for all the poor) scheme.

First ethanol plant

- ✓ The Chhattisgarh government signed a contract for the country's first ethanol plant to be set up in the state under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.

First pollinator park

- ✓ India's first pollinator park was established at Haldwani in Nainital district of the Uttarakhand.
- ✚ Pollinators include bees, birds, butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps, bats and small mammals.

Comprehensive data policy

- ✓ The cabinet of Punjab recently approved the Punjab state data policy.
- ✓ It becomes the first state in India to formulate a comprehensive data policy.

Operation Muskan

- ✓ 1088 people have been traced in Ahmednagar district by the police in Dec 2020 under the operation “Muskan” to trace missing children.

Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar River linking

- ✓ The Foundation stone for the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar river linking project will be laid in January 2021.
- ✓ The project involves construction of a 255.60-kilometre-long canal from Mayanur in Karur district to link river Kaveri with Vaigai.
- ✓ The link canal will run through the districts of Karur, Trichy, Pudukkottai, Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram and Virudhunagar.

Nagaland as 'disturbed area'

- ✓ The Union Home Ministry on December 30, 2020 declared entire Nagaland as 'disturbed area' for six more months under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.
- ✓ Nagaland has been under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act for almost six decades.
- ✓ The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been in force in the Northeast since 1958.

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- ✓ It will reach out to the agriculture fields for testing water, soil and will also suggest remedies for pest control to improve yield.

Kishori Suchita Abhiyan

- ✓ Tripura Government has announced that it is to provide free sanitary napkins to all girls from class sixth to twelfth.
- ✓ This new scheme will be called '**Kishori Suchita Abhiyan**'.

Spotlight on Infant Feeding in Tamil Nadu report 2020

- ✓ 34% of births in Tamil Nadu are by the caesarean part.
- ✓ It is above the WHO threshold of 15 percent. It is also greater than the speed recorded in different States.
- ✓ Out of total caesarean sections, 26 per cent happen in public health facilities and 51 per cent in private facilities.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu is **ranked 10th** among all States based on infant feeding score.
- ✓ It was provided by the National Health Mission of the Ministry of Health.

38th district of Tamilnadu

- ✓ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palanisamy on 28th December inaugurated the newly-formed Mayiladuthurai district.

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- ✓ The 38th district in the state has been carved out of Nagapattinam district.

Pazhaya soru

- ✓ The state health department has commissioned a research project involving 600 patients to study the effect of probiotics in fermented rice (pazhaya soru).
- ✓ It will research the use of this in treating **inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (UC)**.
- ✓ IBD treatment normally involves taking steroid drugs, immunosuppressants and anti-cancer drugs, and in some cases surgical intervention.

PH Pandian Memorial

- ✓ The Mani mandapam of former Assembly Speaker PH Pandian at Govindhaperi in Cheranmahadevi in Tirunelveli District.
- ✓ He served as the Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly from 1985 to 1989.
- ✓ He was instrumental in establishing Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in 1990 at Tirunelveli.

Tamil Nadu electorate

- ✓ The electorate in Tamil Nadu stands at 6.26 crore.

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- ✓ The Shozhinganallur Assembly constituency in Chengalpattu district continues to have the **highest** number of electors with 6,94,845 electors.
- ✓ While the Harbour Assembly constituency in Chennai continues to be the **lowest** with 1,76,272 electors.

Hansraj Verma committee

- ✓ CM Palaniswami announced that seven sub-sects of the Scheduled Caste — Kudumban, Pannadi, Kadaiyan, Pallan, Kalladi, Vathiriyar and Devandrakulathan — will be called as Devendrakula Vellalar.
- ✓ This has been a long-standing demand of the Devendrakula Vellalar community and Puthiya Tamizhagam (PT) party.
- ✓ This has been a long-standing demand of the Devendrakula Vellalar community and Puthiya Tamizhagam (PT) party.
- ✓ However, the other demand of the community of delisting them from Scheduled Caste (SC) category is still pending with the government.

Portraits in Tamilnadu Assembly

- ✓ The Chief Minister of Tamilnadu said that the life-size portraits of Omandurar Ramaswamy Reddiar, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and Paramasivan Subbarayan would be unveiled in the Assembly soon.

- ✓ Earlier he unveiled a portrait of freedom fighter SS Ramasamy Padayatchiyar in the State Assembly hall in July 20th in 2019.
- ✓ SS Ramasamy Padayatchiyar's portrait is the 12th to be unveiled in the House.
- ✓ SS Ramasamy Padayatchiyar founded the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party in 1952.
- ✓ In 1954, he became a minister in the Cabinet headed by the late K Kamaraj.
- ✓ Portraits of Thiruvalluvar, Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar, Periyar, Rajaji, K Kamaraj, Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar, Arignar Anna, Quaid-e-Milleth, MG Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa were unveiled since 1948.

Archaeological excavations

- ✓ The Tamilnadu Archaeological Department has decided to launch excavations at seven more sites and field studies in two places.
- ✓ This is the first time the State will have more than 10 excavation projects by different agencies, including the State Archaeology Department and various universities.
- ✓ The excavations would be carried out in
 - ✚ Keeladi and surrounding areas in Sivaganga district,
 - ✚ Adichanallur, Sivakalai, Korkai and surrounding areas in Thoothukudi district,

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- ✚ Kodumanal in Erode district,
- ✚ Mayiladumparai in Krishnagiri district,
- ✚ Gangaikondacholapuram and Maligaimedu in Ariyalur district.
- ✓ One field study will be conducted **to find new Stone Age** sites in Krishnagiri, Vellore, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai and Salem districts.
- ✓ Another field study will be done in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts **to find the Thamiraparani river civilization.**
- ✓ **Sharma Centre for Heritage Education** has sought permission for excavation in Chenrayanpalayam in Tiruvallur district
- ✓ **Alagappa University** has proposed to excavate in Ilanthakarai in Sivaganga district.
- ✓ **Tamil University** has submitted a proposal for Moolapalayam in Coimbatore district; **the University of Madras** for Vasalai in Vellore district and **Tamil Nadu Open University** for Porpanaikottai in Pudukottai.

India's first Fire Park

- ✓ The Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'Fire Park'.
- ✓ It is a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures.

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- ✓ It is located inside the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.
- ✓ He also launched a dynamic online portal, ‘**Agnishama Seva**’ of Odisha Fire Service on virtual platform.

India’s first ‘Labour Movement Museum’

- ✓ India’s first Labour Movement Museum would be launched in Alappuzha, Kerala.
- ✓ It will showcase the history of world labour movement.

Horticulture Development Mission

- ✓ The Gujarat chief Minister recently announced the “Horticulture Development Mission”. It is also called “**Bagayat Vikas Mission**”.
- ✓ The main objective of the mission is to double the income of the farmers involved in horticulture and medicinal farming.
- ✓ Under the mission, the waste land of the State Government of Gujarat is to be provided on 30 year lease for farming medicinal and horticulture crops.
- ✓ The State Government will provide assistance to such applications under “**The Scheme for Khetiwadi**”.

School of Public Health

- ✓ Rajasthan has launched a new School of Public Health. The school was launched in order to make the policy intervention to build the public health capacity and skills.
- ✓ It will also help in bridging the gaps between education and practices in Rajasthan.

Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) reforms

- ✓ Rajasthan has become the 5th state in the country to successfully complete the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) reforms.
- ✓ This was specified by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.
- ✓ Other states that have completed the Urban Local Bodies Reforms include- Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana.

First Young Readers' Boat Library

- ✓ The West Bengal Transport Corporation has launched the First Young Readers' Boat Library.
- ✓ The library has been launched in collaboration with a heritage book store.
- ✓ It has been launched on a boat making it first of its kind initiative.
- ✓ The boat library will cruise on the Hooghly river.

Gender Park

- ✓ The Gender Park in Kozhikode, Kerala will open from next month.
- ✓ The park will become functional on the occasion of the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II).
- ✓ The ICGE is an initiative by the Gender Park.
- ✓ The second edition of the conference will be inaugurated with the objective of exploring the measures to boost the economic potential of women and transgender persons.
- ✓ It will help them to be equipped as sustainable entrepreneurs.
- ✓ The conference will be organised under the **Theme: “Gender in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Social Business: The Mediating Role of Empowerment”**.
- ✓ This event will be organised in collaboration with the UN Women.

Journalist Day Observed in Maharashtra

- ✓ The Journalist Day is observed by Maharashtra State government on 6th January every year in the memory of late journalist **Balshastri Jambhekar**.
- ✓ Balshastri Jambhekar is also known as ‘**The Father of Marathi Journalism**’, for his efforts in starting journalism in Marathi language, in the form of first Marathi newspaper and first Marathi monthly.

- ✓ The **First newspaper in the Marathi language** named '**Darpan**', was published on January 6, 1832, the date which also marks the birth anniversary of Balshastrri Jambhekar.

NATIONAL

Prime Minister Lays Foundation stone of Light House projects

- ✓ On January 1, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid Foundation stone of 6 Light house projects as a part of Global Housing Technology Challenge India initiative.
- ✓ The programme aims to build thousand houses in cities such as Indore, Rajkot, Chennai, Ranchi, Agartala and Lucknow.

2021 Republic Day parade

- ✓ Chhattisgarh's tableau has been chosen for the 2021 Republic Day parade for the second time in a row.
- ✓ The tableau will display folk instruments used in tribal areas of Chhattisgarh with its cultural surroundings.

National Police K-9 Journal

- ✓ The home minister of India released the National Police K-9 Journal in New Delhi.

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- ✓ The publication is first of its kind in the country on the subject of police service K9s, police dogs, etc.

