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**WEEKLY CA**  
**FEB 2021**

**FEBRUARY 16-22**

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The Union telecom ministry has decided to set up an **intelligence unit and a consumer protection system**. These systems will be set up in the effort to tackle the threats associated with the pesky calls. It would also help in taking strict action against the financial frauds that happens using telecom resources.
2. **ISRO** and **MapmyIndia** partners to develop alternative App to Google Map. This indigeniously-developed alternative app will be known as '**Bhuvan**' to provide mapping and other location-based services. **ISRO's database of satellite images** and **MapmyIndia's digital map platform** will be used to develop new app.
3. Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** has launched an online portal '**e-Chhawani**' and mobile app, to facilitate 'ease of living' and 'ease of doing' for Cantonment Boards residents. **Developed by:** eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), DG Defence Estates and NIC.
4. In its first mission in 2021, **ISRO** will launch **Brazilian satellite Amazonia-1** and three **Indian payloads by PSLV C-51**.
5. Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, **Thaawarchand Gehlot** has virtually released **3rd edition of Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary** with 10,000 terms (including 6,000 earlier terms). **ISL Dictionary** has been brought out by **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC)**
6. **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has launched **Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan** under Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban). It will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies. It will be initially conducted in 10 cities like **Agra, Badlapur, Bhubaneswar, Churu, Kochi, Madurai, Patiala, Rohtak, Surat and Tumkur**
7. An **IIT Madras**-Incubated start-up **Pi Beam** has recently launched **PiMo**, a sustainable utility **e-bike**. The e-Bike can charge faster than a smartphone and its riding does not require a license or registration.
8. The Third **India Tourism Mart** was organised on February 18, 2021. It was addressed by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan. The event was organised by the Federation of Associations in India Tourism and Hospitality (**FAITH**) through video conferencing.
9. The National Highways Authority of India (**NHAI**) has successfully achieved **100 percent cashless toll collection at the National Highway fee plazas** in the entire country. All lanes across the fee plazas on National Highways have been declared as FASTag lanes in effect from February 16, 2021.
10. The **National Informatics Centre** has launched its own instant messaging platform called **Sandes** on the line of **WhatsApp**.

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11. The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, addressed the **India-Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE)** on February 19, 2021. During the hackathon, Narendra Modi said that there is a need to look at India's consumption patterns. India also needs to look upon how to reduce their ecological impact.

12. Labour Minister **Santosh Gangwar** launched software applications for **five pan-India surveys** including on migrant and domestic workers. These five surveys being undertaken by the **Labour Bureau**.

*The Surveys includes **All-India Survey on Migrant workers, All-India Survey on Domestic Workers, All-India Survey on Employment Generated by Professionals, All-India Survey on Employment Generated in Transport Sector, and All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey.***

13. PM **Narendra Modi** inaugurated "**Indian Oil's** 143-km-long pipeline from **Ramanathapuram to Thoothukudi**. The project will monetize the gas from ONG gas fields. This is a part of a larger national gas pipeline project being developed at a cost of **₹4,500 crore**. PM also laid the foundation stone of **Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam**.

14. **India** has joined **Iran and Russia** in a two-day navy exercise dubbed "**Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021**" in the northern part of the **Indian Ocean**.

15. PM **Narendra Modi** has addressed **6th Governing Council of NITI Aayog** focusing on the need of policy framework and cooperation between Centre and state. **Meet saw 6 key focus areas:** making India a manufacturing powerhouse, reimagining agriculture, improving physical infrastructure, accelerating HRD, improving service delivery at grassroots level and health and nutrition. It was attended by 26 CM, 3 Lt Governors and 2 Administrators, apart from Union Ministers

16. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal has announced fourth **Pariksha Pe Charcha 2021**, to be conducted in March 2021.

17. The Union Minister of Road, Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari, had launched the '**Go Electric Campaign**' on February 19, 2021. This campaign was launched in order to spread awareness with respect to the benefits of Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure. The campaign would also raise awareness regarding e-mobility and electric cooking across India.



18. PM Narendra Modi has virtually addressed **29th edition of Nasscom Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF)**. It is the flagship event of **National Association of Software and Service Companies**. NTLF 2021 theme: '**Shaping the future towards a better normal**'.

19. **CSIR** has signed MoU with **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** to support the development and promotion of health research in India.

20. The **first-ever National Toy Fair** will be starting from the February 27th, 2021. The festival will conclude on March 2, 2021. It will be organized in the virtual format. During the event, the Centre for Creative Learning (CCL), which is based in IIT Gandhinagar, will showcase its 75 toy creations in the fair.

