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pravahini



Weekly Periodicals

By

SUCCESS MANTRA (GTB Nagar)

PREFACE

It gives us great pleasure to release the monthly edition of the PRAVAHINI - Monthly e-Compendium & Weekly e-Periodicals of Current Affairs. The magazine's members have shown considerable cooperation as well as devotion. We at successmantra.in work tirelessly to create this magazine and bring it to you with a great sense of gratitude.

The PRAVAHINI March-2021 eBook covers the current events that happened in the month of October. Current Affairs is a crucial component of any competitive exams including CLAT, AILET, DU-LLB, HM, CAT, IAS, PCS, SSC, Banking, MBA and various other competitive examinations.

Current Affairs play the bigger role in many competitive and government exams. It holds the power of making or breaking your chance of success. Therefore, the candidates should cover the Current Affairs thoroughly and smartly.

The PRAVAHINI March-2020 eBook is divided into different sections keeping in mind the need of various exams. The sections covered namely International, National, Economy, Ecology and Environment, Science & Technology, Legal Affairs, Sports, States News Makers and few others.

We would also be pleased to receive any suggestion that could assist us with the upcoming editions.

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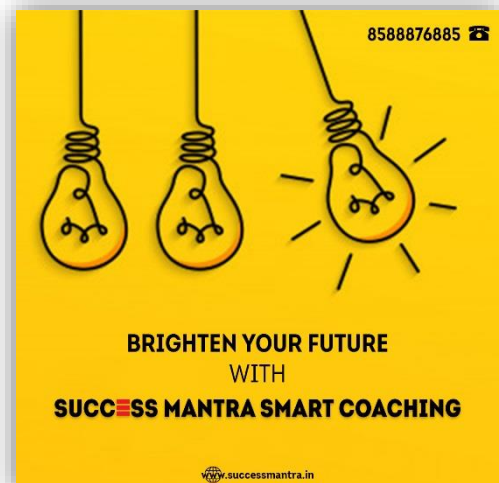


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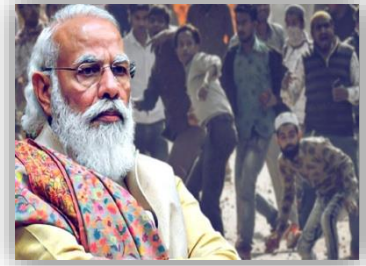
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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

INDIA STATUS DOWNGRADED FROM 'FREE' TO 'PARTLY FREE'

❖ India's status as a democracy and free society has been downgraded to "partly free" in the latest annual report on global political rights and liberties by Freedom House, a US government-funded NGO that studies political freedom around the world.



- ❖ The report titled "Freedom in the World 2021 - Democracy under Siege". India's fall "from the upper ranks of free nations could have a particularly damaging impact on global democratic standards".
- ❖ India had been rated as "free" in Freedom House's reports for 2018, 2019 and 2020, though its scores on a scale of 100 had declined during this period from 77 to 71. In the latest report, India had a score of 67 out of 100.
- ❖ In 1973, Freedom House launched the Freedom in the World report, which assessed the level of freedom in each country and ranked them with a numerical score and declared them as "free", "partly free" or "not free".

UTTARAKHAND CM TRIVENDRA S. RAWAT RESIGNED

❖ Trivendra Singh Rawat has resigned as the chief minister of Uttarakhand, a year before the hill state is scheduled to go to polls.



- ❖ Rawat, who became the CM after the BJP swept the assembly elections here in early 2017, tendered his resignation after meeting Governor Baby Rani Maurya.
- ❖ The central BJP leadership had recently sent two observers, party vice president Raman Singh and general secretary Dushyant Kumar Gautam, to Uttarakhand to get feedback from the party's core group in the state amid reports of discontent against the chief minister.

PM MODI INAUGURATED FIRST INDIA TOY FAIR 2021

❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the first-ever Indian Toy Fair 2021 via video conference during which he urged the country to become 'Aatmanirbhar' in the toy manufacturing sector.

