

## Weekly Current Affairs 19<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> July 2021 साप्ताहिक करंट अफेयर्स 19-23 जुलाई 2021

### Important News: State

#### Maharashtra to be first state to issue educational documents using blockchain technology

##### Why in News

- Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology.
- **India became the 4<sup>th</sup> Country** to roll out blockchain-powered educational documents after **Singapore, Malta and Bahrain.**

##### Key Points

- Maharashtra's Skill Development Minister informed that one million diploma certificates will be issued using this technology.
- This technology will be provided by **LegitDoc.**

##### About LegitDoc:

- LegitDoc is the flagship product of Crossforge Solutions, a Bangalore-based technology company specializing in blockchain DApp development.
- LegitDoc is an Ethereum-based software application for issuing and verifying tamper-proof digital documents.

##### About Blockchain:

- Blockchain is a system of recording information in a way that makes it difficult or impossible to change, hack, or cheat the system.

Source: Business Standard

#### Gujarat HC became the first high court in the country to start live streaming of court proceedings

##### Why in News

- The **High Court of Gujarat** became the first high court in the country to start live streaming of court proceedings.

##### Key Points

- **Chief Justice of India NV Ramana** inaugurated the live streaming of the Gujarat High Court proceedings.
- The chief justice also released **"The High Court of Gujarat (Live Streaming of Court Proceedings) Rules, 2021"**.

##### About High Court of Gujarat:

- It was established on 1 May 1960 under the Bombay Re-organisation Act, 1960 after the state of Gujarat split from Bombay State.
- **Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court: Vikram Nath**

Source: TOI



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### **‘Common High Court of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh’ changed to ‘High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh’**

- Long-winding and cumbersome' nomenclature '**Common High Court of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh'** has been changed to '**High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh'**.
- The order was notified by the Department of Justice in the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **President Ram Nath Kovind** has signed the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2021**, to effect the change.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Manduadih railway station renamed as Banaras**

#### **Why in News**

- The Manduadih railway station has been finally renamed as Banaras by the North eastern railways (NER).

#### **Key Points**

- The formal renaming of Manduadih railway station as Banaras Railway Station was done on September 16, 2020 in view of the NOC given by the Ministry of Home Affairs on March 31, 2020.

**Note:** Recently, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **International Cooperation and Convention Centre “Rudraksh”** in **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.

**Source: TOI**

### **Eight new routes launched to boost regional aerial connectivity**

#### **Why in News**

- Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya Scindia along with Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh flagged off 8 new routes bolstering the aerial connectivity from **Madhya Pradesh to Maharashtra & Gujarat**.

#### **Key Points**

- The airlines SpiceJet will commence operations on these 8 new routes: Gwalior-Mumbai-Gwalior, Gwalior-Pune-Gwalior, Jabalpur-Surat-Jabalpur, and Ahmedabad-Gwalior-Ahmedabad route.
- Gwalior is one of the first airports of Madhya Pradesh to be connected with the UDAN route.
- Inauguration of these routes achieves the aim of the **Sab Uden Sab Juden initiative under the UDAN scheme** to strengthen the established aerial network of the country.

#### **About UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) Scheme:**

- **RCS-UDAN** is a Government of India's flagship program which aims to provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes.



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- **RCS (Regional Connectivity Scheme)** offers a unique opportunity to a common man to fly at an affordable price.
- The UDAN Scheme is a key component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)** which was released by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (India) on 15 June 2016.
- **Note:** Earlier this month, under the UDAN scheme, Indigo airlines started another flight to connect Kolkata, West Bengal & Imphal, Manipur with Dibrugarh, Assam.
- To date, 359 routes and 59 airports including 5 heliports and 2 Water Aerodromes have been operationalized under the UDAN scheme.

Source: PIB

### India's first 'Grain ATM' in Haryana

#### Why in News

- Haryana Government has recently set up its first **ATM machine 'Annapurti'** for dispensing **food grains** at Farrukhnagar in Gurugram, which will provide three types of grains — wheat, rice, and millet.
- This machine is installed under the "**World Food Programme**" of the **United Nations**, and is called Automated, Multi Commodity, Grain Dispensing Machine.

