



Current Affairs - March 2021 to August 2021

Month

Type



- ▶ **166** Current Affairs were found in **Last Six Months** for Type - **International**

International

1. ▶ **Global Youth Development Index** by *Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Division* -

- ✎ It measures progress on youth development in 183 countries, calculated using five main domains - education, health and well-being, employment and opportunity, civic participation and political participation.
- ✎ India is ranked **122nd** across 181 countries.
- ✎ Top 5 - Germany, Denmark, Australia, Switzerland, United Kingdom (UK).
- ✎ Bottom 3 - Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali.















2. ▶ 10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021 -


- ✎ It ranked 3228 billionaires from 2,402 companies and 68 countries.
- ✎ Top 5 - Elon Musk (197 Billion USD), Jeff Bezos (189 Billion USD), Brnard Arnault (114 Billion USD), Bill Gates (110 Billion USD), Mark Zuckerberg (101 Billion USD)
- ✎ India's Mukesh Ambani is ranked 8th Globally, with net worth 83 Billion USD.

3. ▶ 15 Indian universities named in Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2020, also known as **Shanghai Ranking**.

- ✎ Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore has been listed in 501-600 bracket globally, while it tops among Indian universities.

4. ▶ 23 nations, including India, collectively launched a bold new plan called **Mission Innovation 2.0**, during *Innovating to Net Zero Summit* hosted by Chile.
 - ✎ It aims to spearhead a decade of innovation for global investment in clean energy research and development.
 - ✎ It is 2nd phase of global Mission Innovation initiative, launched alongside Paris Agreement at 2015 COP21 conference.
5. ▶ 27 Nations grouping European Union (EU) joined *Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative* of India, which aims to promote disaster-resilient infrastructure.
 - ✎ It was launched by India in 2019, to promote research in areas of infrastructure risk management, financing, and recovery mechanisms.
6. ▶ 7 Indian companies Named in 2021 Fortune's Global 500 list of top 500 enterprises globally, measured by revenues.
 - ✎ Indian Companies in List with Global Ranks -
 - ✎ Reliance Industries (155)
 - ✎ State Bank of India (205)
 - ✎ Indian Oil (212)
 - ✎ Oil & Natural Gas (243)
 - ✎ Rajesh Exports (348)
 - ✎ Tata Motors (357)
 - ✎ Bharat Petroleum (394)
 - ✎ Top 5 Overall -
 - ✎ Walmart (US)
 - ✎ State Grid (China)
 - ✎ Amazon (US)
 - ✎ China National Petroleum (China)
 - ✎ Sinopec (China)
7. ▶ *Economic Freedom Index 2021* released by Heritage Foundation (US) -
 - ✎ Top 3 - Singapore (1) , New Zealand (2), Australia (3)
 - ✎ Bottom 3 - Suriname (169), Iran (168), Turkmenistan (167)
 - ✎ **India** ranked **121**.
 - ✎ Neighbors - Bangladesh (121), Sri Lanka (131), China (107), Pakistan (152)
8. ▶ *World's 50 Greatest Leaders* list for 2021, released by Fortune Magazine -

-  New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern topped The List, followed by mRNA Pioneers and Dan Schulman (PayPal CEO)
- 9. ▶ **Auckland** (New Zealand) topped EIU Global Liveability Ranking 2021.
 -  Top 5 - Auckland (New Zealand), Osaka (Japan), Adelaide (Australia), Wellington (New Zealand), Tokyo (Japan)
- 10. ▶ **Global Peace Index 2021** by Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) -
 -  India ranked **135th**, compared to 139th rank last year.
 -  Top 5 - Iceland (1), New Zealand (2), Denmark (3), Portugal (4), Slovenia (5)
 -  Bottom 5 -Afghanistan (163), Yemen (162), Syria (161)
 -  Neighbors - China (100), Pakistan (150), Sri Lanka (95), Bangladesh (91)
- 11. ▶ **US India Artificial Intelligence Initiative** has been launched by Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF), to focus on AI cooperation in critical areas that are priorities for both nations.
- 12. ▶ **United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan** will establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform to enhance regional connectivity.
- 13. ▶ **World Competitiveness Index 2021** report by *Institute for Management Development* (IMD) -
 -  India ranked 43rd, same as last year.
 -  Top 3 - Switzerland (1), Sweden (2), Denmark (3).
- 14. ▶ A United Nations report called to scale up Carbon Capture, Use and Storage (CCUS) Technology, to boost efforts under Paris Agreement on Climate change which aims for net-zero emissions goal in order to limit global warming.
 -  CCUS is a significant carbon emissions reduction technology, comprising capturing CO₂ from fuel combustion or industrial processes, transporting it through ship / pipeline, and using it to create valuable products / services or store it permanently underground in geological formations.
- 15. ▶ According to report by British company HouseFresh -
 -  Bangladesh was most polluted country in 2020, followed by Pakistan and India and Mongolia.
 -  Among cities, Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh) named 2nd most polluted globally, with China's Hotan at top.
- 16. ▶ Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani left Afghanistan after surrendering to Taliban forces, which entered Kabul soon after US Withdrew its forces from Afghanistan.
 -  Taliban called it an end to War in Afghanistan, that started in 2001 when US invaded Afghanistan and toppled Taliban-ruled Islamic Emirate. Taliban has now regained power after 19 years and 8 months insurgency against allied NATO and Afghan Armed Forces.
 -  It was longest war in US history, surpassing Vietnam War (1955–1975) by approx 5 months.
 -  Also -

 India announced a new category of electronic visas to fast-track applications from Afghans who wish to leave Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, called *e-Emergency X-Misc Visa*.

 India termed Afghanistan evacuation mission as ***Operation Devi Shakti***, to evacuate Indians from Afghanistan after Taliban's takeover.

17. ▶ Africa become first continent to complete collection of comprehensive digital use data and land-use change data under **Open DEAL Initiative**.

 DEAL stands for *Data for the Environment, Agriculture, and Land Initiative*.

18. ▶ African Union suspended membership of Republic of **Mali**, after second military coup detention of a president and prime minister in nine months.


 Military coup leader Colonel Goita had ordered arrest of country's interim President N'Daw and Prime Minister Ouane recently, causing global outrage.

19. ▶ African forest elephant (*Loxodonta cyclotis*) is now listed as Critically Endangered and African savanna elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) as Endangered on *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, after decades of unchecked poaching and hunting.


 Upto now, African elephants were treated as a single species, listed as Vulnerable. This is first time the two species have been assessed separately for IUCN Red List.

20. ▶ Apple announced first-of-its-kind carbon removal initiative, called ***the Restore Fund***, which will invest in forestry projects. It is launched in partnership with *Conservation International* and *Goldman Sachs*.

21. ▶ As Per OECD -

 China, US, India, and Luxembourg attracted most FDI in pandemic-hit 2020, with global FDI flows came down 38 % to 15-year low, at \$846 billion.