- ❖ **The Ministry of Textiles**, in collaboration with other ministries, including the **Ministry of Education**, has organised the virtual event with an aim to provide joyful learning to children by including them in teaching and learning as well as promoting the indigenous toy industry.



- ❖ **The idea of a toy fair emerged from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat** address on August 30, 2020, where he highlighted the huge potential of the toys market and the opportunities that can be tapped to promote indigenous toys.

IAF TO PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE DESERT FLAG-VI

- ❖ The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** is participating in **Exercise Desert Flag-VI**, which has been organised from March 03 to 27, 2021 at **Al-Dhafra airbase, UAE**.



- ❖ The purpose of the exercise is to provide operational exposure to the participating forces, train them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment, provides an opportunity to enhance their operational capabilities along with the mutual exchange of best practices.
- ❖ **Ex Desert Flag** is an annual multi-nation large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the **United Arab Emirates Air Force**.
- ❖ The exercise will also see the air forces of the **United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain**. The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 and one IL-78 tanker aircraft.

INAUGURAL SESSION OF TECH BHARAT 2021

- ❖ **Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan** has addressed the inaugural session of TechBharat 2021.
- ❖ **Laghu Udyog Bharati and IMS Foundation** have organized the **2nd edition of the conclave** bringing together stakeholders from the HealthTech & Edutech sector on a virtual platform.



- ❖ Techbharat is facilitating interactions & deliberations between thousands of domestic & global participants, including policymakers, government representatives, industry members, investors & start-ups to nurture resourceful partnerships and boost growth in the sectors.
- ❖ **The Pradhan Mantri Aatmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana, with a massive outlay of over 64 thousand crore rupees over the next six years, will develop capacities of primary, secondary and tertiary care, health care systems.**

SITHARAMAN ATTENDED G20 CENTRAL BANK GOVERNOR

- ❖ The Finance Minister of India, **Nirmala Sitharaman** has attended the G20 Central Bank Governors' meeting. This was the first-ever **G20 Central Bank Governors' meeting that was held under the Italian Presidency.**
- ❖ The main aim of the meeting was to discuss policy actions for transformative and equitable recovery along with other issues on the agenda including the **global economic outlook, financial sector issues, financial inclusion and sustainable finance.**
- ❖ This meeting is a follow-up for the upcoming 2021 G20 Summit, **the sixteenth meeting of Group of Twenty, scheduled to take place in Rome, Italy, on 30-31 October 2021.**



MAITRI SETU BETWEEN INDIA & BANGLADESH

- ❖ **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the '**Maitri Setu**' bridge between India and Bangladesh through a video conference, to strengthen the connectivity between both countries and especially with the north-eastern region of India.
- ❖ **Maitri bridge** will also make Tripura the '**Gateway of North East**' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 km from the Sabroom.
- ❖ The **Maitri Setu bridge** has been built on the Feni river, which lies between the **Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh.**



- ❖ The **1.9 Kilometres long bridge** will connect Sabroom in India with **Ramgarh in Bangladesh**. The bridge has been constructed by the **National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited** at a project cost of around Rs. 133 Crore.

TIRATH SINGH RAWAT NEW CM OF UTTARAKHAND



- ❖ The **Bharatiya Janata Party's** member of Parliament from Pauri Garhwal, **Tirath Singh Rawat**, will be the next chief minister of Uttarakhand.
- ❖ This was announced by outgoing **chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, who resigned**. Tirath Singh Rawat will be sworn in as the new chief minister of Uttarakhand.
- ❖ **Tirath Singh Rawat** was the **chief of the party in Uttarakhand** in 2013-15 and also an MLA from the state in the past. His name was picked over prominent candidates including **Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank** and **Uttarakhand Minister Dhan Singh Rawat**.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

