

## Current Affairs: 22.02.2021

### PM Modi inaugurates and lays foundation stone of key power and urban sector projects in Kerala



Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of key projects in the state of **Kerala** via video conference, on February 19, 2021.

Projects inaugurated includes:

**320 KV Pugalur- Thrissur power transmission project**, built at a cost of Rs 5,070 crore. The project is a Voltage Source Converter (VSC) based High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Project and has India's first HVDC link featuring state-of-the-art VSC technology. **50 MW Kasaragod Solar Power Project**, developed under the National Solar Energy Mission **75 MLD (million litres per day) Water Treatment Plant at Aruvikkara** under the AMRUT Mission.

Apart from this, PM laid the foundation stone of **Integrated Command and Control Centre and Smart Roads Project in Thiruvananthapuram**.

### PM Modi launches 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' initiative and lays foundation stone of two bridges in Assam

The Prime Minister of India, **Shri Narendra Modi** launched multiple development initiatives in Assam on 18 February 2021 via video conferencing. PM launched the **Mahabahu-Brahmaputra inland waterway project**, laid the foundation stone of **Dhubri Phulbari Bridge** along with **Bhumi Pujan** for construction of **Majuli Bridge**, across the Brahmaputra.

#### Mahabahu-Brahmaputra

The **Rs 3,200 crore Mahabahu-Brahmaputra initiative** is aimed at improving road, waterways and digital connectivity in Assam. To launch the new initiative, PM Modi inaugurated three Ro-pax vessel operations between **Neemati Ghat (Jorhat)** and **Majuli Island, North Guwahati** and **South Guwahati** as well as **Dhubri** and **Hatsingimari**. He also laid the foundation stone of **Inland Water Transport (IWT) Terminal at Jogighopa** and various tourist jetties on the **River Brahmaputra**. PM launched two portals to provide digital solutions for **Ease-of-Doing-Business**.

- **Car-D (Cargo Data) portal** – to provide cargo and cruise data on a real time basis
- **PANI (Portal for Asset and Navigation Information)** – to act as a one-stop solution for providing information about river navigation and infrastructure.

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## Dhubri Phulbari Bridge



The 19 km long four lane bridge over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri (on North Bank) and Phulbari (on South Bank) will be built with a total cost of approx Rs. 4997 cr, It will be India's longest bridge over a river.



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## Majuli Bridge

- PM performed the bhumi puja (ground-breaking ceremony) for a 6.8-km-long two-lane bridge that would connect Kamalabari in Majuli, the world's largest river island to Neematighat in Jorhat.

## Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal Lays Foundation of Eastern India's First Skill University in Darrang district



The Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of the **first skill university of eastern India in Darrang district in Assam**. The state-of-the-art skill university would be built with a financial outlay of **Rs 1,000 crore**. It will impart training to over **10,000 students in 12 disciplines**. The university is expected to be completed by 2026. It will have "understandings" with countries like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Israel, Japan, England.

## Union Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurates Atal Paryavaran Bhavan in Lakshadweep

The **Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar**, inaugurated the **Atal Paryavaran Bhavan at Lakshadweep** on February 19, 2021. Prakash Javadekar is on a **four day official visit to Lakshadweep** from February 19 to 22, 2021. During the visit, the minister attended high level meetings with Secretaries of various departments in Lakshadweep administration, participated in various official programmes at **Suheli, Kadmat and Bangaram islands**.

The minister will also evaluate the major innovative initiatives of the Union Territory's Forest and Environment Department, so that Lakshadweep undergoes comprehensive development, without compromising its commitment to nature.

## Kerala Government sanctions Rs. 9 crore to build 48 'Smart' Anganwadis

The state government of **Kerala** has sanctioned **Rs. 9 crore** to build '**smart anganwadis**', by converting the conventional anganwadis into "smart" structures with better amenities.

The state Department of Women and Child Development has given permission for 48 anganwadis in the state to construct new buildings under the Smart

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Anganwadi scheme. These smart anganwadis are being designed and constructed as part of the **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)**. These 'smart anganwadis' will provide early childhood care by making the facility more child-friendly to nurture the mental and physical development of children. It is expected to have various amenities, ranging from study hall, kitchen, dining area, store room, creative zone, garden to swimming pool and outdoor play area as per the availability of land.

## United States officially re-joins Paris Climate Agreement



The **United States** has officially **rejoined the Paris Agreement on February 19, 2021**, under the Presidency of US President Joe Biden, who was sworn-in on January 20, 2021. Earlier, **in November 2020, US had officially exited the agreement** on the order of the then President Donald Trump. The landmark Paris climate agreement was signed in 2015, as per which countries are expected to enhance their commitments to curb greenhouse gas emissions every five years. The goals of the global pact are to limit global warming to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

## India & Ethiopia Sign Agreements On Visa Facilitation and Leather Technology



On February 20, 2021, **India and Ethiopia** signed two agreements related to **visa facilitation and leather technology**. The Ethiopia Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Demeke Mekonnen Hassen is on a **4-day visit to India, from February 16**, to hold useful and productive discussions on a range of bilateral and regional issues. During the course of meetings, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Ethiopian minister Hassen, agreed to expand India and Ethiopia bilateral agenda especially defence, economic, S&T, digital and cultural cooperation.