Toycathon 2021

- ✓ Union Education Minister Ramesh pokhriyal nishank and the Union Minister of textiles and women and child development Smriti Irani launched Toycathon 2021.
- ✓ It will promote the manufacturing of indigenous toys.

First migrant worker cell

- ✓ The Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the India's first migrant worker cell at Surat in Gujarat.
- ✓ It is to help Odia migrant workers working in different industries of the city.

Legal age of smoking

- ✓ The Government of India has recently prepared a bill to increase the age of shopkeepers selling cigarettes and tobacco products from 18 years to 21 years.

Kochi kottanad Bengaluru LNG pipeline

- ✓ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated of 450 km long Kochi kottanad Bengaluru LNG pipeline through video conferencing.

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- ✓ Launched in 2019, the challenge is undertaken under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U).
- ✓ GHTC was launched by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
- ✚ Chennai - Finland's and America's precast concrete system
- ✚ Indore - pre-fabricated sandwich panel system
- ✚ Rajkot - Monolithic concrete
- ✚ Lucknow - Canada technology
- ✚ Agartala - New Zealand - technology of steel frames
- ✚ Ranchi - 3-D construction system of Germany

Tamil Academy

- ✓ Delhi Government has started a **Tamil Academy** to develop Tamil language in Delhi.
- ✓ Chairman – Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodiya
- ✓ Deputy Chairman – Former Delhi Corporation Councilor N. Raja

GAVI Board

- ✓ Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has been nominated by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) as a member on the GAVI Board.

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- ✓ He will be representing the South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) constituency on the GAVI Board.
- ✓ He will hold this post for 2021 to 2023.
- ✓ Dr Harsh Vardhan was also elected as the chairperson of the World Health Organization.
- ✓ GAVI is an international organisation created in 2000.
- ✓ It is a Global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together public and private sectors.
- ✓ It works to achieve the objective of “**Immunisation for All**”.

India’s First Social Impact Bonds

- ✓ The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal corporation (PCMC) in Pune and United Nations Development Programme signed a MOU to create the first Social Impact bond of India.
- ✓ The municipal administration will bear the cost of a public welfare project associated with the bond.
- ✓ A Social Impact Bond is basically a contract with public sector authority where it pays for better social outcomes.

TRIFOOD Parks in MP

- ✓ The TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed a memorandum of

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- ✓ The policy envisages to connect the Arctic residents, especially the indigenous communities with those living in the Himalayan regions.

India and Arctic Research

- ✓ India signed the **Svalbard Treaty in Paris**. The treaty allowed free access to the Arctic region along with the commitment of not militarizing it.
- ✓ India launched its first scientific expedition to Arctic in 2007.
- ✓ In 2008, India established a research base called **Himadri** at Ny Alesund, Svalbard, Norway.
- ✓ In 2014, India deployed IndArc. It is a multisensory observatory in Kongsfjorden.
- ✓ In 2016, India set up Gruebadet Atmospheric Laboratory at Ny Alesund, Svalbard.
- ✓ The Arctic Policy has been synchronised and adapted to the Goal 11 of Sustainable Development Goals. **The Goal 11 of SDG is “Sustainable cities and Communities”.**

UJALA and SLNP schemes complete six years

- ✓ The UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) and SLNP (Street Lighting National Programme) completed six years of successful implementation. The two

programmes revamped household and public lighting system across the country.

- ✓ These scheme helped to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions by 38.59 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.
- ✓ The scheme distributed 72 lakhs of LED tube lights and 1.1cr Street Lights 23 lakhs of energy efficient fans at affordable prices.

Committee formed for preservation of Ladakh's land, culture and language

- ✓ The Government of India recently formed a committee to protect language, land, culture of Ladakh and ensure participation of citizens in the development of Union Territory.
- ✓ The Committee is to be headed by Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy.
- ✓ It will include elected representatives from Ladakh, central government and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development council.

India's first double stack long-haul container train

- ✓ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently flagged off the first double stack long-haul container train from New Ateli in Haryana to New Kishanganj in Rajasthan.
- ✓ The Indian Railways operated Mission Sheeghra in Uttar Pradesh. It was launched by the Lucknow Division of

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Indian Railways. Under the mission, the trains attained a maximum permissible speed of 100 km/hr.

✓ The Dedicated Freight Corridors are high speed high capacity railway corridors that are exclusively meant for transportation of freight.

✚ The **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor** is from Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai to Dadri on Uttar Pradesh.

✚ The **Eastern Freight Corridor** connects Dakuni in West Bengal and Ludhiana in Punjab.

✚ The **South-West Dedicated Freight Corridor** connects Chennai and Goa.

National Youth Parliament

✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to address be National Youth Parliament.

✓ The first National Youth Parliament was held in 2019 under the theme “be the voice of new India and find solutions and contribute to policy”.

✓ The National Youth Parliament is organised to hear the voice of the youth between the age of 18 and 25 years.

✓ It is held at three levels. They are district youth parliament at district level, state youth parliament at state level, National youth parliament at National level.

✓ The National Service Scheme operating under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

New Foreign Trade Policy

- ✓ The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently announced that the new Foreign Trade Policy 2021-26.
- ✓ It aims to make India a 5 trillion USD economy in 2024.

Chennai to Kevadiya Train

- ✓ The Prime Minister flagged off a weekly train service from Chennai to Kevadiya in Gujarat.
- ✓ Kevadiya Station in Gujarat is also the first railway station of India with a **Green Build Certification**.

Netaji Express

- ✓ The Howrah-Kalka Mail has been renamed as the ‘Netaji Express’.
- ✓ The train connects Howrah in Kolkata in the Eastern Indian state of West Bengal to Kalka in the North-Western state of Haryana.

Wahrew Bridge

- ✓ Meghalaya Chief Minister, Conrad K. Sangma has inaugurated India’s longest road arch bridge “Wahrew Bridge” at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

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- ✓ The mission gained momentum through the launch of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- ✓ The National Policy on Skill Development had set a target of skilling 50 crore people by 2022.

Ramgopal Rao Committee

- ✓ The Ministry of Education had appointed a committee, headed by IIT-Delhi V Ramgopal Rao.
- ✓ It was appointed to suggest measures for implementing reservation in student admissions and faculty recruitment in IITs.
- ✓ The committee has suggested that the 23 IITs should be exempted from reservations.

Tansen Samman

- ✓ The 96th Tansen Music Festival was held at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh.
- ✓ The festival pays tribute to Tansen, one of 9 gems in Akbar's court.
- ✓ The renowned Santoor player Pandit Satish Vyas was conferred upon the Tansen Samman.
- ✓ Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.

Heritage Conservation Committee

- ✓ The Heritage Conservation Committee has approved the construction of a new parliament.
- ✓ It is set up under the Ministry of Urban Affairs.
- ✓ It was setup under the provisions of in Delhi Building Byelaws, 1983 to protect heritage buildings.
- ✓ Only buildings in and around Delhi are governed by these laws.

Operation Sard Hawa

- ✓ It was launched by the Border Security Force in the western border of Rajasthan.
- ✓ The purpose of the operation is to check the instances of infiltration due to dense fog in the region.

Vasuki Train

- ✓ The South-East Central Railways (SECR) zone in Chhattisgarh has successfully operated the longest ever freight train.
- ✓ It was done by amalgamating five rakes of goods trains as one unit of around 3.5 km.
- ✓ It is named as 'Vasuki'.
- ✓ It covered the distance of 224 km between the railway stations of Bhilai and Korba.
- ✓ The SECR has also operated two freight trains recently.

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- ✓ These freight trains got attention due to their length.
- ✓ The two freight trains were ‘Sesh Naag’ and ‘Super Anaconda’.

Driverless metro

- ✓ The Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) unveiled ‘Driverless Metro Car’ for **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)**.
- ✓ It is a defence public sector equipment manufacturer under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

India 1st air taxi

- ✓ Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the country's first small aircraft air taxi service.
- ✓ The air taxi service in its first phase will function from **Chandigarh to Hisar**.
- ✓ It will be operated under **UDAN scheme** of the central government.

India's first ‘Labour Movement Museum’

- ✓ India's first Labour Movement Museum would be launched in Alappuzha, Kerala.
- ✓ It will showcase the history of world labour movement.

Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)

- ✓ PM inaugurated the 306 km New Rewari-New Madar Section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.
- ✓ The new stretch will be for commercial operations between Rajasthan's Madar and Haryana's Rewari.
- ✓ Western Dedicated Freight Corridor starts from Dadri in Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai in Maharashtra.
- ✓ During the event, PM Modi also flagged off the 1.5 km long world's first Double Stack Long Haul container train.

Longitudinal Ageing Study of India

- ✓ It is a full-scale National survey of scientific investigation of economic, health and social determinants and consequences of population ageing in India.
- ✓ This report will provide a base for national and state level programmes and policies for elderly population.
- ✓ It is India's first and the world's largest-ever survey for designing policies and programmes for the old age people.
- ✓ It has been undertaken by the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Maximum Speed of Railways

- ✓ The Railway ministry has drastically increased the maximum speed to 130 km per hour for 1,280 km length.

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- ✓ The enhancement has been done out of 1,612 km in Golden Quadrilateral - Golden Diagonal route.
- ✓ The mentioned route covers the whole GQ-GD route over South Central Railway except the Duvvada-Vijayawada section.