INDIA DESCRIBED SRI LANKA 'PRIORITY ONE' PARTNER



- ❖ **Indian High Commission in Colombo** has described the island nation of **Sri Lanka** as its **"Priority One"** partner in the defence sphere and reiterated the assurance of fullest cooperation in the field of defence and security.
- ❖ The assertion comes at a time when the **Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF)** is gearing up for the celebration of its 70th anniversary on 2 March.
- ❖ The **SLAF is celebrating its 70th Anniversary** on March 2 and to commemorate the historical event, a Fly Past and an Aerobatic Display are being organised for the first time in the country at a grand scale.
- ❖ A **total of 23 Indian Air force (IAF) and Indian Navy aircraft** will also partake in the event. Indian High Commission has called the participation indicative of the growing cooperation, **camaraderie and friendship between the armed forces of the two nations**.

ISRAEL RECEIVES FIRST EVER UAE AMBASSADOR

- ❖ Israel's president has formally received the **first-ever ambassador from the United Arab Emirates**, following last year's historic agreement between the countries to normalise ties.
- ❖ UAE envoy **Mohamed Al Khaja**, who arrived in Israel, delivered his credentials to **Israeli President Reuven Rivlin** at a ceremony in Jerusalem.
- ❖ The UAE was the **first country to agree to establish full diplomatic relations** with the Jewish state under the Abraham Accords, a pact brokered by former **US President Donald Trump**.
- ❖ The agreement made the UAE **only the third majority Arab country** to form official ties with Israel, following Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. **Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan** have subsequently joined the **Abraham Accords**.



CHINA GREEN LIGHT FOR DAMS ON BRAHMAPUTRA

- ❖ China's new **Five-Year Plan (FYP) 2021-2025** draft gave the green light for the first dam to be built on the lower reaches of the **Yarlung Zangbo river**, as the **Brahmaputra** was well known in Tibet before it flowed into India.
- ❖ The draft outline of the "**2025 Five-Year Plan**" and the draft long-term goal by 2035 specifically mention the construction of hydropower bases downstream of the river, which is one of the priority energy projects to be carried out in the next five years.
- ❖ Downstream refers to the section of the **Tibetan river that flows into India**.
- ❖ The inclusion of these projects in the draft plan indicates that the authorities have **approved the first start of excavation downstream**.
- ❖ This marks a new chapter in river hydropower development. **Other major projects: the construction of coastal nuclear power plants** and power transmission channels. All drafts are ready for formal approval.



ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

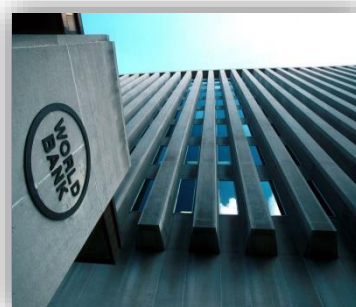
GOVT. AMENDS INSURANCE OMBUDSMAN RULES

- ❖ The **Government of India** has notified **comprehensive amendments** to the **Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017**, for better resolution of policyholders' complaints regarding insurance service deficiencies, in a timely, cost-effective and impartial manner.
- ❖ This **will help in facilitating the resolution of the complaints** with respect to the deficiencies in insurance services in a cost-effective and impartial manner on time.
- ❖ The **Ombudsman mechanism was administered by the Executive Council of Insurers**. This has now been renamed as the Council for Insurance Ombudsmen.
- ❖ Earlier, the scope of complaints to **Ombudsmen was limited to only disputes**, but now it has been enlarged to include deficiencies in service on the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.
- ❖ The insurance brokers have also been brought within the ambit of the Ombudsman mechanism. The **Ombudsmen has been empowered to pass awards against insurance brokers as well**.
- ❖ Ombudsman is an official who is appointed to investigate the complaints **regarding the service or on an administrative authority**.
- ❖ The ombudsman is usually appointed by governments however, the private companies can also appoint them. The Indian government has appointed an ombudsman to resolve the grievances **with respect to income tax, banking and insurance**.