 China overtook US as leading destination for FDI in 2020.

 India's FDI inflows had jumped 13 % to \$57 billion in calendar year 2020.

22. ▶ As per 16th *Global Wind Report 2021* by *Global Wind Energy Council* -

 2020 was best year in history for the global wind industry, as this sector installed 93GW of new capacity in 2020. This represents a 53% year-on-year increase.

 As of now, 743 GW wind power capacity has been installed worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO₂ annually.

 However, report shows that current rate of wind power installed will not be enough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. World needs to install a minimum of 180 GW of new wind energy every year, to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

- ✎ As of now, total installed wind power capacity in **India** is approx **39 GW**, fourth largest in world (after China, US and Germany).
 - ✎ Report says that Due to several constraints, India may miss its 2022 Renewable Energy Targets of 175 Gigawatt green energy capacity by December 2022. India has pledged an NDC of 33-35 % reduction in carbon emissions intensity of its economy by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, apart from 40 % non fossil fuel-based power generation by 2030.
23. ▶ As per 2021 Global Crypto Adoption Index by *Chainalysis*, India ranks second in terms of crypto adoption, behind Vietnam.
24. ▶ As per 3rd edition of Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking -
- ✎ Top 3 -
 - ✎ University of Manchester (UK)
 - ✎ University of Sydney (Australia)
 - ✎ RMIT University (Australia)
 - ✎ India -
 - ✎ Top 3 Indian Universities -
 - ✎ Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (81st)
 - ✎ JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research (101 - 200)
 - ✎ Lovely Professional University (101 - 200)
25. ▶ As per 6th edition of UN Sustainable Development Report (2021) -
- ✎ India ranked 120th.
 - ✎ Top 3 - Finland, Sweden, Denmark
 - ✎ Neighbors - China (57), Pakistan (129), Bangladesh (109), Sri Lanka (87)
26. ▶ As per *Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) 2021* by *Shanghai Ranking* -
- ✎ Top 5 Universities Globally -
 - ✎ Harvard University (US)
 - ✎ Stanford University (US)
 - ✎ University of Cambridge (UK)
 - ✎ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US)
 - ✎ University of California (US)
 - ✎ Indian Universities in List -
 - ✎ None of the Indian universities could make it to the top 100 spots.
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore is only Indian institute to have scored a rank in the top 500.

 India has 14 entries in global 1000.

27. ▶ As per *Global Skills Report 2021* by Coursera -

 India is ranked 67th globally.

 Top 3 - Switzerland, Luxembourg, Austria

28. ▶ As per *Safe Cities Index 2021* by *Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)*. Copenhagen scored 82.4 points out of 100, to top the fourth edition of the EIU's biennial index, which measures the level of urban safety. Yan -


 Copenhagen (Denmark) is named world's safest city, Followed by Toronto (Canada), Singapore, Sydney (Australia), Tokyo (Japan)

 Indian Cities in List - New Delhi (48), Mumbai (50).

29. ▶ As per *World Air Quality Report 2020* by IQAir, 22 of world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally.

30. ▶ As per Annual *International Intellectual Property Index* released by US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) -

 India ranked 40 among 53 ranked economies.


 Top - US (1), UK (2), Germany (3), France (4)

31. ▶ As per BP's Statistical Review of World Energy, Top Crude Oil Suppliers to India in 2020 - Iraq (47 MT), Saudi Arabia (38 MT), UAE (22 MT) and USA (10.7 MT).

32. ▶ As per Hurun Global 500 Most Valuable Companies list 2021 -

 Apple is world's most valuable company (Valued at USD 2443 billion), followed by Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet, Facebook and Tencent.

 Globally, US has most (243 companies) in list, followed by China (47), Japan (30) and UK (24).


 India ranks 9th with 12 companies. Reliance Industries (USD 188 billion) ranked 57th globally and is top Indian company in list.

33. ▶ As per International Energy Agency (IEA) report, Global CO₂ emissions will surge by 1.5 billion tonnes in 2021, to 33 billion tonnes.

 This will be 2nd largest increase in history. Key driver is coal demand which will grow by 4.5.

34. ▶ As per London-based property consultant *Knight Frank's* Global Prime Residential Index for Q1 2021, Indian Cities' Ranks is topped by New Delhi (32nd globally) and Global list is topped by Shenzhen (China).

35. ▶ As per Swiss National Bank (SNB), India ranks 51st in terms of Holding money in Swiss Banks during 2020, with 2.55 billion (INR 20706 Crores) Swiss Francs (CHF) of Indians' money stored in swiss banks.

 Top 3 - UK (CHF 377 billion), US (152 billion).

36. ▶ As per World Trade Organisation (WTO), India entered top ten agricultural produce exporters in 2019, ranking 9th with share of 3.1% in global agricultural exports.

37. ▶ As per report by *Rhodium Group*, China emits 27 % greenhouse gas pollution of total global emission, US 2nd with 11 % and India 3rd (6 %).
38. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) launched *Asia Pacific Tax Hub*, to create an inclusive platform to promote strategic policy dialogue, improve knowledge sharing and strengthen coordination on tax policy and administration matters.
39. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) partnered with Global NGO *Habitat for Humanity International* to help microfinance institutions (MFIs) deliver housing loans to low-income families in rural and peri-urban areas of India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Philippines.
40. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) raised 307 million USD from its first panda bond issue in more than a decade, representing its largest-ever borrowing in an Asian local currency. It pays 3.2 % annual coupon and features a 5 year bullet maturity redeeming in March 2026.
41. ▶ At 2021 UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, *Tata Communications* announced launch of *School of Hope and Empowerment (S.H.E.)* in collaboration with The Better India, to support women from small towns to overcome key barriers to entrepreneurship.
42. ▶ At 74th World Health Assembly, Switzerland and World Health Organization (WHO) launched first *WHO BioHub* Facility, to enhance rapid sharing of viruses and other pathogens between laboratories and partners globally.
 - ✎ Under the agreement, Switzerland will make available to WHO the *Spiez Biocontainment Laboratory*, as a repository for Sars-CoV-2 viruses or other pathogens with epidemic or pandemic potential.
 - ✎ The Assembly was chaired by India's Health Minister Harsha Vardhan, as WHO's Executive Board chairman.
43. ▶ Australia announced grant of AUD 1.4 million (8.12 crores INR) under **Australian-India Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership (AIPOIP)**, an initiative under Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in Indo-Pacific.
 - ✎ AIPOIP is a four-year grant program (2020-2024). The grant round one of this initiative will be commissioned in 2021.
 - ✎ India launched Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) at East Asia Summit in Bangkok in 2019, with focus on 7 pillars. Australia is leading partner on maritime ecology pillar.
44. ▶ BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Nations' space agencies signed agreement for cooperation in remote sensing satellite data sharing, under India's BRICS Chairship.
 - ✎ As per ISRO, it will enable building a virtual constellation of specified remote sensing satellites of BRICS space agencies and their respective ground stations will receive data.
45. ▶ BRO's Project DANTAK completed its Diamond Jubilee (60 Years) in Bhutan, which was established on April 24, 1961.
 - ✎ Amid importance of connectivity in socio-economic development and growth of Bhutan, DANTAK was tasked to construct motorable roads in Bhutan.
46. ▶ Barakah nuclear power plant in Al Dhafrah region of Abu Dhabi began commercial operations, as first nuclear power plant in UAE.