All Women Pilot Group

- ✓ Air India recently operated the longest non-stop Flight operated by an allwomen pilot group.
- ✓ The new route has saved fuel consumption, flying time, and curbing carbon footprint by flying over the polar route as the flight path.
- ✓ The flight is **Air India's longest route** in its network at approx 14,000 km (8,698 miles) and the longest flight to and from India (approximately 16 hours).
- ✓ It includes the four women - Captain Zoya Aggarwal, Captain Papagari Thanmai, Captain Akansha Sonaware and Captain Shivani Manhas.
- ✓ They flew for **17 hours**.
- ✓ The flight was started at **San Francisco** of the USA. It landed at the **Kempegowda international airport** in Bengaluru.
- ✓ This route is also one of the top 10 longest routes in the World, in terms of distance flown.

Food Corporation of India

- ✓ On January 14, 2021, the 75th foundation day of the Food Corporation of India was celebrated.
- ✓ It is a statutory body that operates under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- ✓ It was founded on January 14, 1965 having its first District Office at Thanjavur – rice bowl of Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ Its initial headquarters was located in Chennai and was later moved to New Delhi.

Ethanol blending in India

- ✓ India plans to achieve 20% ethanol-blending with gasoline by 2025.
- ✓ It will be five years ahead of its previous target.
- ✓ It is to help reduce its dependence on costly oil imports.
- ✓ In 2020, the government had set a target of reaching 10% ethanol-blending by 2022.
- ✓ It means 10% of ethanol mixed with 90% of gasoline – and **20% by 2030**.
- ✓ India relies on foreign suppliers to meet more than 80% of its demand.

SAKSHAM Awareness Campaign

- ✓ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently launched SAKSHAM awareness campaign.

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- ✓ The campaign was launched to spread awareness about green energy.
- ✓ It is a one-month long people centric fuel conservation campaign.
- ✓ Green Energy Schemes in India
 - ✚ Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM)
 - ✚ Grid Connected Roof top Solar Programme
 - ✚ National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy
 - ✚ National Offshore Wind Energy Policy

Shree Somnath Temple Trust

- ✓ PM Modi was named as next Chairman of this trust.
- ✓ He becomes the second PM to hold the post after the former Prime Minister Morarji Desai.
- ✓ The temple is in Gujarat. Somnath temple is also believed to be the first among the 12 Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva.

Marriage age of women

- ✓ The task force set up to relook the marriage age of women has submitted its report to the Prime Minister office and the Ministry of Women and Child development.
- ✓ The committee was formed under Jaya Jaitley in June 2020.

- ✓ Mr Morrison said he hopes the change will create a "spirit of unity".

Sales tax on women's sanitary products

- ✓ On January 1, 2021, the British government abolished the tampon tax on women sanitary products.

Iran to enrich uranium up to 20%

- ✓ Iran recently announced the United Nations nuclear Watchdog International atomic energy agency that it has planned to enrich uranium to 20% purity.
- ✓ This was the level it achieved before 2015 Accord.

India sends relief materials to Fiji

- ✓ India sent relief materials to the cyclone affected Fiji.
- ✓ Fiji was hit by **Yasa**, a Category-5 tropical cyclone.

Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act

- ✓ The US Congress recently passed the Malala Yousafzai scholarship act.
- ✓ The act will expand the number of scholarships been awarded to the Pakistani women.
- ✓ The scholarships provided for Pakistani women to receive higher education top.

Vandalize Hindu temple

- ✓ The Pakistan Supreme Court ordered the Evacuee Property Trust Board to reconstruct a century year old Hindu temple.
- ✓ The temple was vandalized and set on fire by a mob in Karak district on December 30, 2020.
- ✓ The attack has caused International embarrassment to the country.

India and China MOU

- ✓ India and China in the context of mutual access to release list of civilian prisoners and fisherman was signed an agreement on 21st may 2008.
- ✓ According to that on each year Jan 1st and July 1st both the countries release the list.

Argentina abortion laws

- ✓ Argentina recently became the largest Latin American country to legalize abortion.
- ✓ Under the new law Argentina has legalised abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy.
- ✓ In India, abortion is legal till 24th week of pregnancy according to medical termination of pregnancy (Amendment) act, 2020. Earlier it was 20 weeks.

Five Eyes network

- ✓ Japan is now to join the Five Eyes network to become the sixth eye.
- ✓ It comprises of five nations namely Australia, Canada, Britain, US and New Zealand.
- ✓ It collaborated to respond against the increasing threats by China and North Korea.
- ✓ The origins of Five Eyes alliance can be tracked to the Atlantic Charter that was issued in August 1941.
- ✓ In June 2020, the Five Eyes countries signed an Economic Agreement to isolate China.
- ✓ The United States has sought to add three democratic countries India, South Korea and Japan in Five Eyes Network.

40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica

- ✓ Ministry of Earth science launched the Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica. Ice class vessel MV Vasilii Golovin has been deployed for the 40th Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica.
- ✓ The expedition will take a team of 40 members to Antarctica and return by April 2021.
- ✓ The Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica was begun at 1981.

International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

- ✓ The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in India has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT).

4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites

- ✓ The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has named 4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites across three countries as the Globally Important Agricultural Sites (GIAHS).
- ✓ These are:
 - ✚ Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem in Yunnan province at China
 - ✚ Traditional Tree Grass system – Japan
 - ✚ Fuzhou Jasmine tea site - China
 - ✚ Traditional Hadong Tea Agrosystem - South Korea
- ✓ The Yunnan province in China is considered as the World's origin for tea.
- ✓ China is the World's largest tea producer while **India is the 2nd.**
- ✓ In India, tea cultivation was introduced only by the British in 19th century.
- ✓ Tea is produced in the states of Assam, West Bengal and Kerala among others in India.

Tampon Tax

- ✓ The British government abolished the tax on women sanitary products as the “tampon tax”.
- ✓ It is a measure to ‘End Period Poverty’.
- ✓ India, Australia and Canada have already eliminated this tax.
- ✓ **Scotland became the first country** in the world to make these period products free of cost.

Maitre Setu bridge

- ✓ It is the bridge over the River Feni.
- ✓ It connects South Tripura with Ramgarh of Bangladesh.
- ✓ It provides access to the Chittagong seaport of Bangladesh.
- ✓ Currently, the only sea trade access point of North eastern states is the Haldia port of West Bengal.

UNSC's Counter-Terrorism Committee

- ✓ India has been asked to chair 3 major bodies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- ✓ India is to chair this Counter Terrorism Committee in 2022.
- ✓ This committee was formed in September 2001 after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, United States.

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- ✓ India had last chaired this committee in 2011-12.
- ✓ India is also to chair the Taliban Sanctions Committee and Libya Sanctions committee.

Palestine Elections

- ✓ Palestine is to hold first national elections after 14 years in 2021.
- ✓ The three elections, parliamentary, presidential and National Council polls, will be conducted in the Palestine in 2021.
- ✓ Two Palestinian groups - Hamas and Fatah - have been against each other ever since Hamas seized the Gaza Strip from its rival in 2007.
- ✓ President Mahmoud Abbas agreed to stay on as President of Palestine until the next election.

Open Skies Treaty

- ✓ Russia has announced that it is leaving the Open Skies Treaty (OST).
- ✓ It is an accord between over 30 countries.
- ✓ It allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states.
- ✓ In 2020, the US announced that it is to leave the Open Skies Treaty.
- ✓ The Open Skies Treaty was signed in 1992 after the Disintegration of the Soviet Union.

D10 Countries

- ✓ The United Kingdom has invited India, Australia and South Korea to attend the G7 summit as “guest countries”.
- ✓ For a country to become the member of G7, it must hold high net national wealth and high Human Development Index.
- ✓ It is scheduled to be held in June at United Kingdom.
- ✓ The D10 group of countries was proposed by Britain.
- ✓ D10 means Ten biggest democracies in the world.
- ✓ G7 was originally formed in 1975.

Tsari Chu river

- ✓ Satellite images show that China built new village in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ✓ The settlements are situated on the banks of Tsari Chu river in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ✓ The village lies south of the McMahon Line.

Davos Agenda Summit

- ✓ The Davos Agenda Summit is organised by the World Economic Forum.
- ✓ It is to be held at Singapore this year.
- ✓ The “Great Reset Initiative” of the World Economic Forum is to be launched during the Davos Agenda Summit.

- ✓ The theme of this Agenda Summit is “Stakeholders for a cohesive and sustainable world”.

World’s Oldest Cave Painting

- ✓ The world’s oldest known cave painting was discovered in the limestone cave of Leang Tedongnge of Indonesia.
- ✓ The painting made using red ochre pigment depicts a wild boar endemic to the Sulawesi island of Indonesia.
- ✓ The painting of the Sulawesi warty pig seems to be the world’s oldest surviving representational image of an animal.

New START Treaty

- ✓ The US President Joe Biden recently proposed to extend New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty by five years.
- ✓ The New START Treaty was signed between United States and Russia in 2010 in Prague (capital of Czech Republic).
- ✓ It entered into force in 2011. It was signed to reduce nuclear arms production and utilisation by US and Russia.

Resolution to promote a culture of peace and tolerance

- ✓ The United Nations recently adopted a resolution to promote a culture of peace and tolerance.

- ✓ The resolution aims to safeguard religious sites spread all over the world.
- ✓ The resolution was titled “Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites”.
- ✓ The resolution condemns offences against religious sites and symbols. The resolution also condemns forcible conversions of religions.
- ✓ India supported this resolution.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue

- ✓ It was held under the theme “The new Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism”.
- ✓ The Asia Cooperation Dialogue countries also adopted the “Ankara Declaration” in the end of the meet.

Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

- ✓ On January 22, 2021, the first treaty to ban nuclear weapons called the “Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” came into force.
- ✓ This treaty is the first legally binding international agreement that aim to eliminate nuclear weapons completely.
- ✓ The treaty was approved by United Nations General Assembly in 2017.

