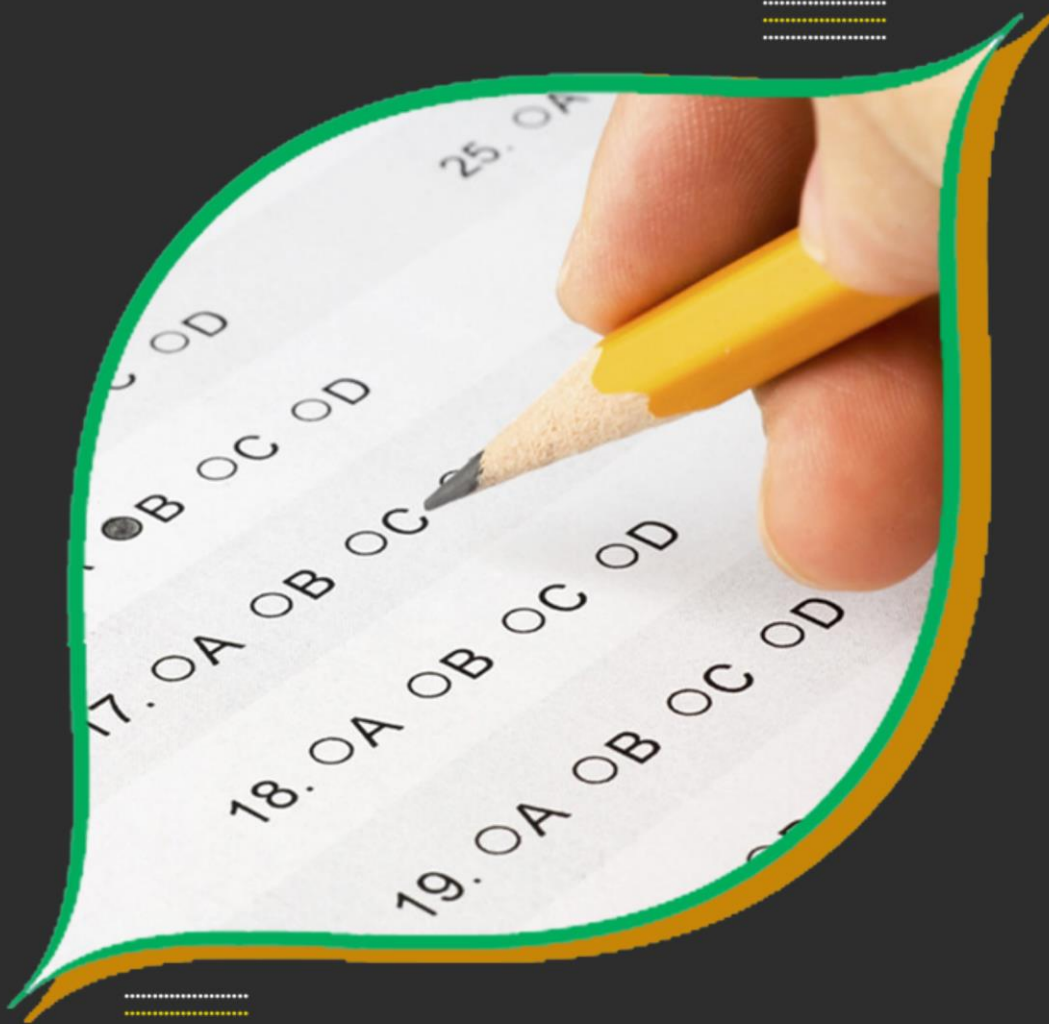


Monthly Current Affairs May 2021

Practice Current Affair MCQs



Important News: State

Nation's first 'Drive in Vaccination Center' inaugurated in Mumbai

- The Nation's first 'Drive in Vaccination Center' was inaugurated by MP Rahul Shewale in Mumbai.
- This center has been set up in the parking lot of Kohinoor Square Tower at Dadar.
- This first of its kind 'Drive in Vaccination Center' facility has been made available to the citizens at a time when people with disabilities are facing difficulties in getting to the vaccination center.
- The center also provides transportation facilities to the citizens who do not have their own vehicles.

Puducherry becomes 'Har Ghar Jal' UT

- Puducherry has become 'Har Ghar Jal' UT by ensuring that every rural home in the Union Territory gets a household tap connection.
- With this, the **UT becomes the fourth State/UT after Goa, Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar Islands** to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home under Union Government's flagship programme, Jal Jeevan Mission.
- All 1.16 lakh rural households in Puducherry have tap water supply now.
- **Note:** Further, the State of Punjab and the UTs of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu have also crossed the milestone of covering 75% of rural homes with assured tap water supply.
- **About JJM (Jal Jeevan Mission):** It is a flagship programme of the Union Government, which aims to provide tap water connection to every rural household of the country by 2024.

Assam becomes first Indian state to have a digital flood reporting system

- Jishnu Barua, Chief Secretary, Assam, launched a digital real-time **Flood Reporting and Information Management System (FRIMS)** in the state of Assam.
- With the launch of FRIMS, Assam becomes the first Indian state to have a real-time digital flood reporting system.
- FRIMS has been developed jointly by **Assam State Disaster Management Agency (ASDMA) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**.

Madhya Pradesh government launches 'Mukhyamantri COVID Upchar Yojana'

- Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the launch of the 'Mukhyamantri COVID Upchar Yojana' (Chief Minister's Covid Treatment Programme).
- **The scheme has been divided into three sections:**
- Under the **first section**, hospitals run by state medical colleges, district and civil hospitals and community health centres will give free treatment to COVID-19 patients.
- In the **second section**, 20 percent ICU/HDU and isolation beds will be reserved in hospitals run by private medical colleges to give free treatment.
- In the **third section**, 20 percent beds will be reserved for free treatment in hospitals accredited under Ayushman scheme for economically weaker sections of the society holding Ayushman cards.

Goa Maritime Symposium (GMS) – 2021

- Towards fostering friendly relations with its maritime neighbours, Indian Navy hosted 'Goa Maritime Symposium, GMS-21' under the aegis of Naval War College, Goa on 11 and 12 May 21.
- Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event for the first time was hosted in virtual mode, with online participation of Naval representatives from 13 Indian Ocean Littoral countries, which included India, Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- The theme for GMS-21 was focused on “**Maritime Security and Emerging Non-Traditional Threats: A Case for Proactive Role for IOR Navies,**” with emphasis on capacity building amongst the IOR Navies to tackle emerging common maritime threats.
- **Note:** Recently, the second edition of **Maritime India Summit 2021** was organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India from March 2 to March 4, 2021.

Pinarayi Vijayan takes oath as Chief Minister of Kerala for the 2nd time

- Pinarayi Vijayan was sworn in as Kerala Chief Minister for a second time, after guiding the CPM-led Left Democratic Front government to a historic second successive term in the April-May 2021 election.
- He was administered the oath by Governor Arif Mohammad Khan at the Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram.
- Apart from Pinarayi Vijayan, 20 other ministers of the new cabinet of Kerala were also sworn in.
- He has been serving as the Chief Minister of Kerala since 25 May, 2016.

'AYUSH Ghar Dwar' for COVID-19 patients in Himachal Pradesh launched

- AYUSH Department has launched a state-wide wellness programme 'AYUSH Ghar Dwar' for COVID-19 patients, in Solan district, Himachal Pradesh.
- The Ayush Ghar Dwar program is being launched by AYUSH Vibhag Himachal Pradesh in collaboration with the Art of Living Organization.
- The initiative aims to provide a Holistic Healthcare Approach through AYUSH to ensure not only physical but also mental, social and spiritual wellbeing to COVID patients through AYUSH.

Haryana declares Black Fungus a notified disease

- Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij has informed that black fungus has been declared a notified disease in the state.
- If any cases of this disease are found, the doctors will have to report them to the concerned chief medical officer (CMO).
- **About black fungus:** It, also known as mucormycosis, is caused by a fungus called mucor.
- **Mucormycosis** mainly affects people on medication for other health problems that reduces their ability to fight environmental pathogens, according to the Indian Council of

Medical Research.

Malerkotla to be 23rd district of Punjab

- Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh announced the creation of a new district of Malerkotla (23rd district of Punjab), carving the state's only Muslim-majority town from Sangrur district on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.
- Adjoining Amargarh and Ahmedgarh will also form part of Punjab's 23rd district.
- **About Malerkotla:** It was established in 1454 by Sheikh Sadruddin-i-Jahan from Afghanistan, and subsequently the state of Malerkotla was established in 1657 by Bayazid Khan.
- During the reorganisation of states in 1956, the territory of the erstwhile state of Malerkotla became part of the state of Punjab.

Punjab to join global COVAX alliance to procure anti-COVID-19 vaccines

- The Punjab government has decided to join the COVAX alliance for global sourcing and procurement of COVID vaccines at the best price, becoming the **first state in the country** to take such an initiative.
- The decision to join COVAX alliance was taken during a Cabinet meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.
- **About COVAX: COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, abbreviated as COVAX**, is a worldwide initiative aimed at equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines directed by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and the World Health Organization (WHO) and key delivery partner UNICEF.
- It aims at accelerating the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world.

Uttarakhand government announces 'Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana'

- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat has announced 'Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana' for orphaned children who have lost their parents due to COVID-19.

About the 'Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana'

- Under the scheme, the state government will make arrangements for their maintenance, education and training for employment up to the age of 21 years.
- Such orphaned children of the state will be given a maintenance allowance of 3000 rupees per month.
- The children will be given 5 percent horizontal reservation in government jobs of the state government.

Exports of GI certified Gholvad Sapota for Maharashtra to UK begins

- In a major boost to exports of Geographical Indication (GI) certified products, a consignment of Gholvad Sapota from Palghar district of Maharashtra was shipped to the United Kingdom.

About Gholvad Sapota (chikoo)

- The fruit is known for its sweet and unique taste. The unique taste is derived from calcium rich soil of Gholvad village in Palghar district (Maharashtra).
- Sapota is grown in many states- Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Karnataka** is known to be the **highest** grower of the fruit, followed by Maharashtra.

Recent Related News

- First consignment of GI certified **Shahi Litchi from Bihar** was exported to the United Kingdom.
- **Shahi litchi was the fourth agricultural product to get GI certification from Bihar in 2018, after Jardalu mango, Katarni rice and Magahi paan.**
- India is the second largest producer of litchi in the world, after China.
- Earlier, a consignment of **GI certified Banganapalli & Survarnarekha mangoes** sourced from farmers in Krishna & Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh was exported to South Korea.

Geographical Indication (GI) Certification:

- Geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country).
- It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- The Geographical Indications Registry is located at Chennai.
- It is also a part of the World Trade Organisation's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

Note: Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005.

Karnataka government launches online portal 'Akanksha' on CSR activities

- Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa launched an online portal 'Akanksha' on CSR activities to provide comprehensive details on all the CSR activities in the state.

Key Points

- Named as Akanksha, the portal will help the corporate sector, government and the donors to utilise CSR funds for Government programmes.
- The portal will usher in transparency in the utilisation of CSR funds.
- The portal will also help achieve the sustainable development goals set by the UN.

About Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

- It is the funding and grants process under which Non-Profit Organisations (NGOs) can get financial and other support from the corporate sector. Under the Companies Act, 2013 it is a mandatory provision to provide a contribution of 2 percent of the average net profits of companies.

Assam Chief Minister appoints 'Guardian Ministers'

- Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has appointed 'Guardian Ministers' for its various districts.

Key Points

- These guardians, each a minister of the Himanta Biswa Sarma Cabinet, have been given the responsibility of 2-3 districts to review implementation of all centrally sponsored schemes & the state's own priority programmes.
- 13 ministers will be responsible for the implementation of the government's policy decision, Administrative reforms and other welfare schemes for the public in the 34 districts.

Important News: India

Shri Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates 'National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign-2021'

- Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated 'The National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign-2021' on 30th April, 2021.
- The conference was organized to interact with the States on challenges & strategies for effective crop management during the ensuing Kharif season.
- Shri Tomar appreciated the efforts of farmers for the record production for food grains (303.34 million tonnes), which is over 1.96% higher than the previous year's output (297.50 Million Tonnes).
- Agriculture and allied sectors registered a continuous growth in GDP contribution.
- The share of agriculture in GDP increased from 17.8% in 2019-20 to 19.9% in 2020-21 as per Economic Survey 2020-21.
- Shri Tomar announced the setting of higher production targets of food grains to 307 million tonnes for the year 2021-22.

NCW launches WhatsApp helpline number for pregnant women

- The National Commission for Women (NCW) has launched a WhatsApp helpline number for providing emergency medical assistance to pregnant women. The number is 9354954224.
- Expectant mothers from across the country can reach out to the Commission through this number which will be functional round the clock.
- **About National Commission for Women (NCW):** The National Commission for Women (NCW) is the statutory body of the Government of India, generally concerned with advising the government on all policy matters affecting women.
- It was established on 31 January 1992 under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act.
- The first head of the commission was Jayanti Patnaik.
- Rekha Sharma is the current chairperson.

Petroleum Minister flags off 1st supply of Used Cooking Oil-based Biodiesel from Indian Oil's Tikrikalan Terminal

- Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan remotely flagged off the first supply of UCO (Used Cooking Oil) based Biodiesel blended Diesel under the EOI Scheme from Indian Oil's Tikrikalan Terminal, Delhi.
- To create an eco-system for collection and conversion of UCO into Biodiesel and developing entrepreneurship opportunities, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, along with Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, had initiated Expressions of Interest for **"Procurement of Bio-diesel produced from Used Cooking Oil"** on the occasion of **World Biofuel Day on 10th August 2019**.
- Indian Oil has started constructing eight Biodiesels plants across Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Biodiesel** is an alternative fuel, similar to conventional or 'fossil' diesel. It can be produced from vegetable oils, animal fats, tallow and waste cooking oil.

- A significant advantage of Biodiesel is its carbon-neutrality, i.e. the oilseed absorbs the same amount of CO₂ as is released when the fuel is combusted in a vehicle. Also, Biodiesel is rapidly biodegradable and completely non-toxic.

Central Government targets road construction worth Rs.15 lakh crore in next two years

- Minister for Road Transport & Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Shri Nitin Gadkari stated that the Government has set a target of road construction of worth Rs.15 lakh crores in next two years.
- The Ministry for Road Transport & Highways will achieve a target of 40 kilometres per day of highways construction in current fiscal.
- Government is permitting 100% FDI (Foreign direct investment) in the road sector.
- **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** for 2019-2025 is the first of its kind and the government is committed to provide world class infra to its citizens and improving the quality of their lives.
- Under the NIP, there are over 7,300 projects to be implemented at a total outlay of Rs. 111 lakh crore by year 2025.
- NIP aims at improving project preparation and attracts investment into infrastructure like highways, railways, ports, airports, mobility, energy and agriculture and rural industry.

Labour and Employment Ministry notifies section 142 of Social Security Code, 2020

- The Ministry of Labour and Employment has notified section 142 of the Social Security Code, 2020 which covers the applicability of Aadhaar.
- The notification of section will enable the Ministry of Labour and Employment to collect Aadhar details for the database of beneficiaries under various social security schemes.
- National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW) is at an advanced stage of development by the National Informatics Centre.
- The section under the Social Security Code has been notified only for collection of data of workers including migrant workers. No benefit will be denied to workers for want of Aadhar.
- **The Social Security Code, 2020** is a code to amend and consolidate the laws relating to social security with the goal to extend social security to all employees and workers either in the organised or unorganised or any other sectors.

