

# Week 3 Current Affairs Update

15<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021

## EVENTS

### NATIONAL

#### ART & CULTURE

##### 11TH RASHTRIYA SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV



**Date:** 16th February 2021

Recently, the 11th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav was inaugurated by Governor of West Bengal, Jagdeep Dhankhar.

#### Key Points:

- The Mahotsav was held at Cooch Behar Palace in West Bengal.
- The Mahotsav is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Culture, which was organised under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' Initiative.
- This Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is conducted to showcase the art and culture of one state in other states.
- This leads to promoting culture and art forms and thus helps in providing support to the artists and artisans.

#### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

##### PEY JAL SURVEKSHAN



**Date:** 17th February 2021

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched 'Pey Jal Survekshan' on a pilot basis.

### Key Points:

- It was launched under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban (JJM-U) in 10 Indian cities.
- The cities are: Bhubaneswar, Agra, Kochi, Madurai, Rohtak, Badlapur, Surat, Tumkur, Churu and Patiala.
- After the positive response in these cities, the survekshan will be extended to AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) cities.
- The 'Pey Jal Survekshan' aims to have a distribution of water and reuse of wastewater.
- It aims to have qualitative and quantitative mapping of water bodies.
- Under this initiative, data related to drinking water, wastewater management, non-revenue water and condition of three water bodies in the city will be collected through face-to-face interviews with citizens and municipal officials.
- Also, the water samples will be collected and will be tested in labs to check the quality of water in these cities.

## POLICIES & SCHEMES

### 'MAA SCHEME' – WEST BENGAL



**Date:** 17th February 2021

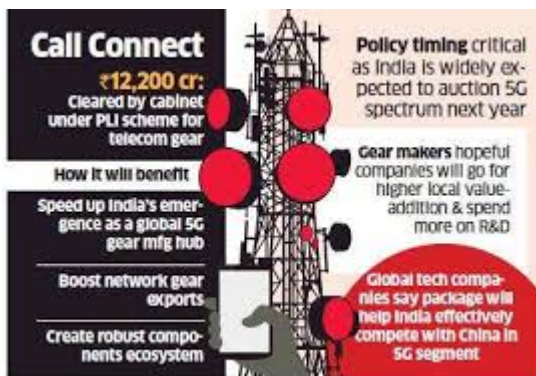
The Government of West Bengal launched 'Maa Scheme'.

## Key Points:

- Under this scheme, the state government will provide subsidized cooked meals to the poor people at the cost of Rs 5.
- The total funds allotted for 'Maa Scheme' by the state government is Rs 100 crores.
- The state government will bear the subsidy of Rs 15 a per plate of meal.
- The meal will be having nutritious food items like rice, dal, vegetable and egg curry which will help to maintain the nutritional value of food for poor people.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### PLI SCHEME FOR TELECOM AND NETWORKING PRODUCTS



**Date:** 18th February 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Telecom and Networking Products (T&N Products) with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 12,195 crore.

## Key Points:

- The Scheme intends to promote the manufacture of T&N Products in India.
- It proposes a financial incentive to boost domestic manufacturing and attract investments in the target segments in order to encourage Make in India.
- The scheme will also encourage exports.
- There will be a minimum investment threshold of Rs.10 crore for MSME with incentives from 7% to 4 % and Rs. 100 crore for others with incentives from 6% to 4 % over 5 year above Base Year.
- The applicants with higher investments than specified threshold under MSME and Non MSME categories will be selected through a transparent process.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### PM MODI LAUNCHED 'MAHABAHU-BRAHMAPUTRA' PROGRAMME



**Date:** 19th February 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' programme. He also laid the foundation stone of the Dhubri Phulbari bridge and Majuli-Jorhat bridge in Assam.

### Key Points:

- 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' Programme is launched to strengthen water connectivity in Assam and adjoining region by using water of River Brahmaputra and Barak. The total funds allotted for this programme is Rs 3231 crore.
- The programme is having various initiatives linked with it.
- The initiatives under the programme are: (a) Ro-Pax services (b) Permanent inland water terminal at Jogighopa (c) Construction of tourist jetties
- Dhubri Phulbari Bridge will be a 4 lane bridge which will be constructed over River Brahmaputra. It will be India's longest bridge with the length of 19.282 km.
- It will offer connectivity between Dhubri in Assam and Pulbari in Meghalaya. It will be constructed with the cost of around Rs 4997 crore.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### DELIMITATION OF UT OF J&K



**Date:** 19th February 2021

The Delimitation Commission held a meeting recently with the Associate Members from UT of J&K to seek their suggestion on the process of delimitation in respect of the UT.



