

## 1. Great challenges for all democracies.



- Inter-religious relations, media freedom, farmers' protests, love 'jihad' violence and minority rights were part of the discussion that visiting U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken had with a group of people, including a representative of the Dalai Lama,

- KEY POINT

- The "civil society round-table" discussion, which is expected to raise some concerns from the Union government and a possible protest from China, was Mr. Blinken's first engagement during his day-long visit to India.

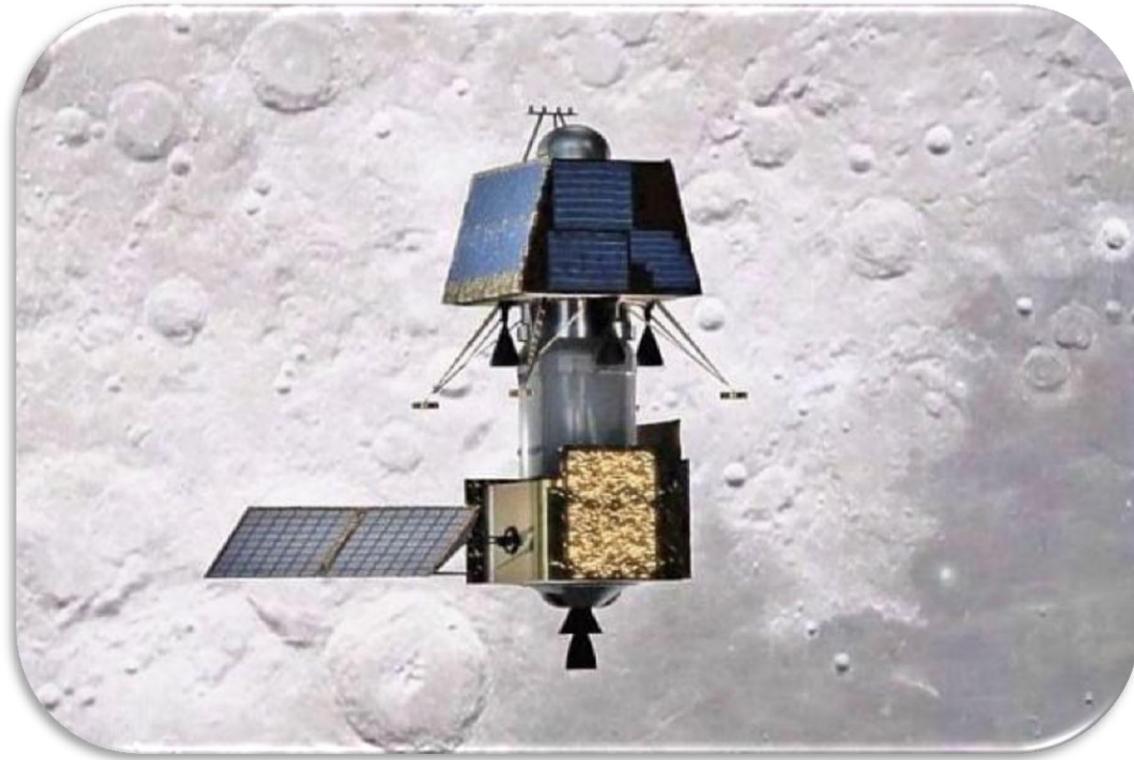
- Sources said Tibet was not directly raised during the meeting, but the lack of progress in China's dialogue on the issue was discussed at the round-table talks, which included Geshe Dorji Damdul, the Delhi-based Director of Tibet House.

- While representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Central Tibetan Authority, or "government in exile", have

met with U.S. diplomats in the past ,

- the presence of Mr. Damdul in the meeting with Indian civil society and with the U.S. Secretary of State in Delhi is a first .
- In his opening remarks, Mr. Blinken spoke of the "great challenges" for all democracies in the world, particularly India and the U.S., where Congress has been holding committee hearings on the January 6 attack on the Capitol House by pro-Trump protesters. Mr. Blinken said the India-U.S. relationship was one of the "most important" in the world, whose people were "connected by shared values".
- "The Indian people and the American people believe in human dignity and equality of opportunity, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion and belief,"
- Mr. Blinken said in remarks released to the media. "We believe that all people deserve to have a voice in their government and be treated with respect no matter who they are
- During the 45-minute discussion, Mr. Blinken received perspectives from the representatives on the status of religious freedom, including the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the anti-conversion (derogatorily referred to as love 'jihad') laws passed by some States, which have drawn international criticism.
- In addition, the problems of farmers protesting at Delhi's borders over the agriculture laws passed last year were part of the conversation .