WB GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR SOLAR ROOFTOP PROJECT

- ❖ The **World Bank** plans to introduce a **\$100-million credit guarantee scheme** to boost India's rooftop solar programme, which has not gained enough traction.



- ❖ The scheme will allow **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** to avail concessional debt financing for setting up rooftop solar units.
- ❖ The **World Bank scheme**, along with the **State Bank of India (SBI)** and the **MSME ministry** to accelerate the adoption of rooftop solar units, will help MSMEs access credit of around \$1 billion.
- ❖ The arrangement will be beneficial for the firms that often do not meet the lending criteria of banks and other financial institutions, with their financial woes been exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic.

MERCHANT DIGITIZATION SUMMIT LAUNCHED BY GOI

- ❖ **Government of India (GoI), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** and United Nations' Better Than Cash Alliance hosted the **Merchant Digitization Summit 2021: Towards AatmaNirbhar (Self Reliance) Bharat**, with special attention to the Himalayan Region, Northeast Region and the Aspirational Districts of India. Highlights
- ❖ The **summit convened the public and private sector leaders** of the Responsible Merchant Digitization Summit to accelerate the responsible digitization of Merchant in North-Eastern India and the Himalayan regions, and Aspirational Districts.
- ❖ This summit is part of a series of learning and exchange activities between **all States and Union Territories**.
- ❖ According to the series, the Department of Economic Affairs also organized a webinar called '**Unlocking the value of Fintech in promoting Digital Payments**' in December 2020.
- ❖ **About Better Than Cash Alliance:** Headquarters of Better than **Cash Alliance in United Nations**. It is a partnership of governments, companies and international organizations designed to accelerate the transition from cash to digital payments to help **achieve Sustainable Development Goals**. The Alliance has 76 members, including India.



APPOINTMENTS

JAIDEEP BHATNAGAR TOOK CHARGE AS DG OF PIB

- ❖ The former head of the News Services Division of All India Radio, **Jaideep Bhatnagar**, took over as **Principal Director General of the Press Information Bureau**.
- ❖ Prior to his current charge as head of the organisation, **Bhatnagar** has worked in **PIB** for six years in different capacities. He will take over from **Kuldeep Singh Dhatwalia**, who superannuated on February 28, 2021.
- ❖ **Bhatnagar**, a 1986-batch Indian Information Service (IIS) officer, earlier served in Doordarshan News as head of the **Commercial, Sales and Marketing Division**.
- ❖ He has also served as **Prasar Bharati Special Correspondent West Asia** covering 20 countries and later went on to head the News Services Division of AIR.



MATAM VENKATA RAO AS CEO OF CENTRAL BANK

- ❖ **Matam Venkata Rao** has taken charge as the new Managing Director and **Chief Executive Officer of Central Bank of India**.
- ❖ Rao till now held the position of **Executive Director at Canara Bank**. His appointment is for a period of 3 years with effect from the date of assumption of office on or after March 1, 2021, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- ❖ **Rao is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers**. He is a post-graduate in agriculture from Sri Venkateshwara Agriculture College, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.



LIGIA NORONHA AS UN ASST. SECRETARY GENERAL

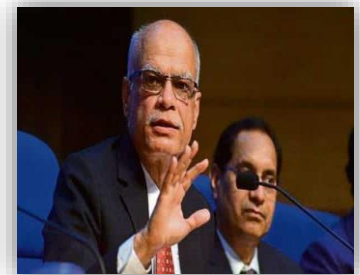
- ❖ **UN chief Antonio Guterres** has appointed leading Indian economist **Ligia Noronha** as **Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**.



- ❖ Prior to joining the UNEP, **Noronha worked at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi as Executive Director** (Research Coordination) and as Director of the Division on Resources, Regulation and Global Security.
- ❖ She has worked since 2014 as **Director of UNEP's Economy Division based in Nairobi**, leading **UNEP's work on climate mitigation and energy transitions**; on inclusive green economies, sustainable consumption and production, as well as on trade and sustainable finance, and the nexus of environment, pollution and health.