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- ✓ The keystone pipeline system is an oil pipeline system in the United States and Canada.
- ✓ It was commissioned in 2010 and is owned by the Government of Alberta and TC Energy.
- ✓ The pipeline runs from the Western Canadian sedimentary basin in Alberta to the Refineries in Texas and Illinois.
- ✓ The major environmental concern raised against the project is that the pipeline spill will threaten Ogallala aquifer. Ogallala aquifer is one of the largest freshwater reserves in the world.
- ✓ It is located beneath The Great Plains in the United States.

POLITICAL

Freedom to Religion Bill, 2020

- ✓ The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has approved the Freedom to Religion Bill, 2020 as an Ordinance.
- ✓ Previously, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have passed similar laws.

WHO Map of India

- ✓ The World Health Organization recently released a new map.
- ✓ The map differentiated Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh from the rest of Indian mainland with a different colour.

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- ✓ The new WHO map of India has marked the newly created Union Territories of India, Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir in grey colour.
- ✓ Also, it has marked the disputed **Aksai Chin region in grey colour with blue stripes**. The blue stripes are in identical shade as that of China. The map shows India in navy blue colour.

India-Nepal map issue

- ✓ In May 2020, Nepal released a new political map that claimed regions of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. Nepal released the map after India inaugurated a motorable link road connecting India and China.
- ✓ The road passes through Lipulekh pass. This region is claimed by Nepal as its own territory.

India-Pakistan map issue

- ✓ In August 2019, Pakistan released a map that showed the geographical areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh within its area.
- ✓ Also, the Junagadh of Gujarat was shown as its own territory. The map was released a day before Indian Government rolled back the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ✓ Also, the it was a counter action for India's inclusion of Pakistan occupied Kashmir as part of the Unin Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Risk of further incitement of violence

- ✓ Twitter has permanently suspended the account of outgoing President Donald Trump due to “risk of further incitement of violence”.

Eight-point agenda

- ✓ The External Affairs Minister Jaishankar proposed an eight-point agenda to address the menace of terrorism.
- ✓ He made it at the UNSC open debate on ‘International Cooperation in combating terrorism 20 years after the adoption of 1373’.

Fiji

- ✓ The UN Human Rights Council elected Fiji as its 2021 President.

Vertical and Horizontal Reservations

- ✓ Through the Saurav Yadav case, the Supreme Court clarified the position of law on the interplay of vertical and horizontal reservations.
- ✓ The Supreme court has ruled against the Uttar Pradesh government order.
- ✓ Vertical reservation refers to as reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).

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- ✓ Horizontal reservation refers to the equal opportunity provided to other categories of beneficiaries such as women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, cutting through the vertical categories.

16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

- ✓ It is organized on 9th January 2021 by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ✓ The theme of this year is “Contributing to Aatma nirbhar Bharat”.
- ✓ It is celebrated on 9th January to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- ✓ It was on this day in 1915 that Gandhi returned to India from South Africa.
- ✓ PBD conventions were held every year since 2003.
- ✓ Since 2015, its format has been revised to celebrate the PBD once every two years.

Parakram Diwas

- ✓ The central government has decided to celebrate Netaji's birth anniversary on **January 23rd every year as Parakram Diwas.**
- ✓ This year is the **125th Birth Anniversary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.**
- ✓ The honour of Netaji was conferred on Subash Chandra Bose in Germany, in early 1942 by the Indian soldiers of

the Indian Legion and by the German and Indian officials in the Special Bureau for India in Berlin.

Right to vote is lost

- ✓ The United Nations announced that Iran and six other countries have lost their rights to vote in United Nations General Assembly.
- ✓ This is because these countries have not paid their dues.
- ✓ The countries are Libya, Niger, Congo Brazzaville, Central African Republic, Zimbabwe and South Sudan.

Prabuddha Bharata

- ✓ The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will address the 125th anniversary celebration 'Prabuddha Bharata' which is scheduled to be organized on January 31, 2021.
- ✓ It will be organized by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.
- ✓ It is a monthly magazine of the Ramakrishna Order.
- ✓ This magazine was founded 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 was of great significance in spreading the message of the ancient spiritual wisdom of the country.

Sudden Stratospheric Warming

- ✓ The Southern India received excessively heavy rainfall (ten times the normal) between January 1, 2021 and January 17, 2021.
- ✓ This winter rain, according to the scientists, is due to sudden stratospheric warming that occurred in Arctic region.
- ✓ The Sudden Stratospheric Warming is an event where the polar stratospheric temperature increases up to fifty degrees Celsius.
- ✓ It is preceded by a situation where the polar jet stream of westerly winds in the northern hemisphere is disturbed by natural weather patterns.
- ✓ This is usually addressed as polar vortex. It is a whirling cone of low pressure over the poles.
- ✓ It is the strongest in winter. It is due to the difference in temperature between polar and mid latitude regions.
- ✓ It spins in the stratosphere. The Stratosphere is the layer of the atmosphere at a height of ten to fifty kilo metres above the earth surface.

Parker Solar Probe

- ✓ Parker Solar Probe Marks Seventh Successful Swing around the Sun. It passed just 8.4 million miles (13.5 million kilometers) from the Sun's surface.

- ✓ NASA's Parker Solar Probe mission provides inputs about our understanding of the sun.
- ✓ It will travel through the sun's atmosphere, closer to the surface than any spacecraft before it.

Kraken Mare in Titan

- ✓ The researchers have recently found that the largest sea in Titan (moon of Saturn) is thousand feet deep in its centre.
- ✓ **Kraken Mare** is huge liquid body located in the north pole of Titan.
- ✓ It is made of ethane and methane. It was discovered by the **space probe Cassini**.
- ✓ Cassini was the first space probe to orbit Titan.
- ✓ An island in Kraken Mare has been named "**Mayda Insula**".
- ✓ It is the first island to be named on a planet or moon other than the earth.

Ratle Hydro Power Project

- ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved the investment to the Ratle Hydro Electric Project.
- ✓ Ratle Hydro Electric Project is located on **river Chenab** in Kishtwar district of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Tsar Icicle

- ✓ The **Vilyuchinsky waterfall** in winter is called Tsar Icicle. The Vilyuchinsky waterfall lies in Kamchatka peninsula. It is home to more than one hundred and sixty volcanoes. Of these twenty-nine are still active.
- ✓ Many of these volcanoes are capped with glaciers. As these glaciers melt during warm weather, they form waterfalls. One such waterfall is the Vilyuchinsky waterfalls.

K2 Mountain Climbing

- ✓ The Nepali Mountain climbers are the first to climb the world's second highest mountain K2 in winter.
- ✓ The Mountain is located in Gilgit-Baltistan side of Karakoram range.

Flash Flood Guidance Services

- ✓ India launched this service for South Asia.
- ✓ It is the first of its kind for South Asian countries namely India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- ✓ It is a robust system designed by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).

- ✓ In India, the mountaineering expeditions are taken up only during premonsoon and post-monsoon period.
- ✓ For the first time, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation has approved the concept of winter mountaineering.
- ✓ Arjun Vajpai is the youngest Indian to climb Mount Everest at the age of 16 in 2010.
- ✓ Mount Trishul is located in the western Kumaon of Uttarakhand.

Jarosite

- ✓ A rare maritime mineral, Jarosite, has been found in the Antarctica ice. It was discovered after drilling deep into Antarctic ice.
- ✓ This supports the theory of presence of jarosite on MARS in a similar manner.
- ✓ It signifies that, the minerals are able to form in thick deposits on Mars because the planet is a lot dustier than Antarctica.
- ✓ Jarosite is a mineral from Mars which is scarcely seen on earth. It is a **sulphate of potassium and iron**.
- ✓ The mineral can be formed by both water and acidic conditions. It was first discovered on Mars in 2004 by a rover named “**opportunity**”.
- ✓ Other Jarosite minerals include silver, sodium, lead and ammonium.

- ✓ It can be found are in the mining and ore processing wastes where they act as sinks for other toxic elements such as lead and arsenic.
- ✓ When the jarosite is broken, it releases metals such as iron, potassium besides the hydrogen ions and sulphate.

MEDICINE

PNEUMOSIL

- ✓ The Serum Institute of India has launched the country's first indigenously developed pneumococcal vaccine PNEUMOSIL for children.

Oxford-AstraZeneca

- ✓ Britain became the first nation in the world to roll out the low-cost and easily transportable Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

COVAXIN, COVISHIELD

- ✓ The Drugs Controller General of India recently approved two vaccines, COVAXIN and COVISHIELD for "Restricted Emergency Use" in India.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

First ever nuclear reactor

- ✓ The US White House has recently issued a directive for the first ever nuclear reactor on the Moon by 2026.

Fatah-1

- ✓ Pakistan successfully completed the test flight of an indigenously developed rocket system named Fatah-1.
- ✓ It is capable of delivering conventional warheads with a maximum range of 140 kilometres.

Ruthenium 106 Plaque

- ✓ Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) Mumbai has developed the first indigenous Ruthenium 106 Plaque.
- ✓ It will be developed for the treatment of the Eye Cancer therapy.

LYNX U2 GFCS

- ✓ The Ministry of Defence recently signed an agreement with the Bharat Electronics Limited to supply ten LYNX U2 GFCS.
- ✓ It is a Naval Gun Fire Control System. It has been designed to track and engage targets amidst sea clutter. It can accurately track air and surface targets.

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- ✓ Also, it can generate required target data to predict weapon aiming points.
- ✓ The LYNX U2 GFCS is to be acquired from BEL. This is developed in true spirit of Atma Nirbhar Bharat (selfreliant India).
- ✓ India has been trying to increase its domestic defence production lately.