21. The **Indian Coast Guard Ship** (ICG) named as C-453 was commissioned into services in **Chennai** on February 19, 2021. This was the 17th interceptor boats out of the 18 which are being indigenously built by **Larsen & Toubro Ltd.**

## STATES AFFAIRS

22. The Chief Minister of **Kerala**, Pinarayi Vijayan, has inaugurated the first route and terminal buildings of **Kochi Water Metro**. This project connects the islands across the city with the help of state-of-the-art boats. The metro route ranges from Vyttila to Kakkanad.

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23. **UP Govt** has started training programme for aspirants of various competitive examinations under '**Abhyudaya Yojana**'. Under this, free of cost training will be provided to the candidates who are preparing for various competitive examinations like **UPSC, UPPCS, Subordinate Services, Banking Services, NEET, NDA, CDS TET exam**, etc.

24. PM **Narendra Modi** launched the **Mahabahu-Brahmaputra** initiative in **Assam**. It aims to improve connectivity in the eastern states. Under which Ro-Pax vessel operations between **Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati** and **Dhubri Hatsingimari** inaugurated.

25. A team of scientists and photographers in Kerala have launched '**Snakepedia**' mobile app to help treat snake bites. It will have all relevant information on snakes to help the public as well as doctors in treating snake bites.

26. **Nagaland** Chief Minister **Neiphiu Rio** has announced two new grants, during the Budget session of the state.

- **Chief Minister's Grant for Journalism:** Support the strengthening of democracy, impacting good governance

- **Chief Minister's Research Grant:** Support advancement of science and extend funding to research and research scholars.

27. Union Minister, **Prakash Javadekar** has inaugurated **Atal Paryavaran Bhavan** at Lakshadweep during his 4-day official visit. **Atal Paryavaran Bhavan:** Lakshadweep forest department's headquarters.

28. PM Narendra Modi has virtually inaugurated key projects of **power and urban sector** in **Kerala**.

29. Chief Minister of Assam, **Sarbananda Sonowal** has laid the foundation stone of the **first skill university of eastern India in Darrang district, Assam**.

30. **Chandigarh** became **1st state or Union Territory** in India to launch **Carbon Watch mobile app** providing carbon footprint of an individual. It can be accessed by everyone, but has specific options for residents of Chandigarh.

31. **Assam govt** has increased the wages of tea garden workers by Rs 50 from **Rs 167** to **Rs 217** per day.

32. The state of **Uttar Pradesh** has become the first Indian State that has tabled the **paperless budget**.

33. **Uttar Pradesh govt** has presented biggest ever budget of the state, having total outlay of **Rs 5,50,270 crores**.

34. **Seven-day long exhibition of National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH) scheme** has been concluded in UT of **Jammu and Kashmir**. Govt has taken slew of measures to ensure the upliftment SC and ST communities and awareness camps and exhibitions are organised on regular basis.

35. The Chief Minister of **Madhya Pradesh**, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, has announced to rename the **Hoshangabad** city of MP as **Narmadapuram**.

36. The **Uttarakhand** government has put forward an ordinance providing the **co-ownership rights to women** in the ancestral property of their husband.

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37. The state of **Uttar Pradesh** is all set to export a consignment of 20 tonnes of **Kala Namak rice to Singapore**. This move is a major boost to the farm exports from the state.

38. The government of **Kerala** has sanctioned ₹9 crore for the conversion of conventional anganwadis into “**smart**” **anganwadis** with better amenities. Smart Anganwadi Scheme Under this scheme, the Department of Women and Child Development has granted 48 anganwadis of the states to construct its new buildings.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

39. The **Nigerian** economist **Ngozi Okonjo Iweala** has been appointed as the head the **World Trade Organization**. She has become the **first woman** to take this position. She has also become the first African to hold this charge amid rising protectionism. Okonjo-Iweala was named as the director-general by the representatives of the **164 member countries**.

40. Indian-origin **Preeti Sinha** has been appointed as the **Executive Secretary of UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)**.

41. **India** has joined the “**Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021**” which is a two-day naval exercise. The exercise is being held in the northern part of the Indian Ocean. The drill was participated by the forces and vessels from navy divisions of both the Iranian army and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

42. **China** overtook **United States (US)** as the **biggest trading partner of European Union (EU) in 2020**, according to the data by European Union statistics agency, Eurostat. Britain was 3rd-largest trading partner, behind China and US, before leaving European Union in 2020. Trade volume of EU with China reached **586 billion euros (\$711 billion) in 2020**, compared to **555 billion euros (\$673 billion)** for US. EU exports to China rose by **2.2%** while imports from China increased by **5.6%**.