#### Key Points

- The purpose of this ATM is to make the distributions of grains at government-run ration shops easy and hassle-free.
- Each machine can dispense up to 70 kg of grains within five to seven minutes, at a time.
- It's an automatic machine; hence the scope of error in the measurement of grains is negligible.
- The machine has a biometric system with a touch-screen, where the beneficiaries have to enter their Aadhaar or ration card number to get their grains.

Source: TOI

## Important News: India

### Government formalises registration process of Vintage Motor Vehicles

#### Why in News

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended **Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR) 1989**, formalising the registration process of vintage motor vehicles.
- This is aimed at preserving and promoting the heritage of old vehicles in India.

#### Key Points

#### About Vintage Motor Vehicles:



- The draft rules define vintage motor vehicles as all those vehicles that are two-wheelers and four-wheelers and are more than 50 years old from the date of their first registration (including imported vehicle).
- Vintage motor vehicles shall not be driven on roads for regular/commercial purposes.

**Source: Economictimes**

## **Geospatial Technologies for the Water Sector in India**

### **Why in News**

- **Rajeev Ranjan Mishra, Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga** released a detailed report on the opportunities created by the use of geospatial technology in the water sector.
- **The Association of Geospatial Industries** – a geospatial technology industry body, has prepared this report titled, **“Potential of Geospatial Technologies for the Water Sector in India”**.
- Given the population density and requirement of water for agriculture, India is heavily dependent on groundwater and is one of the worst hit countries as far as the water crisis is concerned.

### **Key Points**

#### **Findings of the Report:**

- Outlining key water sector programmes and projects in the country, the report provides an overview of how each of these programmes is currently using geospatial technologies, and how to improve technology adoption in the future.
- As per the report a plethora of Geospatial and Digital technologies, like Satellite based Remote Sensing, Surveying and Mapping, GPS based equipment and sensors, GIS and Spatial Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Internet of Things, 5G, Robotics and Digital Twin, can be effectively used to combat the water crisis.

#### **Water Projects in India:**

- National River Linking Project
- Jal Jeevan Mission
- Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project
- Namami Gange Mission
- National Hydrology Programme
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana
- Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)
- National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme
- River Basin Management
- National Water Mission
- Atal Bhujal Yojana

#### **About Geospatial Technology:**

- It is a term used to describe the range of modern tools contributing to the geographic mapping and analysis of the Earth and human societies.



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- It can also be defined as a technology used to collect, analyze, and store geographic information.

**Most common geospatial technologies:**

- Remote Sensing
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Internet Mapping Technologies

**Source: PIB**

**Cabinet approves Extension of term of the Commission constituted to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within Other Backward Classes in the Central List**

**Why in News**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the **11<sup>th</sup> Extension** of the term of the Commission constituted under **Article 340** of the Constitution to examine the issue of Sub-categorization within **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** in the Central List by 6 months beyond 31st July 2021 and upto 31st January 2022.

**Key Points**

**Benefit**

- The proposed extension of tenure and addition in its terms of reference shall enable the “Commission” to submit a comprehensive report on the issue of sub-categorization of OBCs, after consultation with various stakeholders.

**Commission (Rohini Commission):**

- The Commission was constituted under article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of the President on 2nd October, 2017.
- The commission is headed by retired Delhi High Court Chief Justice Smt. G Rohini.
- It was set up to examine the possibility of creating categories within OBCs for the reservation to ensure “equitable distribution” of representation among all OBC communities.

**Note:**

- Currently, OBCs are granted 27% reservation in government jobs and educational institutes.
- There are 2,633 Other Backward Castes in the Central List and earlier this year the commission proposed to divide them into four subcategories numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 and split the 27% into 2, 6, 9 and 10%, respectively.
- The commission had also recommended complete digitisation of all OBC records and a standardised system of issuing OBC certificates.

**Article 340 of the Indian Constitution:**

- The President can appoint a commission through an order to inquire into the conditions of the **socially and educationally backward classes** and to make recommendations regarding the improvement of their conditions.