Rafale jets to carry out SKYROOS wargames

- ✓ Rafale fighter jets of India and France will carry out wargames condenamed Exercise SKYROOS in Jodhpur in third week of Jan 2021.
- ✓ French Air Force Rafale fighters would be coming to jodhpur which would see them flying with Indian Rafales from the 17 Squadron and the Su-30MKI fighters.
- ✓ This would be the first major wargame of the Indian Air Force(IAF) involving the Rafale fighters.

Sea Wing Glider Drone

- ✓ China has recently deployed underwater drones called Sea Wing Glider in the Indian Ocean region. The Sea Wing Glider Drone is used for Naval surveillance. It can operate for months under the sea.
- ✓ Apart from Indian ocean region China has also deployed the Sea Wing Glider Drone in the Arctic Ocean. Also,

these drones are deployed in South China Sea, East China Sea and other waters of the Western Pacific.

SAHAYAK-NG

- ✓ It is the first **indigenously developed air droppable container**, with a parachute system.
- ✓ After the safe separation from the aircraft, the parachute controls the descent of Sahayak-NG for safe touchdown on water.
- ✓ It was designed by Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) and Avantel, a private company.

Japan Solution for Space Debris

- ✓ In order to solve the problem of space debris, Japanese researches are to launch wooden satellites by 2023.
- ✓ These satellites are made of wood. They will burn up without releasing harmful substances into the atmosphere when they plunge back to the earth.
- ✓ The wooden satellites are being designed by the **Sumitomo Forestry and Kyoto University**.
- ✓ All the satellites that re-enter the earth atmosphere burn and create tiny Alumina particles.
- ✓ According to World Economic Forum there are more than 6000 satellite circling the earth. Out of these 60% of them are de-functional.

- ✓ In 2006 a very tiny piece of space debris collided with the International Space Station and took out a chip of the heavily reinforced window. This costed severe damages.
- ✓ Therefore, it is essential to develop solutions like wooden satellites to completely remove space debris.

Sagar Anveshika

- ✓ Union Minister for Earth Sciences, Harsh Vardhan has launched Coastal Research Vehicle 'Sagar Anveshika' at the Chennai Port.
- ✓ The vehicle will be used to carry out environment indexing and bathymetric (mapping underwater features) in both coastal and offshore waters.

Floating Solar Energy Project

- ✓ The Government of India is to construct the largest floating solar energy project in the world.
- ✓ The project is to be constructed at Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river.
- ✓ The project will begin its power generation by 2022 to 2023.
- ✓ International Finance Corporation and World bank are to provide financial assistance.
- ✓ The floating solar power plant refers to solar panels installed on structures that float on surface of the water.

The two types

- ✓ Floating photovoltaic Solar Power plant that uses photovoltaic panels installed on floating platform.
- ✓ Floating concentrated solar power System. It uses mirrors to redirect the solar power to a tower.

H3 rocket

- ✓ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is to launch H3 rocket in 2021.
- ✓ It is to pave the way for the next generation of transportation technologies.

DRDO Biodigester Mk II technology

- ✓ The Defence Research and Development Organisation recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Maha Metro.
- ✓ Maha Metro is Maharashtra metro rail Corporation. It is a joint venture company of the Government of India and Government of Maharashtra.
- ✓ The agreement will render technical support to implement the advanced biodigester Mk II technology to treat human waste in Metro Rail Network.
- ✓ The biodigester technology degrades and converts human waste into usable water and gases. The generated gas is used for cooking and water for irrigation purposes. This is done in an eco-friendly manner.

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- ✓ The bacteria through anaerobic process will degrade the fecal matter. During the process water and methane gas are released.

Asmi Pistol

- ✓ India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by the Indian Army and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ✓ The machine pistol has been named '**Asmi**'. It means self-respect, hard work and pride.
- ✓ DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in Pune and Army's infantry school in Mhow jointly developed and designed this pistol.

SAAW (Smart Anti Airfield Weapon)

- ✓ The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited recently test fired SAAW the from Hawk aircraft successfully.
- ✓ SAAW was developed by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ✓ SAAW is the first smart weapon fired from an Indian Hawk.
- ✓ It is a long-range precision guided anti-airfield weapon.
- ✓ Basically, SAAW is a bomb. The Government of India approved SAAW project for Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.

Heliophysics Missions

- ✓ NASA has approved two heliophysics missions to explore the Sun and the system that drives space weather near Earth.
- ✓ Together, NASA's contribution to the following will help in understanding the Sun and Earth as an interconnected system,
 - ✚ Extreme Ultraviolet High-Throughput Spectroscopic Telescope Epsilon Mission (EUVST) and
 - ✚ Electrojet Zeeman Imaging Explorer (EZIE)

EUVST

- ✓ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) leads the EUVST Epsilon Mission (Solar-C EUVST Mission), along with other partners.
- ✓ It is targeted for launch in 2026. It is a solar telescope.

EZIE

- ✓ It is to be launched in 2024. It will study electric currents in Earth's atmosphere linking aurora to Earth's magnetosphere.
- ✓ The magnetosphere responds to solar activity and other factors.

DRDO Landing Gear System for UAV

- ✓ The Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment operating under DRDO recently developed

the Retractable Landing Gear System for Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, TAPAS.

- ✓ These landing gear systems are to be used by the Indian Navy.
- ✓ The Retractable Landing Gear System consists of a hydrogas shock strut integrated with wheel and brake system.
- ✓ It absorbs and dissipates landing impact load to safeguard the aircraft.
- ✓ It has nitrogen combined with hydraulic fluid to absorb and dissipate impact loads.
- ✓ TAPAS is Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance beyond horizon.
- ✓ It is also known as **RUSTOM-2**.
- ✓ It was developed by India on the lines of American Predator Drones. The first flight of TAPAS took place in 2016.

NASA to test the most powerful rocket ever built

- ✓ NASA is to launch the most powerful rocket in the world on January 17, 2021. NASA has named it as the “**Space Launch System**”.
- ✓ The Space Launch System is to carry the first woman and the next man to the moon. It is 98 metres tall.

- ✓ The future version of SLS is called **Block-2 cargo**. It is expected that Block-2 of SLS will reach the thrust levels of N1.
- ✓ The vehicle called **Starship** being built by SpaceX is capable of producing 66.7 Mega Newtons of thrust. When launched, this will be the most powerful rocket in the world.

India at 3rd position

- ✓ The Department of Science and Technology announced that India is currently in third position in scientific publications after China and US.

Vikram-1

- ✓ The Indian space startup Skyroot Aerospace of Hyderabad, has successfully test-fired its first solid rocket propulsion stage demonstrator called **Kalam-5**.
- ✓ With this, India's first-ever privately designed and developed rocket, Vikram-1, is a step closer to becoming a reality.
- ✓ Kalam-5 uses the same propellant, materials, and interface as the motors that will be installed on Vikram-1.
- ✓ Vikram-1 rocket is powered by four engines - three solid-fuel stages and one Liquid-fuel stage.

Aero India-21

- ✓ The Aero India-21 mobile application was recently launched by the Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- ✓ The mobile app will act as a handy interactive interface for all the issues related to Aero India 2021.
- ✓ The application has features to support the attendees, exhibitors and media of Aero India 21.
- ✓ The Aero India is a biennial air show held in Bengaluru.
- ✓ This year, the Aero India is being conducted under the theme “**Runaway to a Billion Opportunities**”.
- ✓ Aero India-21 is the first hybrid event where the business element will happen both physically and virtually.
- ✓ The first edition of Aero India was held in 1996.

DRDO Rakshita bike ambulance

- ✓ The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) recently developed a bike ambulance called “Rakshita”.
- ✓ The bike ambulance will attend the evacuation needs of the CRPF personnel during emergency or battle injury.
- ✓ The ambulance was developed by INMAS (Institute of Nuclear and Allied Science) operating under DRDO. The ambulances have been developed on Royal Enfield bikes.

Lost Galaxy

- ✓ Recently, the Hubble Space Telescope of NASA captured the images of the NGC 4535 which is also known as the “Lost Galaxy”.
- ✓ The image highlights that the young and hot stars that hang out are the bright blue spots.
- ✓ On the other hand, older and cooler stars are highlighted by the bright shades nearer to the center.
- ✓ An amateur astronomer Leland S. Copeland fixed his telescope lens on a distant galaxy in the Virgo constellation first in 1950s.
- ✓ He then witnessed an eerie spiral that was shrouded in dust. He named the spiral as “The Lost Galaxy”.
- ✓ It is also known as **NGC 4535**.
- ✓ The galaxy is one of the largest of some 2,000 galaxies in the Virgo Cluster.

ECONOMY

GDP Contribution

- ✓ Agriculture Sector has contributed 15% in India’s GDP which is highest for this Sector ever.

GST Collection

- ✓ **GST** collection in December 2020 has been increased to 1.15 lakh Crores rupees which is historical achievement.

Ease of doing business reforms

- ✓ Rajasthan is the 6th state to complete ease of doing business reforms. Other five states that have also completed the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
- ✓ The scheme aims to link grant of additional borrowing permissions to states undertaking the ease of doing business reforms.
- ✓ As per the scheme, the Centre has enhanced the borrowing limit of states by 2% of their GSDP.
- ✓ The reforms are implementation of one nation one ration card system, ease of doing business reform, urban local body or utility and power sector reforms.

India's First Social Impact Bonds

- ✓ The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal corporation (PCMC) in Pune and United Nations Development Programme signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the first Social Impact bond of India.
- ✓ A Social Impact Bond is basically a contract with public sector authority where it pays for better social outcomes.

RBI Trend and Progress Report, 2020

- ✓ It provides information about performance of the banking sector.

