

Monthly Current Affairs February 2022



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February 2022

Important News: State

Union Govt. extends term of J&K Delimitation Commission for second time in a year

- As the Ministry of Law and Justice informed, the Centre extended the term by two months by amending the notification issued on March 6, 2020.
- The panel's term will end on May 6, 2022.
- The delimitation process is crucial for kick-starting the political process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Background

- In 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said elections would be held in J&K after the delimitation process in the UT was over.
- On March 6, 2020, the government had set up the Delimitation Commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, to wind up delimitation within a year.
- As per the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, the number of Assembly seats in J&K would increase from 107 to 114, which is expected to benefit the Jammu region.
- The panel was granted one-year extension last year.

What is Delimitation Commission?

- The Delimitation commission or Boundary commission of India is a commission established by the Government of India under the provisions of the Delimitation Commission Act.
- The main task of the commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies based on a recent census.

Source: The Indian Express

Thane-Diva railway lines

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated (via video conferencing) the newly constructed two additional railway lines between Thane and Diva on Mumbai's busy suburban rail network.
- Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also attended the inaugural ceremony virtually.

Key Highlights

- The additional lines have been built at the approximate cost of Rs. 620 crore and has the following components:
 - i. 1.4 km long rail flyover
 - ii. 170-meter-long tunnel
 - iii. 3 major bridges
 - iv. 21 minor bridges

Note: PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multimodal Connectivity plays an important role in streamlining all processes from planning to execution of infrastructure projects necessary to build a modern 21st century India.

Source: AIR

Classical language Status to Marathi



- A delegation led by Marathi Language Minister Subhash Desai is going to Delhi to get the status of a classical language for Marathi. Union Culture Minister G. Kisan reddy and minister of state Arjun Meghwal are scheduled to meet.
- The question of granting elite status to the Marathi language has been pending with the Centre for several years, and the state government has now started pursuing with the Centre for the same. In line with this, a public campaign has been launched under the guidance of Marathi Language Minister Desai.
- Dignitaries from all walks of life have been singled out and participated in this mass campaign to ensure that Marathi gets 'elite' status. This question is now in its final stages.
- The delegation includes Principal Secretary Bhushan Gagrani and writer-director Shrirang Godbole.

Six Classical Status.

Six languages in the country have got 'classical' status.

- Tamil (2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013) and Oriya (2014).

Criteria

- - High antiquity of the early texts/ records in that language throughout one and a half to 2000 years.
- - A part of the ancient texts in that language is considered a valuable heritage for generations.
- - That language must have an original literary tradition; it should not be taken from other speaking communities.
- - Since classical language and literature are different from modern languages, there may be differences between the classical language and its later form or branches.

Source: Loksatta

Medaram Jatara celebrated

- The biggest tribal fair “Medaram Jatara” celebrated with traditional fervour and zeal.
- The 4-day festival named after a village Medaram village in Mulugu district of Telangana.
- Shri G Kishan Reddy, the Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of the NorthEastern Region (DoNER) attended the Sammakka-Saralamma Medaram Jatara.
- The minister, as per tradition, offered jaggery which is popularly also known as ‘**Bangaram**’ (**Gold**), equal to his weight.



About the festival

- As per the age-old ritual, the tribal priests performed special pujas at Chilakalagutta forest and the Medaram village.
 - The devotees huddled around the road worshipping the tribal deities and walked barefoot to offer jaggery to the goddesses.
 - As a part of Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Ministry of Tourism undertook projects to develop the Tribal Circuit of Mulugu, Laknavaram, Medavaram, Tadvai, Damaravi, Mallur and Bogatha waterfalls and constructed a guest house in Medaram.
 - The Government of India sanctioned approximately 80 crores for the Tribal Circuit in Telangana and this included the construction of tourist amenities centre, amphitheatre, public convenience facilities, cottages, tented accommodation, gazebos, seating Benches, solid waste management infrastructure, solar lights, landscaping and drinking water fountains in Medaram.
- As per the 2011 census, the tribal population of the country is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas.
 - Note: 705 tribal communities constitute approximately 10% of our population.

What is Swadesh Darshan Scheme?

- Swadesh Darshan Scheme is a Central Sector scheme launched in 2014-15 by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture for the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits.
- It aims to promote, develop, and harness the potential of tourism in India.
- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance – CFA to State Governments, Union Territory Administrations for the infrastructure development of circuits.
- It is envisioned to synergise with other schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, the driving force for economic growth, building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realize its potential.

Source: PIB

48th Khajuraho Dance Festival organised

- The 48th Khajuraho Dance Festival commenced from 21st Feb 2022 in Madhya Pradesh, the week-long festival will be held till February 26th.

- Governor of Madhya Pradesh Mangubhai Patel inaugurated the festival at Khajuraho.
- The festival is being organized on the theme of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- Renowned artists from across the country and the world are performing at the festival, such as Kathak performance by the disciples of late Pandit Birju Maharaj etc.



About the festival

- This festival highlights the richness of the Indian classical dance styles such as Kathak, Bharathanatyam, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, and Kathakali with performances of some of the best exponents in the field.
- Modern Indian dance has been added recently.
- The dances are performed in an open-air auditorium, usually in front of the Chitragupta Temple dedicated to Surya (the Sun God) and the Vishvanatha Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, belonging to the western group.

Source: AIR

Water Taxi Service in Mumbai



- Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways & AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal flagged off **Water Taxi Service** for citizens of Mumbai, from Belapur Jetty.
- The Water Taxi services will commence from the Domestic Cruise Terminal (DCT) and will also connect nearby locations at Nerul, Belapur, Elephanta Island and JNPT.
- The newly constructed Belapur jetty, built at a cost of Rs. 8.37 crore was funded in the 50-50 model under the **Sagarmala scheme** of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

About Sagarmala Programme:

- It is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Shipping to promote port-led development in the country by exploiting India's 7,517 km long coastline, 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways and its strategic location on key international maritime trade routes.
- It was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2015.

Source: PIB

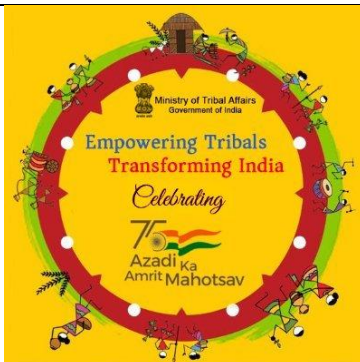
West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar prorogues Assembly session



- Recently, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar prorogued the state Legislative Assembly after exercising power vested with him under Article 174 of the Constitution.
- **About Prorogation:** Prorogation is discontinuing a session of the Parliament or a legislative assembly without dissolving it.
- **Article 174:** The article provides powers to the governor to summon, prorogue and dissolve the legislative assembly. The governor can do so only based on conditions as mentioned in Article 163.
- **Article 163:** The Governor should act based on the advice of the chief minister and the council of ministers.

Source: Indian Express

Medaram Jathara 2022



- The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned 2.26 crore rupees for various activities pertaining to the festival of **Medaram Jathara 2022**.
- The Medaram Jathara is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela, celebrated by the second-largest Tribal Community of Telangana- the Koya tribe for four days.
- This year the Jathara will be held from 16th February to 19th February 2022 (4-days).
- This Jathara is conducted in honour of the Goddesses Sammakka and Saralamma.

Source: newsonair

Central Jail Indore gets own FM radio channel



- In Madhya Pradesh, Central Jail of Indore has started its own radio channel 'Jail Vaani-FM 18.77'.
- Through this radio channel, the jail inmates will get to know about the happening in the world.
- The radio channel will also provide the jail inmates with information on health and social issues.

Source: TOI

India's first biomass-based hydrogen plant coming up in Madhya Pradesh



- The country's first commercial-scale biomass-based hydrogen plant is coming up in the Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh.
- The plant will produce a tonne of hydrogen per day, from 30 tonnes of biomass feedstock.
- It will also produce biochar and methane.
- The plant is being put up by a joint venture of Watomo Energies Ltd and Biezel Green Energy with an investment of ₹24 crore.

Source: The Hindu

J&K becomes the first Union Territory to be integrated with National Single Window System



- Jammu & Kashmir became the first Union Territory to be integrated with the **National Single Window System (NSWS)**.
- Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha launched the J&K Single Window Clearance System integrated with NSWS.
- NSWS is linked with India Industrial Land Bank (IILB) which hosts 45 industrial parks of J&K. This will help Investors to discover available land parcels in J&K.
- The NSWS, a 2020 budgetary announcement of the Government of India, is a digital platform that serves as a guide for investors to identify and to apply for approvals as per their business requirements.
- The platform was soft launched in September 2021 by the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal.
- NSWS will eliminate the need for investors to visit multiple platforms/offices to gather information and obtain clearances from different stakeholders.

Source: PIB

Kerala Governor gives assent to Lok Ayukta Ordinance



Why in News

- Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan to sign an Ordinance seeking to amend the Kerala Lok Ayukta Act, 1999.

Key Points

- Mr. Khan assented to the Ordinance early on Monday. The executive order made it Nonbinding on the “competent authority” to mandatorily eject, sans appeal, any public official found guilty by the Ombudsman.

- The Lok Ayukta Act specifies the Governor as the “competent authority” if the Chief Minister is the public official at fault. In the case of a Minister, the Chief Minister is the competent authority.
- The Act applies at various tiers of the administration, from the Cabinet level and downward. The amended Act makes it obligatory for the competent authority to review the “declaration of guilt” by the Lok Ayukta under Section 14 of the Act before acting against the culpable official.
- The Lok Ayukta would serve for a five year term or till the age of 70, whichever comes first.

Source: Loksatta

Maharashtra's Chitrarath wins Award



Why in the news?

- Maharashtra's Chitraratha on the theme of biodiversity and state standards, which participated in this year's Republic Day procession, has been declared as the number one award in the country in the category of 'Lokpasanti'.

Key points:

- The painting was conceived by Tushar Pradhan and Roshan Ingole, a young sculptor and art director.
- This year's Chitrarath has been created by 'Shubh Adds' of Nagpur.
- Director Naresh Charade and Pankaj Ingle and Rahul Dhansare and their 30 sculptors and artists completed the work of the magnificent replica in the actual theater in Delhi.
- **Source:** Indian Express

Chhattisgarh becomes 35th State/UT to implement One Nation One Ration Card plan



- **Chhattisgarh** has become the 35th State/UT to implement “**One Nation One Ration Card**” (ONORC) plan.

- Recently Department of Food & Public Distribution had reviewed the progress of States/UTs towards the implementation of “One Nation One Ration Card” (ONORC) plan and after successful testing of portability transactions, the Department has approved the integration of Chhattisgarh with the existing cluster of portability States/UTs under ONORC.
- Accordingly, the ONORC plan for nation-wide portability of the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** ration cards has been enabled in the Chhattisgarh State from **2nd February 2022**.
- With the integration of Chhattisgarh, the ONORC plan is now operational in **35 States/UTs** covering almost **96.8%** NFSA population (about **77 Crore** NFSA beneficiaries) in the country.
- Since inception of the ONORC plan in August 2019, so far more than 56 Crore portability transactions have been recorded in the States/UTs under ONORC, delivering nearly total 100 LMT foodgrains through both inter-State and intra-State portability transactions equivalent to about Rs. 31,000 Crore in food subsidy.

Source: PIB

India's first Geo Park to come up in Madhya Pradesh



- The **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** has approved the setting up of the country's first Geo Park at Lamheta village on the banks of the Narmada River in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh.
- The estimated cost of this project is ₹ 35 crore.
- A **Geo Park** is a unified area that advances the protection and use of geological heritage in a sustainable way and promotes the economic well-being of the people who live there.
- This site is already there in the UNESCO geo-heritage tentative list for the conservation of the natural heritage.
- William Henry Sleeman had discovered Dinosaur fossils from this area in 1928.

Source: TOI

Punjab Chief Electoral Officer unveils poll mascot ‘Shera’



- Ahead of Punjab Assembly elections 2022, the office of Punjab Chief Electoral Officer unveiled its poll mascot '**Shera**' depicting a lion.
- The election mascot represents the rich cultural heritage of Punjab.
- Promoted under the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) project, the mascot aims to increase voter awareness and participation in the elections to increase voter turnout and promote ethical voting.

Source: Indian Express

Important News: India

Bhasha Certificate Selfie campaign



Context

- Ministry of Education has recently started the **Bhasha Certificate Selfie campaign** under the aegis of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

About the Bhasha Certificate Selfie campaign

- It will aim to ensure that people acquire basic conversational skills in Indian languages.
- It is also promote Bhasha Sangam mobile app, developed by Ministry of Education and MyGov India.
- Using the app, people can learn 100+ sentences of daily use in as many as 22 scheduled Indian languages.
- The 'Bhasha Certificate Selfie' initiative is encouraging people to upload their selfie with the certificate from their social media accounts using the hashtag #BhashaCertificateSelfie.

Related Information

About Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education which was launched in 2015.

- Its primary objective is to strengthen cultural relations of various regions in the country and to encourage mutual connection between people residing in different states.
- The scheme aims at celebrating unity in the diverse culture of the nation and to bolstering sentimental bonds among the people of different states.

Source-PIB

Empanelment rule removed for central deputation of DIG-level IPS officers



- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued an order on Feb 10th, 2022 that those IPS officers coming to the Centre at DIG-level would no longer be required to be empanelled at that level with the Union government.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of Ministry of Home Affairs for dispensing with the empanelment at the level of DIG with immediate effect and carrying out the corresponding stipulated amendments, in the existing IPS Tenure Policy.
- It would allow to call any IAS, IPS or IFoS officer on central deputation with or without the state's consent, the Union government can order on DIG-level IPS officers that may not be palatable to the states.

According to previous rules, a DIG-ranked IPS officer with minimum experience of 14 years could be deputed to the Centre only if the Union Home Secretary-led Police Establishment Board empanelled them as DIGs at the Centre. The board chooses the panel on the basis of officers' career and vigilance records.

Source: The Indian Express

Bhasha Shahid Barkat memorial in Murshidabad

- West Bengal Government to build a memorial of Bhasha Shahid Barkat at his residence at Babla village in Salar, Murshidabad.



About Shahid Barkat

- In 1952, Abdul Barkat participated in the language movement demanding recognition of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

- Abdul Barkat was injured during the procession that students mobilised on the premises of Dhaka Medical College hostel on 21st Feb, later he died.
- Posthumously he was awarded Ekushey Padak by the Bangladesh Government.

Source: AIR

National Digital University

Context: The concept was mentioned by the Prime Minister in a webinar on the positive impact of the Union Budget 2022-23. He urged all stakeholders to ensure that the digital university starts functioning at the earliest.



Key highlights

- Union Budget for 2022-23 aims to help implement the National Education Policy (NEP) effectively.
- The budget focuses on five aspects related to the education sector –
 - i. universalisation of quality education
 - ii. skill development
 - iii. urban planning and design
 - iv. internationalisation and AVGC (Animation Visual Effects Gaming Comic)
- A move to empower students with better medical and technical education has begun in many states in local languages.

Note: Education in the mother tongue is related to the students' mental development.

- NEP 2020 unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and all State Governments.
- The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.

NEP in higher education envisages to improve the quality of higher education and various schemes are in place to achieve the goal namely,

- RashtriyaUchchatarShikshaAbhiyan (RUSA)
- Scheme for promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)
- Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN)
- Impacting Research, Innovation & Technology (IMPRINT)
- Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP)
- Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM)
- National Digital Library, campus connect programme
- UchhatarAvishkarAbhiyan
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan
- Impactful Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)
- Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA)
- National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) are being implemented to.

Note: Several initiatives are also undertaken by UGC and AICTE for quality improvement in higher and technical education.

Source: AIR

Govt's new rules for kids on two-wheelers



- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has amended **Rule 138 of Central Motor Vehicles Rules (CMVR), 1989** and has prescribed norms related to safety measures for children below four years of age, riding or being carried on a motor cycle.
- This has been notified under Section 129 of the Motor Vehicles Act, which mandates that the Central Government may, by rules, provide for measures for the safety of children below four years of age, riding or being carried on a motor cycle.
- Further, it specifies use of a safety harness and crash helmet.
- It also restricts the speed of such motor cycles to 40 kmph.
- These rules will come into force after one year from the date of publication of the **Central Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Rules, 2022.**

Source: Business Standard

G20 Secretariat for India's Presidency



- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the setting up of a G20 Secretariat and its reporting structures.
- It will be responsible for implementation of overall policy decisions and arrangements needed for steering India's forthcoming G20 Presidency.

- India will hold the Presidency of the G20 from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023, culminating with the G20 Summit in India in 2023.

About the G20:

- The G20 is made up of **19 countries and the European Union**.
- The **19 countries** are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, and the US.

Source: TOI

Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



**ORGANISATION OF
ISLAMIC COOPERATION**

- Recently, India lashed out at the **Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC)** for being “communal minded” and “hijacked by vested interests” after the grouping called on the UN Human Rights Council to take “necessary measures” on the issue of Muslim girl students being told not to wear the hijab in Karnataka schools.
- The OIC also urged India to “ensure the safety, security and well being of the Muslim community while protecting their way of life”.

About Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

- It is the world’s second largest multilateral body after the UN.
- It counts 57 members, all of which are Islamic countries or Muslim majority members.
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Source: Indian Express

Centre reduces agri-cess for Crude Palm Oil



- The Government of India has reduced the agri-cess for Crude Palm Oil (CPO) from 7.5% to 5%.
- After reduction of the agri-cess, the import tax gap between CPO and Refined Palm Oil has increased to 8.25%.
- Another pre-emptive measure taken by the Government to check the prices of edible oils is to extend the current basic rate of import duty of zero percent on Crude Palm Oil, Crude Soyabean oil and Crude Sunflower Oil upto 30th September, 2022.
- The above steps will augment the earlier measure taken by the Government viz. the stock limit order dated 3rd February, 2022 vide which the Government had specified the stock limit quantities on edible oils and oilseeds for a period upto 30th June, 2022 under the **Essential Commodities Act, 1955**.

Source: PIB

Japanese Industrial Townships (JITs) in India



- A Joint Meeting was held between India (Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Japan (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) for annual review of progress under **Japanese Industrial Townships (JITs) in India**.
- It is also worth noting that this year marks the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan.
- The two countries had established diplomatic relations in April 1952.
- It may be noted that Japan Industrial Townships (JITs) were set up pursuant to the “Action Agenda for the India-Japan Investment and Trade Promotion and Asia-Pacific Economic Integration” signed between METI, Government of Japan and DPIIT, Government of India

in April 2015 to take steps to develop “Japan Industrial Townships” in India especially in Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) and Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC) regions in order to facilitate Japanese investment to India.

- Japan is the only country that has dedicated country-focused industrial townships across India.
- Currently there are 114 Japanese companies across the JITs.
- As the 5th largest investor, Japan has contributed over USD 36.2 Billion in cumulative investments since 2000, especially in key sectors such as automobiles, Electronics System Design & Manufacturing (ESDM), Medical Devices, Consumer goods, Textiles, Food processing and Chemicals.

Source: PIB

National Ropeways Development Programme (Parvatmala)



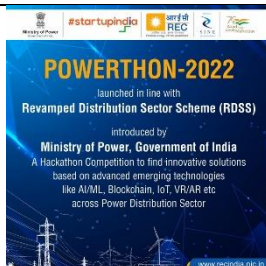
- Union Finance Minister Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, while presenting Union Budget for 2022-23 announced **National Ropeways Development Programme – “Parvatmala”**.

About “Parvatmala” scheme:

- The scheme will be taken up on PPP mode, which will be a preferred ecologically sustainable alternative in place of conventional roads in difficult hilly areas.
- The idea is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism.
- This may also cover congested urban areas, where conventional mass transit system is not feasible.
- The Finance Minister announced that contracts for 8 ropeway projects for a length of 60 km would be awarded in 2022-23.
- The scheme is being presently started in regions like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir and the other North Eastern states.

Source: PIB

Powerthon-2022



- Union Minister for Power and MNRE R K Singh launched **Powerthon-2022**, a hackathon competition under RDSS to find technology driven solutions to solve the complex problems in power distribution and to ensure quality and reliable power supply.
- Powerthon-2022 is being launched in line with the aim of **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)** introduced by the Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- RDSS is a Reform-based and Result-linked Scheme introduced by the Ministry of Power and the key objectives of RDSS are Reducing AT&C losses to 12-15%, eliminating the ACOS-ARR gap by 2024-25 and improving the quality & reliability of the power supply to build a robust power sector which can amplify the development opportunities in the nation's quest for a thriving economy.
- **Startup India**, the flagship initiative of the Government of India, intended to catalyse startup culture and build a strong and inclusive ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship in India is also supporting in wide publicity of **Powerthon-2022**.

Source: PIB

"India Telecom 2022"



- Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Communications, Electronics & Information Technology and Railway, inaugurated '**India Telecom 2022**' - an Exclusive International Business Expo.
- The event is being organised by Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) from February 8th to 10th, 2022 under Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAI) of Department of Commerce, Government of India and with support of Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of External Affairs and Indian missions in different countries.
- Qualified buyers from more than 45 countries are attending the event. Apart from the conference, 40+ Indian telecom companies are showcasing their products and capabilities at the exhibition.
- Event aims to provide opportunities to the Indian telecom stakeholders to meet qualified overseas buyers

Source: PIB

Statue of Equality in Hyderabad



Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 216-feet tall 'Statue of Equality' commemorating the 11th-century Bhakti Saint Sri Ramanujacharya in Shamshabad of Telangana on Saturday.

Key Points

- The statue is made of 'panchaloha', a combination of five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc and is among one of the tallest metallic statues in sitting position, in the world.
- PM to dedicate to the nation 216-feet tall 'Statue of Equality' commemorating the 11th century Bhakti Saint Sri Ramanujacharya.
- statue of Equality, also referred to as Ramanuja statue, is a statue of the 11th-century Vaishnavite Saint Bhagavad Ramanuja, located at the premises of Chinna Jeeyar Trust at Muchintal, Hyderabad.
- The statue costing an estimated ₹1,000 crore (US\$130 million) was built commemorating 1000 years since his birth, entirely from the donations of devotees.

Source: PIB

PM Modi launches Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched **Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation** on the occasion of the birth anniversary of legendary classical vocalist late Pandit Jasraj.
- Pandit Jasraj was an Indian classical vocalist, belonging to the Mewati gharana (musical apprenticeship lineage).
- He received several accolades including the prestigious Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.
- He passed away at the age of 90 on August 17, 2020.

Source: TOI

Lok Sabha secretariat launches Digital Sansad app



- The Lok Sabha secretariat has launched a new app, **Digital Sansad**.
- The App, planned by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, will help people get all Parliamentary updates.
- It becomes easier for citizens to access general information on MPs, on budget speeches since 1947, House discussions from 12th Lok Sabha to 17th Lok Sabha.
- The App will also contain the live telecast of Sansad proceedings, the major news of the day, etc.

Source: PIB

Hoysala Temples proposed to be listed under UNESCO World Heritage Sites



- The Union Culture Ministry announced that the **Hoysala Temples of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapura** in Karnataka have been finalised as India's nomination for consideration as **UNESCO World Heritage site for the year 2022-2023**.
- The 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala' are on **UNESCO's Tentative list** since 15th April, 2014 and represent one of the highest points of human creative genius and stand testimony to the rich historical and cultural heritage of our country.
- All these three Hoysala temples are protected monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and therefore conservation and maintenance will be done by ASI.
- The sacred ensembles of the Hoysalas, built in the 12th-13th centuries and represented here by the three components of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapura, attest to the creativity and skill of the Hoysala artists and architects who built these masterpieces of a kind never seen before or since.
- The Hoysala temples have a basic Dravidian morphology but show strong influences of the Bhumiya mode widely used in Central India, the Nagara traditions of northern and western India, and the Karnataka Dravida modes favoured by the Kalyani Chalukyas.

India's UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

- The first sites to be inscribed were Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Agra Fort, and Taj Mahal, of which all were inscribed in the 1983 session of the World Heritage Committee.
- The latest site to be inscribed is Dholavira, Gujarat in 2021.
- As of July 2021, 19 of the 36 States and union territories of India are home to the World Heritage Sites, with Maharashtra having the highest number of sites (5).
- At present, there are 40 World Heritage Sites located in India. Out of these, 32 are cultural, 7 are natural, and 1 is mixed (meeting both cultural and natural criteria), as determined by the organization's selection criteria.
- India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world.

Source: Indian Express

UGC releases draft National Higher Educational Qualification Framework



- The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** has developed a draft **National Higher Educational Qualification Framework (NHEQF)**, which is part of a set of reforms that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisages.
- From job readiness to constitutional values, theoretical knowledge to technical skills, higher education institutes across the country will soon be brought under a new framework to assess students on a range of learning outcomes.
- In the draft, the UGC has clarified that the framework is not intended to promote a uniform curriculum or national common syllabus.
- The purpose is to bring up/elevate all HEIs to a common level of benchmarking to ensure that all institutions are providing quality education.

About University Grants Commission (UGC):

- UGC is a statutory body set up by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India in accordance with the UGC Act 1956.
- **Founded:** 1956
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

Source: Indian Express

Global Center of Excellence in Affordable and Clean Energy (GCoE-ACE)



- A virtual function was held to mark the launch of the **Global Center of Excellence in Affordable and Clean Energy (GCoE-ACE)** at the Indian Institute of Technology, Dharwad (IITDh), Karnataka in the presence of, Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India.
- The center is supported by the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) donation from Honeywell Hometown Solutions India Foundation (HHSIF).
- The first phase of the CSR project with HHSIF is to establish equipment for the GCoE-ACE mainly as skill development, fabrication, and R&D equipment.
- The subsequent phases are envisaged to encourage innovation and to provide incubation support for the solutions to the grass-root problem statements in the affordable and clean-energy domain.
- This also dovetails with the Government's goal of meeting 50% of the country's energy requirement from renewables by 2030.
- The center will work towards United Nations Sustainable Development Goal - 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy.

Source: PIB

Villages of Excellence



- The Centre has decided to convert as many as 150 villages into 'Villages of Excellence' in 12 states with technical assistance from the Israel government.
- The 150 villages that are located around Centre of Excellence (CoEs) will be converted into 'Villages of Excellence.'
- Out of which, 75 villages are being taken up in the first year to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence, where India and Israel will work together.
- Already, the Israel government has established 29 Centre of Excellence in 12 states, which are producing more than 25 million vegetable plants, over 3,87,000 quality fruit plants and can train more than 1.2 lakh farmers per year.

- India is the third-largest trading partner of Israel, in Asia after China and Hong Kong.
- Recently, India and Israel also completed 30 years of diplomatic relations.

Source: ET

Important News: World

Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT)

Context

- The European Union, US, UK and allies have agreed to exclude a number of Russian banks from Swift, an international payment system used by thousands of financial institutions.

About the SWIFT

- The SWIFT system stands for the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication.
- It is a secure platform for financial institutions to exchange information about global monetary transactions such as money transfers.
- It does not move money; it operates as a middleman to verify information of transactions by providing secure financial messaging services to more than 11,000 banks in over 200 countries.
- It is overseen by the central banks from eleven industrial countries: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, besides Belgium.
- **It is based in Belgium.**

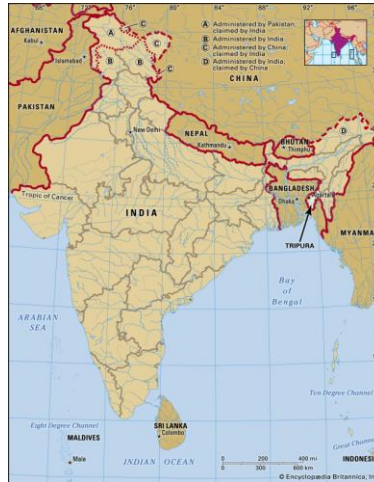
Effects on Russia

- The statement from EU, the US, the UK and others said the move would "ensure that these banks are disconnected from the international financial system and harm their ability to operate globally".
- The aim is for Russian companies to lose access to the normally smooth and instant transactions provided by Swift.
- Payments for its valuable energy and agricultural products will be severely disrupted.
- Banks would be likely to have to deal directly with one another, adding delays and extra costs, and ultimately cutting off revenues for the Russian government.
- Prior to this, only one country had been cut off from SWIFT — Iran.

Source-Indian Express

Second Bangladesh Film Festival in Agartala

Context: The Second Bangladesh Film Festival was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Tripura Biplab Kumar Deb in Agartala.



Key takeaways

- The three-day-long film festival at Agartala is part of the golden jubilee celebration of the liberation of Bangladesh.
- The festival is showcasing the best movies related to the liberation war of Bangladesh to commemorate the glorious history of 1971 and the role of India in the liberation of Bangladesh.
- Tripura and Bangladesh share many similarities in cultures and such programmes are a big step towards increasing harmony in the region through cultural exchange between the two countries.

Note: With the opening of new channels of communication including waterways and railways, Tripura is becoming the commercial corridor of Northeast and also providing huge potential for film-making.

Source: AIR

Kenya citizens stage online protest against Food inflation



- Angry Kenyans have been taking to social media to protest about the high cost of living in the country driven by a spike in the cost of basic commodities including food, electricity, and fuel.
- Using the hashtag #lowerfoodprices, Kenyans have criticized the government for failing to stem the rise in the prices of everyday items which they say has made life unbearable.

Source: AIR

Russia has declared war against Ukraine

Context: Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow will conduct a military operation in eastern Ukraine. In a televised address, Putin asked Ukrainian forces to surrender, and mentioned the action comes in response to threats coming from Ukraine.



Key takeaways

- Russian forces entered Ukrainian territory from Crimea and Ballistic missile attacks were also launched on a number of Ukrainian cities this morning.
- Big explosions were heard in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and other areas of Ukraine.
- Russian President Putin added that Russia doesn't have a goal to occupy Ukraine and the responsibility for bloodshed lies with the Ukrainian regime.
- Russia warned other countries that any attempt to interfere with the Russian action would lead to consequences they have never seen.
- Also accused the US and its allies of ignoring Russia's demands to stop Ukraine from joining NATO.

What is NATO?

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance of 30 member countries.
- It is an alliance between 27 European countries, 2 North American countries, and 1 Eurasian country.
- The organization implements the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed on 4 April 1949.
- **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium, while the headquarters of Allied Command Operations is near Mons, Belgium.

Source: AIR

Russia recognises Ukraine Rebel Regions as independent



- Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin recognised the Ukraine Rebel Regions in eastern Ukraine - Donetsk and Luhansk – as independent areas despite calls from the west to put an end to the tensions driven by fears that Russia may attack Ukraine.
- This paved the way to provide them military support – a direct challenge to the West that will fuel fears that Russia could imminently invade Ukraine.
- Mr. Putin justified his decision in a far-reaching, pre-recorded speech blaming NATO for the current crisis and calling the U.S.-led alliance an existential threat to Russia.
- Mr. Putin's announcement shatters a 2015 peace deal signed in Minsk requiring Ukrainian authorities to offer a broad self-rule to the rebel regions, which marked a major diplomatic coup for Moscow.
- The Donbass region, comprising the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, has been at the centre of the conflict since March 2014 when Moscow (Russia) invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula.

MINSK I: Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a 12-point ceasefire deal in the Belarusian capital in September 2014. The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.

MINSK II: Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions signed a 13-point agreement in February 2015.

Source: The Hindu

Attari-Wagah land border

Context: The first shipment of 10,000 tonnes of wheat from India for the people of Afghanistan will be dispatched via the Attari-Wagah land border crossing.



- The first shipment formally flagged off at Attari-Wagah in the presence of India and Pakistani officials and representatives of the World Food Programme (WFP), which is responsible for distributing the wheat in Afghanistan.
- The shipment is being sent after the Indian and Pakistan sides finalised modalities for transporting the wheat via Pakistan land routes after weeks of negotiations.
- The Indian government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with WFP on February 12 for the distribution of food grains within Afghanistan
- The Indian side is also exploring the option of sending more wheat to Afghanistan via Iran's Chabahar port.

Source: AIR, HT

India-UAE Virtual Summit



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE (United Arab Emirates) Armed Forces, H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan will hold a Virtual Summit on February 18, 2022.
- Both Leaders are expected to lay out their vision of the historic and friendly relations between the two countries, at a time when India is celebrating 75 years of its Independence as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and UAE is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its foundation.
- The Prime Minister visited UAE in 2015, 2018 and 2019 while the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi visited India in 2016 and 2017.
- A major initiative in bilateral relations is the **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.
- Negotiations for CEPA were launched in September 2021 and have been completed.

Note:

- UAE is India's third largest trade partner.
- UAE hosts a large India community which numbers close to 3.5 million.

Source: PIB

WHO launches Quit Tobacco App



- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** launched '**Quit Tobacco App**' to help people kick the cigarette butt and give up use of tobacco in all forms - including smokeless and other newer products.
- The 'WHO Quit Tobacco App', launched during WHO's year-long 'Commit to quit' campaign, is the latest tobacco control initiative by the WHO South-East Asia Region.

Note:

- **World No Tobacco Day (WNTD)** is observed around the world every year on 31 May.
- India is the second largest producer and consumer of Tobacco products.

Source: Indian Express

World Sustainable Development Summit



- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at **The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) World Sustainable Development Summit** 16th February, 2022.
- World Sustainable Development Summit is TERI's annual flagship event.
- The **theme** for this year's Summit is 'Towards a Resilient Planet: Ensuring a Sustainable and Equitable Future'.
- The Summit will discuss a wide range of issues including climate change, sustainable production, energy transitions, global commons and resource security.
- The Prime Minister pointed out that very little has been done despite lot of talk over the last 50 years, since the 1972 Stockholm Conference.

Source: PIB

Lassa Fever



- Recently, one of the three persons diagnosed with **Lassa fever** in the United Kingdom has died.