**Note:** The **First Backward Classes Commission** was set up by a presidential order on 29 January 1953 under the **chairmanship of Kaka Kalelkar**. It is also known as the **First Backward Classes Commission, 1955** or the **Kaka Kalelkar Commission**.



**Source: PIB**

## Indian Labour Conference

### Why in News

- Recently, the **Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (Labour Union)** wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to convene the **Indian Labour Conference (ILC)**.
- India also has a legal obligation to hold the ILC since the Indian Parliament has ratified **Convention No. 144 of the International Labour Organization (ILO)** related to strengthening the tripartite mechanism.

### Key Points

#### About Indian Labour Conference (ILC):

- It is the apex level tripartite consultative committee in the Ministry of Labour & Employment.
- It suggests the Government on the issues concerning the working class of the country.
- **Members:** Central Trade Union Organisations, Central Organisations of employers, all State Governments and Union Territories and Central Ministries/Departments concerned with the agenda, are the members of the ILC.
- The **first meeting** of the ILC (then called Tripartite National Labour Conference) was held in 1942 and so far a total of 46 Sessions have been held.
- The most recent session of Indian Labour Conference was held in 2015.

#### Some Government Initiatives for the Working Class:

- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
- New Labour Codes, 2020
- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Yojana
- National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons

#### About ILO Convention No. 144:

- The Convention on Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards), 1976 (No.144) , promotes the application of a founding principle of the ILO: bringing together governments, employers and workers through tripartite social dialogue to develop, implement and promote international labour standards.

#### About International Labour Organization (ILO):

- It is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labour standards.

**Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland

**Director-General;** Guy Ryder

**Formation:** 11 April 1919

- The ILO has **187 state members**.
- **India** is a founder member of the ILO.

**Source: The Hindu**



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## Indian Institute of Heritage

### Why in News

- The central government has decided to set up the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar (Uttar Pradesh).
- Indian Institute of Heritage will be a world-class university that would focus on the conservation and research in India's rich tangible heritage.

### Key Points

#### About 'Indian Institute of Heritage':

- The Institute is being set up as Deemed to be University.
- **Note:** Presently, there are **38 World Heritage Sites located in India**. India has the 6<sup>th</sup> 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**.
- Presently, a total of **1,121 World Heritage Sites (869 cultural, 213 natural, and 39 mixed)** exist across 167 countries. With 55 selected areas, China and Italy are the countries with the most sites on the list.

Source: PIB

## AI-powered Grievance Management Application

### Why in News

- **Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister** launched an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered Grievance Management Application**.
- The web-based application has been jointly developed by the **Ministry of Defence, DARPG (Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances) and IIT Kanpur**.

### Key Points

- This project is the first of its kind initiative of the Government for using AI, data science and Machine Learning techniques in grievance redressal.
- This AI-powered application will automatically handle and analyse the complaints of the people and would reduce human intervention, save time and bring more transparency in their disposal.
- It enables geographical analysis of complaints in a category including analysis of whether the complaint was adequately addressed or not by the concerned office.

### Note:

- Recently, the Chief Justice of India launched the **Artificial Intelligence (AI) portal, Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency (SUPACE)**. SUPACE, designed to make research easier for judges, thereby easing their workload.
- **AI (Artificial intelligence)** means the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think like humans and mimic their actions.

Source: PIB

## Digital Platform 'Kisan Sarathi'

### Why in News



- ‘Kisan Sarathi’, a digital platform, was launched jointly by the **Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** with the **Minister for Electronics and Information Technology**.
- It was launched on the occasion of 93<sup>rd</sup> **Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR)** Foundation Day.

#### **Key Points**

- **Digital Platform Kisan Sarathi** facilitates farmers to get ‘**right information at right time**’ in their desired language.
- This digital platform will empower farmers with the technological interventions to reach farmers in remote areas.
- It will help the farmers to interact and avail personalised advisories on agriculture and allied areas directly from the respective scientists of **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs)**.
- It will be highly valuable in Agricultural Extension, Education and Research activities of ICAR.

#### **About Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR):**

- ICAR is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- It was established on 16 July 1929.
- The ICAR has its headquarters at New Delhi.
- It is the apex body for co-ordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences.

