

Weekly Current Affairs

4th Week April 2022

Important News: State

Ropeways in Himachal Pradesh under the Parvatmala Yojana



- Union Minister for Road transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari along with Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Jai Ram Thakur witnessed the signing of MoU between NHLML (National Highways Logistics Management Limited) and State Government of Himachal Pradesh for construction of Ropeways in Himachal Pradesh under the ambitious **Parvatmala Yojana**.
- This is a significant MoU which will facilitate a unique, eco-friendly, scenic and seamless travel experience for tourists. By leveraging world class technology, 7 ropeway projects of total length 57.1km at total cost of Rs 3,232 Crore will be constructed in the State.

About Parvatmala Yojana:

- Union Finance Minister, while presenting Union Budget for 2022-23 announced National Ropeways Development Programme “Parvatmala” 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 scheme is being presently started in regions like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir and the other North Eastern states.

Source: PIB

Shivamogga airport to be named after B S Yediyurappa

Why in News

- Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai recently announced that the under-construction Shivamogga airport will be named after former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa.



Key Points

- The proposal will now be sent to the civil aviation ministry.
- The airport will be ready for inauguration in December 2022.
- The project has been taken up under the UDAN (UdeDesh Ka Aam Naagrik) programme.
- The Shivamogga airport will have the 2nd longest runway in Karnataka after Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru.

Source: Indian Express

Tamil Nadu passes 2 bills to take away governor's powers to name VCs



Why in News

- The Tamil Nadu assembly passed two bills to amend the laws of 13 universities to transfer the power to appoint their vice-chancellors from the governor to the state government.

Key Points

- The proposed bills stress that “every appointment of the Vice-Chancellor shall be made by the Government from out of a panel of three names” recommended by a search-cum-selection committee.
- According to the UGC Regulations, 2018, the “Visitor/Chancellor” — mostly the Governor in states — shall appoint the VC out of the panel of names recommended by search-cum-selection committees.
- Under the Central Universities Act, 2009, the President of India shall be the Visitor of a central university.
- Chancellors in central universities are titular heads, who are appointed by the President in his capacity as Visitor.
- The Vice Chancellor too is appointed by the Visitor from panels of names picked by search and selection committees formed by the Union government.

Note: Moreover, the Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi Commission constituted by the Centre in 2007 to look into Centre-state relations had recommended that governors should not be vested with the powers to appoint the VCs since "there would be a clash of functions and powers".

Source: TOI

Important News: India

PM Modi holds bilateral talks with British PM Boris Johnson



Why in News

- Recently, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited in India. This was his maiden visit to India as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with British PM Boris Johnson.

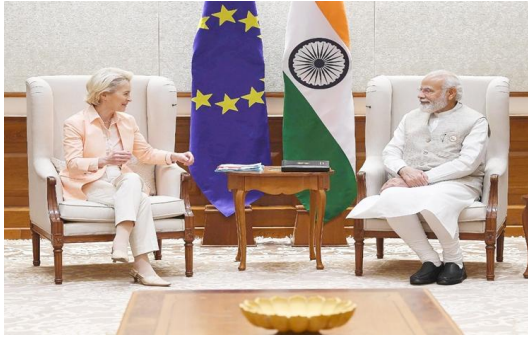
Key Points

- India and United Kingdom have decided to do their best to conclude the Free Trade Agreement by the end of 2022.
- India and UK had launched an ambitious Roadmap-2030 to guide the bilateral relationship in this decade.
- India and UK are launching a virtual Hydrogen Science and Innovation hub to accelerate affordable green hydrogen, as well as new funding for the Green Grids Initiative announced at COP26, and collaboration on joint work on the electrification of public transport across India.
- They emphasized maintaining the Indo-Pacific region based on free, open, inclusive, and rules-based order.
- PM Modi welcomed UK's decision to join Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.
- Both sides also agreed on intensifying operations in countering threats in new domains like cyber security, space, and artificial intelligence as well as on strengthening cooperation on counter-terrorism and addressing violent extremism and radicalism.

Source: Indian Express

India-EU strategic partnership

- PM Narendra Modi held talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in New Delhi.