About Lassa fever:

- The Lassa fever-causing virus is found in West Africa and was first discovered in 1969 in Lassa, Nigeria, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes.
- The fever is spread by rats and is primarily found in countries in West Africa including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Nigeria where it is endemic.
- A person can become infected if they come in contact with household items of food that is contaminated with the urine or feces of an infected rat.
- Symptoms typically appear 1-3 weeks after exposure. Mild symptoms include slight fever, fatigue, weakness and headache and more serious symptoms include bleeding, difficulty breathing, vomiting, facial swelling, pain in the chest, back, and abdomen and shock.

Source: Indian Express

India-Australia Interim Trade Agreement



- India and Australia have announced that they are set to conclude an **Interim Trade Agreement** in March 2022 and a **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** 12-18 months thereafter.
- An interim or early harvest trade agreement is used to liberalise tariffs on the trade of certain goods between two countries or trading blocs before a comprehensive **FTA (Free Trade Agreement)** is concluded.
- Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at about \$12.5 billion in FY21 and has already surpassed \$17.7 billion in the first 10 months of FY22.
- India and Australia have also signed a MoU to boost tourism between the two countries.

What other Free Trade Agreements is India currently negotiating?

- India is currently in the process of negotiating FTAs with the UAE, the UK, Canada, the EU and Israel, besides Australia.
- India is also looking to complete an early harvest agreement with the UAE and the UK in the first half of 2022.

Source: Indian Express

India signs MoU to hand over wheat to WFP in Kandahar



- India signed an agreement with the **United Nation's World Food Programme (WFP)** for the distribution of 50,000 MT of wheat that it has committed to sending Afghanistan as part of a humanitarian assistance.
- The wheat will be taken through Pakistan to the Afghan border crossing and handed over to WFP officials in Kandahar beginning February 2022.
- Iran has also offered to facilitate some of the wheat through Chabahar port and then on to Afghanistan's border via Zahedan.

About World Food Program (WFP):

- WFP is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.
- **Formation:** 19 December 1961
- **Headquarters:** Rome, Italy

Source: The Hindu

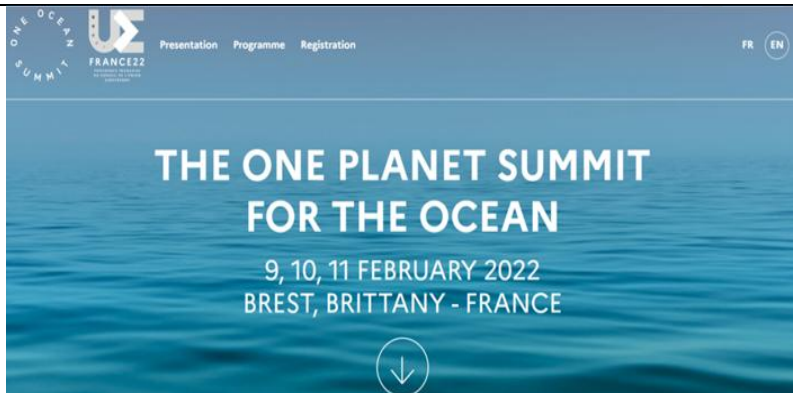
Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting



- Recently, the **4th Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Foreign Ministers' Meeting** was held in Melbourne, Australia.
- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and Australia's Marise Payn held the talks in Melbourne.
- They announced plans for a Quad summit including PM Modi, U.S. President Biden and Australian PM Morrison to be hosted by Japan's PM Kishida in Tokyo in the "first half of 2022".

Source: Indian Express

One Ocean Summit 2022



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the high-level segment of **One Ocean Summit** on 11 February, 2022.
- The high-level segment of the Summit will also be addressed by several Heads of States and Governments including Germany, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan, Canada, among others.
- **One Ocean Summit** is being organised by France from 9-11 February, 2022, in Brest, France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank.
- The objective of the Summit is to mobilise the international community to take tangible action towards preserving and supporting healthy and sustainable ocean ecosystems.
- Several important initiatives will be launched on this occasion in favour of marine ecosystem protection and sustainable fisheries, intended to fight pollution, in particular from plastics, respond to the impacts of climate change, as well as advocate for improved governance of the oceans.

Source: Business Today

India to provide grant to Sri Lanka to implement 'Unitary Digital Identity framework'



- India has agreed to provide a grant to Sri Lanka to implement a **‘Unitary Digital Identity framework’**, apparently modelled on the Aadhaar card.
- The government of Sri Lanka has decided to speed up the implementation of a Unitary Digital Identity framework in the country.
- This project comes amid substantive economic assistance from India, worth USD 1.4 billion to Sri Lanka, since the start of 2022 to help Sri Lanka cope with its dollar crunch, and import food, medicines and fuel due to shortages.

Source: newsonair

ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) Meeting



- Recently, the 2nd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting with India was held.
- Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State for Communications (MoSC) and Admiral Tin Aung San, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Myanmar co-chaired the meeting.
- The Ministers meeting approved the India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2022.
- The Work Plan includes system for combating the use of stolen and counterfeit mobile handsets, WiFi Access network interface for nationwide public internet, the capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in the field of Information and Communication Technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), 5G, Advanced Satellite Communication, Cyber Forensics, etc.

ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN):

- The ADGMIN is an annual meeting of Telecom Ministers of 10 **ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations)** countries -Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam
- Dialogue Partner Countries - Australia, Canada, China, EU, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, UK and US.

Source: PIB

Saudi Arabia organizes first-ever yoga festival



- Saudi Arabia has organized the first-ever yoga festival on Bay La Sun Beach near Jeddah, which drew over 1,000 yoga practitioners from throughout the kingdom.
- The event kicked off on 29th January and will continue till 1st February.
- The event was organized by the Saudi Yoga Committee, which saw the participation of Saudi yoga teachers from across the Kingdom.
- The Saudi Yoga Committee is a government body that acts like a small federation established by the Saudi Arabia Olympic Committee, Ministry of Sports, to promote yoga in Saudi Arabia on 16th May last year.
- The **International Day of Yoga** has been celebrated annually on 21 June since 2015.

Source: newsonair

Important News: Economy

A significant number of women account holders in Maharashtra under the Mudra Loan Scheme



- The central government launched the Mudra Loan Scheme from April 2015 to provide loans to small and small scale industries. Through this, an uncollateralized loan of ten lakh rupees is made available through various banks.
- In Maharashtra, 90 lakh women entrepreneurs and organisations have lifted a whopping Rs 34,000 crore from the scheme in three years.
- According to information available on the Mudra portal loans worth Rs 17.32 lakh crore were sanctioned across the country from the inception of the scheme till December 31 2021. The share of women entrepreneurs in this is 44 per cent.
- In Maharashtra, a total of 43.85 lakh account holders were disbursed loans worth Rs 26,438 crore in 2018-19. Of this, the number of women account holders was 31.88 lakh and the amount of loans given to them was 10,823 crore. There was a further increase in the number of women account holders in 2019-20.

- Loans worth Rs 12,165 crore were disbursed to 34 lakh 78 thousand women account holders. In 2020-21, however, the figures show that there has been a decline in the number of borrowers during the corona period. Loans worth Rs 11,106 crore were disbursed to 29.57 lakh women account holders during these years. In these years, however, the number of account holders decreased.
- West Bengal ranks first in the country in disbursement of loans to women account holders through the Mudra scheme. It is followed by Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
- Source: Loksatta**

RBI cautions against 'sRide'



- Reserve Bank of India has alerted citizens that a car-pooling application by the name 'sRide' is being run without the required permissions.
- Cautioning people using such apps, the RBI has urged citizens to verify the list of authorized payment system providers from the RBI's website before parting with their money.
- The Gurgaon-based sRide Tech Private Limited is operating a semi-closed wallet without obtaining the requisite authorisation under the provisions of the **Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007**.
- As such, any person dealing with sRide Tech Private Limited will be doing so at their own risk.

The Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 along with the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems Regulations, 2008 and the Payment and Settlement Systems Regulations, 2008 have come into effect from 12th August 2008.

Source: AIR

Meeting of Financial Stability and Development Council held in Mumbai



- The 25th meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held in Mumbai, under the Chairpersonship of Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. The Finance Minister is on a two-day post-Budget outreach visit to the city, where she is meeting with representatives of industry, financial market functionaries and bankers.
- The Council discussed operational issues relating to currency management.
- The Financial Stability and Development Council has been set up by the government in consultation with financial market regulators, to strengthen and institutionalize the

mechanism for maintaining financial stability, enhance inter-regulatory coordination and promote financial sector development.

- Without prejudice to the autonomy of regulators, the Council monitors macro-prudential supervision of the economy, including functioning of large financial conglomerates, and addresses inter-regulatory coordination and financial sector development issues. It also focuses on financial literacy and financial inclusion.
- **Source: PIB**

Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and UAE



- (CEPA) between India and UAE will create a minimum 10 lakh jobs for youth of the country informed by the Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal.
- the agreement aimed to help in making India self-reliant, and will also provide job opportunities to the youth of the country.
- through this agreement both the countries will do trade worth 7.5 lakh crore rupees for a period of next five years
- 90 per cent products exported from India will have zero duty in UAE.
- The products include readymade garments, pharmaceutical products, agriculture products, food processing products, footwear, leather, sports and engineering goods, gems and jewellery and all those products which come from labour-oriented sector etc.

Source AIR

Fintech Open Hackathon



- As a part of the Fintech Open Month, NITI Aayog in association with PhonePe will be hosting the first-ever open-to-all Hackathon event for ideating and coming up with the most creative solutions for the FinTech space.
The Hackathon will provide an opportunity for innovators, digital creators and developers from all over India to think, ideate and code.
- Participants at the hackathon need to use any open-data APIs like PhonePe Pulse along with frameworks such as Account Aggregator as a foundation to power.
- The last date to register for the event is 23rd February, 2022 and the deadline to submit the final entries is 25th February, 2022.
- The winners of the Hackathon will be announced on 28th February, 2022.

Source: PIB

India's Unemployment Rate in January 2022



Why in News

- Unemployment rate in January 2022

Key Points

- The unemployment in the urban regions was 8.16%. It was 5.84% in rural areas. In December 2021, the unemployment rate in the country was 7.91%. It was 9.3% in urban and 7.28% in rural.
- Telangana had the lowest unemployment rate in January 2022. It was 0.7%. The second lowest was in Gujarat in 1.2%. the third lowest was in Meghalaya, 1.5% followed by Odisha (1.8%).
- Haryana had the highest unemployment rate, 23.4%. The second highest was in Rajasthan (18.9%).
- As of December 2021, the total number of unemployed in India is 53 million. Of this, the majority were women. Around 35% of the Indian population is actively looking for work. This includes 8 million women. Another 17 million people are unemployed. These people are willing to work if work was available. However, they were not actively looking for job opportunities.
- **Source: Indian Express**

Virtual Digital Assets



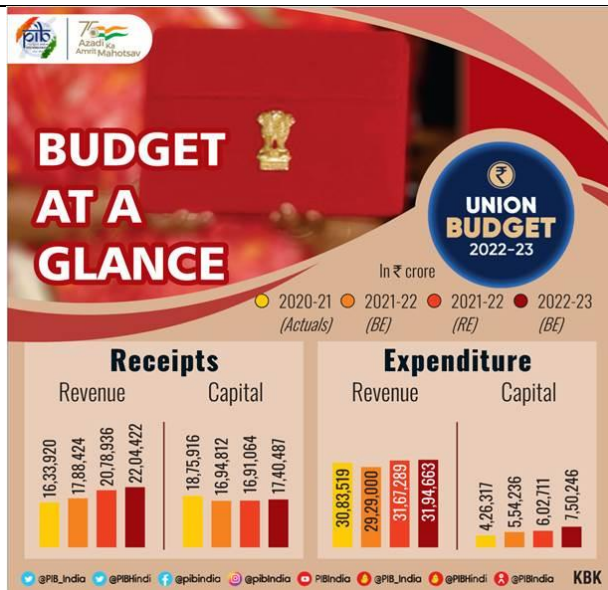
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget 2022 speech, announced a 30 percent tax on income from virtual digital assets.
- Additionally, she also proposed a TDS on payment made in relation to the transfer of virtual digital assets at 1 percent above a monetary threshold.
- There has been a phenomenal rise in such transactions and the magnitude and frequency of these transactions have made it imperative to provide for a specific tax regime.

Virtual digital assets:

- In the explanatory memorandum of the Finance Bill, the government stated, “To define the term “virtual digital asset”, a new clause (47A) is proposed to be inserted to section 2 of the Act.
- As per the proposed new clause, a virtual digital asset is proposed to mean any information or code or number or token (not being Indian currency or any foreign currency), generated through cryptographic means.

Source: Indian Express

Union Budget 2022-23



- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Union Budget 2022-23 in Parliament on 1st February, 2022.
- Entering Amrit Kaal, the 25 year long lead up to India @100, the budget provides impetus for growth along **four priorities**:
- PM GatiShakti

- Inclusive Development
- Productivity Enhancement & Investment, Sunrise opportunities, Energy Transition, and Climate Action
- Financing of investments

Highlights of Union Budget 2022-23:

- India's economic growth is estimated at 9.2 percent, the highest among all large economies.
- Outlay for Capital expenditure in the Union Budget hiked by 35.4 percent.
- Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) extended up to March 2023. The guarantee cover will be expanded by 50,000 crore rupees.
- Additional credit of 2 lakh crore rupees for MSME to be provided under Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises.
- Productivity Linked Incentive in 14 sectors for achieving the vision of AtmaNirbhar Bharat will be strengthened.
- Use of 'Kisan Drones' to be promoted for crop assessment, digitization of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients.
- Implementation of the Ken-Betwa Link Project at an estimated cost of 44,605 crore rupees to be taken up.
- Four hundred new-generation Vande Bharat Trains to be developed over the next three years.
- One Station-One product concept to be popularized to help local businesses and supply chains.
- One hundred PM GatiShakti Cargo Terminals for multimodal logistics facilities to be developed during the next three years.
- PM GatiShakti Master Plan for Expressways to be formulated in 2022-23 to facilitate faster movement of people and goods.
- National Highway network to be expanded by 25 thousand kilometres in 2022-23.
- Allocation of 60,000 crore rupees made for Har-Ghar, Nal-Se-Jal to cover 3.8 crore households in 2022-23.
- 80 lakh houses to be completed in 2022-23 under PM AwasYojana, both rural and urban.
- A new Vibrant Villages Programme to be launched to cover border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and less infrastructure.
- Two lakh Aangawadis to be upgraded under the Saksham Anganwadi Mission.
- A new scheme-Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North-East, PM-DevINE to be implemented through North-Eastern Council.
- One class-one TV channel' programme of PM eVIDYA to be expanded from 12 to 200 TV channels.
- A Digital University to be established to provide access to students across the country for world-class quality universal education.
- Government to set up 75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) in 75 districts of the country by Scheduled Commercial Banks.
- 100 percent of post offices to be brought under core-banking system.
- Digital Rupee, using blockchain and other technologies to be issued by RBI from 2022-23.
- E-Passports using embedded chips and futuristic technology to be rolled out in 2022-23.
- Auction of spectrum for rollout of 5G mobile services to be taken up in 2022.

- Additional 19,500 crore rupees allotted under PLI scheme to give a fillip to domestic manufacturing in solar power.
- Revised Fiscal Deficit during current year is estimated at 6.9 percent.
- Alternate Minimum Tax for cooperative societies reduced from 18.5 to 15 percent.
- Outlay for the 'Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment' is being enhanced from 10,000 crore in the Budget Estimates to 15,000 crore rupees.
- Virtual digital assets to be taxed at the rate of 30 percent.
- Surcharge on long term capital gains arising on transfer of any type of assets to be capped at 15 percent.

Source: PIB

Economic Survey 2021-22



- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Economic Survey 2021-22 in Parliament, which states that the year ahead is well poised for a pick-up in private sector investment with the financial system in a good position to provide support to the revival of economy.
- The central **theme** of this year's Economic Survey is the "Agile approach".
- India to witness GDP growth of 8.0-8.5 percent in 2022-23, supported by widespread vaccine coverage, gains from supply-side reforms and easing of regulations, robust export growth, and availability of fiscal space to ramp up capital spending.
- The growth projection for 2022-23 is based on the assumption that there will be no further debilitating pandemic related economic disruption, monsoon will be normal, withdrawal of global liquidity by major central banks will be broadly orderly, oil prices will be in the range of US\$70-\$75/bbl, and global supply chain disruptions will steadily ease over the course of the year.
- The Survey says, the above projection is comparable with the World Bank's and Asian Development Bank's latest forecasts of real GDP growth of 8.7 percent and 7.5 percent respectively for 2022-23.
- As per the IMF's latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) growth projections released on 25th January, 2022, India's real GDP is projected to grow at 9 percent in both 2021-22 and 2022-23 and at 7.1 percent in 2023-24.
- This projects India as the fastest growing major economy in the world in all these three years.
- In conclusion, the Survey is quite optimistic that overall macro-economic stability indicators suggest that the Indian Economy is well placed to take on the challenges of 2022-

23 and one of the reasons that the Indian Economy is in good position is its unique response strategy.