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- ✓ This includes non-banking Financial Institutions and cooperative banks.
- ✓ The report is a statutory compliance of Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- ✓ The commercial bank's gross non-performing assets ratio has declined from 9.1% in March 2019 to 7.5% in September 2020.
- ✓ The capital to risk weighted assets ratio of the scheduled commercial banks strengthened from 14.3% in March 2019 to 15.8% in September 2020.
- ✓ This helped in recapitalization of public sector banks.

Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank

- ✓ SMCB becomes first urban cooperative bank to transition to Small Finance Bank. o It currently operates in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Uttarakhand.

FDI in 2020

- ✓ China has surpassed the United States as the world's top destination for the foreign direct investment (FDI) in the year 2020.
- ✓ It was the recent figures by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

NAVY

First all women team of NDRF

- ✓ An All women NDRF team was recently deployed on the banks of Ganga River for contingency duties in Uttar Pradesh.

Sea-Vigil 21 exercise

- ✓ The Indian Navy is to organise a mega defence exercise called Sea Vigil-21.
- ✓ The exercise will cover the 7516 kilometres of coastline and the Exclusive Economic Zone.

Army Aviation Corps

- ✓ The Women will be inducted as pilots in the Army Aviation Corps from 2022.
- ✓ Till now, they have only been a part of ground duties in the Aviation Corps.

Mission SAGAR III

- ✓ It is part of India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries during the ongoing pandemic.

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- ✓ This Mission is being undertaken in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region).
- ✓ The Indian Naval Ship Kiltan arrived at Sihanoukville Port, Cambodia as part of this Mission.

INS Sindhuvir

- ✓ It is officially inducted into Myanmar Navy.
- ✓ It is the first and only submarine of the Myanmar Navy.
- ✓ It is given the name of **UMS Minye Theinkhathu** in Myanmar language.
- ✓ It is the first submarine to be given by India to another country.

Desert Knight – 21

- ✓ It is a bilateral Air exercise held between Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force.
- ✓ This year, it will be held at Jodhpur in Rajasthan.
- ✓ The French Air and Space force and the Indian Air Force have so far held six editions of air exercise called "Garuda".
- ✓ The Ex-Desert Knight 21 is being held in addition to the Garuda series exercise.

The **regular defence** exercises held between India and France are as follows:

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- ✚ **Exercise Shakti** is held between the Armies of India and France
- ✚ **Exercise Varuna** is held between Indian Navy and French Naval Forces
- ✚ **Exercise Garuda** is held between the Air Forces of the two countries

AMPHEX – 21

- ✓ It is a large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise.
- ✓ It was conducted in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- ✓ It involved the participation of Indian Naval ships, Indian Army troops and different types of aircraft from the Air force.

Exercise Kavach

- ✓ The Indian Army is to conduct a large scale joint military exercise Kavach in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.
- ✓ The exercise is to be held under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- ✓ It will involve Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.
- ✓ It is to fine tune the joint war capabilities of all the three forces of the India.

ENVIRONMENT

Assam Kaziranga National Park

- ✓ Kaziranga National Park has been visited by 64,000 people from Oct 21st.
- ✓ This the UNESCO world heritage site and special thing in this park is one horn Rhino is popular in this park.

Ice Age Woolly Rhino

- ✓ A perfectly preserved woolly Rhinoceros was found by scientists in Yakutia in Russia.
- ✓ The Ice Age Rhino was discovered on the bank of Tirekhtyakh river.
- ✓ It was revealed due to the melting of permafrost in Russia.
- ✓ Several other animals such as Mammoths, cave lion and foals have been found in the region due to permafrost melting.
- ✓ Permafrost is the ground that remains completely frozen for at least two years. Permafrost is defined based on temperature and duration.
- ✓ Around 65% of Russia is covered by permafrost.
- ✓ Currently Russia is warming 2.5 times faster than the other regions of the world that is causing the permafrost in the region to melt rapidly.

NOTE:

- ✓ The **Norlisk Oil Spill** is the major industrial disaster that occurred in May 2020 due to melting of permafrost. This was the second largest oil spill in Russian history. Around 20,000 tonnes of diesel were leaked into **Ambarnaya river**. The oil spill turned the river into **Crimson red**.

Mathikettan Shola National Park

- ✓ One-kilometre area surrounding the Mathikettan Shola National Park was declared as ESZ.
- ✓ The notification was issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under the Environment Protection Act 1986.
- ✓ Mathikettan Shola National Park is situated in the high ranges of southern Western Ghats in Kerala.
- ✓ It is the last remnant of the original forests of the Cardamom Hill Reserve.
- ✓ It shares an inter-state boundary with Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The area earmarked for the construction of the Neutrino Observatory is in Theni.
- ✓ It is the east side of Mathikettan Shola National Park.

Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat

- ✓ Karnataka Forest Department is on a war footing to save these bats from extinction.

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- ✓ It is endemic to India and is found in only one cave in Karnataka.
- ✓ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) status of this species is Critically Endangered.

Asian Waterbird Census

- ✓ The two-day Asian Waterbird Census-2020 commenced in Andhra Pradesh.
- ✓ It is an annual event started in the year 1987.
- ✓ Its main focus is to monitor the status of waterbirds and the wetlands.

One Planet Summit

- ✓ The summit aims to advance the protection of nature.
- ✓ Theme of this summit is ‘**Let’s act together for nature**’.
- ✓ United Nations, World Bank and France has organised this summit.
- ✓ The first Summit was organised in 2017 after the historic Paris Agreement in 2015.

Management effectiveness evaluation

- ✓ The minister of environment Prakash Javadekar released management effectiveness evaluation of 146 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the country.
- ✓ The report is first of its kind in the country.

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- ✓ Currently India has a network of 903 protected areas covering 5% of the total Geographic area of the country.
- ✓ The top five national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in India are Jaldapara National Park and Raiganj wildlife sanctuary of West Bengal, Tirthan wildlife sanctuary and Sainj wildlife sanctuary and the Great Himalayan National Park of Himachal Pradesh.
- ✓ The Turtle Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh, Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh were ranked at the bottom most.

Insect Apocalypse

- ✓ The entomologists from all over the world attended the proceedings of National Academies of Sciences recently.
- ✓ According to the entomologists, the insect population is declining at rapid rate.
- ✓ The Earth is losing 2% of its insects every year.
- ✓ The scientists have named this as Insect Apocalypse.
- ✓ Insect decline is the worst in North America and in parts of Europe.
- ✓ The rate of extinction of insects is eight times faster than that of birds, mammals and reptiles.

E waste report

- ✓ It is a recent report by the Central Pollution Control Board.

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- ✓ India collected just 10 per cent of the electronic waste (e-waste) estimated to have been generated in the country 2018-19 and 3.5 per cent of that in the generated in 2017-18.
- ✓ The union environment ministry has formulated in the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- ✓ It had made the producers responsible for collection of end-of-life electronic products as part of the Extended Producer Responsibility.

Bankapur Wolf Sanctuary

- ✓ Karnataka State Wildlife Board approved the formation of the first-ever ‘Wolf Sanctuary’ in the drylands of Bankapur of Koppal district.
- ✓ Indian Grey Wolf is a subspecies of grey wolf that inhabits semi-arid and arid areas.
- ✓ It inhabits the dry grassland regions of Deccan Plateau.

New Ant species

- ✓ Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments.
- ✓ *Ooceraea Joshii* was found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala.

- ✓ Ooceraea decamera was discovered from Alagarkoil in Madurai.

Bird festival

- ✓ A bird festival is to be organised at Mahananda wildlife Sanctuary in West Bengal. The festival is first of its kind in West Bengal.
- ✓ The Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar has inaugurated the first-ever bird festival of the state, '**Kalrav**', at Nagi-Nakti bird sanctuary.

Gorewada International Zoo renamed

- ✓ The Maharashtra government has renamed Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur as '**Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park**'.

Bio-heritage sites

- ✓ The Tamilnadu State government identified three ecologically fragile areas.
- ✓ They are:
 - ✚ Arittapatty in Madurai,
 - ✚ Vagaikulam in Tirunelveli and
 - ✚ Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in Coimbatore.

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- ✓ It will be shortly issued as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS).

Gucchi mushroom

- ✓ A geographical indication (GI) tag has been sought for Gucci mushroom, one of the costliest mushrooms in the world.
- ✓ It grows in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Ravi Shastri launched a book

- ✓ India's head coach Ravi Shastri launched a book '**India's 71-year Test: The Journey to Triumph in Australia**'.
- ✓ The book reflects on India's first 12 tours to Australia – from 1947/48.

Romila Thapar book

- ✓ '**Gazing Eastwards: Of Buddhist Monks and Revolutionaries in China**' is a new book authored by Romila Thapar.

S Y Quraishi book

- ✓ The Former chief election commissioner (CEC) S Y Quraishi has come out with his book titled "**The**

RBI officer R. Giridharan book

R. Giridharan, a general manager at RBI has come out with his debut novel titled 'Right Under our Nose'.

SPORTS

67th chess Grandmaster (GM)

- ✓ Goa's 14-year-old Leon Mendonca has become India's 67th chess Grandmaster (GM) by winning at the Vergani Cup held in Italy.
- ✓ Leon is the second Indian to become GM this year after G. Akash of Tamilnadu.

Claire Polosak

- ✓ Claire Polosak of Australia has become the first woman to match official in men's test.
- ✓ She is to take up as the fourth umpire role in the third test of AustraliaIndia series starting at Sydney Cricket Ground.

Cheteshwar Pujara

- ✓ Pujara crosses 6,000 run mark in Test cricket in his 80th match played in Sydney.