43. India is all set to host the virtual health secretary-level meeting with the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (**SAARC**). The virtual meeting will be held on February 18, 2021. During the meeting the members will discuss the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Pakistan has also been invited to attend the meeting.

44. **India – Singapore CEO Forum**, that was launched in November 2018, again held their meeting. The meeting was organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**) and FICCI on February 18, 2021.

45. The **science rover Perseverance** of NASA landed on the **Red Planet (MARS)** on February 18, 2021. This rover is the most advanced astrobiology laboratory that has been ever sent another planet. It will firstly search the traces of ancient microbial life on the Planet.

46. The International Solar Alliance (**ISA**) have planned to launch the **World Solar Bank (WSB)** at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow that is scheduled for November 2021. The development of the World Solar Bank will support India’s attempt to secure its leadership in the climate arena.

47. The Secretary-General of United Nations, Antonio Guterres, has asked the G20 nations to prepare a "Global Covid-19 Vaccination Plan" on February 17, 2020.

48. The lower house of **French** parliament has approved **Ant-Radicalism bill** in a bid to fight the **Islamic radicalism**.

49. **Union Cabinet** has approved signing of **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius**. It is the first trade agreement to be signed by India with an African country. **Aim:** Liberalising norms to boost two-way commerce between the two countries. It will cover **Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, TBT, Dispute Settlement**

50. **India** has signed MoU with **Nepal's Central Level Project Implementation Unit (Education)** for reconstruction of 6 secondary schools.

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51. **United States (US)** has officially rejoined **Paris Agreement** under Presidency of US President Joe Biden.

52. **India** signed 5 deals with **Maldives** to boost infrastructure in island nation:

- Remodel an older EXIM Bank of India Line of Credit of USD 25 million for Road Development
- Letter of Intent for financing housing project
- Fish processing plant in Maldives
- Capacity building and exchange of content and expertise between Prasar Bharati and Maldives Media
- Sustainable urban development

53. **India & Ethiopia** signed agreements on Visa Facilitation and **Leather Technology**.

54. **Israel** has launched **coronavirus 'green pass' system**, that allows people who have been vaccinated to access public facilities.

55. The **Indian and the Indonesian** navies held the **PASSEX military exercise** in the **Arabian** sea on February 18, 2021. This military exercise was organised in order to enhance the operational interoperability and the overall cooperation. INS Talwar represented the Indian naval ship. The Indonesian Navy was represented by the multirole corvette KRI Bung Tomo.

56. The **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** and the Greenstat **Norway** signed an agreement to set up the **Centre of Excellence on Hydrogen**. This agreement was signed some days after India unveiled its national hydrogen mission.



57. The 11th **India-European Union macroeconomic dialogue** was held in the virtual mode on February 19, 2021. The Indian Delegation was led by the Secretary of Economic Affairs, Tarun Bajaj. Director-General of Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission led the European Union delegation.

## REPORTS & INDICES

58. **World Bank** in association with **SaveLife Foundation** has prepared report titled as '**Traffic Crash Injuries and Disabilities: The Burden on Indian Society**' based on 2019 incidents

- Report was released by Union transport minister, **Nitin Gadkari**.
- As per the report, **India has only 1% of world's total vehicles but accounts for 11% of the global death due to road accidents**
- This is the highest death rate due to road accident in world
- 70% of the fatalities belongs to 18-45 years

59. The **Institute of International Finance (IIF)** has reported that, the world has never been more indebted before and the debt will further rise in the year 2021 with more borrowing ahead amid the covid-19 led economic crisis. As per the IIF, governments, companies and households have raised \$24 trillion in 2020

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## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

60. **Govt of India** has launched the **PLI scheme** for telecommunications and networking products, with an outlay of **Rs 12,195 cr** over **5 yrs**.

- The scheme will be operational from **1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**.
- Under the scheme, **Telecom manufacturing** will be boosted in order to enhance the production of more than **Rs 2.4 lakh cr**.
- The scheme also has higher proposed incentives for MSMEs.
- The PLI scheme was launched in **March 2020** in a bid to boost domestic **manufacturing**.

61. The Union Health Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan, has launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0.