#### **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK):**

- Krishi Vigyan Kendra is an agricultural extension center in India.
- Usually associated with a local agricultural university, these centers serve as the ultimate link between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and farmers, and aim to apply agricultural research in a practical, localized setting.
- As of May 2021, there were approximately 722 KVKs throughout India.
- The **first Krishi Vigyan Kendra** was established in 1974 in Pondicherry.

#### **Other Related Initiatives:**

- Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana
- National Agriculture Market (eNAM)
- Soil health card

**Source: PIB**

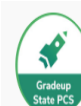
### **Ministry of Electronics & IT enables map services in “UMANG App”**

#### **Why in News**

- The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology has enabled map services in **UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) mobile app** through a MoU with **MapmyIndia**.



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### Key Points

- Citizens will be able to find government facilities nearest to their location, such as mandis, blood banks and much more, at the click of a button.
- They will also be able to see these on the most detailed and interactive street and village level maps of India, built by MapmyIndia.
- Citizens will also be able to view the driving distance, get directions and turn by turn voice and visual guidance to locations, including traffic and road safety alerts during navigation, through the linkage between UMANG App and MapmyIndia.

### About UMANG mobile app (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance):

- The **UMANG** is a Government of India single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app, providing access to high impact services of various organizations (Central and State).
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** had launched the **UMANG App in 2017**.

**Note:** The international version of UMANG was launched in 2020. It will help Indian international students, NRIs and Indian tourists abroad, to avail Government of India services, anytime.

### About mapMyIndia:

- MapmyIndia, is a product of an indigenous, company founded and headquartered in New Delhi, India, in 1995, which has digitally mapped the entire country.
- It helps users find relevant places nearby and see them on detailed building level maps.

Source: PIB

### School Innovation Ambassador Training Program

#### Why in News

- The **Union Education Minister** and **Tribal Affairs Minister** jointly launched the ‘**School Innovation Ambassador Training Program**’ (SIATP).
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched an **Adi-Prashikshan portal** which is also a repository of training inputs.

#### Key Points

#### About Training Program:

- The innovative and one-of-its-kind training program for school teachers, it aims at training 50,000 School Teachers on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, IPR, Design Thinking, Product development, Idea generation, among others.
- The training will be delivered in online mode only.
- The program has been **designed** by the **Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education and AICTE** for school Teachers based on its “Innovation Ambassador Training Program for Higher Educational Institution’s faculty members”.

- This training program is a collaborative effort by the **Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, AICTE and CBSE.**

**Benefits:**

- 'SIATP' will nurture lakhs of students with innovation capabilities, develop a culture of innovation and lay the foundation of a new and vibrant India.
- The students of **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** will greatly benefit from SIATP since it is also the endeavour of the Tribal Affairs Ministry to give the best possible education to the tribal children.
- **EMRS** for tribal children is another ambitious programme of the Prime Minister under which 740 EMRS will be established in tribal dominated areas over the next three years.

**Other Important Related Initiatives:**

- New Education Policy, 2020
- Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA)
- Samagra Siksha
- National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA)
- **About All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE):** It is a statutory body, and a national-level council for technical education, under the Department of Higher Education.

**Founded:** November 1945

**Headquarters:** New Delhi

**Chairperson:** Anil Sahasrabudhe

**Source:** PIB

## Important News: World

### US, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan to form QUAD group

**Why in News**

- According to the Biden administration, the **United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan**, have agreed in principle to establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform focused on enhancing regional connectivity.

**Key Points**

- The parties consider long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan critical to regional connectivity and agree that peace and regional connectivity are mutually reinforcing.
- The parties intend to cooperate to expand trade, build transit links, and strengthen business-to-business ties to recognise the historic opportunity to open interregional trade routes.

**Note:**



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- Afghanistan, which is in the centre of the historic Silk Road, has long served as a crossroads for trade between Asian countries, linking them to Europe and establishing religious, cultural, and commercial ties.
- The establishment of the new quad group is critical given **China's** intention to expand its **Belt Road Initiative (BRI)** to Afghanistan.
- The **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)** intends to create a network of land and maritime connections connecting Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf area, Africa, and Europe.
- Afghanistan can serve as a strategic platform for China to spread its influence over the world due to its geographic location.