Key Points

- Prime Minister Modi and Ms Leyen reviewed progress in the **India-EU strategic partnership** and agreed to deepen cooperation in areas of trade, climate, digital technology and people to people ties.
- They reviewed the progress in the forthcoming re-commencement of negotiations on a **Free Trade Agreement and Investment Agreement**.
- They announced the establishment of an **India-EU Trade and Technology Council**.
- Both leaders noted the increasing policy convergences on Indo-Pacific and exchanged views on other regional and global issues of mutual interest including cooperation in WTO, G-20, Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Facts about the European Union (EU):

- **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium
- **Founded:** 1 November 1993
- **Members Countries:** 27

Source: PIB

Ministry of Civil Aviation organises “Yog Prabha”



Why in News

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Minister of State for Civil Aviation Gen VK Singh (Rtd) inaugurated the mega '**Yog Prabha**' event at Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) organised “Yog Prabha”.

Key Points

- Over 900 officials of MoCA and its Attached organizations/PSU/Autonomous bodies participated in this mega event.

About International Day of Yoga:

- At the initiative of the PM Narendra Modi, the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** took a historic decision in 2014 to declare **21st June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY)**.

Source: ET

AAHAR 2022



Why in News

- The **Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** is co-organising the 36th edition of Asia's biggest B2B international food and hospitality fair **AAHAR 2022** in association with the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO).
- It is being organised from April 26-30, 2022 at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi).

Key Points

- More than 80 exporters from different segments of agricultural products, which include GI products, processed food, organic, frozen food products, millets, etc are participating.
- As per the DGCI&S data, the agricultural exports have grown by 19.92 percent during 2021-22 to touch \$50.21 billion.

Source: ET

'Kisan Bhagidari-PrathmiktaHamari' campaign



Why in News

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is organizing the '**Kisan Bhagidari, PrathmiktaHamari**' campaign from 25th April to 30th April 2022 under 'Azadi Ka Amrit

Mahotsav' in association with various other Ministries & Departments of the Government of India.

Key Points

- During the week-long campaign, Agriculture Minister will also launch a country-wide workshop on crop insurance organized by the Common Service Centre.
- Krishi Mela at each Krishi Vigyan Kendra is also being organised.
- The campaign also highlights the achievements and activities under various flagship schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, Pradhan Mantri FasalBima Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.
- As a part of the 'Kisan Bhagidari-PrathmiktaHamari' Campaign, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, under the **Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME)** Scheme, organized the **One District One Product (ODOP)** -based workshop on the Processing and Value addition of Walnuts in Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir.

Source: newsonair

90th anniversary of Sivagiri Pilgrimage and Golden Jubilee of Brahma Vidhyalaya



Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the inaugural ceremony of year-long joint celebrations of the **90th anniversary of Sivagiri Pilgrimage and Golden Jubilee of Brahma Vidhyalaya** at 7 Lok Kalyan Marg.
- He also launched the logo for year- long joint celebrations.

Key Points

- Both **Sivagiri Pilgrimage** and **Brahma Vidhyalaya** were started with the blessing and guidance of great social reformer Shri Narayana Guru.

About Sivagiri Pilgrimage:

- Sivagiri is an area in Varkala municipality of Trivandrum District in Kerala.
- It is a pilgrimage centre of Varkala Town where the tomb or samadhi of Shri Narayana Guru is situated.

Source: PIB

Raisina Dialogue 2022



Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the inaugural session of **Raisina Dialogue 2022** where President of the European Commission, Ms. Ursula Von Der Leyen delivered the keynote address.

Key Points

- The seventh edition of The Raisina Dialogue 2022 is being held in-person in New Delhi from 25 April to 27 April 2022.
- The **theme** for **Raisina Dialogue 2022** is "**Terra Nova: Impassioned, Impatient, and Imperilled**".
- There are six broad thematic pillars of the Dialogue including Rethinking Democracy, End of Multilateralism, Water Caucuses, Achieving Green Transitions.

About Raisina Dialogue:

- It is a multilateral conference held annually in New Delhi.
- The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

Source: newsonair

MoU between CSIR and iCreate to harness India's tech strength



Why in News

- The Chief Minister of Gujarat, Bhupendra Patel presided over the MoU signing between the Government of Gujarat's flagship technology incubator - **iCreate (International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Technology)** and the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**.

Key Points

- Under the MoU, CSIR and iCreate intend to establish a collaborative support system for promising tech start-ups by making combined resources available for entrepreneurs and innovators in the country.
- Such start-ups will access CSIR's equipment, facilities, and scientific manpower.
- CSIR will provide intellectual property support and explore methods of financially supporting innovative start-ups from India to boost emerging entrepreneurs.