- ✎ It is being built by Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) and Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO).
 - ✎ Upon completion, It will have four reactors with 5,600 megawatts (MW) of total capacity, which will meet 25% of UAE's demand and will save 21 million tons of annual CO2 emissions.
47. ▶ Canada joined *Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)*, an initiative launched by India in 2019, at UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019. CDRI now includes 22 countries, 4 international partners and two private sector organisations.
48. ▶ Central American Nation **El Salvador** became first country to grant legal tender status to **Bitcoin**, the world's largest cryptocurrency.
49. ▶ Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries accepted **Sinatra Doctrine**, to deal with increasing Chinese influence.
- ✎ Sinatra Doctrine will be based on two pillars - Continuing cooperation with China, to address global challenges and Strengthening strategic sovereignty of European Union by protecting technological sectors of its economy.
 - ✎ Sinatra doctrine was name used by Soviet government of Mikhail Gorbachev to describe their policy to allow neighbouring Warsaw Pact states to determine their internal affairs. The name was taken from the song "My Way" which was popularized by Frank Sinatra.
50. ▶ Centre for World University Rankings 2021-22 -
- ✎ Top 5 - Harvard University (US), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US), Stanford University (US), University of Cambridge (UK), and Oxford University (UK).
 - ✎ India -
 - ✎ 68 Indian institutes have made it to the list of top 2000 higher education institutes across world, led by IIM-Ahmedabad (415th) and Indian Institute of Science (459th).
51. ▶ Chandler **Good Government Index** 2021 -
- ✎ India ranked **49th** in list.
 - ✎ Top 3 - Finland (1), Switzerland (2), Singapore (3)
 - ✎ Neighbors - China (40), Pakistan (90), Sri Lanka (74)
52. ▶ China approved 3 child policy, to prevent a steep decline in birth rate, marking an end to its strict two-child policy rule.
53. ▶ China began operating world's second-largest hydropower station, as 289 meter high Baihetan Hydropower Station in Southwest China, despite environmental damage concerns. It has capacity of 16000 MW.
- ✎ China's Three Gorges Dam is world's largest hydro power station in terms of installed capacity, with 22500 MW Capacity, built at Yangtze River.
54. ▶ China has been awarded a malaria-free certification from WHO, Following a 70-year effort, improving from 30 million cases annually in 1940s.

55. ▶ China indefinitely suspended all activity under *China-Australia Strategic Economic Dialogue*, amid strained relations between two nations.
56. ▶ China, largest greenhouse emitter in world, launched its first national emissions-trading scheme, called carbon market, with trading in Shanghai opening at a price of 48 yuan (\$7.40) per ton of carbon.
57. ▶ Chinese Smartphone maker Xiaomi surpassed Apple to become world's second-largest smartphone maker for first-time, only behind Samsung.
- ✎ Xiapomi had 17% worldwide smartphone shipments for second quarter of 2021, behind Samsung's 19% and ahead of Apple's 14 %.
58. ▶ Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic Updates (April 2021) -
- ✎ Carnivac-Cov, world's first-ever COVID-19 vaccine for animals has been registered by Russia.
 - ✎ Carl Bildt (former Prime Minister of Sweden) has been appointed as WHO Special Envoy for Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator).
 - ✎ Punjab Govt named Bollywood actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood Ambassador for Punjab's COVID vaccination programme.
 - ✎ Govt. approved Pharma Firm *Dr. Reddy's* application for emergency use authorisation to Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine, as 3rd vaccine to receive emergency use approval in India after locally manufactured *Bharat Biotech's Covaxin* and *Oxford-Astrazeneca's Covishield*.
 - ✎ Amid Ongoing second wave of Pandemic, Govt announced free food grains @ 5 Kg per person per month to nearly 80 Crore beneficiaries under National Food Security Act 2013 (NFSA), for May and June 2021, on same pattern as earlier "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)". Govt will bear full expenditure of over 26000 Crores for the same.
 - ✎ Australia cancelled *Pitch Black 2020* multilateral air combat training exercise, amid ongoing pandemic.
 - ✎ Google announced 135 crores funding support for India's pandemic battle, amid raging 2nd wave of Covid-19 Pandemic.
 - ✎ Norway announced USD 2.4 million support for medical services in India, amid 2nd wave of Covid-19 Pandemic.
59. ▶ Covid-19 Pandemic Updates (August 2021) -
- ✎ UK moved India from red to amber list, lifting mandatory 10-day hotel quarantine for fully vaccinated passengers from India. Under UK's traffic light system for international travel, those returning from countries in Amber list are not subjected to compulsory institutional quarantine, instead, they have to undergo a 10-day quarantining at home.
 - ✎ Bhubaneswar (Odisha) became first Indian city to achieve 100 % COVID-19 vaccination.
 - ✎ World Health Organization (WHO) created a new advisory group named *The International Scientific Advisory Group for Origins of Novel Pathogens* (SAGO), to systematically study emergence of future emerging pathogens with pandemic potential.

- Amid need to establish more facilities to regulate testing of COVID-19 vaccines, Govt identified 2 Autonomous Institutes of Department of Biotechnology (DBT) - National Institute of Animal Biotechnology Hyderabad (NIAB) and National Centre for Cell Science Pune (NCCS), for upgradation as Central Drug Laboratories (CDLs).
- Maharashtra Govt launched a special mission for women from poor families who have lost their husbands to Covid-19 infection. Under this, a bunch of 18 schemes and services will be provided to these women.

60. ▶ Covid-19 Pandemic Updates (July 2021) -

- World Bank added 8 billion USD in aid for Coronavirus vaccines for developing countries, now totaling 20 billion USD.
- US announced additional \$41 million assistance to help India respond to COVID-19 pandemic, taking total aid to over \$200 million.
- Kerala Govt launched campaign *Mathru Kavacham*, to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all the pregnant women in state.
- IMF approved general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) of US\$650 billion, to boost global liquidity, as IMF's largest SDR allocation ever.
- World Bank Group entity International Finance Corporation invested \$16.5 million in genetics diagnostics and research company *MedGenome*, to increase access to COVID-19 testing in India.
- Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a scheme to provide social and financial security to women who have lost their husbands to COVID-19, named *Chief Minister's COVID-19 Widows Support Scheme*. Under it, one-time assistance of 2.5 lakh each will be given to such women whose family income is less than 5 lakh per annum.
- Saudi Arabia announced 3 year travel ban and penalties for citizens who visit countries on its red list, which includes India. Saudi's red list has nations which are deemed as areas of high COVID-19 infections.
- Researchers from IIT Hyderabad developed India's first Rapid Covid-19 RNA Test kit that allows self-testing at home, called 'COVIHOME.