Source: PIB

Forex Reserves decline by \$678 million



- According to data released by the **Reserve Bank of India's (RBI)**, India's Forex Reserves (Foreign Exchange Reserves) posted a decline of \$678 million during the week ended 21st January 2022 to reach \$634.287 billion.
- **Foreign Currency Assets (FCA)** declined by \$1.155 billion to \$569.582 billion in the reporting week.
- Expressed in dollar terms, FCA includes the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.
- Meanwhile, gold reserves saw an increase of \$567 million to \$40.337 billion during the week ended January 21, as per the data.
- The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) fell \$68 million to \$19.152 billion.
- India's reserve position with the IMF also decreased by \$22 million to \$5.216 billion in the reporting week.

India's Forex Reserve includes:

- Foreign Currency Assets
- Gold reserves
- Special Drawing Rights
- Reserve position with the International Monetary Fund

Source: Indian Express

Important News: Defense

Indian Navy's multilateral exercise MILAN 2022



- The latest edition of Indian Navy's multilateral exercise MILAN 2022 is scheduled to commence from 25 Feb 2022 in Visakhapatnam.

Key Points

- MILAN 22 is being conducted over a duration of 9 days in two phases with the harbour phase scheduled from 25 to 28 February and Sea Phase from 01 to 04 March.
- The theme of the MILAN 2022 is '*Camaraderie – Cohesion – Collaboration*'.
- MILAN 22 will witness its largest ever participation, with more than 40 countries sending their warships/ high level delegations.
- The aim of the exercise is to hone operational skills, imbibe best practices and procedures, and enable doctrinal learning in the maritime domain, through professional interaction between friendly navies.

About MILAN:

- MILAN is a biennial multilateral naval exercise incepted by Indian Navy in 1995 at Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- Started with the participation of only four countries, viz Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand, in the 1995 edition.

Source: PIB

"Eastern Bridge – VI" joint Exercise between Indian and Omani air forces



- Indian, Omani air forces joint exercises being held in Jodhpur from 21st Feb- 25th Feb 2022.
- Oman is one of India's strongest defence partners in the Gulf region, and all three services have bilateral exchanges and exercises with Oman's services.
- To strengthen the ties Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) began a bilateral joint exercise.

- It is the sixth edition of the exercise and is aimed to provide an opportunity to enhance operational capability and interoperability between the two Air Forces.
- Oman also provides operational support to the Indian Navy in the Arabian Sea.
- India has access to the Duqm port, which has strengthened India's capability and maritime strategy in the Indian Ocean Region, especially against China's aggressive advance in the region.

India Eyes Strategic Heft Through Duqm



Source: Indian Express

Indian Naval Fleet, the twelfth Fleet Review

- President Ram Nath Kovind to review the Naval Fleet comprising over 60 ships and submarines and 55 aircraft in Vishakhapatnam.
- President is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.
- This is the twelfth Fleet Review and has a special significance that it is being conducted on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of India's Independence being celebrated as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav across the Nation.

Key Highlights

- The President would be reviewing the Indian Naval Air Arm in a display of spectacular fly-past by several helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. In the final stage of the review, a mobile column of warships and submarines will steam past the Presidential Yacht.
- This display would showcase the latest acquisitions of the Indian Navy.
- Several enthralling waterfront activities, including Parade of Sails, Search and Rescue Demonstration at Sea, Aerobatics by Hawk aircraft and Water Para Jumps by the elite Marine Commandos MARCOS to be conducted.

Key facts

- The President's Yacht is an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel, INS Sumitra, which will lead the Presidential Column.
- The yacht will be distinguished by the Ashoka Emblem on its side and will fly the President's Standard on the Mast.
- After a Ceremonial Guard of Honour and a 21 Gun Salute, the President embarked on the Presidential Yacht INS Sumitra would sail through 44 ships lined up at anchorage off Visakhapatnam.

Source: AIR

CRNO visit to India



- Rear Admiral Saif Bin Nasser Bin Mohsin Al Rahbi, **Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (CRNO)** is on a goodwill visit (13 - 17 Feb 22) of to India.
- The visit aims to consolidate bilateral relations with the Indian Navy, as also to explore new avenues for defence cooperation with India.
- The first visit of the incumbent CRNO to India, reverberates the growing cooperation between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of Oman, which include operational interactions, training and exchange of Subject Matter Experts.
- Both Navies have been participating in the biennial maritime exercise 'Naseem Al Bahr' since 1993.

Source: PIB

IAF to show off Tejas fighter jets at Singapore Air Show 2022



- A 44 member contingent of the Indian Air Force (IAF) reached Changi International Airport in Singapore to participate in the Singapore Air Show-2022, slated for February 15 to 18.
- The IAF will be pitching the indigenous Tejas MK-I ac alongside participants from across the world.
- The Singapore Air Show is a biennial event which provides a platform for the global aviation industry to showcase their products.
- The participation of IAF in the Air Show provides India with the opportunity to showcase the Tejas aircraft and to interact with counterparts from RSAF (Royal Singapore Air Force) and other participating contingents.

About Tejas:

- The Tejas is an Indian fighter jet developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy in collaboration with the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA).

- Tejas was the result of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme that began in the 1980s to replace IAF's ageing MiG-21 fighters.
- The Tejas is the second supersonic fighter developed by HAL.

Source: India Today

India successfully flight-tests marine version of Rafale for INS Vikrant



- The **marine version of the French-made Rafale fighter jet** has been successfully flight-tested at a shore-based facility in Goa where conditions similar to that on the indigenously-developed aircraft carrier INS Vikrant were simulated.
- The Rafale-Marine (Rafale-M) is pitted against the US-made Super Hornet -- both of which are being evaluated for a possible purchase by the Indian Navy for deployment on the 44,000-tonne INS Vikrant that is undergoing trials in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal for likely commissioning in August.
- The Rafale-M jet was tested for 12 days last month at Goa's INS Hansa facility using a 283 metre mock ski-jump facility.

Source: The Hindu

Tri-Service Andaman & Nicobar Command inducts Advanced Light Helicopter MK III



- The indigenous **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) MK III** aircraft was formally inducted at INS Utkrosh by Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN) Lieutenant General Ajai Singh at Port Blair.
- The ALH MK III aircraft is manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and represents a tremendous leap towards self-reliance in the field of military aircraft, in line with the government's push towards 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Amongst its variants, the MK III variant is a maritime role variant encompassing state-of-the-art sensors and weapons that add punch to India's prowess at sea.

Source: PIB

First sea sortie of fifth scorpene submarine 'Vagir'



- The fifth submarine of Project 75, Yard 11879, Indian Navy's Kalvari class commenced her sea trials on 01 Feb 22.
- The submarine was launched in Nov 2020 from the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).
- The submarine would be named **Vagir**, after commissioning.
- The submarine will undergo intense trials of all its systems at sea, including propulsion systems, weapons and sensors.
- The submarine is scheduled for delivery to the Indian Navy in the year 2022 after completion of these trials.
- The six Kalvari-class submarines, designed by French company DCNS, are being built in India as part of the Indian Navy's Project-75.
- Two submarines of the ongoing Project-75 Scorpene programme at MDL - Kalvari and Khanderi - have been commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- The third submarine, Karanj, is in the last phase of sea trials.
- The fourth Scorpene, Vela, has started sea trials, while the sixth and last submarine, Vagsheer, is being readied.

Source: India Today

Science and Technology

International Space Station (ISS)



Context

- A widely circulated comment by the chief of Russian space agency Dmitry Rogozin has ignited fears that the tension following Russia's invasion of Ukraine could have consequences for the International Space Station (ISS).

About International Space Station (ISS)

- It is a manmade space station, or a habitable artificial satellite, in low Earth orbit.
- The ISS has been in operation since 1998 and is expected to continue at least till 2028.

- However, Russia has indicated that it might pull out of the collaboration earlier, possibly by 2024.
- It is a joint project between five participating space agencies:
 - ✓ NASA (United States),
 - ✓ Roscosmos (Russia),
 - ✓ JAXA (Japan),
 - ✓ ESA (Europe),
 - ✓ CSA (Canada)

Facility

- The facility is used for carrying out a variety of zero-gravity experiments, space exploratory studies, and technology development.

Note:

- The ISS is not the first space station to be built and operated.
- Several smaller space stations have been used earlier, the most famous of which has been the Russian Mir space station that operated in the 1980s, and the American Skylab.

Source-Indian Express

Electric vehicle cell launched in Mumbai

- the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation will launch its electric vehicle (EV) cell to bring together government officials, e-mobility experts, and representatives from the electric vehicle industry.
- The EV cell will be placed under the environment department of the municipal corporation.
- Aaditya Thackeray, who is also the guardian minister of Mumbai suburbs launched the cell from Sahyadri Guest House.
- Policy makers will be assisted in the promotion of electric vehicles, build infrastructure for electric vehicle charging in the Mumbai Metropolitan area.
- The move is aimed to provide easy credit facilities for the purchase, implement state-of-the-art technology for in-vehicle batteries, and public transport.

BMC last year launched its first electric vehicle station in the city at Dadar and aims to set up 1,000 EV charging stations in the city in the coming years.

Aditya Thackeray had also announced that the city's BEST bus fleet will convert into EV buses by 2028.

Source: AIR

Bharti Airtel joins SEA-ME-WE-6 undersea cable consortium



- **Bharti Airtel** has joined the '**SEA-ME-WE-6**' **undersea cable consortium** in a bid to scale up its high-speed global network capacity to serve India's fast-growing digital economy.
- Airtel is participating as a "major investor" in the SEA-ME-WE-6 and is anchoring 20 percent of the overall investment in the cable system, which will go live in 2025.
- Airtel has acquired one Fiber Pair on the main SEA-ME-WE-6 system and will co-build four Fiber Pairs between Singapore - Chennai - Mumbai as part of the cable system.
- Airtel will land the SEA-ME-WE-6 cable system in India at new landing stations in Mumbai and Chennai.

About SEA-ME-WE 6 undersea cable consortium:

- The SEA-ME-WE 6 (South East Asia-Middle East-West Europe 6, or SMW6) is a 19,200 km submarine cable system between Singapore and France (Marseille), crossing Egypt through terrestrial cables.
- The SMW6 cable system consists of 10 fiber pairs, with 12.6Tbps per fiber pair and 126Tbps system capacity.

Source: ET

“Corbevax”, COVID-19 vaccine for children between 12-18 years of age group



- Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has granted Emergency Use Authorisation to COVID-19 vaccine Corbevax for children between 12-18 years of age group.
- It is India's first indigenously developed Receptor Binding Domain protein sub-unit COVID-19 vaccine.
- It is developed by Biological E Ltd, the Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company.

- Corbevax vaccine is administered through an intramuscular route.
- Two doses are scheduled 28 days apart and are stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius temperature.

Source: AIR

Vigyan Sarvatra Pujiyate

- A week-long commemoration titled Vigyan Sarvatra Pujiyate is being held from February 22 to 28 simultaneously in 75 locations across India.



Key Highlights

- The programmes have been grouped under four themes.
- First theme: **‘from the annals of the history of S&T’**.
This section traces the contributions of founders of modern science and institutions of national importance to nation-building. It will be done in the form of the screening of 75 films on 75 scientists, and 75 lectures by eminent scientists and technocrats across the 75 locations.
- Second theme, **‘Milestones of Modern S&T’**,
It will highlight critical discoveries, innovations, or inventions that made a mark in the global science or India’s development story.
- Third theme, **‘Swadeshi Paramparik Inventions and Innovations’**
It will showcase 75 inventions or technologies that made India self-standing and helped in achieving the goal of self-reliance by drawing upon the reservoir of traditional knowledge systems, such as drugs from herbs.
- Fourth theme, **‘transforming India’**
It will look at the road ahead for the next 25 years of Indian S&T. It would include talks by 75 eminent scientists & technocrats from within India and the diaspora on their ideas for Indian S&T as it marches towards the centenary year of India’s independence.
- The programme will be held in various Indian languages, including Kashmiri, Dogri, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telegu, Odiya, Bengali, Assamese, Nepali, Maithili, and Manipur and will include the screening of 75 films.
- National Science Day, celebrated on February 28 every year since 1987 in remembrance of Nobel Laureate Sir C.V. Raman’s path-breaking discovery of the Raman Effect in 1930.

Source: PIB

Reliance Jio partners with SES to announce satellite-based internet for India



- Reliance Jio has partnered with SES, a Luxembourg-based satellite solutions provider to form a new initiative – Jio Space Technology Limited.
- The joint venture is aimed at delivering the next generation scalable and affordable broadband services in India by making use of satellite technology.
- Jio and SES will own 51 percent and 49 percent each in the equity stake.
- The technology will use multi-orbit space networks – that is, a combination of geostationary (GEO) and medium earth orbit (MEO) satellite constellations capable of delivering multi-gigabit links and capacity to companies.

Source: Indian Express

ISRO successfully launches satellite EOS-04



- ISRO successfully launched **earth observation satellite EOS-04** along with two other satellites.
- India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C52 successfully injected Earth Observation Satellite EOS-04, into an intended sun synchronous polar orbit of 529 km altitude from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR, Sriharikota.
- The satellite EOS-04 is a Radar Imaging Satellite designed to provide high-quality images under all weather conditions for applications such as Agriculture, Forestry & Plantations, Soil Moisture & Hydrology and Flood mapping.
- PSLV C52 also placed two small satellites. One of them is a student satellite INSPIRESat-1 developed by Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology in association with Laboratory of Atmospheric & Space Physics at the University of Colorado. Another is a technology demonstrator satellite INS-2TD from ISRO, which is a precursor to India-Bhutan Joint Satellite INS-2B.
- This was the first launch of PSLV since the failure of the EOS-03 mission launched last year.

- The first launch of 2022 has set in motion ISRO's plans to conduct 18 other missions this year, including the high profile launch of Chandrayaan-3 to the Moon and the much-awaited uncrewed launch of the country's Gaganyaan mission.

Source: Indian Express

National Centres of Excellence in Carbon Capture & Utilization



- Two National Centres of Excellence in **Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCU)** are being established in India.
- The two Centres, namely the **National Centre of Excellence in Carbon Capture and Utilization (NCoE-CCU)** at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, Mumbai and the **National Centre in Carbon Capture and Utilization (NCCCU)** at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru are being set up with support from the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India.
- Carbon Capture and Utilization (CCU) is among one such key pathways to reduce emissions while continuing to develop sustainably at an unprecedented pace. CCU aligns with five of the seventeen sustainable development goals (SDGs), namely, climate action; clean energy, industry, innovation, and infrastructure; responsible consumption and production; and partnerships to achieve the goals.

Source: PIB

India's newest mammal: White Cheeked Macaque



- Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a new mammal species in the country — the White Cheeked Macaque.

- Macaque was first discovered in China in 2015, its existence was not known in India before this.
- It is only now that Indian scientists have discovered its presence in the remote Anjaw district in central Arunachal Pradesh.
- The White Cheeked Macaque has distinct white cheeks, long and thick hair on the neck and a longer tail than other Macaque species.
- It is the last mammal to have been discovered in Southeast Asia.

Source: Indian Express

Giant Magellan Telescope



Why in News

- The location of the telescope is Las Campanas Observatory, which is also the site of the Magellan Telescopes, some 115 km (71 mi) north-northeast of La Serena, Chile and 180 km (112 mi) south of Copiapó, Chile, at an altitude of 2,516 m (8,255 ft).
- It will consist of seven 8.4 m (27.6 ft) diameter primary segments, that will observe optical and near infrared (320–25000 nm) light, with the resolving power of a 24.5 m (80.4 ft) primary mirror and collecting area equivalent to a 22.0 m (72.2 ft) one, which is about 368 square meters.
- The telescope is expected to have a resolving power 10 times greater than the Hubble Space Telescope. As of November 2017, five mirrors had been cast and the construction of the summit facility has begun.
- A total of seven primary mirrors are planned, but it will begin operation with four. The US\$1 billion project is US-led in partnership with Australia, Brazil, and South Korea, with Chile as the host country.

Source: Wikipedia

Chandrayaan-3



- Recently, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh said in the Lok Sabha that **Chandrayaan-3** is scheduled for launch in August 2022.
- The Chandrayaan 3 mission is the third planned lunar exploration mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It follows ISRO's Chandrayaan 2 mission, which successfully deployed its orbiter around the Moon but failed to soft-land its lander.
- Similar to Chandrayaan 2 mission, Chandrayaan-3 will also include a modified lander and rover. The mission will not include an orbiter, due to the success of the Chandrayaan 2 orbiter. It will use the Chandrayaan 2 orbiter to communicate with the earth.

Source: TOI

Environment

India's first e-waste eco-park

Context

- The Delhi Cabinet has approved the construction of India's first 'e-waste eco park' for the effective management of e-waste.

About the 'e-waste eco park'

- The eco-park will provide training and tools to people in the informal sector to "groom them as formal recyclers.
- Park to recycle, re-manufacture e-waste.
- The park is also likely to have a refurbishing market, which will sell electronic goods like laptops, mobiles, chargers and batteries.