TARUN BAJAJ TAKES ADDL. CHARGE AS REVENUE SECY.

- ❖ **Department of economic affairs secretary, Tarun Bajaj has been given the additional charge of revenue secretary.** Present revenue secretary Ajay **Bhushan Pandey** retires on February 28.
- ❖ The Centre has decided to not grant an extension to finance secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey who was also **holding additional charge of the revenue department in the finance ministry.**
- ❖ **Tarun Bajaj, an old hand at the Finance Ministry**, assumed charge as **Economic Affairs secretary** last May, at a time when India saw the worst growth contraction in history on account of the Covid-19 pandemic.



AWARDS & HONOURS

PM MODI CERAWEEK GLOBAL ENERGY AWARD

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive the **CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award** during an annual **CERAWeek Conference-2021.**
- ❖ The award is given to him for his **commitment to sustainability in energy and the environment.**
- ❖ The **CERAWeek Conference-2021** will be held virtually from March 1 to 5, 2021.



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- ❖ It is an annual international conference that brings together the energy industry leaders, experts. **Policymakers Government officials, leaders** from the technology, energy technology innovators and financial & industrial communities.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS 2021

- ❖ The **Golden Globe Awards 2021** was held to recognise excellence in film, both American and international, and American television.
- ❖ This was the **78th edition of the annual event**, which honoured the best in American television, as well as film in 2020 and early 2021, as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.
- ❖ **American TV series “The Crown” won the most awards** for the ceremony with four awards.



Winners in the Film category:

Best Film – **Drama: Nomadland**

Best Film – Musical/Comedy: **Borat Subsequent Movie film**

Best Director: **Chloe Zhao for Nomadland**

Best Actress – **Drama: Andra Day for The United States vs. Billie Holiday**

Best Actor – **Drama: Chadwick Boseman for Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom**

SPORTS

INDIAN WOMEN'S LEAGUE 2020 TO BE HOSTED IN ODISHA

- ❖ All India Football Federation confirms **Odisha as the venue for the forthcoming Hero Indian Women’s League 2020-21 editions.**
- ❖ This is the fifth edition of IWL, the top division women’s league in India. **The Odisha government is a strategic partner of the AIFF** (All India Football Federation) as it provides the necessary infrastructure to various men and women age-group teams.



- ❖ **AIFF appreciates Odisha Government's longstanding partnership** with Indian Football wherein the latter have been providing its stadia and State of the Art training facilities to National Teams across various age groups and genders – all in an effort to take Indian Football forward together.

J&K TOPS KHELO INDIA WINTER NATIONAL GAMES

- ❖ **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally** in the second edition of the **Khelo India Winter National Games**. J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.
- ❖ The five-day mega sports event which began on the 26th of February concluded in the famous ski resort of **Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district**. The event was e-inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ❖ The second edition of the **Khelo India winter games** is a major step towards making **Jammu and Kashmir a hub of the winter games**.
- ❖ The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the **J&K Sports Council** and the **Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir**.



KIERON POLLARD BECOMES 3RD TO HIT 6 SIXES

- ❖ **Kieron Pollard hit six sixes in an over** to guide West Indies to a comprehensive **four-wicket win against Sri Lanka in the first game of their three-match T20 series**.
- ❖ **Pollard joins former India batsman Yuvraj Singh** as the only other player to hit six sixes in an over in T20 cricket, and just the third man to hit six sixes in an international match, **emulating Herschelle Gibbs (South Africa) and Yuvraj Singh (India)**.
- ❖ Pollard achieved the feat when he hit Sri Lanka's **Akila Dananjaya** out of the park 6 times in the 6th over of West Indies' successful chase in the first T20I at the **Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua**.