Source: **Economictimes**

## Important News: Health

### National Health Mission (NHM)

#### Why in News

- The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare informed the Rajya Sabha about Health Sector Reforms through **National Health Mission (NHM)**.
- NHM supported health system reforms have resulted in development of resilient health systems.

#### Key Points

##### About National Health Mission (NHM):

- NHM was launched by the Government of India in 2013 subsuming the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) (launched in 2005) and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) (launched in 2013).
- **NHM support** is provided to States/ UTs for setting up of new facilities as per norms and upgradation of existing facilities for bridging the infrastructure gaps based on the requirement posed by them.
- **NHM support** is also provided for provision of a range of free services related to maternal health, child health, family planning, adolescent health, universal immunization programme, and for major diseases such as Tuberculosis, vector borne diseases like Dengue, Malaria and Leprosy etc.

##### Other major initiatives supported under NHM:

- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram
- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram
- Implementation of Free Drugs and Free Diagnostics Service Initiatives
- PM National Dialysis Programme
- Implementation of National Quality Assurance Framework (in all public health facilities)
- Mobile Medical Units & Tele-consultation services (implemented to improve access to healthcare particularly in rural areas)
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana
- Ayushman Bharat



### Achievements of NHM

- In the 15 years of implementation, the NHM has enabled achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for health.
- It has also led to significant improvements in maternal, new-born, and child health indicators.
- **Equitable development:** There was also a sustained focus on the health of tribal populations, those in Left Wing Extremism areas, and the urban poor.
- **Growth in Public Health Facilities:** NHM adopts a health system approach and targets to build a network for public health facilities with Health & Wellness Centers.
- **National Ambulance Services**
- **Human Resource Augmentation:** NHM supports states for engaging of service delivery HR such as doctors, nurses and health workers and also implements the world's largest community health volunteer programme through the ASHAs.
- **High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** Recognising the need for reducing the current high levels OOPE, and that, almost 70% of the OOPE is on account of drugs and diagnostics, the Free Drugs and Free Diagnostics Services Initiatives have been implemented under the NHM.

Source: PIB

### Punjab becomes first state in country to introduce SOHUM (AABR)

#### Why in News

- Punjab Government introduced **SOHUM-Automated Auditory Brainstem Response system (AABR)** under **Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programme**.
- Punjab is the first state in the country to introduce SOHUM (AABR).

#### Key Points

- This initiative will effectively screen hearing loss in newborn and young children.
- This device will certainly help in effective assessment and further management of hearing loss in a timely manner.

#### Note:

- In a developing country like India 5-6 per thousand children are born with this defect.
- Around 63 million people are suffering from hearing impairment and related diseases in India.

#### About SOHUM:

- It is an indigenously developed newborn hearing screening device developed by the **School of International Biodesign start-up SOHUM Innovation Labs India Pvt. Ltd.**
- It was developed under the **Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology.**

Source: TOI

## Children of Midday Meal Scheme beneficiaries show better growth: Study

### Why in News

- According to a new study, the school children of beneficiaries are benefiting from the national school meal programme in India.
- The study, which was recently published in journal **Nature Communications**, is titled '**Intergenerational nutrition benefits of India's national school feeding program**'.
- It has been co-authored by **University of Washington's** Suman Chakrabarti and **International Food Policy Research Institute's** Samuel Scott, Harold Alderman, Purnima Menon and Daniel Gilligan.

### Key Points

#### Findings of the study:

- The study used nationally representative data on mothers and their children from 1993 to 2016 to assess whether mid-day meals support intergenerational improvements in a child's linear growth.
- Women who received free meals in primary school have children with improved linear growth.
- The study found that the 14 states which rolled out mid-day meals in the late 1990s experienced improvements in child height earlier than the rest of the nation.
- School meals may contribute to education, later fertility decisions, and access to health care, reducing the risk of undernutrition in the next generation.

