

Weekly Current Affairs
1st December 2021 - 4th December 2021

साप्ताहिक करंट अफेयर्स 1-4 दिसम्बर 2021

Important News: State

World's tallest railway bridge pier to come up in Manipur

Why in News

- The **Indian Railways** is constructing the world's tallest bridge pier in **Manipur**.

Key Points

- The ambitious project in Manipur is part of the **111 km long Jiribam-Imphal railway line** to connect the capital of Manipur with the broad gauge network of the country.
- The bridge, which is being built at a pier height of 141 metres, will surpass the existing record of **139 meter of Mala - Rijeka viaduct, Montenegro in Europe**.
- The work on the bridge will be completed by December 2023.

Source: ET

Important News: India

India Young Water Professional Programme

Why in News

- The first edition of the **India Young Water Professional Programme** was launched by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti**.
- The launch of the India Young Water Professional Program marks a significant milestone in **Australia-India Water relationship**.

Key Points

- This program has been taken up under the **National Hydrology Project**, a Central Scheme of DOWR, and RD & GR and supported by the Australian Water Partnership.
- This Program will be implemented by Australia India Water Centre (a consortium of Australian and Indian universities).
- The seeds for this Program were sowed during a co-design workshop with National Hydrology Project (NHP) on 'Sustainable Water Management' in November 2019.
- This initiative aims to provide a structured platform for capacity building with strategic and long-term investment to support the water management reforms in India.
- Based on the success of this edition, a second phase of it will be planned in the later half of year the 2022.

Related Initiatives:

- National Water Mission
- Jal Kranti Abhiyan
- National Rural Drinking Water Programme
- NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index
- Jal Jeevan Mission
- Atal Bhujal Yojana
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan

Source: PIB

Union Health Ministry releases NFHS-5 Phase II Findings

Why in News

- The **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** released the Factsheets of key indicators on population, reproductive and child health, family welfare, nutrition and



others for India and 14 States/UTs (clubbed under Phase-II) of the **2019-21 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)**.

- The findings of NFHS-5 in respect of 22 States & UTs covered in Phase-I was released in December, 2020.

Key Points

- The States and UTs which were surveyed in the Phase-II are Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- The main objective of successive rounds of the NFHS is to provide reliable and comparable data relating to health and family welfare and other emerging issues.
- The NFHS-5 survey work has been conducted in around 6.1 lakh sample households from 707 districts (as on March, 2017) of the country; covering 724,115 women and 101,839 men to provide disaggregated estimates up to district level.
- The all-India and State/UT level factsheet released includes information on 131 key indicators.
- It provides information on important indicators which are helpful in tracking the progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country.

Key results from India and Phase-II States/UTs NFHS-5 Factsheets:

- The Total Fertility Rates (TFR), an average number of children per woman has further declined from 2.2 to 2.0 at the national level and all 14 States/UT's ranging from 1.4 in Chandigarh to 2.4 in Uttar Pradesh.
- All Phase-II States have achieved replacement level of fertility (2.1) except Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
- Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased substantially from 54% to 67% at all-India level and in almost all Phase-II States/UTs with an exception of Punjab.
- Full immunization drive among children aged 12-23 months has recorded substantial improvement from 62 percent to 76 percent at all-India level.
- 11 out of 14 States/UTs have more than three-fourth of children aged 12-23 months with fully immunization and it is highest (90%) for Odisha.
- Child Nutrition indicators show a slight improvement at all-India level as Stunting has declined from 38 percent to 36 percent, wasting from 21 percent to 19 percent and underweight from 36 percent to 32 percent at all India level.
- More than half of the children and women (including pregnant women) are anemic in all the phase-II States/UTs and all-India level compared to NFHS-4, in spite of substantial increase in the composition of iron folic acid (IFA) tablets by pregnant women for 180 days or more.
- Women's empowerment indicators portray considerable improvement at all India levels and across all the phase-II States/UTs.