Ayush Ministry launches nationwide distribution campaign of AYUSH 64 & Kabasura Kudineer

- In a concerted response to the second surge of COVID-19 infection in the country, Ministry of Ayush is launching a massive nationwide campaign to distribute its proven poly herbal Ayurvedic drugs AYUSH 64 and Sidha drug Kabasura Kudineer for the benefit of the vast majority of out of hospital COVID patients.
- The multi stakeholder campaign being launched by Shri Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State (independent charge) for Youth Affairs and Sports and Minister of Ayush (additional charge) will ensure that medicines reach the needy in a transparent and efficient manner. The main collaborator in the campaign is Sewa Bharati.
- **Note:** The Ministry has also set up an Interdisciplinary Committee for Inclusion of

Ayurveda and Yoga Interventions in the 'National Clinical Management Protocol: COVID-19, which was chaired by Dr V M Katoch, former Director General ICMR.

DCGI approves anti-COVID drug '2-DG' developed by DRDO for emergency use

- The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has granted permission for emergency use of **anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG)**.
- An anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) has been developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a lab of **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)**, in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), Hyderabad.
- Clinical trial results have shown that this molecule helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence.
- The drug comes in powder form in sachet, which is taken orally by dissolving it in water.
- It accumulates in the virus infected cells and prevents virus growth by stopping viral synthesis and energy production. Its selective accumulation in virally infected cells makes this drug unique.

Armed Forces launch Operation 'CO-JEET' to fight COVID-19 in India

- The armed forces (the Army, the Indian Air Force and the Navy) have launched operation "CO-JEET" to aid anti-COVID-19 efforts, like strengthening medical infrastructure and oxygen supply chains, as well as take measures to ensure mental wellbeing of people.
- Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Medical) Lieutenant General Dr Madhuri Kanitkar, who is the third woman to become a three-star general in the armed forces, is working round the clock to strategise and monitor steps to provide relief to COVID-19 patients.
- "CO-JEET stands for co-workers of all the three services who will finally achieve 'Jeet' (victory) over COVID.

India participates in the 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial 2021

- The 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting (ASM3) entitled "**Knowledge for a sustainable Arctic**", was **co-organized by the governments of Japan and Iceland** and took place on 8 and 9 May 2021 in Tokyo.
- **ASM3** is the first Ministerial meeting being held in Asia.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare, and Earth Sciences represented India and shared India's vision and long-term plans for research, work, and cooperation in the Arctic region with the stakeholders.
- The launch of **NISER** (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) satellite mission, in collaboration with the USA, is underway.
- India's contributions to the **Sustained Arctic Observational Network (SAON)** would continue.
- **Note:** The first two meetings—**ASM1** and **ASM2**—were held in the USA in 2016 and Germany in 2018, respectively.
- Since 2013, India enjoys 'Observer' status in the **Arctic Council** with twelve other countries (Japan, China, France, Germany, UK, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Spain, Netherlands, Singapore, and South Korea).

- India's engagement with the Arctic dates back to 1920 with the signing of the Svalbard Treaty in Paris.
- Since July 2008, India has a permanent research station in the Arctic called **Himadri** at NyAlesund, Svalbard Area in Norway.
- It has also deployed a multi-sensor moored observatory called **IndARC** in the Kongsfjorden fjord since July 2014.

Centre releases Rs. 8923.8 crore to Panchayats in 25 States

- The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance released an amount of Rs. 8,923.8 crore to 25 States for providing grants to the Rural Local Bodies (RLBs).
- The grants are meant for all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions – village, block and district.
- The amount released is the first instalment of the 'Untied Grants' for the year 2021-22.
- It may be utilised by the RLBs, among other things, for various prevention and mitigation measures needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Note:** As per the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission, the 1st instalment of untied grants was to be released to the States in the month of June, 2021.
- In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation and at the recommendation of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, the Ministry of Finance has decided to release the grant in advance of the normal schedule.

NITI Aayog and Mastercard release a report titled 'Connected Commerce: Creating a Roadmap for a Digitally Inclusive Bharat'

- The report was released by NITI Aayog's Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant.
- The report identifies challenges in accelerating digital financial inclusion in India and provides recommendations for making digital services accessible to its 1.3 billion citizens.

Key recommendations in the report include:

- Strengthening the payment infrastructure to promote a level playing field for NBFCs and banks, Enabling agricultural NBFCs to access low-cost capital and deploy a 'phygital' (physical + digital) model for achieving better long-term digital outcomes.

• **Facts about NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog:**

Formed: 1 January 2015

Headquarters: New Delhi

Chairperson: Narendra Modi

Vice Chairperson: Rajiv Kumar

CEO: Amitabh Kant

CBSE launches 'Dost For Life' mobile app for students

- **The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** launched a 'Dost For Life' mobile application for students' psycho-social well-being of classes 9-12 during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The new app will simultaneously cater to students and parents from CBSE-affiliated schools in different geographies across the world.

INTERPOL launches a mobile app 'ID-Art' to help identify stolen cultural property

- The INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization) has launched a mobile application 'ID-Art' which will help identify stolen cultural property, reduce smuggling and increase the possibility of recovering stolen works and artefacts.
- The app's users can immediately cross-check if an object is among the over 52,000 items registered as stolen in the Interpol's "Stolen Works of Art" database.
- During the pilot phase, the app was successfully used in Italy and Netherlands.

Central Government launches first of its kind 6- month CBID Program on Rehabilitation of Divyangjan

- Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Dr Thaawarchand Gehlot launched a 6-month '**Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID)** Program on rehabilitation of Divyangjan'.
- This CBID course has been co-designed by **Rehabilitation Council of India and University of Melbourne, Australia** under the MoU signed between the Government of Australia and the Government of India.
- The program has been designed to provide competency-based knowledge and skills among these workers to enhance their ability for successfully discharging their duties. These workers will be called '**Divyang Mitra**'.
- **Note:** A memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the Government of Australia and the Government of India on 22nd November, 2018 for cooperation in the disability sector.
- The Central Government has enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which envisions a society inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Children impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic provided Tele-Counselling through 'SAMVEDNA'

- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is providing Tele-Counselling to children through **SAMVEDNA (Sensitizing Action on Mental Health Vulnerability through Emotional Development and Necessary Acceptance)** - a Toll-Free Helpline (1800-121-2830) launched to provide psycho-social mental support for Children affected during COVID 19 Pandemic.
- **Tele counselling is provided to the children under three categories:** Children who are in Quarantine/isolation/COVID Care centers, have COVID positive parents or family members and near ones, and have lost their parents due to COVID-19 Pandemic.
- **Note: SAMVEDNA** was launched in September, 2020.
- **NCPCR** is a statutory body and works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India.

Union Government hikes fertilizer subsidy by 140 % to mitigate impact of rising international price rise

- The Union Government decided to hike the DAP subsidy by 140 % to provide the fertilizer to farmers at an old rate despite international price rise.
- The subsidy has been increased from Rs. 500 per bag to Rs. 1,200 per bag.
- The actual price of a DAP bag is currently Rs. 2,400 which could be sold by Fertilizer companies at Rs. 1,900 after considering earlier subsidy of Rs. 500.

- Despite the rise in international market prices, it will continue to be available at the older price of Rs. 1,200 per bag.
- **About DAP (Di-ammonium Phosphate):** It is a preferred fertilizer in India because it contains both Nitrogen and Phosphorus which are primary macro-nutrients.

ICMR approves 'CoviSelf' kit for purpose of home testing for symptomatic patients (COVID-19)

- MyLab Discovery Solutions, the Pune-based company, has developed India's first self-use Rapid Antigen Test Kit 'CoviSelf' for COVID-19.
- The Indian Council of Medical Research, ICMR has approved the 'CoviSelf' kit for the purpose of home testing for COVID-19.
- The self-use test can be used by symptomatic individuals and immediate contacts of confirmed cases as per ICMR guidelines.
- **Note:** Last year, MyLab's indigenous RT PCR test was the first to win approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for COVID testing in the country.

Airline company GoAir rebrands as 'Go First'

- After 15 years, Wadia Group-owned GoAir has rebranded itself as 'Go First' as the airline focuses on an ultra-low-cost business model.
- The Go First as ULCC (ultra-low-cost carrier) would operate single aircraft type across its fleet, which currently has both Airbus A320 and A320Neos (new engine option) planes in operation.
- **About Go First:** Go First, founded as GoAir, is an Indian ultra-low-cost airline based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is owned by the Indian business conglomerate Wadia Group. It commenced operations in November 2005.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Microsoft sign MoU on joint initiative for digital transformation of Tribal Schools

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MTA) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to support the digital transformation of schools such as Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) and Ashram Schools, among others under the Ministry at an online event 'Empowering Youth For Success'.
- Microsoft will make Artificial intelligence (AI) curriculum available to tribal students in both English and Hindi at all EMRS schools under the Ministry to skill educators and students in next-generation technologies including Artificial Intelligence.

India's first Agriculture Export Facilitation Center (AEFC) launched in Pune

- Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), launched India's first Agriculture Export Facilitation Center (AEFC) in Pune, Maharashtra.
- Dr. G.R. Chintala, Chairman, NABARD, inaugurated the center in a virtual program organized by MCCIA.
- The center aims to boost Maharashtra's agricultural and food exports by disseminating need-based information, providing timely guidance and organizing training courses for all the stakeholders.

Central Government brings changes in Customs Rules, IGCR 2017 to boost trade facilitation

- The Central Government has brought changes in the existing **Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Rules, IGCR 2017** to boost trade facilitation.
- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs** has introduced changes through the **Customs (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate of Duty) Amendment Rules, 2021**.
- The **IGCR, 2017** lay down the procedures and manner in which an importer can avail the benefit of a concessional Customs duty on import of goods required for domestic production of goods or providing services.
- **One major change** that accommodates the needs of trade and industry is that the imported goods have been permitted to be sent out for 'job work'.

Culture Ministry organises panel discussions on the occasion of International Museum Day 2021

- **International Museum Day** is celebrated every year on **18 May**.
- The objective of International Museum Day, as declared by **International Council of Museums (ICOM)**, is to raise awareness about the fact that, "Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples."
- The theme for International Museum Day 2021 is **'The Future of Museums: Recover and Reimagine'**.
- On this occasion, The Ministry of Culture (MoC), Government of India organised a series of panel discussions.
- **Two panel discussions were organised with the following themes:**
 - i) Re-imagining Museum & Culture Study Programs to Create New Pathways to the Future.
 - ii) The many Shades of Online Interaction & Engagement and What it Means for Museums.
- **Note:** The **National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi**, announced the launch of the **NGMA's Audio-Visual Guide App** on the occasion of International Museum Day 2021.

Prime Minister releases 8th instalment of financial benefit under PM-KISAN

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 8th instalment of financial benefit of Rs 2,06,67,75,66,000 to 9,50,67,601 beneficiary farmers under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme.
- For the first time, the farmers of **West Bengal** would be getting the benefit of this scheme.
- **About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sammann Nidhi (PM-KISAN):** It is an initiative by the government of India in which all farmers will get up to ₹6,000 per year as minimum income support.
- **Note:** On 24 February 2019, Narendra Modi launched the scheme in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur by transferring the first instalment of ₹2,000 each to over one crore farmers.

Cabinet Secretary chairs National Crisis Management Committee meeting on Cyclone 'Tauktae'

- The Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba chaired a meeting of the **National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)** in view of the Cyclonic Storm 'Tauktae' in the Arabian Sea.
- Director General of the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** briefed the committee about the latest status of the cyclone.
- The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** informed that they have deployed/made available 79 teams in the affected states and 22 additional teams have also been kept in readiness.
- **Facts about India Meteorological Department (IMD):** It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.

Union Minister of Rural Development, Narendra Singh Tomar launches NMMS app and Area officer monitoring app

- Union Minister of Rural Development, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Panchayati Raj and Food Processing Industries, Narendra Singh Tomar launched **National Mobile Monitoring Software (NMMS)** app and **Area officer monitoring app**.
- The NMMS app permits taking real time attendance of workers at MGNREGA worksites along with geotagged photographs, which will increase citizen oversight of the programme besides potentially enabling processing payments faster.
- Area Officer Monitoring app facilitates them to record their findings online along with time stamped and geo-coordinate tagged photographs for all the schemes of Deptt of Rural Development- MGNREGA, PMAYG, PMGSY.
- **About MGNREGA:** Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act 2005 later renamed as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (MGNREGA), is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'.
- This act was passed in September 2005 under the UPA government of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.
- It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

1st Phase of MCA21 Version 3.0 launched

- Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs launched the first phase of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' (MCA) **MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0)**.
- It comprises revamped website, new email services for MCA Officers and two new modules, namely, e. Book and e. Consultation.

About MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0):

- The MCA21 V3.0 is going to be implemented in **two phases**.
- The **second** and final phase shall be launched from October 2021 onwards.
- The MCA21 V3.0 in its entirety will not only improve the existing services and modules, but will also create new functionalities like e-adjudication, compliance management system, advanced helpdesk, feedback services, user dashboards, self-reporting tools and revamped master data services.

Note:



- MCA21 has been part of **Mission Mode projects of the Government of India**.
- It will help in improving **Ease of Doing Business** in India.
- India ranked 63rd out of 190 countries in Ease Doing Business 2020: World Bank Report.

To help women hit by violence, Centre plans One-Stop Centres (OSC) in 9 countries

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) will set up One-Stop Centres (OSC), aimed at supporting women affected by violence in public and private spaces, in foreign missions in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The first 10 OSCs will be introduced in Australia, Canada, Singapore, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

Key Points

- This is to help women overseas, who are victims of violence or are simply stuck due to particular situations. They can now approach these centres for immediate as well as non-immediate support including legal aid, medical support and counseling.

About One-Stop Centres (OSC):

- It is a central government sponsored scheme for addressing the problem of violence against women. It was launched in April 2015.
- It is a subscheme of the umbrella scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of Women including Indira Gandhi Matritrav Sahyaog Yojana.

Note: There are currently 700 One-Stop Centres in the country. The WCD Ministry plans to add 300 more such centres across the country this year.

Funding:

- It is funded through Nirbhaya Fund and the central government provides 100% financial assistance to the state governments /Union Territories administrations.
- **Nirbhaya Fund** was established in 2013. It is administered by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Government of India.

Indian Legislative Framework to Prevent Violence Against Women:

- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), 2012
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013

Defence Minister launches SeHAT OPD Portal

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched the '**Services e-Health Assistance & Tele-consultation (SeHAT)**' OPD Portal.
- The Portal will help the Armed Forces in providing tele-medicine services.

Key Points

- It is an online medical consultation service for the armed forces personnel and ex-servicemen to ensure hassle-free health services for them.
- Tele-medicine services will be provided by defence services doctors who are on regular duties.

Note: In last one month on '**eSanjeevani platform**' 5 lakh people availed the facility of telecommunication.

- **eSanjeevani platform** has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz. Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations.

- **About e-Sanjeevani OPD:** It is a Government of India flagship telemedicine platform, developed by the C-DAC, Mohali under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India. It facilitates free online medical consultation to all citizens of India, as well as provides for online prescription of medicines.

Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App

- The Ministry of Ayush launched the Ayush Clinical Case Repository (ACCR) Portal and the third version of Ayush Sanjivani App in a virtual event.

