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## Current Affairs (Jan, 2021)

### State News

#### **1. Arup Kumar Goswami sworn in as CJ of Andhra Pradesh High Court**

- Justice Goswami was transferred from the Sikkim High Court a few days ago. He replaced J.K. Maheswari who has been posted as the Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court.
- Chief Justice Goswami began his career as an advocate with the Bar Council of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura in 1985.

#### **2. Tamil Nadu CM inaugurates Jayalalithaa Memorial in Chennai**

- Pics Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palanisamy inaugurated Jayalalithaa Memorial at Chennai.
- The 79 crore worth grand memorial is built on a nine acre land situated on the shores of the Marina Beach.
- The phoenix shaped memorial has a statue of Jayalalithaa and MGR with an artificial waterfall.

### National News

#### **3. Interest Rates on PPF, NSC and Other Small Savings Schemes Unchanged for Q4**

- The government kept the interest rates on small savings schemes, including PPF and NSC, unchanged for the January-March quarter amid moderating bank deposit rates.
- Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC) will continue to carry an annual interest rate of 7.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent, respectively.

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- The interest rate for the five-year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme has been retained at 7.4 per cent. Interest rate on savings deposits has been retained at 4 per cent annually. The girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samridhi Yojana will offer 7.6 per cent rate during the fourth quarter of the current fiscal.
- The annual interest rate on Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) has been retained at 6.9 per cent. Term deposits of one-five years will fetch interest rate in the range of 5.5-6.7 per cent, to be paid quarterly, while the interest rate on five-year recurring deposit is pegged at 5.8 per cent.

### 4. Oakridge Energy to solarise 1,000 KVs, Delhi government schools

- Solar firm Oakridge Energy said it has signed agreements with the Delhi government and screw Vidyalaya Sangathan to solarise schools in Delhi.
- The company is aiming to solarise 1,000 institutions by 2022.
- The project is developed by the company and subsidised by the Government of India's capital subsidy scheme for government buildings, which the Delhi government has utilised for solarising its schools.

### 5. Suneet Sharma Appointed New Chairman and CEO of Railway Board

- Former Eastern Railway general manager Suneet Sharma was appointed the new Railway Board Chairman and CEO upon the completion of the term of incumbent V K Yadav. Yadav was given an extension in January this year.
- Suneet Sharma is a Special Class Railway Apprentice Officer of the 1978-batch. He has discharged responsibilities at various levels, including zonal railways, workshops and diesel loco sheds, in his over 34 years in the Indian Railways.

### 6. India's 1st Testbed TiHAN launched at IIT Hyderabad

- Union Minister of Education, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has virtually laid the foundation stone of "TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad", India's first Testbed for Autonomous Navigation Systems (Terrestrial and Aerial) at IIT Hyderabad.
- The Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems (TiHAN) for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles at IIT Hyderabad.

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### 7. ISRO Chairman K Sivan gets one year extension up to 2022

- The Central Government has approved the extension of the term of ISRO Chairman K Sivan, for a period of one year.
- He was due to retire on January 14, 2021. Sivan will now continue as ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space up to January 14, 2022.
- He joined ISRO in 1982, has been the chairman of the space agency since January 2018.

### 8. Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2020

- Harmony Foundation hosted the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice.
- The Awards in its 16th year is the only award endorsed by Sister Prema, the Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity, the organization started by Mother Teresa. The theme for this year's awards was, 'Celebrating Compassion In Times Of Covid '.

### 9. GoI extends Deadline to file Income Tax Returns to January 10, 2021

- The Central government has further extended the deadline to file an income tax return (ITR) for FY 2019-20 by 10 days, up to January 10, 2021. Earlier this deadline was December 31, 2020.
- This extension of the deadline is for those individuals whose accounts are not required to be audited and who usually file their income tax return using ITR-1 or ITR-4 forms, as applicable.
- This is the third extension of the deadline to file a tax return. The first extension was given from the normal deadline of July 31 to November 30, 2020, and then to December 31, 2020.

### 10. Soma Mondal takes charge as new SAIL Chairman

- Soma Mondal has taken over as the new Chairman of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) with effect from January 01, 2021.
- She is the first-ever women-head of the body. She replaces Anil Kumar Chaudhary, who superannuated on 31 December 2020. She joined SAIL in 2017 as the director (commercial).

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### 11. Suneeet Sharma takes over as new Chairman & CEO of Railway Board

- The appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved Suneeet Sharma appointment as Chairman & CEO of Railway Board, Ministry of Railways and ex-officio Principal Secretary to Government of India. He took over in his new role with effect from January 01, 2021.
- The extended one-year tenure of Sharma's predecessor, Vinod Kumar Yadav, who also became the restructured Board's first CEO, ended on December 31, 2020.

### 12. PM Modi lays foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs) at six sites across six States through video conference on 1st January 2021.
- The LHPs will be implemented at Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).

### 13. DRDO Celebrates 63rd Foundation Day on 1st January 2021

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) observed the 63rd Foundation Day of its establishment on January 01, 2021.
- DRDO was established in 1958 with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in the Defence sector. At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for Indian Armed Forces.
- As of now, DRDO is working in multiple cutting edge military technology areas, which include aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation, cyber, life sciences and other technologies for defence.