Source: PIB

Union Minister for Jal Shakti launches River Cities Alliance

Why in News

- **Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** launched the **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**, a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers.
- This first of its kind Alliance in the world symbolizes the successful partnership of the two Ministries i.e., **Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.

Key Point

- The Alliance will focus on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- The Secretariat of the Alliance will be set up at the National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA), with NMCG's support.



- The participating cities in the River Cities Alliance are Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Srinagar, Begusarai, Bhagalpur, Munger, Patna, Berhampore, Hooghly-Chinsurah, Howrah, Jangipur, Maheshtala, Rajmahal, Sahibganj, Ayodhya, Bijnor, Farrukhabad, Kanpur, Mathura-Vrindavan, Mirzapur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Aurangabad, Chennai, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Pune, Udaipur and Vijayawada.

Related Initiatives:

- Namami Gange Programme
- Ganga Action Plan
- National River Ganga Basin Authority
- Clean Ganga Fund
- Bhuvan-Ganga Web App
- Ban on Waste Disposal

Source: PIB

Central Government constitutes 5-member panel to monitor Central Vista project

Why in News

- The Central Government has constituted a **Central Vista Oversight Committee** to directly oversee the Rs 20,000 crore project for a period of two years.

Key Points

- **Former Finance Secretary Ratan P Watal** has been appointed the Chairman of the **5-member Central Vista Oversight Committee**.
- The Central Vista Oversight Committee shall ensure multi-agency, multi-stakeholder coordination for seamless integration of different project works, and continuous monitoring of the pace of execution of various projects of Central Vista with respect to targeted milestones to ensure their timely completion.

Note: The Central Vista project was announced in 2019 and the foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020.

Source: Business Standard

Important News: World

India-ITU Joint Cyberdrill 2021

Why in News

- The **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** and the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** have commenced **India-ITU Joint Cyberdrill 2021**.
- It is a four days virtual event starting from 30 November to 3 December 2021.

Key Points

- This Cyberdrill is intended for Indian entities especially Critical Network Infrastructure operators.
- Several high level speakers, panellists and experts from ITU, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL, National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) and other eminent organizations participated in the inaugural session.

Note: India secured 10th rank in the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020.

Source: PIB

Barbados – the world's newest republic

Why in News

- Nearly 400 years after the country became a British colony, **Barbados** has become the world's newest republic.
- The Caribbean island nation removed Queen Elizabeth II as the head of the state.

Key Points

- Dame Sandra Mason, the island's governor-general since 2018, was named as president-elect of the nation.



Note:

- **Barbados** was one of England's first slave colonies.
- English settlers occupied the island in 1627.
- Slavery was abolished in Barbados in 1834 and the country became fully independent in 1966.

Source: Indian Express

13th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM13)**Why in News**

- The **13th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM13)** was held on 25-26 November 2021 via videoconference.
- The Meeting was hosted by the **Kingdom of Cambodia** and chaired by Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Key Points

- The theme of Meeting was **“Strengthening Multilateralism for Shared Growth”**.
- The **Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu**, addressed the Retreat Session of the two-day ASEM Summit in virtual format.
- Leaders reaffirmed the importance of this partnership between Asia and Europe in strengthening dialogue and fostering action-oriented cooperation, based on consensus, equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit to further advance a robust, inclusive and open multilateralism capable of addressing global and regional issues, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic.

Facts about Asia–Europe Meeting:

- The Asia–Europe Meeting is an Asian–European political dialogue forum to enhance relations and various forms of cooperation between its partners.
- **Partnership:** 53 ASEM Partners (51 countries and 2 regional organisations)
- **Founded:** 1996

Note: The 2021 summit marks the 25th anniversary of the ASEM process.

Source: PIB

Collins Dictionary names NFT as word of the year 2021**Why in News**

- Collins Dictionary has named the term **NFT** as the **word of the year 2021**.

Key Points

- NFT is short for **Non-Fungible Token**.
- Collins defines it as “a unique digital certificate, registered in a blockchain that is used to record ownership of an asset such as an artwork or a collectible.”
- Collins English Dictionary is published by HarperCollins in Glasgow.