Key Points

About the Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal:

- It will serve as a platform to support both Ayush practitioners and the general public.
- This portal aims at aggregating information about clinical outcomes achieved by Ayush practitioners on a large scale.

About the third version of Ayush Sanjivani App:

- The third version of Ayush Sanjivani App will facilitate a significant study regarding the efficacy of selected Ayush interventions, including **Ayush 64 and Kabasura Kudineer medicines** in the management of asymptomatic and mild to moderate COVID 19 patients.
- First version was launched in May 2020.
- It is developed by the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- **Ayush 64** is a poly-herbal formulation developed by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences. Ayush 64 is useful in the treatment of asymptomatic, mild and moderate COVID-19 infection. Initially the drug was developed for **Malaria** in the year 1980.
- **Kabasura Kudineer** is a traditional formulation used by Siddha practitioners. It is useful in the treatment of common respiratory health.

Related Initiatives:

- AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres
- **National Ayush Mission (NAM):** Government of India is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of NAM through States/UTs for development and promotion of AYUSH system of medicine.
- Recently, Government notification listed out specific surgical procedures by a postgraduate medical student of Ayurveda.

Traceability Provision in the new IT Rules 2021

- Recently, Facebook-owned messaging platform WhatsApp has moved the Delhi High Court to challenge the traceability provision in the new IT Rules 2021.

Key Points

Traceability Provision:

- Traceability Provision is a part of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- As per guidelines, significant social media intermediaries providing messaging services must identify the first originator of the information based on an order by the court or competent authority.
- **According to WhatsApp,** Requiring messaging apps to 'trace' chats is the equivalent of asking to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp, which would

break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermines people's right to privacy.

- WhatsApp has invoked the Puttaswamy Judgement 2017 to argue that the traceability provision is unconstitutional and against people's fundamental right to privacy.

End-to-end encryption ensures that no one can read the message, except for the sender and the receiver. This includes WhatsApp itself.

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 is secondary or subordinate legislation that suppresses India's Intermediary Guidelines Rules 2011. The 2021 rules have stemmed from section 87 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and are a combination of the draft Intermediaries Rules, 2018 and the OTT Regulation and Code of Ethics for Digital Media.

IBF renamed as Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation

- In a bid to expand its purview to the OTT segment, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), the apex industry body of broadcasters, has been renamed as the **Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF)**.

Key Points

- IBDF** will form a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB), as per the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- The name of the self-regulatory body is **Digital Media Content Regulatory Council (DMCRC)** for digital OTT platforms.
- DMCRC** is a second-tier mechanism at the appellate level and is similar to Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), which IBF had implemented for the linear broadcasting sector way back in 2011.

About Indian Broadcasting Foundation: It is also known as a unified representative body of the television broadcasters in India. The organisation was founded in the year 1999. Over 250 Indian television channels are associated with it. The organisation is credited as the spokesman of India Broadcasting Industry.

About OTT: An over-the-top (OTT) media service is a media service offered directly to viewers via the Internet. OTT bypasses cable, broadcast, and satellite television platforms, the types of companies which traditionally act as controllers or distributors of such content.

Important News: World

India, Russia to establish a '2+2 ministerial dialogue' between Foreign and Defence Ministers

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin agreed to establish a new annual India-Russia 2+2 dialogue, involving the External Affairs Minister and Defence Ministers of the two nations.
- New Delhi's move to launch the 2+2 dialogue with Moscow is apparently aimed at striking a balance between India's growing strategic convergence with the United States in the Indo-Pacific region and its long-standing defence partnership with Russia.
- **Note:** Russia now has become part of a small group of countries with whom India has 2+2 dialogue of foreign and defence ministers. **India has such mechanisms with the US, Japan and Australia.**

23rd ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting

- Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs Riva Ganguly Das co-chaired the 23rd ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting 2021 with Permanent Secretary of Thailand Thani Thongphakdi.
- During the Meeting, the status of ongoing ASEAN-India cooperation was reviewed under the whole spectrum of political-security, economic, socio-cultural and developmental cooperation.
- The Meeting also deliberated on the steps to implement the ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2021-2025 and discussed ways to further strengthen the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership.
- The ASEAN Senior Officials welcomed India's proposal to celebrate the year 2022 as ASEAN-India Friendship Year as it marks the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-India sectoral partnership, 25th anniversary of dialogue partnership, 20th anniversary of Summit-level partnership and 10 years of Strategic Partnership.
- **Facts about Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** It is considered one of the most influential groupings in the region, and India and several other countries including the US, China, Japan and Australia are its dialogue partners.
The 10 member countries of ASEAN are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.
Headquarters: Jakarta, Indonesia
Founded: 8 August 1967

India-UK Virtual Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom held a Virtual Summit on May 04, 2021.
- An ambitious '**Roadmap 2030**' was adopted at the Summit to elevate bilateral ties to a '**Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**'.
- The Roadmap will pave the way for a deeper and stronger engagement over the next ten years in the key areas of people to people contacts, trade and economy, defence and security, climate action and health.
- The two Prime Ministers launched an '**Enhanced Trade**

Partnership' (ETP) to unleash the trade potential between the 5th and 6th largest economies of the world and by setting an ambitious target of more than doubling bilateral trade by 2030.

- A new India-UK '**Global Innovation Partnership**' was announced at the Summit that aims to support the transfer of inclusive Indian innovations to select developing countries, starting with Africa.
- India and the UK launched a '**Comprehensive Partnership on Migration and Mobility**' that will facilitate greater opportunities for the mobility of students and professionals between the two countries.

S Jaishankar participates in G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting

- External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar joined the G7 Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting in London.
- The minister participated in discussions with the other foreign ministers via videolink instead to focus on new ways to ensure fairer access to vaccine stockpiles and increase support for the global vaccine distribution scheme known as COVAX.
- **Note:** The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest, along with Australia, South Korea and South Africa.
- The G7 Summit is to be held on June 11-13, 2021.

India-EU Leaders' Meeting

- At the invitation of the President of the European Council Mr. Charles Michel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the India-EU Leaders' Meeting on 08 May 2021.
- The meeting was held in a hybrid format with the participation of leaders of all the 27 EU Member States as well as the President of the European Council and the European Commission.
- This is the first time that the EU hosted a meeting with India in the EU+27 format.
- They exchanged views on three key thematic areas: **i) foreign policy and security; ii) COVID-19, climate, and environment; and iii) trade, connectivity, and technology.**
- India and the EU launched an ambitious and comprehensive '**Connectivity Partnership**' which is focused on enhancing digital, energy, transport and people-to-people connectivity.
- Coinciding with the Leaders' Meeting, an **India-EU Business Roundtable** was organized to highlight the avenues for cooperation in climate, digital and healthcare.
- A finance contract of **Euro 150 million** for the **Pune Metro Rail Project** was signed by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and **European Investment Bank**.
- India-EU Leaders Meeting has set a significant milestone by providing a new direction to the Strategic Partnership and giving a fresh impetus for implementing the ambitious **India-EU Roadmap 2025** adopted at the **15th India-EU Summit held in July 2020**.
- **Note: European Union (EU)** has recently joined **India's International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-CDRI**.
- **Facts about the European Union (EU):**
Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium
Founded: 1 November 1993
Members Countries: 27
- The **United Kingdom** became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020.
- In 2012, the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize**.

1st BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting amongst BRICS Countries

- Shri Apurva Chandra, Secretary, Labour and Employment chaired the 1st BRICS Employment Working Group (EWG) Meeting held on 11-12 May 2021 in Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi in virtual format.
- The prime agenda for the discussions were Promoting Social Security Agreements amongst BRICS Nations, Formalization of labour markets, Participation of women in labour force and Gig and platform workers – Role in labour market.
- Apart from representatives of member nations i.e Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the representatives of International Labour Organization (ILO) and International Social Security Agency (ISSA) also made valuable interventions and suggestions on the agenda issues.
- **Note:** The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.
- The theme for India's Chairship for 2021 would be '**BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**'.
- **Facts about BRICS:**
Formation: 2009
Countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

KP Sharma Oli reappointed as Nepal Prime Minister

- President Bidya Devi Bhandari has reappointed CPN-UML Chairman KP Sharma Oli, 69, as Prime Minister of Nepal.
- The president had asked the Opposition parties to come up with the support of majority lawmakers to form a new government after Oli lost the vote of confidence in the House.
- Oli's appointment came shortly after the Office of President said that no two parties or more than two parties came to lay claim to forming a coalition government by the given deadline that expired.
- **Note:** Oli previously served as prime minister from 11 October 2015 to 3 August 2016 and again from 15 February 2018 to 13 May 2021 as the first elected prime minister under the new constitution.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan chairs 33rd Conference of Health Ministers of Commonwealth Countries

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare chaired the 33rd meeting of Health Ministers of Commonwealth countries.
- The theme of the meeting was "**Commonwealth Response to COVID-19: Ensuring Equitable Access to Vaccines and Building Resilience for Health Systems and Emergencies**".
- **Note:** WHO-led initiative '**Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator**' has proven to be a ground-breaking global collaboration which is expediting development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines.
- **COVAX, the vaccine pillar of ACT Accelerator**, aims to deliver at least two billion vaccines by the end of 2021, covering 20% of the most vulnerable population in about 92 Low and Middle-Income countries.

Italy hosts G20 Global Health Summit 2021

- The Global Health Summit took place in Rome on 21 May, 2021. The Summit was a special event of the G20 Presidency, organized by **Italy (which holds the G20 Presidency in 2021) in partnership with the European Commission** and is co-chaired by the President of the Council of Minister Mario Draghi and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.
- At the summit, G20 countries agreed to the **Rome Declaration**, which reaffirms continued multilateral support for preparedness, prevention, detection, and response to the pandemic, as well as appropriate and sustainable funding for collaborative global response efforts, especially the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator.

- **Facts about G20:**

Formation: 26 September 1999

Members:

20

(Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and European Union)

Note: The **G20 Summit** is set to be hosted by Indonesia in 2022, India in 2023 and Brazil in 2024.

India-Israel agreement on Agriculture cooperation

- Israel and India have signed '**a three-year work program agreement**' for development in Agriculture cooperation.

Key Points

- India and Israel are implementing the "**INDO-ISRAEL Agricultural Project Centres of Excellence**" and "**INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence**".

INDO-ISRAEL Agricultural Project Centres of Excellence:

- Centers of Excellence established under Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP) have become epicentres of transformation in the horticulture sector.
- This new work programme will further strengthen the bilateral relations and mutual cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture for the benefit of the farming community.

INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence:

- This is a new concept aimed at creating a model ecosystem in agriculture across eight states, alongside 13 Centers of Excellence within 75 villages.
- The program will promote the increase of net income and better the livelihood of the individual farmer, transforming traditional farms into modern-intensive farms based on IIAP standards.
- The program will focus on: (1) Modern Agriculture infrastructure, (2) Capacity Building, (3) Market linkage.

Indo-Israel Bilateral Cooperation:

- The strategic cooperation between the two countries began during the Sino-India War of 1962.
- India is Israel's third largest trade partner in Asia.
- India and Israel have had bilateral relations since 1993 in the agricultural sector.
- Israeli companies have invested in India in energy, renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies, and are focusing on setting up R&D centers or production units in India.

- Israel has been among the top four arms suppliers to India for almost two decades now.

74th World Health Assembly

Why in News

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare and the **Chairman of WHO Executive Board** chaired the 74th World Health Assembly.

Key Points

- The Board called for further efforts to ensure fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility.
- The Board recommended that the 74th World Health Assembly must consider the report on mental health preparedness and response for the COVID-19 pandemic. It also recommended endorsing the updated comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan for the period of 2013 to 2030.
- The Board has recommended that the 74th World Health Assembly should adopt a decision to present a road map for the global action plan for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases till the year 2030.

Facts about World Health Assembly:

- **Founded:** 1948
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Parent organization:** World Health Organization
- **Membership:** 194 Countries

WHO and Switzerland launch first 'WHO BioHub Facility'

Why in the News?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) and Switzerland signed a Memorandum of Understanding to launch the first 'WHO BioHub Facility' for pathogen storage, sharing and analysis as part of the WHO BioHub System.

Key Points

- Switzerland supports the WHO BioHub initiative in its initial phase by providing the necessary infrastructure of a Swiss biosafety laboratory in Spiez.
- The facility will serve as a centre for the safe receipt, sequencing, storage and preparation of biological materials for distribution to other laboratories, in order to inform risk assessments, and sustain global preparedness against these pathogens.
- Following results from the pilot project, the BioHub will expand from SARS-COV-2 and its variants to other pathogens, and connect partners with other repositories and laboratory networks in 2022.

About Pathogen:

- In biology, a pathogen in the oldest and broadest sense, is any organism that can produce disease. A pathogen may also be referred to as an infectious agent, or simply a germ.
- Typically, the term is used to describe an infectious microorganism or agent, such as a virus, bacterium, protozoan, prion, viroid, or fungus.

Important News: Economy

Government of India to provide Rs 15,000 crore to States for Capital Expenditure

- The Ministry of Finance has decided to provide an additional amount of upto Rs 15,000 crore to States as interest free 50 year loan for spending on capital projects.
- The Department of Expenditure has issued fresh guidelines in this regard on the “**Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure**” for the financial year 2021-22.
- **Capital expenditure** creates employment, especially for the poor and unskilled, has a high multiplier effect, enhances the future productive capacity of the economy, and results in a higher rate of economic growth.
- **Note:** The “Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure” was launched in 2020 to provide financial assistance for the states.
- Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided to the State Governments in the form of 50-year interest free loan. An amount not exceeding Rs.12,000 crore was earmarked for the scheme for the financial year 2020-21, and a sum of Rs.11,830.29 crore was released to the States.

TRIFED joins hands with The LINK Fund to work towards tribal development

- TRIFED has now entered into a collaborative project titled “**Sustainable Livelihoods for Tribal Households in India**” with The LINK Fund.
- TRIFED and The LINK Fund have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together towards Tribal Development and employment generation.
- The MoU was signed by Shri Pravir Krishna, Managing Director TRIFED, and Tony Kalm, CEO and Co-founder, The LINK Fund.
- As a part of this association, both the organizations will also work together to create women-centered infrastructure and innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **The LINK Fund** is a practitioner-led fund that is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and works to end extreme poverty and mitigate the effects of climate change.

1st instalment of Rs. 8873.6 crore for State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) released in advance

- As a special dispensation, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance at the recommendation of the Ministry of Home Affairs has released in advance of the normal schedule the 1st instalment of the Central Share of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for the year 2021-22 to all the States.
- An amount of Rs. 8873.6 crore has been released to the States.
- **Note:** Normally, the first instalment of SDRF is released in the month of June as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission. Up to 50% of the amount released i.e. Rs.4436.8 crore can be used by the States for COVID-19 containment measures.

Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participates in Governor's

Seminar as part of Asian Development Bank's annual meeting 2021

- Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs and Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Governor for India Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the Governor's Seminar on **"Cooperation for a Resilient Future"**, held as part of ADB's annual meeting 2021 on May 03, 2021.
- The virtual seminar was attended by delegates from 68 member nations of the ADB.
- The Finance Minister mentioned that India has been at the forefront of various initiatives aiming at the same through setting up of the SAARC COVID-19 emergency fund, and leading by example in global initiatives of Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and COVAX.
- **Facts about Asian Development Bank (ADB):**
Headquarters: Mandaluyong, Philippines
President: Masatsugu Asakawa
Founded: 19 December 1966
Membership: 68 countries
- India was a founding member of ADB in 1966 and is now the bank's fourth-largest shareholder.

Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) finalizes quality standards for 4 spices

- The Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) has finalised and recommended quality standards for **4 spices; cloves, oregano, basil, and ginger**, during its fifth session held virtually from 20th -29th April 2021.
- The committee forwarded these four new standards to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) for adoption at final step 8, as full -fledged Codex standards.
- **Note:** Earlier, Ms Rita Teotia, IAS (retd.), Chairperson, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) virtually inaugurated the 5th edition of CCSCH on 20th April 2021.
- **About CCSCH & CAC:** To develop and expand worldwide standards for spices and culinary herbs, and to consult with other international organisations in the standards development process **Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH)** was formed in 2013 with support of more than a hundred countries with India as the host country and Spices Board as the Secretariat for organising the sessions of the committee.
- Set up in 1963, the **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)** is an intergovernmental body established jointly by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), within the framework of the Joint Food Standards Programme to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.

LIC becomes 3rd strongest and 10th most-valuable insurance brand globally

- State-owned insurance company **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** has emerged as the 3rd strongest and the 10th most valuable insurance brand globally.
- According to a **'Insurance 100 2021'**, the annual report on the most valuable and strongest insurance brands by **London-based consultancy firm Brand Finance**, the total value of the world's top 100 most valuable insurance brands dipped 6 percent from \$462.4 billion in 2020 to \$433.0 billion in 2021.
- Brand Finance's report stated that LIC's brand value increased 6.8 percent to \$8.65 billion in 2021.

- **Top valuable insurance brands:**
1st Position- Ping An Insurance, China
2nd Position- China Life Insurance, China
10th Position- Life Insurance Corporation of India
- **Top strongest insurance brands:**
1st Position- Poste Italiane, Italy
2nd Position- Mapfre, Spain
3rd Position- Life Insurance Corporation of India

Cabinet approves strategic disinvestment and transfer of management control in IDBI Bank Limited

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its in-principle approval for strategic disinvestment along with transfer of management control in IDBI Bank Ltd.
- The extent of respective shareholding to be divested by GoI and LIC shall be decided at the time of structuring of transaction in consultation with RBI.
- Government of India (GoI) and LIC together own more than 94% of equity of IDBI Bank (GoI 45.48%, LIC 49.24%).
- LIC is currently the promoter of IDBI Bank with Management Control and GoI is the co-promoter.
- **About Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI):** It was established in 1964 by an act to provide credit and other financial facilities for the development of the fledgling Indian industry. It is a development finance institution and a subsidiary of Life Insurance Corporation.

RBI announces term liquidity facility of ₹ 50,000 crore for healthcare

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to provide a term liquidity facility of ₹ 50,000 crore to ease access of funds for emergency medical services.
- Under the liquidity scheme, banks can support entities including vaccine manufacturers, medical facilities, hospitals and patients.
- **About the scheme:** Term Liquidity Facility of Rs. 50,000 crore with tenure of up to 3 years, at repo rate, to ease access to emergency health services, for ramping up COVID-related health infrastructure & services.
- Banks can give fresh lending support to a variety of stakeholders under this facility. This lending facility will be available up to March 31, 2022. Banks will be provided incentives to provide credit under this facility.

Fitch predicts India's GDP growth at 9.5%, S&P at 9.8% for FY22

- **Fitch Ratings** has estimated the GDP (Gross domestic product) of the Indian economy to grow 9.5 percent in 2021-22 (April 2021 to March 2022). Fitch in March 2021 had expected an 12.8% GDP growth forecast for FY22.
- **S&P Global Ratings** has lowered the GDP growth forecast of the Indian economy to 9.8 percent for the financial year 2021-22 (FY22). S&P in March 2021 had expected an 11% GDP growth forecast for India for FY22.

Oil and Gas PSUs sign MoUs for Construction and Redevelopment of Shri Badrinath Dham as a Spiritual Smart Hill Town

- Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between the **Oil and Gas PSUs- Indian Oil, BPCL, HPCL, ONGC and GAIL**, and **Shri Badrinath Utthan Charitable Trust** for Construction and Redevelopment of **Shri Badrinath Dham, Uttarakhand as a Spiritual Smart Hill Town**.
- As per the MoUs, the Oil & Gas PSUs will be contributing Rs. 99.60 crore in the first phase of the developmental activities, including river embankment work, building all-terrain vehicular path, building bridges, beautifying existing bridges, establishing gurukul facilities with accommodation, creating toilet and drinking water facilities, installing streetlights, mural paintings etc.
- **Note:** Badrinath is one of the Char Dham - a set of four pilgrimage sites in India. The other Dhams are Dwaraka, Puri and Rameswaram.

RBI joins Network for Greening the Financial System

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has joined the Central Banks and Supervisors **Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)** as a Member on April 23, 2021.
- The Reserve Bank expects to benefit from the membership of NGFS by learning from and contributing to global efforts on Green Finance which has assumed significance in the context of climate change.
- **Note:** Launched at the Paris One Planet Summit on December 12, 2017, the NGFS is a group of central banks and supervisors willing to share best practices and contribute to the development of environment and climate risk management in the financial sector, while mobilizing mainstream finance to support the transition towards a sustainable economy.

RBI sets up an advisory group to assist RRA 2.0

- The Reserve Bank of India has set up a **Regulations Review Authority (RRA 2.0)**, initially for a period of one year from May 01, 2021.
- The RRA will review the regulatory prescriptions internally as well as by seeking suggestions from the RBI regulated entities and other stakeholders on their simplification and ease of implementation.
- The RRA has constituted an Advisory Group, representing members from regulated entities, including compliance officers, to support the RRA in achieving the objective set forth in the terms of reference of RRA 2.0.
- **The composition of the Group is as under:**

1.	Shri S. Janakiraman, Managing Director, State Bank of India	Chairman
2.	Shri T. T. Srinivasaraghavan	Member
3.	Shri Gautam Thakur	Member
4.	Shri Subir Saha	Member
5.	Shri Ravi Duvvuru	Member
6.	Shri Abadaan Viccaji	Member

- **Note:** **Shri M. Rajeshwar Rao, Deputy Governor** has been appointed as the Regulations Review Authority.

Indian economy projected to grow at 10.1% in 2022: United Nations

- The United Nations, in its mid-year update of the **World Economic Situation and**

Prospects (WESP) which was first released in January 2021, projected that the Indian economy would grow at 10.1 percent in the calendar year 2022, nearly double the 5.9 percent growth forecast for the country in the January report.

- The mid-year update said that India will register a 7.5 percent growth rate in calendar year 2021.
- **Global economy** is projected to grow by 5.4% in 2021.

Government releases Rs. 5,968 Crore Central grant to 15 States under Jal Jeevan Mission for financial year 2021-22

- The Government of India has released Rs. 5,968 Crore to 15 States for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the financial year 2021-22.
- This is the first tranche of the four to be released in this financial year.
- Out of the Central fund allocated under Jal Jeevan Mission, 93% of the fund is to be utilized on developing water supply infrastructure, 5% on support activities and 2% on water quality monitoring & surveillance activities.
- **Note: Goa, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry** have become 'Har Ghar Jal' State/ UT.
- **About JJM (Jal Jeevan Mission):** It was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th August, 2019, with the aim to provide assured tap water supply to every rural home by 2024.

India received USD 83 billion in remittances in 2020: World Bank report

- India received USD 83 billion in remittances in 2020, a drop of just 0.2 percent from 2019, according to the 'Resilience COVID-19 Crisis Through a Migration Lens' report released by World Bank.
- In 2019, India had received USD 83.3 billion in remittances.
- Officially recorded remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached USD 540 billion in 2020, just 1.6 percent below the 2019 total of USD 548 billion.
- **Top 3 Countries with Remittance Inflows in 2020**

Country	Remittance Inflow
India	USD 83 billion
China	USD 59.5 billion
Mexico	USD 42.8 billion

- **Top 3 Countries with Remittance Outflows in 2020**

Country	Remittance Outflow
United States	USD 68 billion
United Arab Emirates	USD 43 billion
Saudi Arabia	USD 34.5 billion

- **Remittances outflow from India in 2020** was USD7 billion, against USD7.5 billion in 2019, according to the World Bank.

Government of India's SWAMIH completes first residential project

- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman handed over possession to homebuyers as Government of India's **Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH)** completed its first residential project.
- **The residential project - Rivali Park, located in suburban Mumbai, was the first housing project in India to have received funding under the SWAMIH Fund.**
- **Rivali Park Wintergreens** is the first investment by the Fund and is also the first project to get completed.
- The project is **Rivali Park Wintergreens** developed by CCI Projects Pvt Ltd (CCIPPL), an associate company of Cable Corporation of India Ltd.
- **About SWAMIH:** The SWAMIH Fund was launched by Smt. Sitharaman in November 2019.
- The Fund so far has given its final approval to 72 projects that will complete 44,100 homes, while 132 projects have received preliminary approval, which will complete an additional 72,500 homes.
- The Fund is targeting to complete an aggregate of 1,16,600 homes.

RBI to transfer Rs 99,122 crore as surplus to Central Government

- The meeting of the Central Board of Directors of RBI was held under the Chairmanship of Governor Shaktikanta Das.
- The Board approved the transfer of 99,122 crore rupees as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting period of **nine months ended March 31, 2021 (July 2020-March 2021).**
- **Note:** The RBI had transferred Rs 57,128 crore to the government for the accounting year 2019-20.
- **Facts about RBI:**
Headquarters: Mumbai
Established: 1 April 1935
Governor: Shaktikanta Das (25th Governor)
Deputy Governors: Mahesh Kumar Jain, Dr. Michael Debabrata Patra, M. Rajeshwar Rao, T. Rabi Sankar

Long working hours can increase deaths from heart disease and stroke: WHO, ILO

- Long working hours led to 745 000 deaths from stroke and ischemic heart disease in 2016, a 29 percent increase since 2000, according to the latest estimates by the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** published in the **Journal 'Environment International'.**
- This study is the first global analysis of the loss of life and health associated with working long hours.
- The study concludes that working 55 or more hours per week is associated with an estimated 35% higher risk of a stroke and a 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week.
- Further, the number of people working long hours is increasing, and currently stands at 9% of the total population globally. This trend puts even more people at risk of work-related disability and early death.

India attracted highest ever total FDI inflow of US\$ 81.72 billion during 2020-21

- India has attracted the highest ever total FDI inflow of US\$ 81.72 billion during the financial year 2020-21 and it is 10% higher as compared to the last financial year 2019-20 (US\$ 74.39 billion).

Key Points

- FDI equity inflow** grew by 19% in the F.Y. 2020-21 (US\$ 59.64 billion) compared to the previous year F.Y. 2019-20 (US\$ 49.98 billion).
- 'Computer Software & Hardware'** has emerged as the top sector during F.Y. 2020-21.
- Gujarat** is the **top recipient state** during the F.Y. 2020-21 of the total FDI Equity inflows followed by **Maharashtra** and **Karnataka**.
- In terms of **top investor countries**, **Singapore** is at the apex, followed by the **U.S.A** and **Mauritius** for the F.Y. 2020-21.

About Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):

- FDI** is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country.
- It is different from **Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)** where the foreign entity merely buys stocks and bonds of a company. FPI does not provide the investor with control over the business.

Routes through which India gets Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):

- Government Route:** In this, the foreign entity has to take the approval of the government. It is administered by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Automatic Route:** In this, the foreign entity does not require the prior approval of the government or the RBI.

Government Measures to promote FDI:

- Measures taken by the Government on the fronts of FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business have resulted in increased FDI inflows into the country.
- Launch of schemes attracting investments, such as, National technical Textile Mission, Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana, Production Linked Incentive Scheme etc., and the initiatives under the Atmanirbhar Bharat to encourage investments in different sectors.

Important News: Defense

Seven Indian Navy Ships deployed for Operation Samudra Setu II

- In support of the nation's fight against Covid-19 and as part of operation '**Samudra Setu II**', 7 Indian Naval ships viz. **Kolkata, Kochi, Talwar, Tabar, Trikand, Jalashwa** and **Airavat** have been deployed for shipment of liquid medical oxygen-filled cryogenic containers and associated medical equipment from various countries.
- INS Kolkata and INS Talwar, missions deployed in Persian Gulf, were the first batch of ships that were immediately diverted for the task and entered the port of Manama, Bahrain.
- The second batch of ships comprising Kochi, Trikand and Tabar missions deployed in Arabian sea have also been diverted to join the national effort.

Note: It may be recalled that Operation Samudra Setu was launched in 2020 by the Navy and around 4000 Indian citizens stranded in neighbouring countries, amidst COVID 19 outbreak, were successfully repatriated back to India.

NATO launches Multinational Military Exercise 'DEFENDER-Europe 21' in Albania

- NATO has launched Multinational Military Exercise 'DEFENDER-Europe 21' in Albania with thousands of military forces from the United States and other countries in the first such large-scale drills since World War II in the Western Balkans.
- **DEFENDER-Europe** is an annual large-scale U.S. Army-led, multinational exercise, defensive in nature and focused on deterring aggression, which this year focuses on building operational readiness and interoperability with NATO and a greater number of allies and partners over a wider area of operations than ever before.
- Around 28,000 U.S., allied and partner forces from 26 nations will conduct nearly simultaneous operations across more than 30 training areas in more than a dozen nations from the Baltics and Africa to the critical Black Sea and Balkan regions.
- **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** is an international alliance that consists of 30 member states from North America and Europe. It was established at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949.

Indian Army launches first Green Solar Energy Harnessing Plant in Sikkim

- The Indian Army launched the first Green Solar Energy Harnessing Plant in North Sikkim to harness renewable energy for its troops.
- The Green Solar Energy plant with a capacity of 56 KVA, at an altitude of 16,000 ft, will use vanadium-based battery technology.
- The project has been accomplished in collaboration with IIT, Mumbai.
- A team of faculty from IIT, Mumbai, led by Prof Prakash Ghosh and troops, finished the project.
- **Note:** In January 2021, Vanadium was discovered in Arunachal Pradesh. This was the first discovery of Vanadium in India.
- India consumes 4% of global vanadium production in the world.
- **Vanadium** is a hard, silver-grey metallic element. Vanadium is found in over 60 different

minerals including vanadinite, carnotite, roscoelite and patronite.

- Vanadium can be used to make steel alloys, for use in space vehicles, nuclear reactors and aircraft carriers, etc.

Indian and Indonesian Navies conduct Passage Exercise 'PASSEX' in the southern Arabian Sea

- The Indian Navy was represented by INS Sharda, an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) with a Chetak helicopter and the Indonesian Navy was represented by KRI Sultan Hasanudin, a 90m Corvette.
- The exercise, aimed at improving interoperability and understanding between both the friendly navies, are regularly conducted by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign countries.
- **Note:** The last PASSEX between Indian Navy and Indonesian Navy was conducted on March 13, 2021 between INS Kalpeni, IN Dornier and KRI Sultan Iskandar Muda.
- **Garuda Shakti** is a bilateral exercise between special forces of armies of India and Indonesia.