Related Information

About E-Waste

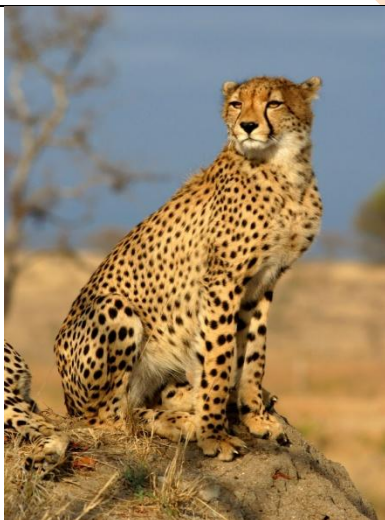
- E-Waste is short for Electronic-Waste and the term is used to describe old, end-of-life or discarded electronic appliances.
- It includes their components, consumables, parts and spares.

It is categorized into 21 types under two broad categories:

- a. Information technology and communication equipment.
- b. Consumer electrical and electronics.

Source-The Hindu

Reintroduction of Cheetah



Why in news

- Recently, an expert team of wildlife officials from Madhya Pradesh, the Indian Forestry department and the Wildlife Institute of India visited Namibia for a site visit for the transfer of Cheetah.
- It has been done under the action plan' launched at the 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).

Provision of Action Plan

- The action plan states that a cohort of around 10-12 young cheetahs that are ideal for reintroduction would be imported from Namibia or South Africa as a founder stock during the first year.
- The animals' lineage and genetic history will be examined to ensure that they are not from an excessively inbred stock and are in the ideal age group so that they make up a suitable founding population.
- The proposed site for introduction is the Kuno Palpur National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh, though at least three other reserves in Central India are being considered.

About Cheetah

- The scientific name of Cheetah is *Acinonyx Jubatus*.
- It is the fastest land animal.
- In India, Cheetah was declared extinct India in 1952. It is the only large mammal to have been declared extinct in our country in recorded history.

Conservation Status

Asiatic Cheetah

- IUCN Status - Critically Endangered.
- CITES status- Appendix-I of the List.

Source-Indian Express

India's first dugong reserve in Palk Bay



Context

- The Tamil Nadu government has begun work to form India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in the Palk Bay region.

About the Dugong

- Dugong (Dugong dugon) also called 'Sea Cow' .

- It is the only existing species of herbivorous mammal that lives exclusively in the sea including in India.

Conservation Status

- They are listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.
- These are protected in India under Schedule I of the Wild (Life) Protection Act, 1972.

Steps Taken for Conservation:

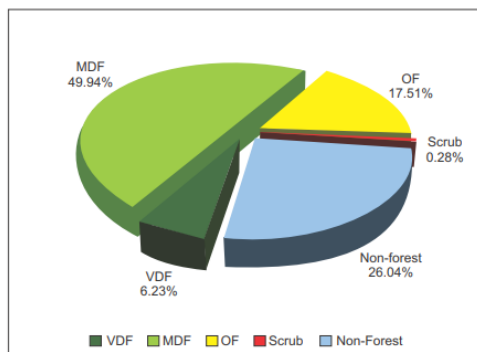
- India has signed non-legally binding Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) on the conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008) and Raptors (2016).
- The Environment Ministry also constituted a 'Task Force for Conservation of Dugongs' to look into issues related to conservation of dugongs and implementation of the 'UNEP/CMS Dugong MoU' in India.
- It also facilitates India to act as the leading nation in the South Asia Sub-region with respect to dugong conservation.

Source-Indian Express

Compensatory afforestation drive in Agartala

- Agartala Smart City Mission in Tripura has taken up a compensatory afforestation drive to compensate for the ecological loss.
- The ecological loss occurred due to the extraction of adult trees for the under progress smart road project funded by the Asian Development Project.
- To compensate the loss some adult trees have relocated alive under the technical guidance of the Tripura Forest Department.
- under the Asian Development Bank-funded project an initiative has been taken to plant ten trees for one tree extracted.
- The move is aimed to not harm the city's existing green cover in our endeavours to make the city smart.

FIGURE 11.27.1 Forest Cover of Tripura



Note: As per the Forest Survey of India 2019 report the forest cover in Tripura has State has decreased by 0.41 sq km as compared to the previous assessment reported in ISFR 2017.

Source: AIR

Ministry of Power notifies Green Hydrogen/ Green Ammonia Policy



- The Ministry of Power notified Green Hydrogen/ Green Ammonia Policy.

About National Hydrogen Mission:

- The Prime Minister launched the National Hydrogen Mission on India's 75th Independence Day (i.e. 15th August, 2021).
- The Mission aims to aid the government in meeting its climate targets and making India a green hydrogen hub.
- This will help in meeting the target of production of 5 million tonnes of Green hydrogen by 2030 and the related development of renewable energy capacity.
- **Hydrogen and Ammonia** are envisaged to be the future fuels to replace fossil fuels, production of these fuels by using power from renewable energy, termed as green hydrogen and green ammonia, is one of the major requirements towards environmentally sustainable energy security of the nation.
- This will reduce dependence on fossil fuel and also reduce crude oil imports.

Source: Business Standard

Mumbai polluted by dust storm

Why in News

- Dust storms in the home desert again reduced Mumbai's air quality on Monday. This is the second



incident in the last 15 days. On Monday, the air in Mazgaon had exceeded the maximum pollution level, while other places were also witnessing high levels of pollution.

Key Points

- Due to the western catastrophe, it reached from Ahmedabad to Mumbai. Scientists around the world are studying this. Thus, there is no denying the possibility that climate change is a result of climate change due to the formation of hurricanes in the current season.
- The air temperature in Borivali, Worli and Bhandup days decreased by 3 and 4 degrees respectively during the winter days.

New gecko species



Why in News

- A team of researchers has identified a new gecko species from the hills of Attappady, in the Western Ghats, Kerala. The new large species of gecko belonging to the genus Hemidactylus goldfuss was found close to human habitation in tribal settlements and rock formations in the region. The team was on an expedition surveying amphibian reptile in the forest areas of Attappady.

Key Points

- The new species, named Hemidactylus easai after former director of the Kerala Forest and Reasearch Institute (KFRI) and wildlife conservationist PS Easa, was found in the drier parts of the region.
- The gecko measures 105 mm from snout to vent (10.5 cm) and is a light brown to grey in colour. The genus Hemidactylus goldfuss has 180 species of geckos distributed across the globe and India has 48. Kerala has over 30 species of gecko and with this new addition, there are nine under the Hemidactylus genus.

Source: The Hindu

Cyclone Batsirai



Why in News

- On February 6, 2022, Cyclone Barsirai made landfall on coast of Madagascar, killing at least six people. It was an intense tropical cyclon

Key Points

- Cyclone had the packing winds of 235 km/h.
- It struck the Mananjary district, which is around 530 kilometres southeast of the capital Antananarivo.
- As per disaster management agency of Madagascar, about 48,000 people moved to emergency accommodation.
- Madagascar is an island country in Indian Ocean. It is located approximately 400 kilometres, off the coast of East Africa across Mozambique Channel. It is world's second largest island country while world's fourth largest island.

Source: Indian Express

Two more Ramsar sites announced in India on World Wetlands Day



- Two new Ramsar sites — **Khijadiya wildlife sanctuary in Gujarat and Bakhira wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh** — were announced on the occasion of World Wetlands Day.
- India now has a network of 49 Ramsar sites covering an area of 10,93,636 hectares, the highest in South Asia.
- Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance as per UNESCO's 1971 Convention on Wetlands held in Ramsar, Iran.

Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary, Uttar Pradesh:

- The Bakhira Wildlife Sanctuary is the largest natural flood plain wetland in the district of Sant Kabir Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. Established in the year 1980, the sanctuary's lake is important for the migratory birds who fly down here in the winter season.
- Migratory birds from Tibet, China, Europe, and Siberia visit the place between November to January. Birds like Indian purple moorhen in addition to more than 30 fish species can be found here.

Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat:

- Located 12 km away from Jamnagar District headquarters, Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary is a freshwater wetland, heaven for birds. It supports marine and freshwater birds, has marshy lands, mangroves, prosopis areas, mudflats, salt pans, creeks, forest scrub, sandy beaches, and farmlands bordering the area. The sanctuary is home to 309 species of birds- resident and migratory birds.

- Endangered bird species such as Dalmatian Pelican, Asian Open Bill Stork, Black-Necked Stork, Darter, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian spoonbill, and Indian Skimmer can be spotted here.

Source: Indian Express

New genus of parasitic flowering plant discovered from Nicobar Islands



- A new genus of a parasitic flowering plant has recently been discovered from the Nicobar group of islands.
- The genus Septemeranthus grows on the plant species Horsfieldia glabra (Blume) Warb.
- The genus belongs to the family Loranthaceae, a hemi-parasite under the sandalwood order Santalales and is of widespread importance.
- The parasitic flowering plants have a modified root structure spread on the stem of the tree and are anchored inside the bark of the host tree.
- The plant was found on the periphery of the tropical forest in one of the biodiversity hotspots referred to as the Nicobar group of islands separated from the Andaman group of Islands by a wide gap of 160 km with heavy tidal flows.
- **Parasitic Plant:** The plant that obtains all or part of its nutrition from another plant (the host) without contributing to the benefit of the host and, in some cases, causing extreme damage to the host.

Source: The Hindu

Schemes

SWAMITVA Yojana

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized in the recent webinar Union Budget 202, “Digital connectivity of villages is no longer an aspiration but the need of the day”.



Why the need of broadband connectivity in rural areas?

- Broadband connectivity will not only provide facilities in the villages, but it will also help in creating a large pool of skilled youth in the villages.
- When the service sector expands with broadband connectivity in the village, the country's potential will increase further.
- optical fibre connectivity issues need to be resolved on pilot basis across the nation's rural areas.

What is SWAMITVA Yojana?

- SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) was launched by Prime Minister on April 24, 2020, as a Central Sector Scheme to promote a socio-economically empowered and self-reliant rural India.

Objective of the scheme:

- Creation of accurate land records for rural planning and reduce property related disputes.
- To bring financial stability to the citizens in rural India by enabling them to use their property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits.
- Determination of property tax, which would accrue to the GPs directly in States where it is devolved or else, add to the State exchequer.
- Creation of survey infrastructure and GIS maps that can be leveraged by any department for their use.
- To support in preparation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) by making use of GIS maps

What all aspects are covered in the scheme?

The scheme covers multifarious aspects:

- facilitating monetization of properties and enabling bank loan
- reducing property related disputes
- comprehensive village level planning

Implementing authority:

- The Scheme is implemented with the collaborative efforts of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Revenue Department, State Panchayati Raj Department and Survey of India.**

How will help revolutionise rural India?

- Scheme is a reformative step towards establishment of clear ownership of property in rural inhabited (Abadi) areas, by mapping of land parcels using drone technology and providing 'Record of Rights' to village household owners with issuance of legal ownership cards (Property cards/Title deeds) to the property owners.
- The scheme is the stepping-stone towards achieving Gram Swaraj in true sense and making rural India Atmanirbhar.

Source: AIR

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme



Context: Third anniversary of the launch of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme is observed across India.

Key Takeaways

- The scheme was launched on 24th of February in 2019.
- It is aimed to provide income support to all landholding farmer's families across the country and enable them to meet expenses related to agriculture as well as domestic needs.
- Under the Scheme, an amount of six thousand rupees per year is transferred in three equal installments of two thousand rupees directly into the bank accounts of the farmers subject to certain exclusion criteria relating to higher-income status.
- The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families having cultivable land up to two hectares, but later it was expanded to cover all farmer families irrespective of the size of their landholdings.

So far, over 1.80 lakh crore rupees have been transferred directly into the bank accounts of the farmer families under PM -KISAN Scheme.

Source: AIR

Capacity Development Scheme to extend until March 2022

- The Union Government has approved the continuation of the Capacity Development (CD) Scheme till 31st of March 2026.
- An outlay approved for continuation of the Scheme during 15th Finance Commission cycle is 3 thousand 179 crore rupees by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

What is capacity Development scheme?

- The Capacity Development Scheme is an Ongoing Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry with an overall objective to augment infrastructural, technical as well as manpower resources for enabling availability of credible and timely official statistics.
- The Scheme encompasses all statistical and data management activities of the Ministry and plays a crucial role in generation and maintenance of official statistical system of the country.
- The large-scale sample surveys undertaken by the Ministry cover important aspects of the economy and provide data inputs for policy framing of the Government.

Capacity Development Scheme



- The Cabinet has approved the continuation of the **Capacity Development (CD) Scheme** till 31.03.2026 or till further review, whichever is earlier, subject to the adherence to Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) recommendations and the financial ceilings etc.
- The outlay approved for the continuation of the Scheme during 15th Finance Commission cycle is ₹3179 crore.

Key Points

- The CD Scheme is an Ongoing Central Sector Scheme of the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI)** with an overall objective to augment infrastructural, technical as well as manpower resources for enabling availability of credible and timely official statistics.
- The Scheme comprises Capacity Development (Main) Scheme and two sub schemes viz. Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS) and Economic Census (EC).

Source: PIB

New India Literacy Programme



Ministry of Education
Government of India

75
Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

New India Literacy Program

A new scheme on 'Education for All' -
erstwhile termed as 'Adult Education'

Highlights:

- Approved by Union Cabinet for FY 2022-27
- Total estimated outlay of Rs. 1037.90 Cr.
- The scheme covers all the aspects of Education for All for 15 years and above age group
- Online modules to increase the access
- Volunteerism based implementation

- Government approved a new scheme “**New India Literacy Programme**” for the period FYs 2022-2027 to cover all the aspects of Adult Education to align with National Education Policy 2020 and Budget Announcements 2021-22.
- Adult Education is now ‘Education for All’ in the country.
- The objective of the scheme is to impart not only foundational literacy and numeracy but also to cover other components which are necessary for a citizen of the 21st century such as critical life skills; vocational skills development; basic education; and continuing education.
- The scheme will cover non-literates of the age of 15 years and above in all state/UTs in the country.
- The target for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for FYs 2022-27 is 5 (five) crore learners @ 1.00 crore per year by using “Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS)” in collaboration with National Informatics Centre, NCERT and NIOS.
- The estimated total outlay of “New India Literacy Programme” is Rs.1037.90 crore which includes Central share of Rs.700 crore and State share of Rs.337.90 crore respectively for the FYs 2022 -27.

Source: PIB

Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)



- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar launches the **Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)** for the welfare of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities.

About De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities:

- Accordingly, the first commission was set up in October 2003 during the first NDA Government to look into the problems of these communities.
- The Renke Commission was set up in 2008.
- The National Commission was constituted in 2015 under the chairmanship of Bhiku Ramji Idate for De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes.
- Based on the recommendation of this commission, the Government of India set up the Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs &NTs (DWBDNCs) in 2019.

Source: PIB

“New Frontiers: A Programme on Renewable Energy”



- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)'s programme **"New Frontiers: A programme on Renewable Energy"** to celebrate the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav commenced with the inaugural event "India's Leadership in Energy Transition" at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- Shri Khuba talked about India's energy transition commitments and achievements; the citizen-centric nature of the transition and Government of India's energy compacts submitted to the UN for the High Level Dialogue on Energy 2021.
- In the past 7 years, India has increased its installed capacity of 395,000 MW whereas our peak demand is 200,000 MW.
- India now has an integrated national grid.
- Under the PLI scheme for high efficiency solar modules, the Finance Ministry will grant an additional Rs 19,500 crore.
- Diesel pumps will be replaced by solar pumps in the agricultural sector by 2024.

Source: PIB

Integration with Beneficiary Database under PM-JAY



- **National Health Authority (NHA)** is mandated with the implementation of **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)**.
- **AB PM-JAY** provides health assurance of up to Rs. 5 Lakhs per family per year, for secondary and tertiary care-related hospitalizations.
- The 10.74 Crore beneficiary families under AB PM-JAY have been identified from the **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011** basis 6 deprivation and 11 occupational criteria across rural and urban areas, respectively.

- **NHA** has collaborated with various ministries implementing welfare schemes to strengthen the different aspects of scheme implementation including inter alia beneficiary awareness campaigns, beneficiary database (SECC 2011) enrichment etc.
- The majority of AB PM-JAY beneficiaries from SECC 2011 are also eligible for benefits under the **National Food Security Portal (NFSA)**.

About National Health Authority (NHA):

- NHA is responsible for implementing India's flagship public health insurance/assurance scheme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

Source: PIB

“SMILE” scheme



- Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar launched the Central Sector scheme **“SMILE: Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise”**.
- The two sub-schemes of SMILE - ‘Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons’ and ‘**Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of engaged in the act of Begging**’ – provide comprehensive welfare and rehabilitation measures to the Transgender community and the people engaged in the act of begging.
- The Ministry has allocated Rs. 365 Crore for the scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Source: PIB

Community Innovator Fellowship



- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, NITI Aayog in collaboration with **UNDP, India** launched the **Community Innovator Fellowship (CIF)**.