About iCreate (International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Technology):

- It is an autonomous centre of excellence of the Government of Gujarat and is India's largest institution for transforming start-ups based on tech innovation into successful businesses.
- To date it has supported over 412 innovations and 30+ patents with a high-touch, entrepreneur first model, connecting them with mentors, markets and money.

Source: PIB

Centre scraps MP quota in Kendriya Vidyalayas



Why in News

- The central government has scrapped the discretionary Member of Parliament (MP) quota for admissions to **Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs)**, and issued revised admission guidelines.

Key Points

- Under the KVS Special Dispensation Admission Scheme, or MP quota, a Member of Parliament had the power to recommend a maximum of 10 students from their respective constituencies in every academic year for admissions in classes 1 to 9.
- Other than the MP quota, the KVS has also removed other reservations, including 100 children of education ministry employees, children and dependent grandchildren of MPs and retired KV employees, and discretionary quota of school management committee chairman, among others.
- The new quotas included 50 seats for the wards of group B and C central police organisations such as the CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB, CISF, NDRF, and Assam Rifles under the Union ministry of home affairs, posted for internal security, border postings.
- Besides, the KVS has also officially included children covered under the PM CARES scheme under the provisions.

Source: HT

Covaxin, Corbevax get emergency use nod for children below 12 years



Why in News

- The **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** grants Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) to Corbevax for those aged 5-12, Covaxin for 6-12 age group and Zycov-D for those above 12 years.
- **World Immunization Week 2022** is being celebrated from 24th to 30th April 2022. The theme of 2022 is 'Long Life for All'.

Source: ET

Important News: World

India's Russian Crude buy since Ukraine conflict double than 2021 purchase



- India has bought more than twice as much crude oil from Russia in the two months since its invasion of Ukraine as it did in the whole of 2021.
- India has taken advantage of discounted prices to ramp up oil imports from Russia at a time when global energy prices have been rising.

Key Points

- After the US and China, India is the world's third-largest consumer of oil, over 80% of which is imported.

Source: BBC

Elon Musk acquires Twitter for \$44 billion



Why in News

- American billionaire Elon Musk reached an agreement to buy Twitter for roughly \$44 billion.

Key Points

- The deal, which was unanimously approved by Twitter's board, is expected to close this year. Under the deal, Twitter's shares will be delisted and it will be taken private.

About Twitter:

- Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interacts with messages known as "tweets".
- **CEO:** Parag Agrawal

Source: Indian Express

European Union (EU) Digital Services Act (DSA)



Why in News

- The European Parliament and European Union (EU) Member States announced that they had reached a political agreement on the **Digital Services Act (DSA)**.

Key Points

- **Digital Services Act (DSA)** is a landmark legislation to force big Internet companies to act against disinformation and illegal and harmful content, and to “provide better protection for Internet users and their fundamental rights”.
- It will apply to a “large category of online services, from simple websites to Internet infrastructure services and online platforms.”

Background:

- The Commission made its proposal on the **Digital Services Act** on 15 December 2020, together with the proposal for the **Digital Markets Act**, on which the European Parliament and Council reached a political agreement on 22 March 2022.

Source: Indian Express

Border Haat at India-Bangladesh border



Why in News

- The **Border Haat** at India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya was opened after a gap of two years.