## 2. Chandrayaan-3 mission likely late 2022 .



- The Chandrayaan-3 mission is likely to be launched late next year.

### KEY POINT

- Chandrayaan-3 is likely to be launched during the third quarter of 2022, assuming normal work flow henceforth.
- The Chandrayaan-2 mission, launched in July 2019, was scheduled to be an effort aimed at landing a rover on the Lunar South Pole. It was sent aboard the country's most powerful geosynchronous launch vehicle, the GSLV-Mk 3.\
- However, the lander Vikram, instead of a controlled landing, ended up crash-landing on September 7, 2019, and stymied the effort.

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### 3. Madhya Pradesh govt prepares Ayush-based economic upgradation scheme - Devaranya Yojana.



- In Madhya Pradesh, the State Government has prepared the Ayush-based economic upgradation scheme - Devaranya Yojana with the twin objectives of improving people's health and livelihood of tribals.

#### KEY POINT

- Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that wellness tourism will be promoted in state. For this, medicinal plants should be cultivated in the beautiful plains of the villages.
  - more than 360 new AYUSH health and wellness centers are being established in the state.
  - Ayush Super Specialty Hospitals are being constructed in Indore and Bhopal.
  - upgradation of Ayurvedic and Yunani dispensaries is also being done in the state.
- AYUSH and tourism will be brought together to boost employment opportunities in tribal areas under the scheme.

#### 4. IN Meghalaya Amit Shah inaugurates Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme .



- Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday visited the erstwhile wettest place on earth - Sohra (Cherrapunjee) to inaugurate the Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme.

#### KEY POINT

- Shah inaugurated the Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme funded by the DoNER ministry under the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) with a sanction amount of ₹2481.25 lakh.
- this is a first of its kind initiative of the Government of Meghalaya to bring together the Ministry of Home Affairs, Defence officials, and village communities for a novel and humanitarian purpose in the field of Natural Resource Management in a very important and ecologically fragile landscape.

## 5. Clean Air Catalyst .



- Indore Adding yet another feather to its cap, the cleanest city of the country has also become the only city to be selected from India for International Clean Air Catalyst Programme.