- The fellowship is developed as a pre-incubation model which will provide youth with an opportunity to establish their social enterprise focusing on **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)** based solutions for solving community issues.
- This is going to be a one-year-long intensive fellowship program which has been designed for an aspiring community innovator irrespective of their socio-economic background.
- During the course of this fellowship, each fellow will be hosted at one of the AIM's Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACICs) and shall acquire SDG awareness, entrepreneurial skills and life skills while they are working on their idea.

Source: PIB

'Accelerate Vigyan' Scheme



- **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)**, a statutory body established through an Act of Parliament, has invited applications under 'ABHYAAS', a program of **'Accelerate Vigyan' Scheme**, for summer season.
- In a recent notification, the call for applications under components of "KAARYASHALA" and "VRITIKA" for the summer season (May 2022-July 2022) is extended till 28 February 2022.

About "Accelerate Vigyan" (AV) Scheme:

- "Accelerate Vigyan" (AV) strives to provide a big push to high-end scientific research and prepare a scientific workforce, which can venture into research careers and a knowledge-based economy.
- AV aims to expand the research base in the country, with three broad goals — consolidation / aggregation of all scientific training programs, initiating high-end orientation workshops and creating opportunities for training and skill internships.

Source: DTE

PMKSY scheme extended till March 2026



- The **'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)'** has been extended for a period of 2021-22 to 2025-26 with an allocation of Rs 4,600 crore.

About 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)':

- PMKSY is a comprehensive package which will lead to creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.
- The scheme will boost the growth of the food processing sector but also help in providing better prices to farmers and creating huge employment opportunities.
- In May 2017, the Centre had launched SAMPADA (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters) with an allocation of Rs 6,000 crore.
- The scheme was renamed as PMKSY in August 2017.
- PMKSY is an umbrella scheme incorporating ongoing schemes of the ministry like Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure, Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure, Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters, Creation / Expansion of Food Process.

Source: ET

Nai Roshni Scheme



- Recently, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has informed the Rajya Sabha that the Government has sanctioned Rs 26 crore under the **Nai Roshni scheme** during the last three year i.e. 2018-19 to 2020-21 through which around one Lakh women have been trained.

About Nai Roshni scheme:

- Nai Roshni scheme is a Central Sector Scheme for women belonging to minority community in the age group of 18 to 65 years.
- The scheme aims to empower and enhance confidence in women by providing knowledge, tools, and techniques for the Leadership Development of Women.
- It was started in 2012-13.
- The training programme covers areas related to programmes for women, health and hygiene, legal rights of women, financial literacy, digital literacy, Swachh Bharat, Life Skills, and advocacy for social and behavioural changes, etc.

Source: PIB

SAMRIDH initiative



- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced a new partnership under the Sustainable Access to Markets and Resources for Innovative Delivery of Healthcare (SAMRIDH) initiative.**
- The partnership will improve access to affordable and quality healthcare for vulnerable populations in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and rural and tribal regions.
- It will enhance SAMRIDH's efforts to reach vulnerable populations, leveraging AIM's expertise in innovation and entrepreneurship.
- In 2020, USAID, IPE Global, and stakeholders from the Indian government, academia, and the private sector developed the innovative SAMRIDH blended finance facility to combine public and philanthropic funds with commercial capital to create and rapidly scale market-based health solutions.

Source: newsonair

Swachhta Saarthi fellowship 2022

Why in News



- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its “Waste to Wealth” Mission announced the “Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship 2022”.

Key Points



- To empower young innovators who are engaged in community work of waste management, waste awareness campaigns, waste surveys etc. as Swachhta Saarthis and implement actions to reduce waste for a greener planet.
- The fellowship was launched in 2021 to recognize students, community workers/self-help groups, and municipal/sanitary workers who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management, scientifically and sustainably.
- The fellowship is aimed at sensitizing the society towards waste management and offer innovative solutions for conversion of waste to value.
- Targeted to encourage community participation, the Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships invites applications from students, researchers and community workers who have done previous work or are currently engaged in waste management activities, including awareness campaigns, surveys & studies.

Source: The Hindu

Awards and Honours

Awards presented on Marathi Language Pride Day



- On the occasion of Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Diwas, the Department of Marathi Language presented honours and awards to the dignitaries working for the development of language and literature by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray at Yashwantrao Chavan Auditorium.
- The birthday of Jnanpith awardee Kavivarya Kusumagraj is celebrated as Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Diwas.
- This year, Vinda Karandikar Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar Litterateur Bharat Sasane received the Shri Pu Bhagwat Award to the publishing house, Folklore House, Mumbai. Ashok Kelkar Marathi Language Practitioner Award to Dr. Ramesh Narayan Varkhede of Nashik, Dr. Ashok Kelkar Marathi Language Practitioner Award to Pune's Marathi Study Council and Kavivarya Mangesh Padgaonkar Marathi Bhasha Samvardhan Puraskar to Dr. Chandrakant Patil has been announced.

- **Source: Newsonair**

Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022



- Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022 was held in Mumbai.

List of main winners:

- Film of the Year – Pushpa: The Rise
- Best Film – Shershaah
- Best Actor – Ranveer Singh
- Best Actress – Kriti Sanon
- Best Director – Ken Ghosh
- Outstanding Contribution To Film Industry – Asha Parekh
- Best International Feature Film – Another Round
- Best Web Series – Candy
- Best Actor in Web Series – Manoj Bajpayee
- Best Actress in Web Series – Raveena Tandon

About Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards:

- The film festival commemorates the notable contribution made by Dadasaheb Phalke.
- Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, popularly known as Dadasaheb Phalke, was an Indian producer-director-screenwriter, known as "the Father of Indian cinema".
- His debut film, Raja Harishchandra, was the first Indian movie released in 1913, and is now known as India's first full-length feature film.

Source: Indian Express

“Most Dependable Public Sector in India” award

- Coal India Limited (CIL) has been conferred with “Most Dependable Public Sector in India” award.
- The award was conferred by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Kolkatta in “Energy Meet & Excellence Awards function.”
- Shri Pralhad Joshi is the Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs.



About CIL

- Coal India Limited (CIL) the state-owned coal mining corporate came founded in in November 1975.
- CIL is an Indian government-owned coal mining and refining corporation.
- Headquarters: Kolkata, West Bengal
- Ownership: Ministry of Coal, Government of India

Important facts

- It is the single largest coal producer in the world and one of the largest corporate employers with manpower of 2,59,016 (as of 1st April 2021).
- It is a Maharatna public sector undertaking.
- It is also the fifth largest employer in India with nearly 272,000 employees.

What is Maharatna Status?

- “Maharatna” status is granted to a company which has recorded more than Rs. 5,000 crore of net profit for 3 consecutive years, an average annual turnover of Rs. 25,000 crore for 3 years or should have an average annual net worth of Rs. 15,000 crore for 3 years.
- And a PSU with Navratna Status must be listed on an Indian stock exchange.

Source: PIB

Atal Tunnel officially recognised as ‘Longest Highway Tunnel’



- **Atal Tunnel** has officially been certified by World Book of Records as the ‘World’s Longest Highway Tunnel above 10,000 Feet’, during a landmark ceremony on 09 February 2022, in New Delhi.

- Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry, Director General of Border Roads Organisation (DGBR) received the award for the stupendous achievement of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in constructing this engineering marvel connecting Manali to the Lahaul - Spiti Valley.
- World Book of Records UK, is an organisation that catalogues and verifies extraordinary records across the world with authentic certification.

About Atal Tunnel:

- Atal Tunnel was dedicated to the Nation by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on October 03, 2020.
- The 9.02 km long Atal Tunnel, that runs under the 'Rohtang Pass' was constructed on the Manali - Leh Highway under the challenging conditions of freezing temperatures in extremely difficult terrain.
- Construction of this tunnel has reduced the distance on Manali - Sarchu road by 46 km and travel time by four to five hours, providing all-weather connectivity on the Manali - Leh axis.

Source: PIB

India's 'Writing With Fire' nominated for Best Documentary Feature at Oscars 2022



- Indian documentary "Writing With Fire" has been nominated in the Best Documentary Feature category at the 94th edition of the Academy Awards.
- This is the first time an Indian documentary has been nominated for an Academy Award.
- Directed by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh, "Writing With Fire" chronicles the rise of Khabar Lahariya, India's only newspaper run by Dalit women.
- This film is about fearless Dalit women journalists who are redefining what being powerful means, quintessentially the story of the modern Indian woman.
- The awards ceremony is scheduled to be held on March 27, 2022.

About Academy Awards:

- The Academy Awards, popularly known as the Oscars, are awards for artistic and technical merit in the film industry.
- Given annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), the awards are an international recognition of excellence in cinematic achievements.
- The first Academy Awards presentation was held on May 16, 1929.

Source: The Hindu

State Government announces Literary Award

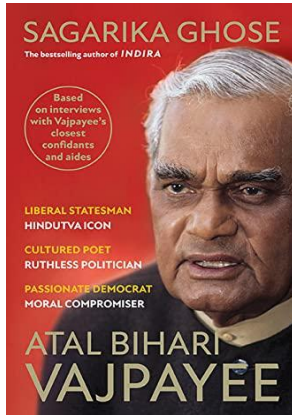


- The Literary Awards to be given on behalf of the Marathi Language Department of the State Government to the writers who have done remarkable work in the field of literature was announced today.
- This year, the Vinda Karandikar Lifetime Achievement Award has been announced for veteran writer Bharat Sasane.
- The award consists of Rs. 5 lakhs in cash, badges and honors. The award was announced by Marathi Language Minister Subhash Desai.
- Mr. P. Bhagwat Award (2021) was announced to Lokvangmay Griha, Mumbai. The award consists of Rs 3 lakh in cash and a badge and honorarium.
- Dr. The Ashok Kelkar Marathi Language Study Award has been announced for Ramesh Varkhede. The award consists of a cash prize of Rs.
- Poet Mangesh Padgaonkar, Marathi Language Enhancer Award (2021, for individuals) Chandrakant Patil was declared.
- Dr. Ashok Kelkar, Marathi Language Study Award 2021 (for the organization) was announced to Marathi Studies Council Pune. The Poet Mangesh Padgaonkar Marathi Language Promotion Award 2021 (for the organization) was announced at the Center for Marathi Studies, Mumbai.

Source: Deshdoot

Books and Authors

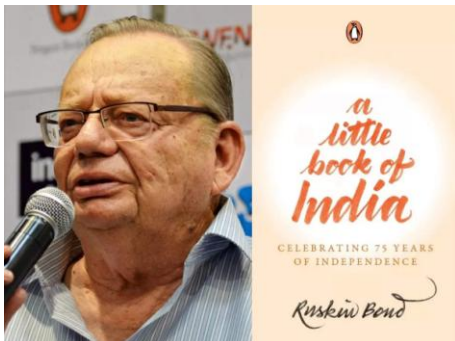
A book titled “Atal Bihari Vajpayee” authored by Sagarika Ghose



- Recently, a book titled “Atal Bihari Vajpayee” authored by Sagarika Ghose has been launched.
- The book is a biography of the former Prime Minister of India “Atal Bihari Vajpayee”.
- Sagarika Ghose is a senior journalist. She is the author of the bestselling biography Indira: India’s Most Powerful Prime Minister.

Ruskin Bond’s new book, “A Little Book of India: Celebrating 75 years of Independence”

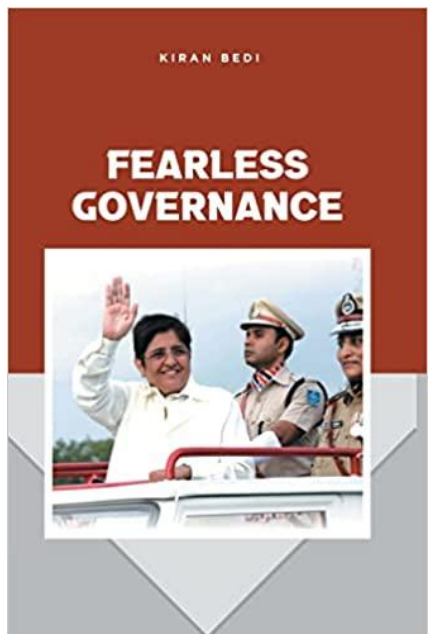
- **Ruskin Bond** authored a new book titled “A Little Book of India: Celebrating 75 years of Independence”.
- The book is an amalgamation of the “physical and spiritual” attributes of India.



- It is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).
- **Ruskin Bond** is the recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award, Sahitya Akademi’s Bal Sahitya Puraskar, Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan, among other prestigious awards.

Source: TOI

A book titled “Fearless Governance” written by Kiran Bedi



- Dr. Kiran Bedi, former Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry and IPS, has released his self-written book 'Fearless Governance'.
- This book is based on the ground realities of nearly five years of service of Dr. Bedi as Lt. Governor of Puducherry and her vast experience of 40 years in the Indian Police Service (IPS).

Important Days

National Science Day



- National Science Day is celebrated every year on 28th February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect'.
- Theme: - **Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for Sustainable Future**

About the National Science day

- On this day, Indian Physicist Sir C.V. Raman announced the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930.
- In 1986, the Government of India designated 28 February as National Science Day.
- The day is aimed at spreading the message of the importance of science and its application in human life.

International Mother Language Day: 21st Feb

- As part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav in India, the International Mother Language Day is observed.

- To mark the day, the Ministry of Culture is organizing a two-day programme in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts IGNCA and UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office in physical and virtual format.



Key highlights

- Vande Bharatam' soundtrack release by MoS Culture Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi.
- Inaugural Address by Shri Prasoon Joshi, Renowned Writer, Poet and Lyricist.
- Launch of book 'Tribal and Indigenous Languages of India' written by Prof. Ramesh C Gaur, Dean IGNCA.
- 'Grammy winner Ricky Kej and tabla maestro Bikram Ghosh Live concert.

About the day

- International Mother Language Day is observed worldwide on 21st February every year to promote
 - awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and
 - multilingualism
- The Day is part of a broader initiative to promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by people of the world.
- The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day first came from Bangladesh.
- The general conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) decided to celebrate February 21 as International Mother Language Day in 2000.
- Every year a unique theme is chosen by UNESCO to celebrate this special day.
- The theme of 2022 is: **"Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities"**, it focuses on potential role of technology to advance multilingual education and support the development of quality teaching and learning for all.

Source: PIB

World Radio Day



- World Radio Day is celebrated on 13 February every year.
- The theme of World Radio Day 2022 is "Radio and Trust".
- World Radio Day was proclaimed by UNESCO in 2011.
- It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day.
- February 13 was chosen as it is the day on which the United Nations established the United Nations Radio in 1946.

Source: un.org

National Women's Day



- National Women's Day is celebrated on the birth anniversary (February 13) of the Nightingale of India, Sarojini Naidu.
- Sarojini Naidu played a major role in India's struggle for freedom against British colonial rule.
- She participated in the non-cooperation movement and Quit India movement.
- After independence, Sarojini Naidu was appointed as the Governor of the United Provinces which is present-day Uttar Pradesh, making her India's first woman governor.
- International Women's Day is celebrated annually on 8 March.

Source: India Today

International Day of Women and Girls in Science



- International Day of Women and Girls in Science is celebrated on 11 February every year.

Theme:

- Towards the achievement of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), the International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly 2022 will focus on the following theme: “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Water Unites Us”.

History:

- The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is the 11th day of February, by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 22 December 2015.

Source: un.org

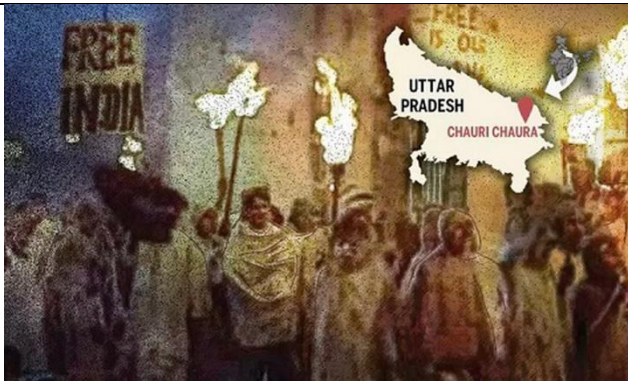
World Pulses Day



- World Pulses Day is observed on 10 February every year to raise awareness about the importance of pulses.
- The 2022 World Pulses Day's theme is: “Pulses to empower youth in achieving sustainable agrifood systems”.
- In 2019, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 10 February as the World Pulses Day.

Source: un.org

100 years of Chauri Chaura Incident



Why in News

- On February 4, 1922, the volunteers of the Non – Cooperation movement proceeded to a local police station. They held a procession. The police fired at the procession. In retaliation, the volunteers set the police station on fire. Some policemen tried to escape the fire. They were caught and beaten to death. This is referred to as the Chauri Chaura incident

Key Points

- Mahatma Gandhiji launched the non – cooperation movement on August 1, 1920. The movement boycotted foreign goods. It mainly included machine made clothes. Also, the people refused to assist rulers who misrule the country. Education and administrative institutions were boycotted.