## Key Points:

- Delimitation is the act of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and state Assembly seats.
- The objective of delimitation is to provide equal representation to equal segments of a population; fair division of geographical areas so that one political party doesn't have an advantage over others in an election.
- Constitutional provisions: Under Article 82, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Delimitation is carried out by an independent Delimitation Commission.
- Delimitation Commissions have been set up four times — 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002
- There was no delimitation after the 1981 and 1991 Censuses.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### ASIA ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT AWARD-2020



**Date:** 19th February 2021

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020.

## Key Points:

- The award is given by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- WCCB got the award twice in three years.
- It has been awarded this year under the Innovation category.
- Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) is a statutory body constituted under the WildLife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is mandated to combat organized wildlife crime in the country.

## ENVIRONMENT

### HYDERABAD EMERGES AS TREE CITIES OF THE WORLD



**Date:** 19th February 2021

Hyderabad has won a green contest among cities in India, and emerged one of the 'Tree Cities of the World'.

### **Key Points:**

- The Award is given by the Arbor Day Foundation and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- Hyderabad has maintained urban forestry under its Haritha Haram programme and its Urban Forest Parks plan.
- The city was evaluated on five metrics: 'Establish Responsibility', 'Set the Rules', 'Know What You Have', 'Allocate the Resources', and 'Celebrate the Achievements'.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **PM INAUGURATED AND LAID FOUNDATION STONE FOR PROJECTS IN KERALA**



**Date:** 20th February 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for key projects in Kerala.

### **Key Points:**

- The key projects are related to the power sector and the urban sector in Kerala.
- PM Modi dedicated the Pugalur-Thrissur Power Transmission project to the nation. It is a 320 KV Voltage Source Converter which is based on the High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC).
- PM Modi also inaugurated 50MW Kasaragod Solar Power Project. It is developed under the National Solar Energy Mission.

- He also inaugurated the 750 MLD Water Treatment Plant at Aruvikkara. It is developed under AMRUT Mission.
- PM Modi laid the foundation stone to construct Integrated Command and Control Centre, Construction of smart roads in Thiruvananthapuram.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

### 29TH NASSCOM TECHNOLOGY AND LEADERSHIP FORUM



**Date:** 20th February 2021

The 29th edition of the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM)'s Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF) was held recently.

#### Key Points:

- The NTLF is the flagship programme of NASSCOM.
- The theme for 29th NASSCOM NTLF: 'Shaping the future towards a better normal'.
- The event was organised by NASSCOM with Maharashtra as state partner and Microsoft was the technology partner.
- The forum was held to build a roadmap for the future to enhance technology usage and to build the trust of people in technology.
- The Forum was addressed by PM Modi in which around 1600 participants from 30 nations participated in the forum.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### DRONES FOR AGRICULTURE



**Date:** 21st February 2021

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted conditional exemption for Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) usage to the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoAFW).

**Key Points:**

- The permission allows drone deployment by the MoAFW for remote sensing data collection in agricultural areas of 100 districts of the country, for Gram Panchayat level yield estimation, under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
- The exemption shall be valid from the one year from the date of issue of the permission letter or until the operationalisation of the Digital Sky Platform, whichever is earlier.
- However, this exemption shall be valid only if all conditions and limitations are strictly adhered to.
- In case of violation of any condition, this exemption shall become null & void and action may be initiated as per Para 18 of the above mentioned CAR.

## **POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **25 CITIES SELECTED FOR 'NURTURING NEIGHBOURHOODS CHALLENGE' COHORT**



**Date:** 21st February 2021

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) announced the names of 25 Indian cities which are selected for Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge cohort.