PV SINDHU WON SILVER IN BWF SWISS OPEN

- ❖ **India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu** has won a silver medal in the **BWF Swiss Open Super 300** in the final of the **women's singles event held at Basel, Switzerland**. The World No. 7 Sindhu lost to World No. 3 and reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin.



❖ *Winners List of Swiss Open 2021*

- Men's Singles: **Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)** beat **Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand)**.
- Women's Singles: **Carolina Marin (Spain)** beat **PV Sindhu (India)**.
- Men's Doubles: **Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark)** beat **Mark Lamsfuss-Marvin Seidel (Germany)**.
- Mixed Doubles: **Thom Gicquel-Delphine Delrue (France)** beat **Denmark pair, Mathias Christiansen-Alexandra Boje**.

IMPORTANT DAYS AND DATES

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OBSERVED ON 8TH MARCH

- ❖ International Women's Day is celebrated on the 8th of March every year. This day celebrating **the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women**.
- ❖ **The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality**. International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women, who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.
- ❖ This year's theme for International Women Day, **"Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world"**, celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- ❖ **The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day in the International Women's Year, 1975**. In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace.



ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY OBSERVED ON 1ST MARCH



- ❖ Zero Discrimination Day is an annual day celebrated on 1 March each year by the **United Nations and other international organisations**.
- ❖ Zero Discrimination Day aims to **raise the voice for the right to live life with dignity, despite one's choices, beliefs, profession, education, disability or even illness**. The theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2021: **"End Inequalities"**.
- ❖ Zero Discrimination Day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was launched by **UNAIDS Executive Director at Beijing after UNAIDS launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on World AIDS Day in December 2013**.

WORLD WILDLIFE DAY OBSERVED ON 3RD MARCH



- ❖ **World Wildlife Day** is observed globally on the 3rd of March every year to celebrate the beautiful and varied forms of **wild fauna and flora present on earth**.
- ❖ **World Wildlife Day** also raise awareness about the benefits that the **conservation of wild fauna and flora** provides to people living on earth.
- ❖ The day also reminds us of the need to fight against wildlife crime and **human-induced reduction of species** causing various wide-ranging **economic, environmental and social impacts**.
- ❖ **World Wildlife Day** will be celebrated in 2021 under the theme **"Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet"**, as a way to highlight the central role of forests, forest species and ecosystems services in sustaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people globally, and particularly of Indigenous and local communities with historic ties to **forested and forest-adjacent areas**.
 - World Wildlife Fund Headquarters: **Gland, Switzerland**.

INDIA TO COMMEMORATE 'CHABAHAH DAY' ON MARCH 4



- ❖ The **Ministry of External Affairs India** will commemorate '**Chabahar Day**' on March 4 on the sidelines of the **Maritime India Summit 2021** being held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The virtual event will see the participation of ministers from **Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan**. The Summit is being held from March 2-4, 2021.
- ❖ *About the Chabahar Port:* It is a seaport in Chabahar which is located in south-eastern Iran in the Gulf of Oman. The port serves as the only oceanic port of Iran.
- ❖ The port comprises two separate ports namely the **Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari**. The port was first proposed by the last shah of Iran in the year 1973. The **first phase was opened in 1983**.

REPORTS AND INDEXES

ELON MUSK TOPS HURUN GLOBAL RICH LIST 2021



- ❖ The **10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021** was released, which ranked 3228 billionaires from 2,402 companies and **68 countries**.
- ❖ The report showed that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the **world added 8 billionaires every week in 2020 and 421 in a year**, taking their total number to a record 3,288.
- ❖ Top three billionaires: **Tesla chief Elon Musk** bagged the top spot on the Hurun Global Rich List for the first time after adding a massive \$151 billion during the year 2020 to take his net worth to \$197 billion. **Amazon.com Inc CEO Jeff Bezos** ranked second with \$189 billion in net worth.
- ❖ **India in the list:** With **60 Billionaires** from the Hurun India Global List 2021, **Mumbai** became the capital for India's rich followed by **New Delhi (40) & Bengaluru (22)**.
- ❖ Asia's richest person and Reliance Industries chairman **Mukesh Ambani is ranked eighth on the Hurun Global Rich List 2021**. The total wealth of Ambani surged by 24% to \$83 billion (approximately Rs 6.09 lakh crore).