61. ▶ Covid-19 Pandemic Updates (June 2021) -

- NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation launched *Surakshit Hum Surakshit Tum* Abhiyaan in 112 Aspirational Districts, under *Aspirational Districts Collaborative*, to assist district administrations in providing home-care support to Covid-19 patients with mild symptoms.
- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) devised an online tracking portal *Bal Swaraj* (COVID-Care link) for children in need of care and protection, during Covid-19 Pandemic.
- As per International Labour Organisation report *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021*, global unemployment rate will be 5.7% in 2022, 6.3% in 2021 & there will be no recovery in global jobs until 2023.

- ✎ Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma launched CM Sishu Seva Scheme, to help children orphaned due to COVID-19. State government would give 3500 per month per child including Central government support of 2000.
- ✎ Govt launched 'Project O2 for India' to step up production of medical oxygen to meet the potential increase in demand due to further expected waves of pandemic.
- ✎ Madhya Pradesh Govt launched *Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti Abhiyan* to make people aware of COVID-19 pandemic, to avoid its spread.
- ✎ Israel became first mask-free country in COVID-19 period, by ending rule of applying masks in Public places, after majority of population has been vaccinated.
- ✎ IDFC FIRST Bank launched *Ghar Ghar Ration* Program, an employee-funded program for its low-income customers whose livelihoods are affected by COVID-19.
- ✎ World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) announced a joint platform to help nations plug gaps in accessing COVID-19 vaccines, technologies, and treatments.
- ✎ World Health Organization (WHO) announced to set up a hub in South Africa to give companies from poor and middle-income countries the know-how and the licenses to produce Coronavirus Vaccines.
- ✎ Delhi Govt launched Mukhyamantri Covid-19 Pariwar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana, to provide financial assistance to families who lost their members to Covid-19. Under it, 50000 ex-gratia will be given to families that lost a member to Covid-19 and an additional 2500 per month will be given if the deceased was only earner.
- ✎ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik announced new scheme **Ashirbad**, for education, health and maintenance of Children orphaned due to COVID-19. Under it, 2500 per month will be deposited in bank accounts of family members who have taken responsibility for children after death of parents.


62. ▶ Covid-19 Pandemic Updates (May 2021) -

- ✎ Odisha Govt announced Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana for journalists, declaring journalists as frontline Covid warriors. It will provide INR 2 lakh health insurance cover and 15 Lakh Life Insurance cover for journalists.
- ✎ Armed forces launched operation “CO-JEET” to aid COVID-19 relief efforts.
- ✎ Serum Institute of India (SII) announced to expand its vaccine business in UK, with investment of £240 million.
- ✎ Himachal Govt launched dedicated Covid-19 Helpline at 'Mukhyamantri Sewa Sanklap Helpline 1100.
- ✎ Japan and UN Development Programme (UNDP) partnered to provide oxygen generation plants to North Eastern Region in India, amid 2nd wave of COVID pandemic.

- ✎ Himachal Govt launched a state-wide wellness programme 'AYUSH Ghar Dwar', to promote Yoga & Ayurveda during 2nd wave of pandemic.
 - ✎ Jharkhand govt Launched *Amrit Vahini* App, to enable booking Covid beds Online.
 - ✎ Chhattisgarh Govt Launched *Mahtari Dular Yojana*, under which it will bear expenses of education of children orphaned due to Covid-19.
 - ✎ Bihar government launched 'HIT Covid App' to ensure regular monitoring and tracking of Covid-19 patients who are in home isolation.
 - ✎ IMF proposed \$50 billion plan to end Covid-19 pandemic, with a target of vaccinating at least 40 % of world's population by end of 2021 and 60 % by end of 2022.
 - ✎ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) launched *SAMVEDNA (Sensitizing Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development and Necessary Acceptance)* Toll-Free Helpline (1800-121-2830), to provide psycho-social mental support for Children affected during COVID 19 Pandemic.
 - ✎ Maharashtra government launched *Mission Oxygen Self-Reliance*, to meet state's oxygen needs, giving Special incentives to oxygen-producing industries.
 - ✎ Haryana launched *Sanjeevani Pariyojana*, to provide for supervised and quick medical care at home largely for people in rural areas with mild to moderate symptoms.
 - ✎ UK Govt announced developmet of Global Pandemic Radar, as an advanced international pathogen surveillance network to identify COVID-19 variants and emerging diseases.
 - ✎ PM Narendra Modi approved creation of *PM-CARES for Children scheme*, for children orphaned due to COVID-19. It includes free education and creating 10 lakh corpus for each child, which will be given to them on attaining age of 23.
63. ▶ Danish Red Cross launched first of its kind catastrophe bond for volcano-related disasters, which will enable quick financial aid to those who are suffering because of eruption of 10 volcanoes in Chile, Ecuador, Cameroon, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Indonesia. Aim is to raise \$3 million with launch of this bond.
64. ▶ Debswana Diamond Company discovered world's third-largest diamond in Jwaneng mine in Botswana (South Africa), which measures 73mm long, 52mm wide, and 27mm thick, and weighs 1098 carats.
- ✎ At present, largest diamond ever recorded is 3106-carat Cullinan Diamond, found in South Africa in 1905.
65. ▶ Denmark Parliament approved building a 20 billion-kroner (\$3.3 billion) artificial island in Copenhagen, to house over 35000 people.
66. ▶ Denmark signed International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement (ISA FA) and Instrument of Ratification with India, becoming first country to ratify it after amendments that went into force in January 2021. ISA is an alliance of 121 countries initiated by India.