**Key Points:**

- The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge cohort is hosted by Smart Cities Mission of MoHUA in partnership with Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) and World Resources Institute (WRI) India being the technical partner.
- The Nurturing Neighbourhoods Challenge cohort is a 3-year initiative that aims to support early childhood-friendly neighbourhoods under the GOI's Smart Cities Mission.



- The challenge will help the selected cities to undertake neighbourhood-level pilot projects in public space, mobility, and access to services to uplift the physical and psychological health of young children and their caregivers.
- The cities will be developing parks and open spaces, anganwadis, early childhood facilities, early childhood amenities, walkable streets for young children and their caregivers, bus shelters and transit hubs, seating, and lactation cubicles and many more.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### ENROLMENT MODULE FOR TECHNOGRAHIS



**Date:** 21st February 2021

Recently, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has launched the Enrolment Module for TECHNOGRAHIS.

#### Key Points:

- The LightHouse Projects (LHPs) are being built as part of the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC- India) initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U).
- TECHNOGRAHIS are students from IITs, NITs, engineering, planning and architecture colleges, faculty members, academicians, and stakeholders.
- Significance of Enrolment Module for Technograhis: The interested candidates can register themselves to visit the Live Laboratories at six LHP sites for learning, consultation, generation of ideas and solutions, experimentation, innovation, and technical awareness.
- It will help students in getting a first-hand account of the technologies being used and in turn, they can adapt and adopt them as per their requirements in the construction sector for a 'Make in India' approach".
- The promotion of LHP sites is aimed to encourage large scale participation of people to create technical awareness for on-site learning.

## DEFENCE

### INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRED 'HELINA' AND 'DHRUVAstra'



**Date:** 21st February 2021

India successfully test-fired indigenously-developed Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) systems 'Helina' and 'Dhruvastra'.

#### Key Points:

- This has led to their induction in the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.
- The testing trials were conducted from the Advanced Light Helicopter at Pokhran deserts of Rajasthan.
- Both the ATGM systems are having the all-weather day-and-night capability.
- They can defeat battle tanks with a conventional armour and explosive reactive armour.
- The Helina ATGM is the Army version and Dhruvastra ATGM is the Air Force version.
- Both the ATGMs are designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

## HEALTHCARE

### CSIR SIGNED MOU WITH BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION



**Date:** 22nd February 2021

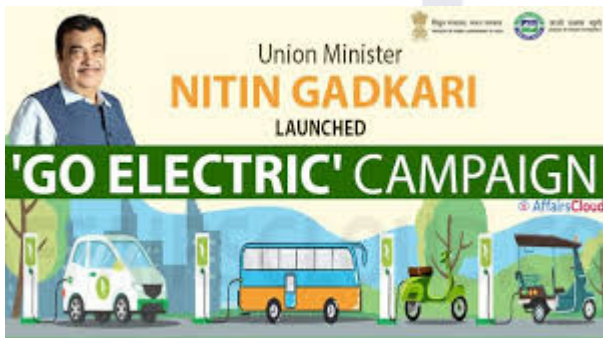
The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has signed an MoU with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## Key Points:

- They have entered into an agreement to uplift the health development activities and promote health research in India.
- Both organisations will work to identify scientific and technological opportunities which can be used in the health sector.
- They will focus on developing and testing new preventions, therapies and interventions which will help to tackle health issues in India and in other nations.
- They will perform research on genetic diseases that impact infant and neonatal mortality; new diagnostics and devices for infectious disease and environmental surveillance; development of cost-effective processes for drug, vaccines, biologics, and diagnostics manufacturing; novel microbiome-directed foods; the socio-economic impact of science and technological tools; and other areas of health and development.

## TRANSPORT

### ‘GO ELECTRIC CAMPAIGN’



**Date:** 22nd February 2021

The ‘Go Electric Campaign’ was launched by Union Minister of Road, Transport, and Highways Nitin Gadkari.

## Key Points:

- The campaign is launched to promote awareness and importance of EV charging infrastructure and e-mobility as well as electric cooking in India.
- The campaigns aim to take India’s one step forward to a cleaner and greener future by adopting EV Charging Infrastructure, e-mobility and electric cooking method.
- The campaign will promote environmental-friendly, cost-effective, and indigenous electric products.
- The ‘Go Electric Campaign’ will also result in an increase in the production of Electric Vehicles.