Note:

- Around 172 people were sentenced to death by the Britishers. But in all 19 were hanged. Mahatma Gandhiji condemned the killing of the policemen. Chauri Chaura support fund was created. Gandhiji stopped the non – cooperation movement.
- Gandhiji went on a fast for five days after the incident. He held himself responsible for the incident. He withdrew the non – cooperation movement on February 12, 1922.
- PM Modi launched Chauri Chaura centenary celebrations. A postal stamp commemorating the incident was launched. The Uttar Pradesh government is to renovate the Chauri Chaura Shaheed memorial into a heritage tourist spot.

Source: TOI

World Cancer Day



- World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4th, to increase the awareness of Cancer globally.
- Close the Care Gap is the theme of World Cancer Day 2022-2024.
- World Cancer Day is led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, written in 2008.
- World Cancer Day was established on 4 February 2000 at the World Cancer Summit Against Cancer for the New Millenium, which was held in Paris.

Source: India Today

World Leprosy Day2022



- **World Leprosy Day (WLD)** is celebrated on the last Sunday of January. In 2022, World Leprosy Day is **30 January**.
- The **theme** of World Leprosy Day 2022 is 'United for Dignity' and to create an environment for leprosy people to live a dignified life.

- The day was first initiated in 1954 by French Philanthropist Raoul Follereau who made people know about this ancient disease.
- Data published by WHO in September 2021, for the calendar year 2020, showed a drop in new cases of 37 percent in the previous year.
- Today, about 208,000 people worldwide are infected with leprosy, according to WHO, most of them in Africa and Asia.”
- In India, Anti Leprosy Day is observed on 30th January every year, i.e., Mahatma Gandhi's martyrdom day.

Source: India Today

World Wetlands Day



- World Wetlands Day is observed every year on February 2.
- 2 February 2022 is the first year that World Wetlands Day will be observed as a United Nations international day, following its adoption by the General Assembly on 30 August 2021 in a resolution co-sponsored by 75 member states.
- The **theme** for 2022 is 'Wetlands Action for People and Nature'.
- This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

Source: un.org

Indian Coast Guard celebrates its 46th Raising Day



- The **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** celebrated its 46th Raising Day on February 1.
- From just seven surface platforms in 1978, the ICG has grown into a formidable force with 158 ships and 70 aircraft in its inventory
- It is likely to achieve targeted force levels of 200 surface platforms and 80 aircraft by 2025.
- As the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world, it has played a significant role in securing the Indian coasts and enforcing regulations in the maritime zones of India.

Facts about Indian Coast Guard (ICG):

- **Director General:** Virender Singh Pathania
- **Headquarters:** Ministry of Defence, New Delhi
- **Founded:** 1 February 1977

Source: India Today

National Commission for Women Foundation Day



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed **30th National Commission for Women Foundation Day** programme.
- The **theme** of the programme 'She The Change Maker' is aimed at celebrating the achievements of women in different fields.

About National Commission for 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.

Source: PIB

Sports

Second LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship 2022



- Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre, LSRC has lifted the Second LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship-2022.
- In finals played in NDS Ice Hockey rink in Leh, LSRC defeated arch-rivals ITBP by Three Nil to win a consecutively second title in the season.
- Ladakh Lieutenant Governor RK Mathur presented the trophies to the finalists in both men's and women's categories of this edition of LG Cup Ice Hockey Championship.

Source: AIR

Women's cricket: New Zealand won in 4th ODI

- In women's cricket, New Zealand defeated India by 63 runs in a rain-curtailed fourth One Day International at the John Davies Oval, Queenstown.
- New Zealand innings was powered by Amelia Kerr's 68-run knock, which was followed by a dominant bowling performance.
- The hosts have taken 4-0 lead in the five-match series.
- Chasing 192, Indian openers went down in quick succession and India were reduced to 12 for 4 in the fifth over.

Source: AIR

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa won Airthings Masters



- In Chess, Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa defeated world champion, Magnus Carlsen in the eighth round of the Airthings Masters competition.
- Praggnanandhaa won with black pieces in 39 moves yesterday to halt Carlsen's run of three straight wins.
- Airthings Masters, is a 16-player online rapid chess tournament.
- Praggnanandhaa has become only the third Indian after Viswanathan Anand and P Harikrishna to beat Carlsen.

Source: AIR

Indian Ranked 1 in Men's ICC T20

- India have become the number one team in the Men's ICC T20 International team rankings for the first time in six years after its 3-0 series win over West Indies in Kolkata on 20th Feb 2022.
- India surpassed England which had 269 rating points to take the top spot.
- It previously held the reigns over the Format under Mahendra Singh Dhoni's leadership from 12th February to 3rd May in 2016.
- Rohit Sharma has become the second captain to take India to the number one position.

India to host 2023 IOC session in Mumbai

- India won the right to host the 2023 IOC session in Mumbai.
- This will be the second time India hosts an IOC session, having done so in 1983 in New Delhi.



- India won the bid unopposed at the 139th IOC session that was held in Beijing, China, on the sidelines of the Winter Olympics.
- Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra, IOC member Nita Ambani, IOA president Narinder Batra and sports minister Anurag Thakur presented India's proposal for the hosting rights at this year's IOC Session.

Source: AIR

Leh to host World Cup cycling event



- Leh is going to host the first-ever highest level of World Cup cycling event in India on September 4, 2022.
- **UCI World Cup Eliminator** event is organized by the UT Ladakh Police in association with City Mountainbike and Cycling Federation of India (CFI).
- With this, Leh will be among world-famous cycling event venues like Abu Dhabi, Barcelona, Paris, and India will be on the cycling chart among Germany, France, Sweden, Indonesia, Brazil, Belgium, Turkey, etc.

Source: newsonair

Women's Asian Cup 2022 Football Tournament



- **China PR (People's Republic)** defeated South Korea (Korea Republic) to win the AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 final title at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai, India.

- This is the record-extending 9th AFC Women's Asian Cup title won by China.

AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022:

- The AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 was the 20th edition of the AFC Women's Asian Cup.
- India was recommended as the host of the tournament by AFC Women's Football Committee and selected as the host in June 2020.

Source: ndtv

[Nehru boat race to be held in UAE this year](#)

Why in News



Key Points

- The Nehru Trophy boat race, a popular fixture held annually in the Punnamada Lake near Alappuzha in Kerala, is slated to be held in Ras al Khaimah in the United Arab Emirates this year, in a move to build on the close-knit ties between the Gulf nation and the southern Indian state, the organisers said on Friday.
- The race, named after former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, will be held on March 27, 2022 at the Al Marjan Island. The move is to build on the beautiful relationship between UAE and Kerala, a statement from the organisers said. The organisers of the UAE Nehru Trophy boat race met Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who is currently in the UAE, and briefed him about the same.

Source: TOI

[2028 Olympicsto be held in Los Angeles](#)



Why in News

- The 2028 Olympics is to be held in Los Angeles.

Key Points

- The 2028 Olympics is to be held in Los Angeles. This is after the 2024 Olympics to be held in Paris. The 2020 Olympics was held in Tokyo. These are all the summer Olympics, the main Olympics. The one that is being held in China right now is Winter Olympics. The International Olympic Committee determines the sports to be held in the Olympics games. The committee has decided to conduct 28 Olympic sports and 24 paralympic sports at the Los Angeles Olympics.
- This is the first summer Olympics to be held in the US since 1996. Before this, the winter Olympics was held in 2002. This is the third time Los Angeles is hosting the Olympics. The other cities that have hosted Olympics three times are London and Paris. In London, Olympics was held in 1908, 1948 and 2012. In Paris the Olympics was held in 1900 and 1924. It is to be held in 2024.
- It is the ninth Olympics to be held in US and fourth to be held in the state of California.
- **Source:** Indian Express

ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2022



Why in News

- India Beat England by 4 Wickets in Final to Win Record-Extending 5th Title

Key Points

- India lifted a record-extending fifth ICC U19 World Cup title after defeating England in the final at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua on Saturday.
- India won the Youth (Under-19) World Cup for the fifth time on the strength of the spectacular all-round performance of the sculptor of victory Raj Bawa.
- India Wins World Cup for fifth time

India Under-19 World Cup wins:

- 1) 2000: Mohammed Kaif
- 2) 2008: Virat Kohli
- 3) 2012: Unmukt Chand
- 4) 2018: Earth Shaw
- 5) 2022: Yash Dhul

Source: Indian Express

Neeraj Chopra nominated for 2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award



- Tokyo Olympics gold medallist **Neeraj Chopra** has been nominated for **2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award**.
- India's first-ever winner of an Olympic athletics gold medal, Neeraj Chopra has been selected as one of the six nominees for the 2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award.
- The other five sportspersons who have been nominated for the award are Australian Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev, British tennis star Emma Raducanu, Barcelona and Spain footballer Pedri, Venezuelan athlete Yulimar Rojas and Australian swimmer Ariarne Titmus.
- Neeraj Chopra is only the third Indian to be nominated for the award after wrestler Vinesh Phogat in 2019 and cricket star Sachin Tendulkar, who won the Laureus Sporting Moment Award 2000-2020.

Source: newsonair

Khelo India Scheme



- The Government has decided to continue the Scheme of “Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports” over the 15th Finance Commission Cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26) at an outlay of Rs 3165.50 crore.
- The allocation in Khelo India Scheme has increased by 48 percent in Budget 2022-23 and it has been included in the PM's Awards Scheme.
- The Khelo India Scheme is the flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

Source: PIB

Women's Asia Cup Hockey 2022



- **India** beat China 2-0 to win a **bronze medal** in the **Women's Asia Cup Hockey tournament 2022** at Muscat in Oman.
- **Japan** defeated South Korea to win the Women's Asia Cup Hockey 2022 title.
- The Women's Hockey Asia Cup is a women's international field hockey tournament organized by the Asian Hockey Federation.
- The winning team becomes the champion of Asia and qualifies for the FIH Hockey World Cup.

Source: newsonair

Unnati Hooda, Kiran George win Odisha Open 2022 titles



- Indian teenager **Unnati Hooda** beat compatriot Smit Toshniwal to claim the women's singles title at the Odisha Open 2022 badminton tournament.
- The 14-year old Unnati is the youngest Indian to win the tournament.
- In men's singles, India's 21-year-old **Kiran George** beat Priyanshu Rajawat to emerge as the winner.
- The **2022 Odisha Open** was a BWF Super 100 tournament that took place at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium, Cuttack, Odisha, India.

Source: The Hindu

2022 Asian Games

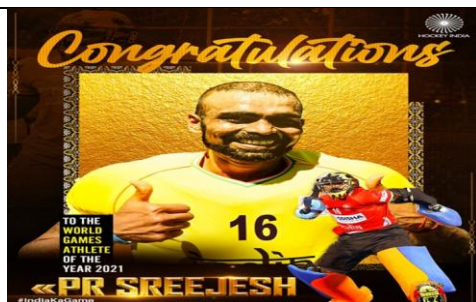


19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022

- The **2022 Asian Games (19th edition)** will take place from September 10 to September 25, 2022, in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China and there will be five co-host cities.
- The multi-sporting event will feature 40 sports with a total of 61 disciplines, including Olympic sports like swimming, archery, athletics, badminton, equestrian, fencing, football, hockey, judo, kabaddi, and much more.
- E-sports and breakdancing will debut in the 2022 Asian Games as full medal sports after being approved by the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) this year, while Cricket will be back at Asian Games in T20 format after 11 years.

Source: TOI

P R Sreejesh wins World Games Athlete of the Year 2021 Award



- Veteran Indian Hockey goalkeeper **P R Sreejesh** has won the prestigious **World Games Athlete of the Year 2021** for his performances, becoming only the second Indian to receive the accolade.
- P R Sreejesh was the only Indian nominated and was recommended by the International Hockey Federation.
- Sreejesh is a former captain of the Indian men's hockey team and a member of the bronze medal winning team at the Tokyo Olympics.
- In the FIH Stars Awards in October 2021, Sreejesh was named the goalkeeper of the year for 2021.

Note: In 2020, Indian Women's hockey captain Rani Rampal became the first Indian to win the honour for her 2019 show.

Source: newsonair

Australian Open 2022



- The 2022 Australian Open was a Grand Slam tennis tournament that took place at Melbourne Park, Australia from 17 to 30 January 2022.
- It was the 110th edition of the Australian Open, the 54th in the Open Era, and the first Grand Slam of the year.
- **List of winners:**

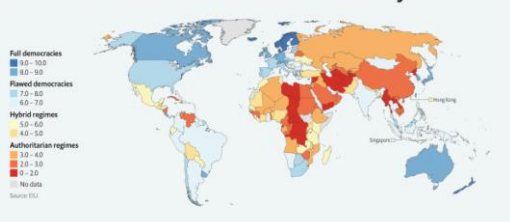
Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
Winner- Rafael Nadal (Spain)	Winner- Ashleigh Barty (Australia)	Winner- Nick Kyrgios (Australia), Thanasi Kokkinakis (Australia)	Winner- Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic), Katerina Siniakova (Czech Republic)	Winner- Kristina Mladenovic (France), Ivan Dodig (Croatia)
Runner-up- Daniil Medvedev (Russia)	Runner-up- Danielle Collins (America)	Runner-up- Matthew Ebden (Australia), Max Purcell (Australia)	Runner-up- Anna Danilina (Kazakhstan), Beatriz Haddad Maia (Brazil)	Runner-up- Jaimee Fourlis (Australia), Jason Kubler (Australia)

Source: newsonair

Reports and Indexes

EIU's Democracy Index 2021

Democracy Index 2021
Less than half of the world lives in a democracy



- According to the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**, India has ranked 46th position in the 2021 Democracy Index's global ranking.
- With the highest score of 9.75, **Norway** topped the Democracy Index.
- India scored 6.91 to rank 46th on the Index.

Top 3 countries in the list: Norway, New Zealand, Finland

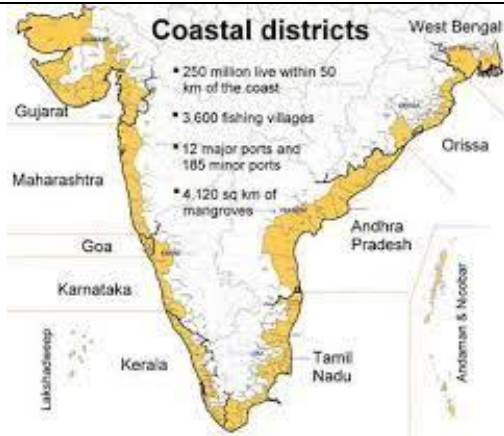
- Afghanistan occupies the bottom place in the index.
- Out of 167 countries included in the survey by EIU, only 21 countries have been put under the category of full democracy while 53 are included under the flawed democracy category.
- 34 countries are counted among hybrid democracies and 59 are authoritarian governments.

About the Index:

- The Democracy Index is an index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the research division of the Economist Group, a UK-based private company which publishes the weekly newspaper The Economist.

Source: newsonair

Coastal Vulnerability Index



- **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** has carried out coastal vulnerability assessment for the entire Indian coast at state level to bring out an Atlas comprising 156 maps on 1:1,00,000 scales to prepare a **Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI)**.

About Coastal Vulnerability Index (CVI):

- The maps determine the coastal risks due to future sea-level rise based on the physical and geological parameters for the Indian coast, the CVI uses the relative risk that physical changes will occur as sea-level rises are quantified based on parameters like: tidal range; wave height; coastal slope; coastal elevation; shoreline change rate; geomorphology; and historical rate of relative sea-level change.
- Coastal vulnerability assessments can be useful information for coastal disaster management and building resilient coastal communities.

Source: The Hindu

Salesforce Global Digital Skills Index 2022



- Salesforce, a leading player in Customer Relationship Management (CRM), said that according to its **Global Digital Skills Index 2022**, India leads in digital skills readiness and has the highest readiness score amongst 19 countries it surveyed.
- India had the highest digital readiness score of 63 out of 100.
- The average global readiness score was 33 out of 100.
- According to Salesforce, in India, 72 percent of respondents say they are very actively learning digital skills. 66 percent of respondents in India also said they feel very equipped with resources to learn digital skills.

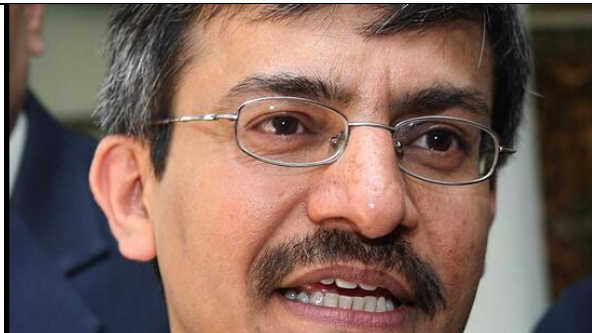
About Global Digital Skills Index 2022:

- The Index is based on a survey of over 23,500 workers in 19 countries.
- The index measures global employee sentiments and readiness to acquire the key digital skills needed by businesses today and over the next five years.

