

Daily Current Affairs 01/12/2021

1. 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.

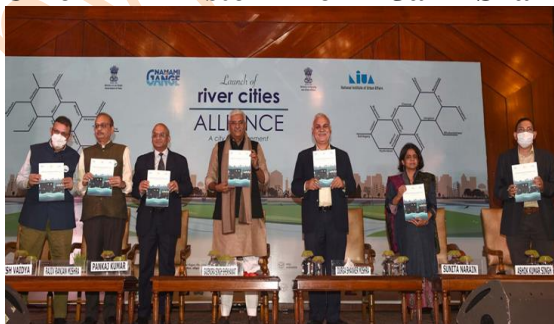
- The report is released by the **International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA)**.

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

2. 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

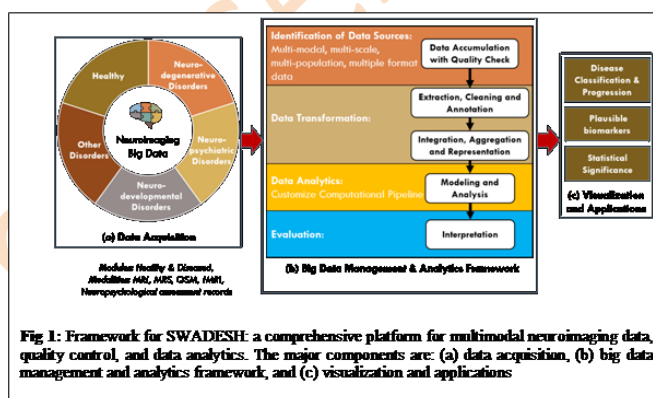
- The Alliance will focus on three broad themes- Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support.
- The Secretariat of the Alliance will be set up at the National Institute for Urban Affairs (NIUA), with NMCG's support.
- The participating cities in the River Cities Alliance are Dehradun, Haridwar,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

3. 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):

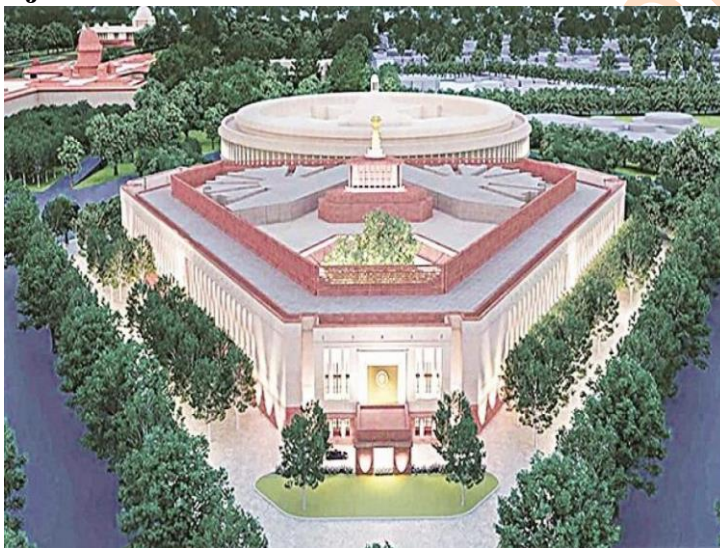
- The Department of Biotechnology, under the Ministry of Science and Technology, promotes and improves biotechnology development in India through its development and implementation in agriculture, healthcare, animal sciences, the environment, and industry.

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

4. 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

5. 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

6. 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

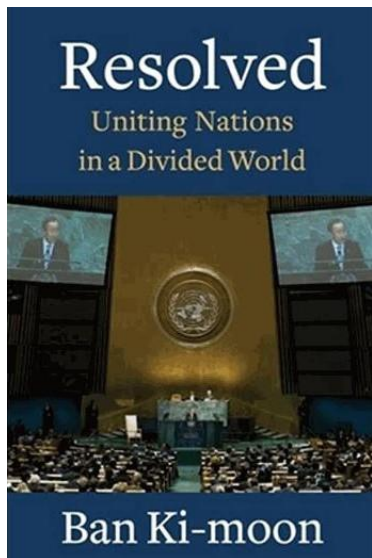
- The 57-year-old Fiala, who has led the conservative Civic Democratic Party since 2014, served as country's education

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

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



Why in News

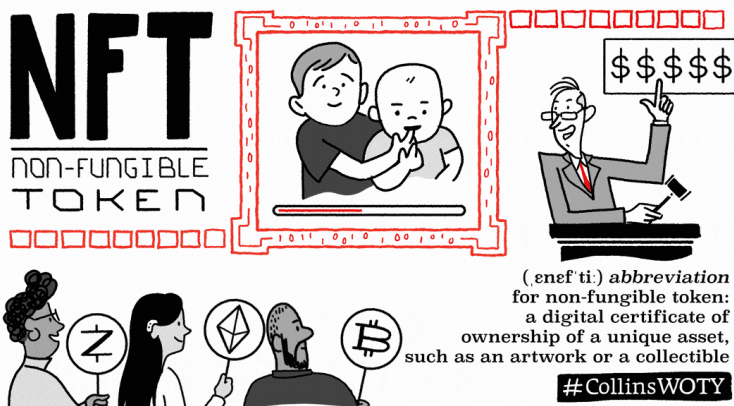
- A book titled ‘Resolved: Uniting Nations in a Divided World’ is an autobiography of the **Former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**.

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

8. 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

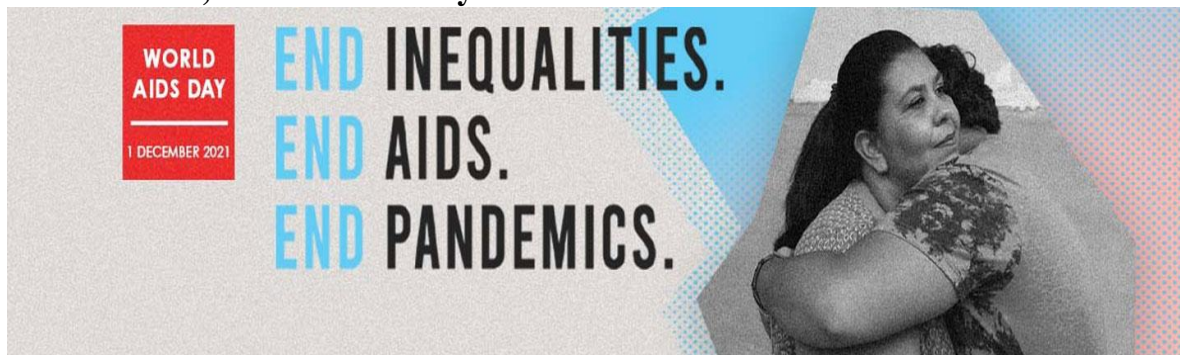
blockchain that is used to record ownership of an asset such as an artwork or a collectible.”

- 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

9. 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