- The mission will be conducted in two rounds.
- The first round will start from February 22, 2021 while the second phase will start from March 22, 2021.
- It will run **across 250 districts** or urban areas across the **29 States or Union Territories**.
- Apart from that, the Minister also launched the IMI 3.0 portal and released Operational Guidelines for it.

- He also launched the awareness material or IEC package developed under the campaign

62. The chairman of National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), Bhagwan Lal Sahni, said that the NCBC is in favour of four subcategories of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). This move complies with the recommendation of the Justice Rohini Commission.

- **Justice Rohini Commission** was constituted on October 2, 2017. This commission has been appointed in order to study and report about the sub-categorisation of OBCs. The commission will be submitting the report by **July 2021**.
- The panel's terms of reference are to study the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among castes or communities. The panel will also work out on the mechanism, criteria and parameters for sub-categorisation within the OBCs.

63. The agriculture ministry was allowed to **use drones** for the purpose of remote sensing data collection under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (**PMFBY**). The conditional permission was granted to use the **Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)** by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

## ECONOMY & BUSINESS

64. **ACC Ready Mix Concrete** has recently introduced its new low carbon range of concrete called **ECOPact**. It is a "Green Concrete" that has been introduced for a high-performing, sustainable and circular construction. ECOPact was launched in Mumbai and Hyderabad in the first phase.

65. The **Tata Electronics** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the Tamil Nadu government in order to establish a facility to manufacture the mobile components. The project by the Tata Electronics will cost Rs 4684 crores. It will be established in **Krishnagiri** to manufacture the mechanical enclosures of mobile phones.

66. Govt has **increased budget of Dept of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences by 30%** as compared to the revised estimate of 2020-21.

67. The **Reserve Bank of India** has approved the takeover of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (**DHFL**) by Piramal Group on February 18, 2021.

68. E-commerce giant **Amazon** has announced plans to begin manufacturing devices in India. This is the **first Amazon manufacturing line in India** and reiterates the firm's commitment to the government's Make in India for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Amazon will commence manufacturing with contract manufacturer **Cloud Network Technology**, a subsidiary of Foxconn, in Chennai, and start production later this year. It will churn out hundreds of thousands of **Fire TV Stick devices** every year.

69. **Hyundai Motors** has launched Transformer-like robocar named as '**TIGER X-1**', that can travel over the most challenging terrains on the Earth as well as on other planets. **TIGER: Transforming Intelligent Ground Excursion Robot.**

## FINANCE & BANKING

70. The Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) has recently released its data on the Bank Credit and Deposits. The data shows that, the Bank credit grew by **5.93 per cent** which now accounts for Rupees 5 lakh crore for the fortnight that ended January 29, 2021.

- It also highlights that, the deposits in the banks have rose by 11.06 per cent that accounts for Rupees 98 lakh crore for the same period.
- Thus, in the fortnight that ended January 31, 2020, the bank credit stands at ₹05 lakh crore while the deposits stand at Rupees 133.24 lakh crore.
- The RBI data further shows that, during the first nine months of the fiscal year 2020-2021, the bank credit increased by 3.2 percent while the deposits increased by 8.5 per cent.
- The data highlights that, the non-food credit growth of banks was 5.9 per cent in December 2020.
- It also highlights that, the growth in the credit to agriculture and allied activities has increased to 9.4 per cent as compared to 5.3 per cent growth in December 2019.
- Loans to industry have decreased by 1.2 per cent because of contraction in the credit to large industries by 2.4 per cent.
- Further, the Personal loans decreased by 9.5 per cent in the current financial year (2020-2021).

71. **RBI** has constituted **8-member expert committee on Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs)** to examine issues, suggesting a road map for strengthening it.

- Chairperson: **N. S. Vishwanathan** (RBI Deputy Governor)
- It will also **review current regulatory approach** and recommend suitable measures.
- It suggests effective measures for faster resolution of UCBs.

72. **ICICI Lombard** and **Frost & Sullivan** has launched unified, standardised index that spans industries and companies named as **Corporate India Risk Index**.

- It will help companies understand the level of risk that their business is facing and also assist in developing a successful risk aversion plan
- Index consists of **15 sectors** including IT, automotive, pharma, etc covering **150 top companies, 2 risk elements across 6 broad dimensions**.

73. To facilitate the privatization of **PSU banks**, govt is likely to bring amendments to **2 Acts**.

- The two laws to be amended are **Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970** and the **Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980**.
- The four banks to be privatized are **Bank of Maharashtra, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank** and the **Central Bank of India**.