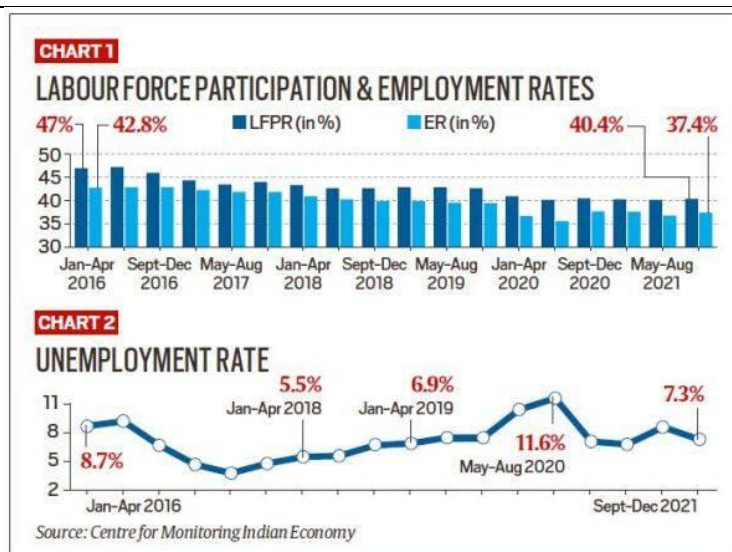
Key Points

- The decision to open the Border Haat between Balat in East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya and Lauwaghar at Dalora in Sunamganj District of Bangladesh was taken by the Joint Border Haat Management Committee.
- At present, India and Bangladesh have seven established Border Haats and nine more new Border Haats are in the pipeline.
- **Border Haats** enable local residents on both sides of the border to trade the local produce.
- As of 2021, India has border Haats only with 4 of its BIMSTEC neighbours, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal.

Source: newsonair

Important News: Economy

India's labour force participation rate (LFPR)



- Data from the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)** shows that **India's labour force participation rate (LFPR)** has fallen to just 40% from an already low 47% in 2016.

Key Points

- This suggests not only that more than half of India's population in the working-age group (15 years and older) is deciding to sit out of the job market, but also that this proportion of people is increasing.
- The LFPR essentially is the percentage of the working-age (15 years or older) population that is asking for a job; it represents the "demand" for jobs in an economy.
- It includes those who are employed and those who are unemployed.
- The Unemployment Rate (UER) is nothing but the number of unemployed (category 2) as a proportion of the labour force.
- The world over, LFPR is around 60%. In India, it has been sliding over the last 10 years and has shrunk from 47% in 2016 to just 40% as of December 2021.

Source: Indian Express

Important News: Defense

iDEX-Prime & 6th Defence India Start-up Challenge



Why in News

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) Prime** and **sixth Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC 6)** during **DefConnect 2.0** in New Delhi.

About Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX):

- It was launched in April 2018.
- It aims to achieve self - reliance and foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovators, R&D institutes and academia.
- The aim of **iDEX-Prime** is to support projects, requiring support beyond Rs 1.5 crore up to Rs 10 crore, to help ever-growing start-ups in the defence sector.

Source: PIB

Govt amends Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020



Why in News

- To further promote 'Make in India' and 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence and enable Ease of Doing Business, Defence **Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020** has been amended based on the approvals accorded by **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**.

Key Points

- Import of defence equipment/sourcing from Foreign Industry of capital acquisitions should only be an exception and undertaken with specific approval of DAC/Defence Minister.
- To create an ecosystem which fosters innovation and encourages technology development in Defence by engaging R&D institutes, academia, industries, startups and individual innovators, the **iDEX framework** was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2018.
- To enable the budding startup talent pool of the country to contribute towards the twin mantras of self-sufficiency and indigenization, the procurement process under iDEX procedure of DAP 2020 has been simplified.

Source: India Today

Science and Technology

GAGAN based LPV approach procedure



- **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** successfully conducted at Kishangarh Airport, Rajasthan trial using **GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation)** based LPV Approach Procedures.
- The successful trial is a great achievement and major milestone in field of Air Navigation Services (ANS) in the history of Indian Civil Aviation Sector.
- India is the first country in Asia Pacific Region to achieve such a landmark.

Key Points

- **LPV (Localizer Performance with Vertical Guidance)** permits aircraft guided approaches that are operationally nearly equivalent to Cat-IILS, without the need for ground-based navigational infrastructure. The service relies on the availability of GPS and GAGAN Geo Stationary Satellites (GSAT-8, GSAT-10 and GSAT-15), launched by ISRO.
- GAGAN is an Indian Satellite Based Augmentation System (SBAS) jointly developed by AAI and ISRO.
- There are only four Space-Based augmentation systems available in the world namely India (GAGAN), US (WAAS) Europe (EGNOS) and Japan (MSAS).

Source: PIB

Solar power production in India getting impacted by Forest fires: Study

- A new study has found that forest fires which plague different parts of India, especially during the summer season play a major role in reducing solar power production in India.



Key Points

- Such analysis of the energy and financial losses due to the direct and indirect effects of forest fires on the production of solar plants can help grid operators to plan and schedule power generation, as also the distribution, supply, security, and overall stability of power production.
- Recently, solar energy generation has been widely used in developing countries such as India which has sufficient solar resources. However, several factors like clouds, aerosols, and pollution generated from various sources limit the solar irradiance causing performance issues in the photovoltaic and concentrated solar power plant installations.