## India & Maldives sign 5 deals to boost infrastructure

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar was on two-day official visit to to the archipelago nation Maldives on February 20 and 21, 2021 to review bilateral ties and development cooperation.

During this visit, Mr. S Jaishankar handed over **1 lakh additional doses of the made-in-India COVID-19 vaccine to the Maldives**. With this, the total Covid vaccine doses gifted by India for the Maldives reaches to two lakh.

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Jaishankar also offered a **\$40-million line of credit (LoC)** to support the development of **sports infrastructure** in Maldives.

Apart from this, **five pacts** were signed between India and Maldives to boost infrastructure in the island nation. They included:

- Amendatory Agreement to repurpose an older EXIM Bank of India Line of Credit of USD 25 million for Road Devt
- Letter of Intent between EXIM Bank and local authorities for financing a housing project of 2000 units in Hulhumale.
- MoU on grant funding USD 0.5 million for a fish processing plant in Kendhikulhudhoo in the northern Maldives.
- MoU on capacity building and exchange of content and expertise between Prasar Bharati and Public State Media, Maldives.
- MoU on sustainable urban development between MoHUA and Ministry of national planning, housing and infrastructure, Maldives.

## Indian Oil signs pact with Greenstat Norway for setting up of Centre of Excellence for Hydrogen



State-owned **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)** has signed a Statement of Intent with **Greenstat Hydrogen India Pvt. Ltd.**, a subsidiary of **Greenstat Norway**, to set up a Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen. Under this association, a **Center of Excellence on Hydrogen (CoE-H)** including CCUS and Fuel Cells, would be developed for clean energy by IndianOil and M/s Greenstat in cooperation with Indo-Norwegian Hydrogen Cluster companies/organizations.

### Benefits

- Facilitate transfer and sharing of technology, know-how and experience through the green Hydrogen value chain and other relevant technologies including hydrogen storage and fuel cells.
- CoE-H will be a vehicle for promoting R&D projects in Green and Blue Hydrogen between Norwegian and Indian R&D institutions/universities.

## S&P Global Ratings Projects India to be among fastest-growing emerging economies in FY22 with 10% growth

The **S&P Global Ratings** has projected that India will be one of the fastest growing emerging market economies in the fiscal year **2021-22**, with GDP growth rate of **10 percent**.

The continuous good performance by the agriculture sector, flattening of COVID-19 infection curve, pickup in government spending and the recently

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released budget are some of the factors for the positive growth prospect of the country



## Indian And Indonesian Navies Conduct PASSEX Exercise In Arabian Sea



The **Indian Navy** and the **Indonesian Navy** conducted the **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** on February 18, 2021 in the **Arabian Sea**.

The military exercise between the navies of both the countries, aims to enhance operational interoperability and overall cooperation among them

Indian naval ship **INS Talwar** and Indonesian Navy's **multirole corvette KRI Bung Tomo** participated in the exercise.

## Novak Djokovic and Naomi Osaka wins Australian Open 2021 Tennis Championship



In tennis, **Japan's Naomi Osaka** won her **fourth Grand Slam title** on February 20, 2021, after she beat American **Jennifer Brady** in the women's singles game of Australian Open final 2021.

The four Grand Slam title for Osaka comes **two Australian Open title** (2021 and 2019) and **two US Open title** (2018 and 2020).

In Men's single final, **Novak Djokovic** claimed his **ninth Australian Open crown** and the **18th Major Grand Slam overall**, as he defeated Daniil Medvedev.

### Winners of Australian Open 2021

- **Men's Singles** – Novak Djokovic (Serbia) defeated Daniil Medvedev (Russia)
- **Women's Singles** – Naomi Osaka (Japan) defeated Jennifer Brady (US)
- **Men's Doubles** – Ivan Dodig of Croatia and Filip Polášek (Slovakia) defeated Rajeev Ram (US) and Joe Salisbury (UK)
- **Women's Doubles** – Elise Mertens (Belgium) and Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus) defeated Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Kateřina Siniaková (Czech Republic)
- **Mixed Doubles** – Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Rajeev Ram of US defeated the Australian pair of Samantha Stosur and Matthew Ebden.

### Sri Lanka Fast Bowler Dhammika Prasad quits international cricket

- The **Sri Lanka fast bowler Dhammika Prasad** has announced his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect on February 18, 2021.
- The 37-year-old played 25 Tests and 24 ODIs and a single T20I taking a total of 107 wickets for Sri Lanka.

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He played his lone T20 International against Australia in 2011.

## International Mother Language Day: 21 February

The **International Mother Language Day (IMLD)** is observed annually on **21 February** to raise awareness regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism. The day was first announced by UNESCO on 17 November 1999 and was formally recognized by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2002.



The 2021 theme is “**Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society**”.

## World Thinking Day: 22 February

**World Thinking Day**, originally known as Thinking Day, is celebrated annually on **22 February** by all Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and other girl groups worldwide. The day is observed to think about fellow brothers and sisters around the world, address their concerns and understand the true meaning of guiding. 2021 Theme of World Thinking Day is: “**Peacebuilding**”