Ekalavya Puraskar

- ✓ India women's hockey team player **Namita Toppo** was conferred with the prestigious 'Ekalavya Puraskar' for her contribution to the game.
- ✓ Toppo was honoured for her performance from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020 at both national and international levels.
- ✓ This award was instituted by IMPACT in 1993.

International Cricket Council (ICC) Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade

- ✓ The former Indian Cricket Captain MS Dhoni won this award. He won the award for his decision to call back Ian Bell after the former England batsman was run out in a bizarre manner during a Test match in 2011.
- ✓ Virat Kohli of India wins the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade.
- ✓ Ellyse Perry of Australia wins the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award for ICC Female Cricketer of the Decade
- ✓ Other Awards
 - ✚ **ICC Men's Test Player of the Decade:** Steve Smith (Australia).
 - ✚ **ICC Men's ODI Player of the Decade:** Virat Kohli (India).

Capital of ice hockey

- ✓ The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy after a win over Ladakh in the finals in Gulmarg.
- ✓ Ladakh has been considered as the capital of ice hockey in India.

AWARDS AND HONOURS

Eminent Engineer Award 2020

- ✓ The chairman of railway board V.K. Yadav was conferred with Eminent Engineer Award 2020.
 - ✚ It was given by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) for his outstanding contribution towards modernization and reforms over Indian Railways.

Scientist of the year Award

- ✓ The DRDO scientist Hemant Kumar Pandey was conferred with the DRDO's 'Scientist of the Year Award'.
- ✓ It was given for his contribution in developing an herbal drug called **Lukoskin** for leukoderma.
- ✓ 'Lukoskin' has been developed using herbs found in the Himalayan region.

- ✓ Leukoderma is an autoimmune disorder characterised by the loss of skin colour in parts of a body.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Awards

- ✓ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has selected Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation as the best performing civic body.
- ✓ Andhra Pradesh secured the third position in best performing state category
- ✓ Mirzapur of Uttar Pradesh won the best performing Municipal body.
- ✓ Tripura has been selected the best performing state in implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban, under the North Eastern and Hilly States category.
- ✓ Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana aims to provide “Housing for All”. It aims to 20 million affordable houses to the urban poor by March 31, 2022.

“Veerayuga Nayagan Velpari”

- ✓ This novel get Malaysia Award.
- ✓ Madurai Loksabha MP S.Venkatesan is author of this book.
- ✓ His first novel is “Kaval Kottam” which got Sahitya Academy Award in 2011.

Globe Soccer Awards

- ✓ The Portugal Football player Cristiano Ronaldo has been crowned the Player of the Century.
- ✓ He was awarded this prize at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai.
- ✓ The Bayern Munich's coach Hansi Flick bagged the **Coach of the Year award.**
- ✓ Also, Bayern Munich won the **Club of the Year award.**
- ✓ The Real Madrid won the **Club of the Century award.**
- ✓ The Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola won the **Coach of the Century award.**

2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize

- ✓ Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, and Adam Marcus, the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize.
- ✓ Nikhil Srivastava is a young Indian mathematician.
- ✓ He was given this award for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison-Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs.

Indian Personality of the Year Award The 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa has conferred

Biswajit Chatterjee with the Indian Personality of the Year Award.

- ✓ He is a veteran actor, producer, director and singer of Hindi and Bengali cinema.

Digital India awards 2020

- ✓ The event is conducted by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), an agency of the IT Ministry.
- ✓ Its purpose is to encourage “digital transformation of government service delivery”.
- ✓ Two new categories have been introduced in this year’s edition namely
 - ✓ Innovation in Pandemic Category and
 - ✓ Exemplary Product category awards.
- ✓ Haryana has been given the first position among the states and union territories for its e-governance efforts at the Digital India Award, 2020.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu came second for its e-governance efforts, followed by UP and Bengal.
- ✓ Tamil Nadu has won a gold award under the category of **Excellence in Digital Governance** in the State/U.T.
- ✓ The Department of Post won the Gold award and the **E-Committee-Supreme court of India** under the department of Justice won the platinum award in the

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category of **Excellence in Digital Governance Ministry/Department (Central)**.

- ✓ Haryana won the ‘platinum award’ and Uttar Pradesh won Silver award in the category for ‘**Excellence in Digital Governance**’.
- ✓ Bihar won the silver medal in the **Innovation in Pandemic category**.

Dadasaheb Phalke South Awards 2020

- ✓ The winners of Dadasaheb Phalke Awards South 2020 have been announced for Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam films.
- ✓ From the Tamil film industry, Dhanush has bagged the **Best Actor award** for his performance in Asuran, while Jyothika won the **Best Actress award** for the film Raatchasi.
- ✓ Parthiban has been awarded **Best Director** for his remarkable film Oththa Seruppu Size 7.
- ✓ Ajith won the **Most Versatile Actor** in Tamil films.

The Kayakalp Awards 2019-20

- ✓ These are presented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. They are annually given to the health facilities with the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene.

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- ✓ The award was for the category Group A Central government health facility, or hospitals with more than 1,000 beds.
- ✓ The District Hospital Reasi of Jammu and Kashmir was given the **first prize**. The Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) was awarded the **second prize** under the Kayakalp Awards scheme.
- ✓ AIIMS Bhubaneswar has received the **best central government hospital** under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness.

Gallantry Awards 2021

- ✓ The President has approved awards of Gallantry awards to Armed Forces personnel. It was announced on the eve of 72nd Republic Day celebrations.
- ✓ These include one Mahavir Chakra, 05 Kirti Chakras, 05 Vir Chakras, 07 Shaurya Chakras.
- ✓ Mahavir Chakra was given to **Colonel Santosh Babu** (posthumous), the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment.

Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards

- ✓ President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the conferment of this award for 40 persons

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- ✓ One Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak award was conferred posthumously to Muhammed Muhsin from Kerala.
- ✓ Jeevan Raksha Padak awards are conferred to honour people who have displayed the meritorious act of human nature by saving the life of another person.

SKOCH Challenger Award

- ✓ The Ministry of Panchayati Raj won the SKOCH Challenger Award under “Transparency in Governance” category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms leading to outcome-based performance improvement, better transparency and strengthening of the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country.

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

- ✓ Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS) has won the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar in ‘institution’ category while Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari has won the Puraskar in ‘individual’ category for their excellent work in Disaster Management.
- ✓ Union Home Ministry announced the award every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

PERSONALITIES

Manushi Chillar

- ✓ The Miss World 2017 winner Manushi Chillar has been roped in by United Nations Women for a global initiative called **#OrangeTheWorld** to raise awareness on gender-based violence.

Justice Hima Kohli

- ✓ The Justice Hima Kohli was sworn in as the first female chief Justice of the High Court of Telangana.

Colonel Narinder Kumar dies

- ✓ Colonel Narinder “Bull” Kumar died in New Delhi at the age of 87.
- ✓ He played a major role in securing the heights of Siachen Glacier in 1984. Also, he played a major role in **Operation Meghdoot**.

ISRO chairman got extension

- ✓ ISRO Chairman Dr. Sivan got the one yr extension period until 2022.
- ✓ He replaced Kiran Kumar who was chairman in 2018.

Bhawana Kanth

- ✓ She becomes the first woman fighter pilot to participate in Republic Day parade 2021.
- ✓ She will be the part of the tableau of the Indian Air Force.
- ✓ In 2019, Bhawana Kanth became the first female fighter pilot of India to qualify to undertake combat missions.
- ✓ She received the Nari Shakti Puraskar from President of India Ramnath Kovind in March 2020.

Shyam Saran Negi

- ✓ India's first voter Shyam Saran Negi (103) voted in the panchayat elections in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh on January 17, 2021.
- ✓ Believed to be the first voter in the 1952 General Election, Negi was born on July 1, 1917.

Shristi Goswami

- ✓ Shristi Goswami, a nineteen-year-old Haridwar-based student, become the **Chief Minister of Uttarakhand for one day** on National Girl Child Day.

Riyasdeen

- ✓ Riyasdeen from Tamilnadu had participated a global competition the Cubes in Space.

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- ✓ His **37 mm sized FEMTO** satellites VISION SAT v1 and v2 has made it to the world's lightest FEMTO satellite.
- ✓ This satellite is expected to be launched in NASA Zero pressure Research Balloon under RB 6 mission during August 2021.
- ✓ Riyasdeen, a student at Sastra University, is from Karanthai in Thanjavur.
- ✓ The Cubes in Space competition is organised by '**idoodle Eduinc**' of NASA for the students in the age group between 11 and 18.

A Madhavan

- ✓ Tamil writer A. Madhavan (87) recently passed away in Thiruvananthapuram of Kerala.
- ✓ He won the Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 for his collection of essays **Ilakkiya Chuvadukal**.
- ✓ He was also a recipient of Kalai Mamani Award in 2009.
- ✓ It is the highest recognition bestowed on writers and artists by the Tamil Nadu Government.

Doctor Shantha

- ✓ She recently passed away on 19th January.
- ✓ She was an Indian oncologist and the chairperson of Adyar Cancer Institute, Chennai.
- ✓ She had joined the Cancer Institute in 1955.

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- ✓ In 2013, former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had presented her with the 'Avvaiyar Award'.
- ✓ Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy set up the Cancer Institute in 1954 at Adayar, Chennai.

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APPOINTMENTS

Railway Board Chairman

- ✓ The former Eastern Railway General Manager Suneet Sharma was appointed as the new Railway Board Chairman and CEO.

SAIL new chairperson

- ✓ Soma Mondal has taken over as the new chairperson of Steel Authority of India Limited, SAIL.
- ✓ She is the first woman chairperson of the SAIL.