Note:

- A group of researchers at the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital an autonomous research institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Govt. of India, and the National Observatory of Athens (NOA), Greece tried to trace the factors that reduce solar energy production.

Source: ET

Environment

World will face at least 560 climate disasters every year by 2030: UN Report



- The world will face around 560 disasters every year by 2030, warned the United Nations in a new report.

Key Points

- This is five times higher than the previous three decades, the **Global Assessment Report (GAR 2022)** recently released by the United Nations.
- The **UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)** released the report ahead of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May, 2022.
- An additional 37.6 million people are estimated to be living in conditions of extreme poverty due to the impacts of climate change and disasters by 2030.
- A majority of countries that face a high disaster risk are also among those with the highest share of population living under the national poverty line.
- These include the Philippines, Bangladesh, Myanmar, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam from the Asia-Pacific region.

Source: DTE

Parliamentary panel suggests changes to Wildlife Protection (amendment) Bill 2021



Why in News

- The parliamentary panel headed by senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh submitted a 254-page report after reviewing the **Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Bill 2021**.
- It highlighted several concerns regarding the legislation and urged the Union environment ministry to consider the recommendations of scientists and conservationists mentioned in the report.

Key features of the Bill:

- The most important reason given by the environment ministry for introducing the bill was the urgent need to provide legislative backing to commitments made by India over the past

many years to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals that came into force in 1975.

- The bill's objectives include ensuring that international trade in wildlife is legal, sustainable and traceable by implementing CITES.
- The Ministry has streamlined the scheduling of species from the original six schedules to just three — Schedule I for species that will enjoy the highest level of protection, Schedule II for species that will be subject to a lesser degree of protection and Schedule III that covers plants.

Source: HT

Schemes

PM SVANidhi scheme to continue till December 2024

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the continuation of lending under the **Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)** beyond March 2022 till December 2024.



About Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi):

- Through the Scheme, affordable collateral-free loans are being facilitated to the Street Vendors.
- The Scheme had envisaged to facilitate loans for an amount of Rs. 5,000 crore.
- Today's approval has increased the loan amount to Rs. 8,100 crore, thereby providing the Street vendors working capital to further expand their business and making them AtmaNirbhar.
- Under PM SVANidhi, significant achievements have already been made. As on April 25, 2022, 31.9 lakh loans have been sanctioned and 29.6 lakh loans amounting to Rs. 2,931 crore have been disbursed.
- This scheme was started in June 2020 .

Source: PIB

Awards and Honours

PM Modi receives first Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award

Why in News

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** received the first **Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award** for his selfless service to the nation and society at the 80th annual Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Awards ceremony in Mumbai.



Key Points

- The Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award was instituted in the memory and honour of Lata Mangeshkar who died at the age of 92 on February 6, 2022.

Source: HT

India creates Guinness world record by waving 78,220 flags simultaneously



Why in News

- India has created world record by waving 78,220 tricolors simultaneously.
- On April 23, 2022 India entered the **Guinness Book of World Records** by waving over 78 thousand tricolor flags simultaneously at the Veer Kunwar Singh Vijayotsav programme in Bhojpur, Bihar.

Key Points

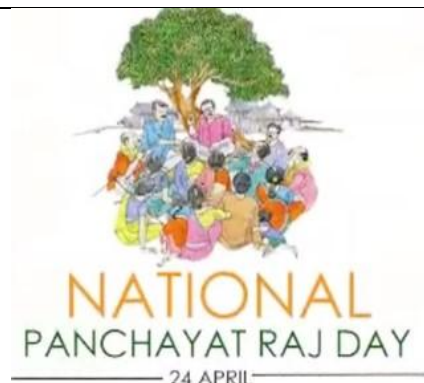
- The event was organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Culture as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the 75th anniversary of India's independence.
- The 'Amrit Mahotsav' was organised to commemorate the 164th anniversary of freedom fighter Veer Kunwar Singh - a key figure in the 1857 mutiny.

- Veer Kunwar Singh fought his last battle near Jagdishpur on April 23, 1858, and defeated the East India Company in this battle.
- Kunwar Singh died in service for the nation after taking down the Union Jack flag from Jagdishpur Fort.

Source: HT

Important Days

April 24, National Panchayati Raj Day



Why in News

- National Panchayati Raj Day is observed on 24 April annually.

Key Points

- Then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh declared the first National Panchayati Raj Day on 24 April 2010.
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj commemorates 24th April as the National Panchayati Raj Day, as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment came into force on this date.