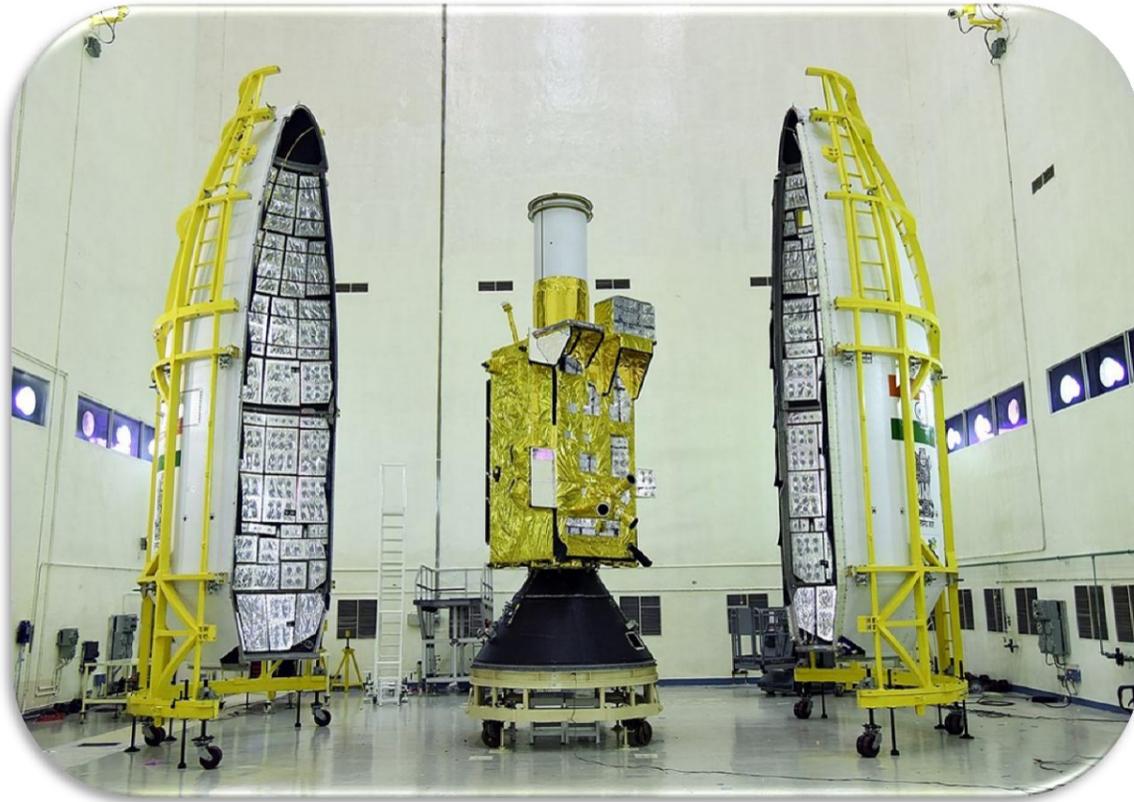
### KEY POINT

- Clean Air Catalyst is a new flagship programme launched by The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and a global consortium of organisations, led by World Resources Institute (WRI) and Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) to accelerate clean air solutions in low and middle-income countries.
- In collaboration with USAID and other international organisations like EDF and WRI, Indore has implement City Clean Air Catalyst programme. In the programme, with the cooperation of Indore Municipal Corporation and Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board, the project will be operated for 5 years for clean and pure air in the city. For

this, a meeting with the Clean and Catalyst team was held .

- In the next phases of the project, work will also be done on issues like health, climate change and gender. In Phase 1 of the programme, a monitoring equipment of Rs 1.2 crore will be installed for source awareness study. For other interventions in the project, other international organisations will also participate in the project in the next phase.

## 6. Geo-imaging satellite “EOS-03”



- SSLV is ideal for on-demand, quick turn-around launch of small satellites. The major technologies developed as part of realization of SSLV are flexible nozzle control with electro-mechanical actuators for all stages, miniaturized avionics and a velocity trimming module in the upper stage for precise satellite injection.

- Geo-imaging satellite “EOS-03” is scheduled for launch in third quarter of 2021 that would enable near-real time monitoring of natural disasters like floods & cyclones.

### KEY POINT

- ISRO realized EOS-03 is capable of imaging the whole country 4-5 times daily. In addition to natural disasters, EOS-03 would also enable monitoring of water bodies, crops, vegetation condition, forest cover changes etc.
- The first developmental flight of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle or SSLV is scheduled in the fourth quarter of 2021 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- ISRO’s vast experience in Solid propulsion and heritage of proven design practices has enabled SSLV to be developed as a cost-effective, three stage, all-solid launch vehicle with a payload capability of 500 kg to 500 km planar orbit or 300 kg to Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit.

## 7. Cutlass Express-21



- Indian Naval Ship Talwar is participating in the multi-national maritime exercise Cutlass Express 2021 (CE 21), being conducted from 26 Jul to 06 Aug 21 in Kenya.

### KEY POINT

- In the harbour phase, which was conducted from 26 -28 Jul at Mombasa, a team of Indian Navy Marine Commandos (MARCOS) conducted training of personnel from navies of Kenya, Djibouti, Mozambique, Cameroon and Coast Guard of Georgia.
  - The MARCOS shared the best practices in executing Visit, Board, Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations with the participating foreign Navy sailors during the exercise, which was held at the Bandari Maritime Academy in Mombasa.
- Exercise Cutlass Express is designed to improve regional cooperation, maritime domain awareness and information sharing practices to increase capabilities between the U.S., East African and Western Indian Ocean nations to counter illicit maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.