Launch of 'Defence National OPD' on e-Sanjeevani portal

- In order to mitigate the criticality of inadequate availability of specialised medical manpower, veteran defence doctors have come forward answering the call of the nation to provide free online consultation services on the e-Sanjeevani platform.
- **'Ex-Defence OPD'** was launched on 07 May 2021 in a phased manner by Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar and Surgeon Vice Admiral Rajat Datta, Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services.
- Initially available for Uttar Pradesh, it was extended to Rajasthan on 10 May and Uttarakhand on 11 May.
- After the successful roll out in 3 states, **Ex-Defence OPD, now renamed as 'Defence National OPD'**, has been rolled out pan India on 14 May 2021.
- **About e-Sanjeevani OPD:** It is a Govt of India flagship telemedicine platform, developed by the C-DAC, Mohali under the aegis of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India. It facilitates free online medical consultation to all citizens of India, as well as provides for online prescription of medicines.

INS Rajput decommissioned

- The Indian Navy's first destroyer INS Rajput was decommissioned at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam after serving the nation for 41 glorious years on 21 May 2021.
- INS Rajput was commissioned on 04 May 1980, at Poti, Georgia (erstwhile USSR), as the lead ship of the Rajput Class Destroyers of the Indian Navy with Capt (later Vice Admiral) Gulab Mohanlal Hiranandani as the first Commanding Officer.

Note: INS Rajput was also the first ship to be fitted out to fire the supersonic cruise and long-range BrahMos missile.

Science and Technology

Telecom Department gives go-ahead for 5G Technology and Spectrum Trials

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India, approved, permissions to Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) for conducting trials for use and applications of 5G technology.
- The applicants TSPs include Bharti Airtel Ltd., Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., Vodafone Idea Ltd. and MTNL.
- These TSPs have tied up with original equipment manufacturers and technology providers which are Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT.
- The experimental spectrum is being given in various bands which include the mid-band (3.2 GHz to 3.67 GHz), millimeter wave band (24.25 GHz to 28.5 GHz) and in the Sub-Gigahertz band (700 GHz).
- The TSPs are encouraged to conduct trials using **5Gi technology** in addition to the already known 5G Technology.
- **International Telecommunications Union (ITU)** has also approved the 5Gi technology, which was advocated by India, as it facilitates much larger reach of the 5G towers and Radio networks.
- The **5Gi technology** has been developed by IIT Madras, Centre of Excellence in Wireless Technology (CEWiT) and IIT Hyderabad.

ISRO develops 3 cost-effective ventilators, oxygen concentrator

- **The Indian Space Research Organisation's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)** has developed three different types of ventilators and an oxygen concentrator.
- "Based on designs, features and specifications, the names are **Prana, VaU and Svasta**. All three are user-friendly, fully automated and with touch-screen specifications, meeting all safety standards.
- Prana is meant to deliver respiratory gas to the patient by automated compression of an Ambu bag, Svasta is designed to work without electric power, and the VaU is a low-cost ventilator equivalent to commercially available high-end ventilators.

SpaceX will launch DOGE-1 Satellite to the Moon in 2022

- SpaceX will launch a satellite DOGE-1 to the Moon in 2022 funded entirely with the cryptocurrency 'Dogecoin'.
- Canadian company Geometric Energy Corporation will lead the lunar mission.
- The satellite, dubbed DOGE-1, will be launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket in the first quarter of 2022.
- The "DOGE-1 Mission to the Moon" will be "the first-ever commercial lunar payload in history paid entirely with" Dogecoin.
- **About Dogecoin:** It is a cryptocurrency created by software engineers Billy Markus and Jackson Palmer. It was introduced on December 6, 2013.
- **About Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX):** It is an American

aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California. SpaceX was founded in 2002 by Elon Musk.

Iran unveils its most powerful supercomputer 'Simorgh'

- Iran has unveiled its most powerful supercomputer 'Simorgh' developed domestically by Tehran's Amirkabir University of Technology (AUT).
- The supercomputer, named Simorgh after a mythical Persian bird, has a performance capacity of 0.56 petaflops at the moment and will reach one petaflops in two months.
- **Note:** Work on the next supercomputer 'Maryam' has already started, and it will have 100 times the capacity of 'Simorgh'.

Antibody detection kit 'DIPCOVAN'

Why in News?

- DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) developed antibody detection kit 'DIPCOVAN' for COVID-19.

Key Points

- The DRDO's Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences (DIPAS) laboratory has developed the DIPCOVAN kit, which can detect spike as well as nucleocapsid (S&N) proteins of SARS-CoV-2 virus with a high sensitivity of 97 percent and specificity of 99 percent.
- It will be commercially launched by DRDO's industry partner — Delhi-based Vanguard Diagnostics.

Recycling Carbon technology by Bangalore startup receives TDB National Award 2021

- **A Bangalore based startup 'Breathe Applied Sciences'** has received the National Award 2021 from Technology Development Board (TDB) for developing a commercial solution for conversion of CO₂ to chemicals and fuels.

Key Points

- Breathe Applied Sciences, a startup incubated at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) developed efficient catalysts and methodologies for the conversion of CO₂ to methanol and other chemicals.
- The research was carried out by Prof. Sebastian C Peter and his group from the New Chemistry Unit at JNCASR. He is also a co-founder and director of Breathe Applied Sciences which was started from the generous funding from DST Nano Mission.
- **About Technology Development Board (TDB):** It is a statutory body established by Government of India under Technology Development Board Act, 1995, to promote development and commercialization of indigenous technology and adaptation of imported technology for much wider application.

Recycling Carbon technology by Bangalore startup receives TDB National Award 2021

- **A Bangalore based startup 'Breathe Applied Sciences'** has received the National Award 2021 from Technology Development Board (TDB) for developing a commercial solution for conversion of CO₂ to chemicals and fuels.

Key Points

- Breathe Applied Sciences, a startup incubated at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) developed efficient catalysts and methodologies for the conversion of CO₂ to methanol and other chemicals.
- The research was carried out by Prof. Sebastian C Peter and his group from the New Chemistry Unit at JNCASR. He is also a co-founder and director of Breathe Applied Sciences which was started from the generous funding from DST Nano Mission.
- **About Technology Development Board (TDB):** It is a statutory body established by Government of India under Technology Development Board Act, 1995, to promote development and commercialization of indigenous technology and adaptation of imported technology for much wider application.

Gradeup

Award and Honors

The Japanese Government awarded the “Order of the Rising Sun” to a Japanese teacher, Shyamala Ganesh

- Shyamala Ganesh, a Bengaluru-based Japanese teacher, was recently awarded the “Order of the Rising Sun” by the Japanese government.
- Shyamala is a Japanese instructor at the septuagenarian institution as well as the Ohara School of Ikebana in Bengaluru's RT Nagar.
- **About ‘Order of the Rising Sun’:** It is conferred on persons with achievements in international relations, promotion of Japanese culture, environmental preservation, welfare or achievements in their fields. It was constituted by Japanese Emperor Meiji in 1875.

Laureus World Sports Awards 2021

- Japan's Naomi Osaka has been named Sportswoman of the Year at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2021, with fellow tennis player Rafael Nadal Sportsman of the Year.
- **Laureus award winners:**
 - World Sportswoman of the Year Award** : Naomi Osaka
 - World Sportsman of the Year Award** : Rafael Nadal
 - World Team of the Year Award** : Bayern Munich
 - World Breakthrough of the Year Award** : Patrick Mahomes
 - World Comeback of the Year Award** : Max Parrot
 - Sport for Good Award** : Kickformore by Kickfair
 - Lifetime Achievement Award** : Billie Jean King
 - Athlete Advocate of the Year Award** : Lewis Hamilton
 - Sporting Inspiration Award** : Mohamed Salah
 - Sporting Moment of the Year Award** : Chris Nikic
- **About the Laureus World Sports Awards:** It is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year. It was established in 1999 by Laureus Sport for Good Foundation founding patrons Daimler and Richemont.

IREDA bags “Green Urja Award”

- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has been conferred with “Green Urja Award” for being the Leading Public Institution in Financing Institution for Renewable Energy this year by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC).
- The award was received by Shri Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman & Managing Director (CMD), IREDA from Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, International Solar Alliance.
- IREDA gets the award for the pivotal and developmental role it plays in Green Energy Financing.
- **About Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA):** It is a Mini Ratna (Category – I) Government of India Enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

Dr. Tahera Qutbuddin becomes first Indian to win Sheikh Zayed Book Award

- Dr. Tahera Qutbuddin, a professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Chicago, recently became the first person of Indian-origin to win the 15th Sheikh Zayed Book Award.
- The Mumbai-born professor won the honour for her book '**Arabic Oration: Art and Function**', which was published by Brill Academic Publishers of Leiden in 2019.
- **About Sheikh Zayed Book Award:** The Sheikh Zayed Book Award is a literary award begun in the UAE. The first award was in 2007. The award is considered to be the Nobel Prize of the Arab world.

Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted of Indian descent wins World Food Prize 2021

- Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, a global nutrition expert of Indian descent has won the prestigious 2021 World Food Prize for her groundbreaking research in developing holistic, nutrition-sensitive approaches to aquaculture and food systems.
- Thilsted, who is a native of Trinidad and Tobago and a citizen of Denmark, was born in 1949 in the Caribbean island of Trinidad in the small village of Reform.
- **About the World Food Prize:** It was created by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug in 1986 to recognize scientists and others who have improved the quality and availability of food.

Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank receives 'International Invincible Gold Medal' 2021

- 'International Invincible Gold Medal' 2021 has been conferred on Union Education Minister Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank.
- Dr. Nishank has been recognised for his extraordinary commitment and outstanding service to humanity through his writings, social and public life.
- The award will be formally presented to Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Guru Purnima this year (July 24, 2021).
- The decision was made after due deliberations by a high-powered committee constituted under the leadership of **Maharshi Organisation's worldwide president Dr Tony Nader**.

Mexico's Andrea Meza wins the Miss Universe 2020 title

26-year-old Andrea Meza from Mexico has won the Miss Universe 2020 crown.

- She was crowned by the former Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi.
- **India's Adline Castelino** became the third runner-up.
- **Miss Universe 2020** was the 69th edition of the Miss Universe competition. The competition was held on May 16, 2021 at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Hollywood, Florida, United States.

Nagaland conservationist Nuklu Phom gets prestigious Whitley Awards 2021

- An environmentalist from Nagaland's remote Longleng district, Nuklu Phom, has won Whitley Awards 2021, also known as the Green Oscar.
- The award recognises Phom's efforts at establishing a '**Biodiversity Peace Corridor**' in Nagaland.
- Nuklu Phom was the only Indian to win the prestigious annual award this year after a gap of three years.

- The **Whitley Awards** are conferred to individuals from the Global South by UK-based charity the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN).

Six Indian places added to tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- The Union Culture Minister Prahlaad Singh Patel stated that six Indian cultural heritage sites have been added to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- The submissions were made by Archaeological Survey of India, which is responsible for the conservation and preservation of Indian monuments.
- **The sites on the tentative list are:**
 - i. Satpura Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh
 - ii. Iconic riverfront of the historic city of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
 - iii. Hire Benkal, Megalithic site, Karnataka
 - iv. Maratha Military Architecture, Maharashtra
 - v. Bhedaghat-Lametghat in Narmada Valley, Madhya Pradesh
 - vi. Temples of Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu
- With the addition of these six sites, UNESCO has 48 proposals in the tentative list of India.
- “As per Operational Guidelines, 2019, it is mandatory to put any monument/site on the Tentative List (TL) before it is considered for the final nomination dossier.
- **Note:** Presently, there are **38 World Heritage Sites located in India**. India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world. Among these 38 UNESCO Heritage sites of India, the list includes **30 cultural sites, 7 natural sites, and 1 mixed site**.

NBA creates Kareem Abdul-Jabbar social justice champion award

- The National Basketball Association (NBA) announced the social justice champion award, naming it after Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar to recognize players who are making strides in the fight for social justice.
- Each NBA team will nominate one player for consideration; from there, five finalists will be selected and ultimately one winner.

Bharat Ratna Professor C.N.R. Rao receives the Eni International Award

- Bharat Ratna Professor C.N.R. Rao has received the Eni International Award 2020 for research into renewable energy sources and energy storage, also called the Energy Frontier award.
- This is considered to be the Nobel Prize in Energy Research.

Key Points

- The Energy Frontiers award has been conferred for his work on metal oxides, carbon nanotubes, and other materials and two-dimensional systems.
- The Eni Awards 2020 will be presented on 14 October 2021, during an official ceremony held at the Quirinal Palace in Rome, attended by the President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen conferred with Spain's Princess of Asturias Award 2021

- **Indian economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen** has been conferred with Spain's top Princess of Asturias Award 2021 in the **social sciences category**.

Key Points



- Amartya Sen won the award for his research on famines and his theory of human development, welfare economics and the underlying mechanisms of poverty have contributed to the fight against injustice, inequality, disease and ignorance.
- The award comprises a Joan Miro sculpture representing and symbolising the Award, a diploma, an insignia and a cash prize of 50,000 Euros.

Note:

- Amartya Sen won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998.
- He was awarded Bharat Ratna in 1999.

Gradeup

New Appointments

Sanjay Kumar Mohanty takes over the charge of new Member (Operations & Business Development) Railway Board, Ministry of Railways

- Sanjay Kumar Mohanty has taken over the charge of new Member (Operations & Business Development) Railway Board (Ministry of Railways) and Ex. Officio Secretary to the Government of India.
- Shri Mohanty was General Manager, South Eastern Railway prior to his elevation to the post of Railway Board Member.
- Shri Mohanty worked in various important posts in Indian Railways viz. Principal Executive Director (Traffic Transportation)/Railway Board, Senior Deputy General Manager & Chief Vigilance Officer in East Coast Railway, Divisional Railway Manager in Khurda Road Division etc.

T Rabi Sankar appointed as the 4th Deputy Governor of RBI

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) executive director T Rabi Sankar has been appointed as the 4th Deputy Governor of RBI for a period of three years.
- Sankar currently serves as the executive director in charge of payments and settlement.
- He succeeds B P Kanungo as the deputy governor, who retired on April 2 after getting a one year extension in his position.
- **Note:** Other three deputy governors are Mahesh Kumar Jain, Michael Patra and Rajeshwar Rao.

Mamata Banerjee takes oath as West Bengal CM for 3rd consecutive term

- In West Bengal, TMC chief Mamata Banerjee was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of the state for the third consecutive term.
- Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar administered her oath of office and secrecy at a simple ceremony held at the Raj Bhavan in Kolkata.
- In the 2021 West Bengal elections, the TMC secured 213 out of the 292 Assembly seats, while the BJP emerged as the second-largest party with 77 seats.
- **Note:** Ms. Banerjee has become the second woman in the country to be sworn in as Chief Minister of any state consecutively for three terms after former Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dixit.

Justice P.C. Pant appointed as the Acting Chairperson of NHRC

- The Hon'ble President of India has authorized Justice (Retired) Prafulla Chandra Pant, Member, National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India, to act as its Chairperson w.e.f. 25th April, 2021.
- Prior to his appointment as Member, NHRC on 22 April, 2019, he was a Judge of the Supreme Court of India from 13th August, 2014 to 29th August, 2017.
- He held the position of Chief Justice of the High Court of Meghalaya from September 20, 2013 to August 12, 2014.
- **About National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC):** It is a statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights

Ordinance of 28 September 1993. It was given a statutory basis by the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

MK Stalin takes oath as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

- DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) chief MK Stalin was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, along with 33 members of his cabinet, by Governor Banwarilal Purohit at the Raj Bhavan in Chennai.