Note:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Jammu and Kashmir to participate in the celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day 2022.
- The Prime Minister inaugurated the Banihal Qazigund Road Tunnel. The 8.45-kilometre long tunnel will reduce the road distance between Banihal and Qazigund by 16 kilometres.
- The Prime Minister also launched the Amrit Sarovar initiative. It is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country.

Source: newsonair

April 26, World Intellectual Property Day

Why in News

- **World Intellectual Property Day (World IP Day)** is observed annually on 26 April.



Key Points

- The **theme** for World Intellectual Property Day 2022 is “IP and Youth: Innovating for a Better Future.”
- The day was established by the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** in 2000 to "raise awareness of how patents, copyright, trademarks and designs impact on daily life".
- 26 April was chosen as the date for World Intellectual Property Day because it coincides with the date on which the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization entered into force in 1970.

Source: wipo.int

April 28, World Day for Safety and Health at Work



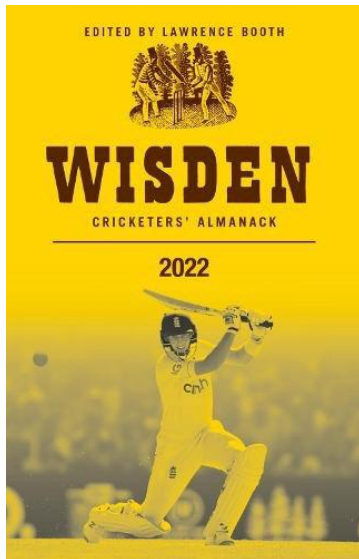
- World Day for Safety and Health at Work is a UN international day that is celebrated every April 28.
- The theme set for this year's World Day for Safety and Health at Work is ‘**Act together to build a positive safety and health culture**’.
- The World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2022 focuses on enhancing social dialogue towards a culture of safety and health.
- World Day for Safety and Health at Work was first celebrated by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** in 2003.

Source: un.org

Sports

Jasprit Bumrah, Rohit Sharma named among Wisden's five 'Cricketers of the Year' 2022

- India captain **Rohit Sharma** and pace spearhead **Jasprit Bumrah** have been named among five players in Wisden's 'Cricketers of the Year' in the 2022 edition of the Almanack.
- Besides the duo, the list also features New Zealand batter Devon Conway, England pacer Ollie Robinson and Proteas women star Dane van Niekerk.



About Wisden Cricketers' Almanack:

- Wisden Cricketers' Almanack colloquially the Bible of Cricket, is a cricket reference book published annually in the United Kingdom.

Source: ET

Reports and Indexes

World's poorest countries need \$600 million a year for water, sanitation in healthcare centres: WaterAid



Why in News

- According to a new report, around \$600 million a year is required to provide water and sanitation in the healthcare centres in some of the poorest countries by 2030.
- The analysis by **WaterAid**, is based on a latest research paper published in the journal Lancet, which focused on the lack of water, sanitation and hygiene access in health facilities in the 46 **Least-Developed Countries (LDC)**.

Key Points

- Around \$6.5-9.6 billion will be needed from 2021 to 2030 to achieve water and sanitation provision in every public health facility in the world's poorest countries.
- Domestic public resources are a critical source of finance for achieving universal access to **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**.
- Half of healthcare facilities in LDCs lack basic water services and 60 percent have no sanitation services.
- Arounds 75 percent of global funding for water and sanitation is now in the form of loans.
- WaterAid is calling on the world's richest countries, including the G7 who will meet in Germany in June 2022, to deliver on the \$600 million annual funding gap in order to provide lifesaving water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to healthcare centres in some of the poorest countries by 2030.

Source: DTE

India, again, 'Country of Particular Concern' on religious freedom grounds



Why in News

- The **United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** recommended, for the third year in a row, that **India** be designated a '**Country of Particular Concern**' (CPC) in 2021, i.e., the category of governments performing most poorly on religious freedom criteria.

Highlights of the Report:

- It was said in report that religious freedom conditions in India had "significantly worsened" in 2021.
- The report section on India said that the government had "repressed critical voices", especially minority communities and individuals reporting on them.
- It mentions the arrest of rights activist Khuran Pervez in Kashmir, and the July 2021 death of octogenarian Father Stan Swamy, arrested in October 2020 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).
- The report touches on challenges faced by Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), especially with regard to foreign funding. It also highlights anti-conversion laws.