- The campaign will be implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). The BEE will provide technical support to the state-designated agencies to promote the campaign in every state.
- The campaign will also observe a discussion on ‘Scaling up e-mobility infrastructure in India and the role of different stakeholders in e-mobility’.

## INTERNATIONAL

### CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

#### 2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY



**Date:** 16th February 2021

The 2nd edition of the International Conference of Gender Equality (ICGE-II) was held in Kerala.

#### Key Points:

- During this conference, the CM of the state inaugurated the Gender Park Campus in Kozhikode, Kerala.
- The ICGE-II was hosted by Gender Park in partnership with United Nations Women.
- The theme for ICGE-II: ‘Gender in Sustainable Entrepreneurship and Social Business: The Mediating Role of Empowerment’.
- Around 20 countries participated in the conference.
- The conference was held to focus on promoting women and transgender person.
- The conference motivated them to participate in socio-economic activities and become successful, sustainable entrepreneurs.
- The ICGE-II was organised as the first carbon-neutral conference event in Kerala, which highlighted Kerala’s commitment to achieving SDG by 2030.

### HEALTHCARE

#### WHO SEARO SIGNED PACT WITH MINISTRY OF AYUSH





**Date:** 18th February 2021

The World Health Organization South-East Asia Regional Office (WHO SEARO) has entered into a Letter of Exchange (LoE) with the Ministry of AYUSH.

### **Key Points:**

- The LoE was signed with an aim of deputation of an expert of AYUSH to WHO's regional traditional medicine programme in New Delhi.
- The expert from AYUSH will guide WHO SEARO to implement regional traditional medicine action plans by using safe traditional medicine services.
- Both the entities will also work to launch a public health research report on COVID-19.
- AYUSH Ministry and WHO SEARO will work to boost the capacities of SEAR Nations in the traditional medicine sector.
- They will also jointly frame policies and regulations for the traditional medicine sector.

## **DEFENCE**

### **INDIAN NAVY JOINED THE 'IRAN-RUSSIA MARITIME SECURITY BELT 2021' NAVAL EX.**



**Date:** 18th February 2021

The Indian Navy joined Iran and Russia in a naval exercise called 'Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021'.

### Key Points:

- It was held in the Northern Indian Ocean.
- The aim of this naval exercise is to boost international maritime trade security, combat maritime terrorism and enhance partnership among nations to share information with each other.
- Indian Navy was represented by Gholamreza Tahani.
- In the 'Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021,' any country can take participation.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### INDIA AND AUSTRALIA SIGNED MOU FOR SPACE COLLABORATION



**Date:** 19th February 2021

India signed MoU with Australia to boost partnership in Civil Space Activities.

### Key Points:

- In this regard, MoU was signed between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Australian Space Agency.
- Both the entities will work in the sectors of civil space research, technology development for space, capability development in space, education activities and the use of outer space to have peace.
- The MoU is basically an amendment of the '2012 India Australia Inter-Governmental MoU for Cooperation in Civil Space Science, Technology and Education

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (CECPA)



**Date:** 19th February 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved signing of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius.

**Key Points:**

- The India-Mauritius CECPA will be the first trade Agreement to be signed by India with any African country.
- It is a limited agreement.
- It will cover Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Financial services, Customs Procedures and Cooperation in other Areas.
- CECPA provides for an institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade between the two countries.
- Both sides have also agreed to negotiate an Automatic Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) for a limited number of highly sensitive products within two years of the Signing of the Agreement.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

### 11TH WORLD PETROCOAL CONGRESS & WORLD FUTURE FUEL SUMMIT 2021



**Date:** 21st February 2021

The Joint Conference of the 11th World PetroCoal Congress and World Future Fuel Summit was held in New Delhi.

**Key Points:**

- Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan addressed the joint conference.
- The Energy and Environment Foundation organised both conferences.
- The theme for 11th World PetroCoal Congress: 'Petroleum-Coal-Gas: Towards a Win-Win Strategy for Producer and Consumer'.