#### About Midday Meal Scheme:

- The Midday Meal Scheme was launched as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** in **1995** to provide free cooked meals to children in government and government-aided primary schools (classes I–V; ages 6–10 years).
- Again, the scheme was extended to children studying in upper primary classes.
- The Midday Meal Scheme is a school meal programme in India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide.
- The State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee oversees the implementation of the scheme.
- The Midday Meal Scheme is covered by the **National Food Security Act, 2013**.
- Tamil Nadu was the first state to introduce this scheme.

#### Global Hunger Index 2020:

- India ranked 94 among 107 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2020 and is in the 'serious' hunger category.

#### Global Nutrition Report-2020:

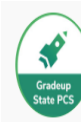
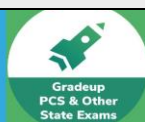
- India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025.

Source: The Hindu

## Important News: Economy



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## Stand Up India Scheme extended up to the year 2025

### Why in News

- The Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance informed that the Stand Up India Scheme has been extended up to the year 2025.

### Key Points

#### About Stand Up India Scheme:

- The Scheme was launched by the Prime Minister on 05<sup>th</sup> April, 2016.

#### Objective and Nature of Loan:

- The objective of this Scheme is to facilitate loans from Scheduled Commercial Banks of value between Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 Crore to at least one Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a green field enterprise.
- This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services, agri-allied activities or the trading sector.
- In case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or Woman Entrepreneur.
- The offices of SIDBI and NABARD are designated Stand-Up Connect Centres (SUCC).

#### Recent Changes:

- For F.Y.2021-22, the margin money requirement for loans under the Scheme has been reduced from 'upto 25%' to 'upto 15%' and activities allied to agriculture have been included in the Scheme.

#### Performance:

- As on 28.06.2021, a total of 1,16,266 loans amounting to Rs. 26204.49 crore have been extended under the Scheme since inception.

Source: PIB

## India emerges as 5th largest forex reserves holder in the world

### Why in News

- **India** has emerged as **5th largest forex reserves holder** in the world with **\$608.99 billion** as on June 25, 2021 after **China, Japan, Switzerland and Russia**.
- This was stated by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary in the Lok Sabha on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.

### Key Points

- Government and RBI are closely monitoring the emerging external position calibrating policies or regulations to support robust macroeconomic growth.
- RBI takes regular steps for diversification of forex reserves by scaling up operations in forex swap and repo markets, acquisition of gold and exploring new markets/products, while adhering to safety and liquidity standards.
- **Note:** In 2020-21, India's balance of payments recorded surplus in both current account and capital account which contributed to the increase in foreign exchange reserves during the year.
- **Foreign-exchange reserves (Forex reserves):** Foreign exchange reserves are cash and other reserve assets such as gold held by a central bank or other



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monetary authority that are primarily available to balance payments of the country.

- **4 things make up Forex:** Foreign Currency, Gold, Reserve Tranche (in IMF), Special Drawing Rights

**Source: PIB**

## Important News: Defense

### DRDO successfully flight-tests surface-to-air missile Akash-NG

#### Why in News

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested the New Generation Akash Missile (Akash-NG), a surface-to-air Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.

#### Key Points

- The missile has been developed by Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.
- During the test, the missile demonstrated high manoeuvrability required for neutralising fast and agile aerial threats.

**Source: PIB**

### Tri Nation Table Top Naval Exercise 'Shield'

#### Why in News

- A Tri Nation Table Top Anti-Narcotics & Maritime Search and Rescue exercise (**Exercise Shield**) between **Sri Lanka Navy, Maldives National Defence Force** and **Indian Navy** was conducted at WNC, Mumbai in virtual mode for the first time on 14 and 15 Jul 2021 with Indian Navy as the lead agency.
- The exercise was coordinated by Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai.

#### Key Points

- Anti-Narcotic Operations and Maritime Search and Rescue are the important issues that were deliberated by the participants who share a unique geographic location, sitting astride the major shipping routes of the Indian Ocean Region.
- The exercise was focused at enhancing maritime security cooperation and mutual understanding, exchange of best practices/procedures for countering common trans-national maritime crimes such as narcotics smuggling, evolving modalities for exchanging information/intelligence and to assist each other in Maritime Search and Rescue.