11TH QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS



- ❖ The **11th edition of the QS World University Rankings** was released on March 04, 2021. The **QS World University Rankings 2021** ranks the top 1,000 universities from around the world, covering 80 different locations.
- ❖ There are 47 new entrants on the list. The **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**, the United States has retained its top position as the best university for the ninth year in a row.
- ❖ **Stanford University, the United States and the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom** are the second and third best **University globally in QS World University Rankings 2021**.
- ❖ The **Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay** has emerged as the best institution. It is placed at 172 positions. No institute in India is in the top 100. **Indian Institute of Science (185), Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (193)** are the only other universities from India to feature in the top 200.
- ❖ The **QS World University Rankings by Subject** are compiled to help prospective students identify the leading universities in a particular subject.
- ❖ The **2021 QS World University Ranking by Subject** cover a total of **51 disciplines**, grouped into five broad subject areas, namely: Arts & Humanities; Engineering & Technology; Life Sciences & Medicine; Natural Sciences; and Social Sciences and Management.

EASE OF LIVING INDEX 2020 RELEASED



- ❖ **Bengaluru emerged as the top city on the government's Ease of Living Index 2020** that was released by Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.
- ❖ **Pune was second and Ahmedabad was ranked third among 111 cities**. A total of 111 cities under the Smart Cities Program, participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020.

The Ease of Living Index 2020 ranked cities in the **following two categories**:

- **Million+ populated cities** – those with a population of more than a million.
- **Less than Million populated cities** – those with a population of less than a million.
- No city has been included from West Bengal because of the “data challenge”.
- **Million+ category:** Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in this category. This was followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai respectively.

❖ **Less than Million category: In this group,** Shimla was ranked the highest in ease of living. This was followed by Bhubaneswar, Silvassa, Kakinada, Salem, Vellore, Gandhinagar, Gurugram, Davangere, and Tiruchirappalli.

UNEP RELEASED FOOD WASTE INDEX REPORT 2021

❖ The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and WRAP released the **Food Waste Index Report 2021** and highlights that food wastes by different countries in 2019. As per the report, Over 931 million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019.



- ❖ In India, the household **food waste estimate is 50 kg per capita per year, or 68,760,163 tonnes** a year. The household food waste estimate in the US is 59 kg per capita per year, or 19,359,951 tonnes a year. China these estimates are 64 kg per capita per year or 91,646,213 tonnes a year.
- ❖ The **Food Waste Index Report** aims at supporting the goals of SDG 12.3. It does so by presenting the most **comprehensive food waste data collection**, analysis and modelling to date, generating a new estimate of global food waste;
- ❖ **Publishing a methodology for countries** to measure food waste, at household, foodservice and retail level, to **track national progress towards 2030 and to report on SDG 12.3.**
- ❖ Countries using this **methodology will generate strong evidence to guide a national strategy on food waste prevention**, that is sufficiently sensitive to pick up changes in food waste over two- or four-year intervals, and that enables meaningful comparisons between countries globally.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM INDEX 2021 RELEASED

- ❖ The **Heritage Foundation**, a **US Conservative think-tank**, recently launched the “Economic Freedom Index”.
- ❖ The index was prepared by covering 184 countries this time for the period of July 2019 to June 2020. This is the **first time the index has been published since the COVID-19 pandemic** overturned lives as well as global economies and the scoring reflects a small extent how governments have responded to the health crisis.
- ❖ In the index, **Singapore has topped the global ranking** for the second consecutive year. In the 2021 Index, India came in around the middle of the pack among **Asia-Pacific countries ranking 26th out of 40 countries, scoring 56.5 points**.
- ❖ Globally, the Foundation rates **India’s economy as the 121st freest**. Although its overall score is unchanged, improvements were made in business freedom. This was offset by declines in judicial effectiveness and other scores.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO LAUNCHES AMAZONIA-1 SATELLITE OF BRAZIL