- The Union Minister addressed the joint conference by highlighting that India aims to create a global energy justice model by maintaining balance in accessibility and affordability of energy.
- He mentioned that India will draft its own strategies and roadmap to achieve the green energy transition.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### INDIA AND ETHIOPIA SIGNED TWO AGREEMENTS



**Date:** 22nd February 2021

India and Ethiopia signed two agreements on visa facilitation and leather technology.

#### **Key Points:**

- The MoU for leather technology was signed between CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI) from India and Wollo University of Ethiopia.
- The agreements were signed by the External Affairs Minister of India, S Jaishankar and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia, Demeke Mekonnen Hassen.
- Both the nations agreed to boost their bilateral cooperation in various sectors like economic, defence, digital, Science and Technology, and cultural cooperation.





# PEOPLE

## NATIONAL

### APPOINTMENTS

#### AJAY MATHUR



**Date:** 17th February 2021

**Why in news:** Appointed as Director-General of International Solar Alliance (ISA).

#### Key Points:

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) has announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General.
- Earlier, Dr Mathur has served as the director general of The Energy & Resource Institute (TERI).
- He is a member of the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change.
- Dr Mathur replaces Mr Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since the inception of the ISA.
- A coalition of 73 member countries, ISA was established in 2015 to accelerate the demand for and use of safe, sustainable, and affordable solar energy for all. Its Headquarters is in Gurugram, Haryana.

### AWARDS & HONOURS

#### S. CHINNY KRISHNA



**Date:** 17th February 2021

**Why in news:** Awarded with the 'Prani Mitra' award for 2021.

**Key Points:**

- The Animal Welfare Board of India has awarded S. Chinny Krishna with the 'Prani Mitra' award for 2021 for his lifetime service to animals.
- S. Chinny Krishna is the co-founder of Blue Cross of India.
- 'Prani Mitra' is the highest award in India for animal welfare.
- Krishna has also won the Jeev Daya Puraskar as well as awards from the Humane Society of the United States for his work following the 2004 tsunami.
- He has also won Karuna Award and the Life Time Award from the Humane Society International.

## APPOINTMENTS

### TAMILISAI SOUNDARARAJAN



**Date:** 18th February 2021

**Why in news:** Appointed as an additional charge of Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.

**Key Points:**

- Tamilisai Soundararajan has sworn in as the Lt Governor of the Puducherry Union Territory.
- She has replaced Kiran Bedi who was removed from the post on February 16.
- Tamilisai Soundararajan is an Indian doctor who is at present the governor of Telangana. It is her 2nd term as Telangana Governor.

- Now she has been given an additional charge of Lt Governor of the Puducherry.
- She is also a former president of Tamil Nadu BJP.

## INTERNATIONAL

### APPOINTMENTS

#### PREETI SINHA



**Date:** 16th February 2021

**Why in news:** Appointed as the Executive Secretary of the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

#### Key Points:

- Indian-origin investment and development banker Preeti Sinha has been appointed as the Executive Secretary of the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).
- Preeti Sinha has commenced her tenure as the Executive Secretary of UNCDF.
- Sinha has succeeded Judith Karl.
- Established in the year 1966, the New York-headquartered UNCDF provides microfinance access to Least Developed Countries (LDCs), with the mandate to unlock the full potential of public and private finance.

### APPOINTMENTS

#### AJAI MALHOTRA



**Date:** 20th February 2021

**Why in news:** Appointed as Chairperson of the United Nations Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council

**Key Points:**

- Ajai Malhotra became the first Indian to be elected as the Chairperson of the United Nations Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council.
- He has been on the Indian team negotiating issues such as biological diversity, climate change, desertification, education, energy, forestry, health, human rights, human settlements, intellectual property, international law, labour, ozone depletion, sustainable development and trade.
- Malhotra first joined the Indian Foreign Services in 1977.
- He has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania.



disha  
Nurturing Ambitions



# ISSUES

## NATIONAL

### ENVIRONMENT

#### SIX ELEPHANTS DIED IN KARLAPAT WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



**Date:** 16th February 2021

#### Key Highlights:

- Recently, six elephants died of Haemorrhagic Septicaemia (HS) in Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Haemorrhagic septicaemia (HS) is a disease which infects animals that come in contact with contaminated water or soil by a contagious bacteria (*Pasteurella multocida*).
- In this disease the respiratory tract and lungs of the animals are affected, leading to severe pneumonia.
- It mainly affects water buffalo, cattle and bison with a high mortality rate in infected animals.
- Recently, around 40 buffaloes had succumbed to the infection in Odisha's Kendrapara.
- The disease generally spreads in the period right before and after the monsoons.
- Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary is spread over 175 square kilometre area in Odisha's Kalahandi district.