Source: ET

New Appointments

Vineet Joshi takes charge as new CBSE chairperson



- Vineet Joshi, additional secretary in the Ministry of Education, has been assigned the charge of **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** chairperson.
- Joshi's appointment comes after his predecessor Manoj Ahuja was appointed as the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the department of agriculture and farmers welfare.
- Currently, he is the Director General of the National Testing Agency (NTA) and also looks after the Institutes of Eminence (IoE), and Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA), among other verticals of higher education.
- Joshi, a 1992-batch IAS officer had previously also served as the CBSE chairperson.

Source: HT

Ilker Ayci to be Air India CEO



- Former Turkish Airlines chairman Ilker Ayci has been appointed as the CEO & MD of Air India.
- The key appointment was finalised at the Air India board meeting, in which Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran was a special invitee.
- Ayci will assume his responsibilities by April 1, 2022.
- After a competitive bidding process, the government had on October 8 last year sold Air India to Talace Private Limited, a subsidiary of the Tata Group's holding company, for Rs 18,000 crore.
- Air India was started by the Tata Group in 1932. However, after the country got independence, it was nationalised in 1953.

Source: TOI

Munishwar Nath Bhandari new Chief Justice of Madras High Court



- Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari has been appointed Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.
- Justice M N Bhandari was transferred to the Madras High Court in November, 2021 and he assumed office as the Acting Chief Justice (ACJ).
- Madras High Court, officially renamed High Court of Tamil Nadu, is the second oldest High Court of India after the Calcutta High Court in Kolkata.

Ravi Mital takes charge as Chairperson of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India



- Ravi Mital took charge as Chairperson of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).
- Ravi Mital is a 1986 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Bihar cadre.
- Prior to joining the IBBI as Chairperson, he superannuated from the position of Secretary, Department of Sports, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

About Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI):

- It is the regulator for overseeing insolvency proceedings and entities like Insolvency Professional Agencies (IPA), Insolvency Professionals (IP) and Information Utilities (IU) in India.
- It was established on 1 October 2016 and given statutory powers through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, which was passed by Lok Sabha on 5 May 2016.

Source: PIB

Akshay Kumar appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador



- Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Uttarakhand, the Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced ahead of Assembly Elections 2022.
- In 2017, Akshay Kumar was appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador for 'Swachhata Abhiyan'.
- He was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2009.

Previous Brand Ambassador: In 2021, cricketer Rishabh Pant, who hails from Roorkee, was appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador.

Source: ET

Santishree Pandit is first woman VC of JNU



Why in News

- Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, a political science professor at Savitribai Phule Pune University, has been appointed as the first woman Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).

Key Points

- She was appointed by President Ram Nath Kovind. She will hold the job for the next five years. She succeeds M. Jagadesh Kumar, who was appointed Chairperson of the University Grants Commission last week, after a stormy tenure.
- Dr. Pandit is herself an alumna of JNU, having completed her M.Phil. and Ph.D there at the School of International Relations.

Jawaharlal Nehru University

- Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is a public central major research university located in New Delhi, India.
- It was established in 1969 and named after Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister.
- The university is known for leading faculties and research emphasis on liberal arts and applied sciences.

Source: Hindu

Dr. Madan Mohan Tripathi joins as Director General, NIELIT



- Dr. Madan Mohan Tripathi has joined as Director General of National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT).
- Before joining NIELIT, Dr. Madan Mohan Tripathi was working as Professor with Delhi Technological University (DTU), New Delhi.

- **National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT)** is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

Source: PIB

Appointment of Dr V Anantha Nageswaran as the Chief Economic Advisor



- The Government has appointed **Dr V Anantha Nageswaran** as the **Chief Economic Advisor (CEA)**.
- He succeeds former CEA KV Subramanian who returned to academia at the end of his three-year tenure in December 2021.
- Prior to this appointment, Dr. Nageswaran has worked as a writer, author, teacher and consultant.
- He was also a part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister from 2019 to 2021.
- The CEA plays a key role in bringing out the Economic Survey, which presents the economic report card of the Government during the year and suggestions on possible reforms.

Source: Indian Express

Lt Gen Manoj Pande takes over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff



- **Lt Gen Manoj Pande** took over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff from Lt Gen CP Mohanty who superannuated on 31 January 2022.
- An alumnus of National Defence Academy, Lt Gen Manoj Pande was commissioned in December 1982 to the Corps of Engineers (The Bombay Sappers).
- The General Officer commanded an Engineer Regiment during Operation Parakram in the sensitive Pallanwala Sector along the Line of Control of Jammu and Kashmir.

- For his illustrious service he has been conferred with the award of Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, the Chief of Army Staff Commendation and GOC-in-C Commendation twice.

Source: HT

Obituaries

Veteran Malayalam actress KPAC Lalitha passes away



- Veteran actress Maheshwari Amma, better known by her stage name of KPAC Lalitha who starred in over 500 films primarily in Malayalam cinema, passed away in Kochi. She was 73.
- KPAC Lalitha entered the film industry in the year 1969 through 'Koottukudumbam', a film by KS Sethu Madhavan.
- She began her career with the Left-oriented Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC), a theatre collective in Alappuzha.

Source: The Indian Express

Mekapati Goutham Reddy passes away



- Andhra Pradesh Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy passed away in a private hospital in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The 50 years old Minister returned to India from Dubai Expo a day before.
- Goutham Reddy is credited to have designed the best industrial policy for Andhra Pradesh which help attract good investments to the state in the last two years.

Source: AIR

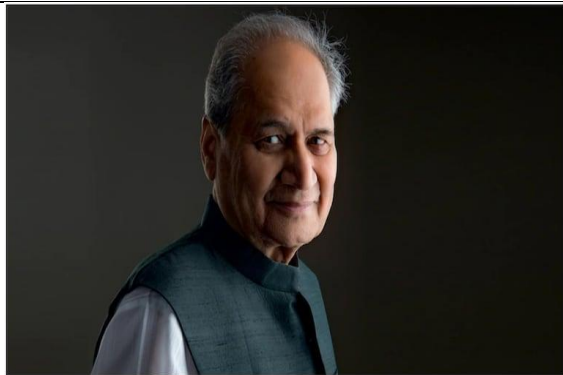
Music composer and singer Bappi Lahiri passes away



- Legendary Bollywood music composer and singer Bappi Lahiri passed away at 69.
- Bappi Lahiri, whose real name was Alokesh, was known for delivering popular songs in several films of the late 1970s-80s like Chalte Chalte, Disco Dancer, and Sharaabi.

Source: newsonair

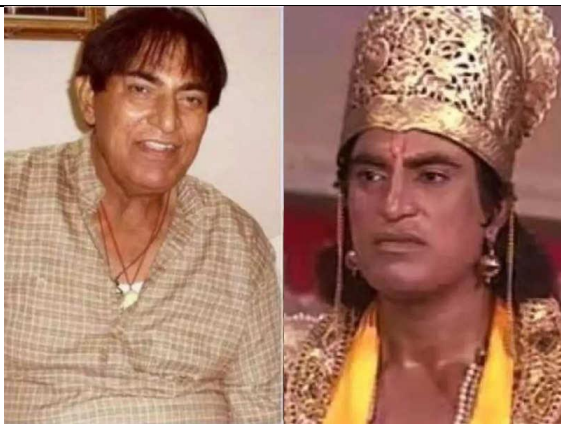
Rahul Bajaj, former chairman of Bajaj Group, passes away



- Industrialist and former chairman of Bajaj Group, Rahul Bajaj passed away at 83.
- Rahul Bajaj acted as the chairman of the Bajaj Group for 50 years.
- He was awarded with the third-highest civilian award Padma Bhushan in 2001.
- Bajaj also served as a Rajya Sabha MP from 2006-10.

Source: Indian Express

Mahabharat's Bheem aka Praveen Kumar Sobti passes away



- Praveen Kumar Sobti who played the role of Bheem in BR Chopra's Mahabharat, passed away.

- Sobti was 20 when he joined the Border Security Force (BSF), and later represented the country across various athletic events in hammer and discus throw.
- The Arjuna Awardee was a two-time Olympian (1968 Mexico Games and 1972 Munich Games) and four-time Asian Games medallist (two gold, one silver and one bronze)

Source: TOI

Death of Dashavtar artist Sudhir Kalingan



Key Points

- Sudhir Kalingan, a veteran Dashavtar artist from Nerur, who was known as the 'King of the People' at the Dashavatar Natya Darbar and played a pivotal role in bringing Dashavatar art across the ocean, died during his treatment.
- He is being treated at a private hospital in Goa. Sudhir Kalingan was running Kaleshwar Dashavtar Natya Mandal Company for last 20 years

Lata Mangeshkar's demise



Why in News

- Veteran Singer Lata Mangeshkar Dies At 92

Key Points

- Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar died in Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital on Sunday. She was 92. She was cremated with full state honors at Mumbai's iconic Shivaji Park this evening. The funeral was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Lata Mangeshkar, a recipient of the Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Dadasaheb Phalke Awards, was an icon of Indian cinema, having sung playback for an

extensive list of Hindi films; she also sang in several regional languages including Marathi and Bengali.

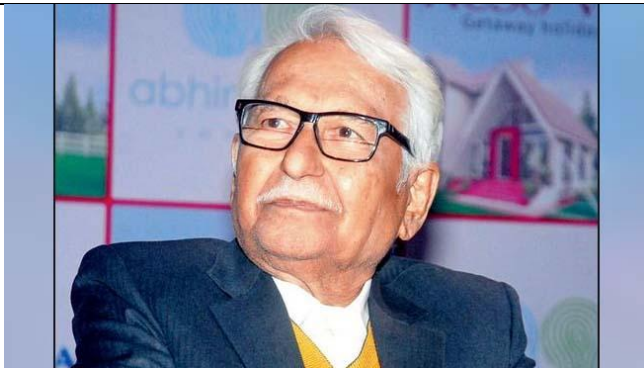
- Lata Mangeshkar, who belonged to a prominent musical family, also composed music as well as produced a handful of films. She was popularly known as the 'Nightingale of India.'

Awards:

- National Film Awards
- BFJA Award
- Filmfare Award for Best Female Playback Singer
- Special Award:
- Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award
- Padma Bhushan (1969)
- Dadasaheb Phalke Award (1989)
- Maharashtra Bhushan (1997)
- Padma Vibhushan (1999)
- Bharatratna (2001)
- Allison of Honor (2006).

Source: Indian Express

Actor Ramesh Deo passes away



- Ramesh Dev, a veteran actor in Hindi and Marathi drama and film, died of a heart attack in Mumbai. He is undergoing treatment at Dhirubai Ambani Hospital.
- In 2013, he was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Pune International Film Festival.
- He had celebrated his 93rd birthday on January 30, just four days ago. Marathi and Hindi films are mourning his demise.
- He started his career in 1951 with the film Patlachi Por
- He started his career as an actor in 1956 with the movie 'Andhala Magato Ek Dola' directed by Raja Paranjape.
- He made his Bollywood debut in the 1962 film Aarti by Rajshri Productions.
- To date, Ramesh Dev has acted in more than 180 Marathi and Hindi films.

Source: Loksatta

Miscellaneous

500-year-old stolen Hanuman idol to be repatriated to India

Context: Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy informed that “Five hundred-year-old Lord Hanuman bronze idol stolen from Tamil Nadu temple, to be repatriated back to India. The stolen idol retrieved by US Homeland Security was handed over to @HCICanberra by US CDA.”



Key takeaways

- An idol of Lord Hanuman, which was stolen a decade ago from Tamil Nadu's Ariyalur district and smuggled abroad scheduled to be brought soon.
- Built between the 14th and 15th centuries, during the period of the Vijayanagara empire, the statue was recently found in possession of a private buyer in Australia.
- As per the Archaeological Survey of India, this Anjaneyar (Hanuman) idol was burgled along with Sri Devi idol and Boodevi idol from the Varadharaja Perumal temple in Vellur village, Ariyalur, on April 9, 2012.
- It will be restored to the temple from where it was stolen.

About Vijayanagara Empire

- The Vijayanagara Empire, also called Karnata Kingdom,[3] was based in the Deccan Plateau region in South India.
- It was established in 1336 by the brothers Harihara I and Bukka Raya I of the Sangama dynasty, members of a pastoralist cowherd community, possibly Kuruba, that claimed Yadava lineage.
- The empire rose to prominence as a culmination of attempts by the southern powers to ward off Islamic invasions by the end of the 13th century.
- At its peak, it subjugated almost all of South India's ruling families and pushed the sultans of the Deccan beyond the Tungabhadra-Krishna river doab region, in addition to annexing modern day Odisha (ancient Kalinga) from the Gajapati Kingdom thus becoming a notable power.

Source: Indian Express

Union Govt bars scholarships for studying Indian subjects abroad

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has issued fresh guidelines barring students from applying for the National Overseas Scholarship (NOS).
- The students are barred to study several humanities subjects, including Indian history, culture, and heritage, abroad.
- The final decision as to which topic can be covered under such category will rest with the election-cum-screening committee of NOS.

Source: AIR

Coke Oven Plant, KIOCL

- Foundation stone laid by Shri Ram Chandra Prasad, Union Minister of Steel for Coke Oven Plant Kudremukh Iron Ore Co. Ltd (KIOCL), Panambur Mangalore.
- The proposed project is for Setting up of 2.0 LTPA Ductile Iron Spun Pipe Plant under forward & 1.80 LTPA Coke Oven Plant under backward integration projects at Blast Furnace Unit.
- It is in sync with the national steel policy and govt. set a target of producing 300 million tonnes of crude steel in India by the year 2030.



- A blast furnace is a type of metallurgical furnace used for smelting to produce industrial metals, generally pig iron, but also others such as lead or copper.
- Blast refers to the combustion air being "forced" or supplied above atmospheric pressure.

Highlights of National Steel Policy

- National Steel Policy enshrines the long-term vision of the government to give impetus to the steel sector.
- The policy envisages to create a technologically advanced and globally competitive steel industry that promotes self-sufficiency in steel production as well as economic growth.
- Steel being a de-regulated sector, government acts a facilitator, by creating enabling environment for development of steel sector.

Source: PIB

Aroma Mission or Purple Revolution

- 'Lavender Cultivation' under CSIR-IIIM's Aroma Mission to be started in Ramban as a part of Purple Revolution.
- The favorable climatic and geographic conditions exist in Doda and Ramban, Lavender cultivation can be started Ramban to increase income sources for the youth of the district.



- Lavender cultivation under Ministry of Science and Technology's AROMA mission will help in providing means of livelihood to budding farmers and agri-entrepreneurs and give a boost to Start-Up India campaign and promoting a spirit of entrepreneurship in the region.
- This decision is taken in order to develop difficult areas as development is essential for inclusive and regionally balanced development.

About Ramban

- Ramban is a district in the Indian union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, located in the lap of the Pir Panjal range.
- It is one of the three districts of Chenab Valley, as it was carved out as a district from erstwhile Doda district in 2007.
- The town is located midway between Jammu and Srinagar along the Chenab River in Chenab Valley on National Highway-44, (originally National Highway 1A (India)) approximately 151 km from Jammu and Srinagar.

Aroma Mission, also popularly referred as "Lavender or Purple Revolution"

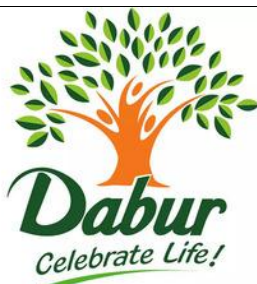
- It has started from J&K and transformed the lives of farmers who are able to grow lavender, make lucrative profit and improve their lives.

Objective

- To promote the cultivation of aromatic crops for essential oils that are in great demand by the aroma industry.
- To enable Indian farmers and the aroma industry to become global leaders in the production and export of some other essential oils on the pattern of menthol mint.
- Aromatic Plants include lavender, damask rose, musk bala, etc.

Source: PIB

Dabur becomes first Indian 'Plastic Waste Neutral' FMCG Company



- India's largest Science-based Ayurveda major Dabur India Ltd has now become a 100% 'Plastic Waste Neutral company' in India, having collected, processed and recycled around 27,000 MT of post-consumer plastic waste from all over India in the 2021-22 financial year.
- With this, Dabur has become the first Indian consumer goods company to achieve this landmark.
- Dabur's Plastic Waste Management initiative was rolled out in the year 2017-18 as part of the Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rule 2016, 2018 (amended).
- Dabur is a registered brand-owner with Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) since November 2018 and with all State Pollution Control Boards across the country.
- Dabur India Limited is the fourth largest FMCG Company in India.

Source: ET

Global Summit on 'Reimagining Museums in India'



- The Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of the North- Eastern Region, G. Kishan Reddy inaugurated the first of its kind, a 2- Day Global Summit in Hyderabad on **'Reimagining Museums in India'**.
- Participants from countries such as India, Australia, France, Italy, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States are participating in the summit being held virtually on 15th-16th February 2022.
- The Summit inauguration event was also attended and addressed by Alberto Garlindini, President of the International Council of Museums.

Source: PIB

Monthly Current Affairs February 2022