Note: The **Oxford English Dictionary’s** publisher recently chose **vax** as its **word of the year 2021**.

Source: Indian Express

Important News: Economics**Skill India launches a programme to upskill Street Food Vendors****Why in News**

- The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** announced to skill the street vendors of East Delhi and makes them eligible for e-cart licenses, improving the hygiene conditions in food preparation and aesthetics of vending.
- The initiative will be implemented under the **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** component of **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0**.

Key Points

- The project will be implemented by the Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skill Council (THSSC) and training partners of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- The two training partners recommended by THSSC are Learnet Institute of Skills and Tata STRIVE.
- Under the initiative, the Street Food Vendors will be educated on health and safety standards, safety provisions under COVID-19 protocols, effective communication techniques with staff and customers, new-age skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, digital payments and e-selling.
- The vendors will also be supported with loans under the Mudra Scheme.
- In its pilot phase with East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC), Skill India aims at upskilling 2,500 vendors, aged between 23 to 55 years.
- Further, this initiative will also provide social security and safety to 4,000 vendors of East Delhi and 25 lakh street vendors, nationally.

Note: India is land to 55 lakh Street Food Vendors, their contribution to the informal economy is 14% which is not a small number and highlights the important role played by them in India's economy.

Other Schemes related to Food vendors:

- PM SVANidhi Scheme
- The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014
- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

Source: PIB

Important News: Science

Mystery behind the high abundance of Lithium in some evolved stars traced Why in News

- Scientists have found a clue to the mystery behind the high abundance of **Lithium**— a trace element on Earth, and a key component of rechargeable batteries, in some evolved stars.

Key Points

- For more than four decades, Astronomers have known that a class of stars has an anomalous amount of Lithium on their surface.
- The reason and processes behind the high abundance of Lithium in about one percent red giants has remained a puzzle since the models of how stars evolve predict the Lithium must have been destroyed in the hot plasma of the star.
- Mr. Deepak from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) Bangalore, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India and Professor Emeritus David L. Lambert from the University of Texas at Austin and an Honorary Fellow of IIA Bangalore have for the first time confirmed that all the lithium-rich stars are burning helium in their core.
- The **survey GALAH** - named after a common Australian bird -- provided a collection of about 500,000 stars with well-determined physical and chemical properties, including **lithium** abundances.

About Lithium:

- Lithium is a chemical element with the symbol Li and atomic number 3.
- It is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal.
- Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.

Source: PIB

SWADESH project, World's First Multimodal Brain Imaging Data and Analytics Why in News



- **DBT-National Brain Research Centre (DBT-NBRC), Haryana** has recently developed the **SWADESH project, World's First Multimodal Brain Imaging Data and Analytics.**

Key Points

- SWADESH is a unique brain initiative focusing on certified neuroimaging, neurochemical, neuropsychological data and analytics that are made accessible to researchers for managing brain disorders.
- SWADESH is the **first large-scale multimodal neuroimaging database** designed specifically for the Indian population with big-data architecture and analytics for various disease categories under one platform.

About Department of Biotechnology (DBT):

- The Department of Biotechnology, under the Ministry of Science and Technology, promotes and improves biotechnology development in India through its development and implementation in agriculture, healthcare, animal sciences, the environment, and industry.

About National Brain Research Centre (NBRC):

- National Brain Research Centre is the only institute in India dedicated to Neuroscience Research and Education.
- Scientists and students at NBRC come from diverse academic backgrounds, including biological, computational, mathematical, physical, engineering and medical sciences, and use multidisciplinary approaches to unravel secrets of the brain.

Source: PIB

New COVID-19 Strain 'Omicron'

Why in News

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the **new corona virus variant, B.1.1.529**, which was detected in South Africa named '**Omicron**' as 'Variant of Concern (VOC)'.