67. ▶ Department of Science and Technology launched India Science Research Fellowship (ISRF) Programme for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand researchers to work in Indian Universities and Research Institutions.
- ✍ It has been implemented since 2015, to engage with neighbouring countries to develop S&T partnerships.
 - ✍ In 2021, 40 scholars from 6 countries have been awarded under ISRF Programme.
68. ▶ Deutsche Bank and Continuum Green Energy subsidiary *Continuum Energy Levanter* executed world's first green hedging transaction with a second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework.
- ✍ The FX hedge solution is for 6 years tenor in USD/INR on notional of US\$185 million.
69. ▶ Egypt announced discovery of a 'Lost Golden City' that was buried under sands of capital of Luxor in Egypt for past 3000 years.
- ✍ This has been identified as most important discovery since unearthing of King Tutankhamun's tomb approximately 100 years ago.
 - ✍ The 3400-year-old royal city was built by Amenhotep III, abandoned by his heretic son, Akhenaten, and contains well preserved remains.
70. ▶ El Salvador became first Central American country be certified malaria-free, by World Health Organization, with no indigenous transmission of Malaria for previous three consecutive years.
71. ▶ Energy **Transition Index Report 2021** released by World Economic Forum -
- ✍ Top 3 - Sweden (1), Norway (2), Denmark (3)
 - ✍ India ranked **87th** out of 115 Nations in List.
 - ✍ Neighbors - China (68), Pakistan (104), Bangladesh (97), Sri Lanka (69)
72. ▶ European Commission proposed to put world's first carbon border tax, on imports of carbon-intensive steel, aluminium, cement, fertilisers and electricity, as part of a programme to meet its new climate target.
- ✍ As proposed, The border levy should be phased in from 2026. It is designed to protect European industries from competitors abroad not subject to the same carbon levies.
73. ▶ European Parliament ratified post-Brexit trade deal between European Union and United Kingdom, clearing hurdle towards ratification of EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which will ensure post-brexit continuation of tariff and quota-free trade.
74. ▶ European Union approved Norway, Canada and US to participate in **Permanent Structured Cooperation** (PESCO) defence initiative, as first time EU bloc has allowed a third state to participate in PESCO project.
- ✍ The countries will now participate in Military Mobility Project in Europe, aimed at overcoming delays in moving troops across Europe.
75. ▶ European Union released *2030 Digital Compass Plan*, to counter EU's reliance on key technologies owned by Chinese and US companies, as exposed by Covid-19 pandemic.


- ✍️ Plan will be presented to EU Parliament for final approval, aiming to enable EU to produce fifth of global output of cutting-edge semiconductors by 2030. EU also seeks to make its first quantum computer in five years.
- 76. ▶ Facebook and Google will build new subsea cables from US to Singapore and Indonesia, called Echo and Bifrost that will provide vital new connections between Asia-Pacific region and North America.
- 77. ▶ Financial Action Task Force (FATF) added four countries - Haiti, Malta, Philippines and South Sudan, to list of *jurisdiction under increased monitoring* for strategic deficiencies.
 - ✍️ FATF had earlier identified 17 countries as having strategic deficiencies, taking the number now up to 21.
- 78. ▶ Geneva-based World Trade Organization revised upwards growth forecast of global merchandise trade in FY 22 (2021-22) to **8 %**, after fall of 5.3 % in FY 21 (2020-21), amid COVID-19 pandemic.
- 79. ▶ Global **Gender Gap Report 2021** by World Economic Forum -
 - ✍️ India slipped 28 places, to rank **140th** among 156 countries.
 - ✍️ Top 3 - Iceland (1), Finland (2), Norway (3)
 - ✍️ Bottom 3 - Afghanistan (156), Yemen (155), Iraq (154)
 - ✍️ Neighbors - Pakistan (153), China (107), Bangladesh (65), Sri Lanka (116)
- 80. ▶ Global Policing organization Interpol Launched ID-Art app to help law enforcers identify stolen art. It allows users to check art against 52,000 works registered as stolen on Interpol's database.
- 81. ▶ Google announced building an undersea cable, that will connect US, Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina, to bolster capacity of internet connection between these regions. It will be named *Firminia*, after a Brazilian abolitionist and author Maria Firminia dos Reis.
- 82. ▶ Henley Passport Index 2021 -
 - ✍️ India stands at number 84 on list, as Indian citizens can visit Visa-Free or Visa-on-Arrival in over 58 places.
 - ✍️ Top 3 - Japan (1), Singapore and Germany (2), South Korea (3)
- 83. ▶ Inclusive Internet Index 2021, released by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in partnership with Facebook -
 - ✍️ India has been ranked at **49th** spot, along with Thailand.
 - ✍️ Top 5 - Sweden (1), US (2), Spain (3), Australia (4), Hong Kong (5)
- 84. ▶ India and Israel signed a three-year work program (2021-2023) agreement for development in Agriculture cooperation, under Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP).
 - ✍️ India and Israel are implementing *INDO-ISRAEL Agricultural Project Centres of Excellence* and *INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence*.

 *INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence* is a new concept aimed at creating a model ecosystem in agriculture across 8 states, alongside 13 Centers of Excellence within 75 villages.

85. ▶ India and Maldives signed a contract for implementation of India-funded *Greater Male Connectivity Project*, as largest infrastructure initiative in Maldives.


 Under it, 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link will be built to connect capital city Male with adjoining islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

 It has been Funded under a grant of \$100 million and a line of credit of \$400 million from India.

 Also, India's Shapoorji Pallonji Group's infrastructure arm Afcons signed agreement with Republic of Maldives, to construct Male to Thilafushi Link project, popularly called Greater Male' Connectivity Project (GMCP).

86. ▶ India and Norway will work in area of marine spatial planning in the oceanic space for next five years, under **Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative** MOU signed in 2019.

 Both countries will extend support for sustainable ocean resources utilisation to advance economic and social development in coastal areas, known as Marine Spatial Planning (MSP).


 In primary state, National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) will develop a marine spatial planning framework for Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

87. ▶ India and Russia announced establishment of a new **2+2 dialogue** at foreign and defence minister level, to enhance co-operation.

 So far, India has this mechanism with US, Japan, and Australia.

88. ▶ India and US re-established US-India Homeland Security Dialogue, which was earlier called-off by Earlier US Prez Donald Trump. It aims at discussing important issues such as cybersecurity, emerging technology and violent extremism.

89. ▶ India and several members *OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting* adopted a high-level statement containing an outline of a consensus solution to address tax challenges arising from digitalisation of economy.

 Proposed solution consists of two components - Pillar One which is about reallocation of additional share of profit to the market jurisdictions and Pillar Two consisting of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.

90. ▶ India announced operationalization of *BRICS Agricultural Research Platform*, prepared and set up in India for strengthening cooperation in field of agricultural research & innovations amongst BRICS members.

 It was launched during 11th meeting of BRICS Agriculture Ministers, attended by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on India's Behalf.

 Also, Action Plan for 2021-24 for agricultural cooperation of BRICS countries was also adopted.

91. ▶ India assumed rotational presidency of 15 member UN Security Council (UNSC) for month of August 2021, from France.

 Presidency of UN Security Council is held by each of members in turn for one month.

92. ▶ India got elected to 3 UN Economic and Social Council bodies - Executive Board of UN Women, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice- CCPCJ, and Executive Board of World Food Programme.


 UN ECOSOC is one of 6 major organs of UN, responsible for coordinating social and economic fields of UN.

93. ▶ India has been elected to 2 key bodies of Universal Postal Union (UPU), during 27th UPU Congress in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). These Bodies are Council of Administration(CA) and Postal Operations Council (POC).

94. ▶ India has been elected to UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of six main organs of United Nations, for 2022-24 term.


95. ▶ India has been ranked 14th among 114 countries in *World Giving Index 2021*, by Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).

 List has been topped by Indonesia, followed by Kenya, Nigeria, Myanmar and Australia.

 World Giving Index offers glimpse of global trends in generosity, and people from which country are most likely to engage in social activities.