About United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF):

- USCIRF is a U.S. federal government commission created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.
 - **Founded:** 28 October 1998
 - **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C.
- Source: The Hindu**

World military spending at all-time high despite pandemic: SIPRI



Why in News

- World military spending continued to grow in 2021, reaching an all-time high of \$2.1 trillion despite the economic fallout of the pandemic, according to new data on global military spending published by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**.

Key Points

- The five largest spenders in 2021 were the U.S, China, India, the U.K and Russia, together accounting for 62% of expenditure.
- India's military spending of \$76.6 billion ranked third highest in the world. This was up by 0.9% from 2020 and by 33% from 2012.

Source: The Hindu

New Appointments

TCS' Krishnan Ramanujam appointed as Nasscom Chairperson for 2022-23



- Nasscom announced that Krishnan Ramanujam, President, Enterprise Growth Group at Tata Consultancy Services has been appointed as its Chairperson for 2022-23.
- Ramanujam succeeds Rekha M. Menon, Chairperson and Senior Managing Director of Accenture in India, in this role.

About National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom):

- Nasscom is an Indian non-governmental trade association and advocacy group, focused mainly on the technology industry of India.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Founded:** 1 March 1988

Source: The Hindu

Eminent physicist Ajay Kumar Sood appointed Principal Scientific Advisor



Why in News

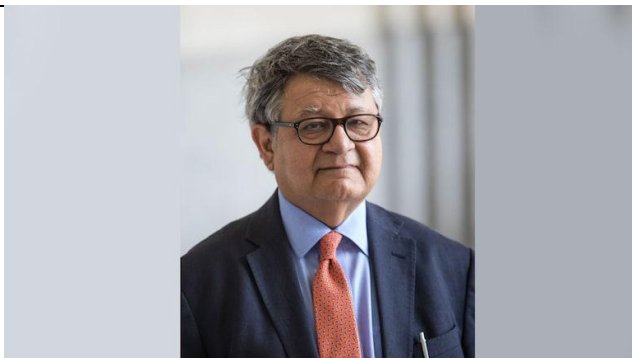
- Eminent physicist **Ajay Kumar Sood** has been appointed as the **Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA)** to the government.

Key Points

- Mr. Sood, a member of the Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, has been appointed to the post for a period of 3 years to succeed K VijayRaghavan.
- The **Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA)**'s office aims to provide pragmatic and objective advice to the Prime Minister and cabinet on matters related to science, technology and innovation.

Source: HT

Economist Suman K Bery appointed as Niti Aayog's vice chairman



Why in News

- Economist **Dr. Suman K Bery** has been appointed as Niti Aayog's vice chairman after Rajiv Kumar stepped down from the post.

Key Points

- The Ministry of Personnel in a statement said that the appointments committee of the cabinet had appointed Suman Bery as the full-time member of the Niti Aayog, and later as the vice chairperson from May 1, 2022.
- Suman Bery was the director-general of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).
- Bery also served as a member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, India's Statistical Commission and of the Reserve Bank of India's Technical Advisory Committee on Monetary Policy.

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

- **Formed:** 1 January 2015
- **Preceding Government Agency:** Planning Commission
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Chairperson:** Narendra Modi

Source: Indian Today

Emmanuel Macron re-elected for second consecutive term as President of France



Why in News

- Emmanuel Macron has won a second term in France's presidential election.

Key Points

- Emmanuel Macron defeated far-right rival Marine Le Pen.
- This is the first time in two decades that France has chosen a president for a second straight term.

Source: newsonair

Obituaries

Veteran Congress leader K Sankaranarayanan passes away



- Former Governor of various states and senior Congress leader K Shankaranarayanan passed away at 89.
- He served as Governor in six states (Maharashtra, Nagaland, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Jharkhand).
- He played a notable role as Finance Minister in A.K. Antony's Cabinet from 2001 to 2004.
- He was elected to the state assembly from the assembly constituencies of Trithala, Sreekandapuram, Ottapalam and Palakkad.

Source: The Hindu

Noted writer Binapani Mohanty passes away



- Noted Odia writer Binapani Mohanty passed away at 85.
- Mohanty has more than 100 books to her credit.
- Besides getting the Padma Shri in 2020, Mohanty received Sahitya Akademi Award, Sarala Samman, and Atibadi Jagannatha Das Sammana by Odisha Sahitya Akademi.

Source: TOI