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## **BANKING / FINANCIAL / ECONOMICAL NEWS**

### **SBI donates Rs. 11 crore to 'PM-CARES' fund**

State Bank of India (SBI) donated Rs. 11 crore on 1 March 2021 to the Prime Minister's relief fund. The employees of the SBI had also earlier donated Rs. 100 crore to 'PM-CARES' to fight the pandemic. SBI also announced that its around 2,56,000 employees have decided to contribute two days' salary to the 'PM-CARES' Fund.

### **Non-basmati rice exports increase to Rs 26,058 crore during April-Jan**

The country's non-basmati rice exports have increased to Rs 26,058 crore during April-January 2020-21 as against Rs 11,543 crore in the same period last fiscal, the commerce ministry said on Thursday.

### **Kotak Mahindra Bank to handle salary account of Indian army personnel**

Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank will handle the salary account of the Indian army personnel. The bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army here for salary account.

### **RBI to start purchase and sale of securities**

The decision was taken after a review of current liquidity and financial conditions. It will purchase four government securities of different maturity dates aggregating to Rs 20,000 crore and sell three securities aggregating to Rs 15,000.

### **Reserve Bank imposes Rs 2 cr penalty on SBI**

Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on State Bank of India (SBI) for contravention of norms, including specific directions to the lender on remuneration to its employees in the form of commission002E

### **Fitch Ratings revises India's growth estimate**

Fitch Ratings has revised India's GDP growth estimate to 12.8% for the next fiscal from the previous 11%. The agency, in its latest Global Economic Outlook GEO, anticipates the level of the country's GDP to remain well below its pre-pandemic forecast trajectory.

### **JICA extends Rs 3,717 crore loan for developing Metro Phase 2 in Bengaluru**

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has signed an agreement with the Government of India, to provide Japanese (ODA) loan amounting to Japanese Yen 52,036 million (approximately Rs 3,717 Crore) for the development of Phase 2 of 'R6, 2A and 2B' of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) in Bengaluru. In March 2006, the first Japanese ODA loan agreement was signed by JICA for BMRCL Phase 1.

**BRICS development bank approves \$1 billion loan for Russia's frontline health workers**

The New Development Bank (NDB) has approved a loan of up to \$1 billion to support healthcare workers treating patients for COVID-19 in Russia. The NDB was established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, a group of emerging economies known as the BRICS.

**100% privatisation of Air India**

Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri on 27 March 2021 announced the complete disinvestment of Air India. Air India is a first-rate asset but has an accumulated debt of Rs 60,000 Crore. Air India has been in losses since it merged with Indian Airlines in 2007.

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**1 March: 45th Civil Accounts Day**

The 45th Civil Accounts Day was celebrated in New Delhi on 1 March 2021. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was the Chief Guest of the event.

**Zero Discrimination Day: 1 March**

Zero Discrimination Day is celebrated every year on 1 March. It aims at highlighting the urgent need to take action to end the inequalities that are prevalent around the world. The symbol for Zero Discrimination Day is a butterfly.

**World Wildlife Day: 3 March**

World Wildlife Day is observed annually on March 3 to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's flora and fauna. On December 20, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 3 March as the UN World Wildlife Day. The theme for World Wildlife Day 2021 is "Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet".

**World Hearing Day: 3 March**

World Hearing Day is held on 3 March each year to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and to promote ear and hearing care across the world. The theme for World Hearing Day 2021 is "Hearing care for all!"

**National Safety Day: 4 March**

National Safety Day is observed on March 4 every year to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council (NSC). NSC aims to raise awareness about safety measures that need to be undertaken to prevent accidents and mishaps. National Safety Day was observed for the first time in 1972, on the foundation day of the National Safety Council.

**Jan Aushadhi Diwas 2021**

Jan Aushadhi Divas or Generic Medicine Day is celebrated on 7 March every year in India. In 2021, the entire week from March 1 to March 7 was celebrated as 'Jan Aushadhi Week' with different themes for each day. March 7 was celebrated with the theme of 'Seva bhi, Rozgar bhi'.