TN State Human Rights Commissioner

- ✓ Justice S. Bhaskaran is been appointed as TN State Human Rights Commission Chairman on 31st December.
- ✓ Justice Durai Jeyachandran was acting Chairman after the retirement of Justice T. Meenakumari who was chairman in 2019.

UN Security Council

- ✓ The permanent representative of India to UN is **T.S.Thirumurti.**
- ✓ India has become non-permanent members of UN Security Council for 8th time in 2021-22.
- ✓ There are 15 non-permanent members in this council and in August 2021 India going to be head of this Council for one month alone.

Deputy Election Commissioner

- ✓ Umesh Sinha has been appointed as the Deputy Election Commissioner in the Election Commission of India.

Justice Vineet Kothari

- ✓ Justice Vineet Kothari acting judge of Madras High Court after A.P.Shahi retired is now transferred to Gujarat High Court.

R. S. Sharma

- ✓ R. S. Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Ayushman Bharat scheme or the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana which is an insurance scheme by the National Health Authority's (NHA).

and mixed fat spreads can contain only 3% or less trans fats. This is to be implemented by January 2021.

- ✓ By January 2022, this is to be further reduced to 2%.
- ✓ This is being introduced because the World Health Organisation has called for global elimination of trans fat by 2023.
- ✓ The trans fats are created artificially during the hydrogenation process of vegetable oils. They result in partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- ✓ Consumption of Trans fats results in heart diseases.
- ✓ According to REPLACE annual report of World Health Organisation that was released in September 2020, more than 40 countries have implemented the “Best practice policies to eliminate trans fats”.

Henley Passport Index

- ✓ The Henley Passport Index was launched by the International air Transport Association.
- ✓ Nepal at rank 104 and Pakistan at 107 continue to be the “Worst passports to hold” category.
- ✓ Pakistan had a visa-free score of 32 countries and Nepal had a score of 38 countries.
- ✓ The countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria were the countries with the worst passport to hold with a score of 26, 28 and 29.

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- ✓ The report said that Japanese citizens can travel to 191 countries and Japan was the top performer.
- ✓ Singapore was in second position with a score of 190.
- ✓ South Korea and Germany were at third position with a score of 189.
- ✓ Countries such as UK, USA, New Zealand and Switzerland were at the seventh position. They are considered as the most powerful passports in the world. Their score was 185.
- ✓ Australia was at eighth position with a score of 184.
- ✓ India ranked **85th** in the Henley Passport Index. India scored 58 in the Henley Passport Index.

Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry Project

- ✓ Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry Project (TNCRP) report was jointly released by the Cancer Institute and the state health department.
- ✓ The **Crude Incidence Rate (CIR)** of all cancers per 1,00,000 population was 93.9 among women compared to 74.4 in men.
- ✓ This is the highest demographic evaluated by any cancer registry in the world.
- ✓ The highest CIR of cancers was observed in **Chennai (140.8)** and the least in **Krishnagiri (48.5)**.

- ✓ The incidence of breast cancer in women observed in Chennai (46.4 per 1,00,000 women) was the highest in the country.

International Migration 2020 Highlights

- ✓ The United Nations recently released the report “International Migration 2020 Highlights”.
- ✓ According to the report, the Indian diaspora is the largest in the world.
- ✓ More than 18 million people from India were living outside India as of 2020.
- ✓ The United States was the largest country of destination of international migrants.
- ✓ It was followed by Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia and the UK.

148th session of WHO Executive Board

- ✓ Dr. Harsh Vardhan of India chaired this session.
- ✓ He said that while **2020 is described as the year of science**, the Year 2021 shall be the **year of global solidarity and survival**.

The Global Firepower Index

- ✓ It ranks the countries based on their potential military strength.
- ✓ The Global Firepower Index ranked 138 countries.

- ✓ The countries were evaluated based on prolonged offensive and defensive military campaigns.
- ✓ The United States topped the index. It was followed by Russia.
- ✓ China was ranked third.
- ✓ India was **ranked fourth** in the index.
- ✓ Pakistan Army surpassed Israel, Canada to become 10th most powerful in world.

Ship breaking

- ✓ Ship breaking refers to the process of dismantling of ships at the end of their life (25 to 30 years).
- ✓ The ship is broken apart into parts or scraps for recycling and is considered to be one of the most dangerous industries in the world.
- ✓ Ship breaking is a process of demolition of ships for either a source of parts which can be sold for re-use.
- ✓ **Alang**, Gujarat is known as the world's largest "ship graveyard".
- ✓ As of January, 2020, India has the largest share in the world in demolished ships which counts around 30%.
- ✓ The Mumbai port Dock and General Employees' Union is the only active ship-breaker's Union in India which strikes to ensure fatality compensation.
- ✓ **Seawise Giant**, the longest ship ever built, was demolished at Alang, Gujarat in 2009.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Statehood Day

- ✓ On January 21, 2021, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura celebrated their statehood day.
- ✓ The three states gained their statehood on January 21, 1972.
- ✓ The **North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971** was a major reform of the boundaries of India's North-East region.
- ✓ The erstwhile princely States of **Tripura and Manipur were merged** with India in October 1949.
- ✓ Meghalaya was created as an autonomous state within the state of Assam on 2 April, 1970.
- ✓ **Himachal Pradesh** celebrated its 50th Statehood day on January 25, 2021. Himachal became the 18th state of India on 25 January 1971.

World Braille Day – January 04

- ✓ Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille language, was born on January 4, 1809 in France.
- ✓ To remember him and his contribution to the world, Louis' birth anniversary is celebrated as World Braille Day on January 4 every year.
- ✓ It was officially approved by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2018.celebrated since 2019.

World Day of War Orphans – January 06

- ✓ The day aims to address the war orphans as it has become a growing worldwide humanitarian and social crisis.
- ✓ World War II created millions of orphans in Europe, with 300,000 orphans in Poland and 200,000 in Yugoslavia alone.

World Hindi Day – January 10

- ✓ The first World Hindi Day was first celebrated in 2006 by former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.
- ✓ It is to mark the anniversary of world's first Hindi conference.
- ✓ That was organised by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on this day in 1975.
- ✓ Hindi is derived from Sanskrit and written in Devnagari script.
- ✓ Hindi is among the fourth most spoken languages of the world.

National road safety week

- ✓ It is celebrated from **11th January to 17th January** every year in our country India.
- ✓ It is to create awareness about road safety and minimize road accidents & save life.
- ✓ At first in the year 1989, awareness for the National Road Safety Week was celebrated.

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- ✓ 32nd National Road Safety Week 2021 theme, 'Safe yourself to save your family'.

National Youth Day - January 12

- ✓ It was chosen to honour the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.
- ✓ The theme of this is 'Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building'.
- ✓ Since 1985, the event is celebrated in India every year.

Armed Forces Veterans Day - January 14

- ✓ The day is being celebrated since 2017. It is to commemorate the sacrifices of the veterans and also to salute those who served the Indian Armed Forces
- ✓ The day was initially called Armistice Day. Armistice Day is celebrated on November 11 all over the world.
- ✓ However, in India the day was first marked through a resolution passed by the Congress in 1926.

1st National Road safety month 2021

- ✓ The National Road Safety Month will be observed to spread awareness regarding road safety and reduce road accidents in India.
- ✓ It will be observed from 18th January to 17th February.

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- ✓ It is the inaugural edition of the National Road Safety Month.

National Youth Festival

- ✓ The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organized a week-long National Youth Festival in the country commencing from the 12th of this month.
- ✓ Every year, the festival is being held to commemorate the birth anniversary of youth icon Swami Vivekananda.
- ✓ It began in 1995 as a major activity under the programme of National Integration Camp (NIC).

Army Day - January 15

- ✓ It is celebrated in recognition of **Field Marshal KM. Cariappa's, the then a Lieutenant General.**
- ✓ He took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from **General Sir Francis Butcher** on 15 January 1949.
- ✓ Butcher was the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.
- ✓ Cariappa had led the Indian forces to victory in the 1947 war.
- ✓ He is one of only two Indian Army officers to hold the Five-star rank of Field Marshal. The other one was Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.

43rd Kokborok Day – January 19

- ✓ It is celebrated in Tripura to celebrated the development of Kokborok language.
- ✓ The Kokborok is the official language of Tripura. This language was recognized as an official language on this day in 1979.
- ✓ The first left front government led by former chief minister Nripen Chakraborty carried out this.

National Girl Child Day – January 24

- ✓ It was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India in 2008.
- ✓ India is observing National Girl Child Week 2021, which begins from **January 21 and continues till January 26**.
- ✓ The state of Punjab has announced January 2021 to be the "**month of Girl Child**".
- ✓ The theme for this is '**transforming education for girls**'.

International Education Day - January 24

- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming this day as International Day of Education on December 3, 2018.
- ✓ The theme for this year will be "**Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation**."

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- ✓ Sustainable Development **Goal 4** aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

National Voter’s Day – January 25

- ✓ It was started for the very first time on 26th January 2011 to mark the Indian Election Commission’s Foundation Day in 1950.
- ✓ The theme for this will be “**Making our voters Empowered, vigilant, safe and informed.**”
- ✓ The Chief Election Commissioner of India was Sukumar Sen.

National Tourism Day – January 25

- ✓ India’s National Tourism Day is celebrated on January 25.
- ✓ India also participates in the celebration of the UN World Tourism Day (September 27).

The International Customs Day (ICD) - January 26

- ✓ The theme for this year will be “**Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a sustainable supply chain**”.
- ✓ It is observed by the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- ✓ WCO is the only international body dedicated exclusively to international customs and border control matters.