### ENVIRONMENT

#### GANGETIC RIVER DOLPHIN



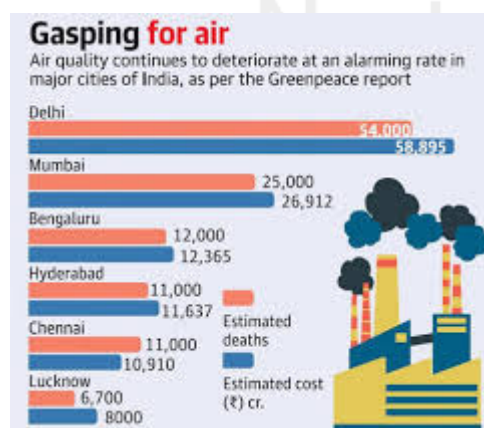
**Date:** 18th February 2021

### Key Highlights:

- Recently, a Gangetic Dolphin was beaten to death in Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh, which is a punishable offence under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Ganges river dolphins live in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.
- The Ganges river dolphin can only live in freshwater and is essentially blind.
- They hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds, which bounces off of fish and other prey, enabling them to “see” an image in their mind. They are also called ‘susu’.
- Population of Gangetic river Dolphin is 1200-1800.
- It is a reliable indicator of the health of the entire river ecosystem.
- It was recognised as the National Aquatic Animal in 2009, by the Government of India.

## ENVIRONMENT

### GREENPEACE ANALYSIS OF COST TO THE ECONOMY DUE TO AIR POLLUTION



**Date:** 20th February 2021

### Key Highlights:

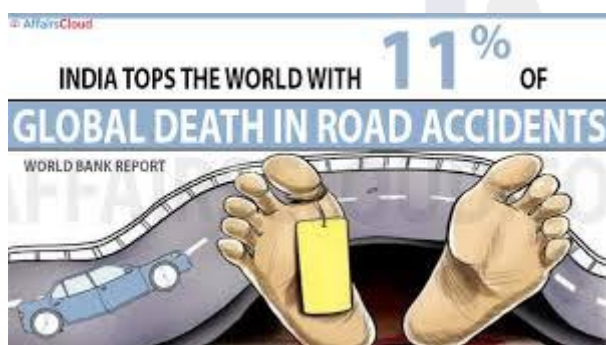
- Greenpeace Southeast Asia recently carried out an analysis of cost to the economy due to air pollution.

- According to the report, Air pollution claimed approximately 54,000 lives in Delhi in 2020.
- Six Indian cities — Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad and Lucknow — feature in the global analysis.
- Globally, approximately 1,60,000 deaths have been attributed to PM (particulate matter) 2.5 air pollution.
- These deaths have occurred in the five most populous cities — Delhi, Mexico City, São Paulo, Shanghai and Tokyo.
- The ‘Cost Estimator’ tool was used for the study. It is an online tool that estimates the real-time health impact and economic cost from fine PM 2.5 air pollution in major world cities.

## INTERNATIONAL

### REPORTS & INDICES

#### REPORT ON ROAD ACCIDENTS: WORLD BANK



**Date:** 16th February 2021

#### Key Highlights:

- Recently, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways released the World Bank Report titled “Traffic Crash Injuries And Disabilities: The Burden on India Society”.
- The Report has been prepared in collaboration with the NGO-Save Life Foundation.
- The survey data was collected from four Indian states i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.
- According to the report, India accounts for 11% of the global death in road accidents, the highest in the world.
- Amounting to about 4.5 lakh road crashes per annum, in which 1.5 lakh people die.

- It leads to an estimated economic loss of about 3.14% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), indicating an underreporting phenomenon in the country.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) estimates socio-economic cost of Road Crashes is equivalent to 0.77% of the GDP.