**Women's Day is being observed on 8 March.**

The theme for the day in 2021 is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world". The day is celebrated to help forge a gender-equal world, celebrate women's achievements and their increasing visibility in every sphere of life.

**Pi Day: 14 March**

Every year on March 14, the world celebrates Pi Day to recognise the mathematical constant, Pi. Pi is defined as the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter and its value is 3.14. The day was recognised in 1988 by physicist Larry Shaw.

**World Consumer Rights Day: 15 March**

World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated on the 15th of March every year to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs. The day is being observed since 1983. The theme of the World Consumer Rights Day 2021 is 'tackle plastic pollution'.

**Global Recycling Day: 18 March**

Global Recycling Day is observed every year on March 18 to create awareness among the masses about the rapid pace at which our natural resources are being used. In 2021, the theme of Global Recycling Day is "Recycling Heroes".

**World Sparrow Day: 20 March**

World Sparrow Day is observed on 20 March every year to raise awareness about the bird. The initiative was started by Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India, founded by Mohammed Dilawar, an Indian conservationist. The first World Sparrow Day was celebrated in 2010 in different parts of the world.

**22 March: Bihar Divas**

Bihar is celebrating its 109th foundation day on 22 March 2021. The theme for the event of the year 2021 is 'Jal Jivan Haryali'. The state was carved out from the Bengal presidency on this day in 1912.

**21 March: International Day of Forests**

The day was founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the United Nations in 2012. The theme of the International Day of Forests for 2021 is "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being".

**22 March: World Water Day**

World Water Day is observed on 22 March around the world. 'Valuing Water' is the theme for 2021's World Water Day. The idea for a World Water Day was put forward in 1992, at the Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

**World Meteorological Day: 23 March**

World Meteorological Day takes place every year on 23 March. It commemorates the coming into force on 23 March 1950 of the Convention establishing the World Meteorological Organization. World Meteorological Day in 2021 is devoted to the theme "the ocean, our climate and weather."

**World Tuberculosis Day: 24 March**

Each year, World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is celebrated on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB. The theme of World TB Day 2021 is 'The Clock is Ticking'.

## **SPORTS**

### **Vinesh Phogat bags gold in Ukraine wrestling**

Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat has won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at XXIV Outstanding Ukrainian Wrestlers and Coaches Memorial in Kyiv, Ukraine. As of February 2021, Vinesh is the only Indian woman wrestler to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics for the 53kg category.

### **J&K tops medals tally at Khelo India Games**

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has topped the medals tally in the second edition of the Khelo India Winter National Games. It won 11 gold, 18 silver, and 5 bronze medals.

### **Vinesh Phogat storms to gold in Matteo Pelicone Ranking Series**

Ace India wrestler Vinesh Phogat won her second gold medal in two weeks by storming to the 53kg title at the Matteo Pelicone Rankings Series in Rome. Vinesh, 26, beat Canada's Diana Weicker 4-0 and has thus won gold without dropping a point throughout the tournament.

### **Boxam boxing: Pooja Rani beats world champ, 9 Indians in finals**

Asian Championship gold medallist Pooja Rani (75 kg) defeated world champion Atheyna Bylon of Panama in a semi-final bout as nine Indian boxers stormed into the finals of the 35th Boxam International boxing tournament in Castellon, Spain.

### **Kieron Pollard: 3rd to hit 6 sixes in an over**

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard has become just the third batsman in international cricket to hit 6 sixes in an over. Kieron Pollard hit 6 sixes in over against Sri Lanka's Akila Dananjaya in Antigua T20I on 4 March 2021. Pollard is only 2nd batsman after Yuvraj Singh to achieve the feat in T20Is.

### **Bajrang Punia clinches gold in Rome**

In wrestling, Bajrang Punia has clinched a gold medal by defeating Tumur Ochir of Mongolia in the Matteo Pallicone World Ranking Series event in Rome. Bajrang defeated Ochir 2-2 by criteria in the final of the 65kg freestyle.