#### Note:

- In April the Navy had recovered over 300 kg of narcotics from a fishing vessel in the Arabian Sea estimated to cost ₹3,000 crore in the international market.



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- The Navy had then stated that it was a major catch in terms of disrupting smuggling routes, which emanate from the Makran coast and flow towards the Indian, Maldivian and Sri Lankan destinations.

**Source: The Hindu**

## Environment

### Two Indian organisations win the UNDP Equator Prize 2021

#### Why in News

- Two Indian organisations bag the prestigious UNDP Equator Prize 2021, for their exceptional achievement in showcasing local, innovative, nature-based solutions for tackling biodiversity loss and climate change.

#### Key Points

- The **two organizations from India** out of the ten winners globally are— **Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited** and **Snehakunja Trust**.
- They will each receive a prize of US\$10,000 and the opportunity to join a series of special virtual events associated with the UN General Assembly, the Nature for Life Hub and the UN Food Systems Summit later this year.

#### About Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited:

- This 1,700-member cooperative, managed and run entirely by Indigenous people from the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in Southern India, has improved livelihoods across 147 villages by processing and marketing a diverse range of forest produce and crops.

#### About Snehakunja Trust:

- Snehakunja Trust has protected sensitive wetland and coastal ecosystems in the Western Ghats and the Karnataka coast for 45 years. Snehakunja Trust is currently piloting the **first blue carbon project** in India.

#### About Equator Prize:

- The Equator Prize, organized by the Equator Initiative within the United Nations Development Programme, is awarded biennially to recognize outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

**Source: undp.org**

## Awards and Honours

### Government of India launches National Logistics Excellence Awards

#### Why in News

- The **National Logistics Excellence Awards** are in **two categories**; the **first** includes **logistics infrastructure/service providers** and **second** is for **various user industries**.
- Awards will give due recognition to various players involved in the logistics supply chain.



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## Key Points

### About the Awards:

- Through these awards, the government aims to turn the spotlight on **logistics service providers** who have attained operational excellence, adopted digitisation and technology, improved customer service and pursued sustainable practices, among other achievements.
- For **user industries**, the awards will showcase efforts towards supply chain transformation, supplier ecosystem development, skill development, automation, and other similar endeavours.

### Note:

- While the Indian logistics sector has been growing at a CAGR of 10.5%, reaching approximately USD 215 billion in value in 2020, there are systemic, interconnected problems that must be addressed to enhance its efficiency.
- Comprehensive logistics costs amount to almost 14% of India's GDP. Closing India's competitiveness gap vis-à-vis the global average of 8 percent, would make the Indian logistics sector advanced, organised and efficient, on par with global peers with the ambition of being amongst the top 25 countries in the global Logistics Performance Index (LPI).

### Source: PIB

### Cannes Film Festival 2021

- The 74th Cannes Film Festival was held in Cannes, France.
- American director & Screenwriter Spike Lee was the Jury President of Cannes Film Festival 2021

### The list of main winners:

- **Palme d'Or:** Julia Ducournau for "Titane" (France)
- **Grand Prix:** Ashgar Farhadi for "A Hero" (Iran) and Juho Kuosmanen for "Compartment No.6" (Finland)
- **Best director:** Leos Carax for "Annette" (France)
- **Best actor:** Caleb Landry Jones for "Nitram" (US)
- **Best actress:** Renate Reinsve for "Worst Person in the World" (Norway)
- **Jury prize:** Nadav Lapid for "Ahed's Knee" (Israel) and Apichatpong Weerasethakul for "Memoria" (Thailand)
- **Best screenplay:** Hamaguchi Ryusuke and Takamasa Oe for "Drive My Car" (Japan)

**Note: Mumbai-based filmmaker Payal Kapadia** won the L'Oeil d'Or: Le Prix du documentaire, an award for best documentary, at the Cannes Film Festival for her film **A Night of Knowing Nothing**.