96. ▶ India in collaboration with UN launched **UNITE AWARE** technology platform for peacekeeping missions, aimed at providing terrain-related information to peacekeepers. It was launched in presence of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at UN headquarters in New York City (US).

 India has contributed USD 1.64 million for UNITE Aware Project.

 Note that India had assumed Presidency of 15-nation UN Security Council for August 2021.

97. ▶ India moved up to 3rd spot on EY's Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index, due to good performance on solar photovoltaic (PV) front. Top 5 consist of US, China, India, UK and France.

98. ▶ India ranked 10th in **Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020**, released by International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

 Top 3 -


 US (1), UK and Saudi Arabia (2nd), Estonia (3rd).

99. ▶ India ranked 20th among top 100 countries named in **Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2021** by Startup Blink.


 Top 5 - US, UK, Israel, Canada and Germany.

100. ▶ India remained largest recipient of remittances in 2020, followed by China and Mexico, as per *Migration and Development Brief* report by World Bank.


 India -

 Remittances received by India in 2020 were USD 83 billion, slightly lower than USD 83.3 billion in 2019.


 Remittances outflow From India in 2020 was USD 7 billion, against USD 7.5 billion in 2019.


 Global remittance inflow was USD 540 billion in 2020, approx 2 % lower as compared to USD 548 billion in 2019.


- ✎ Largest remittance-sending country in 2020 was US (USD 68 billion), followed by UAE (USD43 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD34.5 billion).
- 101. ▶ India retained its position as 2nd largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in UK, after US, in 2020.
 - ✎ Indian companies invested in 99 projects and created 4,830 jobs in Britain.
 - ✎ US companies in 389 projects and created 19301 new jobs in 2020-21 in UK.
- 102. ▶ India retained top spot with 25.5 billion real-time payment transactions, followed by China with 15.7 billion transactions.
 - ✎ In 2020, transaction volume in India for Online transactions stood at 38.4 %, while paper-based payments were 61.4 %.
 - ✎ By 2025, Online payments share in India will rise to 71.7 %, leaving paper-based transactions at 28.3 %.
- 103. ▶ India scored 90.32% in United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, seeing remarkable jump from score of 78.49% in 2019. India saw improvement in all 5 key indicators, with notable 100% score in Transparency. Others -
 - ✎ Formalities: 95.83% in 2021 (from 87.5% in 2019)
 - ✎ Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation: 88.89% in 2021 (from 66.67% in 2019)
 - ✎ Paperless Trade: 96.3% in 2021 (from 81.48% in 2019)
 - ✎ Cross-Border Paperless Trade: 66.67% in 2021 (from 55.56% in 2019)
- 104. ▶ India, Italy and Japan launched a trilateral partnership to create stability around Indo-Pacific region, and counter threats from china.
- 105. ▶ India, Japan and Australia launched **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative** (SCRI), to build resilient supply chains in Indo-Pacific region, to reduce dependence on China.
 - ✎ India was represented virtually by Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal.
- 106. ▶ Indian Firm Wipro joined an initiative by World Economic Forum (WEF) called *Partnering for Racial Justice in Business initiative*, to help promote culture of inclusion, diversity, justice and equity for the people coming from different racial backgrounds at workplace.
- 107. ▶ Indian IT Firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) opened its first European innovation centre in Amsterdam (The Netherlands), under *TCS Pace Ports Network*, to bring universities, startups and government together and help use technology to solve sustainability challenges.
- 108. ▶ Indian Naval Ships visited Mongla (Bangladesh), to attend *Swarnim Vijay Varsh* celebrations of Bangladesh, which commemorates 50 years of Bangladesh's liberation war against Pakistan in 1971.
- 109. ▶ Indian PSU ONGC Videsh (OVL) lost development rights for Farzad-B giant gas field in Iran to Iranian Petropars Group, amid Issues in negotiations between OVL and Iranian authorities.
 - ✎ OVL owns 40 % participating interest (PI) in block, with Indian Oil Corporation owning 40 % PI and with Oil India remaining 20 %.
 - ✎ National Iranian Oil Company signed contract worth \$1.78 billion with Petropars Group for development of Farzad-B Gas Field.

 This gas field has reserves of 651 billion cubic metres, and is expected to record 28 million metric standard cubic meters per day (MMSCMD) of production within 5 years. Notably, India's total gas consumption in FY21 was about 166 MMSCMD.

110. ▶ Indian renewable energy company *ReNew Power* has been included in World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Lighthouse Network, which recognises companies using new technologies to achieve environmentally sustainable and profitable growth.
111. ▶ Indo-Israel Joint Venture (IOC Phinergy Private Limited) between Indian Oil Corporation Limited (Indian Oil) and Israeli Firm Phinergy, has been launched. It plans to manufacture Aluminum-Air systems in India and develop fuel cells and indigenous hydrogen storage solutions for promoting green mobility.
112. ▶ International Criminal Police Organisation (*Interpol*) launched a new global database named *I-Familia*, to identify missing individuals through family DNA and to help police solve the cold cases in member countries.
113. ▶ International Monetary Fund (IMF) authorised USD 650 billion expansion in its lending resources, to provide more support for vulnerable countries amid coronavirus pandemic.

 This is highest such expansion in IMF History. Earlier in 2008 Global financial crisis, IMF had increased its resources by USD 250 billion.
114. ▶ Israel, India and UAE signed a trilateral partnership with Israel-based Firm Ecoppia, which is producing an innovative robotic solar cleaning technology in India for a landmark project in UAE.

 Ecoppia specializes in robotic solutions for solar, with its manufacturing base in India and over 2700 MW of global projects.
115. ▶ Italy launched its first-ever mega food park and food processing unit in India, at Fanidhar in Mehsana district of Gujarat, as first Indian-Italian food park project.
116. ▶ Japan ratified Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the free trade agreement between Australia, China, and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Japan became 3rd member to ratify this agreement, which was signed by 15 countries in November 2020.

 India has not joined RCEP agreement as its key concerns were not addressed.
117. ▶ Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) secured trademark registrations in 3 countries - Bhutan, UAE and Mexico, aimed at protecting identity of brand *Khadi* globally. Apart from these, KVIC's trademark applications are pending in 40 countries.
118. ▶ Larsen & Toubro secured engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contract from a consortium under Public Investments Fund of Saudi Arabia (PIF), for 1.5 GW Sudair Solar photovoltaic (PV) Project, considered to be largest solar project in Saudi Arabia.
119. ▶ Maldives Launched *Fiyavathi Renovation Project*, for young Maldivians, which is funded by India as part of India's total grant assistance of MVR 200 million to Maldives.