### **Mithali Raj becomes 1st Indian woman cricketer to score 10,000 international runs**

Veteran batter Mithali Raj on Friday became the first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats, drawing praise from some iconic names of the game and the BCCI.

### **Rawalpindi's KRL stadium renamed**

The KRL Stadium in Rawalpindi has been renamed after former Pakistan's fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar. Shoaib Akhtar is renowned as 'The Rawalpindi Express'. He has record of total 444 international wickets under his name.

**Para shooter Singhraj clinches gold, Narwal finishes fourth**

India's Singhraj displayed his skills to win a gold medal at the Al Ain 2021 World Shooting Para Sport World Cup in UAE. He bagged the top honours in P1 men's 10m air pistol SH1 finals.

**India end with highest-ever medal tally in Shooting World Cup**

A dominant India claimed both the gold medals on offer by some distance in the men's and women's 10m air pistol team events on the third competition day of the ISSF World Cup. India won a total of 30 medals out of which Gold (15 medals), Silver (9 medals) and Bronze (6 medals).

**ISWA gets government recognition**

The Indian Style Wrestling Association of India (ISWAI) has officially been recognised as a National Sports Federation (NSF) by the Sports Ministry. It is now eligible to receive fund and support from the government.

**The Great Khali in the 2021 WWE Hall of Fame**

The Great Khali has been announced as the latest inductee into the 2021 WWE Hall of Fame. Khali will receive his induction into the WWE Hall of Fame on April 6, 2021. So far, the 2021 WWE Hall of Fame class includes Eric Bischoff, The Great Khali, and Molly Holly.

**Virat Kohli becomes 3rd captain to lead India in 200 international matches**

Virat Kohli has become the third captain to lead India in 200 international matches. Kohli, who became India's captain in all formats of the game in January 2017, led India for the 200th time on Sunday in the third ODI against England. He thus joins his predecessor MS Dhoni and Mohammad Azharuddin as the only players to have led India in 200 international matches.

**APPOINTMENTS AND RETIREMENTS**

**Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar new chief of Western Naval Command**

He succeeded Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar, who served at the helm of this premier command since January 2019, and who retired after an illustrious career spanning 40 years.

**Glenmark Pharma signs Rohit Sharma as brand ambassador**

Sharma has "officially signed on to represent Glenmark's Candid Powder, a legacy brand of the company's consumer care division" Glenmark said Candid Powder brand is a market leader in its category, with a market share of 64 per cent in the medicated powder category.

**Mary Kom: Chairperson of AIBA's committee**

Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom has been picked as the chairperson of the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) champions and veterans committee. The panel was created in 2020 by the world body as part of its reforms.

**Matam Venkata Rao: MD of Central Bank of India**

Matam Venkata Rao has taken over charge as the Managing Director and CEO of Central Bank of India with effect from 1st March 2021. Prior to joining the current assignment, Rao was Executive Director, Canara Bank for more than three years.

**OZiva appointed Deepika Dadukone as ambassador**

Actor by plant-based nutrition brand OZiva Dibharka Padukone got his brand and base Has announced to be a bunyukta. Recently, OZiva is going to Became the first nutritional brand of politics and Accuracy from US-based Clean Label Project and pesticide free certificates. OZiva Daily Diet, Nutrition of Skin and Hair Provides products.

**Tirath Singh Rawat to be the new Uttarakhand chief minister**

Pauri Garhwal MP Tirath Singh Rawat was chosen the leader of the Uttarakhand BJP legislature party on Wednesday, paving the way for his appointment as the new chief minister of the state.

**MA Ganapathy appointed NSG Chief**

Senior IPS officers M A Ganapathy and Kuldiep Singh were appointed Director General of the National Security Guard and the Central Reserve Police Force, respectively on 16 Mar'21. Ganapathy is a 1986 batch IPS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre.