N Rangasamy takes oath as Puducherry Chief Minister

- All India NR Congress (AINRC) chief N Rangasamy was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Puducherry by Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundarajan at Raj Nivas, Puducherry.
- Mr Rangasamy has become Chief Minister for the fourth time.

Himanta Biswa Sarma sworn in as new Assam Chief Minister

- Senior BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as the 15th Chief Minister of Assam.
- Governor Jagdish Mukhi administered him the oath of office.
- Along with Mr. Sarma, 13 ministers also took oath. 10 ministers from the BJP, while 2 ministers from Asom Gana Parishad and 1 from UPPL are included in the Himanta Biswa Sarma ministry.
- A writer and sports administrator, Shri Sarma is also holding the post of Convenor of the North East Democratic Alliance, NEDA.

Ujjwala Singhania takes over as 38th National President FICCI FLO

- Ujjwala Singhania has been appointed as the 38th National President of **FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO)**, the oldest women-led & women-centric business chamber of Southeast Asia.
- About FLO:** It was established in 1983, as a division of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) which is the apex body of industry and commerce in India.

The Reserve Bank of India appoints Jose J. Kattoor as new Executive Director (ED)

- Prior to being promoted as ED, Jose J. Kattoor was heading Bengaluru Regional Office of the Reserve Bank as Regional Director for Karnataka.
- As Executive Director, Shri Kattoor will look after the Human Resource Management Department, Corporate Strategy and Budget Department and Rajbhasha Department.

Former Senator Bill Nelson sworn in as the 14th NASA Administrator

- Vice President, United States, Kamala Harris swore Bill Nelson in as the 14th NASA administrator.
- Nelson currently serves on the NASA Advisory Council.
- Facts about NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration):** It is an

independent agency of the U.S. federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and space research.

Formed: July 29, 1958

Headquarters: Washington, D.C.

Administrator: Bill Nelson

Martin Griffiths appointed UN humanitarian chief

- The UN chief, Antonio Guterres, has appointed veteran British diplomat Martin Griffiths, a seasoned negotiator with wide global experience, as the new Chief at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
- Griffiths is currently serving as the UN special envoy for Yemen.
- **About United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA):** It is a United Nations body established in December 1991 by the General Assembly to strengthen the international response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.

Narinder Batra re-elected as FIH President for a second term

- Narinder Batra has been re-elected as the president of the International Hockey Federation (FIH). This will be Batra's second term.
- Batra became the first non-European president of the FIH in 2016.
- Narinder Batra is also the president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member.
- **Facts about FIH (International Hockey Federation):**
Headquarters: Lausanne, Switzerland
Founded: 7 January 1924

Former Atomic Energy Commission chairman Srikumar Banerjee passes away

- Srikumar Banerjee, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, passed away at 70.
- He retired as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy in 2012.
- Banerjee also served as the director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) for six years till 2010.
- He was a recipient of many awards in his career, including the Padma Shri in 2005 and the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award in 1989.

Martha Koome appointed Kenya's first woman chief justice

- Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has appointed Court of Appeal Judge Martha Koome as the East African country's first woman chief justice and head of the judiciary.
- Koome was appointed as a judge in 2003 and served on the African Union Committee on the Rights and Welfare of Children between 2005 and 2010.

Subodh Kumar Jaiswal takes charge as Director of CBI

- Subodh Kumar Jaiswal took charge as the Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- He has been appointed as Director for a period of two years.

Key Points

- Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, a 1985 batch IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre, was selected by a high-powered committee led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.
- Mr Jaiswal also worked as director general of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

Appointment of CBI Director:

- The Director of the CBI is appointed as per section 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946.
- **Appointment Committee:** The Central Government shall appoint the Director of CBI on the recommendation of a three-member committee consisting of the Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him.
- **The Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2014** made a change in the composition of the committee related to the appointment of the Director of CBI.
- It states that where there is no recognized leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha would be a member of that committee.

Himanta Biswa Sarma elected to BWF Council member

- **Badminton Association of India president Himanta Biswa Sarma** was elected to the BWF Council member for a four-year period till 2025.

Key Points

- **Himanta Biswa Sarma** is an Indian politician and the **current Chief Minister of Assam**.
- Sarma is also the Vice President of Badminton Asia.

Note: BWF President Paul-Erik Hoyer was also re-elected.

Facts about Badminton World Federation (BWF):

- It is the international governing body for the sport of badminton recognised by the International Olympic Committee.
- **Headquarters:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- **Founded:** 5 July 1934
- **Membership:** 194 member associations

Reports and Indices

India should be a 'Country of Particular Concern' for Religious Freedom: USCIRF Report

- The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended for the second year in a row that the US Government put India on a list 'Country of Particular concern (CPC)' for the worst violations of religious freedoms in 2020.
- The annual report of the USCIRF also recommended to redesignate 10 nations as "countries of particular concern".
- These are Burma (Myanmar), China, Eritrea, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.
- In addition to India, USCIRF in its non-binding report recommended the State Department to add three more countries to the list: Russia, Syria and Vietnam.
- The recommendations of USCIRF are non-binding to the US Government.

New Zealand PM Jacinda Arden tops Fortune's list of the World's 50 'Greatest Leaders' 2021, SII CEO Adar Poonawalla in top 10

- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden topped the Fortune's list of the world's 50 'Greatest Leaders' 2021.
- CEO of Serum Institute of India, **Adar Poonawalla** is the only Indian among the top 10 names on the list. He is placed in the **10th spot**.
- **Top 10 Fortune's list of the World's 50 'Greatest Leaders' 2021:**
 - Jacinda Arden
 - mRNA Pioneers
 - Dan Schulman
 - Dr. John Nkengasong
 - NBA Rescuers
 - Jessica Tan
 - Justin Welby
 - Stacey Abrams
 - Reshorna Fitzpatrick
 - Adar Poonawalla

India ranked 140 among 156 countries in WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2021

- India's ranking on the 15th edition, **WEF (World Economic Forum)'s Global Gender Gap Report 2021** dropped 28 places to 140, amongst 156 nations, making it the third-worst performer in South Asia, way behind Bangladesh and Nepal.
1 rank: Iceland
2 rank: Finland

3 rank: Norway

140 rank: India

- Afghanistan was at the last position of 156.
- In South Asia, Bangladesh was the top performer with a global ranking of 65, followed by Nepal at 106.
- **Note: India** has been ranked 112 in WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2020.
- The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment).

Global Wind Report 2021 by GWEC (Global Wind Energy Council)

- In this special edition of GWEC's 16th annual flagship report ahead of the crucial COP26 conference in November 2021, the Global Wind Report 2021 highlights wind power's role.
- 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 GW of new capacity installed.
- Today, there is now 743 GW of wind power capacity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO₂ globally.
- **India** is the world's fourth-largest onshore wind market by cumulative installations with nearly 38 GW of capacity.
- The government has set an **ambitious target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2022**, which calls for current wind capacity to nearly double within the next two years, totaling 60 GW of onshore wind and 5 GW of offshore wind.

Schemes

Ministry of Food Processing Industries issues guidelines for 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry'

- The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has issued detailed operational scheme guidelines for 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry' (PLISFPI).
- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Shri Narendra Singh Tomar launched an online portal for the beneficiaries.
- As a part of Prime Minister's announcement of Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, Government of India has approved a new Central Sector Scheme namely 'Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry' for implementation during 2021-22 to 2026-27 with an outlay of Rs. 10,900 crore.
- Ministry of Food Processing Industries is inviting applications for availing sales based incentives and grants for undertaking Branding & Marketing activities abroad under the scheme from three categories of Applicants:
- **Category-I:** Applicants are large entities who apply for Incentive based on Sales and Investment Criteria. Applicants under this category could undertake Branding & Marketing activities abroad also and apply for grant under the scheme with a common application.
- **Category-II:** SMEs Applicants manufacturing innovative/ organic products who apply for PLI Incentive based on Sales.
- **Category-III:** Applicants applying solely for grant for undertaking Branding & Marketing activities abroad.

Odisha's Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik declared working journalists of the state as frontline COVID-19 warriors.
- As many as 6,944 working journalists of the state have been covered under the **Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana**.
- **About Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana:** It is a Health Insurance Scheme for Journalists. Under this scheme, all the working journalists will get an insurance coverage of Rs. 2 lakh per annum. The insurance coverage will be applicable for cashless treatment in all Public/ Private Hospitals.
- Odisha govt. has also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 15 lakh for the next of kin of journalists who die of COVID-19 while performing their duty under Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana.
- This scheme was made operational by the Odisha state government from 1 June 2018.

Van Dhan Yojana in Tribal Clusters

- TRIFED will be partnering with NITI Aayog to implement the Van Dhan Yojana in the districts that have been identified as aspirational districts by NITI Aayog.

Key Points

- A dedicated team from TRIFED along with the NITI Aayog team will work out the follow-up-plan for the implementation of the Van Dhan Yojana

in each of the 39 Tribal Aspirational Districts.

- These include districts in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Telangana and Tripura.
- As a part of this association, a special focus will be on these aspirational districts where tribal population constitutes more than 50%.
- Under the expansion plan of tribal development program, an additional 9900 VDVKS subsumed into 659 VDVK Clusters spread out in these tribal aspirational districts are envisaged.

About Van Dhan Yojana:

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED launched the Van Dhan scheme in 2018.
- The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of Minor Forest Produces by establishing Van Dhan Kendras to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-based tribes.

National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants

- The Ministry of Power has decided to set up a 'National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants.'

Key Points

- The proposed National Mission on biomass will contribute to the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.
- It would further support the energy transition in the country and targets to move towards cleaner energy sources.
- It aims to address the issue of air pollution due to farm stubble burning and to reduce carbon footprints of thermal power generation.

Structure:

- The Mission would have a Steering Committee headed by Secretary (Power) comprising of all stakeholders including representatives from Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Ministry of New & Renewable Energy etc.
- **NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation Limited)** will play a larger role in providing logistic and infrastructure support in the proposed National Mission.

Other Initiatives to reduce Air Pollution:

- UJALA scheme, National Action Plan on Climate Change, Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI) emission norms, International Solar Alliance

About Biomass:

- It is plant or animal material used as fuel to produce electricity or heat. Examples are wood, energy crops and waste from forests, yards, or farms.

Important Days

May 01, International Labour Day

- May 01 is the International Day of Workers or International Labour Day dedicated to workers across the world.
- The day, also called May Day, is also observed as a public holiday in many countries. Labour Day in India is celebrated as Antarrashtriya Shramik Diwas.
- Labour Day has its origins in the labour union movement in the United States in the 19th Century. In 1889, the Marxist International Socialist Congress adopted a resolution for a great international demonstration in which they demanded that the workers should not be made to work for more than 8 hours a day.

May 03, World Press Freedom Day

- This year's World Press Freedom Day theme is **"Information as a Public Good"**.
- The United Nations General Assembly declared May 3 to be World Press Freedom Day or just World Press Day, observed to raise awareness of the importance of freedom of the press and remind governments of their duty to respect and uphold the right to freedom of expression enshrined under Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and marking the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, a statement of free press principles put together by African newspaper journalists in Windhoek in 1991.

World Asthma Day

- World Asthma Day (WAD) (May 5, 2021) is organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma, (GINA), a World Health Organization collaborative organization founded in 1993.
- This year's World Asthma Day theme is **"Uncovering Asthma Misconceptions"**.
- **About Asthma:** It is a condition of chronic disease which hinders the respiratory system, causing difficulty in breathing. This can make breathing difficult, can trigger frequent coughs and wheeze.
- **Note:** For this year only, World Asthma Day will be held on Wednesday, May 5. Starting in 2022, World Asthma Day will be held on the first Tuesday in May.

May 07, World Athletics Day

- World Athletics Day is celebrated every year on May 7 to spread awareness among the youths regarding the importance of fitness and boost their participation in athletics.
- This day was introduced by the **International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF)** as a social responsibility project 'Athletic for a better World'.
- This day was introduced by the then President of IAAF Primo Nebiolo in the year 1996.
- IAAF, an international governing body for the field of athletics and sports, organizes and sponsors World Athletics Day.

May 08, World Migratory Bird Day

- The theme for this World Migratory Bird Day is **Sing, Fly, Soar – Like a bird!**
- **World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)** is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats.
- All these activities can also be undertaken at any time of the year because of countries or regions observing the peak of migrations at different times, but the main days for the international celebrations on the **second Saturday in May and in October**.
- World Migratory Bird Day was initiated in 2006 by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).
- The AEWA and the CMS are the two international wildlife treaties administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

May 08, World Thalassaemia Day

- **World Thalassemia Day** is observed on May 8 every year, to mark attention towards Thalassemia, a blood disorder characterized by abnormal formation of haemoglobin.
- This year's theme is **“Addressing Health Inequalities Across the Global Thalassaemia Community”**.
- In India, every year over 10,000 children are diagnosed with Thalassemia. Thalassemia patients are mostly children who go through painful blood transfusions for several years in their life. A blood stem cell transplant is the only curative intervention available for a transfusion-free status with a normal life span for Thalassemia patients.

May 08, World Red Cross Day

- The **World Red Cross Day** is celebrated to commemorate the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- The theme of the World Red Cross Day 2021 is **Together we are #unstoppable!**
- World Red Cross Day is also known as World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. The first **Red Cross Day** was celebrated on May 8, 1948.
- Red Cross Day is the birth anniversary of Henry Dunant, the founder of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Henry Dunant was also the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize.

May 11, National Technology Day

- This year the theme of the National Technology Day 2021 is “Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future”.
- On May 11, 1998, India successfully fired an Operation Shakti missile at the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range in Rajasthan.
- This made India the sixth country to join the nuclear club of nations.
- Based on these immense breakthrough achievements by the engineers, scientists and technicians of the country, Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced May 11 as National Technology Day in 1999.

May 12, International Nurses Day

- International Nurses Day (IND) is an international day observed around the world on 12 May (the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth) of each year, to mark the contributions that nurses make to society.
- The theme for the 2021 is **Nurses: A Voice to Lead - A vision for future healthcare.**

May 21, Anti-Terrorism Day

- The Anti-Terrorism Day is observed to spread the message of peace and humanity.
- Anti-Terrorism Day is observed every year on May 21, the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.
- In 1991, on this day he was assassinated by the LTTE.
- **Note:** In 2020, India ranked eighth on the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), one spot behind Pakistan.
- The United Nations observes **International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on 21st August.**

May 21, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

- In 2001, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and in December 2002, the UN General Assembly declared 21 May to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.
- The Day will provide us with an opportunity to deepen understanding of the values of Cultural Diversity and to learn to "live together" better.

UN Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW) 2021

- The **6th UN Global Road Safety Week**, held **17-23 May 2021**, highlights the benefits of low-speed urban streets.
- The **theme** of UN Global Road Safety Week 2021 is '**Streets for Life #Love30**'.
- The Week will be the occasion to garner policy commitments at national and local levels to deliver **30 km/h** speed limits in urban areas; generate local support for such low speed measures in order to create safe, healthy, green and liveable cities; and officially launch the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 and its Global Plan.
- **Note:** It is a biennial global road safety campaign hosted by WHO (World Health Organisation).
- The first UN Global Road Safety Week was celebrated in 2007.

May 17, World Telecommunication and Information Society Day

- World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) has been celebrated annually every 17 May since 1969 to mark the founding of ITU (International Telecommunication Union) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.
- The theme of WTISD 2021 is "**Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times**".