## HEALTHCARE

### UK TO CONDUCT FIRST HUMAN CHALLENGE TRIALS FOR COVID-19



**Date:** 19th February 2021

#### **Key Highlights:**

- The UK is set to conduct the first COVID-19 human challenge trials (HCT) within a month from now.
- The trial was first announced in October 2020.
- In this study, over 90 healthy volunteers between the ages of 18-30 will be deliberately exposed to small amounts of the virus in controlled settings.
- Its objective is to test treatments and vaccines.
- In this way, the participants are “challenged” by the virus.
- This is not the same as standard vaccine clinical trials.
- HCTs are able to give more precise information about the disease and its effects on humans, and also give results about the efficacy of vaccines on infected humans.





# IDIEAS

## NATIONAL

### DEFENCE

#### ARJUN MAIN BATTLE TANK (MK-1A)



**Date:** 17th February 2021

#### Key Features:

- The Prime Minister handed over the indigenously developed Arjun Main Battle Tank (MK-1A) to the Indian Army at a ceremony in Chennai.
- The Arjun tanks stand out for their 'Fin Stabilised Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot (FSAPDS)' ammunition and 120-mm calibre rifled gun.
- It also has a computer-controlled integrated fire control system with stabilised sighting that works in all lighting conditions.
- The secondary weapons include machine guns for anti-personnel and anti-aircraft and ground targets.
- The Mk-1A version has 14 major upgrades on the earlier version.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

#### E-CHHAWANI PORTAL AND MOBILE APP



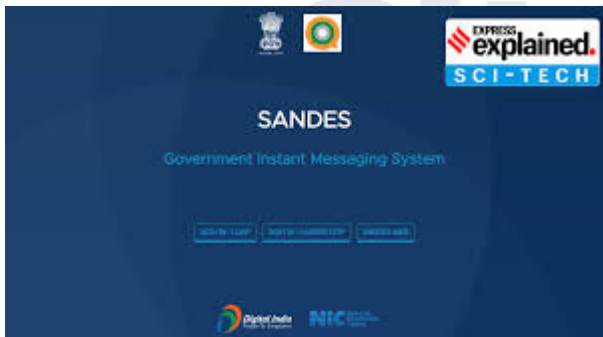
**Date:** 18th February 2021

**Key Features:**

- Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh launched an online portal 'E-Chhawani' and Mobile App.
- The E-Chhawani' and Mobile App is launched with an aim to provide online civic services to the residents of Contentment Boards across India.
- The portal and mobile app will help the residents to facilitate 'ease of living' and 'ease of doing'.
- It is developed by eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE), and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The portal and mobile app will deliver services like renewal of leases, birth and death certificate applications, water connections, trading license etc.
- Also, services like filing property tax and building tax will be added to the portal and app in future.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### INSTANT MESSAGING PLATFORM 'SANDES'



**Date:** 19th February 2021

**Key Features:**

- The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has launched an instant messaging platform called 'Sandes'. It is similar to WhatsApp.
- It is the upgraded version of NIC's Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS) app.
- The app can be used for all types of communication by anyone having either a mobile number or an email address.
- The app is also an initiative by NIC to give a boost to Indian made software.

## SPACE

### NASA'S PERSEVERANCE ROVER



**Date:** 17th February 2021

#### Key Features:

- NASA's Perseverance is set to land on Mars on February 18.
- It is the most sophisticated Mission.
- It is set to land at Jezero Crater, which was likely filled with water in the past.
- It is NASA's 4th generation, Mars Rover.
- Goal: To look for biosignatures in the dried-up lake bed at Jezero Crater.

## ENVIRONMENT

### EXTINCTION REBELLION



**Date:** 21st February 2021

## Key Features:

- Delhi Police have named environmental activists Disha Ravi, Nikita Jacob, and Shantanu Muluk, who are volunteers of this global environment movement.
- The Extinction Rebellion, also referred to as 'XR' was initially launched in the United Kingdom on October 31, 2018, as a response to a report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
- Now, it is a global movement which seeks to “rebel”, and asks groups to “self-organise”, without the need for anyone’s permission, to come up with collective action plans as long as they adhere to the group’s core principles and values.
- It is a decentralised, international and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency.



disha  
Nurturing Ambitions