**H. Nagrale: New Mumbai Police Commissioner**

Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Hemant Nagrale on 17 March 2021 assumed charge as the new Mumbai Police Commissioner. He replaced the former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh. Singh has been transferred to the Home Guard department. +

**Cipla board approves reappointment of Umang Vohra as MD & Global CEO for 5 years**

Pharma major Cipla on Tuesday said its board has approved the re-appointment of Umang Vohra as the Managing Director and Global CEO of the company for a further period of five years.

**Justice Ramana to be next CJI**

Chief Justice of India SA Bobde has recommended the name of Justice NV Ramana as his successor. Chief Justice Bobde is set to retire on 23rd April 2021. Justice Bobde was sworn in as the 47th CJI in November 2019.

**President appoints two judges to Karnataka HC**

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Rajendra Badamkar and Sushree Khazi Jayabunnisa Mohiuddin as Additional Judges of Karnataka High Court for 2 yrs.

**Saurabh Garg appointed UIDAI CEO**

Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). He is a 1991 batch IAS officer. Sanjeev Kumar, a 1991 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre, has been appointed as the Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

**New Andhra Election Commissioner**

Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney has been appointed as the new State Election Commissioner (SEC). She will replace the Andhra Election Commissioner Ramesh Kumar. She was the first woman Chief Secretary of the state.

## **SCHEMES AND POLICIES**

### **J&K: 22,000 treatments provided under PMJAY**

In J&K, more than 22,000 free and cashless treatments have been provided to eligible beneficiaries under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (ABPMJAY) SEHAT scheme in the first two months. The scheme aims to provide Universal Health Insurance Coverage of Rs. 5 lakh per family.

### **PLI scheme expected to boost India's manufacturing by \$520 billion in five years: PM Modi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, aimed to boost domestic manufacturing and exports, is expected to increase the country's production by \$520 billion in the next five years. At a webinar on PLI schemes, Modi also said that the government aims to reduce 6,000 compliances at the central and state level.

### **Uttarakhand CM launches a scheme**

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on 6 March 2021 launched 'Gharoki Paachan, Chelik Naam' (daughter's name is a home's identity) programme and development schemes worth Rs 42 crore in Nainital. This scheme has been launched in Nainital and will be extended to the entire Uttarakhand in the coming weeks.

### **Karnataka government mulling free sand policy for poor to build houses**

The Karnataka government was mulling making available sand almost free of cost for economically weaker sections people wishing to build a house under Rs ten lakh, Mines and Geology.

### **'Dekho Apna Pradesh' campaign**

The Arunachal Pradesh government on 22 March 2021 launched a campaign to encourage the people of the state to visit tourist places within it. Campaign is launched to heal the damage caused to the tourism sector by the Covid-19 pandemic. "Dekho Apna Pradesh" has been conceptualized in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Dekho Apna Desh" campaign.

### **10 crore Ayushman cards issued**

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has registered a landmark achievement with the issuing of a 10th crore card to a resident of Bihar. This landmark achievement is a result of the Aapke Dwar Ayushman campaign which was launched to spread awareness among the beneficiaries. Under the scheme, any family can avail of free medical benefits up to 5 lakh rupees per year.

## **AWARDS AND HONOURS**

### **CSMT: First to get IGBC Gold Certification**

## MONTHLY CAPSULE - MARCH 2021

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Railway Station of Central Railway is the first railway station in Maharashtra to be awarded Gold certification as per Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) ratings. Central Railway has implemented various green initiatives across its zone.

### **Koneru Hampi wins BBC ISWOTY for 2020**

Andhra Pradesh's Chess Player Koneru Hampi has won the BBC Indian Sportswomen of the Year Award (ISWOTY) by 2020 after a past vote. She won the title of Chess Champion in World Rapid Chess Championship in 2019. She received one of the top sportspersons of the year in 2003, Arjun Award in 2007, the fourth-best civilian award of the Padma Shri.