## 8. India's first Green Hydrogen Fuelling Station in Leh.



- National Thermal Power Corporation Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC REL), NTPC's wholly owned subsidiary has invited a domestic tender to set up India's first Green Hydrogen Fuelling Station in Leh, Ladakh.

### KEY POINT

- The tender follows the recent tender floated by NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVN) for procurement of Fuel Cell Buses for Ladakh.
- NTPC REL and NVVN would jointly be executing the Green Mobility Project in Union Territory of Ladakh. A dedicated 1.25 MW Solar plant is also being set up in Leh by NTPC REL to make the Hydrogen Fuelling Station completely green.
- NTPC REL has earlier signed a landmark MoU with Union Territory of Ladakh for development of Green Hydrogen technologies in the high altitude region. The

successful completion of the project would usher in a new era of emission free transport in and around Leh and India would be amongst few countries to take a lead in this coveted space.

- The project will be a definitive step towards building a cleaner and greener ecosystem in the region. The successful execution of the project will also ease the surface transport issues of the union territory of Ladakh and will prove to be a major boost to tourism in the region.

## 9. Lok Sabha passes Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill & The Inland Vessels Bill .



- The Lok Sabha today passed the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill 2021 and The Inland Vessels Bill 2021 without any discussion.

### KEY POINT

- after the launch of regional air connectivity scheme UDAN, aviation activities have been increased manifold in the country.
  - several small airports like Darbhanga, Belgaum, Jharsuguda were rejuvenated after the inception of UDAN scheme.
  - the Inland Vessels Bill 2021 was taken up and was also passed without discussion. The bill replaces the Inland Vessels Act, 1917.
- Moving the bill in the House Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said the 1917 Act was obsolete in emerging scenario. He said the the Inland Vessels Bill 2021 seeks fast, safe and economical inter-state movement of vessels through inland waterways. Mr.
  - it will help in boosting commerce and economic activities and national integration besides bringing uniformity in application of law relating to inland waterways and navigation within the country.
  - it will help in catalyzing a new regime of inland vessels movement. He said the bill also aims to bring transparency and accountability of administration of inland water transportation.

## 10. Maharashtra Bhushan Selection Committee unanimously selects Asha Bhosle for prestigious award.



- The Maharashtra Bhushan Selection Committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray unanimously selected legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle for the prestigious award.

### KEY POINT

- Maharashtra cultural affairs minister Amit Deshmukh said the Maharashtra Bhushan Puraskar will be given to legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle for the year 2021.
- She said the threat of COVID-19 still looms large, besides, the devastating heavy rains and floods in Chiplun, Sangli, Kolhapur has caused tremendous loss. Therefore she requested the government to organise the felicitation programme after the situation gets back to normalcy.

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## 11. Govt announces 27 pct reservation for OBCs, 10 pct for Economically Weaker Sections in medical education .



- Government has taken a historic and a landmark decision for providing 27 per cent reservation for OBCs and 10 per cent reservation for Economically Weaker Sections in the All India Quota Scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental courses from the current academic year 2021-22 onwards.

### KEY POINT

- Union Health Ministry said, this decision will benefit every year nearly one thousand 500 OBC students in MBBS and two thousand 500 OBC students in postgraduation.
- The decision will also benefit around 550 EWS students in MBBS and around one thousand EWS students in postgraduation.
- The All India Quota Scheme was introduced in 1986 to provide domicile-free merit based opportunities to students from any State to aspire to study in a good medical college located in another State. All India Quota consists of 15 percent of total available Under Graduate seats and 50 per cent of total available PG seats in government medical colleges. Initially,
  - there was no reservation in the All India Quota Scheme up to 2007.
  - This decision is in sync with the significant reforms carried out in the field of medical education since 2014.
  - During the last six years, MBBS Seats in the country have increased by 56 per cent from 54 thousand 348 seats in 2014 to 84 thousand 649 seats in 2020. The number of PG seats have also increased by 80 per cent from 30 thousand 191 seats in 2014 to 54 thousand 275 seats in 2020.
  - The Health Ministry said, during the same period, 179 new medical colleges have been established and now the country has 558 medical colleges.