74. **Flipkart** has partnered with **ICICI Lombard** to offer its customers group health insurance policy named as '**Group SafeGuard**' insurance.

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75. The Reserve Bank of India (**RBI**) has brought the **State Bank of Sikkim** under its regulation. State Bank of Sikkim It is a state-owned banking institution. The headquarter of the bank is at Gangtok, Sikkim. It operates under the jurisdiction of the State of Sikkim.

## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

76. **S.Theodore Baskaran** who is a writer, a historian, a naturalist and an activist has won the Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award, 2020. The award was instituted by the **Sanctuary Nature Foundation**. Theodore Baskaran was chosen for the award in the light of his dedication to the wildlife conservation.

77. Andhra Pradesh CM, **Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy** has been conferred the **Skoch Chief Minister of the Year award**. This Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman of Skoch group, **Sameer Kochhar** personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh.

78. Five **Indian-origin** personalities have been featured in **TIME magazine's** annual list of **100 "emerging leaders**.

- **Vijaya Gadde** (Twitter's lawyer), **Rishi Sunak** (UK FM), **Apoorva Mehta** (Instacart CEO) **Shikha Gupta** (ED Get Us PPE) are featured in the list. Bhim Army chief **Chandra Shekhar Aazad** is also on the list.
- The **2021 TIME100 Next** is an expansion of TIME's flagship **TIME100 franchise** of the most influential people in the world.

79. **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** has received **Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2020** for combatting transboundary environmental crime

- It is the **5th edition of the awards**.
- Award was presented by **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)**, **UN Development Programme (UNDP)**, **UN Office on Drugs and Crime**, **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, **INTERPOL** and **World Customs Organization**

80. **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO)** and **Arbor Day Foundation** have recognized **Hyderabad** as **2020 Tree City of World**.

- Hyderabad has been selected for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forestry under Haritha Haram programme and its Urban Forest Parks plan.
- 5 metrics of evaluation:** Establish Responsibility, Set the Rules, Know What You Have, Allocate Resources, Celebrate Achievements.

## PERSON IN NEWS

81. **Ajay Mathur** has been elected as the new **Director General of International Solar Alliance (ISA)** as announced at the first special assembly of ISA members.
82. Award-winning writer, journalist and speaker **Meghna Pant** has come up with her new novel titled as '**The Terrible, Horrible, Very Bad Good News**'

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## OBITUARIES

83. Noted jurist and a former Governor of Bihar and Jharkhand, Justice (Retd.) **M. Rama Jois (88 years)** passed away, due to age-related ailments. He is former Rajya Sabha MP and had also served as the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court.
84. Major General (retired) **Basant Kumar Mahapatra (87 years)** passed away at a hospital in Bhubaneswar. He participated in major battles including **1962 Indo-China war**, and **1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan war**, has passed away.
85. Former Union minister **Captain Satish Sharma** (73-years) passed away in **Goa**. Sharma served as the Union Petroleum and **Natural Gas Minister** between 1993 and 1996 in the **PV Narasimha Rao government**.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

86. **International Mother Language Day** is observed on **21st February** every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. It was proclaimed by **UNESCO** in **November 1999** and first celebrated in 2000. Theme 2021: **Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society**.
87. The **World Day of Social Justice** is observed on February 20 every year. The day is dedicated to advantages and issues which can be tackled by Social Justice. In the year 2021, the day was celebrated under **Theme– "A call for social justice in the Digital Economy."**



## SPORTS

88. Kings XI Punjab (Established in 2008) were renamed as 'Punjab Kings'. Punjab Kings have played in all 13 seasons of the IPL thus far, but they are yet to win a title.
89. **Vivo** has returned as the **title sponsors of Indian Premier League (IPL) for the 2021 edition** as informed by IPL Governing Council chairman Brijesh Patel in Chennai.
90. South-African all-rounder cricketer **Chris Morris (33 years)** has broken all record by becoming the **most expensive player in the history of Indian Premier League (IPL) auction**, held in Chennai. IPL franchise **Rajasthan Royals** has bought Chris Morris for Rs 16.25 crore.
91. **Australian Open 2021 Tennis Championship** has been concluded. Winners:
- **Men's Singles:** Novak Djokovic (Serbia) won his 18th grand slam after defeating Daniil Medvedev
  - **Women's Singles:** Naomi Osaka (Japan) won 4th grand slam defeated Jennifer Brady (US)
92. In sports current affairs, Manika Batra has won the 82nd Senior National Table Tennis Championship. She beaten Reeth Rishya at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Complex in Panchkula.

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