### **Telangana Governor presented with an award**

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has been conferred with the Top-20 Global Women of Excellence-2021 award. The award was presented to the Governor as part of the 9th Annual Congressional International Women's Day Gala at Naperville, Illinois, Chicago. She accepted the prestigious award from Puducherry Raj Nivas.

### **Anne Lacaton wins 2021 Pritzker Prize**

French architects Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have won the 2021 Pritzker Prize for architecture, considered to be the profession's highest honour. The two are known to create sustainable buildings by using pre-existing structures in their work. Lacaton and Vassal's most recent work is the transformation of the Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France 2012).

### **Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020**

The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 will be conferred on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Rahman was the first President of Bangladesh. Rahman is known as the "Father of the Nation" or simply "Mujib" in Bangladesh.

### **67th National Film Awards - 2019**

The 67th National Film Awards for the year 2019 were announced on 22 March 2021. Malayalam movie Marakkar Arabikkadilinte Simham will be awarded the Best Feature Film Award. Kangana Ranaut will get the Best Actress award for her movies Manikarnika -The Queen of Jhansi and Panga. Manoj Bajpayee and Dhanush will be awarded the Best Actor award for the movie Bhonsle and Asuran respectively.

### **Maharashtra Bhushan Award 2020**

Legendary singer Asha Bhosle will be honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020. Along with two National Awards in 1981 and 1986, she was also honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2000. Maharashtra Bhushan Award was started in 1996.



## NATIONAL

### Life imprisonment to food adulterators

Madhya Pradesh Cabinet approved a Penal Law (Madhya Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2021 to give life imprisonment to food adulterators on 26 February 2021. State's Home Minister Narottam Mishra informed about it. In December 2019, an awareness rally was held in Bhopal to fight the menace of adulteration. The rally saw the participation of people of all age groups.

### India ranks third in Hurun Global Rich List

India climbed up to third spot in the Hurun Global Rich List 2021 with 209 billionaires, 40 more than 2020. Mukesh Ambani saw his wealth up by 24% to 83 bn dollars (about Rs 6 lakh crore). Gautam Adani saw his wealth almost double to 32 bn on the back of Adani Green Energy growing to a 20 billion valuation. Shiv Nadar family saw his wealth rise to 27 billion dollars, up 10 billion dollars.

### India's total vaccine supply 461.66 L doses

India's total vaccine supply under the Vaccine Maitri initiative has reached 461.66 lakh doses. As of February 2021, 71.5 lakh doses have been delivered through grant and 288.4 lakh doses on commercial terms. In total, India has delivered vaccines to 47 countries and to UN healthcare workers as well.

### Modi to inaugurate 'Maitri Setu'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh on 9 March 2021. The 'Maitri Setu' has been built over the Feni river connecting Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh. The construction of the 1.9 km long bridge was taken up by the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd at a project cost of Rs. 133 crore.

### India became attractive emerging market

India occupied the second position among large emerging markets in February 2021. This is the second consecutive month in which India has managed to climb to the top. Barring China and Turkey, India was the only country to record positive GDP growth figures in the December 2020 quarter. The Philippines (-8.3%) fared the worst.

**AEPC urges govt to put restrictions on cotton yarn exports**

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) on Saturday urged the government to impose restrictions on exports of cotton yarn in order to curb prices and increase supply for domestic manufacturers. AEPC Chairman A Sakthivel said despite several efforts by the government to reduce the price of cotton yarn, it has consistently increased in the last four months and was affecting the entire value chain.

**INTERNATIONAL**

**World's first platypus sanctuary in Australia**

Australian conservationists have unveiled plans to build the world's 1st refuge for the platypus, to promote breeding and rehabilitation as the mammal faces extinction due to climate change. The Taronga Conservation Society Australia and New South Wales State govt would build the facility, mostly ponds, and burrows for the semiaquatic creatures, by 2022. It could house up to 65 platypuses.