May 15, International Day of Families

- The International Day of Families is observed on the 15 May every year.
- The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families.
- The theme of 2021 is **"Families and New Technologies"**.

May 22, International Day for Biological Diversity

- The International Day for Biological Diversity (or World Biodiversity Day) is a United Nations–sanctioned international day for the promotion of biodiversity issues. It is currently held on May 22.
- This year 2021 the theme is **"We are part of the solution"**.

May 29, International Day of UN Peacekeepers

- The International Day of UN Peacekeepers is observed annually on May 29 to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel for their invaluable contribution to the work of the world organisation and to honour the peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag.

Key Points

- The **theme** of 2021 is **"The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security."**
- The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002.

Dag Hammarskjold Medal Award:

- The **three Indian peacekeepers (Corporal Yuvraj Singh, two civilian peacekeepers- Ivan Michael Picardo and Mulchand Yadav)** were awarded posthumously the Dag Hammarskjold Medal on the occasion of International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Note: India is the fifth largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping with more than 5,500 military and police serving in peace operations.

May 31, World No Tobacco Day

- World No Tobacco Day is observed on May 31 every year to highlight the risk associated with the use of tobacco.

Key Points

- The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2021 is **"Commit to quit."**
- Celebrated around the world every year on May 31, World No Tobacco Day was created by the Member States of World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes.

About National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP):

- **Government of India** launched the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in the year 2007-08 during the 11th Five-Year-Plan.

Books and Authors

Satyajit Ray's book 'Another Dozen Stories' translated from Bengali to English by Indrani Majumdar

- 'Another Dozen Stories' by Satyajit Ray is translated from Bengali to English by Indrani Majumdar and it was released on May 2, 2021, the 100 birth anniversary of Satyajit Ray, one of the greatest filmmakers.
- Aimed for kids aged nine years and above, the book is a collection of 12 magical, bizzare and spooky stories.
- Actress Sharmila Tagore has penned the foreword of the book.
- The book was published by Penguin India.
- **Note:** Another book by Satyajit Ray will also be released by Penguin India. Titled '3 Rays: Stories from Satyajit Ray', the book is a collection of Satyajit Ray's previously unpublished autobiographical writings, stories, poems, illustrations, fiction, and non-fiction works. '3 Rays' is expected to be out on May 10, 2021.

Preet Mohan Singh Malik's book titled "Sikkim: A History of Intrigue and Alliance" released

- A book titled "Sikkim: A History of Intrigue and Alliance" written by Preet Mohan Singh Malik, Former diplomat, has been released.
- It was published by HarperCollins India.
- The book's objective is to clarify and establish the primacy of strategic issues that lay behind India's decision to accept the demand that Sikkim be merged with India.

Ruskin Bond's book titled 'All Time Favourites For Children' to be released

- Veteran author, Ruskin Bond, will release the book 'All Time Favourites For Children' on his 87th birthday on May 19, 2021.
- It is published under the Puffin imprint of Penguin Books.
- It is Classic Collection of 25+ most-loved, great stories by famous award-winning author (Illustrated, must-read fiction short stories for kids).
- Ruskin Bond is an Indian author of British descent.
- He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1992. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014.

Shivshankar Menon's book 'India and Asian Geopolitics: The Past, Present'

Why in News?

- A book titled 'India and Asian Geopolitics: The Past, Present', authored by Shivshankar Menon, has been released.

Key Points

- **Shivshankar Menon** is an Indian diplomat, who served as **National Security Adviser of India** under Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh. He had previously served as the Foreign Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- In the book, he addresses the changes in India's foreign policy: since independence to the present day, and the many challenges faced as the nation seeks to find its way in the increasingly complex world of Asian geopolitics.
- The book is published by Penguin Random House India.

Sports

F1 Portuguese Grand Prix 2021

- **British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** won the F1 Portuguese Grand Prix 2021 held at Algarve International Circuit in Portimao, Portugal.
- **Max Verstappen** (Red Bull) got second position and **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes) got third position.
- **Note:** This was Hamilton's 97th career Formula 1 victory.

Mark Selby becomes World Snooker Champion for 4th time

- In Snooker, English professional player Mark Selby has become the World Snooker Champion for the 4th time.
- Selby won the Championship defeating Shaun Murphy by 18-15 victory at Crucible Theatre, England.
- Selby won the Championship title in 2014, 2016, 2017 also.

Sri Lanka Thisara Perera announces retirement from international cricket

- Sri Lanka all-rounder and former captain, Thisara Perera announced his retirement from international cricket.
- Thisara Perera, who made his international debut in 2009, has featured in 6 Tests, 166 ODIs and 84 T20Is in his 12-year-long international career.
- Perera has hit 2,338 runs and picked up 135 wickets in ODI cricket while he managed 51 wickets and 1204 runs in T20I cricket.
- Thisara Perera was also part of Sri Lanka's 2014 T20 World Cup-winning team.

F1 Spanish Grand Prix 2021

- **British Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** won the F1 Spanish Grand Prix 2021 held at Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Spain.
- **Max Verstappen** (Red Bull) got second position and **Valtteri Bottas** (Mercedes) got third position.
- **Note:** Lewis Hamilton claimed the 100th pole position of his career in Spanish Grand Prix 2021.

2021 Madrid Open (Tennis)

- The 2021 Madrid Open was held at the Park Manzanares in Madrid, Spain from 30 April – 9 May 2021. It was the 19th edition of the event on the ATP Tour and 20th on the WTA Tour.

- List of winners:**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles
Winner- Alexander Zverev (Germany)	Winner- Aryna Sabalenka (Belarus)	Winner- Horacio Zeballos (Argentina), Marcel Granollers (Spain)	Winner- Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic), Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic)
Runner-up- Matteo Berrettini (Italy)	Runner-up- Ashleigh Barty (Australia)	Runner-up- Nikola Pietrangeli (Croatia), Mate Pavić (Croatia)	Runner-up- Gabriela Dabrowski (Canada), Demi Schuurs (Netherlands)

2021 Italian Open (Tennis)

- The 2021 Italian Open (Tennis) was held in Rome, Italy from 08 May – 16 May 2021. It was the 78th edition of the Italian Open.
- List of winners:**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles
Winner- Rafael Nadal (Spain)	Winner- Iga Świątek (Poland)	Winner- Nikola Pietrangeli (Croatia), Mate Pavić (Croatia)	Winner- Sharon Fichman (Canada), Giuliana Olmos (Mexico)
Runner-up- Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Runner-up- Karolina Pliskova (Czech Republic)	Runner-up- Rajeev Ram (America), Joe Salisbury (Britain)	Runner-up- Kristina Mladenovic (France), Marketa Vondroušová (Czech Republic)

- Note:** This was Rafael Nadal's 10th Italian Open title.

Manchester City wins 2020-21 Premier League Title

- In the English Premier League, Manchester City was crowned Premier League champions for the third time in four seasons after defeating Manchester United.
- Manchester City has now won three Premier League titles and eight major trophies under Guardiola, who last year signed a new two-year contract to remain at the club until 2023.
- **About Premier League:** It, often referred to as the English Premier League (The Football Association Premier League Limited), is the top level of the English football league system.

2022 FIFA under-17 Women's World Cup to be held in India

- The 2022 FIFA under-17 Women's World Cup will be held in India from October 11 to 30, 2022.
- India was set to host the 2021 U-17 Women's World Cup before it was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Council also approved dates for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Costa Rica 2022 (10-28 August 2022), as well as the FIFA Arab Cup 2021, taking place between 19 and 25 June 2021.
- **Facts about FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association):**
Founded: 21 May 1904
Headquarters: Zurich, Switzerland
Membership: 211 national associations
President: Gianni Infantino

Obituaries

Former Attorney General Soli Sorabjee passes away

- Former Attorney General of India and renowned jurist Soli Sorabjee passed away. Serving as a legal professional for nearly seven decades, Sorabjee occupied the highest office of the attorney general of India twice – first from 1989-90 and then from 1998-2004.
- He was awarded with Padma Vibhushan.
- From 1998-2004, he was also the Chairman of the UN sub-committee on the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights.

TV journalist Rohit Sardana passes away

- Television journalist Rohit Sardana, who was an executive editor and TV news anchor with the Aaj Tak channel of the India Today Group, passed away.
Sardana was a recipient of the 2018 Ganesh Vidyarthi Puraskar Award.

Sitar Maestro Pandit Debu Chaudhuri passes away

- Pandit Devabrata (Debu) Chaudhuri performed across the world for over six decades, winning several honours, including the Padmabhushan, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his contribution in the field of music.
- He was also an educationist and author.

Former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Jagmohan passes away

- Former Union Minister and Former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Jagmohan passed away.
- A civil servant, Jagmohan also served as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and Goa. He was nominated to the Rajya Sabha once and represented New Delhi in Lok Sabha thrice.
- He was honoured with Padma Shri in 1971, Padma Bhushan in 1977 and Padma Vibhushan in 2016.

Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan passes away

- Dr. Philipose Mar Chrysostom Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan, one of India's well-known religious leaders and the oldest serving Bishop passed away at 103.
- An outstanding religious leader and a humanitarian, Dr. Philipose, was awarded the Padma Bhushan by President Ram Nath Kovind in 2018.

Chaudhary Ajit Singh, former Union Minister and RLD Chief, passes away

- Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief and former union minister Chaudhary Ajit Singh passed away.
- Ajit Singh was a seven-time Member of Parliament from Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh and served as Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Agriculture and Food Processing Industries in different governments.
- He had served in the governments of VP Singh, PV Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh.
- Ajit Singh, the son of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, began his political career as a Rajya Sabha member in 1986.

Veteran music composer Vanraj Bhatia passes away

- The 93-year-old Padma Shri awardee, who scored the music for Shyam Benegal classics like 'Ankur' and 'Bhumika' and TV series 'Yatra' and 'Bharat Ek Khoj', passed away.
- Among the awards he won the National Award for Best Music for Govind Nihalani's TV series 'Tamas' and also the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.
- He received India's fourth-highest civilian honour, the Padma Shri in 2012.

Olympian and former India hockey coach MK Kaushik passes away

- Maharaj Krishan Kaushik was a member of the India national field hockey team and coach of the Indian hockey team.
- He was a member of the team when it won the gold medal at the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow.
- In 1998, he received the Arjuna Award.
- For his coaching contribution to Indian hockey he received the Dronacharya Award in 2002.

'Iron Lady' in Kerala politics, KR Gowri Amma passes away

- Referred to as the 'Iron Lady' in Kerala politics, legendary Communist KR Gowri Amma passed away at 102.
- She was a member of the world's first democratically elected Communist government cabinet led by Communist legend E.M.S. Namboothiripad in 1957.
- In her long career she was a State Minister for 16 years in six cabinets of both the Communists and the Congress.
- She was the first revenue minister of Kerala.

Eminent Assamese writer Homen Borgohain passes away

- Eminent writer, veteran journalist, Homen Borgohain passed away.
- Homen Borgohain was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in the Assamese language for his novel Pita Putra in 1978, but he returned his Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 in protest against the lack of tolerance being created in the Indian society.
- He was the president of Asom Sahitya Sabha from 2001-2002.

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Jagannath Pahadia passes away

- Veteran Congress leader and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Jagannath Pahadia passed away at the age of 89.
- Pahadia was the Chief Minister of Rajasthan in 1980-1981 and also a former governor of Haryana and Bihar.

Former Indian Medical Association chief Dr KK Aggarwal passes away

- Former national president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and Padma Shree awardee Dr KK Aggarwal died.
- Dr Aggarwal was awarded Padma Shree in 2010. He was also awarded the Dr BC Roy award in 2005.
- He was currently president of the Heart Care Foundation of India.

Noted Tamil writer Ki Rajanarayanan passes away

- Noted Tamil writer Ki Rajanarayanan died at 98. Fondly called as KiRa, he was admired as a folklorist and father of Karisal (black soil land) Literature.
- He was a recipient of Sahitya Academy award for his novel 'Gopalapurathu Makkal' in the year 1991.
- He also served as a member of Sahitya Akademi General Council and advisory board from 1998 to 2002.

Distinguished mathematician Padma Bhushan Prof. M S Narasimhan passes away

- Prof. M S Narasimhan contributions were in the areas of Algebraic Geometry, Differential Geometry, Representation Theory of Lie groups and Partial Differential Equations.
- He was the only Indian to be awarded with the King Faisal International Prize for Science & First Chair of National Board for Higher Mathematics.
- He was the founding-Chairman of the National Board of Higher Mathematics of the Government of India.
- He is a recipient of the Srinivasa Ramanujan Medal of INSA (1988).

Times Group chairperson Indu Jain passes away

- Indu Jain has been described as a lifelong spiritual seeker, pioneering philanthropist, distinguished patron of the arts, and passionate proponent of women's rights.
- She became the chairperson of the Times Group in 1999.
- She was the founder president of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), established in 1983 to promote entrepreneurship and professional excellence among women in India.
- She received the Padma Bhushan in 2016.

Noted environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna passes away

- Environmentalist and Chipko Movement pioneer Sunderlal Bahuguna passed away at 94.
- He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 2009.
- **About Chipko Movement:** It was a forest conservation movement in India. It began in 1973 in Uttarakhand, then a part of Uttar Pradesh (at the foothills of Himalayas) and went on to become a rallying point for many future environmental movements all over the world.

India's first Dronacharya awardee coach OP Bhardwaj passes away

- India's first Dronacharya awardee coach OP Bhardwaj (Om Prakash Bhardwaj) passed away.
- In 1985, he was awarded the Dronacharya Award, India's highest award in the field of coaching of sports and athletics.
- Bhardwaj was India's national boxing coach from 1968 to 1989 and also served as a national selector.

Miscellaneous

Byju's, Jio Platforms in TIME Magazine's first-ever list of 100 most influential companies in 2021

- Reliance Industry Limited's (RIL) technology wing Jio Platforms and e-learning startup Byju's have made it to the 'TIME100 Most Influential Companies', which is a new list and an expansion of the TIME100 franchise.
- The list comprises companies across various sectors including health care, entertainment, transportation, technology and more. According to the magazine, the list has been prepared after evaluation of key factors including relevance, impact, innovation, leadership, ambition and success.
- The magazine has listed RIL's Jio Platform for "leading digital transformation" in India.
- The magazine has credited Byju's for expanding e-learning in India. The company founded by Byju Raveendran has seen a sharp rise in popularity in 2020 as demand for online learning rose in the middle of the pandemic.
- Byju's has also been credited for getting a foothold in markets outside India including the US, UK, Indonesia, Mexico, and Brazil.
- **Note:** Even in India, Byju's is aggressively expanding and recently acquired Aakash Educational Services, a leading test-prep school, for almost \$1 billion.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th Prakash Purab

- The auspicious occasion of Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th Prakash Purab was celebrated on May 1, 2021.
- He was the 9th of the 10 Gurus that founded the Sikh religion. He was also considered to be the leader of Sikhs from 1665 until his demise in 1675.
- **Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Sis Ganj Gurudwara in Delhi and offered prayers on the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Teg Bahadur.
- The gurudwara was built by Sikhs at the site where the ninth guru was beheaded by the Mughals in 1675.

Microsoft to retire Internet Explorer in 2022

- Microsoft announced that the Internet Explorer 11 desktop browser will be retired on June 15, 2022, for certain versions of Windows 10.