- ❖ India’s **Polar rocket** has successfully launched **Amazonia-1 of Brazil and 18 other satellites from the spaceport** here, in the first mission of the year for space agency ISRO.
- ❖ The **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C51** lifted from the first launch pad of the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SHAR)** and first injected into orbit primary payload Amazonia-1.
- ❖ The 637-kg Amazonia-1 which became the **first Brazilian satellite to be launched from India is an optical earth observation satellite of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE)**.



RUSSIA LAUNCHED 1ST ARCTIC MONITORING SATELLITE

- ❖ The Russian space corporation Roscosmos successfully launched its first **satellite to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.**
- ❖ The satellite called "**Arktika-M**", was launched on February 28, 2021, **onboard Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket, from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.**
- ❖ This satellite will help to **collect information to solve operational meteorology and hydrology problems, and monitoring the climate and environment in the Arctic region.**



MISCELLANEOUS

RAJYA SABHA & LOK SABHA MERGED INTO SANSAD TV

- ❖ The **Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Television** channels that broadcast the proceedings of the upper and lower **Houses of Parliament**, respectively, have been merged into a single entity.
- ❖ The new channel has been named the '**Sansad Television**'. This change is effective from March 01, 2021.
- ❖ Ravi Capoor, a retired IAS officer of the 1986 batch, has been appointed as the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Sansad TV** for one year.
- ❖ The decision to change the name was jointly taken by **Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.**



YEAR 2023 AS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS

- ❖ The **UN General Assembly** adopted by consensus a resolution sponsored by India and supported by over 70 nations declaring 2023 as the **International Year of Millets.**



- ❖ The **International Year of Millets** is aimed at raising awareness about the health benefits of the grain and its suitability for cultivation under changing climatic conditions.
- ❖ India's Permanent Mission to the UN also distributed savoury millet snack murukku to all **UN Member States**.
- ❖ The **193-member General Assembly** unanimously adopted the resolution, declaring 2023 as **the International Year of Millets**.
- ❖ The resolution titled **International Year of Millets 2023'** was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was **co-sponsored by over 70 nations**.

SC ON APPOINTMENT OF CBI DIRECTOR

- ❖ The **Supreme Court** has filed a **writ petition** requesting the **appointment of a regular Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**.
- ❖ The Director of CBI was appointed in accordance with **Article 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946**.
- ❖ The Director of the CBI has obtained a two-year term guarantee **under the 2003 CVC Act**. The **Lokpal & Lokayuktas Act (2013)** amended the **Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (1946)** and made the following changes for the appointment of the CBI Director
- ❖ The central government should appoint the Director of the CBI on the recommendation of the three-person committee consisting of **Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition party in the Lok Sabha, the Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court** nominated by him.



MAJOR FIRE BROKE OUT SIMILIPAL RESERVE

- ❖ A **fire broke out in the Similipal Biosphere Reserve** in Odisha. The fire did not touch the core area of the biosphere, but the fire threatened the destruction of its rich biodiversity.
- ❖ The name of **Similipal** comes from the "**Simul**" (**silk cotton**) tree. It was officially designated as a tiger reserve in 1956 and was included in the "Tiger Project" in 1973.



- ❖ In June 1994, the Indian government declared it a biosphere reserve. Since 2009, it has **become part of the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Network.**
- ❖ It is part of the **Similipal-Kuldiha-Hadgarh Elephant Sanctuary**, commonly known as the Mayurbhanj Elephant Sanctuary, which includes 3 sanctuaries, namely the **Similipal Tiger Sanctuary**, the **Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary** and the **Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary.**

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