### 14. IFSCA becomes Associate Member of IOSCO

- The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has become an Associate Member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO). The Headquarter of IOSCO is at Madrid, Spain.
- About IOSCO:

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- The IOSCO is the international organization of the world's securities regulators, covering more than 95% of the world's securities markets, and is also the global standard-setter for the securities sector.
- With this new membership, IFSCA will get the platform to exchange information at the global level and regional level on areas of common interests and help to learn from the experiences and best practices of the regulators of other well established financial centres.
- **About IFSCA:**
- The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) was established by the Ministry of Finance in April 2020 as a unified authority to regulate all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in the country. The body has its headquarter in Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

### 15. No Charges on Transaction Through UPI Platforms: National Payments Corp

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said transaction through Unified Payment Interface platform would continue to be free.
- Presently, no charges are levied on transaction done through UPI. NPCI continues to perform uninterrupted and convenient UPI transactions.

### 16. J&K signs MoU with NAFED to take horticulture produce to global market

- To promote the state's horticulture produce and take it to the global market, the Jammu and Kashmir government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED).
- The MoU with the NAFED, an apex organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in the country, is seen as a game-changer for the horticulture sector in the union territory.
- After signing the MoU, the NAFED will cover 5,500 hectares at a cost of Rs 1,700 crore in the next five years with a major focus on apple, walnut, cherry, pear and other significant horticulture produce.

### 17. Modi lays foundation stone of Light House Projects

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- PM Modi laid the foundation stone of six LHPs under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India).
- Modi said that the Light House Projects being executed with modern technologies in six states will show a new direction to the housing construction sector in the country and further strengthen cooperative federalism.
- The six states are Tripura, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.
- The programme seeks to build over 1,000 houses each in six cities in 12 months.

### 18. Kerala Governor releases book on Sabarimala

- Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan released "Sabarimala Vijnanakosham," a book written by KS Vijayanath.
- The Governor also presented a Limca Book of World Records certificate to Swami Maheswaranandu for erecting a 111 feet Shiv Linga sthooa at the Shiva Paravarthi temple premises at Chenkal in Thiruvananthapuram.

### 19. Mukesh Ambani ranked 12th in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021

- India's richest man Mukesh Ambani, the chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) dropped down to 12th spot in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021(as on 2nd January 2021).
- The net worth of Ambani dropped from 90 billion USD (around Rs. 6.62 lakh crore) (in early 2020) to 76.7 billion USD (around Rs. 5.6 lakh crore).
- The drop in the net worth of Mukesh Ambani was due to the correction in the shares of RIL which has fallen to Rs.1995.50 on 30th December 2020, which is 16% from its all-time high of Rs 2369.35.

### 20. India becomes co-chair of Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP)

- India has been chosen as the co-chair of the IUCN-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for a period of three years till November 2023.

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- India will replace South Korea, which held the post for 3 years until November 2020. As a co-chair, India would be responsible to assist other Asian countries in managing their protected areas. The APAP is chaired by IUCN ( International Union for Conservation of Nature) Asia and co-chaired by an APAP nation member on a rotational basis.

### 21. Indian Army inks pact with Goa Shipyard to get 12 fast patrol boats

- Indian Army has inked a contract with Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) to procure 12 Fast Patrol Boats for surveillance and patrolling of large water bodies, including those in high altitude areas like Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh.
- Pangong Tso's 134-km length is divided into eight 'fingers', military parlance for mountain spurs jutting into the water body that is contested by both sides.
- The lake is frozen with the onset of winters, and the Army plans to deploy around two dozen such boats by next summer.

### 22. Pankaj Mithal sworn in as CJ of J&K, Ladakh Court

- Justice Pankaj Mithal has been appointed as the new Chief Justice (CJ) of the Common High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh in Jammu on January 04, 2021.
- Chief justice Mithal has been appointed in view of the retirement of chief justice Gita Mittal recently.
- Chief Justice Mithal was administered the oath of office by Lieutenant Governor of J&k, Manoj Sinha.

### 23. Bajaj Auto becomes world's most valuable two-wheeler company

- Indian multinational two-wheeler and three-wheeler manufacturing company, Bajaj Auto has become the most valuable two-wheeler company in the world, after it crossed a market capitalization of more than Rs. 1 lakh crore, on January 01, 2021.
- Bajaj's share price on NSE closed at Rs. 3,479 per share on the first day of 2021, leading to a market capitalization of more than Rs 1,00,670.76 crore.
- Thus, Bajaj Auto is not only the most valued company in the two-wheeler segment but also the first-ever two-wheeler company in the world to have reached this market cap milestone.



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### **24. ADB approves \$100 million loan to upgrade power distribution system in Bengaluru**

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a USD 100 million (around Rs 730 crore) loan to modernise and upgrade the power distribution system in Bengaluru city.
- Besides the USD 100 million sovereign loans, ADB will provide a USD 90 million loan without sovereign guarantee for the project to Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd (BESCOM), one of the five state-owned distribution utilities in Karnataka.

### **25. PM Modi inaugurates National Metrology Conclave 2021**

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has addressed the National Metrology Conclave, via video conferencing on January 04, 2021. National Metrology Conclave 2021 was organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), New Delhi, to mark its 75th year of inception.
- This year theme: ‘Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation’.
- As a part of this conclave, PM Modi also dedicated ‘National Atomic Timescale’, and ‘Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya’ to the nation, and laid the foundation stone of the ‘National Environmental Standards Laboratory’.

### **26. Delhi government sets up Tamil Academy**

- Delhi government Department of Art, Culture, and Language has set-up a Tamil academy to promote the language and culture of the southern state of Tamil Nadu.
- Delhi has a large population of people from Tamil Nadu and we want to present a platform to the people of Delhi to get a taste of the art and culture of Tamil Nadu.

### **27. Amit Shah released inaugural issue of “National Police K-9 Journal”**

- Home Minister Amit Shah has released the inaugural issue of the National Police K-9 Journal in New Delhi.
- It is the first such publication in the country on the subject of Police Service K9s, Police Dogs.