Key Points

- The future of Internet Explorer on Windows 10 is in Microsoft Edge.
- Internet Explorer-based websites and applications will continue to work on the new Microsoft Edge (Internet Explorer) mode until 2029.
- **Microsoft Edge** is a more secure, faster, and modern internet browser that will replace Internet Explorer on certain versions of Windows 10.
- **Internet Explorer (IE)**, launched in 1995 by Microsoft, is a series of web browsers that operate on Windows.

Vesak Global Celebrations 2021

Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a keynote address on the occasion of Vesak Global Celebrations on Buddha Purnima (VESAK - 2565th Buddha Poornima Diwas)
- **The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)** and Ministry of culture have been organising the event in a grand manner every year and are working together to promote the Teachings and philosophy of Bhagwan Buddha.

Key Points

About Buddha Purnima:

- It is celebrated to mark the birth of Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.
- It is also known as Vesak. In 1999, it became an UN-designated day, to acknowledge the contribution of Buddhism to society.

About International Buddhist Confederation (IBC):

- IBC is the biggest religious Buddhist confederation.
- In November 2011, New Delhi was host to Global Buddhist Congregation (GBC), where the attendees unanimously adopted a resolution to form the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

About Gautam Buddha:

- Gautam Buddha was born as Siddhartha Gautama in circa 563 BCE, in Lumbini and belonged to the Sakya clan.
- He attained Bodhi (enlightenment) under a pipal tree at Bodhgaya, Bihar.
- He gave his first sermon in the village of Sarnath, near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. This event is known as **Dharma Chakra Pravartana**.
- He died at the age of 80 in 483 BCE at Kushinagara, Uttar Pradesh. The event is known as **Mahaparinirvana**.

About Buddhism:

- Buddhism started in India over 2,600 years ago.
- The main teachings of Buddhism are encapsulated in the basic concept of four noble truths or ariya-sachchani and eight-fold path or ashtangika marg.

UNESCO's Heritage Sites related to Buddhism:

- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh
- Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar
- Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.
- Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya, Bihar

Mohali International Hockey stadium renamed after Balbir Singh Senior

Why in the News?

- The Mohali International Hockey Stadium was renamed after the legendary Balbir Singh

Senior on the occasion of his first death anniversary (May 25).

Key Points

- The stadium would be known as “**Olympian Balbir Singh Senior International Hockey Stadium**”.
- Balbir was part of the Indian teams that won gold at the 1948 London Olympics, Helsinki 1952 and Melbourne 1956.
- In 1957, Singh was the first sports personality to be honoured with the Padma Shri award.

Monthly Current Affair Quiz



Attempt this Monthly Current Affair Quiz
for FREE on Gradeup App

Click Here

1. **SVAMITVA** scheme will cover around how many villages across the country during 2021-2025?

- A. 6.62 Lakh Villages
- B. 5.62 Lakh Villages
- C. 4.62 Lakh Villages
- D. 3.62 Lakh Villages

2. How much is India's ambitious renewable energy target by 2030?

- A. 250 Gigawatts
- B. 350 Gigawatts
- C. 450 Gigawatts
- D. 550 Gigawatts

3. “Reaching Zero” Forum is related to which among the following?

- A. Typhoid elimination
- B. Malaria elimination
- C. Polio elimination
- D. Covid-19 elimination

4. World Intellectual Property Day is observed every year on which date?

- A. 26th July
- B. 26th June



- C. 26th May
- D. 26th April

5. VARUNA 2021, a bilateral exercise, was held from 25th to 27th April 2021 . Which two countries participated in this exercise?

- A. India and Russia
- B. India and Germany
- C. India and France
- D. India and Japan

6. Project DANTAK is related to which country?

- A. Sri Lanka
- B. Bhutan
- C. Maldives
- D. Seychelles

7. Rekha M. Menon became the first woman Chairperson of _____.

- A. NASSCOM
- B. FICCI
- C. IFFCO
- D. NABARD

8. Which country has named its first Mars rover 'Zhurong' after the traditional fire god?

- A. Japan
- B. Taiwan
- C. China
- D. Germany

9. Who among the following won the 12th Barcelona Open Title 2021?

- A. Rafael Nadal
- B. Roger Federer
- C. Novak Djokovic
- D. Daniil Medvedev

10. The annual World Day for Safety and Health at Work is observed on _____.

- A. 26th April
- B. 27th April
- C. 28th April
- D. 29th April

11. Which among the following has won Best Picture award at the 93rd Academy Awards ceremony?

- A. **The Father**
- B. Judas And The Black Messiah
- C. Minari
- D. Nomadland

12. Tejas, India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft, added the 5th generation Python-5 missile in its weapons capability. Python -5 is a _____.

- A. Air to surface missile
- B. Air to air missile
- C. Sea to air missile
- D. Air to sea missile

13. Justice Rajesh Bindal has been appointed as the acting Chief Justice of which High Court by the President?

- A. Bombay High Court
- B. Calcutta High Court
- C. Allahabad High Court
- D. None of these

14. India has been placed at which spot in the Chandler Good Government Index (CGGI) 2021?

- A. 49th
- B. 50th
- C. 51st
- D. 52nd

15. Who among the following represented India at G-7 Digital and Technology Ministerial Meeting?

- A. Narendra Modi
- B. S. Jaishankar
- C. Ravi Shankar Prasad

D. None of these

16. Who among the following has been chosen as the first Indian and Asian woman for the 2021 'WILD Innovator Award'?

- A. Krithi K Karanth
- B. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
- C. Samina Hamied
- D. Vinita Gupta

17. Ayushman Bharat Diwas is celebrated across the country every year on _____.

- A. 28th April
- B. 29th April
- C. 30th April
- D. 1st May

18. Match the following Indian sites with their respective states.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| i. Satpura Tiger Reserve | - a. Maharashtra |
| ii. Hire Benkal, Megalithic site | - b. Madhya Pradesh |
| iii. Maratha Military Architecture - | - c. Tamil Nadu |
| iv. Temples of Kanchipuram - | - d. Karnataka |

- A. i-b, ii-c, iii-a, iv-d
- B. i-c, ii-d, iii-a, iv-b
- C. i-b, ii-d, iii-a, iv-c
- D. i-c, ii-b, iii-a, iv-d

19. 2022 FIFA under-17 Women's World Cup to be held in which country?

- A. France
- B. Australia
- C. India
- D. Spain

20. Recently, who has been re-elected as the president of the International Hockey Federation (FIH)?

- A. Narinder Batra
- B. Gianni Infantino
- C. Greg Barclay
- D. Manpreet Singh

21. Sunderlal Bahuguna passed away; he was a/an.....

- A. Author
- B. Environmentalist
- C. Scientist
- D. Singer

22. Which country has unveiled its most powerful supercomputer 'Simorgh'?

- A. Israel
- B. Iran
- C. Afghanistan
- D. Singapore

23. Who has appointed as Kenya's first woman chief justice?

- A. Nyiva Mwendwa
- B. Njoki Susanna Ndung'u
- C. Philomena Mbete Mwilu
- D. Martha Koome

24. Recently, Israel and India have signed 'a three-year work program agreement' for development in which sector?

- A. Information Technology
- B. Agriculture
- C. Defence
- D. Renewable energy

25. Which of the following statements is not correct regarding the recently launched the first phase of the MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0)?

- A. In **MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0)**, MCA stands for Master of Computer Application.
- B. MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0) has been part of Mission Mode projects of the

Government of India.

- C. The second and final phase shall be launched from October 2021 onwards.
- D. It will help in improving Ease of Doing Business in India.

26. Which state government has announced 'Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana' for orphaned children who have lost their parents due to COVID-19?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Uttarakhand
- C. Rajasthan
- D. Bihar

27. One of the world's largest dairy product programmes 'Operation flood' launched in which year?

- A. 1970
- B. 1971
- C. 1972
- D. 1973

28. Who was elected to the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Council member for a four-year period till 2025?

- A. Himanta Biswa Sarma
- B. Siddharth Singh Longjam
- C. Pema Khandu
- D. Narinder Dhruv Batra

29. Which body to partner with TRIFED to implement Van Dhan Yojana in districts identified as aspirational districts?

- A. NABARD
- B. NITI Aayog
- C. FICCI
- D. SIDBI

30. Who has been appointed as the new Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)?

- A. Punit Goenka
- B. Satheesh Reddy
- C. Subodh Kumar Jaiswal
- D. Samant Kumar Goel

31. Who is the author of the book 'India and Asian Geopolitics: The Past, Present'?

- A. Shashi Tharoor
- B. Sanjaya Baru
- C. Amitav Ghosh
- D. Shivshankar Menon

32. Which ministry has decided to set up a National Mission on use of Biomass in coal based thermal power plants?

- A. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- B. Ministry of Power
- C. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- D. Ministry of Coal

33. What is the new name of the Mohali International Hockey Stadium?

- A. Om Prakash Bhardwaj International Hockey Stadium
- B. Dhanraj Pillay International Hockey Stadium
- C. Olympian Balbir Singh Senior International Hockey Stadium
- D. Major Dhyan Chand International Hockey Stadium

34. What amount did India receive in 2020 in the form of remittances as per World Bank report?

- A. USD 55 billion
- B. USD 83 billion
- C. USD 63 billion
- D. USD 76 billion

35. Recently, the Government of India's SWAMIH completed its first residential project. What is the full form of SWAMIH?

- A. Special Window for Accurate & Mid-Income Housing
- B. Special Window for Affordable & Major-Income Housing
- C. Special Window for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing
- D. Special Work for Affordable & Mid-Income Housing

36. Which is the first Indian state to join the global COVAX alliance?

- A. Uttar Pradesh

- B. Maharashtra
- C. Kerala
- D. Punjab

37. Recently, Malerkotla was announced as the 23rd district of which state?

- A. Madhya Pradesh
- B. Karnataka
- C. Punjab
- D. Haryana

38. Who has been appointed as the new Chief at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)?

- A. Achim Steiner
- B. Inger Andersen
- C. Martin Griffiths
- D. Audrey Azoulay

39. Who has won the Miss Universe title for the year 2020?

- A. Julia Gama
- B. Andrea Meza
- C. Janick Maceta
- D. Adline Castelino

40. Which country's Prime Minister has topped Fortune's list of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders 2021?

- A. India
- B. New Zealand
- C. Australia
- D. UK

41. What is the theme of UN Global Road Safety Week (UNGRSW) 2021?

- A. Streets for World 2021
- B. Streets for Walk #Love60
- C. Streets for Life #Love30
- D. Streets for Happiness #Love60

42. When is International Museum Day observed?

- A. May 17
- B. May 18
- C. May 13
- D. May 11

43. Who has been conferred with 'International Invincible Gold Medal' 2021?

- A. Harsh Vardhan
- B. Piyush Goyal
- C. Nirmala Sitharaman
- D. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

44. Who has won the Men's Singles Italian Open Title 2021?

- A. Rafael Nadal
- B. Alexander Zverev
- C. Horacio Zeballos
- D. Novak Djokovic

45. Who has won the Women's Singles Italian Open Title 2021?

- A. Karolina Pliskova
- B. Barbora Krejckikova
- C. Iga Swiatek
- D. Aryna Sabalenka

46. Indian Airline company GoAir has been renamed as.....

- A. Go World
- B. Go India
- C. Go Fly
- D. Go First

47. Recently Padma Shree awardee and former national president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) passed away. Name him/her?

- A. Dr. Indira Hinduja
- B. Dr. Deepak Chopra
- C. Dr. K.K. Aggarwal
- D. Dr. K.C. Gupta

48. **Which of the following kit has been approved by ICMR for the purpose of home testing for symptomatic patients (COVID-19)?**

- A. CoviWin
- B. CoviIndia
- C. CoviTest
- D. CoviSelf

49. Recently, who took oath as the Chief Minister of Kerala for second term?

- A. Pinarayi Vijayan
- B. M K Stalin
- C. Oommen Chandy
- D. Himanta Biswa Sarma

50. **When is World Thalassaemia Day observed?**

- A. May 8
- B. May 7
- C. March 8
- D. April 8

51. Recently N. Rangasamy was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of which state?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. **Assam**
- C. Puducherry
- D. West Bengal

52. An anti-COVID-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) has been developed by.....

- A. DRDO
- B. Bharat Biotech
- C. ICMR
- D. Serum Institute of India

53. **Who has been named 'World Sportswoman of the Year Award' at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2021?**

- A. Mary Kom
- B. Serena Williams
- C. Naomi Osaka

D. Simona Halep

54. Recently Dronacharya awardee Maharaj Krishan Kaushik passed away. He was associated with.....

- A. Football
- B. Hockey
- C. Badminton
- D. Wrestling

55. Recently Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of which state?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Assam
- C. Puducherry
- D. West Bengal

56. 3rd Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting (ASM3) 2021 was organized by.....

- A. India and Iceland
- B. Japan and India
- C. Japan and Iceland
- D. Japan and Germany

57. **Who won the Men's Singles Madrid Open Title 2021?**

- A. Matteo Berrettini
- B. Alexander Zverev
- C. Horacio Zeballos
- D. Marcel Granollers

58. **Who won the Women's Singles Madrid Open Title 2021?**

- A. Aryna Sabalenka
- B. Barbora Krejčíková
- C. Ashleigh Barty
- D. Katerina Siniakova

59. Which organization has been conferred the prestigious "Green Urja Award" 2021?

- A. HAL

- B. **GAIL**
C. IREDA
D. NTPC

60. Who recently became the first person of Indian-origin to win the 15th Sheikh Zayed Book Award?

- A. Iman Mersal
B. Tahera Qutbuddin
C. Mizouni Bannani
D. Iman Mersal



Attempt this Monthly Current Affair Quiz
for FREE on Gradeup App

[Click Here](#)

###ANSWERS###

1. Ans. A.	16. Ans. A.	31. Ans. D.	46. Ans. D.
2. Ans. C.	17. Ans. C.	32. Ans. B.	47. Ans. C.
3. Ans. B.	18. Ans. C.	33. Ans. C.	48. Ans. D.
4. Ans. D.	19. Ans. C.	34. Ans. B.	49. Ans. A.
5. Ans. C.	20. Ans. A.	35. Ans. C.	50. Ans. A.
6. Ans. B.	21. Ans. B.	36. Ans. D.	51. Ans. C.
7. Ans. A.	22. Ans. B.	37. Ans. C.	52. Ans. A.
8. Ans. C.	23. Ans. D.	38. Ans. C.	53. Ans. C.
9. Ans. A.	24. Ans. B.	39. Ans. B.	54. Ans. B.
10. Ans. C.	25. Ans. A.	40. Ans. B.	55. Ans. B.
11. Ans. D.	26. Ans. B.	41. Ans. C.	56. Ans. C.
12. Ans. B.	27. Ans. A.	42. Ans. B.	57. Ans. B.



13. Ans. B.	28. Ans. A.	43. Ans. D.	58. Ans. A.
14. Ans. A.	29. Ans. B.	44. Ans. A.	59. Ans. C.
15. Ans. C.	30. Ans. C.	45. Ans. C.	60. Ans. B.

Gradeup



Why

Gradeup Super Subscription?



With Gradeup Super you get

- Structured Live Courses with the daily study plan
- Full syllabus coverage of Exam with live classes,
- Study notes and interactive quizzes.
- Get mock tests of different exams for better preparation
- Prepare with India's best Faculty with a proven track record
- Complete Doubt Resolution by Mentors and Experts
- Performance analysis and Report card to track improvement



www.gradeup.co