**China hikes defence budget to USD 209 billion, over three times that of India**

China on Friday hiked its defence budget for the first time to more than USD 200 billion, over three times higher than that of India, maintaining a single-digit growth for the sixth consecutive year with a 6.8 per cent increase in 2021. The hike in defence spending was announced by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on the opening day of the National People's Congress, China's Parliament, amidst a military standoff with India in eastern Ladakh and growing political and military tensions with the United States.

**Pakistan connects its first 1,100MW nuclear power plant to national grid**

Pakistan has connected its first Chinese-assisted 1,100MW nuclear power plant in Karachi to the national grid that will help improve the country's economy by providing cost-effective and reliable electricity.

**Japan extends aid for Andaman infrastructure project to bolster Indo-Pacific partnership**

Japan on Friday extended grant aid and loans to India for a slew of infrastructure projects including a project for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as part of New Delhi's Indo-Pacific partnership with Tokyo.

**World Bank signs fresh loan agreements worth USD 1.336 billion with Pakistan**

The World Bank has signed agreements with Pakistan to provide USD 1.336 billion worth of assistance to boost the cash-strapped country's foreign exchange reserves and help support social sector programmes.

**DEFENCE**

**India to export defence equipment to Philippines, expands reach in the Pacific**

Expanding its defence footprint in the Indo-Pacific, India has reached an understanding with the Philippines for exporting military equipment to the nation which has been at the receiving end of China's expansionist plans in the South China Sea. The deal which was concluded in Manila would enable a wider defence interface between India and the Philippines.

**Maritime India Summit-2021 inaugurated**

## MONTHLY CAPSULE - MARCH 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2 March 2021. The three-day Summit will be held till 4 March 2021. It is being organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways on a virtual platform [www.maritimeindiasummit.in](http://www.maritimeindiasummit.in).

### **Indian Navy signs contract with Suryadipta Projects for 11 ACTCM barges**

The Indian Navy has signed a contract with Suryadipta Projects to construct 11 ammunition-cum-torpedo-cum-missile (ACTCM) barges.

### **Indian Navy's third Scorpene class submarine commissioned**

Indian Navy's third stealth Scorpene class Submarine INS Karanj, equipped with potent weapons and sensors to neutralise any threat above or below the sea surface, was commissioned.

### **Indian Navy undertakes Passage Exercise**

Indian Navy on 17 Mar'21 undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf under Operation Sankalp. These are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies.

### **India has world's fourth strongest military: Military Direct's study**

China has the strongest military force in the world while India stands at number four, according to a study released on Sunday by defence website Military Direct. "The USA, despite their enormous military budgets, comes in 2nd place with 74 points, followed by Russia with 69, India at 61 and then France with 58. The UK just about makes the Top 10, coming in 9th place with a score of 43,"

### **Indo-Uzbekistan Training Exercise culminates**

The second edition of Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training Exercise, EXERCISE DUSTLIK-II culminated on 19 March 2021 after 10 days of mutual learning. The training was focused on Counter Insurgency, Counter-Terrorism operations in urban scenario as well as sharing of expertise on Skills at Arms.

### **Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra' commissioned; to enhance coastal security**

Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra', the sixth offshore patrol vessel to enhance coastal security, was formally commissioned into service.

### **India, US begin two-day naval exercise in eastern Indian Ocean region**

India and the US on Sunday kicked off a two-day naval exercise in the eastern Indian Ocean Region, reflecting the growing congruence in their defence and military partnership. The Indian Navy deployed its warship Shivalik and long-range maritime patrol aircraft P8I in the 'PASSEX' exercise.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **DRDO deploys satellite 'Sindhu Netra'**

ISRO launched the 'Sindhu Netra' satellite using PSLV-C51 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh on 28 February 2021. It is capable of automatically identifying the warships and merchant ships operating in the Indian Ocean region.

**Researchers discover "giant luminous shark"**

Scientists studying sharks off New Zealand have discovered the three deep-sea species which glows in the dark. This is the first time that bioluminescence sharks have been documented. One of them is now the largest-known luminous vertebrate.