120. ▶ Marine ecosystem conservation Programme *Blue Nature Alliance* has been launched, Including 5 organizations such as Conservation International and Global Environment Facility (GEF). It Aims to -
- ✎ Conserve 18 million square kilometres of ocean in 5 years.
 - ✎ Protect 5% of world's ocean in 5 years.
 - ✎ Help achieve 30% ocean conservation by 2030.
121. ▶ Microsoft acquired AI speech tech firm **Nuance** for **\$19.7 billion**, as its second-biggest acquisition after LinkedIn (\$26 billion). It will help Microsoft's prowess in voice recognition and will give it a boost in the health care market.
- ✎ Nuance is known for its Dragon software which helps to transcribe speech using deep learning.
122. ▶ Microsoft and UK Govt partnered to build most powerful forecast weather and climate change supercomputer in world, to be operational by 2022.
123. ▶ Microsoft announced to retire its iconic Internet Explorer (IE) browser, On June 15, 2022. Afterwards, Microsoft will instead promote Microsoft Edge as its web browser offering to all users.
- ✎ Internet Explorer was once most widely used web browser, attaining a peak of about 95 % usage share by 2003.
 - ✎ Its usage share has since declined with launch of Firefox (2004) and Google Chrome (2008).
124. ▶ Microsoft launched its 1st Asia Pacific Public Sector Cyber Security Executive Council, which consists of policymakers and influencers from Brunei, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- ✎ It aims to accelerate public-private partnerships in cybersecurity and share threat intelligence.
125. ▶ Microsoft officially launched its new Windows operating system **Windows 11**, to succeed Windows 10, which was launched in 2015.
- ✎ Windows 11 has new user interface, a new Windows Store, and improvements to performance. It will also support Android apps via Amazon's app store.
126. ▶ MoU signed for execution of 679 MW Lower Arun Hydro Electric Project in Nepal, between India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) and Investment Board of Nepal.
- ✎ Lower Arun Hydro Electric Project is located in Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur Districts of Nepal. The project will not have any reservoir or dam and will be a tail race development of 900 MW Arun3 HEP. It will generate 2970 million units of electricity per annum. It is expected to cost around 1.3 Billion USD.
 - ✎ This is 2nd project awarded to SJVN in Nepal, after 900 MW Arun 3 Hydro Electric Project in Sankhuwasabha District.
127. ▶ New Zealand became first country to introduce a law that will require banks, insurers and investment managers to report impacts of climate change on their business.

- ✎ All banks / Insurerers with assets / AUM over than NZ\$1 billion (\$703 million), and all equity and debt issuers listed on stock exchange, will have to make disclosures.

- ✎ This is inline with New Zealand's aim to get to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

128. ▶ New Zealand signed US-led **Artemis Accords** with NASA, an international agreement to cooperate with NASA on peaceful, safe, sustainable, and transparent space exploration.

- ✎ Other Nations who have signed - Australia, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, Ukraine, UAE, UK, US.

- ✎ Artemis Accords is a US led effort to return humans to Moon by 2024, and to expand and deepen space exploration.

129. ▶ On 11 Apr 2021, Hashemite Kingdom of **Jordan** completed 100 years of of founding. On 11 April 1921, Emirate of Transjordan was established with Abdullah as Emir, after Independence from United Kingdom.

130. ▶ PM Narendra Modi Virtually inaugurated **Maitri Setu** between India and Bangladesh, along with with Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina.

- ✎ Maitri Setu has been built over **Feni** river, which flows between Indian boundary in Tripura and Bangladesh. 1.9-km-long bridge joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh, built at 133 Crores.

- ✎ With this, Tripura became 'Gateway of North East' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is 80 Kms from Sabroom.

- ✎ PM also laid foundation stone for setting up an Integrated Check Post at Sabroom.

131. ▶ PM Narendra Modi chaired high-level open debate on *Enhancing Maritime Security – A Case for International Cooperation*, at UN Security Council, making him first Indian PM to have chaired a UN Security Council open debate.

- ✎ On this occasion, UN Security Council adopted first-ever presidential statement on maritime security.

- ✎ Also, Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested creation of a maritime security body in UN Security Council, to address all issues regarding piracy, maritime crimes and terrorism.

- ✎ Notably, India assumed rotational presidency of 15 member UN Security Council (UNSC) for month of August 2021, from France.

132. ▶ PSUs REC Ltd and Power Finance Corporation (PFC) signed pact with Bhutan-based Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Ltd (KHEL), to finance a 600-megawatt hydroelectric project at Trashiyangtse (Bhutan).

- ✎ KHEL is a 50:50 joint venture between SJVN India and Druk Green Power Corporation (Bhutan).

133. ▶ Philippines become first country to get approval for commercial production of genetically modified “golden rice”, a variety of rice enriched with nutrients to help reduce childhood malnutrition.

- ✎ Golden rice has been developed by Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice) in partnership with International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

134. ▶ QS World University Rankings 2021 -

- ✎ Top 5 -

- ✎ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)

- ✎ Stanford University (USA)

- ✎ Harvard University (USA)

- ✎ California Institute of Technology (USA)

- ✎ University of Oxford (UK)

- ✎ Indian Universities in list -

- ✎ IIT Bombay ranked at top among 29 Indian Universities in overall List, ranked 172nd globally, followed by IISC Bangalore (185) and IIT Delhi (193).

135. ▶ QS World University Rankings 2022 -

- ✎ Top 5 -

- ✎ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US)

- ✎ University of Oxford (UK)

- ✎ Stanford University (US)

- ✎ University of Cambridge (UK)

- ✎ Harvard University (US)

- ✎ Indian Universities in List -

- ✎ IIT Bombay (177), IIT Delhi (185) and IISC Bangalore (186) are top 3 Indian Universities.

- ✎ Total 35 Indian Indian Universities have been included in List.

136. ▶ Rail Transportation between India & Nepal got a boost, with India and Nepal signing a Letter of Exchange (LoE) to India-Nepal Rail Services Agreement (RSA) 2004.

- ✎ With this, Cargoes in all categories of wagons that can carry freight on Indian Railways network within India, can also now carry freight to and from Nepal. This will reduce transportation costs for automobiles and certain other products whose carriage takes place in special wagons.


- ✎ This will allow market forces to come up in rail freight segment in Nepal, and will increase efficiency of Nepal Railways.

137. ▶ Russia and China began work of their biggest Joint Nuclear Power Project. Under it, Russia will jointly build four high-power nuclear power plants in two Chinese cities.

- ✎ Both countries signed a deal in 2018, to jointly build units 7 and 8 of Tianwan Nuclear Power Plant and units 3 and 4 of Xudapu Nuclear Power Plant.