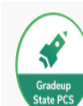
### About Cannes Film Festival:

- The Cannes Film Festival is an annual film festival held in Cannes, France which previews new films of all genres, including documentaries, from all around the world. It was founded in 1946.
- The two major awards are Palme d'Or and Grand Prix.

### Source: TOI



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## Reports

### State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 report

#### Why in News

- **State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021** report presents the first global assessment of food insecurity and malnutrition for 2020 and offers some indication of what hunger might look like by 2030 in a scenario further complicated by the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The report is an annual flagship report jointly prepared by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), UNICEF, WFP (World Food Programme) and WHO (World Health Organization).

#### Key Points

- It informs on progress towards ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition and to provide in depth analysis on key challenges for achieving this goal in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

#### Findings of the report:

- In terms of population, it is estimated that between 720 and 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020. Considering the middle of the projected range (768 million), 118 million more people were facing hunger in 2020 than in 2019, with estimates ranging from 70 to 161 million.
- Of the total number of undernourished people in 2020 (768 million), more than half (418 million) live in Asia and more than one-third (282 million) in Africa, while Latin America and the Caribbean accounts for about 8 percent (60 million).
- After remaining virtually unchanged from 2014 to 2019, the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) increased from 8.4 percent to around 9.9 percent between 2019 and 2020, heightening the challenge of achieving the Zero Hunger target in 2030.
- Moderate or severe food insecurity (based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale) at the global level has been slowly on the rise, from 22.6 percent in 2014 to 26.6 percent in 2019. Then in 2020, the year the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, it rose nearly as much as in the previous five years combined, to 30.4 percent.
- Thus, nearly one in three people in the world did not have access to adequate food in 2020 – an increase of 320 million people in just one year, from 2.05 to 2.37 billion.

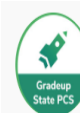
#### Indian Scenario

##### Status of Malnutrition:

- The prevalence of undernutrition among the total population in India was 15.3% during 2018-20.
- The country has observed an increase in the prevalence of obesity among the adult population from 3% in 2012 to 3.9% in 2016.



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- The prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age has only marginally improved from 53.2% in 2012 to 53% in 2019.

**Related Initiatives:**

- One Nation One Ration Card
- PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana
- Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana
- Intensified Mission Indradhanush 3.0 Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)

## Important Days

### July 18, Nelson Mandela International Day

**Why in News**

- Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual international day in honour of Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on 18 July, Mandela's birthday.

**Key Points**

- The theme for 2021 is “One Hand Can Feed Another”.
- The United Nations (UN) officially declared July 18th as Nelson Mandela International day in 2009. It was first celebrated in 2010.

**About Nelson Mandela:**

- Nelson Mandela was the former president of South Africa.
- He is widely regarded as a leader of social justice and a staunch advocate for democracy.
- He received over 250 honours and was awarded the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

**Source: TOI**

### July 17, World Day for International Justice

**Why in News**

- World Day for International Justice is an international day celebrated throughout the world on July 17 as part of an effort to recognize the emerging system of international criminal justice.

**Key Points**

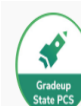
- The theme for 2021 is “A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy.”
- July 17 is the date of the adoption of the treaty that created the International Criminal Court.
- On 1 June 2010, at the Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in Kampala (Uganda), the Assembly of State Parties decided to celebrate 17 July as the Day of International Criminal Justice.

**Source: TOI**

## Obituaries



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### **National Award-winning actor Surekha Sikri passes away**

- Surekha Sikri worked in theatre, films and television.
- She received the National Film Award for Best Supporting Actress thrice, including Tamas (1988), Mammo (1995) and Badhaai Ho (2018).
- She won the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1989.

**Source: Indian Express**

### **Pulitzer Prize winning Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui passes away**

- Pulitzer Prize winning Indian photojournalist Danish Siddiqui was killed in a Taliban attack in Afghanistan while covering the conflict between the Afghan armed forces and the Taliban.
- He was an Indian photo-journalist based in Mumbai, who used to head the national Reuters Multimedia team.
- He received the Pulitzer Prize in 2018, as part of the Reuters team, for documenting the Rohingya Refugee Crisis.

**Source: The Hindu**

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