**DRDO conducts successful flight test of SFDR missile propulsion system**

The DRDO said it successfully carried out a flight test of its solid fuel-ducted ramjet (SFDR) missile propulsion system on Friday morning at the Chandipur test range in Odisha. At present, the SFDR missile propulsion technology is available only with a handful of countries.

**ISRO develops radar for joint earth observation satellite mission with NASA**

ISRO has completed the development of a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the US space agency NASA. NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation.

**Zolgensma: The world's most expensive drug**

Zolgensma which has a reported list price of £1.79 mn (Rs. 18 cr) per dose is labeled the most expensive drug in the world. It is a gene therapy indicated for the treatment of pediatric patients less than 2 years of age with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA).

**OBITUARIES**

**Marathi actor Shrikant Moghe passes away**

Veteran Marathi actor Shrikant Moghe passed away on 6 March 2021. Moghe was popular for his work in both Marathi and Hindi languages, in films and theatre.

**Lou Ottens, inventor of cassette, passes away**

Lou Ottens, the Dutch engineer who invented the audio cassette tape, passed away on 7 March 2021. He also engineered the concept of magnetic tape players and computer discs (CDs). Ottens founded the cassettes in the 1960s when he was employed with tech giant Philips.

**Tanzania's President John Magufuli passes away**

Tanzania's President John Magufuli passed away in Dar es Salaam on 17 March 2021. The President died of a heart ailment that he has battled for over 10 years. According to Tanzania's constitution, Vice President Samia Suluhu Hassan will be sworn in as the new President to serve the remainder of Magufuli's five-year term. Hassan will be Tanzania's first female President.

**K C Chakrabarty passes away**

Former Deputy Governor of Reserve Bank K C Chakrabarty passed away in March 2021. After his stint at Bank of Baroda, Indian Bank and Punjab National Bank, Chakrabarty had joined the RBI as a DG in 2009 and resigned in 2014, three months before his term ended.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**'Pariksha Pe Charcha' to be held in March 2021**

The 4th edition of the Prime Minister's interaction Programme Pariksha Pe Charcha will be held in March 2021. Through this programme, PM Narendra Modi will hold a brainstorming session with school students, teachers, and parents in connection with the upcoming examinations.

**Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV merges**

Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha TV have been merged and now it will be known as Sansad TV. Retired IAS officer Ravi Capoor has been appointed as its Chief Executive Officer. Sansad TV will telecast live proceedings of both the Upper and Lower Houses. The decision has been taken jointly by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, M. Venkaiah Naidu, and Speaker of Lok Sabha, Om Birla.

**Virat: 1st with 100 mn Instagram followers**

Virat Kohli has become the first cricketer in the world to have 100 million followers on the social media platform Instagram. He is also the first person in the Asia-Pacific region to achieve the feat.

**930mn tonnes of food thrown away: UN report**

A new UN global report has revealed that more than 930 million tonnes of food is thrown away in waste bins every year. The UN Environment Programme, UNEP, through the Food Waste Index Report 2021 revealed that 17% of the food available to consumers in shops, households, and restaurants is just dumped.

**India grants NRs 44.17 million to Nepal**

India has extended a grant of Nepali Rs 44.17 million to Nepal to build a new building for Naharpur Secondary School at Butwal-11 in Rupandehi district under the Nepal-Bharat Maitri Development Partnership. This is a part of India's High Impact Community Development Project scheme programme. An MoU has been signed in this regard.

**Tripura government launches 'Jagrut Tripura'**

The Tripura government has come up with a digital platform 'Jagrut Tripura' to help people get benefits from various schemes of the Centre and the state government. At least 102 schemes of various departments of both the governments are available on the platform.

**India's first forest healing centre in U'khand**

First Forest Healing centre of the country was inaugurated on 7 Mar 2021 at Ranikhet in Kalika, Uttarakhand. The forest healing centre has been developed by the Research Wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department after research on the healing properties of the forests and its revitalizing impact on overall health and well-being. It involves many activities like forest walking, tree-hugging, etc.



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