138. ▶ Russia's lower house of parliament (*State Duma*) approved a bill to enable incumbent President Vladimir Putin to run for two more terms starting 2024, until 2036.
139. ▶ Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law to formalize Russia's exit from Open Skies treaty, after US President Joe Biden informed that US will not rejoin Open Skies Treaty.
- ✍ Earlier, Former US President Donald Trump pulled US out of Open Skies Treaty, claiming that Russia had violated the agreement that allows the two nations and their allies to monitor each another's airspace. US formally withdrew in November 2020.
140. ▶ Saudi Arabia joined US, Canada, Norway, and Qatar in forming a new platform called *Net Zero Producers Forum*, for oil and gas producers to discuss how to support implementation of Paris Agreement on climate change.
141. ▶ Singapore became first country to complete official process for ratification of **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** agreement.
- ✍ RCEP is world's largest trade pact, which was signed by all 10 ASEAN members and key partners including China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand at 4th RCEP leaders summit in November 2020.
 - ✍ India has so far kept itself away from the pact.
142. ▶ Singapore unveiled 60 MW Capacity Floating Solar Panel Farm, to help achieve goal of quadrupling its solar energy production by 2025, to tackle climate change.
- ✍ Notably, world's largest floating solar project is being developed at Omkareshwar dam (Narmada river), Madhya Pradesh. It will have 600MW capacity, and will begin operations in 2022-23.
143. ▶ Singapore's Sunseap Group will build world's largest floating solar farm and energy storage system in Batam (Indonesia), with capacity of 2.2 gigawatt-peak (GWp).
144. ▶ South Africa granted world's first patent on an invention created by an artificial intelligence inventor, for *Device for Autonomous Bootstrapping of Unified Sentience* (DABUS), an AI developed by Missouri physicist Stephen Thaler.
145. ▶ South Korean electronics maker LG exited loss-making mobile phone business, to focus on other products / services.
146. ▶ Sri Lanka announced to develop West Container Terminal (WCT) at Colombo Port along with India and Japan.
- ✍ This is notable as recently Sri Lanka government ejected India and Japan as partners from a 2019 tripartite agreement to jointly develop East Container Terminal (ECT), citing resistance to "foreign involvement".
147. ▶ Sweden ratified framework agreement for International Solar Alliance (ISA), becoming member of this India-based global platform for promoting renewable energy.
148. ▶ Tax Inspectors Without Borders (TIWB), a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), launched its programme in Bhutan.

 India has been chosen as Partner Jurisdiction and has provided the Tax Expert for this programme.

 in this 24 months' duration Program, India in collaboration with UNDP and TIWB Secretariat, will aim to aid Bhutan in strengthening its tax administration.

149. ▶ Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2021 -

 Top 5 -

 Tsinghua University (China)

 Peking University (China)

 National University of Singapore (Singapore)

 University of Hong Kong

 Nanyang Technological University (Singapore)

 Indian Universities in List -

 Total 63 Universities named in List.

 Top 3 Indian Universities -

 IISC Bangalore (37)

 IIT Ropar (55)

 IIT Indore (78)

150. ▶ UAE became first Gulf nation to open an embassy in Israel, located in Tel Aviv Stock Exchange building. It came an year after both countries signed an agreement to normalise diplomatic ties.

151. ▶ UAE, Brazil, Albania, Gabon and Ghana have been elected to 15 Member UN Security Council (UNSC), for 2 year term starting January 2022.

 The newly elected nations will replace Vietnam, Estonia, Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

 UNSC has 5 Members (5 Permanent and 10 Non Permanent).


 Permanent - China, France, Russia, US, and US.

 Non Permanent -

 India , Ireland, Kenya , Mexico, Norway, UAE, Brazil, Albania, Gabon and Ghana.


152. ▶ UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) recommended graduation (Upgradation) of Bangladesh from category of *Least Developed Country (LDC)*, after Bangladesh fulfilled eligibility criteria in terms of per capita income, human assets and economic and environmental vulnerability.

 Bangladesh will get time up to 2026 to prepare for transition to status of a developing country.

 Usually, countries are given 3 years for transition but this year due to the pandemic, Bangladesh has been given 5 years.

153. ▶ UN Development Programme (UNDP) Presented an Independent report on performance of India's Aspirational Districts Programme, launched in 2018 -

 It has been depicted as *a very successful model of local area development*, serving as a best practice for other countries.

 UNDP's analysis spans across 5 key sectors of ADP—health and nutrition; education; agriculture and water resources; basic infrastructure; and skill development and financial inclusion.

154. ▶ UN General Assembly adopted a resolution sponsored by India, declaring 2023 as the 'International Year of Millets'.

155. ▶ US Department of Energy, India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) launched a US-India Hydrogen Task Force, under US-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP).

156. ▶ US NGO *Freedom House's* report *Freedom in the World 2021 – Democracy under Siege*, has downgraded status of India as a democracy and free society from *Free* to *partly free*.

157. ▶ US President Joe Biden issued executive order to set up Climate Change Support Office (CCSO) within Department of State, to advance US initiative to address global climate crisis.


158. ▶ US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) launched the US-India Climate Technologies Action Group (CTAG), which aims to bring together stakeholders from both countries that can contribute to advanced global action on climate.

159. ▶ Vietnam appointed Honorary Consul General of Vietnam in Bangalore, to promote cooperation between Vietnam and State of Karnataka. Industrialist **N.S. Srinivasa Murthy** has been appointed as first honorary consul general of Vietnam from India.

160. ▶ World **Press Freedom Index 2021** report by Reporters Without Borders (180 countries) -

 Norway topped the index for 5th consecutive year.


 Top 5 - Norway (1), Finland (2), Sweden (3), Denmark (4), Costa Rica (5)

 Bottom 3 - Turkmenistan (178th), North Korea (179th), Eritrea (178th)

 India's rank remained unchanged at **142nd**.

 Neighbours - China (177th), Bangladesh (152), Pakistan (145), Sri Lanka (127th).

161. ▶ World Bank launched a new *Cybersecurity Multi-Donor Trust Fund*, to better roll out cybersecurity development agenda in a systematic manner.

 New fund has been developed as an associated trust fund under broader Digital Development Partnership (DDP) umbrella program, in partnership with Estonia, Japan, Germany, and Netherlands.

 It aims to enhance cyber and digital security capability and capacity in World Bank member countries.

162. ▶ World Bank published *World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives*, with focus on how data can improve lives of poor people and advance development objectives.
163. ▶ World's first ship tunnel will be constructed in Norway, to be completed by 2025-2026, underneath mountains in Stadhavet peninsula.
- ✎ The 37 meters high and 1700 metres long Tunnel will be built with cost \$315 million.
 - ✎ Stadlandet peninsula is considered as dividing point between Norwegian Sea and North Sea.
164. ▶ World's largest and tallest observation wheel called *Ain Dubai*, will be unveiled in Dubai (UAE) on October 21, 2021.
- ✎ It is 250 metres high, located at Bluewaters Island. It will get past current world's tallest observation wheel, High Roller, in Las Vegas, measuring 167.6 m (550 ft).
165. ▶ World's longest pedestrian suspension bridge (516 Metres) named *Arouca*, opened in Portugal. It stays 175 metres above Paiva river and links two hills with granite cliff faces.
166. ▶ sGermany Ratified International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, becoming 5th nation to do so after amendments that entered into force in January 2021, that opened its Membership to all UN Member States.
- ✎ Germany aims at generating two-thirds of its electricity needs from solar and wind by 2030.

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