Key Points

The WHO currently lists 5 variant of concern:

- Omicron (B.1.1.529), identified in Southern Africa in November 2021
- Delta (B.1.617.2), which emerged in India in late 2020 and spread around the world
- Gamma (P.1), which emerged in Brazil in late 2020
- Beta (B.1.351), which emerged in South Africa in early 2020
- Alpha (B.1.1.7), which merged in Britain in late 2020

Source: Indian Express

Awards and Honours

52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) 2021

- The **52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI)**, held in Goa in a hybrid format from November 20 -28, 2021 screened international films drawn from 73 countries at the festival.
- As many as 148 films were presented to film lovers in the International Section that included the World Premiere of 12 films, 7 International Premiere and 24 Asia Premiere.
- **Uttar Pradesh** has been picked as the **most friendly state** for film shooting.

Winners List

- **Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award:** Martin Scorsese, István Szabó
- **Indian Film Personality of the Year:** Hema Malini, Praseen Joshi

Golden Peacock Award

- **Best Film:** Ring Wandering (Directed by Masakazu Kaneko)

Silver Peacock Awards



- **Best Director:** Václav Kadrnka (Saving One Who Is Dead)
- **Best Actor (Male):** Jitendra Joshi (Godavari)
- **Best Actor (Female):** Ángela Molina (Watch Charlotte)

ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal: Lingui, The Sacred Bonds (Mahamat-Saleh Haroun)
BRICS Film Festival

- **Winner(s):** Best Film: Barakat (South Africa), The Sun Above Me Never Sets (Russia)

Source: PIB

Bihar wins gold award in 40th IITF 2021

Why in News

- **Bihar pavilion** won a gold medal in the **40th India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2021** for “excellence in display” in state government/union territory pavilion category.
- **IITF 2021** was organised at Pragati Maidan in Delhi from November 14 to 27.

Key Points

- This is the 6th gold medal for the Bihar pavilion in the last 7 years.
- Bihar is the partner state for the 40th IITF and the focus states are Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- Assam has been awarded the Silver Medal.

About India International Trade Fair (IITF):

- It was first organized in 1979.
- The fair is organized by the Trade Promotion Organization of India, a trade promotion agency of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

Source: HT

S K Sohan Roy becomes first Indian to be honoured with ‘Knighthood of Parte Guelfa’

Why in News

- **Dr S K Sohan Roy**, a Forbes-listed entrepreneur from Kerala has become the first Indian who has been awarded the honorary title of '**Knighthood of Parte Guelfa**' in Italy.

Key Points

- The knighthood was conferred on Roy for his humanitarian and environmental protection efforts in business and movies.

About Order of the Guelph Part:

- Order of the Guelph Part or Ordo Parte Guelfae which was initially known as Societas Partis Ecclesiae is an order of pontifical foundation established by Pope Clement IV in 1266.
- The Guelph part is concerned with environmental protection and the knighthood is recognised as the protector of the World Environment.

Books and Authors

Ban Ki-moon released his autobiography “Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World”

Why in News

- A book titled '**Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World**' is an autobiography of the **Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**.

Key Points

- The book consists of life experiences and challenges that the author faced in his life & elaborates his tenure in the United Nations (UN).
- Ban Ki-moon served as the 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations for a two 5-year term (2007-2016).
- The book has been published by HarperCollins India.

Source: Indian Express



Reports

Global State of Democracy Report 2021

Why in News

- The number of countries moving towards authoritarianism in 2020 was higher than that of countries going in the other direction, towards democracy according to the **Global State of Democracy Report, 2021**.
- The report is released by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA)**.

Key Points

- The report aims to influence the global debate and analyses current trends and challenges to democracy, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It offers specific policy recommendations to spark new and innovative thinking for policymakers, governments and civil society organizations supporting democracy.
- The pandemic placed considerable stress on democracy across the region by imposing inevitable restrictions on movement and—where governments were sensitive to criticism—also restrictions on freedom of expression.
- Democratically elected Governments, including established democracies, are increasingly adopting authoritarian tactics.
- The report highlighted the case of Brazil and India as some of the most worrying examples of backsliding.
- **India** remained in the **category of a mid-level performing democracy** as it has since 2000.

Source: The Hindu

New Appointments

IRS officer Vivek Johri takes charge as CBIC Chairman

Why in News

- Senior bureaucrat **Vivek Johri** took charge as the **Chairman** of the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**.

Key Points

- Johri, a 1985-batch Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Indirect Taxes) officer, has been a member of the board.
- He succeeded M Ajit Kumar, who completed his tenure on November 30.

Source: Business Standard

Sweden's first female Prime Minister resigns hours after appointment

Why in News

- Sweden's first ever female Prime Minister, **Magdalena Andersson** has resigned just hours after she was appointed.

Key Points

- Magdalena Andersson was announced as leader but resigned after her coalition partner quit the government and her budget failed to pass.
- A former junior swimming champion from the university city of Uppsala, she began her political career in 1996 as political adviser to then-Prime Minister Goran Persson. She has spent the past seven years as finance minister.

Source: HT

Indian Parag Agrawal takes over as CEO of Twitter

Why in News

- **Indian Parag Agrawal** took over as **CEO (Chief Executive Officer)** of the social media platform **Twitter**.

Key Points



- Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey has stepped down as Chief Executive of the company paving way for the current chief technical officer, Parag Agrawal, to take over.
- Parag Agarwal has joined the list of Indian-origin Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella to head the world's top technology companies.
- A Computer Science and Engineering graduate from IIT Bombay, Agrawal is a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Source: newsonair

Petr Fiala appointed as new Prime Minister of Czech Republic

Why in News

- The President of Czech Republic, Milos Zeman appointed **Petr Fiala** as the new Prime Minister of the country.

Key Points

- The 57-year-old Fiala, who has led the conservative Civic Democratic Party since 2014, served as country's education minister between 2012-13.
- Fiala leads a bloc of five centre and centre-right opposition parties that won an election in October, 2021.

Source: TOI

Obituaries

Noted Telugu Lyricist Sirivennela Seetarama Sastry passes away

- **Noted poet, Telugu film Lyricist Sirivennela Seetarama Sastry** passed away at 66.
- Sirivennela Seetarama Sastry wrote about three thousand songs, for over 800 films and most of them, known for their lyrical excellence and also popular.
- The Government of India honoured him with Padma Shri award in 2019 and prior to that he received Andhra Pradesh Government Nandi Awards for 11 times and film fare awards for 4 times.

Source: TOI

Important Days

December 3, International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021

Why in News

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)** is a global observance celebrated every year on December 3.

Key Points

- The **theme** for IDPD this year is "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world."
- The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly.

Note:

- Today, the world population is over 7 billion people and more than one billion people, or approximately 15 percent of the world's population lives with some form of disability; 80 percent live in developing countries.

Source: un.org

December 2, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

Why in News

- The **International Day for the Abolition of Slavery** is observed every year on December 2.

Key Points



- The focus of this day is to raise awareness about slavery and put an end to all kinds of slavery existing in the present-day world such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- It is being organized since 1986 by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Note:

- According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) more than 40 million people worldwide are victims of modern slavery.
- In addition, more than 150 million children are subject to child labour, accounting for almost one in ten children around the world.

Source: un.org

December 01, World AIDS Day

Why in News

- December 1 is observed as **World AIDS Day** across the world.

Key Points

- The theme of World AIDS Day 2021 is **'End inequalities. End AIDS.'**
- With a special focus on reaching people left behind, WHO and its partners are highlighting the growing inequalities in access to essential HIV services.
- The day was first marked in 1988 and was also the first-ever international day for global health.

About Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS):

- AIDS is a chronic disease that is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- The immune system of the person who is suffering from the disease gets damaged and also reduces the disease fighting ability of the body.

Source: un.org

Sports

Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan wins maiden singles title on ATP Challenger Tour

Why in News

- Indian tennis player **Ramkumar Ramanathan** won maiden singles title on **ATP Challenger Tour** in Manama, Bahrain.
- This is his maiden Challenger level singles title after 12 years turning a Pro.
- He outplayed Evgeny Karlovskiy in the summit clash of the ATP 80 Manama event, in Manama, Bahrain

Source: newsonair

